

MINUTES

A meeting of the Lane County School District No. 19 Budget Committee was held virtually on February 11, 2021.

Attendance

Budget Committee members in attendance were Ken Kohl, Todd Mann, Zach Bessett, Keina Wolf, Naomi Raven, Nancy Cameron. District staff, students and community members identified included: Superintendent Todd Hamilton, Brett Yancey, Brenda Holt, Laura Pavlat, David Collins, Don Lamb, Judy Bowden, Whitney McKinley, Brian Megert, Jenna McCulley, Gary Cole, Jeff Michna, Heather Murray, Mindy LeRoux, Sheryl Cramer. Dustin Reese, Jonathan Gault, Representative John Lively, Senator Lee Beyer and Lydia Dysart.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chair Rave opened the Budget Committee work session at 6:02 p.m. Everyone present introduced themselves. She said that Lisa Barrager, Steve Irvin, and Emilio Hernandez would not be present at their meeting that night.

2. Legislative Information w/Q & A

Mr. Yancey welcomed Representative John Lively and Senator Lee Beyer.

Representative Lively said that:

- COVID-19 elongated the legislative process.
 - Could not just get something done in a few minutes.
 - Over four thousand bills introduced.
 - Highest amount in his time.
 - Multiple bills dealt with the same issue.
- In March Committee chairs outlined the budget.
 - There had been some guidance so far.
 - \$1,700,000,000 in deficits based on general fund and current service levels.
 - Includes inflation.
- They wanted to restart schools and focus on economic recovery.
 - Renters also in trouble and homelessness had gone up.

Senator Beyer said that:

- Since everything was online and only a quorum was present to read through a bill.
- There were only so many days to move a bill through the first chamber.
 - This would take lots of time with four thousand bills.
- Springfield got a reasonable budget for 2021-2022.
 - Would be one of the first budgets passed.
- They had one of the highest COVID-19 infection rates.
 - More vaccines coming in the next few weeks.
- On top of COVID-19 had other issues to deal with.

- Infrastructure and renters.

Representative Lively said that in the House:

- No bills would be moved out of Committees.
 - Focus was on hearings.
- No bills to the House until March.
- They could move bills to a Policy Committee but not until March.

Senator Beyer reported that:

- Since March 2020, the employment department had paid out more in claims in one year than the previous decade.
 - Most of that was federal money.
 - Helped keep economy afloat.

The Board asked:

- How difficult it would be to get their budget raised.
 - Senator Beyer replied that they would need to get into their reserves.
 - Possible but they had to be careful.
 - Hopeful for more federal funds.
 - Representative Lively added that they were committed to getting a better budget to their schools.
- If there was a push to get internet providers to build out their service in rural areas.
 - Senator Beyer responded that there was a lot of interest there.
 - States were not in charge of that since internet was in Federal hands.
 - Representative Lively said he was on a Committee that was working on that issue.
 - Want to invest in these hard to serve areas.
 - Broad Band Commission doing a lot in Oregon.
- If there were other measures that would affect schools.
 - Senator Beyer responded that there seemed to be interest in school nurses.
 - Depends on if there was money available.
 - He wanted them to do more with behavioral health.
 - COVID-19 delayed original push.
 - Representative Lively was unsure what the Student Success Act (SSA) funds would increase too.
 - Want to increase capacity across the State.

3. 2021-22 Enrollment Projections

Brett Yancey shared that they:

- Partnered with LCOG for demographic information.
 - Looked at birth rates.
- Hoped to be back in-person by the Fall.
 - Could change, but they were planning to be in-person.
- Projections next year were down from what they predicted by 400 students.
 - This from COVID-19.
 - Will recover those students in coming years.

- The Committee asked if that number included their Springfield Online School students.
 - Mr. Yancey replied that they were counted separately.
 - Mr. Collins added that they had between 900 and 1,000 students on their online school.

Brett shared that:

- Middle school numbers were not affected as much as elementary.
 - 200 student decrease which they would make up.
- 236 students were in their charter schools.
- The Committee asked what the finance difference was between in-person and online students.
 - Mr. Yancey replied that there was no difference with the budget, but the expenses changed.
- They would start to look towards staffing changes needed.

4. Budget Assumptions for 2021-2022

Mr. Yancey wanted to talk about their revenue for 2021-2022:

- \$9,700,000,000 budget for the State was a little under what they wanted.
 - They were preparing for any changes that would need to be made.
- Entering into a bargaining agreement and a new biennium.
- Insurance will continue to increase to 15% to 20%.
 - This impact from the wildfires.
 - Their trust covers a certain amount and then they reinsure for the rest.
 - Wildfires and COVID-19 insurance nightmare.
- Fuel costs would be on the rise.
- The Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) rate was set to decrease 1.3%.
 - Think in next biennium it would increase.

