



2009-10 Camas Budget Frequently Asked Questions

New

Q: Can we implement an across-the-board pay cut?

A: In theory, yes; however, implementation would meet with mixed results.

Teachers: 100% of the teacher salaries funded by the state must be paid to the teachers. This means that even if our teachers voluntarily took a 5% pay cut, the district would have to return that money to the state. The legislature is currently considering the elimination of one or both of the Learning Improvement Days (LID) for teachers. A LID reduction would equate to a salary reduction for teachers.

Classified staff: More than 90% of our classified staff members are represented by collective bargaining groups. While salary reductions are possible with classified staff, they would have to be negotiated.

Administration: Both the superintendent and the assistant superintendent have volunteered to take a 5% reduction in compensation. Additionally, the remaining cabinet members have volunteered for a 3% reduction in compensation. The net cost savings to the district is \$63,000.

New

Q: Can we implement a four-day school week?

A: No. State law requires school districts to provide 180 days of instruction. During this legislative session, a pilot program to allow a waiver for a four-day school week was approved for 2009-10. This waiver is directed specifically toward cost-savings and is only available to very rural districts with enrollment under 500 students. The Camas School District is not eligible for the waiver.

(Source: Washington State Legislature: WAC [180-16-215](#) and [SHB 1292](#))

New

Q: Why don't we reduce areas such as playground or lunchroom supervision and use volunteers instead?

A: Current bargaining agreements prevent backfilling lost positions with volunteers.

New

Q: How much money is spent on travel?

A: Very little money used for travel. Less than one tenth of a percent of the total budget is used for travel.

New

Q: Why don't we freeze all travel?

A: The district has limited travel destinations for all classified staff and administrators to the State of Washington. Teachers are permitted to use part or all of their allotted staff development money for travel to conferences—these funds are protected by collective bargaining agreement and cannot be reduced or restricted by location.

Q: What are the sources of district financial support?

A: The sources of the District's resources are detailed below. The major portion of the District's operational revenue (68.1%) is received from the State of Washington. The revenues received from the State are allocated based upon the enrollment of the district. Thus, student enrollment is a major driver behind the revenue base of the district. The budgeted total full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment for the Fiscal Year 2008-09 is 5,412.50. Camas Public Schools receives its funding from the following:

- Voter-approved local levy (17.9%)
- Local support—e.g., fees, lunch, child care tuition, etc. (6.9%)
- State funding (68.1%)
- Federal funding (7.1%)

(Source: CSD 2008-09 Budget

http://www.camas.wednet.edu/district/business_services/2008-09_budget_summary.pdf)

Q: What is the projected budget shortfall for Camas Public Schools in 2009-10?

A: Governor Gregoire's proposed budget, which was released December 18, would cut our funding by \$570,000 for the district in 2009-10. However, the State's projected shortfall has increased since the Governor's budget was released in December from \$6 billion to an estimated \$8.3 billion. The governor's proposed budget is only a preliminary step in the legislative process. The actual impact on Camas School District will not be known until the House and Senate release their versions and then agree on a consensus budget when the legislature is set to adjourn on April 26.

In the governor's proposed budget, the most significant impact on Camas School District lies in I-728 funding. The proposed reduction was about 25% and results in a decrease of \$555,991 in both 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Q: What is I-728?

A: Initiative 728 appeared on the Nov. 2, 2000, ballot in Washington State; voters approved the measure by nearly 72 percent. The initiative provides additional money to help students reach new state learning standards. Under I-728, school districts are authorized to use funds to reduce class size; provide extended learning opportunities; provide additional professional development for educators; provide early assistance for children who need pre-kindergarten support; and provide building improvements relating to class-size reductions. (Source: OSPI website - <http://www.k12.wa.us/I728/>)

In Camas, 100% of I-728 funding is spent on teacher salaries:

- K-4 Math Specialists; 2.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)
- K-4 Class Size Reduction; 6.0 FTE
- 5-12 Class size reduction; 19.7 FTE
- Professional Development; \$300,467

It seems increasingly likely that the cut to I-728 funding will increase as the state's forecasted deficit increases. If this is the case, it does not necessarily mean that all positions funded via I-728 would be eliminated. However, it does mean the loss of any I-728 funding would have to be absorbed or addressed somehow in the overall district budget for 2009-10.

Q: Will the district's projected budget shortfall result in employee layoffs?

A: It is too early in the legislative process to know what type of reductions in staff will be necessary. Eighty-four percent of the district's general fund budget is dedicated to personnel costs. Depending on the size of the deficit, positions could be reduced through attrition (e.g., retirements), which could lessen the need for layoffs. Regardless of whether positions are eliminated through layoffs or attrition, any loss of positions would result in fewer services being provided to students, families and the greater community.

