

**Bridgman Public Schools**  
**February 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 Continues**

Our work to address the financial challenges from the AEP tax appeal settlement remains ongoing. While there are no new developments since January, the administration continues to focus on budget reduction planning to ensure long-term stability.

Our priority is to make thoughtful decisions that uphold our high academic standards, maintain valuable programs, support our students, and treat employees fairly while managing rising costs and a reduction in revenue.

We are grateful for the support of our staff, families, and community as we move forward together.

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

As we continue our budget planning process, I encourage everyone to avoid speculation about layoffs or program reductions. This process remains fluid, with frequent adjustments, and will continue to evolve through the start of the new school year. While uncertainty can be challenging, it's important to stay grounded in facts rather than assumptions or rumors. ***The heart of our district—our classrooms, programs, and commitment to students—will remain strong.***

Beginning today and over the next several weeks, building principals and I will start meeting with affected staff. With many moving parts in this process, certain steps must happen before others. Please know that every decision has been made with great care, and we have worked tirelessly to minimize disruption for staff, students, and the overall learning environment. ***While changes are necessary, they will not be drastic or fundamentally alter the educational experience we provide.***

I will continue to communicate openly and transparently as we finalize plans. It's important that we stay focused on the facts, support each other, and navigate this process together. To ensure everyone is informed, I will schedule an all-staff meeting before the March 24 Board meeting to review the proposed changes in detail and the reasoning behind them.

## 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.