The Committee asked:

- What the student/teacher ratio would be at with enrollment being down.
 - Mr. Yancey replied that they were at the early stages of looking at that issue.
 - Would try and keep the ratio balanced.
 - They would be in a budget reconciliation, not budget reduction.
 - Student Investment Account (SIA) would help keep class sizes small.
 - SIA written into the law, so it would not be voted on every year.
 - Mr. Collins added that they added 20 positions after the reconciliation to help support mental health issues and keep class sizes small.
- If the students who did not enroll in kindergarten that year would be first graders the following year.
 - Mr. Collins said that was correct.
 - If there were more students in first grade next year, they would adjust their ratio to make sure there were more teachers.

Mr. Yancey said that:

- They were committed to \$1,000,000 a year in their instruction time fund.

- Technology support might have \$1,000,000 transferred into its account.
 - Put a lot of money into technology that year.
- These were their beginning parameters, and they would listen to feedback and make changes.

The Committee asked:

- What their end fund balances would look like from the current biennium to the next.
 - Mr. Yancey replied that the Board got an update on finances monthly.
 - Ending fund balance was increased by about \$3,000,000 dollars.
 - Seen across the State.

5. Back to School Update

Superintendent Hamilton said that:

- They were preparing for going back to in-person instruction.
 - Guidelines and metrics continued to change.
- They used metrics to guide if they would go back to in-person instruction.
 - In January metrics were changed.
 - On February 4 they opened their Kindergarten and 1st grade classes, on February 8 they opened for their 2nd graders, and that day they opened for 3rd graders.
 - Preparations were for opening through 3rd grade.
 - Start looking towards grades 4 and 5.
 - More information in coming weeks.
- New cases within last 14 days per 100,000 people was 206.
 - When the cases dropped under 200, they would be able to open more grade levels.
- Over last week and a have seen pictures of children and teachers excited to be back.
 - Classified employees have worked so hard to prepare for in-person and keep students safe and healthy during virtual learning.

Mr. Yancey shared:

- They were working with Cascade Health to get vaccines out to employees.

6. Curriculum Update

Mr. Collins said:

- Before this year they were on track for their curriculum update.
 - Continue working in the 2021-2022 school year.
- Material focus curriculum that involved textbooks.
 - Got to experiment with other mediums during virtual learning.
 - Figure out how to incorporate.

The Committee asked:

- If they were reviewing content for all grade levels every year.
 - Mr. Collins said that they looked at them in cycles based on grade level or class type.

7. Technology Supports Update

Mr. Michna shared that:

- They increased the number of documents created by students and staff in one year from 135,000 to 181,000.
- Students were more relying on their technology more.
- In the Spring they had to switch teaching models.
 - During their bond they adopted a 2:1 model to try and get one device for every two students in a classroom.
 - When COVID-19 hit they loaned devices out.
 - Each family got one device.
 - Did not work out and had to change it so that every student got one device.
 - iPads and Chrome Books were their main purchases.
 - Most students checked out devices.
- They had internet connectivity problems.
 - Wildfires only made it worse.
 - District created hotspots for students to connect to.
- Used CARES funds for to support technology purchases.
- Chrome books lasted five to six years.
 - Bought in 2015.
 - It was now six years later, and the technology was starting to die off.
 - Google allowed for another year before needing to make more purchases.
 - The Committee asked what they would do with the devices after the got new ones:
 - Mr. Michna said that they usually recycled them.
 - They were looking at other options.
 - Potentially auctioning them or giving them to other districts.
- During the bond certified staff got MacBooks.
 - Now seven years old and some were dying.
 - Would purchase new technology soon.
- Started process to get new technology because they knew it would take a long time.
 - 500 iPads
 - 240 Macbooks
 - \$940,000 just for student devices.
- Started off the year with \$977,000 in their technology fund.
 - Closed out 2014 bond this year and transferred that \$2,100,000 into the technology fund.
 - They also had the one-time budget item of \$700,000.
 - Total hardware expenses were \$1,300,000.
 - An additional \$225,000 for hotspots.
 - \$3,400,000 left in the fund.
 - This can sustain their model.
 - Talk more in the future about how they want to deploy technology to the schools.
- Look good to maintain devices through 2025 with current funds.
 - Mr. Collins was looking to get CARE funds to help.

The Committee asked:

- If they would continue to loan out their Chrome Books and hotspots when they returned to in-person learning.
- Mr. Michna said that they would continue loaning devices through at least the next year.
 - After they would look at what was needed for their families.
- What kind of security issues did you run into with devices.
 - Mr. Michna said that they installed filters on devices.
 - Tightened down systems.
- How they found devices that were lost.
 - Mr. Michna noted that they had some devices stolen out of buses and cars.
 - They could track them when connected to the internet.

8. Adjournment

Chair Bessett adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Lydia Dysart)