



TALAWANDA SCHOOL DISTRICT

131 W. Chestnut Street, Oxford, Ohio 45056 | www.talawanda.org

Talawanda School District EMPOWERS Every Learner Every Day!

FQA3 Audit and Fiscal Distress Information

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Question 1: What about the Performance Audit completed by the Auditor of State?

The Board of Education voted (August 2019) to have a performance audit conducted as a method to seek guidance about reducing costs, creating cost savings, and making decisions for the future. The Board of Education members did not want to wait for the State of Ohio or Ohio Department of Education to mandate a plan due to being in fiscal distress and/or deficit spending. It was, and still is, very important to be fiscally responsible while maintaining the outstanding programs and services found within the Talawanda School District.

The external performance audit conducted by the Ohio Auditor of State (AOS) was completed on March 26, 2020. This audit compared Talawanda to other schools who were similar in some ways but spent less money. Quality of education, programming, report card grades, and other factors were *not* included in the audit. The Auditor of State staff who conducted the audit also had to make decisions as to how to quantify certain roles/staff positions and expenditures due to each school district not having exactly the same programs, staffing, expenditures, etc. This created some issues in the final report.

The Board of Education reported the audit findings to the community and noted some inaccuracies. The BOE made the decision to maintain its high level of education and wide variety of opportunities for all of our students. The BOE and administration has used, and will continue to use, the audit results to make multiple decisions. However, the BOE also determined the importance of maintaining the whole child and superb educational programs, instruction, and services as the audit's recommendations would eliminate many of them.

The Superintendent reported the progress on reducing costs and saving money at the September 2021 Board of Education meeting. A comparison to the audit was made, which can be found [HERE \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JippUkdXx2o\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JippUkdXx2o). A brief explanation was also provided on what was reduced or eliminated, as well as, the items that were not being reduced or evaluated due to maintaining programs, education, and trying to limit the amount of time that a student spends on the bus traveling to and from school. As positions are vacated, the administrative team analyzes each position to determine if it can be eliminated, reduced, changed, or modified in any way. The administrative team is committed to hiring the best quality staff while also carefully monitoring spending.

Question 2: Why are we paying \$13,519.14 (CUPP 2021 Data) per student, which is more than some districts?

The Board of Education is committed to an outstanding education including academic, mental health, and extracurricular activities that prepare our students for life after high school. Some quick statistics in an average graduating class include:

- Military - 3%
- Employment - 29%
- College - 68%

Approximately 3% of our students with special education services will continue to be served at Talawanda through the age of twenty-one (21). This ‘deferment’ of this diploma is not captured in the 4 year or 5 year graduation rate.

While Talawanda School District is often compared to our neighboring school districts, Talawanda School District is *not* comparable to these districts due to factors such as:

- a. 27-30% Low Socioeconomic Status
- b. English Language Learners
- c. Average and Median Income of Families
- d. Large Geographic District

Talawanda School District does provide:

- K-12 busing, including transportation for extra-curricular activities.
- STEM
- Social workers *and* counselors in each of our buildings
- Wide variety of extracurricular activities such as, foreign language, mock trial, drama, sports, band, music, choir
- \$0 pay to participate within our athletic and band programs
- Wellness Coordinator (25-100% funded via grants)
- Low student to teacher ratio (**Average 18.96 students to 1 staff)
- Extra Time Extra Help (ETH)
- Student Assistance Programs (SAP)
- Title 1, Elementary Intervention Teachers, Gifted Programs, and Special Education Services.
- High School Elective courses to prepare students for their next step
- Alternative School Programs
- Butler Technology Programs such as FFA and FCLA
- AP/Honors/CCP classes
- Preschool Program
- Teaching and Learning teachers to assist, coach, and provide professional development for staff members.
- School Resource Officers (SRO’s) in each building
- High School Summer School
- Administration of Non Public Schools Federal Funds (mandated by law)

- Partnerships and Wrap-Around programs with businesses: Community Foundation, City of Oxford, Oxford/Reily/Hanover/Milford Townships, Primary Health, Butler Behavioral Health, TriHealth (McCullough Hyde), St. Als.
- Certified nurses at each of our buildings
- Alternative to expulsion interventions and programs
- Mental health and wellness for both students and staff
- Parent mentor project (identified parents or family members who need assistance)
- Resident Educator services (new teachers mentor and assistance)
- Advocacy to our state legislators, and other local entities
- 94.5% (4 year) graduating rate, 94.9% (5 year) graduating rate
- Distribute food backpacks for weekend food for identified students
- 1:1 computer devices
- Specials (art, music, and physical education) at all grade levels

All of these programs and services prepare our students for employment, military, vocational, and/or college experiences as contributing members of society amongst other services (not listed) to our students, staff, and families.

Talawanda School District provides services and education that wraps around the students academically, socially and emotionally including mental health supports resulting in the cost of \$13,519.14 per student.

What also should be pointed out is that Talawanda School District has built two (2) new elementary schools (Kramer and Marshall) funded without having additional bond levies. The high school and Bogan Elementary schools are being paid for by taxpayers through a bond levy passed by the community in 2003 and 2009. We are being proactive with our building's maintenance which is why TSD is currently renovating TMS a little at a time. Current projects at TMS include replacing Air Handler Units and windows within the exterior walls of the building (these two (2) projects are utilizing ESSER funding that we have received from the State).

Fortunately, TSD has a stable workforce. Staff that come to work at Talawanda School District stay at Talawanda. Having a stable and experienced workforce is critical to an outstanding school system.

All of these programs, services, and conditions cost money. While the district is evaluating every position and every cost, the focus is, and always will be, to maintain the highest quality Talawanda education, that attracts others to this community and prepares our students for life beyond high school. TSD accepts all students and works towards each student achieving and reaching their **potential, interests, and emerges from our school system ready for their next big endeavor.**

Additional information may be found on our website: www.talawanda.org or <https://www.talawanda.org/departments/treasurer---finance-42/understanding-school-finance-395>

*CUPP Report November 2021 at:

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/School-Payment-Reports/District-Profile-Reports>

**AG Audit at:

<https://www.talawanda.org/media/treasurer/TSD-%20Audit%20March%202020.pdf>

***Ohio Department of Education report cards at <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/> or <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/district/gradrate/046151>

****DeRolph Decision at:

<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/rod/docs/pdf/0/2002/2002-Ohio-6750.pdf> or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DeRolph_v._State#:~:text=State%20is%20a%20landmark%20case,funding%20public%20education%20was%20unconstitutional

*****<https://www.talawanda.org/resources/2022-levy-facts-48/> 2022 Levy Facts