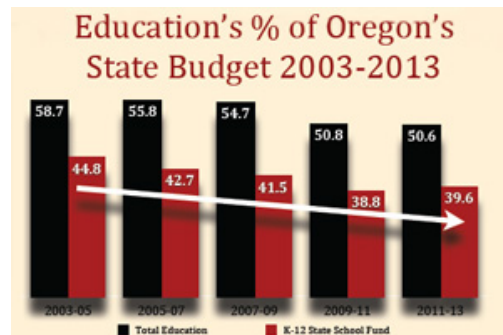


2012-13 Budget Message

My budget messages in recent years have taken on a remarkably similar tune. "Student achievement is up, funding is down!" The continued growth that our dedicated employees have achieved with their students is a testament to their commitment to excellence, the strong leadership in our buildings and central support departments, and the good systems for supporting success that are being put in place to support teachers and students throughout the District.

When compared with constant measures, student achievement reached unprecedented levels throughout our District this past year. Continued progress was demonstrated with our economically disadvantaged and special education students. Our work toward full implementation of EBISS (Effective Behavior and Instruction Support Systems) in our elementary and middle schools, and increased focus on intervention activities with students needing extra academic support in our high schools is paying dividends.

We are entering our fourth straight budget cycle with an expectation of flat or decreased funding for schools in Oregon. The state's financial crisis, along with its simultaneous disinvestment in K-12 education, makes for extremely challenging times as we plan for continued high performance and improvement. Thanks to the commitment of every Bend-La Pine Schools employee to ensure student success, we will continue to do much with the resources available to us.



When compared to the 2011-12 year, the resources available for the 2012-13 school year will require us to continue to operate at a reduced level - but our priorities will remain constant. We will continue to focus on the objectives established in recent years through our Comprehensive Plan to meet board goals. We will continue to support early literacy, maintain high academic accountability, continue to encourage use of instructional technology to boost student learning, and ensure student access to extra curricular activities. We will continue our quest to provide a "world class" education to all of our students.

The importance of maximizing instructional time and maintaining continuity of instruction remains at the top of our list. We are unwavering in our efforts to continue to provide one of the longest school year's in the state of Oregon and to maintain a full 5-day instructional week. The preparation of our students for their next step after graduation continues to receive high marks and students are demonstrating significant success.

It is impossible to present this budget proposal without acknowledging that the current funding level for schools in Oregon is inadequate to fully meet the District's needs in many areas. Although we are presenting a budget that essentially sustains current operational levels across the District, those levels are not what I believe is appropriate to achieve the high level goals that we have set for our staff and students.

Bargaining is just beginning with our employee groups. In order to present a balanced budget that maintains current program and staffing levels, this budget is based on the assumption that we must reach agreement for some continued concessions with employees in terms of length of

contracts and salaries and wages. If those agreements can be reached, we are hopeful to begin the first step towards adding back time in our school year. Even as we work with our employee groups, we must be proactive with our legislators in advocating for increased funding in the next biennium. I am concerned about a "new normal" for Oregon education that represents continued reduced school days and exorbitant class sizes and teaching loads for our dedicated educators.

You will note that we are proposing to use a significant portion of our anticipated ending fund balance for 2012 as revenue for next year's budget. Although balancing the budget with one-time revenue is not sustainable in the long run, several factors have contributed to the current fund balance. Most significant is the fact that we chose to spend in 2011-12 in a manner that would provide us comparable money for 2012-13 so that we could avoid further cuts in the second year of the biennium. Where, historically, the state has allocated a smaller percentage of their biennial appropriation to K-12 education in the first year of the biennium, this time they allocated 50.5% the first year and 49.5% the second.

This budget is built with the intent of continuing to promote high levels of student achievement, and progression of our students to post-secondary education and beyond. It works within our available resources to do what we believe is best for our students and families. As with the funding challenges of the past three years, we will continue to work as diligently as possible to find strategies to use available resources in the best manner possible to serve our current and future students. Our commitment to providing a World-Class education for our students will not waiver.

Finally, the proposed budget meets the requirements of Bend-La Pine Schools Board Governance Policy BDGOV A.3 Financial Planning and Budgeting, and shows a growing percentage in our budgeted ending fund balance.

We thank you for your continued support of Bend-La Pine Schools.

Sincerely,

Ron Wilkinson
Superintendent, Bend-La Pine Schools