Budget Advisory Committee Regular Meeting (Wednesday, April 9, 2025)
Generated by Kavitha Lakshmanan on Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Members present
Stacy Yao, Michelle Herriage, Mary Alarid-Enright, Omar Batres, Maria Fernandez, Kate Lee, Marc Kulla, Shompa Bhattacharya, Kimya Sharifi, Dan Halabe, Stuart Rosenberg, Phyllis Vogel, Ava Chiao, Satheesh Madhathil

Jenn Lashier joined meeting at 9.35 AM

Meeting called to order at 9:30 AM
1. CALL TO ORDER
1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of Committee Meeting Agenda
Approve the April 09, 2025 Committee Meeting Agenda

Motion by Dan Halabe, second by Kate Lee.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Stacy Yao, Michelle Herriage, Mary Alarid-Enright, Omar Batres, Maria Fernandez, Kate Lee, Marc Kulla, Shompa Bhattacharya, Kimya Sharifi, Dan Halabe, Stuart Rosenberg, Phyllis Vogel, Ava Chiao, Satheesh Madhathil

2. MINUTES APPROVAL

2.1 Approval of the January 29, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
Approve the January 29, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Kimya Sharifi, second by Michelle Herriage.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Stacy Yao, Michelle Herriage, Mary Alarid-Enright, Omar Batres, Maria Fernandez, Kate Lee, Marc Kulla, Shompa Bhattacharya, Kimya Sharifi, Dan Halabe, Stuart Rosenberg, Phyllis Vogel, Ava Chiao, Satheesh Madhathil

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Brainstorming Potential Cost Savings

Staff introduced Phyllis Vogel who will be joining the committee as a member representing the Community and her membership to the Budget Advisory Committee was approved by the CUSD Board at the April 10, 2025 Regular Board Meeting.

Staff explained the format of the meeting:
This is a working, ongoing list that will continue to evolve. Each time we review it, there may be comments, questions, or clarifications. Staff will provide input, and new ideas or items may be added as they come up.

Some of the topics may not be fully ready for answers today, but we've allocated an hour at the end of the meeting for further discussion.

Thank you for taking the time to compile and document this information. It's valuable for keeping the Board updated on the budget and providing important insights.

Today's meeting is structured as a discussion rather than a formal presentation, and we will make sure to capture all aspects of the conversation and feedback provided.

Determine the outcomes of 2 electives for all middle school students and weigh that against the extra costs of offering them.

Member clarified the question/input: The Board has decided to introduce two additional electives at the middle school (MS) level. This decision raises several important questions regarding the added costs, staffing needs, and operational expenses. While one the middle schools has offered electives for many years, it's crucial to evaluate the benefits of

expanding this offering. What impact will the added electives have on social-emotional development, academic performance, and overall student well-being? Does the value justify the costs? A cost analysis is needed to determine whether the benefits outweigh the financial commitment.

- Instead of reducing full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, the decision was made to keep the current staff while adding the electives. This decision preserves jobs but does come with increased costs. A reduction of 18 positions at MS would have saved approximately $2 million. The Board opted to offer the two electives instead.
- Surveys with parents indicate support for these electives, but concerns remain about the additional costs. We are also in discussions with CEEF (Community Education Enhancement Fund) to see if they will help offset these costs. Initial estimates suggest a cost of around $300,000- $400,000 but this is nowhere near enough.

Is what the parents support equal to the $300,000- $400,000?

- No
- Each middle school is unique, and the specific electives offered may differ from school to school.
- Member added that this is not solidified yet, but the technical education or career focused technical education will allow us to draw from a different pot of fund, to be offered at the middle school sites to offset the electives cost. Of course there will be consumables and upfront materials costs but we will try to secure this

One major consideration is whether we should expand to two electives or reduce the number of MS teachers. While the retention of staff is appreciated, it's important to focus on reducing reliance on parents for these programs.

Another issue to address is scheduling. With the addition of electives, middle school students now have six or more academic periods, which some find overwhelming. Can we find ways to reduce this load while still offering electives? For example, one middle school has already been offering electives, while others are just starting. Is there anecdotal feedback, for example from counselors could provide insight into how students are adjusting to the change.

