As Food Costs Soar District Tries More Efficiency

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We’re all paying more for groceries these days, and the Kodiak Island Borough School District is no exception.

Finance Director Luke Fulp told the school board at this week’s work session in Ouzinkie that the district is expecting a 292-thousand dollar shortfall in its food service budget this year.

(School Food 1 :26s “…over 20,000 cases of milk.”)

Fulp says transportation and energy costs are also partly to blame, as food suppliers pass those expenses on to the district. He says the district will look for money to make up the shortfall when it does budget revisions in January. One option the district is not considering is charging more for student meals as districts in other parts of the state have done. Fulp says that would barely put a dent into the amount that needs to be made up.

(School Food 2 :33s “…10,000 dollars of extra revenue.”)

But the district is looking for ways to save money by being more efficient. Sandy Daws, the district’s purchasing coordinator, addressed the school board by videoconference during Monday’s work session. She says a reviewer who works with the district every couple years on the food service program is scheduled to be in Kodiak this month and will evaluate ways the program can save money.

(School Food 3 :22s “…operating in the hole basically.”)

In addition, Fulp says Daws is working on creating a more comprehensive list of food service costs at each school.

(School Food 4 :16s “…a better idea of what’s going on.”)

The district did get some good news regarding food service recently. The state Department of Education and Early Development awarded Kodiak schools a 27-thousand dollar grant to pay for fresh fruits and vegetables at five village schools and Main Elementary. Daws says part of the money will go toward buying a vacuum sealer that can keep the foods fresh.

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