

# MINUTES

## January 2018-Oak Hills Community Council Meeting

*Date | time* January 11, 2018 | *Meeting called to order by* Terry Miller

### In Attendance

Council Members: Ruthanne Keller, Casey Pickett, Martha Anderson, Victoria Stats, Marv Cassler, Terry Miller, Elissa Smith, Rebecca Gallacher-PTA Pres, Misty Mayfield, Michelle Porter, Shelli Arthur, Ben Pykles, PTA Board, Faculty & Staff, Parents, and Community Members.

### Agenda Topics:

#### A. Introductions and Welcome:

Principal Keller invited local legislative leaders to our CC Meeting several weeks ago. CC Chairperson, Terry Miller and Principal Keller welcomed the legislative guests to our meeting: Representative, Ray Ward and Senator, Todd Weiler.

#### B. Audience Questions and Discussion

1. *How much of our educational budget in the state of Utah goes to higher education and public education (elementary and secondary)?*

Both legislator guided in this discussion because it is very complex. They began by pointing out where Utah's actual state budget comes from. For example, this year, the state budget will be around 16 billion dollars (approx.). Our state budget comes from three specific sources: 1. State Sales Tax, 2 State Income Tax, and 3. Gas Tax.

Sales tax goes into the state's General Fund, all state income tax goes towards Education (there is never enough to fund all of education's needs, and gas taxes only go to fund Transportation and Roads (there's never enough in these funds either). To help boost the needs of Education and Transportation, funds are often taken from the General Fund to help boost the other two. However, money is never taken from the Education to fund needs in other areas. Of these funds-approx. 80% is spent on K-12 Education and 20% on higher education.

2. *It would be nice if we could be at average per pupil spending or have that be a goal. Our population is only going to get bigger and our needs are only going to grow. Utah allocates on average about \$7,084 per pupil, per year (One of the lowest). The national average is \$11,841. What are the three top barriers to Utah not being able to allocate more funding to education at the K-12 level?*

This is another very complicated question. Utah spends on average around \$6200 to \$6500 per student per year. The problem we have in Utah is we have the most kids per capita in the country, additionally we get thousands of new students each year due to high birth rates (from large families) and people moving into our state. So, just to keep up with growth, we must add new funds, and this does not increase our per pupil spending, it just maintains it. However, slowly we are trying to add more to per pupil spending every year. Good news, 2018 will be Utah's high per pupil spending, thanks to a great economy, in our state's history. The top three barriers to Utah being able to allocate more funding to

this area of education are: 1. New growth (more students), 2. Money going to education pensions, 3. Increasing healthcare costs.

- 3. The percentage of the budget that Utah spends on education is irrelevant compared to what it costs per pupil to educate them in the world class environment that our employers want us to. What is the plan to make this happen for Utah's students?*

Our new education budget is trying to increase awareness of all Utah's post-secondary educational opportunities including excellent state funded colleges, universities, and technical colleges. This year's 2018 Budget was announced at Davis Technology College in Kaysville, which again reiterates Utah's education to both primary and secondary education.

- 4. As I am sure you know, Utah is ranked 50th for spending per student, despite this we are still ranked #22 in the nation for education. Do these facts impact decisions made regarding education spending for K-12 education? Is there a desire in the state legislature to try to become better than a mid-range educational system in the country? What can we do as parents and educators to help improve education in the state?*

The biggest reason that Utah's students continue to score well on national tests despite large class sizes and nationally low per student spending is that we have a high percentage of two parent homes. This is the largest pre-determining factor in student success. It's what happens at home. This also disadvantages Utah; though, because we have lots of single income family with over 3 children. So, we aren't bringing in as much income tax. So, our strength is also a weakness to our tax base, because many Utah families have a parent stay at home. Yes, there is a desire to improve funding for education. But it must be done in gradient realistic levels.

As a parent, you need to be educated in how education is funded. Additionally, beyond contacting state legislators, you can also contact your state and district school board members. They also have a huge say in how the state and local districts allocate and spend education funds. Our state school board member is: Laura Belnap. Her email address is: [lbelnap@utahonline.org](mailto:lbelnap@utahonline.org). She loves to hear from local parents.

- 5. What can you tell us about rumors we've heard that the legislature is looking at putting LAND Trust funds into the general education budget?*

The Trustland Funds program has been a very successful opportunity for schools to have a very personal way to fund special projects determined by their own CC faculty and parent board members. There is no movement to take these funds away and put them into the general budget and there are no legislatures that our visitors are familiar with that would support such a plan. Trustland Funds is a very supported and worthwhile project that helps Utah's K-12 school.

6. *What do you anticipate happening with education in the legislature this year?*

Most new monies will go to education. Don't forget that education spending is also determined by the local and state school board, not just the legislature.

7. *School shootings are increasing across the nation. There have been 134 school shootings in the United States since 2010, including two in Utah in 2016. These shootings generally fall into two categories: (1) those committed by non-students (think Newtown or the recent shooting in Rancho Tehama Reserve, CA), and (2) those committed by students (think Columbine or Mueller Park Jr. High) Given this sobering reality, what are our elected government representatives doing to protect our children, teachers, and administrators from shootings in our schools? And what can we – as concerned parents, teachers, administrators, and citizens – do to work with our government representatives to increase the safety of our schools?*

Senator Weiler addressed this topic, because last legislative session he got federal money to fund a training video about dealing with active shooter situations in school. There's also been requests for school to have doors that can be locked from the inside and only unlocked with a specific tool. Oak Hills investigated this; however, the fire marshal would not okay the program due to the risks of students being locked in a room during a fire. This is an on-going topic. However, school districts have so many challenges that trying to secure schools with metal detectors etc. just isn't realistic due to cost of installation and have personnel to man the security in place. Oak Hills has had a secure vestibule installed. However, our district still can't fund this program for every school.

8. *What are the top concerns you're hearing from parents and educators across the state?*

Top concerns from parents and educators are very universal. They include: 1. Increased funding, 2. Legislature puts forward too many bills impacting educators (its overwhelming to them), 3. Reducing class size, 4. Federal government trying to mandate our schools with topics like common core.

**C. Conclusion:**

We so appreciate our legislators taking time out of their busy schedules to educate us in what makes education funding happen at the state level.

*Note Taker Disclaimer:*

The answers to these questions are based on notes taken and there may be inaccurate or partial answers in this document. The discussion was faced paced. Feel free to chat with parents and faculty who attended to get their overview and opinion of topics discussed.

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**Next Meeting**

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Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 8 from 6pm to 7pm

Upcoming Topics: School Improvement Plan for 2018-2019 School Year