

NOTES
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET PUBLIC FORUM
COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200
March 3, 2010

The Board of Education conducted a public forum for input on the proposed budget reductions. The forum began at 7:00 PM at Hubble Middle School, 3S600 Herrick Road, Warrenville, IL.

The following Board Members were present:

Andy Johnson
 Rosemary Swanson
 John Bomher
 Joann Coghill
 Barbara Intihar
 Ken Knicker
 Marie Slater

President Johnson stated that the Board values the input from the community, both at this forum and the many emails that have been received. During the public comment, President Johnson requested that the comments/questions be kept to three minutes or less so that the Board can hear from as many who wish to speak. Questions can be answered this evening after all speakers are heard from. If a previous speaker has addressed your questions/concerns, speakers can pass, thus allowing more speakers the opportunity to address other topics. Public speaking can be intimidating so the audience was asked to hold their applause so the meeting remains respectful of all positions. President Johnson shared a brief history of how the district reached this deficit and reviewed the process and timeline to develop the reduction recommendation from administration. Everyone's goal in this room is the best for the children of District 200.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Speaker	Julianne Blatner
Topic	PACE Program
Comments	Student at Emerson, attends PACE classes, program teaches more than just reading, teaches confidence

Speaker	Kristen Margaglione
Topic	Class Size, Elementary Reading Program

Comments	Speaking for many Emerson Parents, aware of difficult situation, all cutbacks affect students, parents would like a voice in what is cut, younger children need more attention, maintain class size caps instead of targets, request that the reading program be untouched, reading is the most vital component of a child's education, aides are needed to address more kids needs, need to be strong readers to succeed at higher levels later in life, make the cuts less detrimental to students, value extra programs but must maintain core academic program first, submitted signatures from other Emerson parents
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Speaker	Cathy Nugent
Topic	PACE, Maintain Librarians
Comments	Thanks for keeping PACE program, library cuts go against reading and the LLC teachers are vital for getting into 21 st century, helping to teach technology, thanks for keeping swim team, it is good to have a variety of offerings for kids

Speaker	Bonnie Disbrow
Topic	AP Course Offerings
Comments	Each and every student deserves academic challenges, offering AP courses gives those students that are motivated to tap into their abilities, a chance to dive deeper into a subject that helps a student decide what he or she wants to study in post high school, colleges like to see rigorous class choices, students can received generous scholarships based on AP classes, they can take more rigorous classes in college, be flexible and fair in choosing cuts, understand there are far reaching effects to the cuts that impact a student's career

Speaker	Kristin McCoyd
Topic	Reading
Comments	Aware of problems the district is facing, many programs – athletic and academic are on the cutting board, all cuts will affect a child but have to be made, all students are at different stages in their academic journey, has a concern over class sizes, she has one child that thrives and one child that struggles, interventions at Whittier have kept him from being even farther behind, what the average person doesn't realize is the huge range of reading levels at primary grades, cut of reading aides and increased class sizes will make teachers' jobs harder, more students in classrooms makes it harder and the class will move at a slower pace, hard to develop groups, in the first year of bigger class sizes you will see behavior problems and in the second year you will see academic problems

Speaker	Jeanne Hoffer
Topic	PACE
Comments	Board member on Gates and has been working with District 200 to develop appropriate learning for gifted students, have made great progress, understand difficult situation, all students deserve an appropriate education, PACE program gives kids emotional stability and confidence, they learn to fit in with the group, have strong ISAT scores that help the district, thanks for keeping the program

Speaker	Andrew Schmit
Topic	Kindergarten PE
Comments	Cutting the kindergarten PE program double penalizes kindergarten classes with no PE and larger classes sizes, shared an article on the value of PE, asked where students will go during the teacher's plan period

Speaker	Janet Mathis
Topic	Elementary Cuts
Comments	Cutting elementary teachers and aides will snowball at the middle school level, PE cut will not exceed the long term costs of obesity, please do not cut elementary teachers and aides or PE at kindergarten, range of student types with bigger classes will leave students behind, freeze salaries, reduce benefits, run a referendum, make more cuts at the middle and high school levels instead

