

OUUSD POINTS FOR DISCUSSION OF (IN)EQUALITY (as brought to our attention from voters/community members...)

- More expansive (or at least more expensive) Pre-K in Bradford? Is there a difference in pay and/or 'level' of staff?
- independent (i.e. better) food service in Bradford? Are they moving towards Abbey Group?
- outdoor classroom in Bradford but not Newbury?
- school budget supported After School Program in Bradford whereas NES is self-supporting?

BUDGET QUESTIONS/THOUGHTS FOR ADMINISTRATION, BOARD & BUDGET COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Based on questions/concerns heard from residents/taxpayers (and our working group) on budgets:

A. OESU Budget

1. What are the proposed salary increases for administrators and for staff folks? (believe Bradford SB is planning on 1.5% for town officials and Federal COLA was 1.3%)
2. What are the health insurance cost percentage increases and what percentage of premium do employees pay?
3. Administrative benefit costs (concerns over significant bump in retirement fund line items? – Were/are those significant increases offset with any other benefit reductions or minimal salary increases or were they just an added or increased benefit?)
4. Is there really a potential of 55 'earned-days' if an OESU staffer takes all of his/her allotted leave time (holidays, personal, sick, vacation allowances?)
5. Can there be consideration of an exploration of better facility options for when this lease is up? (perhaps revisiting the idea of a building on the Oxbow campus?)
6. Will the OESU budget be published in the annual report/budget booklet for transparency (with appropriate descriptors/explanations for notable changes in line items?)
7. In the Special Education section, there is a large amount of tuition which is likely for out-of-district programs. How many students are attending those (and can it be publicly known how many from each school) and how much of that \$\$ is reimbursed via the federal gov't?
Has tuitioning out that many students provided our schools/staff with opportunity they wouldn't have had otherwise – or is it just best for the students?
8. Attached is the OESU staff listed in last year's annual report. Can someone update that with current (or better yet, proposed for 2021 budget book?)

B. OUUSD Budget, etc.

1. Is the Board intending to provide the OESU office with a 'target' budget amount (or increase/decrease) for the 2021/2022 budget? (and if so, should the finance committee discuss and provide such a recommendation to the board?)

2. Will the next annual report have the three school budgets separated as well as the combined figures in summary (as in last year's?)

3. Can there be itemization of staff benefits in each section rather than the 'lumped', opaque reporting of last year?

4. Can there be a better explanation of the River Bend CTC budget/effect, as I recall that the RBCTC budget is largely funded by federal and state funds (Perkins, etc.) as well as tuition from the sending schools (of which Oxbow is one and we understand and can see there is a line item for that tuition?) Yes, this is possible to do.

5. Can there be 'notes/explanations' for notable line item increases/decreases? This is also possible to do but would require more conversation about how to define this. We had talked in the last OUUSD meeting about using a % change amount to trigger an explanation.

6. Will there be significant savings from items such as extra-curriculars that did not happen due to COVID (or were at much reduced levels? i.e., coaches salaries, transportation, officials, supplies,) I don't know that they will be significant, because coaches are still being contracted to work with their teams, but there will be savings around transportation and officials.

7. What is the contracted salary increase for professional staff and for support staff?

Understanding that \$62,500 was added to this year's budget for that late .5% increase of professional staff, it seems likely that about \$125k is the figure to be increased for each one-percent professional staff increase in addition to support staff... (all staffing being equal to present) All of the negotiated agreements and salary information can be found here: <https://oesu.org/staff/negotiations/>

Support staff are .50 cent increase per hour, and teachers are \$850 increase to the grid growth at about 3%

8. How soon after a budget is finally passed will it take before we can see ytd actual to budget figures to help ascertain whether there might be some surplus (hopefully) to consider in next year's budget prep? Those are being worked on now. Any surplus funds from this year are not applied to the budget we are working on now for FY 22, those funds would impact the FY23 budget. Application of surplus/deficit funds is one year after the operating year closes.

9. What are the current enrollment figures for NES, BES and OHS with the following breakdown for each: in-person (and/or hybrid), remote learner, and total) 10.

Understanding that there are currently seven elementary-aged students from Newbury attending BES (and that there were, perhaps, two others earlier in the year but now back at NES) is the board fully aware of these numbers, engaged with the reasons for the transfers, and is there any sort of threshold at which additional transfers will be disallowed? As you may understand, this is a concerning issue to us.

11. As far as school/community engagement committee(s), there will be a committee for each school, right? (and not just one for all the schools combined?)

Danielle and Emilie,

Some questions about the proposed OESU budget for checking into prior to Wednesday's meeting.

1. Did we have to pay the full amount of the bus contracts last year (including the add-ons for athletic teams, field trips, etc) or were there significant credits for the changes with remote learning? **The bus company was running the routes dropping off meals. So we did pay for the transportation contact. There may be some savings from the decreased field trips and athletics. Still working on that.**

.2. Is there any consideration for potential changes in this next budget should that be necessary (hopefully not to be needed)? **Yes, changes have been made and positions have been taken out of the budget. As far as transportation goes we have a contract and would have to work within the contact agreement if any changes in transportation were needed.**

3. Is there a fuel cost adjustment in the transportation budget to allow for increases and decreases in fuel costs? **I know there is a line item for fuel cost if the fuel price goes up a significant amount. I don't know the threshold.**

4.. Is there a full 'budget notes' page being prepared or are the seven 'key points' to be the written explanations? **Once there is a finalized set of assessments agreed upon by the Board we can provide detail for particular districts for their annual reports.**

Line item questions:

a. What is Regular Ed Direct Instruction at OESU? **These are the costs associated with special education teachers that perform regular education duties at the school. Ie lunch duty, recess,**

b. What are the average salary increases for 'union staff?' Reg ed and ELL salaries look to be up 6and 11% respectively. **The budget is built with 3% pay increase and 10% health insurance increase place holder**

c. Is one of the staff reductions as result of a person moving to a different position in OUUSD this year and is that likely to remain the same 'situation' for next year?

d. For some reason the subtotal column on SpEd (page 2) that shows a variance of \$442,876 doesn't seem to be the right total (should be more like \$564k increase, which would be 10.4% increase is Sp Ed costs. It looks like the rate of Sp Ed costs continues to be a driver of these budget increases. Is anything being done to try to 'stem that tide?' (as we know that the federal funding/reimbursements do not keep up. **This is unclear to me...I think I would need more details to be able to answer. This may be due to applied revenues.**

e. Superintendent salary line (and guessing that's Sup and Ass't) reflects close to a 5% increase. Is that correct? **The current Assistant Superintendent has different salary requirements and the change that you see is in anticipation of different costs for that position.**

f. What's the \$5k stipend for Central Office staff? **I believe that this references stipends for lead teachers for special education and a negotiations stipend for Board coordination of negotiations with the association.**

g. What is the story with the annuities for Central office staff? Are they not included in the state retirement system (guessing not) and is there a percentage of salary contribution to these annuities? (and do they require a match from employee?) **When BMU merged the office staff**

had a retirement program. Act 46 required us to retain that program and therefore offer similar to the SU staff. The office is now part of the Vermont municipal retirement plan

h. Which area of the budget should reflect the other (if the first was EEE) staff/salary decrease?

I don't understand this question? This may be better discussed in a budget finance meeting I am not clear what is being asked either.

i. What percentage of health insurance premiums do employees pay? **20%**

Thanks for having a look at these and perhaps having some answers for Wednesday's meeting.

Marv