

Broadalbin-Perth Central School District
Community Roundtable 4: Final Budget Recommendations
Monday, March 14, 2011
Small Group Work Session Notes

The Broadalbin-Perth Central School District community came together on March 14, 2011 to discuss academic programs. In total, 46 participants signed in to the meeting. In addition, several Board of Education members and the district Leadership Team members were in attendance.

Seven facilitators from the Capital Region BOCES/HFM BOCES Communications Service facilitated the small groups. Two groups combined, resulting in five groups. The groups were charged with looking at three categories of the school budget: core academic programs; health, social/emotional and academic support services; and enhanced educational opportunities, which are under consideration for reduction/elimination in the 2011-12 school budget. In addition, the group had a list of alternative/additional cost-saving measures to take in consideration.

Participants were asked:

As the district moves forward in the budgeting process:

What additional cuts would you be willing to consider to further reduce the tax burden?

What should NOT be cut? And, are you willing to accept an additional tax levy increase (above 5 percent) to preserve this (these) item(s)?

B-P tax payers were asked:

What levy increase would you support?

- A. 0-3 percent
- B. 4-6 percent
- C. 7 and above

Vote results

- A. 4
 - B. 32
 - C. 12
- 48 total votes

What additional cuts would you be willing to consider to further reduce the tax burden?

Gold Group

- This group did not quite interpret the question correctly, but they did list cuts they would be willing to make. They listed cuts from all of the categories, not just areas in the alternative box. They supported the cutting of:
- High School Secretary
- TAs at the secondary level
- Professional development, and wondering about the possibility of considering more in-house professional development
- Middle School Accelerated Art
- Communications Specialist

Red Group

- Possibly PE
- The group was willing to consider the option of a smaller area that requires transportation, but said they had a lot of concerns about students walking on roads without sidewalks, and especially at the Perth site.
- Possibly instructional technology

Purple/White Group

- Community use of buildings
- Reduction of reduce instructional technology purchases
- Within the athletics program, instead of eliminating sports or levels, could we look at the programs in terms of numbers and possibility eliminate the programs that affect the least number of students?

Blue Group

- Middle School health
 - The group suggested trading middle school accelerated art as a potential cut for middle school health.

Green Group

- This group said it would be comfortable eliminating all of the cuts that would get the levy down to a 5 percent increase.
- In addition, the group said it would consider cutting modified sports.

Silver Group

- Could we cut back on sports as opposed to eliminating them?
- Could coach stipends be reformed during collective bargaining?
- Could we use “natural selection” for sports and clubs?

What should NOT be cut? And, are you willing to accept an additional tax levy increase (above 5 percent) to preserve this (these) item(s)?

Gold Group

- Again, this group did not quite interpret the question correctly, but did identify areas it did not want to see cut.
- JV/Varsity Sports
- Full-day kindergarten
- Nursing Services

Red Group

- Sports
 - The group had some discussion about whether it might be a good idea to eliminate junior varsity, and make modified sports grades 7-9 and varsity sports grades 10-12?
- Class size
 - On the topic of class size, group members wondered if instead of cutting five teachers, it could be a smaller number. Maybe, if it's absolutely necessary, three could be cut?
 - If class size remains the same, the group could give more support to the idea of cutting TA positions.
 - One person pointed out, however, that staff is the most expensive part of a district and cutting staff will result in savings in future years if they are cut now.
 - If class sizes have to go up, several people in the group wanted to make sure that the district would still be able to provide the same level of education. Chipping away at the "little" things in the budget begin to make the overall picture less attractive. How will we attract people to B-P if the district programming is becoming less attractive?
- School Nurse

Purple/White Group

- Full-day Kindergarten
- Kindergarten AIS position
- Is there a middle ground that we could find on cutting classroom teachers and increasing class sizes? Could fewer than five be cut? Could a maximum class size number be established and that maximum number would determine the number of teachers who would have to be cut?

Blue Group

- Kindergarten AIS
- Social Worker
 - This group proposed combining modified sports teams to preserve Kindergarten AIS and the Social Worker position.
- JV/Varsity Athletics
- Full-day kindergarten

Green Group

- Although these items were not in the alternative box, the group identified areas it would not want to be cut if the Board of Education looks to lower the tax levy even further:
- Building use

- Sports
- Clubs
- Technology purchases

Silver Group

- Full-day kindergarten
 - Losing this would be a daily disruption for kids and parents
 - They would not have enough preparation for first grade
- Kindergarten AIS
- School Nurse
- Could cutting elementary teachers be looked at more carefully? Early education is really important, and having students in smaller class sizes at this age is critical.
- The smallest amount of art and music as possible.

The vote

Gold Group 0-3%: 0 4-6%: 7 7 & above: 0
Red Group 0-3%: 1 4-6%: 3 7 & above: 1
Purple/White Group 0-3%: 3 4-6%: 5 7 & above: 0
Blue Group 0-3%: 0 4-6%: 2 7 & above: 2
Green Group 0-3%: 0 4-6%: 5 7 & above: 5
Silver Group 0-3%: 0 4-6%: 5 7 & above: 4
Totals 0-3%: 4 4-6%: 32 7 & above: 12

In additional, Mr. Steve Murray, a community member called the district office on Monday, March 14, stating he would not be able to attend the roundtable. He asked to pass along a comment: he is okay with a 5 percent hike, but he would not like to see any further cuts made.