

## **Budget Questions and Answers from Principals:**

### **1) In what areas in which each elementary school participates – like e-camp or software licenses – do you think it would be possible to combine efforts and save money through economies of scale?**

**Elementary Schools:** Software licenses for programs such as Type to Learn, Test Wiz and Study Island are already district-wide. The principals said they have pursued a group discount on e-camp, but joining forces would not result in a discount.

**Middle School and High School:** There is an opportunity to share more speakers and events. There may be the potential to combine licenses for the software used in the libraries. Librarians can touch base to investigate that.

### **2) Are there areas – like enrichment – where the school district might be able to work with neighboring districts to save money and enhance existing programs?**

**Elementary Schools:** Elementary school principals have approached those who offer enrichment programs to get five enrichment days for the price of four. PTO enrichment teams – Hoover and Winthrop – work together to make things like that happen.

**Middle School:** Mr. Brow meets with other principals from surrounding districts to share information on enrichment programs. *First Robotics* is coming to the Middle School and Winthrop.

**High School:** The Robotics Team and other extra-curricular clubs could bring projects and presentations to the Middle School and Elementary Schools for “longitudinal pride.”

### **3) What areas might the Bridge be able to help with volunteers that are not being taken advantage of now?**

**Elementary Schools:** Schools are already working with The Bridge, using volunteers for math tutors and teachers for after-school clubs as well as for libraries and reading programs. City departments also participate with programs like DPW Day.

### **4) How can we use technology better to save money?**

**Elementary Schools:** Schools are sending out more and more electronic notices to save money.

A web-based administrative management platform seems to be a need across the district. Right now, elementary schools are using at least one application – Admin Plus – that is time-consuming and cuts into productivity. An expected Fios upgrade may help to alleviate this.

The principals are also investigating Google calendar and Google Apps for school needs. A technology needs assessment should be completed to figure out what is required and what’s available.

**Middle School:** Mr. Brow said the Middle School is a beta site for Follet Digital Class Cognite, which is a web-based administrative management system. Because the Middle School is a beta site, it does not pay for it. Mr. Brow likes this platform and says there would likely be some cost for rolling it out district-wide.

**High School:** Mr. Dillion likes a web-based administrative and student management platform called Edline, which would likely cost \$3,000 per year but would provide functionality for administrative plus classroom needs.

**5) Is there one thing that you feel your school desperately needs, and what would you consider giving up to get it?**

**Elementary Schools:** Principals said they would like additional SPED staff to do co-teaching in classrooms. They said they would forgo paraprofessionals for more SPED teachers. The principals also said there is a great need for a technology integration specialist to help teachers use technology. Some said they would be willing to give up the library media specialist to get that position.

**Middle School:** Mr. Brow said the Middle School desperately needs a second assistant principal – at a cost of \$85K-\$90K per year – but he says he would not give up teachers to get the position.

**High School:** Mr. Dillion said the High School needs a facelift because it's a tired old building. Bathrooms (especially the boys') and locker rooms are in "deplorable" condition, which must be addressed. One idea might be to have a "Community Day" to spruce up Melrose High School.

The enrollment at the High School is growing, and 26 classes have 30 students in them. More teachers are needed, but Mr. Dillion is not willing to cut elective classes in exchange.

All principals agree that they need more social work assistance. Right now there is one social worker stationed at the Lincoln School serving the whole district.

**6) Do your PTO and site councils have a partnership by which they work together to address identified needs?**

**Elementary Schools:** At the Winthrop School, the Site Council creates a target list of needs and the PTO works off that list to meet the needs as they can.

**High School:** The site council has a mini grant program that teachers take advantage of to initiate projects and programs.

**Other ideas:** No one knew about the existing educational foundation in Melrose called LAUNCH. More communication is needed to let people know how to contribute to it and how to take advantage of it.

There is a great need to initiate a major alumni effort for Melrose High School and even for each elementary school.

**7) Do your teachers partner – or would they like to partner more – with community groups that would provide some benefit to your students?**

**Elementary Schools:** The Elks partner with elementary schools to bring dictionaries. The principals were grateful for that. Other community groups the schools have worked with include the Masons, Sharing and Caring, the Food Pantry and the Rotary. Verizon employees of Verizon and parents who work for the state are encouraged to volunteer their time to the schools.