

Daniel Boone School Board 2012-13 deficit is \$3.5 million

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For Journal Register News Service**

The Daniel Boone School Board will begin working in January to reduce a \$3.5 million 2012-13 budget deficit to zero by the state's June 30 deadline.

Assistant Superintendent Anne Marie Traynor has already been to work on the budget and said there is a potential savings of \$131,000 in 2012-13 with different kindergarten to twelfth grade teacher placements.

Five months ago the board balanced the \$49 million 2011-12 budget, a process that had started in January with a \$6.9 million deficit.

The only program curtailment was the district's full day kindergarten program to a half day program for a savings of \$424,000.

The rest of the budget was balanced by a .54 millage tax increase, the use of \$766,000 from the district's projected \$3.15 million fund balance, retirements, transfers of teachers and 66 classroom aides, the furlough of 17 aides and two secretaries, a reduction of aides' hours, unanticipated new revenue, and a modified Daniel Boone Education Association contract with more than \$1 million of concessions.

Property taxes increased \$54 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value for a total of \$2,896 for every \$100,000 of assessed value.

The tax rate is now 28.96 mills.

Board members said last spring that reducing a large deficit would become increasingly more difficult in future years as they would need to curtail additional programs and furlough more staff if federal, state, and/or local revenues don't increase; they said there will be less and less expenses to eliminate for a balanced budget.

Daniel Boone School Board President Andrew Basile delivered the budget news to the school board at its Nov. 14 Committee of the Whole meeting, where it also recognized and said farewell to three board members not re-elected to additional terms.

Jo Ann M. Hartzell, has represented Union Township since she was elected to the board in 2005.

Hartzell has also served as the board's representative to the Berks County Intermediate Unit.

Alan D. Ross has represented Amity Township since he was elected to the board in 2003.

Ross has served as board treasurer, served on the board's Finance Committee, and was board president for one year

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Longtime board member Margaret M. Fiset was elected to the board in 1995 to represent the Borough of Birdsboro and has served as board secretary.

“Thank you to the people of Birdsboro for allowing me to serve,” said Fiset.

She added that it has been a privilege to be a representative, although board members don’t earn a salary or may defer their taxes, a public misconception.

The three board seats will be filled by Connor Kurtz, Douglassville; Robert McLaughlin, Union Township, and Monica Hamill, the Borough of Birdsboro.

The board’s reorganization is Dec. 1.