

**1. *When will the Budget go to the Board of Education?***

The Budget Reduction Plan will be presented to the Board of Education at a special board meeting on Wednesday, February 24. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. and be held in the North Farmington High School auditorium. The meeting will be cablecast LIVE on TV-10.

**2. *Can the time line of either the state or school be adjusted so that the final budgets are in sync?***

A School District's fiscal year of July 1 through June 30 captures the school year time frame when students are educated, which is a district's main operating purpose. Therefore, it would not be possible to change the fiscal year end for a school district as the school year typically starts in September and ends in June which is within the July 1 through June 30 time frame. The State could move its fiscal year end back to June 30, which would coincide with a school district's year end, however the State does not have the cash flow to be able to do this. In the mid-1970s, the state balanced its budget (a \$298 million shortfall), as required by law, by extending one of the fiscal years to 15 months resulting in the current year end of September 30.

**3. *How often are purchase cards audited for abuse? Who audits them?***

Purchasing card statements (similar to a credit card) are issued monthly. Each purchasing card transaction in the monthly statement is reviewed by an individual in the business office to ensure the purchase is allowable and that the appropriate supporting documentation is attached. The transactions are also reviewed on a higher level by a supervisor in the business office. A sample of purchasing card transactions would be audited by the District's independent auditor, Plante & Moran, PLLC, during the year end audit as well. The year end audit takes place in September each year.

**4. *Will the Harrison dance company program be eliminated in 2010-2011?***

We have proposed the elimination of no specific programs (with the exception of the TV-10 class). However, we are asking our staff, in all curricular areas, to staff a minimum of 25 students in all classes in order for the class to be offered. If the dance company had less than 25 students in the class, it would be recommended for elimination. Otherwise, it is not proposed for elimination.

**5. *Can students stay in their building for AP classes and take them via TV or web?***

We are exploring that as an option for some classes. Many classes do not lend themselves to an on-line environment. We will be exploring this on a class-by-class basis.

**6. *Would all students need to spend 1/2 day in another school in order to take AP classes?***

Yes, guests will be at the guest school for half of their day. The third hour class (which includes lunch) would be used to transport students which eliminates lost instructional time.

**7. *What types of instructional aides will maximize efficiency of increased classroom sizes? Please provide research.***

We are not adding people (paraprofessionals or other support staff). Instead we are focusing on supporting teachers, by way of professional development, to help them to serve the needs of all of their students. Research supports that the use of research-based best practice has a stronger correlation with achievement than does smaller class size. I would point to Marzano's research to support this answer.

**8. *Have we looked at contracting services for long-term employees?***

Schools are permitted to outsource non-instructional positions, typically the custodial, transportation, and Nutrition Services. As part of the budget process the District has investigated the possibility and the savings that may be connected to such a decision. At the present time the District prefers to employ those individuals working with and around our students. Depending upon the economic issues faced, the District may be forced to pursue outsourcing as a last resort.

**9. *Can overtime be eliminated or has it already?***

Overtime is controlled by the supervision in each department and school. The use of overtime in the District is low, but we have for some time worked to minimize it further and resort to it only when required.

**10. *Can each employee job description be reviewed to work less hours?***

While individual's work hours can be modified, the work needs to be done and the same number of hours would be invested one way or another. By example, 2 part time employees could replace one full-time employee, but the District would still be paying for 8 hours of work.

**11. *Will all of the decisions be made by contract negotiation time?***

Preparations for negotiations have been ongoing with the goal of getting an agreement that contributes to the budget shortfall. However, there is no way to predict when negotiations will be completed and budget decisions will need to be made accordingly.

**12. *How will placement be determined for staff coming back from leave or part time?***

Staff returning from a leave of absence or desiring a change from part-time to full-time, will be handled pursuant to the provisions of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

**13. *How much is the District expecting the Farmington Education Association (FEA - teachers' union) and other union members to sacrifice?***

Bargaining is not done in a public forum and until such time as proposals have been presented and bargained over in good faith, the parties are precluded from making those proposals in public.

