

Superintendent Don Johnson sent an e-mail communication to all staff on March 8 about the Compensation Committee and legislative funding for K-12 public education. Here are the questions and answers he covered in the communication:

**What is the status of the legislative funding proposals that are being discussed?**

There have been three basic proposals presented by Governor Walker, Senate Republicans, and Assembly Republicans. There are many similarities, however, the Senate proposal is much more moderate in nature than the other two. Basically, the much publicized proposal from the governor would cut funding for most school districts in Wisconsin by \$150 per student for 2015-16, which equates to 1.5%. For MCPASD, this is almost \$1,000,000. This is obviously a problem, as we are doing all we can to keep class sizes at current levels, maintain our efforts to support programs to close the achievement/opportunity gaps, maintain our current level of benefits, and provide reasonable salary increases to all staff.

At this time, there has been a significant backlash from school boards, superintendents, and parents around the state opposing this funding cut for 2015-16. There has been major concern coming from both traditionally Democratic and Republican areas of the state. Although there has been no formal proposal, several legislative Republican leaders have indicated that they are hoping that an updated Legislative Fiscal Bureau report due in April/May will provide more available funding to support public schools.

At this point, there is no good way to predict whether this hope will become a reality.

**Are there other factors that significantly impact the MCPASD budget?**

Yes. Most notably, our health insurance costs. We expect to have new bids submitted to us next week, with an additional week or two to interpret the proposals and verify the specific details of the plan. Estimates have ranged from an increase of between 10% and 20%. We are very hopeful that the increase will be closer to 10%. The cost of a 10% increase would be approximately \$800,000. In addition to insurance, we are projecting an additional 90 new students who will enroll as regular in-district members. This will help offset some of the projected budget shortfalls. Lori Ames, Tom Wohlleber, and the full administrative team are also looking at a variety of options to streamline operations and save money. We are doing all we can to look at reductions and efficiencies that do not impact current programming and class sizes.

**What is the status of the Compensation Committee? Are there any changes being considered by the Board for next year?**

Much background, education, and investigation has been pursued by the Compensation Committee. No proposals have been sent to the Board of Education by the committee. The next committee meeting will be held on April 15th at 4:30 PM. It is expected that the committee work will take more time than originally scheduled. The Board will be conducting a Discussion/Work Session tomorrow night to allow for an update on the work and status of the Compensation Committee. The topics for tomorrow include:

- Brief summary of process of Compensation Committee
- Review of Content of Live Binder Documentation (Documents Considered by the Compensation Committee)

- Draft of a Possible Salary Schedule (This will involve looking at other established plans from other districts)
- The Concept of a “Cross-Over Plan” for teachers to transition from current schedule to a new schedule, if and when a new plan is established
- Discussion of the challenge of moving to a new plan with a budget cut of 1.5% or a 0% increase in funding for the next biennium

The Board will be discussing these items, but will NOT be making any decisions, as no proposals have been forwarded from the Compensation Committee.

**Is there any chance that staff salaries will be reduced next year?**

No. The Board has stated that it will not cut salaries/pay.

**Can faculty/staff count on a cost-of-living increase for next year?**

This is a topic of discussion for the Board tomorrow evening, and in the future. My sense is that this is a high Board priority, but they must consider the full impact of a final budget plan passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Walker. We hope to have more clarity on this by June, but there is no way to predict a final timeline for completion.

**If we don't have any new funding, how will can we implement a new Compensation System?**

This is a key question that the Compensation Committee, the administration, and the Board continue to consider. Most all revised systems need additional funding of between 2%-5% to implement. There is a sense that at some time in the future, the legislature and governor must recognize that compensation systems cannot be revised, provide innovative incentives, and be supported, without at least some modest additional funding.

Finally, please say thanks to the Compensation Committee Members. It is important to recognize the time commitment that the Compensation Committee has made as we consider alternatives to our current salary schedule. I believe it is safe to say that everyone on the committee is interested in a compensation plan that will attract and retain quality faculty/staff, recognize the career aspirations of dedicated professionals in all of our schools and departments, and provide a sustainable model that is fair and philosophically sound. Please thank the individuals on this committee for their commitment to the entire district.