

**Paso Robles Joint Unified School District  
2018-19 Budget Questions and Answers**

**Question.** Did the Superintendent receive a 20% raise?

**Answer.** The Superintendent received the same 1.5% raise that all district employees received on July 1, 2018. The Superintendent is donating his salary increase to the 4A Foundation which will be disbursed to school sites and classrooms.

**Question.** What increase has the district contributed to employee health and benefits?

**Answer.** This district increased the health and benefits cap for all employees in 2015 from \$9,572 to \$10,931.

**Question.** What has been the total amount of additional compensation provided to staff during the last several years?

**Answer.** Salary raises for all employees during the last 4 years equal a total increase of 14.5%.

- 2014-15 = 3.0 %
- 2015-16 = 5.5 %
- 2016-17 = 2.5 %
- 2017-18 = 2.0 %
- 2018-19 = 1.5 %

**Question.** Do the current budget challenges impact construction or Measure M funds?

**Answer.** No. Measure M is a General Obligation Bond approved by the voters and can only be used for facility improvements. All projects approved by the Board of Trustees are in progress.

**Question.** Is the aquatics project still moving forward?

**Answer.** Yes. Measure M has a specific allocation for this project. The plans have been approved by the Division of State Architect. We anticipate bidding the project by the end of 2018. The anticipated construction timeline is 8-9 months.

**Question.** Is there is a Special Education legal case that will bankrupt the district?

**Answer.** The district has been working through a special education due process case which began in 2011. This case has been litigated through the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. A final settlement has been negotiated for approximately 50% less than the original amount with a multi-year payout. The multi-year expenditure will be budgeted into future budgets, with some of those costs covered by an existing allocation within the Special Education resources.

**Question.** Will people lose their positions this year?

**Answer.** No. All people in a current paid position will remain in that position through the fiscal year. Employees will not lose their positions based upon fiscal concerns, but the district maintains the option to take personnel action through the employee performance evaluation process.

**Question.** What is the timeline for potential position reductions?

**Answer.** District staff will be updating the Board of Trustees on a monthly basis with current budget information. By December 15, 2018, staff will present the 1<sup>st</sup> Interim budget report for the 2018-19 fiscal year. No later than that time, the district staff will provide a detailed action plan to reach the required 3% reserve.

**Question.** What are the areas of focus for savings?

**Answer.** The focus areas are:

1. Management
2. Programs (assess and evaluate)
3. Revenue Generation (facility use fees, developer fees)
4. Other classified and certificated positions, first focus away from the classroom.

**Question.** What is the district doing to immediately reduce expenditures?

**Answer.** All expenditures are being reviewed to ensure department or site budgets can support the purchase and that they align with district goals. Additionally, purchases that exceed the bid limit are competitively bid to ensure the district is maximizing savings.

**Question.** How much does iRead cost the district? The rumor I heard was \$10,000 per classroom.

**Answer.** iRead is \$1,250 for hosting per site for five sites per year (HMH does not charge the district use at Georgia Brown), for a total district wide hosting bill of \$6,250 per year.

**Question.** What did AR cost the district?

**Answer.** AR \$17,228.25 (\$5.85 per child) + \$599 (per site- data integration fee) = \$20,822.

**Question.** Is the district exploring the opportunity of offering an early retirement incentive (golden handshake)?

**Answer.** Yes. Staff is currently reviewing the list of employees who would be eligible. Staff will be working with our financial advisor to determine the feasibility of the implementation.

**Question.** With the potential reduction of staff, would more combination classes be likely?

**Answer.** We will continue to use the current procedures for determining need for combination classes in which class configurations are based on numbers of students enrolled in a school at each grade level as well as CBA guidelines in which numbers of combination classes will not exceed 10% of the total number of classes.

**Question.** How involved will sites be in making decisions related to the potential elimination of positions?

**Answer.** Opportunities for staff input around prioritization of reductions will be provided through existing and future committees.

**Question.** Do school sites continue to have budgetary decision power for their site budgets?

**Answer.** Yes. School sites have the authority to initiate purchases (approved through the typical purchasing process) and continue to have the authority to make budget transfers within their site allocations.

**Question.** To cover shortage of crossing guards before and after school, could Paraeducators assist with this work?

**Answer.** The budget for crossing guards has not been altered. We will continue to recruit crossing guards through each school site. Paraeducators have set hours working for the district; therefore, we are focusing on outside recruitment.

**Question.** It has been mentioned that we do not currently have coverage for custodial services to provide basic classroom needs like once a week vacuuming. Will these positions be filled or are they being eliminated?