**14. *What sacrifices will be made by administration - including the administrators at Central Office? Would those administrators/office personnel also be willing to take pay cuts?***

Concessions will need to be made by everyone in the District, and traditionally all groups have contributed to the success of the District. As decisions are made with regard to the current reductions, again all individuals will be making similar contributions to the budget shortfall although different groups may approach it differently, in terms of compensation, benefits, and work days.

**15. *When will teachers/staff know about the positions that will be eliminated? Request for leaves/voluntary transfers need to be in by March 1, 2010 - will they know by then?***

The Board of Education is scheduled to be making decisions regarding budget reductions in early March. As such, staff will not know this outcome until after that time.

**16. *When will staff learn what positions are going to be PESG - subbed out?***

Any decisions that would result in the movement to staff to an outside resource would be made after final budget decisions are made and collective bargaining have occurred.

**17. *If the District reconfigures to K-4, 5-6 schools, etc..., will staff have the option for their teams (four teachers) to move to the same school?***

Under the current staffing process, such group relocation would not likely occur. However, once decisions are made regarding reductions and school/building closures, District administration and the Association leadership will be working together to review the current procedures and explore changes that may be warranted in light of the decisions.

**18. *What plans does the District have to reduce and save money at an administrative level?***

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**19. *Will there be staff layoffs this June?***

In light of anticipated reductions, it is almost certain that layoffs will occur at every level and in every Association in the District. The timing for layoff notifications will occur between late April and early June.

**20. *What percentage of reductions will occur in each sector - i.e.: what percentage of teachers will be laid off, what percentage of administrative staff, what percentage of custodial staff, etc..?***

Until the final budget plan is endorsed by the Board of Education, it is impossible to identify the level of reductions in the various areas of District employees.

**21. *What is the process and factors used in deciding which staff members will be cut for non-unit staff?***

While years of service (seniority) to the District is an important factor the final decision also takes into account the qualifications of the individual and the specific needs of the District.

**22. *Could teachers who are about to retire continue part-time without affecting their retirement monies?***

After a teacher retires, he/she is allowed a limited amount of income without jeopardizing their retirement income. Anyone with questions about the retirement system, should contact the MPSERS office directly. They can be contacted by phone at 517. 322. 6000.

**23. *Is providing breakfast federally required? Could that be cut?***

We currently have breakfast in the three high schools and four elementary schools. Breakfast is required by the federal government if the number of free and reduced students exceeds 20 percent of the school's enrollment. Breakfast is not required in the high schools, but is required in four of our elementary schools. The high school breakfast program is self-supporting with many students purchasing juice, milk, bagels and other breakfast type items.

**24. *Has the District explored consolidation with Clarenceville Public Schools?***

A meeting was held with Clarenceville to discuss the potential for sharing services only.

**25. *Can the lunch room be open for parents to come for lunch?***

Many parents periodically eat lunch at our schools, especially in the elementary schools. If interested, contact your school's principal to see when parents may participate. The cost of the adult lunch is \$3.25 and \$3.75 for elementary and secondary schools, respectively.

**26. *Could we purchase smaller buses to reduce fuel costs?***

Purchasing smaller buses would result in more buses and bus drivers being needed. This option would be significantly more costly to the District.

**27. *Other districts in the state have cut busing, can we? Can we charge for high school transportation?***

Yes, busing can be eliminated, except for special education students whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) requires it. However, if this were to occur, parents will have a much more difficult time picking-up and dropping-off students because of significantly increased congestion on roads around the school site and on the school site. District sites were not designed to accommodate this increased traffic.

State law does not allow the District to charge for busing to and from classes.

**28. *Is it true that the Superintendent has a vehicle in her compensation package?***

The superintendent is provided an allowance to apply to a car lease in lieu of being reimbursed for work related mileage. Although it could be negotiated out of her employment agreement, the District has calculated that the mileage reimbursement would offset any savings taking into account the IRS rate coupled with the clerical time spent on the accounting for such reimbursements.

