

Clifton Journal

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Time to clean house at BOE

The Clifton Board of Education announced that 49 staff reductions in our schools were necessary to balance the budget, claiming that revenues have not kept up with expenses. This board faces choices - increase revenues and prioritizing expenses - is it needed or wanted. The answer is not reducing teaching positions.

Here is a simple way to increase revenues by approximately \$4 million - sell Latteri Park to the city of Clifton once and for all. This school district should not be in the business of managing a park nor should any of the school budget be used for this purpose like insurance and maintenance expenses.

On the expense side, this board needs to decide what expenses are necessary and needed to educate the children of Clifton and only reduce those expenses which are not necessary. Teaching positions are necessary and is not the way to cut costs. It is time we start "cutting the fat" from this budget. For example, with an annual salary of \$177,000 the superintendent does not need a BOE paid car and gas to commute to and from his home which is approximately 20 miles from Clifton each way. Last year, Clifton taxpayers paid over \$1,300 in gas for him to commute to/from

work without the cost of insurance and maintenance on this vehicle.

At the last BOE meeting, with the exception of Michael Evans and Judy Bassford, the rest of the board voted to hire another supervisor of custodians at \$65,000 annually. Since the district has several supervisors of custodians this was a position that could have been easily cut.

Commissioner Evans stated at the last BOE meeting since 2010 this board has moved over \$14 million from the operating budget into the capital reserve account. This is exactly what the previous boards did with the 290 Brighton Road debacle and how they funded the over \$5 million in cost overruns and then claimed they were forced to layoff media specialists in the schools. Fast forward to today,

and having spent over \$3 million for turf at the stadium; spending another \$1 million for turf at the high school practice field and moving \$14 million into capital reserve over the last six years, we are now told 49 staff positions must be reduced. This is poor financial management. As we did several years ago after the 290 Brighton debacle it is time once again to clean house at the BOE.

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