**Answer.** We are excited about the recent movement of our custodians into advanced positions. In the past month we have had three in-house candidates successfully interview and advance into higher positions, and all of their previous positions have been replaced as well.

**Question.** What specific impact has special education had on the general fund?

**Answer.** During the last five years, the district has increased serving the number of students with special education requirements. While at the same time, federal and state revenues have been reduced. This has required the general fund to make a contribution to special education resources.

**Question.** Will district office administrators substitute teach when needed?

**Answer.** Yes.

**Question.** Could employees be given the option not to participate in the district's healthcare plan? (For example, an employee's spouse is eligible for healthcare benefits through a different employer.)

**Answer.** No. The district's healthcare benefit plan is based on the number of employees eligible for benefits. By changing that number, the annual premiums would fluctuate.

**Question.** Will class sizes be impacted next year?

**Answer.** A collective bargaining agreement has been established that set the limits of class sizes. For changes to take place outside of that agreement, a renegotiation must take place.

**Question.** If a school site office secretary is absent, when will a substitute employee be allowed?

**Answer.** For the past five years the district practice has been that when a clerical or classified sub is out in excess of 3 days consecutively, a sub would be provided. There are exceptions to this practice based upon available coverage and the health and safety of students. These exceptions will be brought forward by site administration.

**Question.** Has the high school increased administrative staff?

**Answer.** Yes. The Dean of Culture and Climate was added to the administrative staff for the 2018-19 school year. This was in response to the concerns about school safety.

**Question.** What is the district doing differently to prevent a fiscal problem from occurring again?

**Answer.** The district is working closely with the County Office of Education and Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team, hired new staff within the fiscal office, is increasing professional development for the fiscal office, and is implementing new policies and procedures.

**Question.** The district owns vacant pieces of property. Could those be sold, with the proceeds deposited into the general fund?

**Answer.** Staff is reviewing the title reports for these properties to determine legal rights and conditions of ownership. If property could be sold, an evaluation would have to be made to determine the best use of revenue, while considering anticipated housing growth within the district boundaries.

**Question.** Will summer school programs be eliminated?

**Answer.** Remedial programs will continue and enrichment programs will be reduced not to exceed the allocations set forth in the LCAP.

**Question.** Is the district maximizing the use of various grants for funding?

**Answer.** Currently, grant funding provides for opportunities such as CTE courses, busses, and elementary after school programs. As long as such grants are available and the services do not encroach on the general fund, they will continue.

**Question.** The district had two prep periods for high school special education teachers. Would it be cost effective to return to this model?

**Answer.** Staffing for special education services are determined based upon student needs. Such needs are examined throughout the school year and staffing changed accordingly. A change of prep periods was negotiated in 2015-16. Any return to a former model would require a renegotiation.

**Question.** How many mental health therapists are employed by the district?

**Answer.** Two. One is funded through Special Education and one is funded through LCAP.

**Question.** When does the district receive information related to the total percentage of unduplicated students?

**Answer.** The percentage of unduplicated students is certified and reported during the third week in November.

**Question.** What is the cost of NWEA MAP testing and how does it align to student achievement?

**Answer.** The cost of NWEA MAP for this school year was \$56,587. It is currently used to provide ongoing formative assessment aligned to the standards and to identify next steps for targeted instruction.

**Question.** How can someone apply for the budget communication committee?

**Answer.** There will be an application that will be posted on the district's website. Applicants will be chosen based on a cross-section of representatives from employee associations, Board of Trustees, management, SLOCOE Fiscal Advisor, and general public.

**Question.** What will be the cost to complete the Fiscal Health Risk Analysis?

**Answer.** The Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) will be providing a proposal that will be approved by the Board of Trustees on October 23, 2018. Details will follow.

**Question.** Can the district receive a credit if school sites are not using consumable products associated with specific programs that have been purchased?

**Answer.** Some of the curriculum consumables are included in the contracted purchase price of the adoption, and some consumables have exceeded to time limit of inclusion in the original purchase price and require yearly purchase. Publishers do not refund or buy back unused consumables.

**Question.** *Suggestion:* Would it be cost effective to find a way to have the attendance parties be handled at a site level with incentives that don't require a financial obligation? STEM challenges, field day, etc. would all be looked upon favorably by elementary students. This would eliminate the cost of food items like hot dogs and goodies as well as free up district personnel to be used in other ways like the sub days mentioned in the staff meeting.

**Question.** *Suggestion:* Link the Free and Reduced Meal Plan application to the parent portal.