

**Bridgman Public Schools**  
**January 2025**  
**Tax Appeal Settlement Agreement Update**

The District remains committed to keeping staff and community stakeholders informed as we continue addressing the financial impact of the AEP tax appeal settlement.

**Budget Reduction Planning**

Since our December update, there are no significant new developments regarding the AEP tax appeal settlement. The administration remains focused on budget reduction planning to address the financial challenges ahead.

Please rest assured, that our ultimate goal is to navigate these reductions carefully, ensuring we maintain high academic standards, preserve program offerings, meet student expectations, treat employees fairly, and address rising costs.

We appreciate the continued support of our staff, families, and community as we navigate this process together.

**Staying Grounded: Focused on What One Can Control**

I strongly encourage everyone to avoid speculation about the exact number of layoffs or which programs will be cut, as nothing has been finalized and the "plan" is still very much fluid, changing almost daily. While I recognize this process can cause anxiety, it's important not to let it lead to unnecessary assumptions, sleepless nights, or gossip. The decisions being made will not alter the core of our district, classrooms, or services. Let's stay focused on the facts, trust that I will communicate clearly as decisions are finalized, and remember—you can only control what you can control.

**Board of Education Meetings**

Superintendent Peters will continue addressing the financial effects of the tax appeal settlement and its impact on district operations in upcoming Board of Education meetings. We appreciate the Board's ongoing support and guidance as we navigate these challenges.

We recognize the uncertainty this situation creates for our staff and families. Please know that we are committed to open communication and will continue providing updates as we move through this process together.

Superintendent Peters will be addressing the financial effects of the recent tax appeal settlement and its impact on district funds in upcoming Board of Education meetings:

**November 25, 2024:** Superintendent Peters reviewed the tax settlement's impact on the District's Sinking Fund. The Board approved two recommendations in regards to the Sinking Fund. 1) Use the Sinking Fund conservatively to preserve our buildings' current condition and to plan ahead for any significant future renovations or repairs and 2) All future expenditures from the Sinking Fund require approval from the Board of Education.

**December 16, 2024:** Superintendent Peters reviewed the tax settlement's impact on the District's Recreation Fund. The Board approved four recommendations in regards to the Recreation Fund. 1) Utilize the Recreation Fund prudently to safeguard the operations of the Aquatics Center and community recreation programs while setting aside resources to address anticipated facility renovations or repairs in the future. 2) Approve that all Recreation Fund expenditures, including those from the Pool Fund, exceeding \$10,000 require prior approval from the Board of Education, with the exception of utilities, payroll, routine expenses, and emergencies. Any emergency expenditures will be reported to the Board of Education within 48 hours. 3) The District will be reducing programming and staffing as part of efforts to address budget constraints, which will include reorganizing the administrative structure of the Aquatic Center. Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the District will eliminate 1 FTE (full-time equivalent) position. 4) Adjust and Expand Patron Fee Structure – Beginning on July 1, 2025, revise the fee structure to include differentiated rates for residents and non-residents, ensuring fair access and equity. This may involve implementing tiered pricing based on residency status, increasing fees to reflect operational costs and inflation, and introducing additional charges for specialized programs or facilities. Such adjustments will help sustain programs and services while maintaining accessibility for residents.

**March 24, 2025:** Superintendent Peters will outline the implications for the District's General Fund and propose necessary adjustments, including potential administrator, teacher and support staff layoffs and program reductions.

**April 28, 2025:** Superintendent Peters will provide an update on staff and program reductions from March, including any additional adjustments necessary to address budgetary challenges. This update will cover anticipated changes impacting staffing and programs across the District.

For additional details or to discuss these initiatives further, please don't hesitate to reach out to Superintendent Shane M. Peters at 269-466-0220 or via email at [speters@bridgmanschools.com](mailto:speters@bridgmanschools.com). Superintendent Peters is available to provide more context, answer questions, and keep you informed on these important developments impacting our District and community.