- In terms of instructional minutes, CMS recently added seven minutes to the school day, extending instructional minutes from 51–52 minutes to 59 minutes. To accommodate this, other parts of the schedule, such as lunch and recess, have been shortened. However, the extra time has allowed for more flexibility in course offerings.
- Currently, 75% of 7th and 8th graders are enrolled in electives. Surveys conducted in previous years showed that students and parents supported the introduction of electives, as it provided more learning opportunities and allowed for a more standardized experience across schools. Additional surveys could be conducted to gather more feedback and help guide future decisions. We discussed this a couple of years ago and agreed on a gradual transition. Feedback was this was needed, standardized across with equal opportunity for everyone.
- In the past, MS electives were divided between academic and non-academic subjects, such as food, art, and metal shop. These electives were tailored to student interests and offered a range of learning opportunities. Today, all students have the option to take at least one elective, and students with special services can now participate in at least one elective as well. It tends to go towards student's choice, and is a learning opportunity for parents and students to see if they wat to add or reduce their load.

Do English learners take a supplemental class?

- Depends on their level.

HMS has block schedule, see how it affects staff.

- Another consideration is whether the introduction of electives affects enrollment at schools? While some schools may offer similar courses, the electives available at each site can influence enrollment numbers. The Enrollment Task Force is working to balance enrollment numbers across the district, and feedback from LMS, KMS, and HMS could be valuable in understanding how elective offerings impact student decisions.
- Ultimately, more information is needed to fully understand the financial implications of offering these electives, including any additional funding sources that might be available.

Analyze Fund Codes that have increased for this year's budget, and might have excess monies for this and next year - Materials & Supplies, Services & Other, Classified Salaries, Professional & Consulting Services, Classified Admin.

Why are some of these categories drastically increase from budget to first interim?

- These are some of the object codes that we track.There are significant changes observed between the adopted budget and the first interim report. We will bring back a deep dive into these categories—similar to previous analyses—going down to the object-level detail to determine the rationale behind increases or decreases.This analysis can be part of our broader effort to present clearer financial information to the Board.

Another valuable angle is to examine spending patterns over the past 3 to 5 years. How do current expenditures compare to historical actuals? Are we spending at the minimum necessary, or are there areas where spending has crept up over time? Have textbook purchases, for example, increased or decreased, and what are the associated costs?

Unspoken question may be why are we spending the money in some areas that we do? We might be in agreeance as to how we spend it, are we aligning with the priorities. If we are not aligned then shift the spending. For example: Services have increased by nearly 19%, Consulting services are up 28%, these increases stand out, especially in a time when we're also discussing layoffs and cuts

- This deep dive view can help us assess whether spending patterns align with district priorities and where adjustments may be needed.
- We need to understand what we're spending on, why these costs are rising, and whether they align with our goals. It's a complex message, but it's necessary. The needs of our district are not decreasing, and our budget strategy needs to reflect how those needs are shifting.
- Bring back a detailed breakdown of key spending categories and how they've evolved over time. Understanding the resource, where the monies came from 5 years ago, better understanding of what is happening today and how resource allocations have shifted over the past five years. Identify misalignment and ensure all spending and analysis align with district goals and Board priorities
- Also tie this to the Board Advisory Committee (BAC) and highlight the applicable District strategic priorities in future agenda items in board docs.

Address the number of certificated and other district management which has increased even though our enrollment has decreased.

We should take a closer look at how our staffing structure aligns with the current size and needs of our district. While we were a large district serving approximately 19,000 students, these positions made sense. Our staffing levels no longer reflect a smaller student population.

- It's important to ask: what has changed? Over the years, mandated responsibilities have significantly increased. We now generate state-required reports for nearly every funding source and program. Management and staff are deeply involved in meeting compliance obligations, and we need to decide whether we will continue fulfilling every mandate as written—or determine which are truly essential.
- At the same time, we've added numerous new programs and services, including ELOP, Cuper Doodle, additional nursing coordinators, and other support roles. It would be wise to review these additions and evaluate if there are opportunities to cross-align functions or consolidate efforts where possible. As we focus on our Future Ready Learner priority, we must ensure all staffing supports that goal.

