

Board of Education Budget Committee Meeting  
1/24/23 5:45pm  
High School Distance Learning Room

Committee members present: John Chandler, Kelly Firmbach Anne Schaefer  
Staff Present: Suzanna Guntlow, Michael Brennan, Mena Mazure, Todd DiGrigoli,  
Dan Doyle

Topic the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> was the discussion of two areas that are not specifically in past budgets – Cafeteria Meal Funding and Electric Bus Funding

### 1. Cafeteria Meal Funding

The committee reviewed and discussed the percentage of ICC students receiving Free and Reduced lunch (F/R), the percentage paying for lunch, the cost per student for breakfast and for lunch, and the way in which numbers increased during 21/22 in which all students were able to receive free lunch though federal grant. This info was used to project out what cost to the district would be to potentially institute free lunch for all though our general fund. Cost projections were generated as three options – Full Free, Free Breakfast, Lunch Reduced by \$1 and Free Breakfast Only. The data and projected costs are below.

Free & Reduced (F/R) = 37%

Paid = 63%

Breakfast = \$1.75

Lunch = \$3.00 (Average)

- 2018-19 (Paid)
  - Pre-Covid Year
  - Breakfast = 32,006
  - Lunch = 144,717
  - Total = 176,723
- 2021-22 (Free)
  - All Students Free - Federal Grant
  - Breakfast = 60,792
  - Lunch = 186,713
  - Total = 247,505

\*Increase of 70,782 meals in Free Year of 21-22

- 2022-23 (Paid)
  - Return to Paid Meals
  - Estimate based on sales from Sept - Dec
  - Breakfast = 42,376
  - Lunch = 162,519
  - Total = 204,895
- 2023-24 (Free)
  - Estimate based on a Return to All Free
  - Breakfast = 65,000
  - Lunch = 188,000
  - Total = 253,000

- Option 1
  - Full Free
  - Breakfast = \$71,663
  - Lunch = \$355,320
  - Total = \$426,983
- Option 2
  - Free Breakfast, Lunch Reduced by \$1
  - Breakfast = \$71,663
  - Lunch = \$118,440
  - Total = \$190,103
- Option 3
  - Free Breakfast Only
  - Breakfast = \$71,663
  - Lunch = \$0
  - Total = \$71,663

There are new logistical challenges that come with proceeding with any of the Options. Specifically, unlike 21/22 when all students were eligible under the federal grant and bulk reporting could be used to report number of meals, in a future scenario, that would not be the case and reporting would have to be done counting meals that fell in to the F/R vs those the District funded. This would not be an unsurmountable task just a new one to tackle. There was conversation around the idea of using a stepped approach to phasing more District funded meals in. For example, starting with Option 3 and moving toward Option 1 with a longer runway for planning and budgeting.

## 2. Electric Bus

With NYS Legislative Deadlines outlined the District need to plan to convert our fleet of busses to all electric. It is required that only e-buses be purchased beginning in 2027 and complete conversion is required by 2035. Our district uses 55 buses (35 large and 20 small). We currently purchase 5 a year.

There are substantial fiscal considerations for the development of a plan to convert to e-buses. The cost of an e -bus is 2.5 times the cost of our current buses.

- Large bus cost \$155,000 vs \$430,000
- Small bus cost \$85,000 vs \$380,000

To replace the full fleet (this is bus only cost, not inclusive of infrastructure needs or safety and training costs) it would cost \$22.6M. There is 60% Aid Ration on bus purchases. We do not qualify for grants but the District is committed to continuing to look for additional grant funding.

Having appropriate infrastructure in advance of bus purchasing is essential and a significant step in the District's planning for the full e-bus conversion. A feasibility study is the first step in assessing the infrastructure needs and estimated costs. The District has contracted with Girardin Energy to conduct the study. Cost of this study is \$4-5k and will be completed in roughly 7 weeks. The feasibility study will calculate the required electrical usage.

Some of the significant challenges that this required conversion presents are as follows:

- a. Funding
  - i. Given the current ineligibility of the District for grant funding, funding would need to be met through Capital Project and/or State Aid
- b. Infrastructure requirements
  - i. not only do we need charging stations but we must ensure that other schools or venues have them so buses can adequately charge to make return trips
- c. Bus range and capability 90-200
- d. Charging Limitations
  - i. the charging capabilities and bus range may not meet the needs of the District's routes
- e. Safety and training
  - i. Mechanics 45-80 hrs of training
  - ii. Accident protocols updated with current E-Vehicle
- f. Bus garage update
  - i. New Lifts to handle increased weight
  - ii. Equipment to service and repair
- g. Parking & Paving
  - i. Repair after electrical installation
- h. Electrical Usage

The District has outlined a proposed conversion timeline listed below:

#### Proposed Conversion Timeline Plan

- a. Fleet Audit
  - i. Completed
- b. Feasibility Study
  - i. Spring 2023
- c. Capital Project
  - i. Vote December 2024
- d. Infrastructure Construction
  - i. Summer 2025
- e. Electric Bus Purchasing & Implementation
  - i. 2025-26 Budget
  - ii. Fall of 2025 - first electric buses begin operation