

Chippewa Valley superintendent: School aid money should remain with schools

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Chippewa Valley Superintendent Ron Roberts discussed school funding concerns during the Jan. 13 Chippewa Valley Board of Education meeting. (Photo by NICOLE TUTTLE)

Although the Chippewa Valley Board of Education approved a Best Practices incentive on Jan. 13 that would earn the district \$52 more per pupil, Chippewa Valley Superintendent Ron Roberts said legislators could do more to make up for prior education cuts.

“There has been budget reports released by the House Fiscal Agency that estimated a carryover balance from last year to this year of \$291 million in school aid, and that they expect at the end of this year there would be \$351.3 million,” Roberts said. “And you know, you see a lot in the paper about what should be done with that money and legislators are out there saying well, we need to have tax cuts, we need to fix the roads. Sometimes you will hear, oh, we want to expand early child education, which is nice. But in order to do that they just take the money from the school aid fund, which is intended for K-12 anyway. And you remember a few years ago we were cut by \$470 per student. We have not been made whole yet. And that is particularly painful for a district like ours, which is at the lowest possible funding level.”

Roberts said that although competition for the money will be fierce, it was targeted for K-12 education and should not be used for pre-school or college education.

“They continually take from that and I just don’t know how we can begin to be satisfied until they make us whole from the money that was cut a few years ago,” Roberts said. “So before they start handing it back out, it would be nice to make K-12 whole.”

The Chippewa Valley Board of Education approved a resolution to adopt the Best Practices incentive with the Michigan Department of Education, but this is one-time funding according to Chippewa Valley Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations Scott Sederlund.

“In accordance with section 22F of the State School Aid Act and MCL 338.1622F, the district must adopt the Best Practices initiative resolution with the MDE, if the district wants to receive the \$52 per pupil one time grant under the State School Aid Act,” Sederlund said. “The district meets eight of the eight possible criteria.”

In addition, the board approved a contract for reconditioning of middle school and varsity football helmet and shoulder pads at a cost of \$40,500. Sederlund said that Stadium Systems was the low bidder and received the one-year contract with an option to renew annually for an additional five years. Funding will come from the general fund budget for the purchase, according to Sederlund. He said that each year the equipment must be recertified so that it may be safe for student use next football season.

The board also received recognition for Board of Education Appreciation Month, including student artwork from district schools adorning the board room, and acknowledged the retirement of Dakota High School teacher Roseanne Macksoud who taught in the district for 25 years.

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