**29. *What is the professional to student ratio?***

On a raw basis, the District has an enrollment of approximately 12,000 students and employs 880 active teachers.

This equates to a 13.6:1 student-to-teacher ratio.

**30. *If it is decided to reduce hall monitors & parking lot security personnel, how will they be notified?***

Any staff being reduced through the budget process will be notified both in person, as well as in writing, once the reduction is finalized.

**31. *Teachers are asking about four-day work weeks? Any thoughts on that happening?***

A four-day work week would mean a reduced number of instructional days. State law precludes the District from reducing the number of instructional days.

**32. *Are there going to be buy-outs offered?***

Any decision to offer severance incentives would be made by the Board of Education. At this time, the issue has not been addressed, but could be as part of the ongoing budget decision process.

**33. *How will cross level bumping work?***

Staffing, as well as any bumping of staff between individuals, is conducted pursuant to the process outlined in each collective bargaining agreement.

**34. *Will there be additional layoffs the following school year, 2011-2012?***

There is no way of predicting what, if any, steps will be necessary to provide a balanced budget beyond the 2010-2011 school year.

**35. *Is there compensation for eliminated jobs?***

Unemployment is the compensation for eliminated jobs.

**36. *Has the District considered furlough days like they did in Livonia?***

Furlough days have been considered and have not been entirely ruled out, however the District must, by law, provide 1,098 hours of instruction and cannot reduce the number of instructional days.

**37. *What is the prediction of 2011-2012 revenues? Are they stabilizing? Any indication of this lack of funding ending?***

At the present time, our budget forecast reflects a flat foundation allowance for 2011-2012. We are however anticipating an additional loss in student population of 127 pupils. This forecast does not take into account the potential shortfall for the use of the balance of the State's federal stabilization dollars. Nor does it take into account the economic decline in the housing values and their impact on the State's budget. The farther out we go, the more difficult it becomes to estimate our revenue amounts and sources.

**38. *What happens if the anticipated reductions don't have the anticipated effect?***

Further reductions will then be necessary to balance the budget.

**39. *Per the BUDGET PROCESS Memo dated 12.14.09, the "team" does not consist of any members from clerical, transportation, maintenance or custodial. Why only administrators?***

As we live into our proactive process, the intent is to gain input from all stakeholders. We have updated the Budget Committee to include representatives from each of the respective bargaining groups. As we have processed this year's ideas, we have asked administrators to obtain suggestions from their staffs. When the process started back in September, we were not anticipating this high of a level of reductions due to the current sharp economic downturn. Had that not occurred, stakeholder input would have been received earlier, but time has not been on our side.

**40. *Why continue to dig a hole and use the fund balance when cost saving initiatives can be put in place now?***

Several initiatives have been put into place. We are monitoring all non classroom staffing positions as they become vacant, as well as purchases for non school building materials and texts have been delayed awaiting the results of the budget reduction plan.

**41. *When will we know what the budget will look like for next year?***

The budget is a constantly moving target. As more facts become known, we will be revising our estimates. The Board will be presented with a reduction plan on February 24, 2010. Should circumstances change and the results are better than anticipated, items on the reduction list could be added back, unfortunately we have to also look at the budget implications of future years as well and at this time we are not anticipating an increase in funding.

**42. *What will the difference be in budget cuts if we get half of the 20j funds versus none?***

The funding for 20j is \$2.2 million, therefore half of this would equate to \$1.1 million.

**43. *Could the community be provided with a list of the dollar impact that certain cuts make?***

The estimates provided at the forum are the best pieces of information at this time. These handouts can also be found on the District's web site at [www.farmington.k12.mi.us](http://www.farmington.k12.mi.us)

**44. *Should any cuts be made at all, when the true issue is the funding from the State of Michigan?***

We need to continue to operate as a public school district regardless of the funding. Our expenditures exceed our revenue sources therefore it requires reductions to continue to operate. All public school districts are required by law to have a balanced budget and potential criminal penalties can be imposed upon the Board and administration for acting otherwise.

