

**POTTSGROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNITY BUDGET ADVISORY TASK FORCE
REPORT SUMMARY - May 10, 2011**

In the face of unprecedented budget challenges, the Pottsgrove Board of School Directors (school board) directed the administration to form a Community Budget Advisory Task Force (task force) to be charged with the development of a feasibility report on ways to operate the Pottsgrove School District in a more cost-effective manner, and how to prioritize budget cuts. Like most districts around the region and nation, Pottsgrove is facing serious budget deficits of \$1 to \$2 million for at least the next two years. Actual numbers will rely greatly on the amount of state funding the district receives. The district is also facing a crunch from state limits on property tax increases, the expiration of current caps on electric rates, and potential increases in union contracts. As of May 2011, the Pottsgrove Education Association (teacher's union), the district's administrators, and the district's secretaries have all agreed to a one-year pay freeze.

At the initial meeting of the task force held February 1, 2011, six sub-committees were formed in the areas of Educational Programs, Energy and Facilities, Extracurricular Activities, Student Services, Technology, and Transportation. Each sub-committee consisted of 14 - 20 volunteers (staff and community members) with varied backgrounds and was charged with finding a 10% savings in their selected area. At their first meeting, all sub-committees were provided with background information on key programs and practices, as well as relevant laws and regulations. The sub-committee chairs presented their findings to the school board and administration at the April 12 school board meeting.

The entire report includes details of possible reductions in an amount slightly less than \$1 million for the 2011-2012 budget, if all of the findings were to be accepted by the school board. The findings of the task force are advisory in nature, as the school board is the governing board that makes final budget decisions. All meeting agendas, notes, PowerPoint presentations, as well as the final report are available at www.pgsd.org.

The K12 Educational Program Sub-committee included five (5) findings for reduction in expenses up to \$153,603. The recommendations were:

- Elimination of the Mandarin Chinese program at the high school
- Elimination of some special-pay positions
- Reduction in the expenses associated with staff development
- Reductions in expenses associated with new teacher induction
- Implementation of a PGSD cyber school to, in part, reduce costs associated with cyber-charter payments

The Energy and Facilities Sub-committee recognized current initiatives to reduce energy consumption and associated costs and focused on purchasing practices, consolidation of summer programs, reducing overtime, employee benefit contributions, and renewable energy as additional means to reduce operating costs. Also analyzed were; cleaning processes, reducing building checks and reducing fuel consumption as opportunity for higher efficiencies. Seventeen (17) recommendations were offered amounting to \$143,000 in potential savings.

The Extra-curricular Programs Sub-committee reviewed a variety of cost reduction proposals that were presented in five (5) findings for a potential reduction in expenses of \$128,053

including:

- Eliminating some programs
- Establishing minimum numbers of participants to conduct programs
- Increased fundraising efforts
- Increasing ticket prices for a wider variety of events and concerts
- Reducing costs by utilizing volunteers.

The Student Services and Special Education Sub-committee presented three (3) findings for a reduction in expenses of \$463,520. The recommendations were:

- Shift some eligible purchases from the regular operating budget to Access funds
- Transition some students from outside program providers back to newly implemented and comparable programs in the District
- Reduce the number of instructional and 1:1 aides

The Technology Sub-committee found potential for saving an additional \$72,500 from an already reduced budget in the context of ten (10) findings. Findings included:

- Implementation of technologies and practices to reduce toner consumption
- Switching from Cisco-branded to other competitive network hardware
- Funding some projects using capital reserves rather than the operating budget
- Reducing some licensing costs through implementation of Google Schools
- Reductions in telecommunication costs
- Studying the use of thin client technology in some settings

The Pupil Transportation Sub-committee developed four (4) findings with a defined cost savings of \$129,000. Those saving come from the following:

- Elimination of mid-day kindergarten bus runs
- Elimination of elementary after school club and tutorial bus runs
- Elimination of secondary after school activity bus runs
- Defer the purchase of one (1) school bus

Additional findings were developed for which more research is required in order to identify cost saving potential. These findings included increasing walking distance before becoming eligible for bus service and the consolidation of some existing bus runs.

The task force was created at the direction of the school board and these findings were offered to the school board for their consideration. This document is intended only to be a brief overview of these findings. Readers who are looking for additional information are encouraged to read the entire report online at

http://www.pgsd.org/Portals/0/_PGSD_Resources/budgetcmtefinalrpt.pdf.