

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**  
**COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200**  
**January 24, 2024**

The Committee of the Whole meeting for the month of January of the Board of Education of Community Unit School District 200, DuPage County, Illinois, was called to order at the School Service Center, 130 W Park Ave, Wheaton, IL by Board President Rob Hanlon, on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at 7:00 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon the roll being called, the following were present:

Board Members:       Mr. Rob Hanlon  
                              Ms. Julie Kulovits  
                              Mr. Dave Long  
                              Ms. Angela Blatner  
                              Mr. Erik Hjerpe  
                              Mr. John Rutledge

Absent:                 Mr. Brad Paulsen

Also in Attendance:   Dr. Jeff Schuler, Superintendent  
                              Ms. Alyssa Barry  
                              Mr. Matt Biscan  
                              Ms. Melissa Murphy  
                              Dr. Brian O’Keeffe  
                              Dr. Chris Silagi  
                              Mr. Jason Spencer

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Secretary Dave Long led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SUSPEND THE RULES AND ADJOURN TO A WORKSHOP SETTING**

**MOTION**

Member Long moved, Member Blatner seconded to suspend the rules and adjourn to a workshop setting. Upon a roll call vote being taken the vote was: AYE 6, NAY 0.

**The motion carried 6-0.**

**Business Services**

Five Year Forecast

Superintendent Schuler noted the Board’s Finance Committee prepared for this during their last two meetings and reminded the Board the set of five-year projections is intended to be the launch point for the budget projections. The tentative budget will be presented in July and the data elements will shift between now and then. While some data pieces are known, some pieces need to be projected. The Finance Committee spent time on the major assumptions used for the five-year forecast.

Dr. Brian O’Keeffe, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services provided a look at the Five-Year Projections - Accrual Basis Fund Balance (based on the AFR for FY23) and the Cash Basis Fund Balance. The 5-Year Forecast Major Assumptions (January 2024) were also reviewed, and are incorporated into both sets of projections. The assumptions included information on the following:

- Levy Assumptions (Levy Years 2024-2028)
  - Percent Change in Existing EAV
  - New Construction
  - Consumer Price Index (CPI)
  - Percent of Levy Collected by Fiscal Year End
  - Tax Collection Rate
- Major Revenue Fund Assumptions (FY25-29)
  - CPPRT (Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax)
  - Interest Income
  - EBF (Evidence-Based Funding)
  - State MCAT (Mandated Categorical)
  - Federal Grants
- Major Expenditure Assumptions (FY25-29)
  - Salaries (WWEA)
  - Salaries (CEA)
  - Salaries (Non-CEA Clerical/Admin)
  - Lane Changes/Micro-Credentials
  - Retirement/Resignation Reductions
  - Medical/Dental (Final Renewal Rates - 4.16.24)
  - Purchased Services/Supplies (Ed Fund & O&M Fund)
  - Purchased Services (Transportation Fund)
- Potential Future Revenues
  - JUUL Settlement
  - Altria Settlement (JUUL Parent)
  - Registration Fees - Returning to 20-21 Fee Schedule (using 10-day enrollment)
  - City of Wheaton TIF #3

There was additional information/comments on the following:

- There are six months before the tentative budget will be in front of the Board, and there is a lot that will happen between now and then.
- This is a good start to get a sense of where we potentially will have challenges in the short term and long term.
- AFR has different fund balances because those are based on the accrual method of accounting (anything that happens in July and August that is specifically related to the prior fiscal year gets pulled back - both revenue and expenditures). This is the only difference in the charts.
- Changes in existing EAV are determined by the township assessor’s offices - not controlled by the District or the County. This does not impact the actual tax bill.
- New construction - what we determine new construction is going to be year after year. Based on data coming out of Naper Commons that has not yet been captured. This does not take into account anything happening around the downtown Wheaton area with apartment complexes.
- Any dollar that we do not capture on the new side, we lose forever in perpetuity.

