

School districts brace for budget shortfalls

Measure 28 will determine the future of some Oregon K-12 school district budgets

Jan Montry
City/State Politics Reporter

Oregon's K-12 school districts are bracing for another round of potential shortfalls if Measure 28 fails this month, putting even more pressure on district administrators to make ends meet.

The Oregon Department of Education is reporting that a \$47 million shortfall would result from the failure of the measure, which the department said will cause about 50 percent of K-12 school districts to reduce school days.

"There is no other way to save money," ODE spokesman Gene Evans said. "We'll have to start sending kids home."

Evans blamed the poor state of school funding on the Oregon recession, the unemployment and an unfavorable funding model.

"Schools are 60 percent reliant on income taxes, which is very volatile," Evans said. "Nobody else funds schools like that."

Some districts have already prepared for the worst, even despite the gloomy outlook if Measure 28 fails.

The Eugene 4J school district, which already faced an \$8 million cut going into the year, has an emergency reserve fund that will be

used to avoid reducing school days. 4J schools will face an additional \$3 million shortfall this year if the measure fails, but the reserve would pad the blow.

"What we did is, when the state revenue shortfall showed its face, we started saving," 4J spokeswoman Barb Bellamy said. "For us, we can use the reserve, but we certainly can't continue to do so for the next two years."

Bellamy explained that, whether Measure 28 passes or fails, the district will most likely face cuts in the next fiscal year because of the state's expected shortfall. But for now, she said, their intention is to postpone them as long as possible.

The Springfield school district, which faced a \$3.3 million cut going into this fiscal year, would be short an additional \$1.8 million if Measure 28 doesn't pass. Like the 4J strategy, Springfield officials started preparing for the possible cuts in July and will offset the possible shortfall by instituting spending freezes and not hiring people for unfilled positions.

And like the 4J district, the Springfield school district is more worried about the next fiscal year.

"What we're looking toward is the kind of shortfalls we'll be facing next year," Springfield school district spokeswoman Cherie Kistner said. "The current estimates are at \$7 million."

Many detractors of the measure

are arguing that its failure will not signify such drastic cuts in funding.

Rep. Dan Doyle, R-Salem, said there are ways to prioritize funding that will save schools from budget shortfalls and don't include increasing taxes.

"Right now, we are going through that process," he said. "There is still a way to live within the means that the taxpayers give us."

Doyle said a team of Oregon legislators are planning to meet during the next few weeks to discuss prioritization ideas.

Taxpayer Association of Oregon Executive Director Jason Williams called the threatened cuts to schools a scare tactic, saying once lawmakers revisit the cuts, they will find them less drastic than anticipated.

But Evans disagreed. Evans said he believes people doubt the cuts because, in the past, schools with slashed budgets have been able to keep programs such as art and sports — even after saying cuts were necessary.

And according to Evans, most people think schools are crying wolf.

"Looking at the poll numbers, people don't actually believe the cuts will occur," he said. But "our schools are in terrible shape right now."

Contact the senior news reporter at janmontry@dailyemerald.com.

Crime watch

Thefts and recoveries

Wednesday, Jan. 1, 6:29 a.m.: Furniture reported stolen off porch of residence on East Campus.

Friday, Jan. 3, 11:34 a.m.: Bike reported stolen from EMU.

Friday, Jan. 3, 11:35 a.m.: Bike reported stolen from Walton Complex.

Friday, Jan. 3, 2:36 p.m.: Bike reported stolen from closed portion of East 13th Avenue.

Monday, Jan. 6, 10:57 a.m.: Bike reported stolen from the School of Music.

Monday, Jan. 6, 4:58 p.m.: Bike reported stolen from 180 PLC.

Monday, Jan. 6, 7:00 p.m.: Bike reported stolen from Knight Library.

Drugs and alcohol

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 10:32 p.m.: DPS received a report of more than 15 subjects with open containers at Hayward Field.

Sunday, Jan. 5, 1:36 a.m.: DPS received a report of two subjects with open containers at intersection of Kincaid Street and East 14th Avenue.

Sunday, Jan. 5, 7:54 a.m.: DPS received a report of multiple, possibly intoxicated male subjects outside EMU.

