

WAUKESHA *Forward*

Growing prosperous communities for future generations
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What's New

Waukesha Forward has stepped into the school funding debate in Waukesha. See our website www.WaukeshaForward.org for more information.

Key Facts

Taxes

Take a look at your property tax bills and see where your money goes. In the City of Waukesha about 37% of your tax bill goes to the schools and 45% goes to the city. Property taxes in Waukesha are high not because of the school district but because of the growth of city taxes over the last several years. In fact since 2001 school district taxes have grown by only 6% while the city has grown by 27%.

Revenue Gap

Due to current state law, every year there is a \$3-4M gap between the costs the district incurs versus the allowable growth under the revenue limits. To manage this situation the district must cut \$3-4M per year from the operational budget. As an example of this problem, if the district eliminated **all** the administration they would save \$5.3M. However next year there would still be another \$1-2M gap. What would have to be cut next to make up the \$1-2M shortfall?

State Legislation

Several bills have been introduced that could benefit all school districts in the state of Wisconsin. Waukesha Forward is analyzing these bills to see what kind of impact they might have on the

district. To learn more about these bills visit the Wispolitcs website. <http://www.wispolitcs.com/index.html?Article=97876>

District Cost Savings

Several suggestions have been made about cost reduction ideas for the district. Waukesha Forward has done some preliminary investigation as to the potential of these ideas to save the district money. However, it is important to remember that cutting costs alone is a dead end street as there will be a point in time that there isn't anymore to cut and the revenue side of the equation will have to be addressed.

Outsourcing of maintenance, custodial and grounds keeping

The district has looked at this in the past and even tried it at Butler Middle School. There were issues with the contractor such as theft and poor performance. It was not pursued further. Waukesha Forward is investigating what kind of annual savings would actually be realized by this option. Food service has been outsourced successfully since 1993.

Insurance contributions by non-bargained employees

According to the district, this already occurs. Waukesha Forward is working on getting some statistics to assess the annual impact.

Leveraging costs savings with other districts

The district does do some cooperative purchasing with the County but has not found it to be cost

effective to co-op with other school districts in the area primarily because of the size of the district. It can typically generate cost discounts that equal anything generated by a group.

Closing elementary schools

The district has calculated that per school it could save \$300 - \$400K by not hiring a principal, clerical staff, and possibly custodial staff. Utilities would not be eliminated totally since they would need to maintain minimal heat particularly in the winter. The building can be sold but its uses are limited because of the major renovation costs that would be incurred by a buyer who wanted to do something other than a school. Pleasant Hill is being considered for closing by the board.

Reducing administration at the schools

Waukesha Forward has found that the Waukesha School district for the 2005-06 school year spent \$402 on administration costs per student. As an example, Elmbrook spent \$449 per student. Another factor is the number of administrators per student. In Waukesha, the ratio is 306 students to every administrator. In Elmbrook the ratio is 259 to one. The school district of Waukesha has purposefully put more of their administration in the schools where they can best serve the students. The ratio of in school administration to central office administration in Waukesha is 5 to 1. In Elmbrook the ratio is 1.7 to 1. While not the lowest in administration costs, the district overall does a good job of managing this important factor.