

FY24 Orleans Elementary School Budget
Orleans Finance Committee Questions with Answers

The Orleans Finance Director Cathy Doane asked the Finance Committee to send any questions/comments re the Nauset Regional School District (NRSD) FY24 Budget to the NRSD Director of Finance and Operations Giovanna Venditti ahead of the Wednesday, March 22, 2023 joint meeting of the Finance Committee and the Select Board with representatives of the Orleans Elementary (OES) School Committee, Cape Tech and NRSD to discuss the FY24 school budgets so that she could gather any additional information if needed. We decided to extend the same courtesy to the OES School Committee to let them know what we were thinking after reviewing the OES line-item budget and the associated “Budget Justification Notations” as well as the Budget presentation for the March 20, 2023 public hearing on the OES budget.

The responses to the Finance Committee questions were received from NRSD Finance Director Giovanna Veneditti on March 20, 2023.

Presentation and Budget Detail

In the presentation document, there are several “pages” on “NPS (Nauset Public Schools) Focus & Needs” - one of which is focused specifically on Technology. Maybe tie this to several of the line-item increases in the OES budget where there are big up-ticks in year-to-year numbers - eg, 3013 - Hardware Non-Instructional Technology is up \$14k from \$1k to \$15k. Account 3011 - Contracted Svcs Non-Instr Technology is up \$6586 (28%). Is all of this part of the NPS-wide technology upgrade strategy? Similarly re account #'s 3109 (Contracted Svcs Tech Maint & Support), 3031 (Contracted Svcs Instr Tech) and 3034 (Instructional Hardware) - big upticks in those accounts.

Also, in an earlier OES School Committee meeting, NRSD Superintendent Brooke Clenchy had noted that during COVID, much software was free. Is that change impacting some of these technology numbers?

Answer: As a result of the NPS-wide technology upgrade strategy plan, there are

increases in the OES Technology budget.

#3011 (Contracted Svcs Non-Instructional Tech) increase of \$6,586 due to higher costs of licenses and subscriptions for many of our security and data systems.

#3012 (Supplies Non-Instructional Tech) increase of \$14,000 due to security updates, connecting security cameras to the Orleans Police Department.

#3109 (Contracted Srvc Tech Maint & Support) new cost of \$8,874 funds OES portion of the Region's elementary school tech and maintenance and support personnel to address contracted services provided by our IT team for technology.

#3034 (Instructional Hardware) increased \$5,000 as during COVID, much software was free. Digital licenses for ELA curriculum are included as are online Assessments and learning programs.

Big up-tick in Account 3045 - Regular Day Transportation - up \$17.5k - need to understand why - especially with fewer students. This too was referenced in the presentation - in the "NPS Focus & Needs" pages - noting the Transportation "Concerns" and "Action Taken".

Answer: The FY24 budgeted amount reflects an increase of \$17.5k which represents a cumulative increase for FY23 and FY24. During the current FY23 school year, rates were increased due to an increase in additional hours for drivers and various cost increases. In addition, the District was able to derive savings over the past two and a half years as a result of route consolidations, payroll protection program funds, and savings during the COVID timeframes. When other districts serviced by the Collaborative were seeing increases in their rates, our rates did not increase due to these savings. The District was utilizing these savings to offset any increases during the 2.5 years. Therefore, now we are seeing increases as these other funding sources have expired and also the increases in the amount of hours being paid to drivers has increased as the routes are longer, we are no longer consolidating the buses going to the High School from the Middle School as all buses are going to the High School daily (before we were consolidating at the MS and then going to the HS) and the time required to fill the buses with propane which was previously provided by the propane vendor.

Utilities (Account 3061 - Natural Gas and Account 3062 - Electricity) are up \$37.2k - almost 50%. Pretty understandable for most and the numbers are independent

of enrollment (unless someone suggested there w/be a way to turn off lights and heat in empty classrooms). Also noted in the presentation - on the "General Information" page.

Answer: Increases due to the fluctuations and volatility of the energy markets.

Special Ed numbers (generally, Accounts 3064 through 3098 with an overall Special Ed total on the last page) are up 6% overall (looking at the totals on the last page). Perhaps clarify/remind us that services are largely state-mandated and based on needs of those enrolled.

Answer: Many students receiving Special Education services are required to have a continuation of their services throughout the summer. A few of our students require assistance offered on Specialized Transportation. Preschool students who are identified as requiring support services must be provided a preschool (program). Our Integrated Preschool cost is based on a 3-year average of student enrollment.

Is there anything that should be included in the OES budget that isn't there at all?

What is the timing of the OES campus-wide Asset and Accessibility Assessment currently underway? When is the report expected? Meanwhile, what other Town-funded building repair projects are currently in process?

Answer: Waiting to receive report. Check with (Orleans Building & Facilities Manager) Ron Collins. HVAC project will be underway during the summer months.

Also re the Presentation Document

"NPS Focus & Needs" - the page focused on Transportation - bottom line re reimbursement of parents for SPED student transportation. We thought we understood that the District is required to provide a seat on a bus for each kid in the District. But does that include SPED students? If SPED parents are reimbursed for transportation, is the District paying twice for the transportation of these students where there is reimbursement?

Answer: No, the District is not paying twice for transportation. The Special Education students who are required to be transported within the District and to any out of district school per their IEP (Individualized Education Program).

“NPS Focus & Needs” - Technology page - the up-tick in technology line-items is very apparent in most of the District-wide budgets, including OES.

“2023-2024 Nauset Region Budget Overview Income” - suggest clarifying briefly what some of these line items are - and the basis for their calculation. Eg, what is “Chapter 70 Funds”? What is the basis for Charter School Aid and for State Transportation Aid? What are the big chunks (if any?) in “Estimated Receipts Interest & Medicaid”.

Answer: Chapter 70 funds - funds received (from) the State, State Aid based on a formula. Charter School Aid is based on a formula. The District received the following aid based on the number of students leaving the Nauset District to attend various Charter School. Formula is 100% year 1; 60% year 2 and 40% year 3. State Transportation Aid is based on the actual amounts spent in the prior year, calculated at a rate of 70-91% reimbursement rate to the District.

Estimated receipts are comprised of Medicaid receipts, interest income on our investments and any miscellaneous receipts that do not fall within these categories.

“2023-2024 Net Operating Budget Increase” - the Debt line shows \$4.561M. Is this the most current number? After the most recent meeting when it was decided to roll over the current BAN for the H.S. building project and postpone bonding for another year or so? I thought this number would have come down?

Answer: This number did come down. Previously the number was \$9,306,895.

Lynn Bruneau / on behalf of the Orleans Finance Committee