



SOUTHEAST ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 19569, 1010 Sandy Beach Road Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919
(907) 828-8254 Fax: (907) 828-8257 E-mail: sisd@sisd.org

Board Report

3/29/17

Grant Update

Visiting Playwright:

In April, the district is lucky enough to have Zack Desmond from the Island Institute of Sitka (<http://www.ialaska.org/>) come to SISD for a period of three weeks. Zack is part of the Story Lab program and is a playwright interested in rural school story labs. Zack creates a “vehicle for writers/artists/storytellers to create unique learning experiments that focus on developing critical thinking, creative empathy, and literacy and storytelling skills with students.” The purpose of the Story Lab project is to “empower students to think innovatively and express themselves with clarity, purpose and imagination.” Students will be involved in writing plays, improvisational acting, writing compelling dialogue, building a one-act play, and learning about dramatic recitation and stage movement. Isaac Martin met Zack in Sitka, and then Priscilla wrote a grant for the AK State Council on the Arts for \$1000 to make this possible. This is a rare opportunity!

Other grants from the AK Council on the Arts:

Both Laura Anania and Chad Dillman wrote grants for an ‘arts excursion,’ where they will be traveling together to Ketchikan to visit the Saxman totem park, the Southeast AK Discovery Center, and the Potlatch and Totem Bight state parks. The grant recipients have not been selected yet, but hats off to Laura and Chad for going after the money!

Staffing and count for next year

Thorne Bay: 75

The secondary science position has been filled.

Naukati: 18

Both positions have been filled.

Coffman Cove: 10

Both teachers and the greenhouse manager are leaving. The count is not stable. Megan Fitzpatrick has requested a leave of absence for the next school year. Funding issues make it difficult to place two teachers at a site with ten students. We hope to find a greenhouse manager with a teaching certificate to reduce the need for a second full-time teacher. There are anticipated revenues possible from the greenhouse and a continuing grant that could partially fund a greenhouse position. Thus far, we have not had a greenhouse maintain production to a degree we could count on. The transition could cause similar issues and it is a little worrisome to count on the income to fund a position. We will seek a full time teacher for the site with a broad skill set. We have interviewed for a Greenhouse Manager and have strong candidates.

Port Alexander: 7

We are currently seeking a second teacher for the site. Housing continues to be an issue. We will watch this closely and we cannot hire unless we are confident on having ten students for the school year.

FY 2018 Budgeting**Vehicles**

We can sell four or five vehicles without creating undue difficulties. We can sell more, but this would affect sites that do not have a qualified bus driver. Perhaps this is just a natural, logical consequence. We have sold of the three smaller buses that required the most repairs. Reducing the number of vehicles we own cuts our insurance and maintenance costs. We increase our own liability if students are transported in private vehicles and transportation problems complicate our efforts to do things with students on Fridays and Saturdays like swimming, archery, and science fairs. Bus driver training is expensive and many do not drive for us for any period of time. Running buses is considerably more expensive that operating other school vehicles because we seldom pay for an extra individual to act as the driver when using a vehicle other than a bus.

We have been offering a school vehicle to transport students when parents want to have their students attend a SISD school outside of their community. If neighboring districts offer mileage to students from our district, ending this opportunity may result in more students attending other school districts.

We are currently selling one vehicle at a time.

Savings of \$30,000

Vehicle Maintenance

Our costs have been soaring. A certified mechanic does not fill our current position at the shop. Hourly costs for an outside mechanic have increased a great deal this year. We have also been paying several assistants to support the efforts of our shop supervisor. The model that we use for vehicle maintenance operations was put in place when we only had two district-wide vehicles. I think we will need to continue operating more than just two district-wide vehicles, and that leaves the way we are operating the shop obsolete. We have been very happy with our current employee. He does many things very well. He is our bus driver trainer, maintains buses to the highest standards, shops for good values on used vehicles, and has institutional knowledge that we would miss. With a change we still have to find a way to train bus drivers.

