

Palisades Cost Control / Revenue Enhancement Task Force FAQ's

In working through the 2014-2015 budget process, we asked members of the Palisades Community, all Employees of the District and our School Board members to help find ways to increase revenues and reduce expenditures. A Task Force was created of five administrators, seven support staff employees, four teachers and two school board members to analyze and discuss every suggestion that was submitted. The final report can be found at <http://www.palisadessd.org/Page/6058>. This report was shared with the School Board and discussed at the June 2014 Fiscal Committee meeting.

During the time the Task Force met, there were some suggestions that were submitted to our Committee several times. Many of these suggestions are either already done, or they may not be able to be addressed as a result of other obligations of the Board. This FAQ should help to explain some of the specific reasons that these items were not noted in the final Task Force report. The Committee did not consider ideas that dealt with Board Approved Contracts or items covered by a Collectively Bargained Agreement.

Q - Does the District rent their unused facility space?

A - The District does rent the unused space to interested parties throughout the year when it does not interfere with Students and Student Activities.

Q - Does the District partner with outside organizations to increase revenues?

A - The District partners with several organizations. We have a great working relationship with the Palisades Community Foundation that contributes generously to our student programs. Nationwide and Wells Fargo both pay for advertising on our District website and there are several signs at the stadium that are all revenue generating. There is also advertising sold on the District calendar to help defray the cost of the calendar.

Q - Does the District purchase supplies, fuel, heating oil, etc... through a bid process with other Districts or use state bids such as CoStars and PEPPM?

A - The District has been utilizing cooperative purchasing for custodial supplies, heating oil, diesel fuel, and nursing supplies for many years. We have used, and continue to use, CoStars and PEPPM (both state bid contracts) for purchases when allowable and beneficial to the District.

Q - Why can't the District offer a less expensive retirement plan to its employees?

A - This is a state mandate that all employees of the District are participants of the Pennsylvania State Employees Retirement System (PSERS). Both the Employee and the District contribute to PSERS. All School Districts are required to contribute a rate that is set annually by the PSERS Board of Directors. Employees contribute between 5.25% and 10.3% of their gross salary depending on their benefit choice and enrollment date. The School Board, six years ago, created a fund to offset annual spikes in retirement rates that would have otherwise created large annual tax increases or significant program cuts.

Q - Does the District shop around for deregulated electric rates?

A - The District shopped around and is currently locked in with rates through 2016 with different suppliers. In 2015, the District will again begin shopping around for competitive rates.

Q - Does the District outsource services?

A - Currently the District uses First Student Inc. to provide busing for our students. The District has outsourced busing for at least the last 15 years.

Q - Why are the lights on during times when facilities are not in use, including the stadium?

A - The District makes every attempt to turn off the lights to all facilities prior to leaving for the evening. The last employee to leave is responsible to shut off all lights prior to leaving for the night. The stadium lights are turned off after the cleanup is done after the event. Cleanup can take up to an hour and a half after the event is over. Our employees must pick up all of the trash, clean up and lock up the entire stadium.