

Board of Education Approves Budget Realignment

At its public meeting on April 10, AUSD's Board of Education approved a set of budget changes designed to improve employee salaries. The decisions came after an exhaustive review of the district's budget and programs that took place over the course of five Board of Education meetings since mid-February.

AUSD's salaries for all employees have long lagged behind those of neighboring districts and are currently among the lowest in Alameda County. In January, the Board directed staff to provide information on why the salaries are low, how AUSD's budget compares to that of neighboring districts, and how the district's budget could be adjusted to help improve employee salaries.

Low Salaries

Over the course of the five meetings, staff presented data on a wide range of budget items, including the costs of full day kindergarten, innovative programs, staffing, teachers on special assignment (teachers who do district work outside of the classroom), special education, cuts that District Office has already made to its staff and programs, and the parcel tax program.

Staff found a number of reasons why AUSD's salaries are low, including:

- AUSD's class sizes are lower than the county average
- Many AUSD classes are not filled to the contractual limit
- AUSD's special education costs are higher than the county average

The budget exploration also found that AUSD's administrative costs are lower than the county average and that AUSD spends less of its overall budget on administrator salaries than surrounding districts.

"We have had a full and robust set of presentations about how resources and funds are now allocated in this district," Superintendent Sean McPhetridge said at the meeting. "As a result, we are farther along in our ability to start discussing why these decisions have been made, as well as how the Board is committed to making new arrangements to take care of the district as a whole and to take care of the collective interests of people who work here and the families we serve."

All of the presentations to the Board of Education, as well as FAQs on the budget realignment process and links to other resources, can be found on the [AUSD Budget Talks page](#).

Approved Budget Changes

At the April 10 meeting, staff presented the Board with a list of ways to potentially shift funds to employee salaries. After discussing the list, the Board asked staff to implement the following changes for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 budget:

Program	Implementation Year & Estimated Savings	
	2018-19	2019-20
Full Day Kindergarten		\$432,256
Innovative Programs		
Bay Farm Innovative Funding	\$14,000	
Earhart Innovative: Some staff and additional technology	\$47,000	
Maya Lin Innovative: Part-time literacy coach, counselor, and Spanish teacher	\$134,469	
Maya Lin Innovative: 25:1 ratio in grades 4 & 5		\$90,450
Encinal Innovative: Additional supplies & technology	\$30,592	
Teachers on Special Assignment		
TSA ELD/Literacy Coaches (6)	\$377,046	
TSA Math Coaches (4)	\$251,364	
TSA Bay Science (part-time)	\$25,136	
TSA Teacher Induction (1)	\$62,841	
Staffing		
Change LMS/WMS 7-period day to 6-period day; fill classes to contractual limit (33:1)	\$779,228	
Fill high school classes to contractual limit (35:1 except at Island High)		\$314,205
District Office		
Reduce services; eliminate discretionary IT funds; cancel software programs	\$557,446	
Change funding source of some DO positions	\$116,000	
Reduce school site discretionary funds 25%	\$205,000	
Optimize use of LCFF supplemental funds	\$250,000	

“Some schools that have received more over recent years in staffing and other arrangements will potentially get less in the coming years,” Superintendent Sean McPhetridge said. “People have heard me say that everyone is going to have to get ready for some austerity measures and some changed conditions if we are to move toward where we need to go with regard to fair salaries of employees in AUSD.”

Long-term changes

During the meeting, both community members and board members called for long-term plans to identify the community's educational values and then find creative ways to implement them while developing a salary schedule that can both retain and attract excellent employees. Ideas include merging Alameda and Encinal High Schools, combining elementary schools, and leveraging grants, partnerships, and other alternative funding sources.

In a separate agenda item, the Board decided not to place a parcel tax on the November 2018 ballot to raise funds for employee salaries, citing both a lack of support in the community and the need to right-size the budget via structural changes first.

"I want to acknowledge this as being a difficult process," McPhetridge said, "and I want to praise the Board, public, and AUSD staff for the advocacy and inquiry they have shown throughout this process. This work is not easy, and in some ways it really is just beginning."

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