

**Stimulus and Foundation Aid Spending
Employee and Community ThoughtExchanges
June 2022**

Rush-Henrietta conducted two ThoughtExchanges to request input from the community and from employees regarding the district's plan for utilization of the increased Foundation Aid and federal stimulus funds. There were 94 participants in the community ThoughtExchange and 164 participants in the employee Exchange. Of the employee participants, 64% were teachers. Participants were asked to post their thoughts on the proposed spending and rate the thoughts posted by others based on how strongly they agreed with the statements.

In both exchanges, the participants were in support of the district's plan to put the money toward key focus areas. Details were given to demonstrate how the spending would meet the needs of students through academic support, mental health and social-emotional learning support, and employee retention and recruitment efforts.

Among employees, there was strong support for retention efforts, with many naming salary increases as a desired retention measure. In addition, thoughts mentioning a need to focus on mental health and behavioral concerns were top-rated. Other highly rated sentiments included a need for academic support and maintaining our smaller class sizes. There was also strong support for a need to hire more substitutes.

Within the community, the strongest support was for thoughts related to employee retention and the behavioral needs of the students. Other highly rated thoughts included mental health support, smaller class sizes, and academic support. Several of the additional suggestions offered by the community centered on safety within the school buildings.

As one of the highest-rated thoughts in the employee Exchange stated; "I do agree with what the funds are being used for. Mental health and quality staff retention are crucial to keeping the district with strong teachers and leaders."