



## **FAQ 7: Answers to questions from the Community Forum, October 2, 2017**

A note from a Board Member,

We have held two community forums in the past several weeks. One of the more common themes that I have heard from community members is that questions that are asked of the Board are not immediately answered. We have heard what you have said; that is why this document has been produced.

As a Board Member, I see many questions put forth at Board meetings that are not appropriate for the Board. The natural progression that most of these questions should take are as follows:

1. Engagement as a parent or guardian with your student
2. Engagement with the student's teacher
3. Engagement with the student's principal
4. Engagement with the student's Superintendent

In the normal line of attempting to find resolution of your issue and if all of these options have been exhausted, only then is the Board of Education the correct format to bring forth your questions, comments or concerns.

Many times, the issues that many community members bring to the Board of Education meetings are not appropriate for the Board to address; we do not manage the day-to-day operations of the building. In addition, the Board President reroutes the question to the correct level such as teacher, principal, etc. or asks the Superintendent to address it in the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Below are all of the questions that were submitted via notecards on the night of October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017. The following questions have only been altered to correct spelling and some grammar issues. Unfortunately, most of the below questions do not have an author, so direct correspondence with the author to talk more in depth about the question is not possible.

The questions are grouped together by general area of interest.

Respectfully,

Todd Wright

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Q28: When concerns have been brought up to the BOE + Administration, why are they not addressed?

A28: We are in the process of providing a remedy for the past situation. There is a balance to be struck. The purpose of providing answers in this online format is the beginning of that process. The current construct of an official Board meeting is not a question and answer



session per current board guidelines. We have established a communication format called *Straight from the Honeycomb* to begin answering these questions.

Q35: If the board sets policy only... \*What is the Job of the Superintendent? Whose Job is it to listen to the community? \*What has the board done to rectify the glass walls in the classrooms?

A35: The job of the Superintendent is <http://neola.com/bethel-oh/> see 1230 - RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT. All teachers, administration and the School Board proper are designed in their roles to listen to the community in each specific occurrence. There is no plan for any changes to the glass walls.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Q6: Have you ended open enrollment give the growth explosion in Huber and farms being subdivided in 'old Bethel Township'?

A6: We have ended open enrollment for the elementary this school year. We currently take high school and middle school students where there is availability. This changes year-to-year dependent upon enrollment numbers.

Q25: Many more families are choosing to home school their kids due to the environment at the school and problems they have had while in school. What is being done to address their concerns & to fix any problems that occur-it has been said that there is less & less discipline applied at the school?

A25: It is a personal decision and philosophical choice to homeschool a student. Any discipline issues with a student is confidential and cannot be discussed. The discipline that is applied at the school is consistent and in line with board policy.

## **FINANCES**

Q5: Do any board members take advantage of insurance thru the school?

A5: No. Currently no Board members use the school's insurance plan.

Q7: How many years before you think a new levy will be proposed + put on the ballot?

A7: 2018 will see a new Levy. The purpose of the Levy has yet to be determined.

Q12: What was the increase in teachers' pay vs the increase in insurance the teachers' pay?

A12: For the 17-18 school year, the Increase in teachers' pay varied regarding where each teacher was placed on the negotiated step plan. Health Insurance cost increase was 5% for all teachers.

Q15: How much money was spent was spent on the field trips to IN + how many trips?

A15: The cost of the two professional development trips to Columbus, Indiana was approximately \$2500.00. This amount covered the twelve teachers/staff members who attended each of the trips.



Q16: How much does MDECCA actually charge the school for their services vs. what we charge the students / parents?

A16: \$5.00 per student. The school pays \$27,000 per year. The total cost to all student combined is \$7030.00.

Q17: Does the superintendent get an additional amount added for her retirement and / or insurance that is more than teachers are? If so how much?

A17: Yes, she does. The attempt to compare exact dollar amounts does not correlate exactly. The superintendent is part of the administrative staff. The administrative staff are Principals and the Superintendent the Athletic Director, Treasurer, Network Administrator, Kitchen Manager, Transportation Director, Facilities Manager whose contracts are all negotiated separately and differently than teachers.

Q18: How much \$ has been spent on 'meetings' at Potters house + how many days does she work from home?

A18: The superintendent does not work from home unless there is an emergency. To keep costs down and provide a more collaborative work environment for professional development, the superintendent has conducted those meetings at her residence with no facility-use fees attached. For the most part, the Superintendent also provides food for these events. Occasionally, when there are receipts turned in for food that is provided to the staff, the average cost is \$5 dollars per person per meeting. Staff is reimbursed for mileage in the same manner that they would for any professional development meeting.

Q19: You stated 72% of the budget is teachers' staff salary. How much of that is for administration including insurance + retirement?

