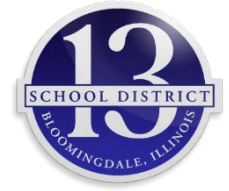


Bloomington School District 13

2025-26 Staffing Plan



RATIONALE

The Board of Education has been committed to increase the salaries of the staff over the years through the collective bargaining process and by directly addressing hourly minimum wage increases ahead of the schedule set forth by the State of Illinois. District 13 is heavily dependent upon local residential property taxes; which under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law of 1994 using the December Consumer's Price Index for all consumers, has limited the District's ability to access the full wealth of local properties over time. These factors working together led to a structural deficit in the Education Fund. The Board of Education requested that the Administration address the problem by finding ways to balance the budget based on incoming revenue with anticipated expenditures. With nearly 80% of the expenditures of the Education Fund directly related to the salary and benefits of the employees, the development of a staffing plan has been an annual practice to help in the development of the District Annual Budget.

DESIGN

To provide context for the conditions that created the original concern of the structural deficit in the Education Fund, annual financial report data from the Education Fund for the five years prior to the current FY 2025 Budget have been provided to show the trends in the following areas:

- Salaries
- Benefits
- Special Education Tuition

Other budget stressors will also be shared, like annual construction costs, bus transportation, and the adoption of curriculum resources. These costs occur primarily outside of the Education Fund and are supported by the Operations and Maintenance Fund, the Transportation Fund, the Capital Projects Fund and the Working Cash Fund. The latter funds have been in balance for some time and have contributed to the District not having to submit a deficit reduction plan to the Illinois State Board of Education under their interpretation of balancing a total district budget utilizing Operating Funds.

RETIREMENT INCENTIVE

The Board of Education successfully negotiated a retirement incentive with the teachers and paraprofessionals in their most recent contracts. The purpose of the incentive is to reward teachers and paraprofessionals for their years of service to the Bloomington community and

provide for fiscal flexibility as the District fills these positions with less experienced candidates. It is the belief of the Administration that the retirement incentive over the term of both contracts will lead to reduced costs that will aid in the correction of the structural deficit in the Education Fund. In 2024-2025, one teacher and two paraprofessionals have elected to retire and in 2025-2026, one other teacher will be retiring and will take advantage of the retirement benefit.

LEAVES AND JOB SHARES

Two of the three teachers who elected to take an unpaid leave of absence for a year (for maternity reasons) have indicated that it is their intent not to return for the 2025-2026 school year. As of the publication of this year's Staffing Plan, no teacher has asked for an unpaid leave of absence for the upcoming school year. The job share opportunity contained within the Teacher's Council contract was not used by any staff members this year nor has anyone inquired about its use for the 2025-2026 school year.

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Paraprofessionals have been a valuable asset for the District for years as they support instructional practices, build relationships with students, act as substitute teachers, and fulfill the required components in the individual educational plans (IEPs) of many special education children. The Board of Education welcomed the organization of the Bloomington Paraprofessional Council in the Fall of 2024 with a two-year agreement. The establishment of this relationship will lead to a greater understanding of the resources needed to provide this essential support service for students and staff.

INSTRUCTIONAL ROLES AND CHANGES

The District heard from the public on November 5, 2024 when a clear majority of residents voted against increasing taxes for the purpose of increasing staff for full day kindergarten. This was necessary to ask upon the passage of HB 2396 in 2023 that required public schools to offer full day kindergarten programming within 4 years of its passage. With that being said, the District will maintain current staffing levels in anticipation of the need to reclassify teaching staff in the Fall of 2027 to accommodate the additional sections of kindergarten. This will involve movement of teachers in all three buildings based on their licenses, but should not result in the loss of personnel.

Currently, the District is selling voter approved building bonds to implement full day kindergarten as well as to renovate Westfield Middle School. The conceptual plans project the projects to be complete prior to the implementation of the new kindergarten spaces in the Fall of 2027.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

One of the concerns of the Board of Education was the tuition being paid to NDSEC for services to students in low incidence programs throughout Northeastern DuPage County. The directive made at the time of the first staffing plan was to find a way to lower the tuition costs while reducing the structural deficit in the Education Fund. This was accomplished by

- Creating three structured classrooms to accommodate students from District 13 in grades K-5 and;
- Creating a self-contained early childhood classroom to accommodate students from District 13.

The District realized savings immediately in the reduction of tuition costs in the quarterly NDSEC bills as seen in the attached table. At the same time, the students are served in their home school environment, which is preferred by most parents of students with special needs. Please note, all staffing decisions for special education students are governed by their needs as identified in their IEPs.

There has been extraordinary interest in the blended preschool room at Erickson. This room serves students with disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers in a half day tuition based program that the District has coordinated with the Park District. This year, the number of students have created a waiting list, many of whom are residents in the District. For the 2025-2026 school year, the District will be opening a second blended preschool room at Erickson and will return the students in the self-contained program to NDSEC for services. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the District will operate the tuition based blended preschool without the partnership with the Park District.

Due to space limitations and the relatively few number of students in the self-contained program, this adjustment in programming made more sense, will serve more District 13 students, and will increase the special education tuition paid by the District to NDSEC for next year.

EXTRA DUTY

During the 2024-2025 school year, there were 110 extra duty activities and a total of 84 staff members involved in the fulfillment of District extra-curricular activities. Science Olympiad was initiated for the first time during this school year. Student interest in other clubs and activities are being investigated and could result in new additions to the extra duty offerings for student consideration in the 2025-2026 school year.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT GROWTH

The slow growth in student enrollment has temporarily stalled as student enrollment has been around 1,350 per year for the past couple of years. Currently, student enrollment stands at 1,336 students at all three schools. This figure has grown since 2012 when the enrollment was

approximately 1,235 students. The highest enrollment I could find for the District was back in 1999-2000 when 1544 students were in all three schools. The most recent projections of student enrollment data were shared at the January 27th Board of Education meeting and small fluctuations of growth and decline in numbers will continue in District 13.

The purpose of analysis of this data is to determine the available space for the students as well as keeping staffing at levels that maintain class sizes between 20 to 28 students based upon their age and ability to work and function independently.

SUMMARY

Bloomington School District 13 has made great strides in fairly compensating their employees for the past six years. In an effort to balance the FY 2025 Budget based on a split Consumers Price Index tax cap of 3.4% in 2023 and 2.9% in 2024, decreased funding from the State and Federal Governments, and the collection of local fees, action has been required now to address expenditures to achieve this goal. The staffing plan will help guide the development of the FY2026 Budget while not compromising the quality of service the professionals in District 13 deliver daily to the students and families in our community.