



## BOARD QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Page 10. 5340 Professional Services: There is an expected decrease in the number of substitute special education teachers and paraprofessionals. Why just this department specifically and not overall? Is this due to the current trend of ESS not being able to staff our vacancies due to absence with substitutes?

**ANSWER:** This Account went DOWN \$14,526 or .71%. Special Education decreased Subs by \$45,000 and utilized this money in other parts of Special Education Budget to keep Special Education budget Flat for 24-25 Year. Special Education also reduced Hospitalized Tutor Services by \$4,000 based on history and I reduced Technical Services by \$2,500 because we have had \$0.00 spent in the past 4 years.

2. Page 12. 5560 Tuition: The current budget projection for 2024-2025 reflects 80 outplaced students, but we currently have 78 outplaced students. Why the 4.07% decrease?

**ANSWER:** The reason for the decrease is because of the change in the State legislation affecting Magnet & Vo-Ag Schools billing out 58% of the previous year.

3. Page 13. 5600 Supplies: 76K increase for supplies, is this itemized on what supplies are no longer covered by COVID grants?

**ANSWER:** No, the increase is due to approximately 89k for supplies associated with our new Reading Program which we will see each year moving forward as well as for our Yondr pouches. I would like to emphasize the rigorous review of all the items in the “Supplies” account line in every

department conducted this year and significantly decreased (without detriment to our students) to try to offset the new Reading Program and Yondr Pouch increases.

4. Also, 60K for Yondr pouches is no longer covered by COVID grants. Is this just for the service and pouches or for the stipends for those supervising Yondr and the welcoming areas in the morning as students get off the buses before the start of the school day?

**ANSWER:** This is just for the pouches.

5. Page 16: Please explain these increases and decreases. They are being pointed out due to their amounts most specifically, unless otherwise stated.

**ANSWER:** This is just another summary level of looking our Budget.

6. 5111.31 - Social Worker - why the 27.63% increase of \$200,615.00 - are we adding social workers?

**ANSWER:** No, we are not. These are both Grant and General Fund budgeted.

7. 5111.50 - Stipends - why the decrease of \$1,294.00 (are there stipends that are not being offered). Aren't they contractually dictated?

**ANSWER:** No, there are no stipends not being offered. There are years/circumstances where there may not be enough participants and certain Athletic Stipends may be changed or suspended altogether for that year. Stipends are negotiated by the TEA and as such are reflected here.

8. 5112.27 - Behavioral Therapy why a 369.48% increase of \$140,882.00

**ANSWER:** These are both Grant and General Fund budgeted.

9. 5120.00 Substitutes 107.33% increase of \$142,528.00

**ANSWER:** If you recall, we have mentioned this during our Budget committee meetings. This is to better budget our Long-Term Subs. We have seen an increase in the FMLA program these past few years and now that we have some data points we will more accurately budget each school accordingly.

10. 5130.30 OT Wages 18.31% increase \$18,851.00. Occupational Therapy wages or Over Time wages?

**ANSWER:** Over Time Wages

11. 5210.01 HSA Deductible 27.63% increase of \$158,024.00 - don't believe the districts contribution to the deductibles has changed, is these due to # of personnel on our plans?

**ANSWER:** Yes, it is the only plan that is offered now.

12. 5250.00 Tuition Reimbursement why the decrease of \$2,500. The new TEA contract summary states "Article 35, Page 26, Tuition Reimbursement **Increased** total allocation from minimum of the 50% of BA Step 1 salary, to a flat \$30000 annually; increased teacher reimbursement rate from \$500 per course to \$600 per course." If last year's budgeted amount was \$32,500 and we are going to \$30,000 isn't that a decrease in total. The increase mentioned for individual reimbursement makes sense, but not the total allocation.

**ANSWER:** Yes, it is. Historically we have not spent nearly that amount which is a shame as we believe continuing education should be a lifelong endeavor.

13. 5340.00 Other Professional Services 17.18% increase of \$81,810.00. What does this include?

**ANSWER:** I think you are asking what makes up the increase. Special Education moved Sub money to here, I increased the Central Office because we have been over budget for 4 years running. Also, some marginal increases i.e. Police at our Athletic events.

