



Urbana School District 116

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MEMO

TO: USD116 Board of Education
FROM: Donald Owen, Superintendent
RE: Questions regarding Tuition Based Proposal for UECS (ITEM 8.01 on June 2, 2015 Agenda)
DATE: May 29, 2015

Below are the questions and answers that were submitted by various BOE members regarding the Tuition Based Proposal for UECS.

We discussed this last year and put it off, why are we looking at this proposal at this time?

The reason we are bringing this back to the BOE at this time is because with the Governor's most recent cuts to this year's budget and projected cuts to next year's budget, there will be significant programmatic cuts if we don't find other revenue streams for EC.

Why is there currently a limit of 15 students (10 At-Risk, 5 IEPs) in a class?

This is the equation/ratio that ISBE recommends for blended programs (programs that serve students both with and without disabilities in the same classroom). Also, placing additional students with IEPs into blended classroom, while possible, would raise the likelihood of the need for additional teaching assistants and the associated costs. Therefore it is not recommended. The Pre-K For All Grant pays for 7 teachers and requires that we serve 40 "at-risk" students per teacher. This is a total of 280 students. We currently serve the maximum number of students that the grant pays for; however, because we have blended classrooms, we spread those students out between 12 teachers – bringing the current class enrollment to 15.

By adding one tuition student to each classroom, will we be displacing a student who would need preschool?

No - Students who qualify for special education services are automatically eligible for a spot and we are already serving the maximum number of at-risk students that we are funded for on the preschool for all grant. Therefore, we are not displacing any students by considering adding a tuition-based component.

Will this proposal have a negative impact on the Headstart Early Childhood Program?

No - Headstart is full and has a waiting list of 200 students, so we would not be affecting their ability to serve students by adding a student per classroom at UECS.

If this program goes to tuition based (for some), will that open the door to tuition based openings in all of our schools?

The district already has policy that allows tuition-based students at the K-12 level. We have three or four students this year who pay tuition to attend USD116. The tuition at the K-12 level is set by ISBE based on our GSA formula.

Should it be done on a temporary basis? If this turns out to be the wrong thing to do, how and when would the plug be pulled on it?

The BOE and Administration can revisit the tuition based idea at anytime. If the BOE wants yearly updates, we can do that.

Should we have had this info before we agreed to the latest First Student contract?

Student transportation allocations from ISBE and through the Pre-School for All grant would not have affected our contract with First Student much. Cuts to transportation funding are being done at ISBE annually. Our transportation costs go up for all students, not just EC.

If we were to cut transportation for UECS how would that effect attendance and participation?

Cris Vowels conducted a survey of current families. 115 families responded. 26% said that they could provide transportation. 74% responded that they could sometimes or never provide transportation if it wasn't provided by the district.