

July 15, 2020

Dear District Resident,

We are pleased to announce the Ohio Auditor has released the long-anticipated Performance Audit for Van Buren Local School District. It is available for your review at the following website: <https://www.ohioauditor.gov/performance/VanBuren.html>. If you cannot gain access to the Audit online, please contact Dawn Jacobs, Treasurer, at (419)299-3863 and she will assist you in obtaining a copy to review.

We want to thank the Auditor's Office for the time its auditors spent getting to know our district, how it operates, and the issues we are facing with Ohio's funding formula. Through its work, the Auditor was able to benchmark Van Buren's actual and projected financial performance against other similarly performing districts to provide tiered recommendations to improve our operational effectiveness and stretch our dollars as far as possible. We are very appreciative of the advice provided as it will assist us in making the necessary changes to eliminate deficit spending. Now the hard work is on us, as a District, to decide what changes we can make without fundamentally altering what we care about as a District.

As noted in the Performance Audit, "school districts face progressively higher costs of doing business and uncertainty related to state and local revenue", so we must operate as efficiently as possible. As a Board, we are committed to providing the community a voice in the decisions that will be required to be made over the next few years, especially around programmatic changes and facility renovations and/or construction that will need to occur. From our perspective, we are at a pivotal point of a time of great change, where the decisions that we make over the next few months and years will determine what type of District we will be in the future.

At a high level, the **Tier I** Auditor recommendations are as follows:

1. Reduce the General Fund subsidy of extracurricular activities to the local peer level – estimated savings: \$122,000. (Details on page 9 of the Audit).
2. Eliminate Administrative and Administrative Support Positions above the Peer Average – estimated savings: \$173,900. (Details on page 11 of the Audit).
3. Eliminate Direct Student Education and Support Positions above the Peer Average – estimated savings: \$648,100. (Details on page 13 of the Audit).
4. Align employer cost for vision insurance with SERB regional average – estimated savings: \$13,200. (Details on page 15 of the Audit).
5. Renegotiate Collective Bargaining Agreement Provisions Related to Contracted Services – estimated savings: Increase management control over district operations. (Details on page 16 of the Audit).
6. Develop renovation management plans in accordance with best practices – estimated savings: mitigation of extra costs associated with otherwise preventable hazardous situations. (Details on page 17 if the Audit).

7. Eliminate 1 bus route from the active bus fleet – estimated savings: \$12,300. (Details on page 19 of the Audit).

We encourage everyone to read the Performance Audit over the next few weeks and make your list of questions. The Auditor's Office has agreed to present the Audit findings at an upcoming Van Buren School Board Meeting. We are requesting that if you have specific questions about the Performance Audit, you email them to Dawn Jacobs at: [djacobs@vbschools.net](mailto:djacobs@vbschools.net) or call her at (419)299-3863. Ms. Jacobs will submit the questions and comments received to the Auditor's Office for review and response during the community meeting.

Remember our ultimate goal is creating the Van Buren Experience by Empowering All Through One Team! With all that is occurring in the world, country, state, and right here at home, we need to work together to continue to produce the excellent results we have all grown to expect while recognizing that the revenue to support our dream district will continue to be limited for the foreseeable future.

With appreciation,

The Van Buren School District Board of Education