



## BELLBROOK-SUGARCREEK SCHOOLS

*"Soaring Toward Excellence"*

### **Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools Announces Another Round of Budget Reductions; Prepares for March Ballot Issue**

[Bellbrook, November 15, 2019] After deliberation and input from the district leadership team, while working closely with the teacher's union, the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek School Board of Education adopted another phase of reductions at the November 14 board meeting. Phase II reductions, which total nearly \$1 million, will go into effect for the 2020-21 school year and include the following:

- Teachers, administrators and non-union staff will take a 0% salary increase for the 2020-21 school year.
- The elimination of 3-5 staff positions through attrition.

"We are all working together to do what is necessary to protect the programming and services we offer here at Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools while trying our best not to compromise the student experience. I would like to say thank you to the Sugarcreek Education Association, administrators and non-union staff; I am grateful for their financial sacrifice and commitment to our children," said Dr. Doug Cozad, superintendent. "Even though the most critical issue facing our district right now is our budget, we want to continue to put our kids first so we made decisions that will have the least impact on the classroom."

During the board meeting, the Board of Education also took the first of two necessary votes to put a 5.7-mill operating levy on the March 17, 2020 presidential primary ballot.

"We are diligent about managing our budget in an open and transparent manner while continuing to make cuts to reduce our lean budget even more, but we are to the point where the implementation of any more reductions will have a significant impact on the experience we provide for our students," said Liz Betz, board president. "We continue to express our concerns to our legislators about the way schools are funded in Ohio but for now this is the system in which we must operate, which is why the best way to support our local schools is with local tax dollars. Community support is so critical."

Over the years, the district has seen inflationary increases that are outside the district's control that include unfunded and underfunded mandates in addition to the increase in the cost of doing business plus district funding from the state has generally flat-lined.

Following the failure of the May 2019 ballot issue, the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek School District Board of Education and district leadership team began identifying additional cuts and reductions that the district would have to make. Staff reductions in the summer of 2018 before the May

2019 ballot issue and Phase I and II after the failure of the ballot issue have totaled more than \$2.3 million and include the reduction of 20 staff positions, half of which were teaching positions.

“This is not a spending issue, this is a revenue issue,” said Cozad. “After the implementation of both Phase I and II reductions, with an already lean budget, introducing more reductions as a result of another loss at the ballot will hurt the quality of education we can offer and strike at the core of our schools.”

The passage of this operating levy in March 2020 will help fund the district’s day-to-day operations, such as staffing, utilities, transportation and supplies. The 5.7-mill operating levy would cost taxpayers approximately \$16.60 per month per \$100,000 home market value.

“Our community spoke and we listened - they wanted us to make additional cuts and reductions before returning to the ballot,” continued Cozad. “Now we have done all that we can. We should not let our schools falter due to continued strains to our budget and an unconstitutional public school funding model, but ultimately it is up to the community to decide what kind of schools it wants and I will respect whatever decision our residents make at the ballot in March.”

To formally place a levy on the ballot, the Board of Education is required by the state of Ohio to pass two resolutions: a Resolution of Necessity, which occurred on November 14, and a Resolution to Proceed. A recommendation for the Resolution to Proceed will be included on the December 3 board meeting agenda. That board meeting will be held at Bellbrook Middle School in the Large Group Room at 7 PM. For more information about the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek School District, visit <http://www.sugarcreek.k12.oh.us>.