- The biggest lever we have some control over is CPI (Consumer Price Index). CPI for December was 3.4%. Where we have control is the ability to go below what CPI is - you cannot ask for more than CPI or the cap of 5% on the operating side but can ask for less.
- The percent of levy collected by FY end is 52.5%, and the average tax collection rate is 99.8%. Noted the recapture clause has been around \$400K the last few years (refunds that have happened after the tax bills have gone out and are put forth by the treasurer's office and declared by the clerk's office).
- CPPRT is a tax that is collected for all municipalities by the IL Dept of Revenue and is based on profitability from prior tax years.
- Interest Income - the Fed has indicated there are going to be three reductions in the overnight rate that is paid from one bank to another for borrowing money.
- EBF - CUSD 200 is tier 3 and at a 97.3 adequacy rate. Full funding from the state's perspective within the EBF model is 100%. EBF has 27 levers/functions that comprise it. CPPRT is one of those 27 functions, which could bring our overall adequacy number down. Anticipating growing closer to 100% in the upcoming years, which will mean the district will be held harmless with what is coming from the state.
- Have kept the mandated categoricals (transportation, special ed, private facility reimbursements) flat as they are unknowns at this point. Noted we have never been fully funded on MCATs.
- Federal Grants - ESSER runs out this year, and have kept this flat in the following years.
- Salaries for WWEA and CEA based on contracts and in later years on CPI projections. CEA actual for FY25 is 5.0%, and built-in 2.5% for non-CEA clerical and admin salaries.
- Average about \$1M in a reduction of retirement/resignation salaries.
- Medical/Dental - final renewal rates will be known in mid-April, 2024. The PPO preliminary renewal is 9.5%, and HMO is 10.8%. There is a possibility these numbers will come down. Noted the caveat of .5% ( half a percent) of the overall increase is to reinvest or rebuild some of the fund balance that was in the NIHIP pool that was lost over the last two coverage years.
- Purchased services (transportation fund) - are in negotiations now and are looking at two 2-year extensions from both IL Central and Sunrise. The increase being quoted is 16% for the first year (for IL Central) and 4% for year two. The District is not comfortable with this number. The idea of taking over fuel purchasing and the impact on the increase and/or savings to the District.
- Potential future revenues listed are not built into the projections - including the JUUL and Altria settlements, revenue from a return to 20-21 registration fees, and the impact of City of Wheaton TIF #3.
- Wheaton TIF #3 expires on 12.31.28; estimated EAV increase of \$35M; estimated surplus of \$11.6M and CUSD 200 is roughly 69% of TIF #3.
- The operating surplus or deficit line on the projections is related to the Board's policy in terms of a balanced operating budget.
- Sherman Dergis commitment and where this is found on the projections.
- Fund balance deficit vs. operating deficit.
- From a structural perspective, we are in a pretty good place moving forward for the next couple of years.

There were questions and/or additional discussion on the following:

- Fuel purchasing - savings on both the differential above the cap and also the tax benefit; the impact on the transportation reimbursement as well. Any opportunity to piggyback on the purchase of fuel from the City of Wheaton or the County?
- Transportation and the lack of service providers - a limited market for those services here.

