

Dear Okemos Community:

As we have learned more in regards to the economic impacts of COVID 19 on the budget outlook for the Okemos Public Schools, I would like to provide you with an update.

The recent revenue consensus for the State legislature indicated a \$1.1 billion dollar School Aid Fund shortfall for the current 19-20 school year, and an estimated additional \$900 million shortfall for the 20-21 school year. The impact of this forecast on our main revenue stream, our per pupil funding allocation, is significant with a projected prorated decrease of approximately \$650 per pupil for the current school year (of which we have three weeks remaining) which may continue into the 20-21 school year and beyond.

After analyzing this projection, we are tentatively planning for budget scenarios that include a reduction of approximately \$2.9 million to \$5.5 million dollars from our district's \$53 million dollar budget. The economic impacts of COVID 19 are ongoing; therefore, we will continue to monitor the state's projections and adjust accordingly.

By law, districts are required to adopt a balanced budget by June 30th. The State of Michigan has a different fiscal year with their budget required to be adopted by October 1st and has already indicated that school districts will not have next year's funding figures in time to inform our June 30th budget adoption. To position our district appropriately, we must be prepared for significant impacts. Therefore throughout June, the administration will be working with the Board of Education to revise the 19-20 budget, identify areas for potential cost savings/revenue enhancements for the 20-21 budget, and will adopt a preliminary 20-21 budget.

I encourage our community to attend our Board of Education meetings and to be aware of the timelines outlined below. Our Board meetings can be attended remotely via a zoom meeting link found by clicking here: [Meetings / Notice of Board Meeting and Agenda](#)

Upcoming Board Meetings, 7pm

June 1 - Special Meeting

Board reviews potential 20-21 reductions/enhancements

19-20 revised budget presentation

June 8- Regular Meeting

Tentative action on revised 19-20 budget, discussion on 20-21 budget

June 15- Special Meeting

20-21 budget presentation

June 22 - Regular Meeting

Tentative action on 20-21 budget

On Monday, June 1, the Board of Education will consider a list of potential cuts which unfortunately include administrative and staffing positions that are deeply valued in our schools and by our community. The uncertainty of the ripple effect from budget decisions to their impact

on students, families and our school system will add anxiety and stress throughout the district. I can share with certainty that we do not want to reduce support for our students, and that there are no “good” options on our lists that involve staff members. I believe our Board, administration, staff, and community will find unity in this notion and will struggle together.

In addition to the budget conversation, administration has begun looking at potential COVID 19 related scenarios that may present during the 2020-21 school year should another school closure or alternate approach to education be needed. Options we are investigating include: a “normal” start to the year with students in school, a distance learning start to the year, an interrupted year (one that may switch between in-person and distance learning like this year), or a potential partial opening where students are at school on separate schedules. We are seeking guidance from the State government, health officials, the Michigan Department of Education as well as other resources as we wish to keep students and staff as safe as possible during their time with us. As we prepare scenarios, we will be seeking input and feedback from staff and our community, knowing that there are many unknowns and limitations in our system to navigate.

As we continue to address these unprecedented challenges, we will keep you informed of our thinking and next steps. The Okemos Public School system has faced adversity in our past and has always persevered as a strong, vibrant community. I expect us to once again. The ongoing support and efforts from our community remain deeply valued and appreciated.

John J. Hood
Superintendent