Speaker	Julie Georgiou
Topic	Administrative Cuts
Comments	After years of wasteful spending the district is faced with making cuts that are vital to developing children, look at the administrative census and cut them instead of front line workers, do a study of how administrators work, Board agreed to teacher contracts they knew they could not afford, what other compensations will Dr. Harris get to supplement his contract, we paid those legal fees, still paying for Catalani and Drury and paying for Baker, how much are we paying for the person that is doing what Baker should be doing, cut redundant administrative positions and reduce the pay of the rest, is it necessary to have an HR Assistant Superintendent and a Director, do we need a Special Services Assistant Superintendent and two Assistant Directors, one of those assistant directors gets money to co-chair summer school, there is a retired principal working at one of our middle schools as a teacher getting a salary and a retirement, this cost us \$120,000 a year to work in this district, everyday wastes by the district, most glaring is the signs for Board parking spots, Board members were elected to serve they can walk with everyone the chumps that put them in office, elitism to have parking, have to hold this Board accountable for our hard earned money

Speaker	Sheila Thorse
Topic	Counselor Usage
Comments	If counselors are decreased it will have a significant affect on student success, they get parents through the process of dealing with adolescents, have an impact on educational and emotional well being, counselors provide interventions, the needs of the whole child must be met, listen to them and guide them and help them make good decisions, I speak for all middle school counselors when I say we will work with the Board before you make this cut

Speaker	Deb Ryder
Topic	Enhancement Aides

Comments	These aides are poorly named, they provide a significant program for kids that struggle to read, their goal is to get them out of the program and back into their classrooms, this is a gift, aides work closely with a reading specialist and change kids ability to read forever, these aides are like eye glasses and open up opportunities, they are very important to kids
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Speaker	Alex Ahnet
Topic	Across the Board Cuts
Comments	Cutting teachers and cutting services is not the best way to solve the budget crisis, increasing class sizes will cause one teacher to have to wear all of the hats of those cut, cuts last year affected our family directly, while all of this is happening the union has not been invited to the table, contracts are up for negotiations this year and why not invite them in to help solve the problem, a lot of teachers are here tonight and I know they care a lot about the jobs of their co-workers, if you move ahead with these cuts some will lose jobs and some will have to pick-up more work that others use to do, all employees should take a salary decrease of 10%, if everyone from the top to the bottom gets a decrease it will help make up the difference, have to compromise, I love teachers at our school but these economic circumstances are bad, better to cut than lose a job, the Board has a difficult decision to make, your name on the ballot means you assumed the responsibility

Speaker	Mark O. Stern
Topic	Budget
Comments	Here to offer an alternate solution through shared sacrifice, we heard the impact of teacher cuts from parents tonight, the district has had several non-referendum tax increases, should have parents pay more fees, administrators should have the same benefits as all, the union should take a pay freeze, in the private sector people have to do more with less and the union needs to do the same, they must give up stipends, the Board has to bargain a reasonable contract, if raises had been limited the budget would be balanced today, the proposal as written is unacceptable, my proposal that I will give you a copy of and it will be on my website balances the budget

Speaker	Bill Repke
Topic	Kindergarten PE Budget
Comment	The decisions the Board is faced with are difficult, please retain PE at kindergarten, works for the American Heart Association and they are very concerned, obesity and weight issues have tripled, this has to be turned around, the benefits of PE include less behavior problems and less illness, good exercise habits as children means they are more likely to be healthy adults, I am proud of District 200 for being a shining example of health, only 8% of districts achieve this level of excellence

Speaker	Cindy Hummel
Topic	Non-tenured Layoffs

Comments	Thank you for the budget process and the quick responses to emails, there are many wonderful teachers that will lose their jobs while less dedicated teachers will keep theirs due to tenure, maybe now is the time to stop using seniority on staffing decisions, would like to see the Board be proactive and retain teachers that give their all and not keep those purely because they have tenure
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Speaker	Kelley Gillenwater
Topic	LLC & ELL
Comments	I am a former employee and student of the district, go back to the 1980's when we went through a similar budget issue, students suffered, keep this in mind when you make choices today, how many of you have seen the caseloads of the Librarians, they are the heart of every school, every student visits the LLC, volunteers can only do so much, what is the portion of the ELL money we get and what does it cost to educate them, illegal immigrants are guaranteed three years of education, why are we favoring some over others, what does it cost us to translate newsletters and documents, quit paying more to educate some groups of students