- Transportation - extending current contracts vs. going out to bid - noted previous experience the District had with this and the bids that came back were significantly higher than the renewal that the District turned down.
- The challenge in transportation is there are not a lot of players, two big players in this area, which limits some of the competitive pricing elements. This is not an easy service to get out of the third-party market. There is the cost of operation, the need to locate a facility to house buses, purchase equipment, etc. The idea of some districts together starting a transportation company to service multiple districts.
- If we purchased fuel for transportation, we would not need infrastructure, noting the IL Central facility and tanks. It is in our best long-term interest to look into other opportunities.
- What is the incentive for the City of Wheaton to disperse the TIF surplus early? There is a reasonable chance the TIF will end earlier than projected; other projects the city is watching before they end the TIF. There is a good chance the District will see dollars - either through surplus distributions, a distribution at the end, or the TIF rolls off and you see it in new construction dollars that stay in perpetuity.
- In FY27 projections, fund balance would fall below the minimum (25-40%); how to rectify that and what adjustments would need to be made.
- The ability within Board policy to use fund balance to support capital projects and the fund balance policy saying you need to be within a 25-40% range - the need to balance those two things. The point in the future where you may need to make some changes.
- What is being discussed today will not be what the tentative and final budget will look like.
- From a strategic point of view, we have some gaps we need to address in the future; a series of levers we know about and others not known that will become apparent that are used to align fund balance and make sure we have a balanced budget.
- The need to look at the surplus and deficit lines.
- Would like to see Sherman Dergis be higher than the \$7.8M annually (includes capital projects, playgrounds, and architectural fees).
- These projections do not account for a significant development going in the block by Egg Harbor in Wheaton. It is not unreasonable to assume that whatever year it is constructed, new construction could be doubled. The true unknowns have been kept out of the assumptions/5-year projections.
- New construction is based on what is defined as of January 1st; the impact of this and when it will show up on the tax levy.
- Some pretty significant revenue levers are going to sit somewhere in the five-year model.
- Looking out at projections, start to make sound decisions, but also recognize the fact if you overreact way too early in this planning process, some other things could change on the back end and could see the fund balance element skyrocket.
- As you look three years out, understand there are going to be shifts; the need to focus on FY25.
- Big structural things - fuel purchase, TIF expiring.
- ADK - revenue in projections starts for FY28 as that is known.

There were some additional pieces of information shared with the Board as you look at some of the structural pieces. This included information on the following:

- Headcount - 70% of the budget is in salaries/benefits. The variables are how much you are paying people and how many people you are paying.
- Provided the District 200 enrollment from 2017-18 to the current year. Noted the enrollment for this current year is the first year in a while where the numbers have started to trend up. Enrollment for younger students seems to be driving that number up and has exceeded what were projections.

- 2019-20 was the school year that was interrupted in March.
- 2020-21 coming out of the pandemic - made some significant changes both in overall headcount and in how that headcount was used. Noting adjustments were made to class sizes for the in-person experience and were operating a virtual academy that was educating 1300 students in a fully virtual space, reassigned a lot of headcounts represented in the specialist/classroom ratio chart.
- In the years that have followed since then, have begun to rebalance headcount that went to core overall enrollment with the headcount on the specialists + classroom ratios chart. Reinstated a lot of those instructional support positions in learning acceleration and support for students and slowly bringing the core class size numbers back up toward the ratios staffed at in the 2019-20 year.
- We are staffing into next year with those pre-pandemic class sizes (noted 26 is the cap/max for grades K-1, 28 is the cap/max for grades 2-3, and 30 is the cap/max for grades 4-5). This does not mean that all classes have that amount of students, but once we get over that number, we are looking at adding an additional resource.
- Reviewed the Specialists + Classroom Ratios Chart for 23-24. This shows, by elementary building, the number of resources for ML, Reading, Math, PACE, Class Sections, and the number of students to determine the ratio.
- As some of our core classroom's overall number of sections have gone down, we have seen increases in staff in support for ML programs, reading, and math intervention.
- Have not removed the resources/dollars that went to math intervention, reading intervention, etc. from the model.
- How we are supporting students is a function of core class assigned to classrooms, but also staff that are supporting students inside of those classrooms and pulling students out of the classrooms for key times (ML staff, reading and math intervention/coaching staff, and PACE staff).
- Do not believe overall enrollment will go down, but will go up.
- Enrollment/staffing projections are built on the assumption of level headcount moving forward. There is not an escalator for headcount in the 5-year model.
- Provided the number of Multilingual Learner (ML) students by building - the total number of students, those being monitored (the state requires this for two years for those that have exited the program), newcomer students, the number of ML staff (full-time equivalents), and the number of ML students last school year.
- The total enrollment is up again from last year for ML learners (an increase of 136 students from last year) and newcomer students.
- Largest populations for ML students in the District - WNHS, Johnson, WWSHS, and Pleasant Hill.
- Schools watched all year because they have had an increase in ML students during the year - including WNHS, Bower, Sandburg, WWSHS, and Washington.
- Have added some staff at specific schools during the year while monitoring the enrollment and the needs, and listening to feedback from staff.
- Trends noted for ML programming and staffing considerations for FY25:
  - Elementary - limited availability for ML teachers to provide additional time to support newcomer students due to increasing numbers; co-teaching is limited to certain portions of the school day for ML students (supporting only one of the three Bookworm blocks during the day).
  - Middle School - schools are not able to offer co-taught science and social studies courses to support newcomers and lower-level language learners; MS needs to review scheduling and supports for dually identified SPED/ML students; per WWEA agreement, MS or HS Dept. coordinators of ML/Bilingual programs shall have two release periods to monitor, test, and in-take new ML/Bilingual students. With the

increase in MLs, this needs to be monitored. Currently, there is a 1.0 Coordinator/Coach that fills this role.

