

AGENDA



**Addison Central School District
Finance Committee
Committee Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024, 8:45 am - 9:45 am
49 Charles Avenue
Middlebury VT
05753**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81832100998>

- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum
 - 1. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff
- B. Public Comment - Agenda Items
- C. Recommendation to Approve the Minutes from December 4, 2024
- D. Committee Discussion:
 - 1. Financial Feasibility Target Strategies
 - 2. FY 26 Budget Creation
- E. Public Comment - Any Topic
- F. Adjournment

***Public Comment Guidelines:**

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.

MINUTES

**Addison Central School District
Finance Committee
Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 8:45 am - 10:15 am
49 Charles Avenue
Middlebury VT
05753**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

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OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Chip called the meeting to order at 8:51 am

1. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff

Jason Chance, Emily Weinstein, Chip Malcolm, Ellen Whelan-Wuest, Wendy Baker, Matt Corrente

B. Public Comment - Agency Items

No public comment

C. Recommendation to Approve the Minutes from 11-4-2024

Move: Jason Chance Second: James Malcolm Status: Passed

D. Committee Discussion:

1. Financial Feasibility Target Strategies

- Financial Feasibility Target Strategies
- Matt walked the committee through his draft of a presentation for the upcoming December full Board meeting. The focus of the presentation is to look at the foundations of the forecasting, the pieces of the budget that we have more assurance of in preparing our FY26 spending plan, as well as pieces we can look at to help achieve the financial feasibility target as set by the Board.
- We are hoping to present options that would exceed the amount that we would need so that we have flexibility with how we achieve the target

- Reduction strategies:
- Eliminating some of the positions that were created under ESSER funding, including grant-funded positions. Chip asked if these cost savings estimates are based on actual salaries or estimates for FTEs. It is based on actual salaries. Jason asked if the costs per pupil are cost per individual pupils or weighted pupils, and Matt clarified its cost per individual- we don't have the weighting information from the state yet.
- Surplus Reduction is another strategy that would allow us to reduce the budget by \$225,000.
- Reducing construction funds in facilities budget. We had added to this budget line item to ensure the completion of Mary Hogan ESSER funded projects, so we can reduce that by \$200,000 for that purpose. An additional \$85,000 could be responsibly cut from that as well.
- Healthcare budget adjustments. This is a variable expense that is unique to individual employees, which staff utilize the ACSD health plan and to what extent (individual vs. family). We tend to budget for this by estimating in the middle, but based on current staff usage and FY24 performance it looks like there is surplus that can be reduced- about \$300,000. This would only go towards addressing the increase in rates for everyone else, which could cost us \$700-800,000 this year alone, so it would be more like an offset of that increase. Employees receive a \$1500 single payment if they waive their healthcare benefit.
- Reduce general education nonprofessionals. This would require reducing some of the vacant or difficult-to-fill positions, which could be 5-10 FTE reductions. Not all of that cut amount is realized as savings but it does mean there is more capability to fund different positions and get the need somewhere else. Wendy pointed out that these are positions that have been vacant for a long time, so the choice would be to not carry them in our budget. This would require shifting some of how we use our other positions to cover these.
- Student services streamlining is part of our overarching themes of FY26 budget development. Adjusting the special education teacher:student ratio by establishing a case-load quota system, setting a minimum threshold for how many students special educators will meet with students. Reduce or consolidate personnel and facility costs for ACP programs, bringing them into current buildings and existing personnel to reduce some of the costs associated with these programs. And looking again at the positions that were initially funded and created during the pandemic and reducing these specialist/consultant positions. All of this would reduce the additional costs of the student services budget from FY25 based on the ACP programs, the collaboration for that funding between ACSD and Mount Abe and ANWSD dissolving, and other increases that equaled \$620,000 in additional costs. Wendy pointed out that we often hear that districts received pandemic related funding to meet increased student needs associated with the pandemic, and there are positions within the student services expanded budget and services that came out of the pandemic. Other districts have already been looking at how to reduce these. Over the last 3 years there has been a lot of work to pilot new programs, such as our wellness and learning centers, ACP programs, and we have a lot more information and experience now to learn from what works well in those programs but streamline their operations to try and reduce the costs. This way we can still offer high quality services but in a more streamlined way. Ellie asked how many positions would be eliminated through this approach. Wendy said it is hard to say but it could be between 4-6, though there would be service contracts we might be

able to reduce or eliminate as well.

- Ripton operations focuses on not operating Ripton school in the traditional way. If we were to choose to not operate them as K-5 school now, but if we moved ACP to the building now then that would be a way of operating it in an educational capacity. Ellen pointed out that even moving a program into the building would effectively close the Ripton school, which may violate our district charter or at least the spirit of the charter. Chip affirmed that this is an option that we are sharing for transparency's sake but not necessarily because it's one that we'll take. Wendy reminded us that there are more strategies in this list than we necessarily will need. She also said that these finances have been very much part of conversations with community members in Ripton. And, the Finance committee could decide to pull this option from the list of strategies. Ellie pointed out that there is research that has been shared indicating there are not necessarily long term cost savings that come from closing schools.
- Jason asked for more explanation of what the impact of these strategies will be, especially those that have student-facing impacts (reducing ESSER funded positions, closing a school, etc.). Wendy agreed there will be impacts, but they are working with principals now to plan out how sun-setting some of the strategies that were begun under ESSER and making sure there are back up resources or approaches that don't result in a net-loss of the services and educational resources that students and schools need.
- Foundational COst Forecasting:
- The first block is operations expenses, the most fundamental and forecastable cost centers with most of the year-to-year changes easy to predict.
- Second block is tuition expenses for Hannaford Career Center and Universal Pre-K (UPK)
- Third block is federal state and policy requirements
- The fourth block is contracted services and materials
- The fifth block is student services
- The sixth block is student opportunity funds
- The seventh block is equity investments
- All of this implements the equity-based budgeting work that has informed how the team thinks about how to use our resources and how to make it all work together.
- While the 2% growth target that the Board approved means the budget may grow up to an additional \$937,516 Matt is not incorporating that into the costs forecast yet because other important budget factors are not yet known, so it feels safe to wait until we have more information before we start to count on that growth in budget.
- Matt walked through changes in each of the areas that make up Block 1, including where different cost centers are remaining steady.
- Matt walked through changes in each of the cost centers that make up Block 2 & 3 as well. In Block 3, he pointed out that the cost centers that make up PD, Curriculum and direct instruction personnel will be the focus of a future presentation. In this presentation the projection for Block 3 is roughed out at \$25 million because it is still under development, based on work principals are doing now related to class configurations and other considerations.

- Matt walked through changes in each of the cost centers in Block 4, the non-personnel costs associated with everything in Block 3. Wendy pointed out that the fees we pay for IB are around \$40,000 and included within PD & Curriculum line item.
- Explanations of Block 3, 5, 6 & 7 are still under construction/development and will come in a future presentation.
- The committee discussed how the presentation could evolve for the board meeting on Monday, 12/7. Chip and Ellie suggested taking the Ripton operations option off the list because it should be a separate conversation. Ellie also suggested that the slide that summarizes reduction strategies include the target number of reductions we are aiming at, and to tally up the student-facing and non-student facing strategies so the board understands what those totals are.
- The committee agreed to warn another meeting for December 9th and December 16th

2. **Public Comment:** None

2. FY26 Budget Status Review

E. Public Comment - Any Topic

No public comment

F. Adjournment

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Jason Chan Status: Passed

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