

Questions and Answers generated from BUDGET ROUND TABLE held on June 5, 2017

Why does our school district need to run a local levy?

The state of Washington does not provide enough funding for school districts to educate all children adequately. Most school districts (287 of 295) must ask their local communities to support maintenance and operations levies in order to have the resources to best serve students and meet the state requirements. Our school district has previously used federal forest funds (Secure Rural School –SRS).

How much does a \$2 million levy mean to our schools?

The renewal of this levy would mean that about 18% of our budget would come from local funding. Personnel costs make up about 80% of our total \$11.7 million budget. Without the local levy, we will not be able to provide the teachers and programs our kids need and we will not be able to support our community values.

Can you explain the other funding challenges you face as a district?

First, the Stevenson-Carson School District has not received any timber dollars (SRS) since fiscal year 2015. The SRS (Secure Rural School) payment was about \$1.4 million in 2015. This loss in revenue very much impacts the programs we can offer. Secondly, as of 6.14.17, the state has not approved an education budget. At this point in time, we are missing that information and are unable to prepare our 2017-2018 budget without it. Finally, if the district passes the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Replacement Levy, the district will receive an estimated \$49,525 in levy equalization funds from the state. If voters do not approve the levy, this money will be given to other districts.

What will you do if by some slim chance, Congress approves SRS for 2018?

The district desires to build a budget that does not rely on SRS for daily operations. Any unforeseen SRS funds received by the school district, after an approved levy, would be used for one time projects (capital outlay—roof, student desks, track repair) and would not be used for the day-to-day operations. We want to move away from this unstable and unpredictable funding source.

Will the levy amount be reduced if SRS funds come through?

The currently levy proposal has been filed with the Skamania County Auditor. There is no process available to change the amount after Friday, May 12, 2017.

What are some of the cuts that have been made to the budget last year and moving forward into next year?

- Closing Columbia Gorge Alternative School
- Eliminate the vice principal position from Stevenson High School
- Through a reduction in force and attrition, the district has cut over 15 positions in the last two years

- Building and department budgets have all been reduced

Are you doing anything to save money?

The district had an energy audit completed on every facility in February 2017. This information is being used to apply for grants and to ensure money spent for upgrades are cost effective. The district seeks grants and partnerships. This year alone over \$1,070,000 was brought in through grants and cash donations and over \$120,000 of donated equipment because we simply asked. Volunteers have put in over 200 hours painting, cleaning and landscaping district grounds. We created a partnership with an analytical operational specialist to reduce costs while improving productivity, beginning at the district office. This service is at no cost to the district at this time. Finally, we are even looking at saving pennies: please, turn out the lights when you leave the room!

If extracurricular isn't basic education, how is it funded?

The state of Washington does not identify extracurricular as a basic education function. In the past, our school district has used timber dollars/SRS (Secure Rural Schools) or levy dollars to fund this activity within our school district.

How much does the district pay teachers? How does that compare to other districts?

The district pays teachers based on the LEAP Salary Schedule that is enacted when the state of Washington's operating budget is adopted. This salary schedule was developed in the 1970's to implement a statewide funding formula for K-12 teachers. This schedule aligns the teachers' years of educational experience and their years of service to generate a staff mix. This staff mix is a multiplier for the enacted (approved) base salary. For the 2016-2017 School Year, the Base Salary for a teacher with 0 years of experience and a Bachelor's degree is \$35,700. SCSD uses the LEAP Salary Schedule to generate the base pay for all of our teachers.

Each district works with their negotiation teams and their additional pays could look different than ours. SCSD addresses "other pays" during contract negotiations and then when agreed upon are added to the collective bargaining for each union. We currently pay a 1.00 FTE teacher the additional other pays: 5% of base for TRI pay (White Salmon has 5 days, Washougal has 22 days), 6 supplemental curriculum days (Washougal teachers receive \$730 extra for professional development) and 2 personal days (White Salmon 3, Washougal 2).

What is a prototypical funding model?

Prototypical school is a fixed theoretical school size that is used for modeling and funding purposes. As adopted, it is believed to be a scalable model. For example, as enrollment increases or decreases from prototypical size, the staff units change proportionately. This model has 400 in an elementary school, 432 in a middle school and 600 in a high school.

Has school funding recently changed for Washington state?

<http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2014.08.20.Education.Funding.OSPI.pdf>

What is the fiscal year for school districts?

The fiscal year starts September 1 and ends August 31.

Is the school board solidly behind this levy?

Yes. Each board member supports this levy.

What is the status of the swimming pool? How much did the district spend on reopening it?

The swimming pool will open on June 23rd. It is reopening because of overwhelming community support and partnerships. The school district only funded about 25% (\$40K) of the reopening costs and the rest was donated! The goal is to reopen the pool at a cost not much greater than the amount we paid annually for the pool while it was closed (\$30K). If this goal cannot be achieved, the pool will be closed for good, draining it and repurposing the building. The pool will need continued community partners and participants to provide the annual revenue to make the pool sustainable.

What is the cost of extracurricular activities? How many students are involved?

Our extracurricular budget for this year was \$323,980. To date, we have spent \$265,715. We had 888 separate participation enrollments.

Why did the board decide to run it for \$2 million and not to the levy lid?

The board's desire is to be a good steward of ALL funds received by the school district. It is believed that we can still provide great programs to our students while trimming the budget a bit for future years. The district will still trim its budget up to \$500,000 with the approval of this levy.

How many votes does the school district need to pass the levy?

Fifty percent plus one of the total votes cast must be "yes" votes.

If I don't have children attending school in Stevenson-Carson School District, how will I benefit from this levy?

With proper education of our children, local property values increase, crime decreases and the availability of skilled, competent workers increases. As taxpayers, we fund other public services like utilities, roads and fire/emergency protection. Some believe that educating our citizens for the future is part of our civic responsibility.