- High School - HS needs to review scheduling and supports for dually identified SPED/ML students.

There were questions and/or additional discussion on the following:

- Newcomer academy concept - is the District at a point to consider this? Have started conversations on what are the best services for our newcomers. Noted EAB research student and servicing newcomer concepts at the secondary level - in the preliminary stages and reviewing models for support.
- Having conversations with other districts - is there an opportunity for a coop academy for newcomers (similar to TCD)? The growing number of ML learners does come up in conversations with peer districts but focusing on how each district is meeting the needs within their district.
- The number of newcomers at the high school level is large. Regarding graduation requirements - is there any accommodation for extending education to age 22 (like SPED) for graduation requirements? No, but certainly face challenges to ensure our students are getting everything they need within that time.
- Not having co-teaching at the MS and HS levels in Science and Social Studies - worry that we not setting up some students for success.
- Pressure points - and what the board should be thinking about?
- Understand that as we plan forward in building the staffing plan - at the Board level, may have a point of understanding when handed recommended adjustments to staffing/changes for next year. The reality is we have finite resource allocation that has to support that. If we decide we need to attach the ML need, there is a practical reality that co-teaching is an expensive resource-based model. We need to be cognizant of this as we investigate/look at some areas and means something has to be pulled from another staffing bucket.
- On average, 30% of the individuals educating children in the classroom are specialists. Specialists in the classrooms and the impact on the ratios of staff to student; anchoring on the staff to student ratio rather than just the core class size number.

## **Instruction**

### Special Education Programming Update

During January, the Board of Education adopts a resolution to begin the budget cycle and reviews the 5-Year Financial Projections. With this begins the work of reviewing staffing allocations for the following school year. Each year, special programs such as special education are carefully considered as part of the staffing allocations.

Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Ms. Melissa Murphy, and Ms. Erica Ekstrom, Executive Director of Special Education, provided the Board with an update on Special Education Programming, including adjustments to this population and consideration being made for FY25 staffing. This included information on the following:

- Three Guiding Questions
  - What is the continuum of programming for special education in CUSD 200?
  - How has the special education population adjusted over time?
  - What is being monitored as we moved into FY25 staffing plans?
- Special Education Programming: EC-12+
  - Early Childhood (Blended Classrooms, Instructional Classrooms)
  - Elementary (Resource, Instructional Classrooms - SKILLS, Essentials, PISA, SAIL)
  - Middle School (Resource, Instructional Classrooms - SKILLS, Essentials, Direct)

