

**TO:** Board of Education  
**FROM:** Joel Filas, Chief School Business Official  
**DATE:** February 9, 2026  
**RE:** Business & Operations Report

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**FY27 Budget Update**

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As Dr. McGill noted in his previous communications to the Board, the final CPI-U for calendar year 2025 was calculated at 2.7%. Now that this number is known, the Business Office can make the following Budget Assumptions for FY27:

**Revenue:**

2025 Property Tax Levy

The District will tentatively budget for a 2.7% increase in local property tax revenue for the 2026-2027 school year. All economic indicators point to CPI maintaining this level over the next two years. This projection will increase our Local Property Tax Revenue from \$13,754,000 to \$14,210,000. Removing the Bond and Interest levy from the total, Operating Revenue will increase from \$12,654,000 in FY26 to \$12,995,000. However, if our new property value estimates hold, we can realize closer to a 3.4% increase. This would increase the total to \$13,122,000 for FY27. Official new property values remain unknown, so we are unable to lock in that projection.

Evidence-Based-Funding

The District's share of State Funding has increased by an average of \$595 (yes, just Five Hundred and Ninety Five Dollars) over the last four years. We project next year's EBF funding to increase from \$571,766 to \$572,366

**Expenditures:**

Contracted Custodial Services

The District is currently operating in Year Two of a 3-Year CPI-Based agreement. The FY 2027 contract will increase by 2.7% from \$505,958 to \$519,619. This will be the last year of the current agreement.

Transportation

The District is currently operating in Year Two of a 5-Year Regular Transportation Agreement. The FY27 contract will increase by 5% from \$431,678 to \$453,262.

Food Services

The District is currently in a year to year Food Services Agreement. The 2025-26 contract is projected to increase between 3-4% based on the CPI Food Away From Home reported in January. Since the District operates the program as the "middle-man," the District's increase will be based on the costs of personnel to distribute the food.

### Certified Salaries

The December CPI blended variables equate to a 2.7% base salary increase for certified staff. Teachers who receive a performance rating of “proficient” or above will receive an additional 1.5% increase. Most will see a 4.22% increase

### Medical and Dental

The Business Office received preliminary renewal rates from NIHIP. While these numbers will most likely go down after negotiations, we are currently budgeting for the following increases:

PPO: 8.7%

HMO: 15%

Dental: 3%

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## **Service Provider Survey**

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This month, the District issued a satisfaction survey to our students (Grades 4-8) and staff regarding their experiences with our service providers: First Student Transportation, GSF Cleaning Services and Sodexo Food Services. Parents will also have an opportunity to provide feedback after the next round of Strategic Planning Surveys is completed. Results of the survey will be shared at our next Committee Meetings and the Superintendent’s Weekly Memo to the Board.

As the FY27 Budget Review section shows, we will be nearing the end of all three of these contracts over the next few years. We will use the survey data when considering renewal or opening services for a public request for proposals.

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## **Safety Committee**

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### **2026 School Safety Summit**

Members of the Benjamin 25 Safety Committee attended the 2026 School Safety Summit on January 29th at the College of DuPage. The conference was sponsored by the DuPage ROE, and was attended by Allie Agress, April Tepe and me.

A significant portion of the summit was dedicated to "Working with the Media," presented by ABC 7’s John Garcia. This session used video and a work sessions to focus on how school safety leaders should communicate with the public and press during or after an emergency.

The afternoon session focused on students with specialized needs to ensure a comprehensive approach to safety. This work featured a specific session on "Emergency Communication for People with Disabilities" presented by Stefan Bjes. This 90-minute block consists of a 60-minute presentation and a 30-minute work session, emphasizing the importance of specialized communication strategies to ensure that emergency information is accessible to everyone.

### **Monthly Safety Spotlight**

The Safety Committee kicked off Benjamin 25 Monthly Safety Spotlight program. This initiative is designed to keep school safety at the forefront of our daily operations through continuous review, training, and practical discussion.

*How the Spotlight Works:* Each month, the Safety Committee will publish a Spotlight Newsletter focused on a theme tied to the season or national safety observances. You can access this month’s [Spotlight here](#).

*Following the newsletter:* Staff will receive specific discussion points and "Tabletop" exercises to discuss during team or grade-level meetings. These tabletop exercises are short, scenario-based discussions—such as responding to a missing student or a failed PA system—intended to help us identify procedural gaps in a low-stakes environment. If needed, Team Leaders will debrief with Administration to share insights and recommendations for any further action steps gained from your discussions.

The Safety Committee's goal is to move beyond simple compliance and foster a proactive safety culture in which every staff member feels empowered to act. By revisiting these "Foundations" regularly, we hope to ensure that protocols like AED locations, evacuation routes, and communication trees remain fresh in our minds.

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## Legislative Update

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I am excited to report that I was selected to LEND's Federal Relations Committee. The committee's focus will be to follow Federal legislation that affects our member districts and advocate on their behalf. I look forward to reporting back to you on our work.

The Illinois General Assembly has convened for the Spring 2026 session, initiating a legislative cycle that will heavily impact school funding, operations, and governance. To ensure our District's interests are represented, IASBO will provide weekly updates and "Calls to Action" regarding fast-moving bills. Board members and district leaders will be encouraged to engage with legislators by filing witness slips and sharing specific local impact stories—particularly regarding how underfunded mandates force budgetary trade-offs. With the bill-filing deadline on February 6 and nearly 8,000 bills already introduced for the 104th General Session, IASBO must remain vigilant through the anticipated legislative surge in April and May to advocate for adequate state support and local flexibility.

IASOB's primary focus for this session is the critical underfunding of mandated categorical payments (MCATs). While the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has recommended a \$151 million budget increase for these programs, this amount would only maintain current proration levels. ISBE estimates that a much larger \$558 million increase is actually required to return private facility reimbursements to 100% and transportation line items to the mid-80% range. The upcoming Governor's Budget Address on February 18 will provide further clarity on how these funding gaps may be addressed.

This infographic tells the story of how MCAT proration has impacted Benjamin 25 over the past years. I have also created a more detailed report on the effect of MCATS that can be accessed here: [MCAT White Paper](#)

Respectfully submitted,

*J. Filer*

