

Board of Education Highlights

March 11, 2009 - Wheaton Warrenville South High School

The Board took the following action:

The District is facing significant financial challenges due in part to economic factors confronting our state and country. In an effort to cope with these challenges, last fall the Board of Education convened a District Finance Committee to develop a plan of action. The Committee recommended, and the Board approved, a multi-phased strategy to cope with the budget deficit and maintain financial stability for District 200. The plan called for the District to reduce the 2009-10 budget, issue working cash bonds to augment diminishing cash reserves, and to reach a balanced budget within three years. Last night the Board took significant steps to implement that plan.

In order to develop a list of possible budget reduction items, the Superintendent met with principals at all buildings, along with his administrative cabinet, to examine areas that could be reduced with minimal impact on student learning. The rationale behind those meetings was that the people working directly with the actual budget items would best know where reductions would be possible without affecting student learning. This list was refined and posted on the District's website, www.cusd200.org. The list was also distributed to all employees in the District and the Superintendent held two information sessions for all staff where they were invited to offer additional suggestions to meet the budget reduction targets.

Following this extensive and transparent process, the Board of Education approved the Finance Committee recommendations and the budget reductions for 2009-10 for approximately \$7.4 million. Of the original recommendations, the Board reinstated four reduction items:

1. The proposal to reduce high school workbooks, at a cost savings of \$70,000 was postponed for one year to allow for the review and study of their use, costs, funding options, and alternatives.
2. The Board also returned middle school "B" teams to the 09-10 budget, for \$151,000. They did ask the administration to continue discussions with the Wheaton Park District to explore alternative program opportunities.
3. High school intramural programs, at \$11,600, were also returned to the budget for one year to allow time to study possible alternative options.
4. Although the start of orchestra instruction for students was moved from fourth grade to fifth grade to be consistent with the start of band instruction, the Board asked the administration to more closely examine the \$15,000 stipend associated with the fourth grade orchestra and explore less costly options for providing support for the fifth grade orchestra students.

Finally, to support the second recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Board approved a resolution declaring the intent to issue Working Cash Fund Bonds in the amount of \$20 million. A public hearing concerning the issuance of these Working Cash Fund Bonds will be held March 25, 2009 at Lowell Elementary School. Board adoption of the resolution is scheduled for the April 15 Board meeting.

Next Meeting:

March 25 – Lowell Elementary School