- o High School (Resource, Instructional Classrooms - SKILLS, Essentials, Direct)
  - o Ages 18-22 (Transition)
  - o All Levels - Out-of-District Programming
- General Education Setting vs. Instructional Setting
  - o Gen Ed Typical Elementary Classroom Experience
    - Class size ranges from 24-28 students
    - Math and Reading Coaches, ML Specialist or Resource Teacher may co-teach/push-in throughout portions of day
    - Students able to navigate lunch and other school environments independently
    - Independent work time occurs during some portions of school day
    - Students use Bookworms, IM (Illustrative Math), or other common D200 materials
    - Whole group instruction is common; students level the room for interventions that occur in small group; includes resource students
    - Weekly communication through newsletters or phone calls as needed
  - o Instructional Elementary Classroom Experience
    - Class size ranges from 6-10 students
    - Additional staff are within the classroom for a majority of the school day
    - Students need support to navigate lunch and other school environments
    - Support is needed throughout the school day
    - Instructional materials are individualized for each student
    - Instruction typically occurs in small groups
    - Communication occurs daily
- How Has The Special Education Population Adjusted Over Time?
  - o Instructional Level Classrooms - the change in the number of instructional classrooms per level from 2019 to 2024
    - Elementary - 18 to 21; Middle School - 8 to 10; High School - 8 to 10; Total - 34 to 41
  - o Staffing Requirements for Instructional Classrooms - based on staffing averages; staff support may fluctuate based on the makeup of classrooms and individual student needs
    - Teacher (1), Teaching Assistant (2-3), Speech (.25), Occupational Therapist (.25), Physical Therapist (.16), Nurse (.16), Psychologist (.16), Social Worker (.16)
  - o Elementary Increases for Resource Staff - At the elementary level, special education teachers use research-based programs to provide support to both students with resource level and Tier 3 programming (intensive intervention)
    - We are seeing an increase in students needing these services since 2019-2020
- What Is Being Monitored As We Moved Into FY25 Staffing Plans?
  - o Monitoring and Supporting Culture - Support Structures
    - New mentoring program has two tracks - general or special education; Special Ed mentoring was designed to provide job-specific training throughout the year; a mentor in a like role was selected
    - Additional leadership positions: Student Support Specialists, Early Childhood Instructional Coach, Additional Director Support Assistant Principal for Bower Elementary
  - o Monitoring and Supporting Culture - Feedback Loops
    - Morale Survey; shadowing resource teachers; administrator/staff feedback to guide the FY25 staffing needs
  - o Strategy - Hiring

- Beginning the hiring process early for hard-to-fill positions, such as school psychologists; continuously recruiting Teaching Assistants; Grow Your Own Program/Wheaton North Internships
- Strategy - Staffing Allocations for FY25
  - Special considerations for staffing needs, particularly for Instructional Classroom settings; Work closely with elementary administrators to analyze staffing supports for resource and Tier 3

There was additional information/comments on the following:

- Understanding some of the pressure points we are seeing in the student services program and how this relates to building the staffing plan for next year. Noted the adjustments in our District population, specifically to special education.
- The largest program within the District is the Resource level program that services most of our students with disabilities in the District. The resource program is present at all District 200 schools from elementary through high school.
- Instructional programs - students are supported most of the day with a special education teacher and most of the students in the class are students with a disability.
- The SKILLS (Supporting Kids In Lifelong Learning Social-Emotional Skills) program goes all the way from elementary through high school and provides intensive social-emotional executive functioning and behavioral support to students. Students do have access to grade-level curriculum in this program.
- The Essentials program is another K-12 program; the name is derived from the learning standards students are working on (the Illinois Essential Elements which are linked to the Illinois learning standards). This program provides intensive services in the areas of daily life skills, functional academics, community awareness, recreation and leisure, vocational skills, and a variety of other skills that help students access the school community.
- Programs unique to elementary include:
  - PISA (Primary and Intermediate Supportive Academic) program which provides intensive special education services in reading, math, writing, social skills, behavior, speech, and language. The general education curriculum is modified in this program and based on the individual needs of the students within the classroom.
  - SAIL (Social Academic Integrated Learning) program which provides intensive services in communication, social interaction, sensory and behavioral integration, and how these come together to help student access their courses. This program services a wide range of students, with the primary eligibility area tending to be students with autism.
- A program unique to the secondary level is the Direct-level program. A special education teacher provides instruction in all of the general education courses in both middle and high school. While the general education curriculum is used, the special ed teacher makes adjustments based on the unique profile of the learners within that classroom.
- District 200 is seeing shifting trends within our special education population, and are seeing the largest growth in our elementary classrooms.
- Teacher shortage and hard-to-fill positions such as School Psychologists are not unique to District 200 but are also in the county, as well as at the state and federal levels.

There were questions and/or additional discussion on the following:

- Definition of push-in (specialist goes into the classroom and supports a particular lesson or with a particular skill) vs pull-out (remove the student from the classroom to provide support) services provided to students. Co-teaching is a more structured format of push-in services on a more consistent schedule.



