



# Northwood Local Schools

Home of the Rangers  
“Excellence in Education”



Board of Education 700 Lemoyne Road Northwood, Ohio 43619 419-691-3888

July 2021

Parents/Guardians/Community,

I wanted to share with you some financial information that both affected this past school year and the next 2-3 years. The Federal Government has passed 3 different stimulus packages that have provided some type of financial assistance to schools, known as Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER). We will talk about these 3 packages as ESSER 1, ESSER 2, and ESSER 3.

In my update a little over a year ago on May 8, 2020 I shared the following information: “I am sure you heard the Governor announce many budget cuts throughout the state for the next 2 months. Included in those cuts was an announced \$300 million for K-12 education. For Northwood specifically the amount announced was \$144,861. This is somewhat offset by the Federal Cares act that provided roughly 400 million to Ohio and education. That allocation for Northwood was \$96,842” (This is ESSER 1).

The cuts announced by the Governor held steady into this school year as well, meaning the \$144,861 that was reduced from the state funding in the 2019-2020 school year AND in the 2020-2021 school year. Later, the Governor did reduce the amount of the cuts for the 2020-2021 school year by refunding a partial amount of \$79,446 to our district.

2019-2020 cuts \$144,861

2020-2021 cuts \$144,861 - \$79,446 = \$65,415

Total = \$210,276 in cuts from the state of Ohio in the past 13 months. That is a significant amount for our school budget.

## ESSER 1:

The \$96,842 mentioned above was the ESSER 1 allocation for Northwood Local Schools. With the allocated amounts for ESSER 1, we immediately looked at ways to preserve funds, along with covering expenses for items that allowed us to open the building in August. The plexiglass barriers used in lunchrooms, younger classrooms, and around teacher desks & office/cafeteria spaces were covered with these funds. The increase in expenses for hand sanitizer, wipes, and other cleaning products were covered with these funds. The costs of substitutes needed for COVID related issues were covered with these funds along with a few other smaller items such as thermometers, masks and health clinic supplies. We also received some smaller grants that helped to cover the bulk of the costs for our NOVA program this school year. This money was a huge help, but did not cover the cuts made by the Governor. Our application for ESSER 1 was approved by the state and we have received those funds.



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## ESSER 2:

This was a larger allocated amount for Northwood Local Schools at \$380,913. These funds have specific uses related to covid and covering expenses to avoid major losses through the funding cuts. These funds are provided as reimbursement when expenses are submitted to the state. Our application has been approved by the state and funds will be coming as they are requested. ESSER 2 funds are being used to cover salary costs of staff who were needed to turn their full attention to NOVA this year and by doing so were unable to complete the duties they typically would have been assigned. These funds also continued to support our need for increased daily substitutes in our building to maintain education. These funds are also being used for needed upgrades to the AAA cafeteria and kitchen when reopening the cafeteria for students was a necessity for space. We will also be using some of these funds to look at intervention needs heading into next school year, but much of that next project will be part of ESSER 3 funding.

## ESSER 3

The third stimulus package was announced, and our allocation is listed to be in the area of \$850,000. Our intention is to use these funds to bolster our intervention services over several school years as that is the true intention of the funding. Our goal is to increase our ability to address learning loss and intervention needs through next year and beyond. These funds have a full 3 year window to be utilized which will provide a good foundation for some increased services. We are also exploring the addition of services that can provide more resources for families in need, and potentially bolstering our partnerships for mental health counseling services as well. This application process is just now opening for schools to submit plans during the summer months.

## Remaining Student Focused

Our plans for these funds are all centered around student well-being, intervention services, and academic success. Safety precautions have been and will continue to be necessary and we will continue to use these funds to purchase the needed equipment to maintain in-person education. Mental health and resources for students are essential right now and we are looking to strengthen our relationship with Children’s Resource Center for mental health and other social work type services. We remain committed to putting money into our intervention services K-12. We are also re-committing to our gifted program for the 21-22 school year after a year of staff helping in other areas of the district. NOVA served a purpose last year for many families and the funding helped get us through that online need. We do not see that need being there for the 21-22 school year or beyond at this point in time.



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## Bonds:

You may recall that our district refinanced bonds back in August 2020 saving taxpayers a total over 3 million dollars through the life of the remaining bonds and shortening the life of the bonds from 37 years to 33 years. The first refinance took years of the burden for our tax payers. In March 2021 the time was right to look at smaller sets of bonds and we were able to again refinance and save close to \$350,000 of interest payments over the life of this series of bonds. This is money that will help our general fund over several years. These bonds are all part of the school building construction project that was approved in 2014. Angel Adamski, Treasurer, was integral in this process and should be commended for her efforts to reduce costs and years from the overall project. In the end, the refinancing will save over 3.5 million dollars over the life of the bonds.

## Overall financial outlook:

Throughout the pandemic we have been cautious with overall spending and have a few areas of staffing in which we did not immediately replace personnel as we kept a close eye on revenue. Our community overall has not shown any major decreases in property or income taxes to date which is great news for our entire community.

The area of greatest impact for our district in the past year has been athletics. The limitations on spectators throughout the fall, especially at football games which tend to have the largest crowds, the limitation on spectators in the winter, especially the loss of the normal Derr Wrestling Invitational tournament, has had a large impact on athletic department funds. The Athletic department does not operate completely independently and thus the loss is simply incurred on the general budget for our district. We are proud that we were able to maintain all of the opportunities for our student athletes throughout the entire 20-21 school year. We are hopeful that we will be able to increase capacity again for our events this coming year.

Regardless of the issues at hand, within the last 14 months we successfully finalized new contracts with both our teacher union and our classified union. Both unions should be applauded for recognizing the need for stability in our district and working closely with our administration to accomplish that task.

## State Funding

State funding for education always seems to be unknown from one biennium budget to the next. This year the House passed a budget bill that includes the “Fair School Funding Plan,” which is a plan that we believe will give a better formula for long term planning to all districts. The bill reached the Senate, and the Senate has outlined their own plan which has been debated and reviewed. This went to a conference committee and the final budget as signed by the governor did include portions of the Fair School Funding Plan, but only for the 2 year cycle. What impact this will have long term is still unknown, however initial numbers released as “potential allocations” do show an increase in state funding for Northwood Local Schools. The initial numbers were \$500,000 and \$300,000 increases in the next 2 years.



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What is still being determined is how this new system will fully affect areas such as transportation, open-enrollment funding, excess cost for special education, total enrollment, etc. The initial information looks promising, and we will be reviewing closer as true numbers are released in the coming weeks.

Angel Adamski, treasurer, prepares a 5 year forecast that is updated at minimum each May and November and always puts together the best information available. The good news is that we do not see the pandemic resulting in immediate financial need for our district. Northwood Local Schools has not been on the ballot for new operating money since 2008. It is almost unheard of for a district to go 13+ years without returning to the taxpayers for operating revenue. That means the parents of the graduating class in 2021 did not see an operating levy on the ballot during their student's entire school career. The Northwood Local Schools Board of Education and Administration are committed to continuing to be good stewards of our community's investment in our district.

If you have any questions we can help answer please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email.

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