The logical thing to do is to change this position to one that is filled by a certified mechanic.

Savings of \$50,000

Coffman Cove Teacher Reduction

Reducing the staff at Howard Valentine Coffman Cove School to one teacher and hiring a greenhouse manager that can provide some academic support will save some money. We had one full-time teacher and a greenhouse manager/principal/teacher this year. Nick Higson will assume principal duties. The Coffman Cove greenhouse can generate

income this year, which will offset the cost of a greenhouse manager, and there is a continuing grant to fund a portion of that position as well.

Savings: \$30,000

Café

We have altered the model in an attempt to reduce costs. I am pleased with the changes to the Culinary Arts program at Thorne Bay School and their greater involvement in the Café. Café operations now involve a large number of students and very few adults. I find the current expenses acceptable given the student engagement.

We have opened one night a week to fundraising activities, which has been reasonably successful. I would entertain having additional nights available for fundraising for the Fire Department, EMT squad, library, Girl Scouts, churches or other non-profit organizations. Fundraising nights do not reduce expenses. Fundraiser nights have been generating \$250 to \$500 gross sales. They will need to offer a takeout option for diners if they are to generate enough money to justify the effort.

We also have plans for each school to sell student-generated items in the associated building. I am reluctant to close the Café as I feel it can provide a valuable educational opportunity, but there is no question that it is costing us money whether operating or sitting empty. Fixed costs are of about \$2000 per month when it is not operating.

Continue Operations – Cost: \$30,000

Sell – Revenue and Savings: \$50,000

Close the café but do not sell – Cost: \$20,000

Close regular operations and continue fundraising operations – Cost: \$20,000

Sports, Student and Staff Travel, Board and Administrator Travel

We have already cut most of these travel items to just what is funded by another source with the exception of sports. We already expect our students and parents to contribute more fundraising or money toward activities than any other district on the island. One reason we have students going to other districts are the fundraising expectations if they play on a team in Thorne Bay. Going to another district often leaves a fundraising bill that was never paid and those districts do not expect as much from their students. Increasing this burden will likely lead to further student transfers. The same can be said for eliminating any specific sport. One thing that is hurting us badly is legislative actions that have reduced ferry service, which forces us into expensive air travel.

Maintenance Crew

We have a number of activities that make it difficult to reduce staffing. I expect that we will continue to offer support to Hydaburg City School District. We charge them for the employee cost when working on their projects, which saves us those costs for that time period. We will need staff to complete the three RAC projects that were funded this year. These projects include a constructing a shelter at Sandy Beach and a viewing platform at the cave just north of Whale Pass, and rebuilding the dam for water collection in Hollis. We are also still completing wood-fired boiler projects and expect to loan our employees to Hydaburg City School District in the coming year for their wood-fired boiler project.

Office Staff

We are reducing part of a position due to the loss of the Hydaburg City School District contract. We are anticipating further changes and are attempting to plan for that transition. These may lead to additional costs.

Administration

We will not fill the administrative position being vacated by the current Howard Valentine Coffman Cove principal. I have gone to a part-time contract. There is nothing left to cut on administration.

Aides

We are currently staffed with just about the minimum number of aides required. Law allows for grouping some students for special education services. We give individualized assistance in most cases and can consolidate some of this support.

Four-Day School Week

The four-day school week requires us to pay teachers for the equivalent of three additional workdays. We could save some money by going back to a five-day school week. This would also save the costs of a number of Friday activities.

Greenhouses and Wood-fired Boilers

Fuel costs are down, but the real value of using firewood is supporting fundraising and small entrepreneurs. Our smaller greenhouses are not performing as hoped. Some crash and some sputter and stumble. We will try to correct our operational issues through making hires of teachers with an interest in the greenhouses, chickens and gardens. These ventures should be able to support school lunches, our café, and still have items to sell. There is a cost but there are exceptional educational opportunities with the greenhouses.