Q: Why did the district make budget cuts last year?

A: The 2008-09 fiscal year was the first year in which Camas School District was forced to implement significant budget reductions in more than 25 years. After more than a decade of sometimes dramatic enrollment growth, the district is now seeing enrollment flatten. At the same time, the district has experienced rising costs in special education, pupil transportation, utilities, insurance, employee health care, textbooks, and instructional materials, and other areas. Budget shortfalls have become common in school districts throughout the state where funding support for K-12 schools has not kept up with inflationary expenses.

In 2000, Washington voters approved Initiative 732, which authorized annual cost-of-living (COLA) increases for K-12 teachers and other school employees. School districts, however, did not receive state revenue to provide the state-mandated COLAs for all employees. For the Camas 2008-09 budget, the unfunded COLA affected 32% of staff. That means \$1.2 million must come from local levy funds or reduced purchasing power in non-basic education in order to meet the COLA for all staff.

Q: How is the budget developed for the district?

A: At the direction of the school board, Camas School District administration convened a budget development committee comprised of patrons, board members, administration, and classified, certificated, and unrepresented staff members. The committee and its sub-committees have met tirelessly since the group initially convened in January developing a list of possible cost savings. This list is set to be released from the committee in March to the school board.

Once the board has reviewed possible budget cuts, these options will be publicized. A survey for district staff, students, and the public will be conducted that will compile input and ideas on budget reductions and stakeholder priorities. The board will also host listening posts at multiple locations and times across the district to garner face-to-face input about the budget.

The superintendent and his leadership team are responsible for preparing the budget and submitting it to the board for review. The final budget decision is made by the Camas School Board.

Q: What is the district doing this year to save money and reduce the impact of budget cuts in 2009-10?

A: In late fall, when it became clear the state's budget crisis would have a significant impact on K-12 funding, the administration took several steps to curb costs in this year's budget:

- Freeze hiring of non-mission critical staff
- Freeze out-of-state travel except where contractually obligated
- Limit travel within state
- Critically review all purchases before authorization
- Develop Resource Management Conservation Policy
- Tighten travel/meal reimbursement guidelines

Q: What efforts are being made to communicate with legislators and others about the expected budget shortfall?

A: The legislative platform has been developed by the school board and shared with elected officials, district employees, and community leaders. The superintendent and board members have met with area legislators to discuss the state's budget crisis and its potential impact on the district. Legislators have pledged to stay in close contact with Camas school officials throughout the 2009 legislative session. The superintendent and board members also are advocating for public education support through their membership in the Washington Association of School Administrators and the Washington State School Directors' Association.

Q: Could the district use money from its ending fund balance, or financial reserve, to ease the projected budget deficit?

A: The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends districts maintain a fund balance, or financial reserve, of 5-6% of expenditures. A prudent ending fund balance is essential to:

- maintain an excellent bond rating that saves interest costs;
- provide resources for capital investments including equipment and technology;
- guarantee payment of principal and interest on debt;
- maintain warehouse inventories and other prepaid items;
- cover the costs of nutrition services programs; and
- ensure sufficient cash flow to meet district obligations without warrant interest.

The district's ending fund balance already has been drawn down significantly to cover past budget needs. In recent years, Camas School District has supplemented basic education funding from the state by using local levy dollars and depleting its undesignated, unreserved fund balance. When the state has given cost-of-living (COLA) increases for many employees, the district has extended the COLA to all employees with money from the district's financial reserve and local levy proceeds.

Additionally, each time a new school opens, start-up costs associated with staffing and supplying new buildings take a hit on the fund balance. Our projected fund balance for the current year end is 3.4%

Q: Why are we building new schools while potentially having to lay-off staff?

A: Bond dollars for school construction comes from the capital projects fund and can only be used for construction of buildings. These funds cannot be used to fund teachers, pay utilities, or cover operational costs. Bond funds are an entirely different funding source and cannot mix with the General Fund. The two new schools currently under construction are replacement schools and will not add additional staff.

Q: Why don't we wait to build the new schools?

A: The two new elementary schools will provide needed student housing as several of our schools are currently filled beyond maximum capacity. Additionally, the current contract bid climate is excellent, and the district is able to maximize every dollar we're spending on school construction.

Q: How are salaries determined for the superintendent and other administrators?

A: Salaries for all positions in the district, with the exception of teachers who are placed on the state salary schedule, are compared with like positions in districts our size and with neighboring districts. Camas utilizes SIRS Salary Survey to accurately compare compensation data to ensure that we offer fair and competitive wages based on market conditions.

The superintendent's compensation and the administrative management salary schedule are reviewed and set each spring by the school board as part of budget preparation. Adjustments for the principals and associate principals are determined after surveys are completed as outlined in their collective bargaining agreement.