

SLSD faces budget deficit

Acting superintendent expects to present balanced budget in May

BY CAITLYN MAY
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Given the projected revenue and expenditures for the South Lane School District next year, the district is \$425,000 short. However, it's nothing to worry about.

This, according to acting superintendent Kyle Tucker who told the school board and seven budget committee members that in a \$30 million budget, \$425,000 was not something to panic about.

"Hopefully, that based on what happens over the next month, we'll get us to a balanced budget," Tucker said.

In May, the district is expected to have more concrete numbers including an adjustment from the 2016-2017 school year. Last year, that adjustment was a negative number. This year, they're hoping for a positive.

Tucker walked the budget committee through the process explaining cost increases including a 2.1 percent salary increase that is non-negotiable and included in staff contracts. The district is also facing a 4.5 percent Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) increase as well as a projected increase in the cost of insurance.

Eighty-five percent of the district's budget is made up of staffing costs.

"It's people," Tucker said. "Most businesses, the cost is in staffing."

The district has made allowances for increases it can predict such as insurance (moving it from \$15.5 million this year to \$16 million next year) but for other factors, such as enrollment, it can only guess.

According to the district, enrollment has been on the downward trend the last few years with Tucker explaining that the kindergarten classes are not on track with the outgoing senior classes.

As of this week, the district's kindergarten class totals 189 students. The 12th grade class has 209 students.

School district receive money for each student that attends school. The numbers are tracked through the Average Daily Membership (ADM) which tracks the daily average enrollment in a district. That number, weighted, for South Lane is 3,357.

The remainder of the general fund is made up of local revenue including property tax and federal allotments. Local revenue for South Lane is expected to be just over \$7 million. Federal allotments are still up in the air.

"We think they'll be a decrease based on what we're hearing come out of the federal government," Tucker said. "I'm not holding my breath at the federal level," he added later in the meeting.

South Lane has had budget issues in the past including last year when the district joined others across the state to call for more money from the legislature. The education package that was eventually passed came in at \$8.2 billion but was short of the \$8.4 billion schools had asked for. The state legislature follows a two-year budget cycle.

The district also has to take into account longterm projects including the effort to update its fleet of buses that must be completed by 2025. The Department of Environmental Quality is overseeing the governmental mandate that governs emissions standards. South Lane School District currently has 21 buses out of its 41-bus fleet that do not meet those standards and must be replaced. According to Tucker, the district has budgeted for three new buses in the 2018-2019 school year. Any buses that do not meet the new standards by 2025 will be red-lined and taken out of service.

Cottage Grove City Councilor and school district budget committee member Mike Fleck asked if the buses could be retro-fitted to meet standards. Tucker said those adjustments come at a cost of approximately \$30,000 per bus. "Now you're spending \$30,000 on a 20-year-old bus and the transmission starts having problems and the engine and the axle. It wasn't cost effective," he said.

The district is also approximately three years behind on its textbook adoption cycle and continues to work on projects funded by a \$35 million bond passed in 2016. The new Harrison Elementary School is the largest bond project coming in at nearly \$24 million and has a lasting effect on the budget with additional custodial staff budgeted for the facility which is considerably larger than the current Harrison school.

The current budget estimations take into account that no days have been cut from the calendar. Last year, the district cut two days and earlier this year, there was talk of cutting days for the upcoming budget cycle.

"For every day of school in South Lane, it costs \$90,000," Tucker said. "So, this doesn't include cut days, this is a full calendar."

The final budget is expected to be presented to the school board and budget committee next month.

"Our hope is that between now and May 14, we'll get some final numbers and have some staffing changes as people decide whether they're retiring or going somewhere else and we'll present a budget that reflects those revenues and expenditures," Tucker said. "In others words, a balanced budget."

This story first appeared in the April 18 edition of The Sentinel. Get SLSD news all month long at cgsentinel.com

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March Students of the Month

LONDON SCHOOL



FINLEY NASH

The London School April 2018 Student of the Month is

Finley Nash. Finley is an 8th-grade student in Mr. Loeb's 6-8th grade class. Finley is a very hardworking, dedicated and thoughtful student. Finley often completes work early and uses this as an opportunity to help others. In a classroom with a range of ages, Finley uses his maturity to bring the entire group up with him. He also understands that education is a lifelong venture. This mindset will serve him well in high school and beyond. Watch out Cottage Grove High School!

DORENA ELEMENTARY



TORI HAINES

Tori Haines is Dorena School's star student for April. Every morning she comes with a smile and happy attitude. Tori is a calm, positive influence on our class. Tori helps her classmates use their PAC skills. Tori is everyone's best friend. She is patient and cooperative at play and schoolwork. Tori is a valuable member of the Preschool classroom.

HARRISON ELEMENTARY



REESE PRUDHEL

Reese Prudhel is a kind and thoughtful person. Reese always has a smile for everyone in class. Reese is dependable and will accept any challenge that school has to offer. Reese is the type of student that every teacher is grateful to have in the classroom-eager to learn, hard-working and positive.

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LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL



JORDYN BESWICK

Jordyn Beswick is our April Student of the Month. Jordyn is dynamite! She is kind, helpful and always up for the daily challenge! What we appreciate about Jordyn the most is her ability to keep a smile on her face as she tries new things, and even when they may feel hard, she doesn't give up or let it sour her attitude!

ELKTON HIGH SCHOOL



ASHLEY ROBERTSON

Ashley is a conscientious, hardworking and intelligent student. She is kind and thoughtful and very capable of being clever and quick. She has a wonderful sense of humor. She gets along great with her classmates and our staff. She is a very good student who is respectful, listens and works hard!

KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL



TAO MAGEO

Toa has consistently shown incredible care for his own decisions, his future and for the people around him. He works hard and he embodies his belief in the Kennedy community by being active and friendly to all.

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