



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

School meal pricing undergoing reevaluation

Nutrition services director recommends raising meal prices by 10 cents

The Davis School District Board of Education is considering a 10-cent increase in school meal prices for the next school year.

Nutrition Services Director Natalie Bradford told board members during Tuesday's meeting that the Utah State Board of Education recommends evaluation of meal prices every couple of years. Increasing food prices, escalating equipment needs and rising employee wages are some of the main drivers behind the recommendation.

"When we increase prices by 10 cents, it's not large and it's not noticeable. I think it's not a deterrent to families. However, by increasing paid meals by 10 cents, we would be bringing in about \$500,000 to the nutrition services department," said Bradford.

Bradford said that 10 cents more for full-paid meals would allow the district to stay ahead of the curve as it faces increased food costs.

Since the district purchases food in such large quantities, it qualifies for commodity pricing. However, with the increased number of students eating school lunch this year — up to 34,500 school lunches served per day this year compared to 30,000 per day a year ago — the department has used all the product purchased from commodity pricing and is now required to purchase food items commercially.

"What this means is that we are spending a lot of money as a department to feed the children," said Bradford. "We're happy to do it, but there is a realistic cost associated

with it."

For instance, chicken sandwiches are a daily menu item. Under commodity pricing, a case of chicken patties is almost \$100, whereas the commercial pricing is \$130 per case. Access to certain food items is also proving difficult with supply chain issues. Milk and chicken are harder to come by and the beef company the district used in the past shut down, requiring the nutrition department to purchase product between two companies to get enough beef patties.

The list of equipment that needs replacing is also growing, she said. The district has a couple of ovens that will need replacing at about \$30,000 a piece, a walk-in freezer replacement will cost \$100,000 and the department is looking into adding hot wells to serving lines at elementary schools, which is \$10,000 per school.

"We've got so many more kids eating school lunch right now, which is exciting," she said. "We want to be able to continue to provide the quality of food and also the equipment that is going to make that possible. Increasing the price of meals is going to help us be able to continue to do that."

The district has been serving school meals for the last two years under the seamless summer option, which provides school meals for free to every student. However, the district may see a return this fall to the traditional national school lunch and breakfast program, which offers meals at regular cost and the continuation of the free and

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Report identifies schools in need of seismic updates

A recent statewide report on the seismic condition of schools identified 17 schools in the district that have unreinforced masonry (URM).

Facilities Administrator Gary Payne told the Board of Education during Tuesday's meeting that the district is aware of the buildings identified in the Utah Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management report and commissioned its own seismic studies in 2006 and 2017.

The district continues ongoing efforts to ensure schools are as safe as possible.

Payne said several schools were placed in the URM report based on the original build year. Those structures have since been replaced. Reconstructions of those older buildings include Bountiful Junior High, Centerville Elementary, Clinton Elementary, Syracuse Elementary, and West Point Elementary. Using voter-approved bond money, the district has also fully

reconstructed many of its oldest schools including Davis High, North Davis Junior High, South Clearfield Elementary, Wasatch Elementary, and West Bountiful Elementary. Two other schools — Bountiful Elementary and Sunset Junior High — are also slated for a rebuild in the near future following a voter-approved bond, he said.

"This report is not a surprise to us," said Payne. "We've known about it for decades and because of

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reduced student meal program for students who qualify.

Bradford said the timing of a cost increase would help offset the reduced amount of reimbursement given to the district from federally funded programs when the seamless summer option ends. The price increase recommendation will be discussed by the Board of Education at an upcoming board meeting.

In other workshop business:

- The internal audit conducted by BDO Global analyzing school fees in the district provided recommendations, which included implementing a review process for student fees at the activity level, establishing a standard policy for coding fees and developing a process for handling fee waivers.

- An ad hoc committee is being put together to discuss the most productive ways for the district to engage with parents.

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that knowledge, these schools have been replaced. ...

“This (report) is a good thing for us, because it brings the attention of the concern that we have to the state level, ...” Payne continued. “The most important thing stated in the report states that authors do not believe any students are in imminent danger – and it just brings to light the scope of problems.”

The board also learned that the other 12 district schools identified in the list as URMs have received seismic upgrades over the years. Those upgrades include connecting the walls to the roof, which minimizes the possibility of a roof collapse during an earthquake.

“There is no question that some of our schools are old and date precode 1972,” said Business Administrator Craig Carter. “Through the efforts of Gary’s team, we have worked hard to try and make them as safe as possible.”

Education appropriations funding recommendations include about \$3.8 million for seismic upgrades, Carter said.

Two elementary schools undergoing small boundary adjustment

Davis School District administrators are proposing a measured approach to alleviate overcrowding at West Point Elementary while providing a stable enrollment at West Clinton Elementary.

Elementary School Director Dr. Gwen Hill said if the district does nothing, students will no longer fit in the West Point Elementary building. While schools can add portables to help with large student body population, West Point Elementary can no longer accommodate the large influx of students, even with the maximum number of portables.

“West Point (Elementary) is 142%, and that is beyond extended (student) capacity, so we want to make sure that we give them the help that they need so they can continue on. It’s not good for kids to be so crowded,” said Hill. “We want to make sure that they have the opportunity to learn.”

Hill said the district’s goal is to disrupt the least number of people. The recommended adjustment is to move a small section of about 92 students from West Point Elementary to West Clinton Elementary, which is at 103% student capacity.

The district has presented the suggested boundary adjustment to community councils at both schools and continues to receive feedback as part of the boundary study process.

Board Member Cheryl Phipps asked if the district’s boundary adjustment is still open for change following the upcoming public hearing.

“This process, by telling you about it today, allows you to know that we are letting the public know about it and they will continue to be able to share information with the emails and calls, ...” said Hill.

“Schools are talking to their faculties and the PTA are talking about it,” she continued. “And we are happy to provide any help and support as far as the information goes, but they all had the opportunity to see it. ... This gives them time to share and be a part of the process.”

The district will present the boundary adjustment study recommendation at the Davis School District Board of Education meeting on March 1.

A public hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m., March 22 in Syracuse High Auditorium to receive additional feedback from the community.

The final plan will be presented at the Board of Education meeting on April 19.