

NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM WORKSHEET:

NTF TESTIMONY ON OPS FY 2023-2024 BUDGET, SEPT. 7, 2023.

Good afternoon. Doug Kagan, 416 South 130 Street, speaking for NE Taxpayers for Freedom. First, we want to thank the acting superintendent and chief financial officer for taking the time and effort to discuss this budget with us. Because of the changes in funding mechanisms for education coming from the Legislature and your increased costs for building maintenance and other expenditures, we realize that it is difficult for school districts like OPS to decide how to set funding for all their programs. We do commend the finance dept. for identifying potential spending reductions, reviewing school and program spending levels, listing priority items to be funded, and finding savings on part-time employees and other places. There is a sizable contingency fund. And the district is dropping its tax levy a bit.

However, your financial situation, especially your pension predicament, gives incentive to find places to cut the budget instead of utilizing an allowable override for the budget. Our NTF suggestions are as follows:

- ✓ Make interlocal agreements with adjacent school districts to order supplies and equipment in bulk.
- ✓ Privatize your maintenance work force.
- ✓ Stop funding college tuition costs for staff.
- ✓ End the \$750,000 expenditure for staff development.
- ✓ End dues and fees paid to some outside organizations.
- ✓ Reinstate agreement with the Millard School District for transportation of students. OPS hired another transportation service, because STA could not handle all the routes, so cut additional busing for cross-district purposes. This action will alleviate the problem of hiring drivers and those in supportive positions.
- ✓ Implement zero-based budgeting in every department.
- ✓ Scrutinize closely your worker compensation costs.
- ✓ Continue the student fees charged for extracurricular activities, etc.
- ✓ Eliminate all unmandated services like Adult High School.
- ✓ Survey parents for the reasons that they are opting out their children to other districts and find a solution to this situation.

Thank you.

