

## **Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart Schools Policy #714**

### **FUND BALANCE**

*[Note: The provisions of this policy include the provisions of Statement No. 54 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).]*

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to create new fund balance classifications to allow and for more useful fund balance reporting and for compliance with the reporting guidelines specified in Statement No. 54 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

#### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The policy of the school district is to comply with GASB Statement No. 54. To the extent a specific conflict occurs between this policy and the provisions of GASB Statement No. 54, the GASB Statement shall prevail.

#### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Assigned" fund balance amounts are comprised of unrestricted funds constrained by the school district's intent that they be used for specific purposes, but that do not meet the criteria to be classified as restricted or committed. In funds other than the general fund, the assigned fund balance represents the remaining amount that is not restricted or committed. The assigned fund balance category will cover the portion of a fund balance that reflects the school district's intended use of those resources. The action to assign a fund balance may be taken after the end of the fiscal year. An assigned fund balance cannot be a negative number.
- B. "Committed" fund balance amounts are comprised of unrestricted funds used for specific purposes pursuant to constraints imposed by formal action of the school board and that remain binding unless removed by the school board by subsequent formal action. The formal action to commit a fund balance must occur prior to fiscal year end; however, the specific amounts actually committed can be determined in the subsequent fiscal year. A committed fund balance cannot be a negative number.
- C. "Enabling legislation" means legislation that authorizes a school district to assess, levy, charge, or otherwise mandate payment of resources from external providers and includes a legally enforceable requirement that those resources be used only for the specific purposes listed in the legislation.
- D. "Fund balance" means the arithmetic difference between the assets and liabilities reported in a school district fund.
- E. "Nonspendable" fund balance amounts are comprised of funds that cannot be spent because they are either not in spendable form or are legally or contractually required to be maintained intact. They include items that are inherently unspendable, such as, but not limited to, inventories, prepaid items, long-term receivables, non-financial assets held for resale, or the permanent principal of endowment funds.

- F. “Restricted” fund balance amounts are comprised of funds that have legally enforceable constraints placed on their use that either are externally imposed by resource providers or creditors (such as through debt covenants), grantors, contributors, voters, or laws or regulations of other governments, or are imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.
- G. “Unassigned” fund balance amounts are the residual amounts in the general fund not reported in any other classification. Unassigned amounts in the general fund are technically available for expenditure for any purpose. The general fund is the only fund that can report a positive unassigned fund balance. Other funds would report a negative unassigned fund balance should the total of nonspendable, restricted, and committed fund balances exceed the total net resources of that fund.
- H. “Unrestricted” fund balance is the amount of fund balance left after determining both nonspendable and restricted net resources. This amount can be determined by adding the committed, assigned, and unassigned fund balances.

#### **IV. CLASSIFICATION OF FUND BALANCES**

The school district shall classify its fund balances in its various funds in one or more of the following five classifications: nonspendable, restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned.

#### **V. MINIMUM FUND BALANCE**

The school district will strive to maintain a minimum unassigned general fund balance of [17 percent of the annual budget.]

*[Note: School districts need to select one of the bracketed choices above and fill in the blank. The other bracketed choice should be deleted. If a minimum fund balance is specified, a stabilization arrangement such as that specified in Part IX below that sets aside specific stabilization amounts may not be necessary.]*

#### **VI. ORDER OF RESOURCE USE**

If resources from more than one fund balance classification could be spent, the school district will strive to spend resources from fund balance classifications in the following order (first to last): restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned.

*[Note: The school board determines this order.]*

#### **VII. COMMITTING FUND BALANCE**

A majority vote of the school board is required to commit a fund balance to a specific purpose and subsequently to remove or change any constraint so adopted by the board.

## VIII. ASSIGNING FUND BALANCE

The school board, by majority vote, may assign fund balances to be used for specific purposes when appropriate. The board also delegates the power to assign fund balances to the following: Superintendent and Business Manager. *[Specify individual(s), such as the superintendent, business manager, etc., or an entity, such as the finance committee, authorized to make these assignments.]* Assignments so made shall be reported to the school board on a monthly basis, either separately or as part of ongoing reporting by the assigning party if other than the school board.

An appropriation of an existing fund balance to eliminate a projected budgetary deficit in the subsequent year's budget in an amount no greater than the projected excess of expected expenditures over expected revenues satisfies the criteria to be classified as an assignment of fund balance.

## IX. GUIDELINES (BLHS Plan-Not in Model Policy)

The school board hereby establishes the following order for resource use: Non-spendable fund balance, Restricted fund balance, Committed fund balance, Assigned fund balance, and Unassigned fund balance. Journal entries at the end of the fiscal year may be used to accomplish this.

The district's encumbrance policy is for fiscal year end individual encumbrances exceeding **\$25,000** to be considered significant encumbrances. All encumbrances will be classified as either Assigned Fund Balance or Restricted Fund Balance.

When the combined total of the General Fund Committed, Assigned and Unassigned fund balance falls below **17%** the district shall initiate the following measures:

1. Reduce expenditures through implementation of cost containment measures.
2. Seek opportunities to increase revenue. Consider fee increases where appropriate. Examine options to increase enrollment.
3. If permitted by state law, request from voters additional revenue through an increase in the operating referendum or other financial options.
4. A combination of the above.

## X. STABILIZATION ARRANGEMENTS

**[Note: If the school board has established any arrangement(s) for emergencies and other contingencies, the description(s) should be included in this section. The school board needs to specifically define the circumstances or conditions when these amounts may be used, which must be unanticipated adverse financial or economic circumstances. These circumstances or conditions cannot be situations that are expected to or which occur**

**routinely. Stabilization arrangements should be reported as restricted or committed if they meet the criteria or, otherwise, should be reported as unassigned. They should not be reported as assigned. If the school board does not have any such arrangements, this section should be deleted.]**

## **XI. REVIEW**

The school board will conduct an annual review of the sufficiency of the minimum unassigned general fund balance level.

**[Note: The school board should determine the review period adequate for their school district and change “an annual” to “a quarterly” or “a monthly” or some other time frame if appropriate.]**

Legal References: Statement No. 54 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board

Cross References: None

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