14. 5341 series for Substitute Services - what are we still using, not using there are two-line items that are 100% decreased for a total of \$95,000.

**ANSWER:** Please see above explanation for Special Education.

15. Pg. 17: Please explain these increases and decreases. They are being pointed out due to their amounts most specifically, unless otherwise stated.

**ANSWER:** This is just another summary level of looking our Budget.

16. 5440.03 Other Rental Services is a 100% decrease for \$2,500. What were we renting?

**ANSWER:** We aren't. That is why it is \$0.00.

17. 5530.05 Licensing - Warranty Contract 66.93% increase of \$220,838.00 - what warranty or warranties does this include?

**ANSWER:** There is a new "Carrier" savings off setting a portion of the increase. The majority of the Budget is for Licensing. Please realize that all of the individual school licensing is now placed under one account in order for us to see some savings. Some of this cost may be offset by a grant. This

is dependent upon grant allocations which will not be made known until October.

18. 5560.15 Tuition Vo-Ag SPED 37.50% increase in the amount of \$75,000 but Voag Tuition (I am assuming this is general ed students) has a decrease of 40.85% for \$345,484.00

**ANSWER:** Please see Section I, page 12 comment.

19. 5610.01 Instructional Supplies an increase of 36.51% for \$99,249.00 - what does this include?

**ANSWER:** Please see Section I, page 13 comment - Reading Program and THS Spanish Textbooks make up the majority.

20. 5610.05 Non-Instructional Supplies an increase of 55.65% for \$79,832.00 - what does this include?

**ANSWER:** Please see Section I, page 13 comment - Yondr Pouches make up the majority.

21. 5640 Series (Textbooks, Library Books and Subscriptions) total decrease of \$21,604.21 or 87.12%. Is this for textbook replacement, decrease in new library books being ordered and what subscriptions are we stopping? Are these needs moving to online? Specific Textbooks and Subscriptions detail will have to come at a later date.

**ANSWER:** Please realize that all of the individual school licensing and subscriptions are now placed under one account in order for us to see some savings.

22. 5650.00 Non Instructional tech supplies \$66,700 increase at 667%. What does this include?

**ANSWER:** Actually, Instructional Tech Supplies increased \$66,700 which is COVID Monies (Grants) running out. Mostly Chargers, headsets etc.

23. Page 20-23 - Stipends. Not necessarily a budgetary issue, but more a contractual issue. There is a difference between stipends for student government between THS and TMS. Why such a difference? Why is the Classbook (yearbook) stipend so low based on the amount of work it requires to complete? Drama stipend disparities between THS and TMS?

**ANSWER:** Stipends are negotiated by the TEA and as such are reflected here.

24. Page 23 - The decrease in the Facilities Director for being on call 24 hours is missing from the new budget book? Can this be explained is this not part of the new director's contract?

**ANSWER:** You are correct, the 24 hour on call stipend has been removed from the contract.

25. The following Yellow and Blue Total lines between pages 23 and 67 do not match with what is listed above them. Are these mistakes or purposeful?

**ANSWER:** The yellow is GB and Blue is Grants. They add up in our totals for each at the end total. This was one of those areas that we explained in the corrected copy of the budget book and happened as a result of the New World past budget transfer. Please realize that all of these changes whether plus or minus do not alter our overall requested increase. These edits were necessary in order to clean-up the entire document. Some of these positions were transferred in from New World from past budgets and had not been updated to reflect our current status. These are now updated to reflect all of our current positions.

26. Page 45 - Longevity line for custodians missing the FTE total. How many are receiving this for a budgetary total of \$1,500. An increase from \$300 from 22-23? Based on the total line under it appears there are 2 people and each would get \$750.00.

**ANSWER:** FTE totals are not appropriate here as it is a longevity stipend. But, you are correct; it should be one person at \$150.00 I must have added a zero by mistake.

27. page 53 - 8 1st grade teachers budgeted, projections on page 74 shows only 7 sections. —

**ANSWER:** It should say 8 sections to parallel the same number of sections currently in grade K.

28. page 55 - Longevity line for custodians has not FTE total. There was zero budgeted last year and the total line under is also missing the FTE total.

