

Did You Know?

Chapter 4

Thank you to those who were able to attend the Budget Forum on March 1st at Cactus Shadows High School. There were over 150 attendees between the two budget forums.

We will continue to check to see if additional questions are submitted through the Google Doc that is on the District web page and respond in future Did You Know? Communiques.

Here are the *questions* and factual responses to the submissions from the latest budget forum and the Google Doc:

- *How will elementary teachers have a prep period every day with the reduction in specials?*

Elementary principals will be working together to create schedules for the elementary sites with the staffing provided.

- *Will teachers be compensated if they do not get a prep period?*

There will be no compensation available. If there were money available we would apply it toward staffing.

- *What is the land trust? We are new to Arizona?*

The land trust was created in 1915 from state trust lands to benefit Arizona schools. When proceeds from the sale of state lands are received it goes into the State Land Trust for education. The Education Finance Amendment (Prop 123) will be going to the voters on May 17, 2016 for the state electorate to decide to fund education for 10 years from the interest of the State Land Trust. The corpus of the trust will not be touched.

- *How does reducing teachers at the Middle School affect classroom size with the upcoming 6th graders?*

The middle school principal will be constructing a schedule with the goal of not increasing class size.

- *How much money is the district losing next year? (worst case scenario)*

The district will lose \$3.4 million from the loss of charter money. We will need to reduce our budget by approximately \$3 million if Prop 123 fails.

- *Some staff sign up for district health insurance solely to get \$40.00 into an HSA. Many of these staff already have health insurance through other sources such as spouses or even parents for younger teachers. Why not allow staff to receive \$40.00 as cash instead of HSA, and many staff would voluntarily forgo district insurance?*

Our benefits package is dependent on the number of participants. The larger the pool of employees the more competitive the pricing for our

benefits package.

- *Is there a strategy for how the district intends to retain talent while simultaneously submitting staff to an environment of perpetual fear of job loss due to budgets?*

We are communicating with our employees on a continuous basis, as new information becomes available. Our goal is to retain, reward and recognize our employees every chance we get.

- *What can our parent groups do to help alleviate the pain in the cuts at the school level, aside from CCUEF?*

Our parents already do so much. You have repeatedly helped us with supplies for our students and classrooms. Work with your site administrators to see if there are other needs that can be met. We appreciate all that our families do for our District.

- *Explain the sub budget at EL schools. What happens with students?*

Each school receives a sub budget and when the budget is exhausted the principal will make decisions that will cover the teacher absence and preserve the learning environment.

- *With reference to cutting specials (if 123 passes) how can the 2 smaller elementary schools share special teachers when there are more classes to service 33+ (combined), plus drive time.*

The elementary principals will be working together to create a schedule so that art, music and P.E. are **offered 3 times a week.**

- *I am confused on the proposed specials cuts for elementary schools. Can you explain?*

The specials at the elementary school will be over staffed next year at the two smaller schools, by one art, one music and one P.E. position. Each year we look at the student enrollment numbers and make decisions that fall within our staffing guidelines and act to reduce staffing. This year it includes the specials positions at the two smallest elementary schools.

- *How are you going to retain our excellent teachers and keep morale at a decent level through all these changes? We stay in this district because of the quality of staff!!!*

We will continue to communicate so we have transparency in our decision making. Our intent is to give as much money as possible that may be allocated from the passage of Prop 123 to our staff. We want to keep our great staff!

- *Why are the elementary schools getting hit with 30% of the cuts while the middle school is 13%, the high school is 22%, and DO is 17%? While the elementary school may have slightly higher enrollment overall than the other levels, it is not that much higher to warrant such a larger hit.*

As Dr. Burdick stated, elementary schools have the most grades (7). As you know middle school has (2) and high school has (4). The volume of staff is at the elementary sites.

- *Please clarify one of the answers previously given which said “Reducing instructional time is not an option. Minutes of instruction are mandated by the state”: What is the specific state requirement for instructional time, and what are the CCUSD instructional time minutes in relation to this requirement?*

State law A.R.S 15-901. requires 712 hours per school year in grades kindergarten through third: 890 hours in grades four, five and six: 1,000 hours in grades seven and eight: 720 hours in grades nine, ten, eleven and twelve. In CCUSD we serve students an average of 960 hours in grades kindergarten through third grade: 980 hours in grades four, five and six: 1073 hours in grades seven and eight; and 1048 hours in grades nine, ten, eleven and twelve. We value every minute of instructional classroom time.

- *What is the \$22,000 reduction in red, on the budget sheets, for Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS)?*

This is not a reduction. This is the increased cost for the employee contribution to ASRS for the 2016-2017 school year. The District will cover this increase for their employees.

- *The 25% sub budget reduction for elementary schools how does that work?*

The budgeted amount for school substitutes will be 25% less and the sites will need to find other ways to cover staff absences, should the money allocated be exhausted before the end of the school year. The principals at the elementary schools will be working on a plan on how to cover their classrooms.