A19: Approximately 15.4% of the 72% is the budget for the administration. The administrative staff is considered to be Principals and the Superintendent the Athletic Director, Treasurer, Network Administrator, Kitchen Manager, Transportation Director, Facilities Manager.

Q20: Last forum the BOE stated our expenses were outpacing our revenue. Then why are we spending on non-essential items instead of being fiscally responsible?

A20: The board is being fiscally responsible; there are no non-essential items purchases. A record of all purchased items is available through the monthly checkbook register. Please see the front office for a copy.

Q21: What were the ACTUAL cost of the legends / planners?

A21: Apologies, this question is unclear, please contact Todd Wright to clarify. His email can be found under the BOE link on the school's webpage.

Q29: If available dollars are so scarce, why did the Board spend our precious funds on non-essential items such as high-dollar fencing, table decals, colored terrazzo, new furniture where it wasn't needed, expensive tile in the Elem girl's bathroom, a new middle school office, glass walls, extra-wide sidewalks, new flagpole, showy new furniture, garage doors in the classrooms, concrete walls in the outdoor area- the list goes on & on.



A29: All funding that was provided by the Building levy was spent appropriately and within budget constraints decided by the Board of Education.

Q32: At the "Meet the Candidates" night, all the candidates stated the school is 'green'. However, each day all the 1300+ students get their lunch on Styrofoam trays! Why didn't we plan for this + buy enough trays for everyone?

A32: Good question! We are going to discuss this with the Kitchen Manager. Stayed tuned for an update.

Q36: You say the problem is funding but that is the system we have to work with so stop complaining and start being fiscally responsible! It will be a cold day in hell before I give one more cent to the current BOE and administration so what is your plan to save money?

A36: We are currently reviewing the budget. The student population is exceeding our current revenue income. Some planned projects may be put on hold due to funding shortfalls.

Q37: How do Bethel's per pupil expenses compare to all other Miami County School Districts?

A37: This question has been answered in FAQ 6 in the straight from the honeycomb

<http://www.bethel.k12.oh.us/images/DistrictPDF/FAQ%206.pdf>

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Q2: We spend a lot of \$ on the sound system....Why does it not work correctly + have so many dead areas? Plan to fix?

A2: The sound system is working correctly. The microphones have an antenna at the bottom of the microphone. When a user holds the bottom of the device, it limits the device's range. This is a user training concern that will be addressed in the future.

Q13: Why do students don't have enough desks? There was many thrown away in the dumpster why?

A13: At the beginning of the year, there were a few classrooms that needed desks. The situation has been fixed with the addition of desks. Currently there are additional desks on order. The desks that were thrown into the dumpster all had a defect. Additionally, some of the desks did not meet the physical needs of the students.

Q27: The original plan was athletics + attendance office was in the back entrance. Why did this change/If the plan had not been changed the attendance secretary could buzz kids in when they arrive?

A27: There was never a plan for an attendance office in the back entrance of the high school. Consistent with security recommendations, there are controlled access to the school at the front entrances. Administrators need to have control over their student entering and exiting the building. Providing for a nonstandard entrance would defeat this purpose.



Q30: I heard from a community member that the roof on the new addition has already required repair or replacement. Is this a fact? If yes, please explain what the problem was and how it was fixed.

A30: There was one small leak discovered in the new roof. The contractors are under warranty to repair such defects.

Q31: What is being done to fix the parking problems? Given the plan is to expand North, wouldn't it be better to fix the backdoor problem to let students in there rather than spending throwaway money on a sidewalk? The back entrance was originally supposed to be a student entry. We have the secretary's office there why can't we go back to the original plan?

A31: There was never a plan for an attendance office in the back entrance of the high school. Consistent with security recommendations, there are controlled access to the school at the front entrances. Administrators need to have control over their student entering and exiting the building. Providing for a nonstandard entrance would defeat this purpose. There continues to be a plan to install a sidewalk for student and visitor safety.

Q26: What happen to all the old artifacts, bell, Boy Scout donations, H.S. Lettering, PTO donated sign, ETC

A26: The bell was returned to the family that donated it to the school at their request. The lettering was looked at by the contractor and was not meant for removal and reinstallation so it was destroyed when it was removed. Many of the other older artifacts may be in storage; we are investigating where the specific artifacts you mentioned were stored.

## **NEGOTIATIONS**

Q14: Why would the school spend down money in the general fund when they knew negotiations were coming up this year?

A14: The BOE and Superintendent did not purposely spend down funding in the general fund. There are expenditures that require immediate attention for which the funding was allocated.

Q24: Can we get an update on the teacher contract negotiations? Last time @ the forum it was stated by the board that anything given to the teachers is permanent year after year - did you consider not spending funds on unnecessary items such as concrete blocks in the outdoor area so that those funds could have been used on other necessary items such as our teachers?

