

BUDGET MESSAGE 2008-09 BUDGET

Greater Albany Public School District enjoys a place of honor in the communities of Albany, Millersburg and Tangent. The communities honored the school district by approving a capital construction bond to upgrade facilities and build a new school, and by engaging with the school board in a conversation about the values that will drive the district's education programs into the future.

Albany's school programs reflect community values and expectations for accountability. High standards and student success are held inviolate at the heart of the district's educational programs. The budget supports these programs and budget development is guided by goals adopted by the Budget Committee. When the Budget Committee met in the fall of 2007, the committee first reviewed the goals that were established the previous year for the 2007-08 budget. After considering current progress in critical areas of district operations and student achievement, the Budget Committee determined that the same goals would serve to support the next budget's desired outcomes of continuous improvement and steady growth.

The 2008-09 school year will be characterized by capacity issues as schools cope with continuing enrollment growth. The Board approved boundary changes for 2008-09 to ease overcrowding in high enrollment areas, but the pinch will be felt until the new school goes on-line fall of 2009. A new wing at North Albany Middle School, and new classrooms at West Albany High and South Albany High will improve capacity at those schools in the coming year.

The district's budget for 2008-09 is based on the second year of biennial funding determined by the Legislature in its 2007 session. It is not a budget that offers opportunities for expansion of district programs. As a result, staff constantly re-evaluates internal resources to allocate funds in the most effective ways.

This proposed budget seeks to meet the Budget Committee's goals in the following ways.

Class size - Education is a people industry and staff costs constitute at least 85% of the district's budget. Staffing schools and departments with the best, most qualified individuals is key to student success. The budget includes staff to address enrollment growth and also to maintain current class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios. A hallmark of the district's student achievement effort is the literacy program that spans all grade levels. Teaching resources directed to this program are squarely invested in continuous improvement.

Facilities – Facilities feature prominently in the proposed budget with routine and deferred maintenance funds allocated from the general fund. New construction costs are associated with the separate bond fund and are tracked closely by the Citizen’s Bond Oversight Committee.

Staff Development – Continuous improvement requires continuous training. Staff development opportunities are supported with resources throughout the budget, including professional development for staff in student behavior support, literacy, math, language acquisition, data collection and management, and professional mentoring.

Student Services – In this area, the budget supports co-curricular and other activities for students to increase their levels of success. The proposed budget recognizes the importance of working with under represented student populations, such as English Language Learners. Programs for these students are being strengthened through increases in instructional staff, professional development, and more translation services.

Instructional Materials and Textbooks – The proposed budget maintains funds for annual textbook adoptions, following the adoption cycle established by the Oregon Department of Education. Additionally, allocations for technology maintenance and upgrades will continue to increase the availability and sophistication of technology directly in the hands of students and staff.

The School Board and community are in the process of articulating the district’s core purpose, core values and strategic goals. The district’s vision and mission clearly revolve around ensuring student success through commitment, character development, and reciprocal partnerships. These elements can be found in abundance in the district’s talented and hard-working staff, its students, families, and its business community. It is those individuals to whom this proposed budget is dedicated.

Pat Bedore
Superintendent of Schools
April 2008

2008/2009 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Revenue

The 2008-09 Proposed Budget encompasses the second year of the current biennium and reflects a roughly 3% increase in state funding (General Fund). Student growth would have increased revenues to an approximate 5 ½ % increase, but a significant decrease in the anticipated beginning fund balance results in a net 2.1% increase in available revenues. Separately, the School Improvement Fund remains a significant revenue source in 2008-09.

General Fund Expenditures

- Expansion of technology-based literacy interventions (example: “Read 180”; function 1131-470).
- Second year of district-wide six-year replacement cycle of student computers (all schools will be included within the six years). Computers are being used for research, taking tests, obtaining credit, and assisting in math and reading instruction. This initiative will ensure at least a 6:1 student to computer ratio at all schools (while reducing support costs through standardization). Funds are budgeted to outfit the schools included in the second round of replacements: South Albany High School and Albany Options School (functions 1131-480 and 1283-480).
- Support for training of new Student Information System in the form of a “Classified on Special Assignment” (function 2114).
- Improvement in library services with anticipated acquisition of new library automation system (function 2222-470).
- Additional trades-level position in Maintenance (with decrease in funds to pay outside contractors; function 2544).
- Continued expansion of district high speed network (last in-city schools scheduled to receive high speed connections). Non-recurring costs (fiber optic build costs) are paid for through the E-Rate Fund while the recurring costs are paid for in the General Fund (function 2660-359).
- The \$2 million drop in beginning fund balance was covered with a corresponding reduction in Facilities Acquisition and Construction (function 4150). Significant funds were used in 2007-08 to provide for replacement office space at Grand Prairie and the new Albany Options facility.

- Continued school bus replacement (two activity vans, three regular busses and one special education bus; function 5200-712).
- Transfer to FACT (Families and Community Together) program corresponding to an increase in state revenue resulting from increased services to pregnant and parenting students provided by FACT staff (function 5200-713). This partially offsets the anticipated loss of federal revenue.
- Fully funded textbook adoption (object code 421; \$554,000).
- Staff and non-staff allocations to schools included additional allowances for ELL populations.

School Improvement Fund

- State funding increased approximately 7% (inflation factor and anticipated student growth), however the fund increased by more as a result of anticipated unspent funds being carried-over to 2008-09 (second year of a two-year allocation).
- This fund primarily provides for the district-wide literacy program as well as mathematics interventions, teacher mentoring, limited summer school opportunities and other services to at-risk youth.
- Formula allocations to schools for additional 2008-09 staffing included additional allowances for ELL populations and school poverty levels (at the secondary level).

Capital Projects Bond Fund (November 2005)

- New school construction begins in earnest in 2008-09.
- Numerous projects planned for West Albany High School including locker room renovation, science lab upgrades, and library renovation.
- Other significant projects programmed for 2008-09 include Periwinkle Elementary expansion, boiler replacements, bus loops, fire alarm upgrades, South Albany High School addition, and electrical upgrades.
- Citizen Bond Oversight Committee continues to meet monthly to review project proposals, cost estimates and construction bids to ensure bond funds are used exclusively for purposes approved by the voters.

Other Fund Highlights

- SB 1149 Fund only carrying debt obligations for final projects completed in 2007-08.
- New fund created to track revenues and expenditures of the Construction Excise Tax imposed in the City of Albany March 2008.
- Capital Projects Fund #1 will be essentially exhausted in 2008-09 with the completion of the new Albany Options facility.