**45. *What steps are other districts taking to counter the budget cuts?***

Many districts are taking the same actions as Farmington Public Schools. One only needs to pick up the newspapers and read articles on Dearborn or Livonia or Walled Lake to see that they have made mid year cuts this year and are also looking at further reductions.

**46. *How vigorously have other reductions, besides teacher layoffs, has the District pursued?***

The District has reduced approximately \$33 million since 2002 and staff across all areas have been impacted.

**47. *Will staff be given an opportunity to view a possible list of reductions and be able to say whether or not they agree with the cut, if it involves programming?***

The decisions on the reduction list will have been thoroughly discussed taking into consideration staff input that has been received. No one wants to make any of these reductions, but they will be necessary to balance the budget as required by law.

**48. *What input do teachers and parents have as to what is on the list of cuts?***

Input from all stakeholders is being accumulated and will be used to assist in the decision making process. All input will be shared with the Board of Education.

**49. *How will the budget reductions be prioritized?***

The budget has been divided between its instructional and non instructional components and sub committees of the budget committee are establishing priorities for the listing of reductions as presented at the Public Budget Forums.

**50. *What "values" or protocol will be used to guide decision making?***

We are currently in the process of program evaluation which is a time consuming process. The instructional leaders are working on a process that is helping them in this assessment. They will be using process tool knowledge that they have gained through attending Langford training.

**51. *When the budget reduction plan is presented to the School Board, what methods are they going to use to make an educated decision?***

The Board will rely upon administrative recommendations and all of the input they have received throughout this process.

**52. *How was the list of possible budget reductions created?***

The original list was developed by the instructional and non instructional administrative sub committees of the budget committee based upon input from staff and administrators and knowledge of past reduction levels. In the instructional area, students in the classroom were used as baseline data and various levels of interventions were reviewed.

**53. *Are teachers, parents, and administrators on the committee that will propose which cuts should be made?***

Administrators will use suggestions and input from staff and parents as part of the final reduction listing that the Board of Education will act on.

**54. *Since this survey is open ended, how will the data be made quantitative so that the board and the final decision makers can truly make sense of the data?***

We are in the process of putting together these recommendations. We will be analyzing the suggestions and categorizing them.

**55. *Are the impacts of cuts on students, personnel, and families being considered and steps being taken to limit that wherever choices allow for that?***

The District has always looked at reductions in ways to lessen the impact on students and student achievement, unfortunately, the level of reductions needed to balance the budget will now be felt by all stakeholders.

**56. *Has the District evaluated alternate, non-traditional sources of revenue?***

Focus seems to be only on reductions. There are very few ways a district can collect additional revenue. A good source of the ways are clearly documented in the Powerpoint created by Washtenaw Intermediate School District which is posted on the District's web site, see: [www.wash.k12.mi.us/movies/misfc3/](http://www.wash.k12.mi.us/movies/misfc3/)

**57. *Can the Board produce an accounting for all current programs and the level of funding/expenditures for the 2008-2009 school year?***

The District's Comprehensive Financial Reports are available on-line on the home page of the District's web site, [www.farmington.k12.mi.us](http://www.farmington.k12.mi.us). Click on the Budget Information link and it will take you to the page where the last five years of Financial Reports, as well as the last five years of Budgets are available. The Budget provides a functional look at how the District spends its funds based upon the State required accounting manual. It also is a document that describes the way that school districts in Michigan receive their funding.

**58. *In addition to the layoffs, are teachers in Farmington getting pay cuts or having their benefits changed/reduced?***

This is the subject of collective bargaining. The current contracts with teachers expires at the end of the school year. The collective bargaining process is now underway.