

Statement made by Leigh Prince during the budget committee meeting 1/25/23:

I am concerned about the significant decrease in this budget before you from previous budgets which were at more educationally sound levels while being sensitive to taxpayers. I am concerned that such a steep cut will result in significant loss of needed programs and support for our students and teachers. This district has been and continues to be in a period of great transition between administrative models and transition to 21st century skills in accordance with the national and state standards. Some have focused their attention on the academic director position, I believe that our academic director has been working hard to develop a road map for the school in terms of curriculum and instructional models.

There have been many valuable changes in recent years, especially to the delivery of middle school education, in response to our changing world, the different needs of this generation of learners, and the skill expectations for students upon entering high schools.

Although some of this work may have been curtailed due to Covid and then her assuming an interim principal role, it seems to me that the institutional knowledge, data driven curricular planning, and skills of our academic director will be essential as the district moves to begin writing the new strategic plan.

While it is reasonable to assess the long term need for this position with a shift back to a superintendent and principal administrative model, eliminating the Academic Director position, whilst the permanent administration is not even fully hired, seems premature and detrimental at this juncture. I would suggest that it would be beneficial to allow administration to evaluate the organization of responsibilities, consider changes that have occurred in the years since implementing the district admin model, and identify how to best meet those needs with thoughtful transition of roles and responsibilities in a sustainable way.

The other lines that the School Board reduced in the budget were to Library and Technology education. The Library Media Specialist/Tech integrationist is an educational position with two interconnected focus areas, library and educational technology implementation. It seems to be the technology integrator aspect of this role that the board would like to eliminate. This educator works directly with students and teachers to implement the use of technology into instruction, collaborates with and trains teachers in technology use to support learning, and provides direct instruction in technology skills and digital citizenship to students in accordance with information and communication technology standards. Without this position learning will absolutely be lost. The school finally has the three support aspects in place to address the technology and educational needs. There is now network/data/technology administration support through a contract with a tech coordinator, support for IT to address hardware and connectivity the teachers have been requesting for years, and the educational professional to support implementation of technology for teaching and learning. These are three different and essential functions. The Library media

specialist/tech integrationist is a necessary member of the teaching team to meet the objectives put forth on the current strategic plan, and a resource the teachers have stated is very important.

I feel the cuts the board made in these areas on the budget before you produce short term savings with potentially significant negative long term consequences. I respectfully ask that you restore the budget by \$73,221.00 with recommendation that \$36,597 be added to technology (Budget Line 1120) and \$36,624.00 to library (line 2220).