

April 26, 2022

SUMMARY: This fiscal brief corresponds to the presentation made at the Methacton Board of School Directors meeting on April 26, 2022 by Dr. Zerbe and Mr. Bricker presenting the 2022-2023 Budget Update- April.

NOTES:

The April update to the 2022-2023 budget shows a tax increase of 2.83%, slightly down from the 2.85% previously presented. This increase does not include our 3rd and final look on healthcare and prescriptions, nor the recommendation of an additional science teacher at the high school which will be presented at education committee in May. It also does not include the April assessments or property insurance. Please note that given what we know, it is estimated that the proposed final budget for the fiancé committee's review in May will be closer to 2.2%. This budget update represents what we shared with the finance committee this month.

The April update addresses 3 main matters from our last presentation:

1. Program/Service Improvements in Math Instruction K-12
2. Address world language student primary choice grade 7/8
3. Substitutes and Coverage

First- Program/Service Improvements in Math Instruction K-12

Dr. Walsh – Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment presents rationale on need for Math coaches.

SECOND -Address world language student primary choice grade 7/8

In order to provide most students with their first choice for world language, I am recommending that we add a Spanish Teacher to the Arcola program.

- As an example, this year's 7th grade class had 98 students not get their first choice.
- By adding another Spanish teacher we can increase the likelihood of more students getting their first choice and
- Allow us to address some caseload challenges for all Arcola world language teachers

THIRD - Substitutes and Coverage

It goes without much conversation that finding substitutes is a challenge. This is true with all employee classes, both professional and support. While it was a challenge prior to the pandemic, it is greatly compounded as a result of the pandemic. Furthermore - it is clear that a continuation in the annual decline in teacher certification in Pennsylvania provides no hope that access to high quality long term and daily professional substitutes will increase. Recognizing this, under the leadership of Dr. Sorgini- we have implemented a number of things including:

- Multiple instances of daily and long term rate changes to remain competitive
- Ran several Guest Teacher program sessions
- Specifically targeted retired teachers
- Worked with STS on Act 91 classroom monitor options
- Sought and created partnership with 3rd party agencies and universities –example- Gwynedd Mercy University
- Worked cooperatively with the Teacher Association to implement Large Group Instruction coverage as a last resort

Even with all of these efforts we are challenged with meeting the need for substitutes and coverages. As such, I am recommending the following:

1. We invest in more people, who as employees will be committed to us and will allow us utilize them to provide instructional support and to off load tasks and duties to free up a certified teacher for coverage.
 - a. While we will continue to utilize all the current solutions, the additional staff allow greater flexibility and likelihood of daily success in the operation of our program under normal situations and during extreme COVID related situations.
2. The last recommendation is inserted into the budget, but is not completely ready for full discussion. That is we estimated the costs associated with providing an incentive program for professional staff in exchange for days not utilized annually.