

CROSBY-IRONTON SCHOOLS  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY  
November 14, 2021

Item 7.2a

The finance committee met in the District Office Conference Room on November 3, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. with the following present: Barb Neprud, Tom Nixon and Kim Coughlin. Jamie Skjveland and Bill Tollefson were also present.

Enrollment – The committee received the third enrollment report of the 2021-2022 school year. Enrollment had dropped between the first and second reports by 22 students – 3 at CRES and 19 at the high school. There was a drop of 7 students between the second and third reports – up 1 at CRES and down 8 at the high school. Enrollment at both buildings continues to be above the enrollment projection, up 28 students and 30 pupil unit. The average enrollment still remains artificially high because of the reported enrollment on the first week of school. The average will become more useable as additional monthly enrollment counts are added to the report.

2022-2023 Budget Planning – The committee received information on the results of the first Fall MARSS reporting of the 2021-2022 school year, focusing on how that relates to the Compensatory/Basic Skills revenue. Based on October 1, 2020 counts, the 2021-2022 Compensatory Revenue is \$369,299. Based on the first Fall MARSS report for October 1, 2021, the 2022-2023 Compensatory Revenue will decrease to \$148,973. The first report is always off, but there is concern given the extension of free school meals for all students into the 2021-2022 school year that parents will not feel any urgency regarding completing the application again this year. Food service continues to engage parents in communications to encourage completion of the form, stressing the importance of completing the form in order to increase Compensatory/Basic Skills revenue, the Title I allocation, e-Rate, and other revenue streams that are dependent upon this data.

Personnel Items – The committee reviewed several personnel items.

Alternative Career Pathway (ACP) Program -The Alternative Career Pathway (ACP) program through Sourcewell was revisited. Initial information created some skepticism about the rigor of the program and the concept of using ACP coursework as credits for lane changes on the teacher salary schedule was dismissed in the teacher negotiation process. With a number of ACP projects now approved, the rigor of the program has become more apparent. Project proposals have been robust and full of rigor. There is a multiple step approval process that includes the ACP committee, the building principals, and finally the ACP program staff at Sourcewell. Based on this, the administrative recommendation is to look to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Education Minnesota – CI to allow ACP coursework to count toward either lane change credit or one-time stipend. The committee was in agreement and, if the MOU can be finalized before the November Board meeting, it will be included on the agenda as an action item for approval.

Health Insurance Bid – The committee was updated on the status of the health insurance bid. One group of bids was received for just the AFSCME and the administrative staff, which is the group that had remained covered through the Sourcewell health insurance pool following the teacher bargaining unit decision to move to PEIP; while a second bid was received for the whole of the school staff. The teacher bargaining unit rejected any interest in pursuing more information about the health insurance bid, indicating their preference to stay with PEIP. The AFSCME and administrative staff have reviewed the proposals and have agreed to move health insurance coverage from the Sourcewell pool to stand alone coverage through Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Minnesota. Rates will be reduced between 15 % and 25%, depending on the plan coverage.

Administrative Staffing – The committee reviewed a situation relative to administrative staffing and agreed to let the current school year play out and to review progress and receive an update on the situation on July 1, 2022 and determine a plan of action from that date.

New Hire Status – There was an update provided regarding initial impressions of the new members of the teaching staff. Overall, they appear to be adapting and performing favorably. There are 5.5 unfilled paraprofessional positions that remain vacant due to lack of applicants.

Staff Satisfaction and Retention – The committee was updated on a recent meeting with select staff regarding strategies relating to Strive to Survive. The focus was on how staff were coping with continuing issues associated with the COVID pandemic, including staff shortages, staff satisfaction and staff retention strategies. The sharing and brainstorming meeting resulted in a number of ideas generated that may be explored as the school year continues to unfold.

Miscellaneous Items – The committee received updates on a number of miscellaneous items.

Concession Operations at Inside High School Concessions Booth – The committee was updated on communication from Food Service Director, Scott Skinner, that he would like to transition away from being the primary staffing person for the concession booth in the high school. He has provided notice that he would work with the district to brainstorm options and train new people who might be interested in performing these tasks, especially relating to staffing the booth during all of the fall and winter sporting events. More information will be presented as a plan becomes more clear.

Update on Department of Employment and Economic Development Daycare Grant - The planned deadline for review and notification of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) daycare grants, which were submitted at the end of September, 2021, was the end of October, 2021. At this time, in spite of inquiries to DEED, there is no additional information regarding the status of the School District's application.

Dissolution of Education Innovation Partners Cooperative – Several years ago, the IRRRB committed funding to assist Iron Range schools meet technology needs and objectives. To facilitate this effort, the Education Innovation Partners (EIP) Cooperative was formed. Over the years, there have been peaks and valleys to the activities and projects funded by EIP. Based on several years of minimal funding and projects, school districts on the Iron Range are now being asked to pass a resolution to dissolve the EIP Cooperative. This resolution will be considered as an action item at the regular November Board meeting and is recommended for approval.

Agency Fund Continuation – The committee reviewed agency funding arrangements that the School District maintains. Several years ago, the State Auditor's Office took the position that these arrangements should be discontinued. At that time, the education foundation (now known as CLEF) was notified and they moved their fiscal operation to the Initiative Foundation. The only remaining agency group now is Unlimited Learning. Based on changes happening within the organization, it was recommended that Unlimited Learning be notified that the School District will no longer conduct their financial transactions, with the goal of having completed a transition by June 30, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by William Tollefson