



## Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2025

Central Office

5:30 pm

### BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Champagne, Board Chair  
Stephan Behuniak

### BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Lori Nespoli

### OTHERS PRESENT:

Dr. [Susan Compton](#), Superintendent of Schools  
Salvatore Bucci, Business Manager  
Shannon Levey, Board Clerk

### I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 5:38 PM.

### II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairperson is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairperson's Comments portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and no longer than 3 minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All the public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

Public comment called three times, no public comment.

### III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

#### A. [Financial Statement](#)

1. Mr. Bucci reviewed the February Financial Statement.

#### a. **Positive Variance: IDEA**

There is a positive variance from the IDEA grant, which is being utilized to offset a teacher's salary. While the budget includes 50 paraeducators, the district is still relying on Delta-T staff; the district is working to mitigate these expenses, which are primarily IEP-driven.

#### b. **Employee Benefits**

A negative balance is noted in the employee benefits category due to retirement payouts.

#### c. **Local Transportation Variance**

The local transportation budget shows a negative variance of \$169,000, largely due to unanticipated transportation costs for homeless students. It's important to note that the expense is split between the two towns involved, with each town covering half of the cost.

#### d. **McKinney-Vento Act and Homeless Students**

Mr. Champagne inquired why homeless students cannot attend school in the town where they are temporarily residing. Dr. Compton explained that under the McKinney-Vento Act, students have the right to remain in their original district despite their homelessness. This requirement contributes to the transportation costs, and the district is obligated to comply with this unfunded mandate. Mr. Champagne asked for an estimated cost of transportation for our current McKinney-Vento students.

#### e. **Transportation Staffing Issues**

Mr. Bucci shared an email from All-Star Transportation indicating a shortage of staff, with 8 employees currently on paid leave. Due to this, Allstar has expressed difficulty providing

transportation for after-school sporting events. Dr. Compton emphasized that this situation is unacceptable and insisted that Allstar find a solution.

f. **Special Education Non-Local Costs**

The special education non-local costs are currently running only \$25,000 over budget. Dr. Compton shared that a meeting with valley superintendents is scheduled to explore potential regionalization for special education, or some collaborative effort to reduce costs equitably. A key strategy discussed was determining which district could "house" programs, with the possibility of an equal tuition swap between districts.

g. **Social Worker Cost Savings**

Mr. Bucci suggested the potential cost-saving impact of social workers, noting that if one social worker can prevent a student from being placed out-of-district, that would cover the cost of the social worker's salary.

h. **Concerns Regarding Federal and Title I Funds**

Dr. Compton expressed concern over the future of federal funding, particularly Title I funds, noting that 53% of middle school students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

i. **Reading Program Payment and Budget Management**

The district has one installment remaining on the 6-year Into Reading program, totaling \$380,000, which was pushed forward against the grant. The program is fully funded until 2029, providing budget relief. Mr. Bucci emphasized that the district's goal is to end the year with a zero balance, but this does not mean there aren't unmet needs. The district limits spending to the allocated budget, and some needs remain unfilled.

j. **Remaining Four Months of the Fiscal Year**

With four months left in the fiscal year, the district has started early in reviewing all grants to ensure they are appropriately written and will make modifications if necessary to ensure compliance and avoid overspending.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Behuniak / sec. Mr. Champagne) to send the February Financial Report to the full Board of Education.

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Behuniak, Mr. Champagne

**PASSES:** 2-0-0

**IV. REPORTS**

- A. Board of Education
  - 1. Chairman Comments - none
  - 2. Board Member Comments - none
- B. Superintendent's Report - none

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM

Prepared by Shannon Levey,  
Board Clerk