26-10-22 Meeting Notes: FY27 BOE Budget Committee

Attendees:

- Loa Carol Hubbard (Chair/BOE Treasurer)
- Nicole “Nico” Herbert (Chief Operations & Finance Officer)
- Michele Nilson (Budget Specialist)
- Amanda Menifield (FEA Elementary representative)
- Caroline Brown (Parent representative)
- Felicity Lujan (Student representative)
- April Scott (FPA Representative)
- Ben Loeffler (At-large representative)
- Jason Witt (At-large representative)
- Jen Gunderson (Parent representative)
- Danette Peterson for Ed Paxson (FEA Secondary representative)

Absent: Kate LaPlaunt: Non-Represented Committee rep, April Johnson: ESSA representative, Morgan Dulian: BOE Clerk, Liz Tomsha: FNA representative, Jeanna Singleton: Military-Connected representative, FPA Elementary representative-TBD, ESSA representative-TBD

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order @ 5:32pm and Roll Call (Quorum), Adoption of Agenda, Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (2026-10-08)

The meeting officially commenced at 5:32 PM on October 22, 2026, with a quorum established. A motion was made by Jason Witt and 2nd by Caroline Brown to adopt the agenda. The agenda was adopted without changes on October 22, 2026. A motion was made by April Scott and 2nd by Amanda Menifield to adopt the minutes. There were no objections, and the minutes were adopted.

Agenda Item 2: Goal of Committee and Information Review

Ms. Carroll-Hubbard welcomed members and outlined the committee’s role: draft a memorandum for the school board recommending budget investments and reductions. Committee memo due December 2026 to align with the February 2027 administration budget and April 2027 school board adoption. Reviewed procedural norms (including Open Meetings Act compliance) and emphasized high-level, scalable recommendations adaptable to final funding levels. Reviewed answers from the Oct. 8 meeting and discussed topics including Medicaid reimbursement, staffing vacancies and retention, school meals, enrollment, and district programs.

Agenda Item 3: Group Discussion: Stakeholder Priorities and Strategic Plan Pillars

Staffing & Compensation: Review retention surveys, incentive models, district health insurance, and competitive compensation/state pension (monitor upcoming legislative bills);Request turnover categories for state/out-of-state comparison; Expand secondary CTE teachers, non-Title extracurricular supervisory support, dedicated APs for large elementary schools, after-school activity staff, and sub/temporary budgets.

Facilities & Maintenance: Address aging HVAC/ventilation repairs and acute custodial shortages.

Approved 11/12/26

Activities, Charter Expansion & Program Relocation: Boost student activity budgets and athletic transportation support; Add Pearl Creek STEAM as a charter school and relocate the Star of the North program.

Classroom Supplies & Tech: Increase general school supply budgets and invest in classroom presentation monitors; Evaluate Canvas Instructor vs. Google platforms.

External Financial Proposal: Explore hiring an investment firm to invest surpluses in commercial mutual funds for capital projects.

Reductions, Administrative Efficiency & Curriculum: Cut non-classroom instructional, non-grant teaching, and district office positions before altering classroom PTR; redirect savings to activities; Train IEP facilitators as LEA representatives to keep principals in schools; Fix purchasing waste (unused consumables, unnecessary hardbound books for online learning).

Before/After School Enrichment & Community Frameworks: Partner with non-profits for secondary before-school programs (e.g., open gym, cooking, study time) and community-supported after-school activities to reduce family costs, teacher burnout, and teacher workload; Explore an income-based student activity assistance fund.

Class Size (PTR), Extended Learning Program (ELP), Pre-K Program: Prioritize PTR reductions, focusing on secondary schools this year; Reallocate 6 ELP coaches in a cost-neutral shift—move 2 to middle schools to also support CTE electives; Gather feedback on the first-year Arctic Light and Weller pilot (inclusive, grant-supported model) before prioritizing further Pre-K expansion.

High School Utilization & Academic Expansion: To maximize facility utilization and increase enrollment at neighborhood high schools, the district should expand Advanced Placement (AP) and dual-credit offerings directly on traditional high school campuses; Because North Star College operates as a standalone school receiving full Base Student Allocation (BSA) funding, shifting or sharing high-level academic programs could help draw students back to their zoned high schools while optimizing district resources.

Agenda Item 4:Next Steps from Ms. Carroll-Hubbard:

- **Timeline:** Announced the next meetings are November 12 and December 3, 2026.
- **Survey Distribution:** Ms. Nilson will send the Balancing Act priority survey by Nov. 2, with responses due from members by Nov. 6.
- **Next Steps:** Results will be reviewed at the Nov. 12 meeting and integrated into the draft memo for final approval at the Dec. 3 meeting.
- ***The meeting was adjourned at 7:32pm***

Approved 11/12/26