



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

Majority speak in favor of proposed tax increase

Board of Education votes unanimously to support teacher salaries

The Board of Education unanimously approved a proposed tax increase following a Truth-in-Taxation Hearing Tuesday. Nearly two dozen people addressed the board regarding the proposal, the majority in favor.

The district plans to use the funds from the tax increase to offer teachers a competitive wage and attract and retain the best educators possible for its 72,389 students. The starting salary for a first-year teacher will increase to \$43,798, reflecting a 7.65 percent increase.

The approval of the tax increase sets the 2019 Certified Tax Rate at .007808, which amounts to about \$58.74 annually on a \$338,000 home. It will raise about \$7.6 million, which will also help provide salary increases for all teachers. The Davis School District has not increased taxes since 2011.

Business Administrator Craig Carter said the Board of Education adopted a tentative budget in June which allotted for the 4.75 increase for teachers and other employees. The Truth-in-Taxation Hearing and subsequent vote from the board certifies that tax increase. Carter said the tax increase helps the district remain competitive, but the starting wage is still below what some surrounding districts are offering.

“We don’t have the commercial value of some of those other districts,” Carter explained. “We’ve been asked, ‘Why don’t you match the \$50,000 (that other districts are offering beginning teachers). ...’ We don’t have the capacity to do that. If we maxed out our increase, we couldn’t get

enough money to match \$50,000. So what we are trying to do is get as close as we can and provide other benefits to entice our teachers to stay and attract new teachers.”

Several teachers attended the hearing and thanked the board for stepping up and considering a tax increase. Jennifer Hogge, a sixth-grade teacher, spoke of the extra time teachers spend in classrooms.

“I’m asking you to support a tax increase so that I can continue to provide the children of this district with a quality education,” she said. “And I want to belong to a community that shows support for education.”

Those speaking against the tax increase pointed out the increasing burden on limited senior incomes and for those in a single income home. Rusty Cannon, representing the Utah Taxpayers Association, urged the district to look at other ways to pay for salary increases.

Board members said they felt the district was being responsible with spending. Vice President Liz Mumford said in her three years on the board she has witnessed a consolidation of administrator roles, a cutback on trips to conferences and trainings and other cost-saving measures.

“We are working on keeping costs manageable, but we recognize the challenges that our teachers face and I feel strongly that we need to support them in their positions,” Mumford said. “We’ll be looking ahead to the future as we continue to keep costs appropriate and we will work with our community on that, along with our staff and employees.”

Board consolidates public comment periods, passes other amendments

The Board of Education continued discussion on a proposal to consolidate two public comment periods into one during its regular meetings.

Previously, the public could comment on any topic for up to 15 minutes just following the start of the meeting. Another public comment period preceded the Board’s consideration of business items.

The change in policy removes the confusion for the public and sets the

single comment period at 18 minutes.

Board Member Julie Tanner spoke against the policy change. She said she values public comment and believes other board members do as well.

“I’m just asking myself, ‘How can we continue to send the message that public comment is very important, that it’s vital?’” Tanner said. “I guess I’m concerned that as we cut back from 30 minutes to 18 minutes that that sends the wrong message.”

The policy change passed with

one dissenting vote from Tanner.

In other business, the board approved:

- Changes to the School Community Council policy, which added references to the school’s Teacher and Student Success Plan.

- Updates to the Assessment of Student Achievement policy. The changes reflect changes in state law and allow educators to use standardized testing for consideration of their academic grade in that course.