**ANSWER:** We are not placing an FTE here as the longevity payment is a stipend.

29. pg. 63 - Unified Sports Coordinator - missing the FTE total and if that is in conjunction with the Data Secretary above it then the Clerical total Account Number 5100.10 50 5112.30 FTE total is wrong.

**ANSWER:** There is no FTE here, the Unified Sports Coordinator receives a stipend for their work and is just coded here.

30. We have been provided with a GB comparison of \$\$ from 23/24 to 24/25 but It would also be great to see a 23/24 vs 24/25 grant funding comparison. Do we have a list of positions that have moved in/out of Grant funding sources (from one year to the next)?

**ANSWER:**

2023-24 School Year		Budget
Alliance	68	\$4,851,684.00
2 %	7	\$467,659.00
IDEA 611 & 619	22	\$1,096,398.00
Title I	13	\$1,022,987.51
Title III	1	\$37,632.00
ARP III	14	\$1,022,708.86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>\$8,499,069.37</b>

31. We had to put approx. \$1.1 million into a nonrenewable Esser grant when the city failed to adequately fund us. I do not see any mention of how we are making up for these funds. I am 99% certain It was an Esser 1 or Esser 2 grant. I can't find the document from our final budget to confirm the name. I would venture a guess that we are banking on getting some/all of the \$2.9 million dollar boost from ECS that was adopted last year. Obviously, it must be approved again in state budget season but these ECS dollars (proposed \$8.9 mil as Alliance) have lots of strings.

**ANSWER:** It was actually ARP III that we had the boost from. You are also correct that we are, like many districts, hopeful that the Alliance grant will assist us in avoiding the fiscal cliff left by losing ARP III. Please realize that we shared our anticipated grant amounts, however these are all contingent upon the state through our application process. We are beyond fortunate to have a wonderful grant writer on staff to assist with this.

32. Transportation Increase - Can we get an explanation to the 500k aspect of this? Can we not bus Pre-K with Kindergarten ? It these were "required private transport" this increase isn't really related to the extra year before kindergarten as they would have needed this accommodate as kindergartners too. The Salary's line items 5111.15 & 5112.01 show a net decrease in Pre-K staffing. Budgeted SPED Tuition (5563) remained flat at \$5.7 Million and Vo-ag/Magnet Tuition (5560/5561) is down a significant \$400k. Just want to understand the underlying cause of a flat and decreasing tuition budget and how those correlates to an increase in transportation expenses when this year's transportation line item (5510) is actually tracking on budget. I understand the contractual 5% increase from the bus contract but would appreciate some clarification on the remainder of this significant increase.

**ANSWER:** Out of district transportation is already over budget for this year, so we are increasing the budget to cover at least that overage plus contract increases and added runs anticipated. Trying to plan so that we aren't over next year. PreK transportation will also increase, due to increase in PreK students (because of the change in law). So, expecting to have to add at least another PreK bus to hold them all. Adding PreK kids on the bus with K students wouldn't be feasible because it's not just K students on the bus. Combining PreK students onto elementary runs would mean they would be on with K through grade 5 students (bus routes are designed in a way that most buses drop at both sister schools, so it is not just K - 3 or 4 - 5 on a bus; it is K - 5 and the bus drops at one school, then the other). The flat private sped tuition aligns with what we expect for students outplaced at private placements next year. Some students are graduating/aging out, which will cause a decrease. But there are new outplacements pending that will need the funding. So, it is expected to somewhat even out. Transportation costs are not

directly correlated to tuition costs. You could have five students at a single outplacement and all sharing a run or you could have five students at five different outplacements that all have their own run. The first and second scenario would be the same tuition cost, but the second scenario would be a much larger transportation cost.

33. Communications (5530) and Licensing and Warranties (5530.05) experienced large swings. What is the cause of the communications savings?

**ANSWER:** Before our former IT Director left the District, we were moved to a new Carrier with a \$37,500 savings.

34. We added a Crown Castle Fiber circuit at TMS and switched to SIP trunking for the phones which likely results in some communications savings but I'm curious the cause of the overall savings. The increase in 5530.05 returns this account to just above is FY23 level of 530k. What are we spending the extra 200k on?