Survey Monkey Suggestions for Cost Savings

Hire mechanic

Hire mechanic, retain current employee, eliminate assistants

Reduce vehicles, trailers

Sell Café

Cut Travel

Raise Rent

Sell Float House

Rent café for events

Stop paying for online classes if have staff that could teach it

Stop transporting students who attend different school

Monitor maintenance workers

Better monitor food inventory

Use technology to reduce principal and District Office travel

Delay curriculum purchases

Lease space to community

Students for maintenance support and any other possible activities

Computer calls instead of landlines

Eliminate Technology aide and use students
No vehicle for workshops, reduce workshop attendance, reduce per diem
Food Service Manager idle at times travelers take food to sites, eliminate hot breakfast
Too much food waste
Minimize adult travel on sports trips
Reduce site travel allocations, encourage fundraising
Reduce DO staff, move duties to school secretary
Focus grant search to support personnel costs vs. travel and supplies
Reduce recruitment travel
Hire the best teachers and reduce support staff
Sell greenhouse
Lead teacher becomes Bus Driver, teachers use personal vehicles
Greenhouses use solar to save money
Sell old technology
Students pay to play, serious fundraising, reduce parent burden
Get out of Apple products and go cheaper
Get rid of principals, assistant superintendents, cut out their trips
Don't waste money with three teachers on ASTE conferences
Superintendent should retire, stop buying greenhouses and chicks
Give up farms, greenhouses
If students are not competitive, don't allow to travel, limit off island trips

Other Survey Monkey Suggestions

Add more low costs sports (badminton, ping pong, indoor bowling, croquet)
Boarding school for secondary students
Less computer use in class and not on personal devices
Higher expectations for aides
More rigor and choice in secondary reading
Better food for lunch, real food
Professionally clean houses between teachers
Skiff to transport kids in Port Alexander
Buy house in Port Alexander
Don't move staff around
Studs on vehicles
More on site sports for younger kids
Have a seven-week quarter with two-week intensive for secondary
Hunting class
Better integrate greenhouse, animals etc into curriculum
Teach students what a real workweek is
Add fourth secondary teacher at Thorne Bay
Better organized maintenance and construction plan
Better train staff on technology use
Better student restaurant management program
More hands on, less independent Internet math lessons
Continue chasing grants for storytellers, artists, keep funding for art, music and vocational programs

2nd Reading, Draft FY 2018 Budget

My Suggestion to Balance Budget

My dollar estimates are just a guess

Consolidate SpEd delivery where possible \$5,000

Eliminate hot breakfast \$5,000

Food Service Manager

Reduce hours except start and end of year \$5,000

Librarian

Reduce hours except start and end of year \$5,000

Hire Mechanic

Eliminate outsourcing, support staff, vehicles \$80,000

Cafe

Close except for fundraising and expand that \$30,000

Coffman Cove Staffing

One teacher with support from greenhouse manager \$30,000

Utilize funds that have been reserved for emergencies to balance the budget.

This is not sustainable and will only get us through the following year.

I recommend moving this to a third reading to give an opportunity for review.

2nd Reading, Board Policies and Administrative Regulation 4111 - 4115

I recommend approval.

2nd Reading, Board Policies and Administrative Regulations 4116 - 4118

I recommend approval.

Certified Teacher Request for leave of Absence

I recommend approval.

Inter-Agency Cooperative Agreement

I recommend approval.

Resolution 2017-04: Reducing School Days to Balance the Budget

We have cut everything we can to balance the budget. We cannot sustain further cuts. I am encouraging other Superintendents to propose reducing school days as the only way to maintain programs. The reality is that we cannot reduce days on a four-day school week without affecting teacher retirement. The resolution is to make a statement.

I am recommend approval.

1st Reading, Curriculum Materials for Sex Education

Craig Public Health is responding to recent legislative mandates regarding the delivery of Sex Education. This will be of interest to our parents and should be reviewed. **I recommend moving this to a second reading.**

Sincerely,



Lauren Burch
Superintendent