



BIRMINGHAM
CITY SCHOOLS

BCS News & Notes

A newsletter for parents, students, staff and community

Feb. 25, 2011

Cost-cutting plan includes buyout

Superintendent Craig Witherspoon Tuesday presented the Birmingham Board of Education a cost-cutting plan that includes a retirement incentive for employees, additional school consolidations beyond those already approved and other measures.

“The Birmingham City School System faces a projected loss of \$23 million plus in funding for the 2012 fiscal year,” Witherspoon said. “My administrative staff and I have been poring over every aspect of the district budget to identify areas where money can be saved. We have to examine every area of district operations and identify items, large and small, where we can realize savings.”

The funding losses include \$11.6 million in federal stimulus funds, \$5.4 million from the 2010 federal jobs bill and \$5 million in state funds because of the loss of enrollment. There also is a \$1 million projected increase in employee insurance and retirement costs.

The retirement incentive is a key element of the plan because personnel costs are 78 percent of the district’s operating budget. “We have identified 329 district employees who are eligible to participate in the retirement incentive, which is entirely voluntary,” Witherspoon said.

Employees who opt to take the buyout would receive a minimum of \$13,000 for classified employees and \$20,000 for certified employees. Classified employees could receive a maximum of \$20,000 and certified employees could receive a maximum of \$30,000, depending on their years of service.

The plan projects a \$3 million reduction in expenses from the retirement incentive.

The plan includes a \$1.5 million savings from the consolidation of buildings that already have been approved for 2011, which will reduce the number of schools in the district by five. It also calls for the possible consolidation of five more schools and additional savings of \$1.5 million. It does not identify those schools, but Witherspoon said schools that are operating at 50 percent or less of their design capacities will be considered for consolidation.

The proposed cost reductions also include \$1 million from an energy management plan and \$1 million from the freezing of employee step raises, as well as revenues of \$1.5 million from the sale of surplus property.

The proposals outlined in the plan would reduce the funding gap to \$9.1 million if the board chooses to approve all of them. “What happens next depends on the outcome of this plan,” Witherspoon said. “We will continue to identify ways to close the remaining gap.”

The superintendent added, “The core business of the Birmingham City Schools must be teaching and learning that provides quality educational opportunities for all students in the district. ... We must ensure resources are supportive of and directed to our schools and classrooms.”

The Board of Education has scheduled a special called meeting for 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 1, to discuss the retirement incentive.

Community meetings also are being planned.



The Woodlawn High School Drill Team and Color Guard usually can be seen doing military drills. But members of the group performed a song and dance routine Feb. 17 at the Veteran’s Valentines Event featuring the Dennis Edwards and the Temptations Review.



Students from middle and high schools across the district competed in the district science fair this week.

Students shine at science fair

Students from middle and high schools in the Birmingham City Schools competed in the district-wide science fair Feb. 23 at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

Winners in the middle school division included:

- Chemistry -- First place, tie, Joshua Horn and Jahmiliah Brown, both Phillips Academy
- Biological science -- First place, Lia Barnes, W.J. Christian K-8 School; second place, Ryan Stoves, Huffman Middle School
- Physical science/physics -- First place, Timothy Huffman, Wilkerson Middle School, also tied for best in show; second place, Jeffery Simmons, Phillips Academy
- Environmental science -- First place, Andre Davis, W.J. Christian K-8 School, also tied for best in show; second place, Elexia Coleman, W.J. Christian

Winners in the high school division included:

- Chemistry -- First place, Jasmine Walker, Parker High School; second place, Abdallah Nasser, Ramsay High School
- Biological science -- First place, Jasmine Smith, Ramsay High School, also best in show for high schools; second place, Terrica Kelley, Huffman High School
- Physical science/physics -- First place, Oliver Cox, Huffman High School
- Environmental science -- First place, Rashona Howard, Carver High School; second place, TaPorsha Caldwell and DeAndrick Crossley, Carver High School

-- Submitted by Dr. Spencer Horn

Financial literacy highlighted

The TimeMAPS financial literacy program and the Birmingham City Schools' use of it got some national attention this month. The program was highlighted in "Economics Education Brightens Up," an article in The Journal: Transforming Education through Technology.

BCS's use of the TimeMAPs software in high schools was given as an example of how school districts are teaching financial literacy to their students. Career development coordinator Sallie Lawrence was interviewed for the story.

To read the story go to: <http://thejournal.com/articles/2011/02/11/economics-education-brightens-up.aspx>.

