

Ann Arbor Public Schools 2012-13 Budget Forums

Monday, November 14, 2011, 6:30 PM

Pioneer High School, Café Annex

1. Was the information provided tonight helpful?

- There were 16 responses total that saw the information presented as helpful. Common responses included that the retirement information was shocking. Other responses included that there was too much focus on the legislature.
- There were 4 responses total that thought the information presented was not helpful. Some wanted more information while others were frustrated with the information presented.

2. Is there additional budget information that you would like to see at these forums?

- Additional budget information that people would like to see at the forums included responses such as the need for better proposal A information, the elimination of multiple principles per building, and the need to define SISS and all required programs. SISS needs to be broken down into the full cost for all grade levels including elementary, middle school, and high school.
- Other information that people would like to see included the need to research when and at what age does Ann Arbor Public Schools lose its students to the area charter schools. Lastly, Rec. and Ed. needs to be examined more closely to discover if it is possible for them to generate additional revenue to better support the Ann Arbor Public Schools general fund.

3. The school district anticipates additional reductions in the 2012-13 budget. After reviewing the detailed expenditure report (copied from the FY2010 audit report) please

indicate areas that we should consider for reduction and those areas that should remain intact.

- Areas that the Ann Arbor Public Schools should consider for reduction included ideas such as the elimination of step increases, eliminating school athletic programs, and researching how to decrease transportation costs. Also it was thought that Ann Arbor Schools has a surplus of teachers and that more evaluation was needed to reduce the number of teaching staff. Utilizing technology to reduce the amount of money spent on textbooks was also an area that the school district should take into consideration. It is also important to point out that the reductions should not compromise current class sizes and that principle sharing was not an option to reduce revenue. The music, arts, and athletic programs should also remain intact.
- Other areas that the school district should consider are really questions that the district should ask itself. These questions include can the district really afford boutique schools? The district should explore other ways to put the specialized schools into a comprehensive building, which could reduce transportation costs. Also are there other ways where the ISD's could assist in the English as a second language programs or grant writing. Additionally, it should be considered that there are vacant spaces in school buildings that could be repurposed to generate additional funds.
- Outsourcing was another option that the district should consider. Poor performing teachers should be retired faster and custodian/maintenance work should be privatized.
- Areas that should remain intact include ideas on the areas of the school district that could generate revenue for the district. The possibility of combining Pioneer and Huron in some way was mentioned. Also renting Skyline to a local community college should be explored as a possible way to generate revenue. Other ideas included looking into real estate sales of certain buildings and finding a way to market schools. It was also mentioned that combining schools such as Community and Skyline and Clemente and A2 Tech would save additional revenue.

- It was mentioned several times that the district should look at other school districts to compare and contrast how others are doing with their budgets. The successful school districts should especially be explored to find the best practices in the school district.

4. Do you have any additional suggestions for the Ann Arbor Public School District for more actively involving families in the budgeting process?

- Additional suggestions to more actively involve families in the budgeting process included that Ann Arbor Public Schools needed to be more transparent and proactive with budget information. Ways to achieve this include more budget forums and to share the feedback with the public. Several suggestions were offered to find ways to cut costs such as auditing custodial costs, and researching preschool costs. Negotiating a lower salary for all school employees was also mentioned. Reducing the school hours from 7 to 6 and instituting an early start should also be explored.

5. What could we do differently to save money?

- The Ann Arbor Public Schools could explore several options to save money such as putting more effort into researching programs such as ITD, AT&G, and magnet at middle school programs. Finding ways to increase enrollment also is important. Also teachers need to be awarded with incentives for excellence. A couple of audits need to be researched in the areas of elementary spaces, and annual health benefit plans. All programs need to be reviewed and if needed parents may need to be asked to contribute to their schools. Seeking advertising revenue from corporate sponsors should also be examined as a way to generate funding. Consolidation should also be explored. The district needs to research the possibilities of consolidating U of M lawn care, AATA, parking, and ING.
- It was mentioned that the district spends too much on legislature and that budget cuts need to be explored. Budget cuts suggested included an 8% cut across the board; cutting support services 10-20%, and cutting the administration by 30%. Lastly the

district could save money in energy costs by closing every school building during the month of July.

6. What suggestions do you have for collaboration between AAPS and other entities?

- There were several suggestions as to how AAPS could collaborate with other entities such as using WISD for special education programs. Transportation could partnership with the AATA busses to reduce costs. There are also ways to save and also generate money from other entities such as raising funds from U of M, WCC, and private schools if possible. Offering online courses to the public could also be a way to generate money. Additionally asking students and staff to pay for parking should be explored. A suggestion of a way that the district could save money could include having meeting with the staff at all buildings about ways to save on energy thus reducing costs.

7. What suggestions do you have for revenue enhancements?

- Numerous ideas were suggested for revenue enhancements. Exploring additional options in the schools of choice program could prove to be beneficial to the district. Grants should also be explored. Asking U of M for an endowment called the A2 promise could also be studied This could open possibilities such as the recruitment of new students, hosting a night school, and getting the U of M alumni from Ann Arbor Public Schools to contribute back to the district. U of M also could be charged more for parking. The area colleges could offer guidance counseling to district students allowing for current guidance counselors to be reduced. Current expenditures also need to be investigated for possible options at reducing costs such as looking at how much it costs the district for professional development days. Change also needs to be made in regards to a more aggressive move by the community for legislative change.

- Cutting costs and generating revenue in the district were common suggestions. Cuts should include a 75% across the board cut in union concessions. Generating revenue could also be achieved by going back to the two high schools and moving all students back to Huron and Pioneer. Skyline could then generate revenue as a rental space for a local community college. The district could also provide legal/ human resource assistance to other districts. Additionally it could be explored whether it is possible that an Ann Arbor millage could be passed.
- Lastly, administration dollars should be spent on the students. Also when exploring ways the either generate or cut costs within the district it is important the district needs to think outside the box for any possible solutions.