Sunday, Jan. 5, 9:38 p.m.: DPS received a report of intoxicated subject at Bean East.

Other

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 3:24 a.m.: DPS received a report of subject camping illegally at Chiles Business Center.

Thursday, Jan. 2, 2:32 a.m.: DPS received a report of a broken window at Science Library.

Thursday, Jan. 2, 12:37 p.m.: DPS received a report of female staff members stuck in an elevator at Oregon Hall.

Friday, Jan. 3, 5:17 p.m.: DPS received a report of suspicious subject sleeping at Willamette Hall.

Sunday, Jan. 5, 12:25 a.m.: DPS received a report of a suspicious subject sleeping outside Barnhart.

Sunday, Jan. 5, 11:42 p.m.: DPS received a report of a suspicious subject yelling at a wall at intersection of Agate Street and East 13th Avenue.

Monday, Jan. 6, 3:04 a.m.: DPS received a report of subject sleeping on sidewalk at Streisinger Hall.

Monday, Jan. 6, 8:52 a.m.: DPS received a report of a female subject fainting in a classroom at Gerlinger Hall.

Monday, Jan. 6, 11:51 a.m.: DPS received a report of subject sleeping outside of Knight Library.

EARN MONEY

Now accepting applications for Rec Sports basketball, volleyball and floor hockey officials. First general meeting is Wed., Jan. 8th, 6p.m. in Ulrich Room, 63 SRC. Apply at 102 Esslinger or call 346-4113.

Recreational Sports

Come out and Play!



Winter Term 2003

League	Manager Meetings	Location	Time
Basketball	January 14	*SRC Multipurpose #4	4:00p.m.
Floor Hockey	January 21	*SRC Ulrich Room 63	4:00p.m.
Coed Volleyball	January 22	*SRC Ulrich Room63	4:00p.m.

League	Playoff Meetings	Location	Time
Basketball	February 13	*SRC Multipurpose #4	4:00p.m.
Coed Volleyball	February 13	*SRC Ulrich Room 63	5:00p.m.
Floor Hockey	February 18	*SRC Ulrich Room 63	4:00p.m.

Special Events	Deadline	Dates	Location
Basketball Scramble	January 14	January 15-16	Courts 4 & 5, SRC
Open Swim Meet	February 5	February 7, 5:00 p.m.	Leighton Pool
Slam Dunk (new)	February 11	February 12, 4:00 p.m.	Court 1, SRC
Hot Shot, 3-point Contest	February 12	February 12, 4:00 p.m.	Court 1, SRC

One Day Events	Deadline	Dates	Location
Pac-10 3-on-3 Basketball	January 29	February 1	Courts 1, 2, 3, SRC
Table Tennis	January 30	February 2, noon	220 Gerlinger Hall
Wrestling	February 12, 3:45-5:00p.m.	February 12, 7:30p.m.	Mac Court
Badminton	February 27	March 1, 3:30p.m	Court 3, SRC

Two Day Tournaments	Deadline	Dates	Location
Indoor Soccer	February 13	February 15-16	Courts 4 & 5, SRC
Stadium Flag Football	February 20	February 22-23	Autzen Stadium

*Student Recreation Center
An equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accommodations for people with disabilities will be provided if requested in advance.

For more information, stop by 102 Esslinger Hall or call 346-4113. Visit our Web site: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~pars/>

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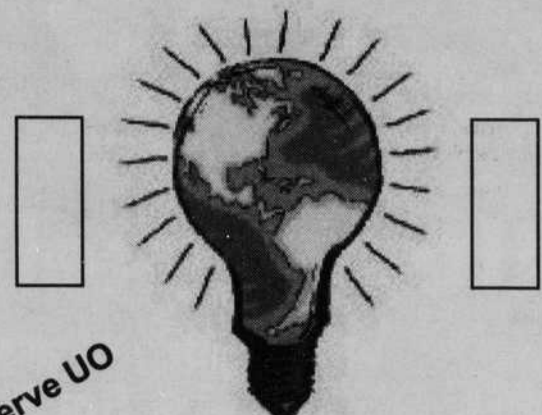


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LIGHTS OUT!!



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