



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

District officials present positive budget picture

Business administrator shares news of salary increases, no tax increase

A review of the Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget and preview of the 2017-18 proposed budget was good news followed by more good news.

“Based on direction from the board we were able to accomplish some things,” Business Administrator Craig Carter said. “We took care of our employees, I think in a substantial way, accomplished a goal the board set eight years ago, and really took care of some things happening in the classroom.”

Among the positives shared was the news that \$7 million will be added to the fund balance, which completes the economic stabilization account. Finance Director Tim Leffel said the Board of Education passed a resolution in 2009 to create the account, which acts as a rainy day fund, but also improves the district’s credit rating. Even in the lean years, the district was able to add to the account. This last \$7 million brings the account up to the legal maximum of \$22.6 million.

“That’s huge,” Carter said. “It took the effort of three boards to get us to where we are at. We’re giddy about it.”

The budget also takes care of district employees. In

fact, 87 percent of the budget is spent on people who impact students in some way every day. Leffel said specifically it takes care of what happens in the classroom. The average teacher salary went from \$47,823 to \$50,273.

“It’s just an indication that we are trying,” Leffel said. “We are trying to get that up.”

Another good news item, Leffel said, is that \$12 million was set aside to put evaporative coolers in about 20 schools over the next two years. The district will start with the hottest schools — typically two story schools — and move down through

the list.

“It’s a big thing,” he said. “We’ve heard (about the heat) a lot from our community and we are trying to address it.”

Carter said they have seen about a 7-degree drop in classrooms in schools where the evaporative coolers have been installed.

In the coming budget year, there is more positive news. Beginning teachers will make just over \$40,000. All full-time licensed educators will receive a 3 percent cost-of-living increase, steps and lanes and a \$500 stipend in

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Survey narrows list of high school names, mascots, colors

The new high school being built in west Farmington is one step closer to having a name.

Principal Rich Swanson told the board the second survey results show the top three names received more than 73 percent of the vote. Swanson said Farmington High was the top name with about 50.55 percent indicating that was their top choice. The interesting thing, he said, is that it was the top name for the majority of survey takers in every city.

This is something that’s had a lot of energy and excitement,” Swanson said.

The survey also narrowed the mascot down to Eagles, Phoenix or Ducks. Five color combinations were also part of the survey. The top choice was the third set which included a deep teal, silver and white.

“All this is wonderful,” Swanson said “I’m excited to let you make these tough decisions, fill the building and let me do what I love to do.”

Board member Julie Tanner

asked what criteria the board should consider as they move forward on choosing the school name, mascot and colors.

Secondary School Director Dan Linford advised the board to consider the public feedback received through the survey. If it was obvious a mascot or name was a joke, he said, he would advise the board to look at other options. However, if the choices are good possibilities, he advised giving that feedback strong consideration.

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November. The Legislature funded a 4 percent weighted pupil unit increase and funded growth. Carter said that is significant when considering the expected growth of 1,000 students in the district next year.

Full-time classified employees also will receive a 2.5 percent cost-of-living increase, steps and the \$500 stipend.

In the 2017-18 budget year, Carter says the district will set aside \$4.5 million for the third step in its job study. Last year, teacher and principal salaries were addressed. This year, the job study focus is on classified employees.

Carter said the proposed budget does not require a tax increase. The budget hearing will be held Tuesday, June 6 at 6:30 p.m.

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“In this case, I think people voted in an authentic way,” he said. “It’s a good thing to listen to voters.”

Board Vice President Mona Andrus said she was concerned about the eagle mascot. She questioned how it could be distinguishably different from the Clearfield Falcons. If, however, the mascot picked was the ducks, she worried about the color options.

Board Member Gordon Eckersley said it is important to base the decision on the survey results.

“I had the good fortune about 50 years ago to choose the mascot and colors for Layton High School,” said Eckersley. “I would have been so mad had the board come and said ‘We don’t like Lancers, we want you to be the Longhorns.’”

The board is expected to make a decision during the June 6 meeting.

In other workshop business:

- School counselors representing the each level — elementary, junior high and high school — outlined their role in the Davis

School District. Each said they take care of the emotional and academic needs of students. From classroom instruction to career and college readiness, they help students be successful.

- District Legal Counselor Ben Onofrio reviewed three policy changes: Charitable solicitation, student board member selection and employee discipline and dismissal.

- Burke Kilburn, father of Dakota Kilburn who was hit and killed while crossing 2000 West, asked the Board of Education and school district for support in increasing the safety for pedestrians in that area.

UDOT is installing a HAWK pedestrian crossing, which includes flashing lights that warn drivers to yield when a pedestrian activates it. He would prefer UDOT look at a pedestrian bridge.

“We want to do all we can,” Superintendent Reid Newey said. “We’ll continue to be supportive and stand with you in lobbying for the safety of our students.”

Board gathers public input in “What Counts” effort

Philosopher Epictetus is quoted as saying, “We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.”

Such may be the end goal of the Board of Education as it continues to move forward with its “What Counts” effort.

Back in late April, board members hosted a community feedback event in which 75 invited guests — representing a variety of community members — convened in the district’s Kendell Building to answer two questions.

- What do you appreciate about your schools?

- What are the characteristics of quality schools?

The discussion, facilitated by Mossi White, past president of the Utah School Boards Association and National School Boards Association, resulted in the following top priorities:

- Programs to develop “well-roundedness:” art, sports, clubs, interests, music, STEAM, history, government, citizenship

- Quality teachers and staff who love teaching, use best practices, are engaging, and welcome parental involvement and input. Teachers have the freedom to innovate without fear of failure.

- Safe, healthy, happy learning environment where students and teachers feel loved and supported.

- Address all abilities and skill levels to meet students’ needs, including vocational, college prep, resource and gifted.

- Innovate education practices (project-based learning, hands-on learning opportunities, real-world problem solving, deeper level thinking. Make learning fun.)

- Money to fund programs, teacher training, increase salaries, reduce class size.

Board member Julie Tanner explained, “The priorities will have a strong influence as the school board decides upon our vision and goals for the school district.”

She also added board members will hold a similar meeting with district employee representatives in October which will further assist in formulating the board’s vision and goals.

Anyone who would like to give input about the “What Counts” effort and the two questions being asked by the board can simply contact individual board members via email. Those addresses are posted at: <https://www.davis.k12.ut.us/Page/30>