

Dear Community Members,

As Superintendent of Fillmore, I am proud of the collective effort between the Board of Education and Administration that went into developing the 2013-14, Fillmore School Budget. The budget is centered on students and is dedicated to increasing learning opportunities. The 2013-2014 budget maintains the current educational programs for our children ranging from Pre-Kindergarten classes, academic intervention services, and opportunities for college credit courses. Elementary class size will remain at the current level and all existing athletic and extracurricular programs are in place for next year. The budget also includes innovative, cost effective upgrades to our building that will result in future energy savings and increases in technology that will benefit all learners. Our Board of Education and Administrative Team are committed to being fiscally responsible while focusing on continuous improvement of our programs and facilities. This is the approach we have taken to ensure Fillmore's financial stability for years to come.

Increasing Student Learning Opportunities

We are increasing student learning opportunities for next year through BOCES. One example of this is we have five senior students who will participate in the New Horizons Medical Program at BOCES next year. We are expanding opportunities for students to learn with new programs such as a Safe School Ambassador Program, NASA Challenger Learning Center, a Spanish 4 college credit class and other great learning opportunities for our students at Fillmore. We are also planning to add an Americorp teacher to work full time for us next year. We did this a few years ago and found it to be very economical and helpful for our students. The Americorp teacher will work alongside our teachers to instruct students in enrichment programs as well as assist in serving students who need additional academic support.

Improvements to our Building

Below are two projects that are included in the 2013-14, budget. These projects allow us to make significant gains in both our ability to use technology in the classroom and save money annually by adding products that increase our energy efficiency. Fillmore School received a grant of \$111,000 through the Schools and Libraries division of the Federal Communications Commission. We are using this grant money to increase our wireless access points in classrooms as well as throughout the building. While this will improve our ability to use technology in the classroom it will also allow us to meet the new computer based testing requirements of the New York State Education Department. The financial impact of these upgrades to the budget, are listed below. The local share of the project is included in the budget for this year at a cost of \$54,000. The work will be coordinated through the Cattaraugus Allegany BOCES and Erie 1 BOCES. This part of the project will be eligible for BOCES Aid in 2014-15 making the final cost to the district \$8,100.

Wireless E-Rate Project Cost Break Down

- Estimated cost of project - \$165,000
- Grant Funds Available -\$111,000 Difference Remaining - \$54,000
- BOCES Aid on remaining cost of project-\$45,900
- Total Revenue (Grant and BOCES Aid) - \$156,900
- Estimated remaining cost to Fillmore= \$8,100

Energy Savings Project

Increasing the energy savings of a district results in future revenue and decreasing energy used is beneficial to our environment. Our State currently offers a Net Zero Energy Performance Plan that allows schools to update existing inefficient light fixtures with energy efficient light products at little to no cost to the district. Fillmore's Net Zero Plan for 2013-14 focuses on replacing older T-12 fluorescent lights that are approximately 30-40% less energy efficient than the LED lights that will replace them. In fact, the Department of Energy is phasing out the production of T-12 lights due to their inefficiency.

The conversion from fluorescent lights to LED lighting saves energy and it has many other advantages as well:

- LED lights last ten times longer and therefore save the district on maintenance expenses
- LED's do not contain any hazardous materials
- LED fixtures do not require expensive ballast transformers
- LED's light up quicker when you turn them on
- LED's have a steady, natural light, without the "fluorescent 60 cycle flicker"

Fillmore's new LED lights will emit a specific amount of light based on the brightness setting for the room and the lights will dim automatically when natural light is increased making them environmentally friendly and saving the district more energy and money for years to come.

Energy Savings Plan

- Estimated cost of project - \$100,000
- State Aid Reimbursement Rate for Energy Savings Project =\$85,000
- Difference Remaining - \$15,000
- NYS Energy Research and Development Authority Rebates - \$10,000 Estimated
- Energy Savings in Year 1 - \$10,000 Estimated
- Estimated positive return to the district after 1 year - \$5,000

It is important to note that **this opportunity is only possible if our voters approve our annual budget proposal.** The \$100,000 will be transferred from fund balance into the capital budget line as part of the 2013-14, School Budget. We will be able to replace the money in the general fund within the same budget year and possibly add more revenue when we receive the money for the district in the form of aid, energy rebates, and energy savings. This is a great way to make energy efficient improvement to the building at cost effective rates!

These two projects are examples of how we can upgrade our building and improve educational opportunities while minimizing the cost to local taxpayers. These challenging financial times require that we continue to search for and take advantage of creative ways to fund reasonable projects. The Board of Education and I are committed to making needed improvements to the building and grounds in a fiscally responsible manner.

Increasing Costs

Fillmore like every other district faces rising costs. Some of these costs are related to increases to the Teacher Retirement System, Employee Retirement System, Debt Service and Health Care Coverage for all employees.

State Aid

Fillmore will receive more in state aid for 2013-14 in comparison to last year. However, our amount of aid is still significantly less than what we received in 2008-9, due to the State's Gap Elimination Adjustment. The loss was greater but was reduced after our State Representatives Catharine Young, Dan Burling and Joe Giglio lobbied on behalf of our school for an increase in state aid following the Governor's Education Budget Proposal. I want to thank Senator Young and Assemblymen Burling and Giglio for securing more funding for Fillmore and supporting our school.

State Aid for public education has declined since 2008-2009. Foundation Aid is the largest component of aid to school districts has been frozen since 2008-09.

Conclusion

Currently, Fillmore has the lowest tax rate of any school district in Allegany County. Our Board of Education and I are committed to being fiscally responsible, while continuing to making improvements to our building and educational programs in order to provide the best education for our students at Fillmore. We appreciate your support and welcome any questions you may have regarding the budget. Questions can be directed to myself by calling (585)567-2251 or by calling Tom Ricketts, Business Manager at (585)567-2259. I also encourage you to attend our budget hearing on May 14 at 7pm in the Fillmore Small Gym. Be sure to vote on your School Budget, Board of Education candidate and tax levy for the Wide Awake Library Club on Tuesday, May 21. Voting will take place just inside the main entrance of the building, between the hours of 12-8pm.

Ravo Root
Superintendent of Fillmore School District