**ANSWER:** This is due to Expiring Grants - Please realize that all of the individual school licensing is now placed under one account in order for us to see some savings. Some of this cost may be offset by a grant. This is dependent upon grant allocations which will not be made known until October.

35. Since we are self-insuring the district student and staff devices moving forward it, must be a large licensing expense that I don't remember coming through the board. (I'm getting older, but my memory is pretty good LOL).

**ANSWER:** Please realize that all of the individual school licensing is now placed under one account in order for us to see some savings. Some of this cost may be offset by a grant. This is dependent upon grant allocations which will not be made known until October.

Supplies Budgets are up significantly. Noticeably the tech increase in 5650/5650.01 is another \$100k in the tech budget on top of the \$200k increase in Licensing/Warranties.

**ANSWER:** No, the increase is due to approximately 89k for supplies associated with the new Reading Program which we will see each year moving forward and also for Yondr pouches. I would like to emphasize the rigorous review of all the items in the "Supplies" account line in every

department conducted this year and significantly decreased (without detriment to our students) to try to offset the new Reading Program and Yondr Pouch increases.

36. Many of the admittedly smaller accounts are up as well. I see the 89k for Reading materials **This is to Support new Reading Program - See Previous Question on that account** but the Non-Instructional Athletics, "Misc" Instructional supplies for 20k, and the 8k for Math seem out of the ordinary compared to the rest of account details. **The 8k for Athletics Replacement of higher expense items in Football. Practice blocking bags and shields. Golf equipment increased because we are seeing higher participation levels.** Comparing against FY23 I see that FY23 is significantly under budget for Instructional supplies -Do we have something not yet ordered in 23/24? Any clarification would be appreciated. **My apologies, but I am not seeing this "misc" 20k increase in Athletics.**

37. Is the 100k in 5430.03 the Moving expense you referred to in the budget summary?

**ANSWER: Yes.**

38. 50% Increase in 5340 "Other Professional Services" allocated to Admin Budget - Cause?

**ANSWER: Please see previous explanation. But we have been over budget the past 4 years, so we increased the budget.**

39. 5130.80 - OT Custodial . We haven't spent less than 100k in years on this line item. I haven't seen how much we have collected in Rental Fees which help offset this fee but without that data I would advocate for this number to be significantly raised. We are already on track to obliterate the 85k budgeted from last year and I strongly suggested the prior superintendent and her team increase this number last year to well over 100k. If you look back over the last couple years you will likely agree.

**ANSWER: Thank you for reminder and comments. We would agree, and if it is the Board's pleasure, we will gladly increase this line item to over \$100,000.**

40. The RBT's referenced in the correction email appear @ THS as Qty 3 in the original budget but 4 in the "new" budget. I understand they are Alliance funded which is why it didn't affect GB % increase but are there 3 and we are adding one to be 4 or are there 4 currently?

**ANSWER: You are correct that these positions are grant funded. This was one of those areas that we explained in the corrected copy of the budget book and happened as a result of the New World past budget transfer. Please realize that these edits were necessary in order to clean-up the entire**

document. Some of these positions were transferred in from New World from past budgets and had not been updated to reflect our current status. These are now updated to reflect all of our current positions.

41. Looking at the Enrollment trend (Found on Slide 75) I'm reading this as the assumption is that 100% of currently enrolled 8th graders will continue on to the High School. I don't believe we've ever seen that happen as Wamogo , Region 7, OWTS etc will certainly cause this number to be lower. Does the 24/25 budget presentation for Grade 9 staffing utilize the 100% assumption?

**ANSWER:** We will always budget based upon us having all of our students continue. However, even if we were to lose some students to Wamogo, Region 7, OWTS etc; our High School teachers would not be decreased as they are by department and as such, teach multiple levels. In the catastrophic event, that we were to lose over 300 students, then we would consider eliminating a teacher from each discipline. However, I would argue that having a full staff would also allow us to offer more electives and less study halls.