- The differentiation between “resource” (a lot of the services are within the general education classroom) and direct programs (relates to what the subject matter is - customized and individualized based upon the students in the classroom).
- Students in the instructional programs and opportunities to work with other students outside of their classroom - conversations discussed with the IEP team for each student as to the makeup of their day and the best placement for the student during their day/schedule.
- Supports (teaching assistants) for these students if they are participating in some general education classrooms is dependent on the individual student.
- Parental involvement in the process and the touch points along the way - starts at the beginning with approval to do an evaluation, IEP meetings, etc. Communication is more frequent with parents of students with disabilities than those in a typical elementary classroom.
- IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings - in-person vs. virtual; prefer in-person, although some parents request virtual meetings.
- The intensity of services and which environment/level of programming for the student is best - the IEP team must first consider what is the least restrictive environment. Must have student-based data to indicate where the student needs to be serviced to make growth.
- In the event of a parent disagreement with placement for their student - encourage families to work with their case manager or speak to an administrator. Noted there is a designated special education director for each program.
- Middle schools, especially at Monroe - the targeted area for improvement as part of the Monroe facilities plan (noted this is not referencing the resource level of support - those spaces are distributed throughout the building). Referencing the specialized program and the advantages of those spaces being clustered vs. distributed in the building. Clustering provides increased services to students. An example is Monroe and the Essentials program - providing daily living skills, functional academics, recreation, and leisure. The issues with the location of the current kitchen used for these students, as well as spaces not being as ADA compliant as needed.
- The issue of the plans for Monroe having the redesigned area clustered away instead of centrally located so our special ed students can be part of the school community.
- Feedback from staff indicating it would be helpful to have two classrooms right next door to each other - noting shared specialists, health needs of students, etc.
- The number of instructional classrooms at Jefferson ECC - 5 sections out of 30.
- The number of students being served in the instructional level classrooms - an average of 6-8 students per classroom.
- The number of students in OOD (Out of District) programming and how those decisions are made (anywhere from 115 to 125 students in OOD). This is one of our most intensive specialized programs, as well as restricted. The involvement of the IEP team in the decision regarding OOD placement.
- Continuum of services - are we capable of providing that throughout the District in each building or does placement take kids out of their home school in some situations? To give the intensive services needed, some of the programs are clustered to specific locations within the district (driven by there not being enough students at each school and not labor market shortages).
- Connecting parents with resources to help them navigate the IEP process, use an advocate. Information is located on the ISBE site. Noted the transition plan for students once they turn 13.5 years old added as part of their IEP and includes steps/actions needed to help a student to be successful post-graduation.
- Out of District placements - schools across the state, at least 20 therapeutic day school partners; how the process works; approval to support the eligibility of a student for a specific

location; rules and requirements that need to be met, application process for placement of a student.

- Blended classrooms - push-in vs. pull-out; similar to our resource-level programming at the elementary level.
- When a resource student who may need reading or math support receives services - this is an individual student decision.
- Glad to see the “grow your own” aspect for staff; the students participating in the program are remarkable and believe in inclusivity and supporting our students. Students focusing on the special ed classrooms; specifically noted the Wheaton North internship program.
- Interaction with parents and the support needed - dealing with those that are not as supportive; processes for advocates, conflict resolution, etc. Using outside resources to help these parents.
- Multilingual parents accessing the teacher/school connection - exacerbated at the special education level. Noted the requirement to provide interpreters at every IEP meeting to translate if needed.
- Peer mentor program - because programs may move locations, may not feel part of any one building. Noted the reality of very heavy regulations and opening classrooms cannot always happen within a building. Have been trying to build a consistent path within a program, and the trajectories are much more consistent now.
- ISBE report card and District Dashboard - noted the growth from 2022 to 2023 among the IEP students. Do we attribute that to any specific change we made in our programming or demographic shift?

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS – Agenda Items & Non-Agenda Items**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **MOTION**

There being no further business to come before the Board in Open Session, Member Hjerpe moved, Member Rutledge seconded to adjourn the meeting. Upon a voice call being taken, all were in favor. **The motion carried 6-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM.

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**Dave Long, Secretary**

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**Rob Hanlon, President**