

Media Release - How will the Funds from the Referendum be used? 2/23/24

Dear Community Members,

Thank you for your attendance at the Community Forums, Coffee & Chat with Administration, Budgets & Bagels with Rachele, and the School Board meetings. The question regarding “how the funds from the operational referendum will be used” is a question in the minds of many taxpayers. The projected deficit is the sum of the parts of the gap between revenue and expense therefore, I am not able to provide the specificity with regards to how much will be allocated to distinct areas. As far as priorities and examples, the following provides more detailed information.

An approved referendum would enable the district to continue funding our top priorities, including:

1. Maintain current educational and extracurricular programming

Maintain single sections in grades 4K-6 as to not have multi-age classrooms, maintain core classes and specials at MS and HS, provide a variety of electives for HS students, maintain student organizations and athletics.

2. Attract and retain high-quality staff

Provide competitive salaries and benefits to maintain high quality educators, turnover of staff is costly. It affects student learning as well as costs money and time for hiring and training.

3. Provide the needed reading and math interventions for students

Tier 2 and 3 reading and math interventions grades K-6.

In order to close learning gaps and determine whether or not a student has a learning disability, interventions must be provided.

4. Upgrade safety and security infrastructure

Video surveillance at all doors, centralized alert system

5. Enhance technology resources and support

Smartboard replacement cycle with Clevertouch, student Chromebook replacement cycle, cybersecurity Smartboard/Clevertouch TVs are used daily to present lessons. Our Smartboards are obsolete and "dying" which affects the quality of the lesson presentation; many of our programs are digital.

6. Secure budget for facility maintenance

Annual custodial expenses, roof replacement, boiler system, plumbing, electrical, unit ventilators, HVAC, parking lots, exterior lighting, etc.

There is a great deal of planning involved in the development and implementation of strategic planning and budget development. All of this must also follow School Board policies and guidelines as well as State Statutes. The additional funds from the operational referendum would be added to existing Fund 10 revenue to fill the gap that is creating the deficit. The funds would be an investment in maintaining the educational programming we currently have, as the revenue coming in is not enough to sustain that.

As always, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Elmhurst-Friemuth
Superintendent
School District of Mellen