There's also an opportunity to rethink the distinction between classified and certificated roles. They are part of one team, and we should consider whether some work can be merged or restructured. This includes asking: Are there positions whose responsibilities can be shifted or combined? Are there roles that are no longer needed or can be reimagined? Can some management functions be redistributed?

Employees across all levels—particularly teachers and site staff—are being asked to do more with fewer people. For example, we've have 7th of an employee as interim so staff has to absorb multiple roles due to gaps in coverage and take on additional duties like yard supervision and assessments, often with minimal support. We would like to see a similar process of looking at management roles as everyone else. must explore whether a similar level of review and restructuring can be applied to management and support services.

Looking at personnel data, we've seen that while most staffing categories have remained relatively consistent, certificated staffing is the only group that has decreased as a percentage of total staff.

- We will bring back information about staff: The impact of declining enrollment on staffing-How program changes affect staffing needs? Which areas (e.g., grounds, custodial, food service) have staffing needs that

don’t decline in proportion to student enrollment

We should also identify any roles that do not supervise others or no longer serve a critical function. Can their work be absorbed elsewhere? What are some of the things that are no longer valid, can someone else do it? Are all management roles still necessary, or can they be reclassified? With increased access to technology and digital tools, we must ask whether some tasks are still relevant or can be completed more efficiently.

We should have a spreadsheet of different jobs throughout the district: what they are doing? Maybe what they are doing is no longer suited to the District.

- Caution that this is outside the scope of this committee.

This review shouldn’t be limited to management. Departments like Transportation, HVAC, and Maintenance have not seen staffing increases, despite growing operational demands. We need to assess all departments, not just leadership, to ensure every part of the organization is right-sized and supported appropriately.

Staffing decisions moving forward should be based on actual district needs, established staffing ratios, current and future initiatives, State and federal mandates

- We’re already in the process of defining appropriate staffing ratios. However, numerical targets alone won’t give us the full picture. Each department should conduct its own internal review to assess whether its current structure is still appropriate—and whether recent growth was necessary.
- In some cases, staffing may need to increase; in others, it may need to decrease. The key is to ensure every position directly supports the district’s mission, student success, and long-term priorities.
- Management take a proactive role in reviewing the organization’s structure based on both current and future needs. As we implement new programs like transitional kindergarten (TK), we should also evaluate where roles may no longer be essential, and where strategic reductions or shifts are appropriate.

Address the appointment of a Bond Program Administrator at the highest end of the management salary schedule when the position of a Classified director was just laid off due to lack of funds. (BOARD Agenda (04.10.25) for approval: Classified Management : APPOINTMENT Bond Program Administrator Facility Modernization Range 250G)

Why was the Bond Administrator placed at that salary range?

We’ve seen layoffs in classified positions, including directors, managers, and supervisors. But in some cases, people weren’t actually laid off; instead, their titles were changed or they were reassigned. The question is: how does that truly help us reduce costs?

The classified Director of MOT (Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation), for example. That position was officially laid off. However, the person who held that role is now in the newly created Bond Program Administrator position. While technically a different title, it raises concerns.

- These are two completely different roles, funded in completely different ways: the MOT position was paid through the General Fund, while the Bond Administrator is paid through bond funds. The laid off position offers 100% savings.

On paper, laying off the MOT position represents 100% savings to the General Fund. Bond money cannot be used to cover general administrative salaries. However, since the new position oversees the bond 100%, its funding is covered entirely by the bond. Clever move—but who figured that out?

- This isn’t new, that’s always the case. The position is very similar to the old Measure H role.

Still, the transition hasn’t been very transparent. How was the position vacant?

- The new bond (Measure Z) was passed in November, and after Measure H funds ran out, the old position was disbanded.

Now it’s been revived under Measure Z, with a salary of approximately $243,000. Was the position posted?

- It's a management role, it doesn't legally have to be.

But from a transparency standpoint, that's troubling. If I were a voter, I'd have questions—because this doesn't look like a transparent process. There are some serious concerns around how the district is handling layoffs, reassignments, and salary ranges—particularly when it comes to transparency and actual cost savings.

We could just as well have contracted a person from outside, this role need not have been filled internally at all. We could have easily contracted someone from outside the district. Is the person now in the bond role is the same individual who was the Director under Measure H?