Speaker	Chris Myers
Topic	Sports Cuts
Comments	A lot of teachers will be laid off, consider a salary freeze, many here have done that, keep the nurses, I support education over athletics, I support athletic programs but treat them like club sports, Board needs to be aware that they reductions in income may not end this year and may go on for several years, these issues will not go away

Speaker	Linda Pecharich
Topic	Administrator/Teacher Salary Cuts
Comments	I am speaking from the heart, the Board needs to think long and hard about the quality of education children will receive if these drastic cuts are made, large class sizes with one teacher and no aide, ELL students and special needs students will have their needs met, but everyday kids will be left behind so that the teacher can help kids that need more help, make administrators pay for their health care, ask administrators to take a 15% pay cut, tough decisions but the ones you placed so far are not the way to go, we will hold the Board accountable, kids only get one chance to get a good education, start with the top first before you affect kids, don't make children's education suffer

Speaker	Bobbi McFarland
Topic	Counselors
Comments	Impressed by the professionalism of the Board during this process, concerned about the proposed cuts to counselor positions, our duties are varied and we benefit the students and the climate of the school

Speaker	Sharon Carroll
Topic	Instructional Supplies

Comments	Thank you for the forum and letting parents raise funds to support swimming and for not cutting PACE reading, many student handbooks are not being used and the books come home empty, stop spending money on books and then the teachers use the copier to make their own materials, please look at the materials being purchased
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Speaker	Jacki Caputo
Topic	Class Size
Comments	Class sizes are my main concern, class sizes above the average of the last decade, please take great care in choosing class sizes, consider caps not targets, this is not what District 200 is about, fearful that the decisions will make the district suffer as a whole, release administrators, need to operate leaner and meaner, why do we need the number of directors and assistant superintendents, look at furlough days, look harder for other ways to make cuts

Speaker	Mary Ann Vitone
Topic	Class Size
Comments	No question the district is in debt, it doesn't matter if District 200 is on par with other districts, what matters is to get the district on track, let's lead the way for districts being more responsible, there is no choice but to cut jobs and programs, it is unfortunate but the Board left no choice, cut administrative benefits, freeze salaries, give the funds to students first, the majority of the situation is in the Board's control, have to work within the levy every year, it is incorrect to say the district has no control over contracts – you can say no, the union and the Board are putting people in the position of making decisions to hurt kids to save their pay, raises of 7% put us in this position

Speaker	Tim Brink
Topic	Head Count Reductions
Comments	I echo the comments of Mr. Stern and Mrs. Vitone, during a recession when you are faced with deficit budgets salaries are frozen, to what extent did you consider that? Dr. Baker stated that the district is in discussion with both unions now and all administrative contracts are under review. What will that mean to this budget review? Dr. Baker stated that any part of any of the negotiated items will affect this budget.

Speaker	Julie Westberg
Topic	Class Size/Caps
Comments	If class sizes are increased and with no caps on their size students will fall under the radar, how can teachers educate and care in classes over 30, what about the child that needs extra help but the teacher doesn't have time like students with IEP's and 504 plans, class sizes are the key to everything else teachers do, can you honestly say only increasing by one student, that is a lie, we will not be able to replace what we have with larger classes

Speaker	Joanne Pschigoda
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Topic	PE – Kindergarten
Comments	You are looking for everyone to do more with less, asking students to do more or same with less, keep fitness program for kindergarten, heard tonight from doctors and pediatricians and the lung association about the importance of physical activity, Naperville is showing what fitness has done for learning and the benefits of physical activity on learning

Speaker	Trevor Simpson
Topic	PACE
Comments	Thanks for the work the Board has done, has kids at Pleasant Hill and in the PACE program, there are plenty of statistics that show differentiation doesn't help PACE kids, the mission of the district is to inspire all to reach their highest level, the Board has difficult decisions to make and I hope you hear what is being said tonight

