

The Highland HIGHLIGHT

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MEET:

Katie DeLozier, Senior, Highland High School

A Message from the Board and Superintendent \$1.2 million in budget cuts outlined

As you are aware, the failure of the recent levy has prompted the Board of Education to make cuts in staffing and programs to address the anticipated \$5.1 million deficit in 2012. The Board recognizes that this is a difficult time for our schools and our communities, yet this action was necessary to offset the pending deficit. As teachers, staff members and parents of Highland, it is imperative that we continue to work together for the continued success of our students and our District.

The Board and I are committed to maintaining open lines of communication with staff and the families of Highland Schools. We would like to offer some facts on what has occurred to date and what changes to expect in the future.

In an effort to save the District \$1.2 million annually, the Board implemented the following:

- A reduction of 23 support and certified staff, effective January 15 and January 22, respectively. This includes 4 teachers, 12 aides, 5 tutors, 1 custodian and 1 bus mechanic.
- Consolidation and modification of school bus routes, effective January 19. This means that some students may walk up to one-half mile to their designated bus stops. A letter will be sent home to all affected Highland families outlining the changes.
- Cancellation of this year's 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. (refunds will be issued).
- Elimination of all transportation for non-essential field trips.
- Elimination of the District's summer school program.
- Outside organizations will pay full rental price to use any school building, as well as associated personnel costs.
- The Latchkey Program will be charged a flat fee for utilities at each building utilized.

The Board has initiated a "pay-to-participate" fee structure for all sports and club participation, effective January 4. Cost per high school student, per sport, will be \$200, with an annual cap of \$600 maximum per family; middle school students will pay \$150 per sport, with a \$600 maximum per family per year; and those students who choose to be involved in extra-curricular clubs will be assessed a \$50

fee per student per club. Effective January 19, those parents utilizing PaySchools will be responsible for any associated administrative costs.

The District lost an entire year of collection in revenue due to the failure of the levy, while cuts in state funding and additional state mandates continue to grow.

Unfortunately, we will be faced with further budgetary cuts and staff reductions prior to the 2010-11 school year, regardless if the levy in May passes. As a result, the Board and the administration will begin to identify additional reductions to ease the growing deficit. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Elimination of high school busing
- Consolidation of all middle school and elementary bus routes into one route
- Administrative pay freezes (Approved at the 1/4 BOE meeting)
- Increased pay-to-participate fees
- Elimination of additional teachers, tutors, aides and other support staff
- Larger class sizes
- Elimination of 6th grade camp

The fact is, the funding system is broken and it is unfortunate that we need to move forward with these types of budget cuts. Highland is not alone, however, as the majority of the school districts in Ohio continue to feel the pinch of reduced funding. I understand that not everyone will agree with the order, pace and extent of the cuts now and in the future, but we must all remain committed to our mission – to help students reach their full potential and prepare them for a successful future.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Catherine Aukerman

The Highland Board of Education:
Dr. Norman Christopher, Mike Houska, Robert Kelly,
Dan Petek and Dr. Nancy Wingenbach