

Superintendent's Report Hampton Board of education January 26, 2022

Budget Preparation 2022-2023

Over the past (3) three weeks I've been working in collaboration with Ms. Lehoux on the 2022-2023 preliminary budget. This first draft is based on figures, in light of the current status of several different components that make up the budget.

COVID

The COVID complications associated with the 2022-2023 budget stem from the lack of any clarity regarding conditions we may be facing in the coming school year. We currently have in place a number of protocols that have increased our budget costs considerably over the past (2) two years. I would remind you that we follow all CDC guidelines. In addition we must follow the Governor's emergency orders as well as all of the directives from the CSDE.

There are, of course, hidden costs associated with COVID protocols. One area I was not fully cognizant of until recently, is the large increase in our health insurance costs. Obviously with high numbers of people ending up in our Nation's hospital ER's and ICU's, these costs get passed along to the consumer, or at least to those of us who actually pay for health insurance. The insurance carriers have aggregated all of these unplanned costs into our renewal package for the 2022-2023 academic year. In past years our health insurance costs have averaged an increase of under 5% each year. Due in part to the "unseen" COVID costs, projections are that the increase would run between 15% and 20%.

Heating OIL

In the past, we have purchased heating oil at bulk rates. The system worked like this: we would purchase our #2 heating oil (12,000 gallons) at a fixed price. This price was determined at the time of signing of the contract. The oil was then delivered months later, when we needed it. Unfortunately, in today's world we have lost the ability to purchase oil in bulk.

Adding to the uncertainty of these oil costs, is the protocol which calls for us to run our indoor air filtration, HVAC, system 24/7 for 365 days. This increased our oil consumption by roughly 25% last year. I would remind you we had a relatively mild winter in 2020-2021. This winter we have had several "zero" degree days since returning from our holiday break. Hence the purchase of oil on a price averaging basis. The price is now calculated from the "Rack price" plus \$.23/gallon. EastConn is currently attempting to find a bidder for oil as a "bulk purchase". A discussion among superintendent's regarding this issue is up for consideration in the near future.

Cost of Living Increase

We have, as a nation, experienced a cost of living increase in 2021 of 5.9%. I have, therefore, chosen to make a salary increase of 3.5%, for those members of the HES community who are not covered under contract to receive any increase in their salary, as compensation.

Possible Savings

Considering all these pricing/costs increases, I have tried to control our budget costs by reducing lines that I can control, mainly supplies and repairs. A possible reduction in staffing may also be possible with a change in our student needs.

First Draft of Budget

The first draft of our 2022-2023 budget will be forwarded to all the members of the BoE under a separate cover from your board packet. This will allow me to present as accurate a first draft as I can, based on the most current information I can get before the meeting on the 26th of this month.

Request for: Formation of a Staff Sick Bank

You may be aware that the Federal government stopped paying for any COVID related absences from work at the end of 2021. What could not have been foreseen was that this would coincided with an increase in infections due to the Delta and Omicron variants. Thankfully every staff member in the HES community is fully vaccinated.

The CDPH has given us (2) two shipments of rapid test kits, totaling 200 kits. We have also received (3) three boxes of KN-95 facial masks that we are distributing. With access to rapid testing we are better able to protect the HES community. However, the result is that more people have discovered that they are COVID positive, yet they show no, or only mild symptoms. By the COVID protocols they must stay isolated for (5) five days from the date of the positive test.

A consequence of this clarity of infected persons, and our adherence to protocols, is that the newer staff members have used all their sick days. The veteran certified staff members may have been able to accrue up to 180 days, and many have reached that number. It would therefore, stand to reason that the neophyte's on staff have the fewest number of accrued sick days.

I am asking the Hampton Board of Education to authorize a sick bank for people who use up their sick days, based on the COVID protocols. The sick days would be offered by the HES community for the benefit of members who are facing a shortage of sick days available to them. Since this is a medical issue, I have asked Beverly if she would help administer the Sick Bank.

Request for: Direction on the Juneteenth Holiday

Last year the US Congress passed, and President Biden signed a bill, that created a new federal holiday, Juneteenth. This is the day which commemorates President Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the African-Americans from slavery in the United States. My request is for your review and possible approval to include this holiday in our list of paid holidays, as well as non-work day/non-school day (if we should ever have school that late in June).