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Contact: Susan Brott, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
School District 197 – West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan
651.403.7008 - office 651.245.5253 - cell
Susan.Brott@isd197.org

Board approves budget adjustments for 2010-11

Slight modification to administrative recommendation totals \$947,643

(Mendota Heights, Minn.) --- The school board of the West St. Paul – Mendota Heights – Eagan Area Schools made a minor modification to the administrative recommendation presented at Monday’s meeting, bringing the approved budget adjustments to just under \$950,000, enough to balance the projected shortfall for the 2010-11 school year.

“We are fortunate that our modest increase in enrollment allows us to only be making a 2% adjustment this year, especially when we look at the cuts our colleagues in other districts are having to make,” said Superintendent Jay Haugen. “All of these reductions are painful, but we believe they are reasonable given our current financial situation and the economic future that lies ahead of us.”

Board member Dewayne Dill noted that while he didn’t necessarily want to make more cuts last night, he was concerned that the proposed adjustments only solve the immediate budget shortfall and do not address the even larger deficits expected in the coming years.

“I’m not proposing any additional reductions at this time, but we need to be clear that this is a one-time favor to just barely balance the budget,” Dill said. “We need to look at shoring up our fund balance to help us with even greater budget gaps in the future.”

Fifty percent of the approved adjustments will come in the form of raising class sizes by one at the elementary and 1.5 at middle and high school levels. Averages for next year are targeted to be 21.5 for kindergarten, 23.5 for grades 1-2, 25 for grades 3-4, 26.5 for middle school core classes (math, science, social studies, language arts), and 29.8 for high school core classes. To help ensure that one school does not experience classes with significantly higher or lower class sizes than another, the district will implement ranges in which the majority of class sizes will fall.

“We have been fortunate to have class sizes at or below metro average for several years. We believe that the modest increases to class size that we are proposing will allow us to stay in that same range, which is attractive for our families,” Haugen said. “And by employing the parameters we’ve outlined at the elementary, middle school and high school levels, we will be better able to help parents and staff understand the differences between schools that they may experience.”

Other adjustments approved on Monday night include \$238,670 in support services (including adjustments to paraprofessional positions and hours), \$90,000 in operational efficiencies, and \$50,000 in revenue from increased user fees for high school students.

Originally, the administrative recommendation included \$55,000 in user fees – a 10% increase to high school athletic and activity fees totaling \$40,000, and a new \$50 per student graduation fee which would net \$15,000. The board opted to forgo the proposed graduation fee and instead

increase the existing student parking fee at Sibley by \$25 per semester. The parking fee increase is expected to capture an additional \$10,000 in revenue.

“We heard from our community that fees should be applied in a ‘pay for what you use’ manner,” said board member David Koziol who proposed the change in fees. “I fear that with the graduation fee, some students would opt not to participate in commencement because they don’t want to pay the \$50. I would rather see an increase to parking fees as it only applies to those who wish to drive to school and not all students.”

Koziol added that perhaps the increase in parking fees might encourage students to either ride the bus to school or carpool with other students.

With Monday’s approval of the budget adjustments, district and school administration will now move forward with staffing programs and buildings for next year. As required by state law, the board will approve a 2010-11 budget by June 30.

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To view the complete list of budget adjustments approved at Monday’s meeting, see attached.

To view the administration’s presentation to the board on Monday night, click [here](#).

**2010-11 Budget Adjustments
March 1, 2010**

~ Budget Adjustments approved by School Board (3/1/10) ~

Description	Estimated Impact	Board Action
REDUCE EXPENSES		
Class Size	\$541,848	YES
Increase ELEMENTARY average class size by 1.0 students	\$201,595	***
<i>90% of elementary classrooms will fall within the following ranges, with targeted district average as noted:</i>		
<i>Kgtn = dist. avg. 21.5, ranging from 18-25 students per classroom</i>		
<i>Gr. 1-2 = district avg. 23.5, ranging from 20-27 students per classroom</i>		
<i>Gr. 3-4 = district avg. 25.0, ranging from 22-29 students per classroom</i>		
Increase MIDDLE SCHOOL average class size by 1.5 students	\$185,616	***
<i>district avg. 26.5 - with 75% of middle school classrooms not to exceed:</i>		
<i>Core Programs (science, soc. studies, lang. arts, math) = 31</i>		
<i>Allied Arts (music, art, phy. ed., FACS, tech. ed, world lang.) = Variable</i>		
Increase HIGH SCHOOL average class size by 1.5 students	\$154,637	***
<i>district avg. 29.8 - with 75% of high school classrooms not to exceed:</i>		
<i>Core Programs (science, soc. studies, lang. arts, math) = 33</i>		
<i>Non-Core (music, art, phy. ed., FACS, tech. ed, world lang.) = Variable</i>		
Support Services	\$238,670	YES
Reduce para-professional positions & hours	\$175,000	***
<i>Includes a slight reduction in positions (15 to 30 minutes per day). Positions would be staggered throughout the day to provide consistent service to students and allowing for a more efficient delivery of service.</i>		
Consolidate middle school support staff	\$30,000	***
<i>Includes the consolidation of clerical support and paraprofessional positions between the two middle schools.</i>		
Restructure high school instructional & pupil support	\$33,670	***
<i>Includes the adjustments of some pupil support positions and instructional stipends.</i>		
Operational Efficiencies	\$90,000	YES
Reorganize transportation operations	\$60,000	***
<i>Includes a restructuring of the consultant, mechanic and administrative operations within the transportation department.</i>		
Coordinate all facility usage (evening/weekend) through Community Education	\$30,000	***
<i>Involves improving efficiencies by coordinating after school, evening and weekend activities through the Community Education department. Such coordination would not limit school and community use of the buildings, but rather allow for better coordination so that additional utilities and personnel expenses are not incurred.</i>		
Other		
Reduce high school supply allocations	\$27,125	YES
<i>Includes a 10% reduction in department and program supply budgets, dues and memberships, repair and maintenance expenses, as well as the elimination of program budgets with little to no activity.</i>		
INCREASE REVENUE		
User Fees	\$50,000	MODIFIED
Implement Graduation Fee at \$50/student (event costs)	\$15,000	NO
<i>NEW - Increase Henry Sibley Student Parking Fee by \$25/semester (added 3/1/10 by Board member Koziol)</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>YES</i>
Increase Activity Fees by 10% increase (athletics, activities)	\$40,000	YES
TOTAL	\$947,643	
* Administration recommends further study on moving middle school co-curricular programs out of the General Fund into the Community Education Fund as part of the district's Futures Planning discussions. Estimated savings to the General Fund = \$85,000.		