



SOUTHEAST ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Board Report March 1, 2017

Staffing and Current Count Projections For Next Year

Coffman Cove: 10 students

Both teachers and the greenhouse manager are leaving. Student count is not stable. Megan Fitzpatrick has been assigned to the secondary position at the site. 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, a part-time teacher, or a greenhouse manager/teacher couple that could fill a combined 1.5 contract.

The management of the Coffman Cove greenhouse is working well, but our management of other sites is weaker. The program should have a dedicated manager, which is not possible with teaching responsibilities. There are anticipated revenues possible from the greenhouse and a continuing grant that could partially fund a greenhouse position. To date, we have never had a greenhouse maintain production consistently to a degree that we could count on. The transition could cause similar issues.

Hollis: 25 students

Should the school have 25 students, we can submit an application for a new school at the site.

Hyder: 12 students

Kassan: 11 students

Port Alexander: 7 students

We are currently seeking a second teacher for the site. Housing continues to be an issue. We will watch this closely; we cannot make a hire unless we are confident that we will have ten students for the school year. The site is dangerously close to being impossible to keep open.

Naukati: 18 students

Currently, both teaching positions are open. One must be filled by a candidate with a SpEd certificate. We intend to hire the secondary position first and hope to do so in the coming week. SpEd certification is easier to find in combination with an elementary certificate. This site will require two teachers due to the need for intensive SpEd services.

Thorne Bay: 75 students

The interview team conducted interviews on Monday for a secondary Science position. We expect to hire this week.

Funding

Our first run at the budget brings us up short by \$300,000. The State Senate is proposing a 5% reduction in education funding. We expect the State House to argue that point, but will not be surprised to see a 2.5% reduction, which is what we used to establish projected funding. We cannot sustain perpetual reductions when most costs continue to increase. Over the years, we have reduced spending in as many areas as possible that do not result in undue impacts to our programs. Any further cuts will have unintended consequences.

Vehicles

We can sell four or five vehicles without creating in undue impacts. We can sell more, but this will affect sites that do not have a qualified bus driver. Perhaps this is just a natural, logical consequence. We have sold the three smaller buses that required the most repairs. Decreasing the number of vehicles reduces 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 we are probably lucky if one out of five participants is still driving a year later. Running buses is considerably more expensive than operating other school vehicles because we are seldom paying a driver when we are not using a bus.

We have offered a school vehicle for transporting students when parents want to have their students attend a different SISD school. With neighboring districts that allegedly offer mileage reimbursement to students who live in our district, ending this opportunity would likely result in more students attending different school districts across the island.

Savings: \$20,000 if we sell four or five vehicles

Vehicle Maintenance

Our costs have been soaring. A certified mechanic does not fill our current position at the shop. Hourly costs for a mechanic have increased a great deal this year. We are also paying several assistants to support the efforts of our fleet supervisor. I don't think we can go back to 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.

Board members pushed for this solution ten years ago, but I have resisted due to the value of our current employee. We have cut about everything we can that does not impact students in the classroom. It is time to consider this option. I am no expert on the topic and will encourage the employee to speak to the Board before any decision is reached. In fairness to a long-term and dedicated employee, a decision needs to be reached soon as we are well into the hiring season and it is not fair to drag this out and make it difficult for him to seek other employment.

Savings: \$50,000 if we have a certified mechanic fill the fleet supervisor position

Coffman Cove Teacher

The student numbers are expected to be down and reducing from two teachers to 1.5 would save money without hurting students. This would require some combination of greenhouse manager and teacher, a part-time teacher, or a couple that had the right skill set.

Savings: \$50,000 if we reduce to 1.5 teachers

Café

We have altered the model in an attempt to get the café to a position where it would not be a financial drain. 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.

We have opened one night a week to fundraising activities, which has been reasonably successful. Naukati School just held an event that sold 70 take-and-bake pizzas in Naukati. I find the current expenses acceptable, given the student engagement. I would entertain opening other nights for outside fundraising opportunities such as Fire/EMS, library, Girl Scouts, churches or other organizations. Neither brings up the bottom line on expenses. We also have plans for each school to sell items in the associated building.

I am reluctant to sell the café as I feel it can provide a valuable educational opportunity; however, it does cost us money to operate or to sit empty. There are fixed costs of a couple thousand a month if sitting idle. Our AmeriCorps hire is leaving in a week, which will add addition strain to the finances Students had planned to make a presentation tonight, but the Basketball tournament has interfered with those plans.

Cost: \$30,000(?) if we continue operations

OR \$20,000 if we close the café and have it sit idle

Savings: \$30,000 if we sell the café

Sports Travel, Student and Staff Travel, Board and Administrator Travel

We have already cut these travel items to just what is funded by another source, with the exception of sports. We currently expect our students and parents to contribute more to sports travel than any other district on the island. Fundraising expectations are one reason we have students transferring to schools in other districts. When students transfer, the students who remain are often left with any fundraising debt. Increasing the amount that students must pay for sports travel will likely lead to further student transfers. The same can be said for eliminating any specific sport. Legislative actions that have reduced ferry service have resulted in the need to use expensive air travel more often.

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 what the employee costs that day and it saves us those costs. Three RAC projects have been funded this year that will need staff. The projects include a shelter at Sandy Beach, a viewing platform at the cave just north of Whale Pass and rebuilding the dam for water collection in Hollis. We also are 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 at the District Office due to the loss of the Hydaburg City School District contract. We are anticipating further changes and are working on a plan for that transition. These may lead to additional costs through the transition.

Administration

We are losing a principal at Coffman Cove. I have gone to a part-time contract. There is nothing left to cut on administration.

Aides

We have already reduced staffing to just about the minimum level required. Law allows for grouping some students for service and we still give individualized assistance in most cases. We may be able to consolidate some of this support.

Greenhouses and Wood-fired Boilers

We purchase firewood for the wood-fired boilers locally, which supports fundraising and small entrepreneurs.

Our smaller greenhouses are not performing as hoped. Operations at some have crashed and operations at others are inconsistent. We will try to correct these issues through making hires of teachers with an interest in the greenhouses, chickens, and gardens. The greenhouses should produce enough to support school lunch requirements, our café and still have items to sell. The cost of our greenhouses is offset by the exceptional educational opportunities they provide.

Overall

Since I am reluctant to commit to closing the Café, we can only save about half of the expected shortfall.

Survey Monkey

We will have out a survey within a day or so and encourage stakeholders to make their own suggestions on where we can find cost savings.

2nd Reading, Board Policies and Administrative Regulations 3300 – 3315

I recommend approval.

2nd Reading, Board Policies and Administrative Regulations 3000 - 3290

I recommend approval.

2nd Reading of Board Policies and Administrative Regulations affected by HB 156 (AR 0520, BP 4112.4, BP 4131, BP 4222, BP 5141.3, BP 5141.52, BP 5145.15, BP 6020, BP 6141.2, BP 6142.1).

I recommend approval.

Resolution 2017-05: A Resolution in Support of Prince of Wales Community Advisory Council Resolution No. 17-01 (Setting 2017 Transportation Priorities for Prince of Wales Island)
I recommend approval.

Award of Contract of External Audit Services Action
I recommend approval.

1st Reading, Draft FY 2018 Budget
This projects a \$300,000 shortfall. *I recommend moving this to a second reading.*

1st Reading, Board Policies and Administrative Regulation 4111 - 4115
I recommend moving this to a second reading to allow time for Board review.

1st Reading, Board Policies and Administrative Regulations 4116 - 4118
I recommend moving this to a second reading to allow time for Board review.

Sincerely,

Lauren Burch
Superintendent