

Role of the State Monitor

Direct all business office activities; oversee budget development, direct operations and fiscal management of the district; ensure the development and implementation of a plan to address fiscal deficiencies; hire, promote and terminate employees subject to the education, labor and employment laws and regulations including collective bargaining agreement; attend meetings of the Board of Education, and give reports as needed.



Fiscal Year 23/24 - Critical Actions Taken By Superintendent and BOE

- Mr. David DiPisa, School Business Administrator, placed on administrative leave on 3/14/24 (resigned 6/29/24)
- Requested district auditor LVB provide budget projection through 6/30/24
- Submitted Corrective Action Plan to Executive County Superintendent and Executive County Business Administrator
- Requested a State Aid advance from the State of NJ
 - Accelerated receipt of remaining FY 23/24 State Aid
 - Received \$9 million advance on future State Aid
- Ended ability to override accounts
- Worked with State Monitor to schedule release of vendor payment checks that had been set aside in a drawer due to lack of funds
- Worked with staff to ensure all committed FY24 expenditures, i.e tuitions, insurance had been fully encumbered on purchase orders prior to the end of the year.



Fiscal Year 24/25 - Critical Actions Taken By Superintendent and BOE

- Superintendent Kent Bania and Ian Viemeister, Director of Data Management/Grant Accounting, developed a revenue budget that accurately forecast the maximum allowable expenditure budget
- Meetings were held with the Board Finance Committee, Directors, Principals, Vice Principals, Supervisors, Transportation, and Business Office Staff to review and lower budget requests
- Superintendent and Finance Committee met with IMAC, the district's insurance broker, for an accurate projection for future insurance costs
- Developed \$6.7 million in cuts necessary to balance the 24/25 budget, with a goal that programs be impacted as little as possible
- State Monitor, Superintendent, and the Board of Education reviewed budget to ensure it was balanced prior to final approval.



Fiscal Year 24/25 - Critical Actions Taken By Superintendent and BOE

- Advertised and conducted interview process for a replacement Business Administrator, which resulted in the hiring of Michael DeVita, an experienced, highly recommended BA, to lead the financial operations of the district
- State Monitor reviewed the operations of the Business Office and began setting up best practices and procedures, ensured that all purchasing procedures followed code and practices, State Contract and Co-op backup documentation were attached to all relevant purchase orders
- Purchase orders for tuition, transportation, insurance, utilities, payroll, etc. were encumbered in full at the start of the fiscal year
- Procedures were put in place for the orderly transfer of funds between budgetary accounts. An official transfer request form was developed, which must be completed and submitted to the Business Office and must be approved by the Business Administrator and the State Monitor.



Fiscal Year 24/25 - Critical Actions Taken By Superintendent and BOE

- Request for Proposal (RFP's) for professional services resulted in:
 - Appointment of New District Auditor (Nisivoccia LLP)
 - Appointment of New Board Attorney (Dennis McKeever, Chasan Lamparello Mallon & Cappuzzo, PC)
 - Reappointment of Insurance Broker (IMAC)
 - Reappointment of Food Services Provider (Pomptonian)



End of 24/25

- Ended the 24/25 year with an unrestricted fund balance of \$2,670,477
- Unrestricted fund balance placed in:
 - Capital Reserve - \$1,818,240
 - Maintenance Reserve - \$852,237
- Annual audit for 24/25 had no repeat findings from 23/24
- Six audit recommendations were made that recommended stronger procedures and follow up
- A Corrective Action Plan was submitted to and approved by the Executive County Superintendent



Ongoing

- The budgeting process has been strengthened. First, Mr. DeVita and the State Monitor perform revenue projections to establish maximum allowable expenditure budget
- Business Administrator compiles a budget book that includes the past year's expenditures, current budget, and projected future budget with supporting documentation
- Meetings are held with Directors, Principals, Vice Principals, Supervisors, Transportation, and Business Office Staff to review budget requests and projections
- The Board of Education will continue to schedule public workshops to review the budget, ask questions, and make recommendations, prior to the Business Administrator finalizing the budget for County and Board approval

Ongoing

- Finance Committee meetings are held monthly to review current status of the district budget, building operations, and proposed agenda items
- The insurance broker attends every meeting to review the current status of the health insurance, i.e. expenditures to date, trends, and at appropriate times, recommendations for future budgets
- The Superintendent and Business Administrator have developed an open-door policy - all staff are encouraged to provide updates and/or discuss budget concerns



Achievements

- John H. Walker Middle School was renovated to include ten additional classrooms. This project was financed by the Nutley Board of Education through the use of Capital Reserve funds and assistance from the Mayor and Commissioners
- During school year 25/26 Mr. Bania organized a transition committee made up of parents, teachers, and administrators who worked on curriculum, logistics, and end of the year activities for the fifth grade to ensure a positive transition to sixth grade at the middle school
- Middle School curriculum, staffing, scheduling, and operations were updated and adjusted over the course of the 25/26 school year to accommodate the six grade transition
- In September 2026, all sixth grade classes smoothly moved into the Middle School



Achievements

- With assistance from the Mayor, Commissioners, and Township, the district opened the Nutley Early Childhood Center at 777 Bloomfield Avenue in September 2025, increasing available PK seats by 129 (GenEd PK program is funded by NJ State Preschool Expansion Grant)
- A two-year pilot program in partnership with Belleville Public schools for an Electrical Training Academy, leading to Journeyman hours
- FY 25/26 has ended with a positive balance, and no repeat annual audit findings
- The FY 25/26 Annual Audit will be presented at a future BOE meeting when it is finalized by the current auditor, Nisivoccia LLP