- Yes

If bond money had not be funded, then the person would still be employed? Who would have been laid off we did not have bond money?

- If we did not have bond money that position would have been laid off. If we laid off a Director we could have cost savings but we still would have to add a bond administrator.

So, if we hadn't had bond funding available, that person would have been laid off entirely. That implies the only reason they remained employed was because the district found another way to fund their salary.

Meanwhile, classified staff and CSEA members are the ones bearing the brunt of cost-cutting. Many had their hours reduced—cuts totaling $250,000 that impacted a large group of employees. Yet, in management, only one director, one manager, and one supervisor were technically reduced or shifted. And even then, it appears that nobody truly lost their position—they were just moved into new roles.

That's where the optics come into play. To the outside, it looks like we eliminated a director position, but in reality, the same person simply slid into another high-paying job. It's concerning because it doesn't build trust with our employees or the community. If this were about actual savings, we should have either not filled the role or filled it with someone at the lower end of the salary scale—not the top.

Hiring someone new at the lower end of the scale would've saved money. The difference between the top and bottom of the salary range is about $35,000. We talk about being responsible with funds—so why aren't we applying that same principle here? Why do CSEA members get shifted or laid off, while management gets reassigned at full salary?

It would be helpful to look at the full salary breakdowns—from the highest point on the director scale to the lowest. Let's talk about the actual justification for the pay, not just the need for the position. Of course we want someone experienced, but that doesn't mean we can't make fiscally smart hiring decisions.

Please bring more information on this. We need clarity and accountability—not just for the sake of the budget, but for the sake of trust.

We have more district office administrators now than we had when our enrollment was at 19,000+. Examine the administrative structure to see where cost savings are possible. We spend a lot of money on intervention for students who struggle academically. Are we seeing commensurate results compared with the cost? Consider reducing intervention costs by reassigning some of the teachers who are providing intervention support and reducing administrative personnel.

Similar to previous question: Comparing staffing to where we are with enrollment

- This was one of the first areas we examined: teachers providing services outside the classroom. Aligned with our priorities, intervention teachers remain a high priority.

Data and feedback strongly support the effectiveness of intervention programs. While the groups served are small, the results are impressive. These interventions not only help students improve reading and math skills but also positively impact their overall development. The progress made by both students and teachers in these programs is remarkable, with noticeable social and emotional benefits as well. Without these interventions, reaching many students would be much more difficult.

Can we achieve this in a more cost-effective manner?

- Yes, we can. We're exploring ways to reduce costs, and addressing intervention services could be a significant part of that effort.

One potential strategy could be reducing the number of sections or the number of students requiring intervention, which would directly lower costs while maintaining the quality of support.

Consider additional school closures

No matter how we adjust the middle schools, they remain relatively small. Traffic at the middle school is also a major issue.

When we examined the smaller middle schools, one of the decisions made was to consider closing them in a few years. We were looking at this as part of our long-term strategy and planning. The idea was to close the middle school and revisit the situation in the 2025-2026 school year, as part of the enrollment task force's review. The task force will assess if we're able to balance enrollment effectively.

With the enrollment task force re- balancing, Is closing schools off the table?

- Many aspects involved. If we close a school, do we have enough classroom space in the remaining schools to accommodate the students? If not, this will result in additional costs to add classrooms in other locations.

If the Enrollment Task Force (ETF) moves forward with this idea, they will need to conduct a study to assess the feasibility and impact of closing schools, including considerations for busing and traffic management.

Reduce the substitute teacher requirement by cutting back on professional development during the school day.

- Is this about covering substitute costs and paying the teacher when they’re not in the classroom?

It’s both

- Anytime we can offer professional development (PD) outside of the school day, it’s a benefit.

Teachers need to be in the classroom and its cost savings.

How does this align with our priorities? Take a close look at that. Are there some PD sessions we don't actually need to offer?

PD offered outside of duty hours incurs adjunct duty costs, so the savings may be lower.
Why would a teacher be required to stay after their duty day?

- The district also looked at student non-attendance days.

Clean classrooms every other day

Students can help by emptying trash.
Vacuuming doesn’t need to happen daily, but trash collection should—it's the bare minimum.

How can we reduce custodial services in a way that still makes sense and saves money?