Speaker	David Kafer
Topic	Salary Cuts
Comments	The Board goals address a climate of culture to lead to the 21 st century, do the items on the list of cuts create the climate and culture, do they support the goals and mission, one is to negotiate agreements that provide financial stability and predictability, money isn't going to keep showing up, PMA shows a larger deficit next year, how many will be fired next year, money comes from the people here – not from the state or the feds, I reiterate that we need to seriously look at salaries and pensions, we are on an unsustainable track right now, don't take away from the children

Speaker	Kristen Seely
Topic	Budget Control
Comments	These proposed cuts are very unimaginative, I am hearing a universal concern for education, educators need to get into the real world, Board has to help them get there, this is the right time to ask for concessions from faculty and administrators, ask teachers to give back, there is waste in the schools

Speaker	Beth D'Antonio
Topic	Budget
Comments	I echo some of the thoughts tonight, reading support is necessary, very clear that expenses are going to out pace revenue, salaries are the biggest driver of expenses, rate of growth built into the steps and levels is unsustainable, this is why we got into the boat we are in today

Speaker	Pam Bassi
Topic	"B" Teams & Administrative Salaries
Comments	I was on the "B" Team committee, there are ways to eliminate expenses, don't need buses, students go home with parents, there was a petition with 538 signatures to save "B" Teams, administrators' salaries have to be reduced and they have to contribute to their benefits

Speaker	Lisa Seleski
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Topic	General
Comments	Mistakes made in the past haunt our present, put individual benefits aside and assess the big picture, the charge is to maintain our kids education even in tough economic times, looking at average administrator salary and it seems low to me but discovered that the part-time FTE's are averaged in too so that isn't a fair average, looking at the numbers we pay a lot for administrator salaries and they don't pay for their health care, I was disappointed to find out who is on the finance committee, the community is not represented, with regard to the elementary cuts – aides will affect all children's education, those not here tonight are most affected, special interest groups that are the loudest are getting their way, please allow all students to learn to their highest potential

Speaker	Judith Kennedy
Topic	Kindergarten PE
Comments	Curriculum has changed dramatically, there is no nap time, not much time spent on socialization skills, state standards have risen, today's kindergarten kids are engaged in real reading and math, I believe the youngest children need the physical activity the most, have evidence it enhances learning in the classroom, benefits of PE on learning, we are losing sight of what is developmentally appropriate, we put more sitting and listening time on the youngest students, I encourage you to find ways to reduce time across all class levels instead

Speaker	Nancy Height
Topic	Kindergarten PE
Comments	My child loves her PE class and all that she is learning, childhood obesity is rising, please don't cut kindergarten PE

Speaker	Heather Evans
Topic	Budget
Comments	We moved to Wheaton because it is one of the last communities in IL with a great school district and a safe place to raise kids, few other places can you trust your neighbors and everyone helps each other, if you take away good schools good people will move away and we will lose property values, we can't let our priorities get out of order, we are paying teachers and coaches for student opportunities, the teacher is in charge of giving my kids a good education, we want our teachers to make good money – not administrators, the average pay of an administrator should be less then the average teacher pay, education is the key to growth in our community or we will become just another crummy community in a corrupt state

Speaker	Tim Herr
Topic	Salaries & Cuts

Comments	I echo what others say, don't envy the task ahead of the Board, demand a good education for our kids, this district has a good reputation, I demand fiscal responsibility, budget cuts and salary cuts were forbidden to the finance committee, staff may have to take a pay freeze, teachers must be reviewed and not just kept because of seniority, you must run the district like a business, this budget does not fully address the deficit, need to look to technology to save, there are other solutions out there besides cutting staff, education is the key to growth in a community
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Speaker	Dr. David Dungan
Topic	PE/Athletics
Comments	I am a pediatrician and I want to impress the importance of retaining kindergarten PE, it is not prudent to eliminate education on healthy life styles, sports teams will contract opportunities for physical activity, there is a correlation between physical fitness and learning, the emotion here tonight is real and happens every day, we have to try to maintain health to combat stress

Speaker	Christopher & Marissa Annis & Kira Bolos
Topic	PACE Reading Program
Comments	Thanks for keeping the PACE program, the program gives a chance to struggle and succeed, submitted a petition with 110 names

