

Mellen School District Board of Education Adopts Budget for 2024-25, Acknowledges Deficit Despite Several Cuts

The School District of Mellen Board of Education adopted the District's budget for the 2024-25 School Year, during its regular meeting on October 23, 2024. The approved budget net total is \$4,838,785, reflecting an 11% decrease over last year, and includes a projected deficit of <\$129,176>, despite several cost-cutting measures implemented to address financial challenges.

The District has made difficult decisions to reduce expenditures across various areas, including eliminating and/or consolidating certain positions, postponing capital improvement projects, in an effort to balance the budget. However, despite these reductions, the District is still facing a budget shortfall, which is primarily due to inadequate state funding, inflationary costs, declining enrollment, staffing challenges, and other external factors.

- **Educational Programs:** The District has worked hard to protect core educational services, including STEM initiatives, digital learning, and special education. Funds have been allocated to ensure these programs continue despite financial pressures.
- **Staffing and Professional Development:** While the District has implemented staffing reductions in certain areas, grant funding is still earmarked for professional development to support educators and staff in delivering high-quality instruction.
- **Facilities and Maintenance:** The District is making strategic investments in building maintenance and safety, allocating \$40,000 to ensure that school facilities remain in good condition, though some upgrades have been deferred.
- **Student Services:** The District remains committed to supporting students, with funds dedicated to counseling and extracurricular activities, though some programs have been scaled back or adjusted to fit the budget.

We are navigating a difficult financial landscape, and while we have made significant cuts in many areas, the budget deficit remains a challenge. We know these decisions are tough on our community, but we are doing everything we can to minimize the impact on students. Our commitment is to continue offering a high-quality education while being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. We are exploring all options, including additional cost-saving strategies and potential new revenue sources, to close the gap moving forward.

The District has prioritized transparency throughout the budget process, holding multiple public meetings and workshops to gather input and answer questions from the community. The Board of Education will continue to monitor the financial situation closely and will keep the public informed about any future adjustments or actions taken to address the deficit.

For more information about the adopted budget and ongoing efforts to manage the deficit, please contact Superintendent Rhonda Elmhurst-Friemoth at 715-274-3601 or relmhurstfriemoth@mellendiggers.org.

The District remains committed to providing high-quality educational opportunities for all students, despite the financial challenges it faces. Through careful planning, community engagement, and a focus on long-term sustainability, the District is working to ensure that all students receive the education they deserve.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Elmhorst-Friemoth

Superintendent

Mellen School District