Look at FUHSD—their campuses are spotless, and their custodial staff is clearly invested. I’m not sure of their exact staffing numbers, but high schools have a lot of foot traffic.

Simple things like putting up chairs can save time.

There might be potential in using a team-based approach for the night custodial crew.

The senior custodians would love to go back to the team approach and see custodial teams rotate through, especially with a senior custodian leading.

We have added many services over time—are all of them still necessary?

A lot of that ramp-up happened during COVID.
As class sizes were reduced, more rooms were used, which increased cleaning needs. But there's still potential in team efficiency.

We've gotten feedback that more gets done with teams. Other than staff permanently assigned to specific areas, there's no consistent model. Could we be more efficient?

Was there a financial benefit when we moved away from the team model? It happened years ago, and people don't really remember.
Any cost savings here are tied directly to increased efficiency. But does "more efficient" mean fewer staff?

There's cleaning technology available now—robotic carpet sweepers, backpack vacuums, etc. We should consider a basic standard that includes these tools.

Custodians are working year-round now, with little downtime due to ongoing programs, summer use, and outside groups using facilities.

- We've shifted to year-round cleaning schedules, but custodians are being asked to do more with less time.

Yes, there's potential to be more efficient.
There are still unknowns to explore—but how can we improve efficiency with the resources we already have?

- There's a mix of financial savings and operational improvements here—we just need to find the balance.

Mow grass less often

Just a thought—kind of a wild idea:
Could we consider removing the real grass area and move to artificial grass?

- There's a County-level discussion exploring this already—removing the grass could potentially address some health-related concerns (e.g., kids playing, rolling around, exposure, etc.).
- It's not currently a priority on our facilities bond list.
- However, there could be significant cost savings from not having to mow or water the area. We also have a maintenance agreement with the City of Cupertino, which might factor in.
- That said, we have to ask ourselves:
  Would removing the grass go against what we promised voters?
  While it's not just a space used for school purposes, it's also used by the broader community.
- At the same time, we have more urgent facility needs—buildings, restrooms, etc.—that are in real disrepair. So maybe this issue should be set aside for now.
- But the core question remains:
  Is there a way this could help us save money?

Increase class size – 24 in primary; 30 in intermediate; staff at 25:1 in middle school

- The original class size formulas have shifted over time, and any changes now would have staffing implications. We can calculate those differences and share the projected impact.

Any adjustments to class size ratios would need to be negotiated.

- Previously, the ratio was increased from 25:1 to 22:1 to accommodate students' ability to take two electives. While the average class size is listed at 35 students, many classes are actually much larger.

The question raised was not taking into account the scheduling impact of students choosing two elective courses.

Closely monitor special education to reduce encroachment

We need to continue closely monitoring special education spending to reduce encroachment on the general fund. That is our duty. But beyond monitoring: how can we actively reduce our overall contribution to special education while still meeting legal and ethical obligations?

- Special education is a significant cost for the district—not just due to the services themselves, but also because of litigation, encroachment, and operational inefficiencies. We need to look at systemic and sustainable ways to operate more efficiently. On the legal side, one potential solution could be increased staff training, which would help us focus on prevention rather than just mitigation. The goal is to prevent disputes before they escalate to the point of settlement or litigation.

At times, we've found ourselves giving in to parent demands, even when our proposed services were educationally appropriate. This leads to unnecessary costs that exceed what students truly require under special education law. Settling quickly may seem easier in the moment, but over time, it creates a pattern that is difficult to sustain. We must shift back to recommendations grounded in professional judgment and legal compliance, rather than defaulting to appeasement.

- This is a bigger issue and a broader conversation. We have to balance what children need with what is appropriate to provide. Efficiency should be central to this discussion—not just in staffing, but across operations, including transportation, use of outside programs, consultants, and placements in public or non-public schools. These services often lead to much higher expenses, especially when we outsource what we could potentially provide in-house.
- That said, we also know compliance is non-negotiable. We've added four directors to oversee programs and ensure we're aligned with regulations, but at the same time, we've had to eliminate other programs. Many services are now being provided externally, which increases our costs.

