

## **1925 COMMITTEE NOTES**

### **1925 Committee Meeting No. 3 – Nov. 20, 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.

Additionally, from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024, Denton ISD’s general fund expenditures related to instruction decreased from 77.9 percent to 72.7 percent while district operations increased from 17.2 percent to 22.4 percent. The increase in district operations costs are attributed to record inflation at more than 20 percent, as well as an increase in utility costs.

#### **Administrative Costs and Reductions**

Dr. O’Bara provided an overview of Denton ISD’s Executive Cabinet, as well as its payroll compared to neighboring districts of similar enrollments. Denton ISD currently has more than 30,000 students enrolled, and its Executive Cabinet payroll is \$1,653,673,09 – which is below the average payroll of \$1,948,965 from 15 surrounding school districts of similar size.

Denton ISD’s central divisions include: budget, finance, payroll, purchasing and risk managements; community relations, communications and publications; personnel, engagement, benefits and leave; maintenance, grounds, transportation, custodial and warehouse; systems infrastructure, network infrastructure, technology services, integrations and enterprise information systems; superintendent, board of trustees and legal services; advanced academics, bilingual education, digital learning, elementary education, pre-kindergarten and secondary education; adult education, assessment and accountability, athletics, career and technology education, counseling and social work, fine arts, federal programs, health services, safety and security, special education and student support services.

Proposed non-campus reductions include 21 professional and 15 paraprofessional positions, representing a \$2,591,801.20 reduction, as well as a \$1,260,400.79 reduction to the operating budget, resulting in a \$3,852,201.99 total reduction. Other considerations after three meetings include adjusting class size ratios for a \$7,912,924 reduction, \$639,000 in classroom support professional reductions, \$200,000 in extra/co-curricular reductions, as well as the aforementioned non-campus proposed reductions for a total of \$12,604,126 in proposed reductions – or 3.6 percent.

## **Review of Possible Further Reductions**

Additional considerations include redefining the technology support model for \$200,000 in savings, consider reducing co/extracurricular programs by \$250,000, increasing transportation to 2.5 miles, resulting in \$586,626 in savings, increasing transportation to 3 miles, results in \$1,450,367 in savings, and eliminating five hazardous routes for a savings of \$136,374.

It was also noted that Denton ISD has some of the smallest middle school and high school class sizes among neighboring districts of similar size, with a current class size ratio of 25:1. Potentially increasing the student:teacher ratio at the middle school level to 28:1 would result in \$969,992 in savings.

Potentially increasing the student:teacher ratio at the high school level to 28:1 would result in \$1,190,742 in savings, while potentially increasing the ratio to 29:1 would result in \$2,299,364 in savings.

Dr. O'Bara also compared Denton ISD's current middle school and high school master schedules with surrounding school districts, explaining that the district currently utilizes a model of 6/8 at middle and high school. This means teachers teach for six of eight class periods per day, with two planning periods. Potentially moving to a 7/8 model at the middle school level where teachers teach seven out of eight periods per day would provide \$2,704,127 in savings. Potentially moving to a 7/8 model at the high school level where teachers teach seven out of eight periods per day would provide \$4,762,969 in savings.

## **Additional Revenue**

Dr. Jeremy Thompson, Deputy Superintendent, provided information and history on Voter Approved Tax Ratification Elections (VATRE) of surrounding school districts of similar size since 2019. Dr. Thompson noted Denton ISD's current MCR is \$0.6169.

Potential options for additional revenue include adding \$0.06 to the MCR while also adding \$0.02 pennies over MCR, which would provide Denton ISD with an additional \$10,521,779 in potential revenue. Adding \$0.03 pennies over MCR would provide Denton ISD with an additional \$16,072,059 in potential revenue.