



WEEKLY BOARD NOTES

November 17, 2023

Support Unit Update

Coeur d'Alene School District 271 enrollment reached a high of 11,158 students in 2019. Since then enrollment has steadily declined, currently sitting at 9,581 students, down from 10,042 students in FY23. The largest decline in students is at the elementary school level. As reported by [Idaho Ed News](#), declining enrollment is a reality across Idaho with all districts reporting enrollment declines, something we've never seen before.

As discussed during the process of adopting the district's FY24 budget, we are currently funded under last year's protected support units, per [Idaho Code 33-1003\(1\)](#). As you know, under the attendance-based funding model, district funding is tied to the number of students who regularly attend classes at our schools. Attendance-based funding protection is in place to provide financial stability to school districts when fluctuations in attendance rates have a negative impact on the level of funding they get from the state. Specifically, protection kicks in when a district's current year average daily attendance (ADA) drops below 97% of the prior year's ADA. When this drop occurs, the district is funded at 97% of its prior year's ADA, plus the cost of protection.

Districts across the state pay into a protection fund to cover the additional cost of funding districts negatively impacted by a drop in student attendance. Every district in the state is funded based on average daily student attendance and every district in the state is experiencing significant reductions in support units, causing the cost of protection to increase drastically. In an average year, the cost of protection is a fraction of a percent (usually around .05 -.10%).

When we developed our budget for FY24 in May and June of 2023, the state directed districts to estimate the cost of protection at 3% of total support units. Since then, an unexpected statewide enrollment decline has caused an estimated increase in the projected cost of protection from 3% to 4.3-4.5%. As a result of this increase, we expect our FY24 support units to be around 471, six fewer than the 477 adopted support units reflected in the FY24 budget. Each support unit is valued at \$150,000, so the reduction of six support units will result in a \$1 million decrease in state support to the district for FY24. The State Department of Education has requested a supplemental appropriation in the public schools budget for the current school year which will help with the shortfall if the appropriation is funded by the Idaho Legislature this session.

Looking Ahead to FY25

The significant decline in enrollment this year will have some concerning implications for FY25. With enrollment at 9,581 and ADA coming in at 8,971 (as of 10/31), we expect support units to be 458 next year, a decrease of 19 support units from the 477 adopted in the FY24 budget. We don't know if we will receive new state funding after the 2024 legislative session wraps, or if changes will be made to the way districts are funded. Right now we can only base our budgets on the assumptions we have today, understanding that all revenue projections are subject to

change unless and until legislation is passed and signed into law. As of today, assuming current year funding levels stay the same, and assuming one support unit is valued at \$150,000, a reduction of 19 support units from what was initially budgeted for FY24, means a \$2.85 million decrease in state support to the district for next year.

What's Next?

The district leadership team is fully aware of the situation and is actively engaged in monitoring and discussing the reduction in support units. At the January board meeting, staff will present the mid-year budget update and discuss with you the support unit impact. We analyze and monitor enrollment and staffing levels throughout the fall and in January we will begin preparing for the FY25 budget based on the assumptions described here until we have more information following the legislative session. (Shannon Johnston)

Enrollment Numbers

Click the links below for this week's enrollment numbers that were prepared Thursday, November 16, 2023. (Becky Bailes)

[Elementary Enrollment](#)

[Secondary Enrollment](#)