The district is known for offering strong special education programs. However, we need to ask ourselves: are we offering a "Cadillac" model when a more balanced, legally sound program would still meet student needs? The strain isn't just financial—it's taking a toll on our staff, site administrators, and district office teams managing IEPs. We need to look at this through two lenses: the financial impact and the human impact.

- There's nothing wrong with reevaluating how we do things—we should.

Transportation is one major area where we might find savings. Are there more efficient bus routes? Should we rethink our approach to contracted Instructional Aides, maybe using floaters to improve flexibility and reduce costs?

- This isn't an issue unique to our district. Many are grappling with the same challenges. The key is to approach special education with care and thoughtfulness. If there's one area where a small misstep can lead to major financial loss, it's here. That's why we've invested heavily in training our staff—to ensure that when we say, "we've done everything required," it carries weight. We should feel confident drawing the line and standing behind the services we provide, knowing they are appropriate and well-supported.

Everyone working with our students is giving their all. But at some point, we have to say: we've done everything we were required to do—and be firm about it.

Both CSEA and CEA expressed support of that position.

- It's a good idea to do the legwork now—track where we can save, measure compliance, and determine the true cost of what we're offering. How do we quantify that? Can we compare our special education spending per student with other districts to see if we're on the high or low end? Right now, it feels like we're offering a premium program—but do we need to?

Settlements and transportation are two major cost drivers. If we focus on those areas, we may find ways to reduce some of our most significant expenses without sacrificing service quality.

Review all contracts with outside agencies to determine (1) do we need the service? and (2) can we provide the service internally?

It may be more cost-effective to handle certain services internally, especially when our employees are already invested in the success of our programs. It's worth exploring whether keeping some work in-house, like tree trimming for example, could save us money—though in some cases, hiring outside contractors might be more efficient due to specialized skills or equipment. It really depends on the task and the capabilities of our current staff.

This is a significant budget area. For instance, we may need to consider whether hiring more speech therapists in-house would be more sustainable than continuing to contract out those services. When we take a deeper look at support services, we have to ask: is it more cost-effective to continue outsourcing, or should we build internal capacity?

- As we prepare a presentation to the board, it would be valuable to outline the full cost of special education—including transportation, contracted services, and staffing. We should also show how much funding we receive from the state and federal governments versus what we're actually spending. Highlighting that gap could help us better understand where adjustments
  might be made.
- What services are required by law, and which ones go above and beyond compliance?
  Are there alternatives that still meet student needs while helping us operate more efficiently?

Consider moving/lessening funds for books for school libraries at this time.
The current allocation is based on a per-student rate, but in the interest of cutting back maybe go from $8 per student to $6 per student—which would result in approximately $13,000 in savings.

Consider raising the rates for the after-school facilities.

Evaluate, make more money on a hourly basis, add more rooms for community open space room, evaluate space usage after school usage, raise rates of facility usage

We should consider increasing the rates for after-school facility rentals. It may be possible to generate more revenue by evaluating our current hourly rates, adding more rooms available for community use, and reassessing how our spaces are utilized after school hours. A comprehensive review of space usage and rental rates could identify opportunities to maximize income from our facilities.

If the Federal government reduces the payments for lunch, consider asking parents who are not lower SES to pay a small portion. Even $1.00 would lessen the waste and prevent students from picking up lunch that they don't always eat as well as add needed revenue.

Universal lunches are an important and valuable program, but because families don't pay for the meals, we're seeing increased waste. Students often take multiple servings, or grab items like a single orange or milk, only to place them in the share cart or throw them away. If there were even a minimal cost associated with meals, families and students might treat the food with more care and respect, leading to reduced waste.

While this isn't about generating revenue, there is a real opportunity to cut down on waste and lower operational costs. The amount of food discarded is significant, and it contributes to a large volume of garbage. Although the program doesn't encroach on the general fund, reducing food waste could lead to savings in other areas—such as fewer trash cans and reduced trash pickup. Even small changes in how we manage the program could have a meaningful financial and environmental impact.

Evaluate substitute needs for less than ½ of a day for classified employees.
Currently, every classified employee is assigned a substitute, even in cases where it may not be necessary. For shorter absences—such as an hour or half a day—we may not always need a substitute.

Plan on better utilization of CUSD buses for field trips. For example, book them in the spring for next year. Why are we giving money to other districts to use their buses?