A24: Contract negotiations are confidential, ongoing and cannot be discussed. The BEA declared an impasse to negotiations. The most recent meeting with a Mediator was on September 28th. Second part of the question, is that once a wage is given, it is permanent. Third part of the question is that many of the items such as the concrete blocks were part of the building project and those funds are not permitted to be spent on employee salaries.

Q33: Why were the teachers held to the contract but the board was not? The ethical thing would have been to stick with the contract (Both sides).

A33: Both side are adhering to the contract as both the BEA and BOE signed it. Contracts cannot supersede the law.



## PERSONNEL

Q10: Last year we saw several staff members leave for positions to go to other districts and several hires this year have quit or resigned shortly after being hired. What is being done to prevent the volume of teachers specifically at the H.S. level. There has been 7 since July!

A10: For high school, there have been three resignations. One resignation for medical reasons. One to return to live with their family in their hometown. One found an opportunity closer to their place of residence. We have currently added 2 additional positions in science and social studies in the high school.

Teachers under contract with the CTC and ESC are not school employees; they are contracted through their respective agencies. We were not given clear reasons as to why the CTC teacher who was teaching engineering classes resigned from his position. The ESC Teacher in the Special Education Position was placed in a different position per the ESC.

Q11: I heard two teachers resigned over the weekend and the maintenance person Roman recently quit as well. Why do you think the staff is leaving and what will you be changing to retain good teachers?

A11: Due to confidentiality of Mr. Roman Gabriel's reasons for resignation, they are not public record. We respect his personal decision to resign.

The School continues to retain good teachers at the high school level. We are proud of our veteran and newly hired teachers and the work they do to educate our students!

Q22: Where do we go to find out how many are on the payroll + what their position is! And, what are the responsibilities of each?

A22: 119 staff are funded out of personal services. 65 are teachers, 10 are administration, five are board members, and 58 are support staff (out of support staff the big populations are 20 are transportation, 9 are food service). The responsibilities of each are in their job descriptions, the job descriptions can be requested through the school's front office.

Q23: Why are we using Schoology + Progress Book? Are we bogging down our teachers w/ unnecessary paperwork @ a time when they are being asked to do more + more.

A23: Schoology is a learning management system that provides the opportunity for teachers to communicate with students in various ways, and assign and submit school work. Progress Book is used for grade cards and attendance reporting to the EMIS (which is a data tracking system for the state, it is state required).

Q34: Teachers are being told they have to give up their planning period in order to cover for teachers who are out sick due to the fact that we are having difficulty hiring substitutes. What is being done to resolve this issue and where are the substitute positions advertised?



A34: This is part of the negotiated agreement that both the BEA and BOE agreed to financial compensate teachers who are required to cover during their conference period. The substitute positions can be located at the Education Service Center of Miami County, the district website, or an individual can submit an application at the Superintendent's office.

## **SECURITY**

Q3: How many hours of training has the staff had in intruder training?

A3: The staff is required each year to do public school works training on ALICE. Additionally, the Miami county Sherriff has provided training to the staff. In staff meetings, additional training has been provided. On October 23<sup>rd</sup> of this year, there will be a 4-5-hour training on Intruder drills.

Q4: Have you consulted (FASTER)?

A4: Yes, the Board and Administration has looked at the FASTER program in addition to several other programs. Due to the sensitivity of the subject, the Board and Administration will not disclose the final solution.

## **Special Education**

Q1: Why has the district not hired another Intervention Specialist when enrollment has increased drastically? Why isn't the district correctly meeting the needs of IEP students and children with different needs?

A1: The state law limits the caseload per intervention specialist. The school has yet to hit the next threshold for the hiring of an additional special education teacher, based upon caseload. The school follows state guidelines for IEPs for special needs students. The school has extended more services in some instances that required by state law.

Q8: What is being done to resolve the special Ed fishbowl issue with the glass walls? Will curtains be installed or will they be moved to another classroom?

A8: The special education students are to be provided the same facilities as their same age peers. The classroom facilities are the same as the regular education population. Therefore, we are meeting the requirements of Less Restrictive Environment (LRE).

*Author: Diane Cerbus (only person to put name on card)*

Q9: It was brought up at the last meeting about the special needs classroom being in a glass classroom. Has this been dealt with yet? If not, why not? Has a new teacher been hired to replace her yet? Please update—

A9: We immediately contracted through the Miami county ESC to fill this position with a certified intervention specialist, Jordan Renfro. The special education students are to be provided the same facilities as their same age peers. The classroom facilities are the same as the regular education population. Therefore, we are meeting the requirements of Less Restrictive Environment (LRE).