Speaker	Andrew Kucienski
Topic	K-3 Funding
Comments	I understand the issue you face and the decisions you have to make, not all of your proposed cuts are perceived as correct by all, provided articles regarding class size levels at kindergarten through grade 3, and an executive summary from the Dept. of Education, shows that having smaller class sizes at the lower grades is like getting more months of schooling, can't find evidence where sports activities can do that, K-3 is the most important time, budget cuts have to be more than slashing, please look at partial fees for athletics

Speaker	Cathy Mousseau
Topic	
Comments	Thanks for the opportunity to speak and for the time you put in to helping my kids, heard a lot of comments about the administrators, it concerns me that the administrators being targeted tonight, they are the decision makers and they provide input and guidance to the teachers, we need to look at other school districts and compare ourselves, if we fall to the bottom of the range we won't attract and keep good administrators, I don't want to see teachers cut but I am saying let's be smart about it and really look at what we need to run a solid school district

Speaker	Susan Cain
Topic	

Comments	In my practice at work I help organizations become more effective, I have some observations to share, you have not demonstrated any creativity in these budget cuts, the clients are the children, in the Tribune today there was an article about superintendent salaries soaring, you under estimate the community, parents care more about your budget then the administrators that we have to do this, they should take pay cuts, thinking like a group is not helpful, you need to shake it up
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Speaker	Katerina Bolos
Topic	
Comments	WNHS student, thank for not cutting PACE program, concerned about increased class sizes and cutting staff, there were 33 in my math class and it was overwhelming, the reductions of classified positions is not much money compared to freezing the larger salaries of administrators, if “B” sports are eliminated it tells kids that if they aren’t really good they don’t matter, most of these concerns are shared by the whole community

Speaker	Michael Dalan
Topic	PE/Sports
Comments	I am a chiropractor and I coach sports, this is really about pride of ownership, we want it to be all we want it to be, cuts affect that ownership, we want teachers well paid and programs effective, cutting “B” sports removes level of ownership for kids, all programs get kids into the fabric of the school and reduce the risk of them getting into wrong activities on their own, kindergarten PE is needed, physical programs in childhood lead to it becoming a habit that helps later in life, don’t cut sports, tonight you heard applause for the same topics over and over

Speaker	Mary Juarez
Topic	Working Cash Fund Balance/Union Negotiations
Comments	As I was reviewing the estimated budget I wondered if you could consider using more of the fund balance instead of doing the cuts, salaries of administrators is a small percentage of the whole line item, cutting aides won’t really impact the problem, biggest portion is our teachers, I think we have to make sure we have a line on how much education we are going to pay for

President Johnson stated that the Board appreciates the thought and comments and the value that was brought here tonight. On March 10, the Board will discuss this topic at the Board meeting. The meeting will be held at Whittier Elementary School. The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, March 8 and will present their recommendation on March 10. The Board will need to take some action on March 24 on any teacher releases.

Member Bomher expressed their appreciation to all that came and spoke and all that came to listen. Member Bomher stated that the Board members are volunteers. When he is asked why he is on the Board, he tells them he is fortunate to live in a great community. The passion tonight is evidence of how much people care about our schools. If only a few came he would feel badly. All of the Board members have been passionate advocates for children and share that concern

and passion and all want it to continue being an exemplary school district.

Mrs. Intihar stated that some misinformation was put out tonight and would like to see the correct information shared with the community. Dr. Baker stated that the administrators will review all of the requests from tonight and present information on March 10. Some of the information was right from the state and staff will make sure that the information shared on March 10 is accurate. Sometimes the state calculates data a little differently and that causes the discrepancy.

Member Swanson thanked everyone for coming. The comment that resonated the most for her is the pride of ownership. District 200 is blessed to have parents that care so much about the kids. Member Swanson stated that to clear up the assumption about a raise, this is a contract negotiations year so Board members cannot talk publicly about the negotiations. Assumptions were used in the data base to project where we could be with certain scenarios and are not a statement of where the Board is headed.

The contract for the new superintendent will be posted soon and will be open for all to see on the web site. The salary is set for three years. President Johnson stated that there are no done deals on the list provided. All recommendations are still be looked at and reviewed before any action is taken.