We are currently paying other school districts to provide transportation for our field trips, when we could be utilizing our own local resources instead. Rather than sending funds to other districts, we should prioritize using our own transportation services wherever possible.

- While we do have limited capacity to support district-run field trips, they can be accommodated as long as they don't overlap with existing routes and occur during the middle of the school day. Licensing constraints also need to be considered.

There may be opportunities for cost savings by consolidating and optimizing our transportation routes. For example, we've seen cases where only one student is riding a bus.

- By organizing routes more efficiently and combining trips when appropriate, we can make better use of our transportation resources and reduce overall costs.

Negotiate better prices for most frequently used school materials (paper, pencils, printer ink etc.) rather than just use the business rates.

We're struggling to manage with the 10% reduction in general operating expenses. One area that may offer opportunities for savings is the purchase of student supplies—items like paper, pens, and pencils. We've noticed that other sources are offering lower prices than what we currently pay through Office Depot. If I were in the purchasing director role, I'd collaborate with purchasing directors from other districts to pool our buying power. With enough volume, we could likely negotiate better deals and beat current vendor pricing.

For example, a case of paper that used to cost $20 is now priced at $50, though this week it dropped to $37. One strategy could be to buy certain high-use items, like paper, on a monthly basis in bulk, store them in a centralized location, and distribute them as needed. This could help us manage both price fluctuations and availability.

Other frequently used supplies—like printer ink, lamination paper, and other consumables—also need to be analyzed. Fixed vendor contracts force us to purchase at higher prices, and while we do have to follow State bid processes to access certain pricing, we should still be routinely exploring alternative vendors who might offer better rates.

- The move from warehousing to direct shipping was made for efficiency, especially considering our limited warehouse space and staffing capacity.
- For certain items, like paper products and toilet paper, direct shipping has been more cost-effective. However, we should go back and look at it to see if it could yield better savings.
- That said, we don't want school site staff to spend too much time researching prices or managing supply orders. Instead, the responsibility should fall back on the purchasing team to periodically review pricing, seek competitive bids, and identify opportunities for more strategic sourcing.

The District wants us to use Amazon as a last resort, but sometimes items are cheaper at Amazon rather than through Office Depot - they will only allow us to order from Amazon If the items are significantly cheaper than OD - at least more than $10.00 cheaper per item and we always have to get permission from them before we can order the items.

For the agreement with Office Depot that the District has, shouldn't the prices stay locked in?

We've noticed that sometimes the items on the regular Office Depot website are cheaper than the price that we get from the District's Office Depot Business account.

Cannon automatically sends toner at intervals, and we are paying for more than we need. We have excess currently. We should be ordering as needed.

Members comment-
Many of the estimates presented so far are rough projections—some could be considered uneducated guesses including the unthinkable not including SPED, it may be about $10mil..thats about 10% of our budget,

Without any reductions, we would be looking at needing to cut around $30 million this year.

Our total budget is roughly $300 million, so a $30 million reduction represents about 10%, not 30% as previously mentioned.

Currently, we are facing a $15 million structural deficit. Of that, $10 million in reductions are already being prepared, and that should be noted as part of the broader budget consideration. Again, to be clear—the deficit is $15 million, not $30 million.

As we go through this list, we've identified multiple potential cost-saving opportunities. Are there any other areas you're reviewing that we should be aware of or include in the conversation?

- We've been analyzing vacancies and department-level staffing as part of this year's budget work, and we're also looking ahead to the next fiscal year to identify programs and services that could be reduced or restructured.

Regarding positions that were posted but not filled—have those been removed from the budget?

- We're in the process of putting together a comprehensive presentation for the Board, scheduled for June 4th. It will include updated figures, current cost-saving measures, and future considerations.
- We have also taken into consideration and shifted BAC meeting dates so that we may bring items to the BAC before the Board meetings. The Meeting dates were picked to align with the budget development calendar
- Member commented that they appreciated the follow up and noted that incorporating the date considerations worked really well. They thanked the team for including that detail.

4. FUTURE AGENDA

4.1 2024-2025 Scope of Work and Upcoming Committee Meeting Calendar

5. ADJOURNMENT
Meeting adjourned at 11.27 AM