Ramsay student art to be at Vulcan

Artwork by Ramsay High School students will be on display in the Linn-Henley Gallery of Vulcan Park and Museum from March 1 through April 1.

The show's theme is "What Makes the Magic City So Magical?" Students were asked to depict a positive aspect of the Magic City. The works that will be on display highlight the talents of the young artists at the same time illustrating a facet of the community that is important to each student.

Admission to the art show is included in the cost of admission to Vulcan Park and Museum.

Stories needed for newsletter

If you know of something good happening in the Birmingham City Schools and you want to tell others the news, write a few paragraphs for BCS News & Notes and e-mail the information to Michaelle Chapman, director of communications, at mchapman@bhamcityschools.org. Digital photos also are needed. Ms. Chapman is editor of "BCS News & Notes."

Board approves items on agenda

The Birmingham Board of Education approved all items on the agenda for its Feb. 22 agenda. The items included:

- Purchase of five units of Reading Intervention, one classroom of the MORE program and Schoolwide Enrichment for Wylam Elementary School from Better Basics at a cost of \$38,000
- Purchase of The Caring School Community and Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics and Sight Word for Whatley K-8 School at a cost of \$20,000
- Purchase of primary sources, exploring history binders and leveled texts for the Teaching American History project from Teacher Created Materials at a cost of \$18,227.27
- Purchase of new concert band instruments for Phillips Academy from Arts Music Shop Inc. at a cost of \$33,166
- Purchase of new concert and marching band instruments for Wenonah High School from Art Music Shop Inc. at a cost of \$86,273
- Paying Black Box Network Services for voice and data cabling at the new Parker High School at a cost of \$378,927.64
- Paying Institutional Network Communications for coaxial cabling at the new Parker High School at a cost of \$55,810
- A change order for Brasfield & Gorrie for the new Parker High School at a cost of \$155,093
- Accepting the conditions of a limited release of claims to Errors & Omissions for the Glenn K-8 project
- Establishing a capital project for the demolition of the McCaw building in an amount not to exceed \$150,000
- Purchase of 10 66-passenger in-line six-cylinder diesel school buses from Transportation South at a cost of \$872,134
- Purchase of four compressed natural gas buses from Transportation South Inc. at a cost of \$561,615.80
- Paying P&G Construction Co. \$78,325 for emergency repairs due to flooding at Carver High School
- Paying Nuvision Construction Co. \$45,914.99 for emergency repairs due to flooding at Carver High School
- A contract with AT&T for network cabling in the amount of \$1,661,700.43, Information Transport Solutions \$1,152,046.08 and TekLinks for Voice over IP telephone system \$1,179,784.14 for E-Rate year 14
- An agreement with Logista for network maintenance services for one year at a cost of \$301,559

and AT&T for PBX maintenance services for one year at a cost of \$330,851.88 for E-Rate year 14

- A 12-month contract with Funds for Learning LLC for E-Rate consulting services at a cost of \$78,000
- Filing an FY 2011 Services Ordered and Certification Form with the selected vendors submitted on the district's E-Rate year 14 funding application
- Donation of \$3,100 to the Birmingham City Schools Academic Bowl from the Community Outreach Partnership Center
- Donation of \$5,000 from Alabama Power Co.
- Donation of \$500 to Brown Elementary School from Councilman Steven W. Hoyt
- Donation of \$500 to Brown Elementary School from Councilman Steven W. Hoyt
- Donation of \$2,000 to Carver High School from Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
- Donation of \$200 to Central Park High School from Councilman Steven W. Hoyt
- Donation of \$500 to Glenn Middle School from Councilman Steven W. Hoyt
- Donation of \$2,500 to Huffman High School from State Sen. Linda Coleman
- Donation of \$500 to Minor Elementary School from Councilman Steven W. Hoyt
- Donation of \$500 to Princeton Elementary School from Councilman Steven W. Hoyt
- Donation of \$1,000 to Putnam Middle School from the Crestwood South Neighborhood Association
- Donation of \$1,700 to Robinson Elementary School from the Robinson PTA
- Donation of \$600 to the Social Studies Department from Alabama Power Co.
- Donation of \$2,000 to Wenonah K-8 School from State Sen. Priscilla Dunn
- Donation of \$1,500 to West End Community School from State Rep. John Rogers
- Donation of \$500 to Wilson Elementary School from Councilman Steven W. Hoyt