

## **1925 COMMITTEE NOTES**

### **1925 Committee Meeting No. 2 – Oct. 16, 2024**

#### **Brief District Overview**

Dr. Susannah O’Bara, Superintendent of Schools, provided a brief district overview. Dr. O’Bara noted that since the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, Denton ISD has lost \$6,592,071 of School Health and Related Services (SHARS) funding. The district has also experienced a \$7,438,226 transportation funding gap, safety and security annual funding requirements from House Bill 3 totaling \$4,440,228, and \$10,000,000 in 2023 raises based on assurances that the \$4 billion in the state budget would have flowed to public schools.

As a result, Denton ISD adopted a \$19,917,396 deficit budget for 2024-2025.

Dr. O’Bara further detailed Denton ISD’s enrollment vs. teacher count from 2019 to 2025. Despite the district’s nearly constant increase in enrollment over the past six years, Denton ISD’s teacher count has decreased over the past year. In addition, Dr. O’Bara explained that what is spent on any particular student depends on the characteristics of the district and the needs of our students.

Dr. O’Bara also noted Denton ISD’s budget allotment changes from 2019-2020 to 2024-2025. In 2019, Denton ISD allocated 77.9 percent for instruction, 17.2 percent for district operations, 3.1 percent for general administration and 1.8 percent for other. In 2024, Denton ISD allocated 72.7 percent on instruction, 22.4 percent on district operations, 2.8 percent on general administration and 2.1 percent for other. The 5.2 percent decrease in instruction and the 5.2 percent increase in district operations is largely due to record inflation. Denton ISD’s fixed operations costs have increased over the past five years while funding for public schools has not.

Denton ISD’s overall staff composition consists of 53 percent teachers, 17 percent paraprofessionals, 14 percent auxiliary, 12 percent professional and support, 3 percent campus administration and 1 percent district administration. Since 2023-2024, the percentage of Denton ISD’s budget that is allocated for the executive cabinet has decreased from 0.55 percent in 2023-2024 to 0.44 percent for 2025-2026.

Deficit areas for Denton ISD include \$2,240,955 for Pre-K programming, \$9,859,333 for special education, \$7,438,226 for transportation and \$4,440,228 for safety and security.

#### **Classroom Support Positions**

Dr. Lisa Thibodeaux, Executive Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, and Sandy Brown, Executive Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning, provided an overview of classroom support positions. At the elementary level, under the current model, there are 122 support teachers for 26 campuses consisting of instructional coaches, reading interventionists, math interventionists, reading recovery, descubriendo la lectura (DLL), elementary expo

specialists and bilingual/English as a second language specialists. Under a proposed model, a potential 6.5 percent cut would result in eight fewer support positions (114) for 28 campuses, resulting in an approximate savings of \$568,000.

At the secondary level, under the current model, there are 10 support teachers for nine campuses consisting of secondary math coaches, digital learning specialists and professional development specialists. Under a proposed model, a potential 10 percent cut would result in nine support teachers for nine campuses, resulting in an approximate savings of \$71,000.

### **Athletics Overview**

Joey Florence, Director of Athletics and Dr. Chivonne Kiser, Assistant Director of Athletics, provided an athletics overview. Dr. Kiser explained the researched-based impact of athletics as it relates to academic success, career readiness and personal development. Dr. Kiser noted that student-athletes miss 9-12 less days of school per year compared to non-athletes, perform better academically compared to those not involved in extracurricular activities and have transferable skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, perseverance, discipline, time-management and accountability that are fostered through athletic participation.

Denton ISD offers 12 UIL-sanctioned sports in high school, five in middle school and 28 girls and boys programs across nine middle schools and four high schools.

Sports with programs offered to boys include football and baseball. Sports with programs offered to girls include volleyball and softball. Sports with programs offered to boys and girls include basketball, soccer, swimming, water polo, cross country, golf, track and tennis.

Football had the highest average sport participation at both the high school and middle school level, with 1,025 students participating in high school and 932 students participating in middle school. Across all sports at the middle school and high school level, total participation has increased from 7,488 students district-wide in 2021-2022 to 8,545 students district-wide in 2023-2024.

### **Fine Arts Overview**

Eddy Russell, Director of Fine Arts and Kelley McGee, Assistant Director of Fine Arts, provided a fine arts overview. Mr. Russell detailed the impact of fine arts on academic achievement, life readiness and engagement. Mr. Russell explained that seniors from the Class of 2024 who were enrolled in four years of fine arts courses had a 99.5 percent graduation rate. In addition, data also shows that Denton ISD fine arts students are more likely to achieve master of STARR in English, biology and history than students not involved in fine arts.

Through fine arts, students learn creativity, problem solving, perseverance, focus and collaboration skills that will help them be successful in any career. Students involved in fine arts also have a low occurrence of absenteeism and miss less school compared to students not involved in secondary fine arts programs. For the 2024-2025 school year, there were 15,828

students enrolled in fine arts courses at the secondary level, with 134 teachers. At the elementary level for 2024-2025, there were 14,468 students enrolled in fine arts courses with 52 teachers.

Combined, athletics and fine arts make up just 0.9 percent of Denton ISD's total budget, and a 7 percent combined reduction for both departments would result in a potential \$218,960 savings.