

## I. Superintendent's Budget Message

May 5, 2014

Dear West Linn-Wilsonville School District Budget Committee Members, Staff, and Patrons:

In accordance with ORS 294.391, I am submitting to you the West Linn-Wilsonville School District proposed 2014-2015 budget.

### **Investing in a Vision**

Tonight I have the pleasure of presenting my 3rd budget message as Superintendent of the West Linn-Wilsonville School District and I bring to you a proposal that represents my first opportunity to propose strategic investments that go beyond just holding even. I believe this is significant and it is also a moment to acknowledge the tremendous work that has been done and what has been accomplished during challenging times.

This budget, presented to you for your consideration, represents an opportunity to renew our commitment to investing in a vision of excellence in education for the children in West Linn-Wilsonville Schools. We believe this budget supports investment strategies that are aligned to our District vision, values, and Board goals as well as to Oregon's aspirational 40-40-20 goals. Ultimately this proposal supports an investment in opportunity for each child, every child to experience miracles in their classrooms and find their path to personal greatness.

I bring this message to you with great pride and an ever-increasing optimism that we can close the gap between our ability to maintain high levels of excellence and the resources available with which to do so. Economic forecasts have improved and Legislators have demonstrated a commitment to creating adequate and stable funding for schools. We are confident that these trends, combined with our culture of growth mindset and belief in what we can accomplish together, will result in outstanding returns on these investments and create the educational opportunities our students deserve.

We truly would not be in this position without the leadership of our Board and the support of our school community. I want to thank our cities, our families, our teachers and principals, our partners and the district staff who have stepped up over and over again to support our schools and our students. I am extremely proud of the work we have done together over the past three years.

### **West Linn-Wilsonville: Investments in Excellence, Access, and Opportunity**

We have consistently invested in and sustained a rich and diverse range of opportunities for students. Our theory of action is that these strategies work together toward the achievement of our goals and vision. The interdependency of these strategies, the level

of diversity they offer, and the quality with which they are implemented creates an equity of access and opportunity that is the hallmark of our district. We believe we are investing in the ability to deliver on the promise that we make to every student: that regardless of who they are or where they live they will meet and exceed academic standards and will be fully prepared for college, career and participation as an active member of our community...for the world. Our key investment strategies include:

- Developing excellence in teaching through **high quality professional development**.
- **Strategic staffing** aimed at **decreasing class size** and providing effective **classroom support systems**.
- Providing **quality curriculum, curriculum development**, and supporting materials.
- Supporting **full day Kindergarten** and Pre-K Programs.
- Providing access to a **full school year and full academic schedules**.
- Developing expertise in providing instructional **support for students with diverse learning needs**.
- Developing and sustaining strategies that **increase time for learning**.
- Developing K-12 **measures of progress** that inform classroom, school, and district actions.
- Supporting K-12 **access to rigorous coursework** including AP and college level courses in high school.
- Providing **enriched and comprehensive programming** for the performing and visual arts, world and dual language, and for athletics, activities and wellness.
- Developing **STEM Programs** and experiences in research, mathematics, science and engineering.
- Developing and integrating robust systems for the use of **instructional technology**.
- Responsible **stewardship of our facilities and grounds**.

#### **Our 2014-2015 Investment Highlights:**

- We can propose a budget that offers the ability to sustain recent investments in staff and classroom support.
- We can begin adding teachers and support services as well as maintaining the opportunity to address staffing needs that may come in the fall.
- We can provide critical professional development, curriculum development, and mentoring for all levels of school staff.
- We can continue to support a full academic school year, full academic schedules, and targeted support for extended learning time.
- We can provide additional capacity to recruit and support new teachers.
- We can sustain and extend our strategies of targeted support for students for whom we have identified achievement gaps.
- We can fulfill and sustain contractual commitments initiated during 2013-14.
- We can build reserves to protect and sustain our investments.

## **A Process for Engagement**

Throughout 2013-2014 we have engaged in high levels of teaching, learning, and increasing opportunity and access for students while staying within the parameters of our budget. We have been able to add staff in a way that has decreased class size and that is sustainable. This has not been easy AND our efforts have been supported by increased state revenues, stabilization of our local option revenue, increases in enrollment, positive adjustments to the state funding formula and a positive redistribution of ESD resources. We have remained disciplined in our focus on sustaining high-leverage investment strategies and continuing in this regard will be the key to realizing the results expected from our work.

In developing the budget proposed for 2014-15 we began with evaluation, analysis, and monitoring of our current budget. Preparation began in December when potential investment scenarios were discussed by staff and new budget committee members were selected. It is helpful to be entering the second year of a two-year state funding cycle in which state revenues are generally known. During the winter and throughout the spring, budget information was shared with district staff, with school staff, parents, partners, community members, budget committee members, and with the Board. Key Communicator groups were convened and feedback was collected to help review needs, anticipate questions, and affirm investment strategies. Effective class size and support services, support for improving instruction, support for the implementation of new standards and assessments, maintaining enriched curriculum offerings, providing fair wages and benefits for personnel, and maintaining the investments in our safe, efficient, and well cared for facilities and grounds emerged as priorities.

Our Achievement Compact Advisory Committee has added to our process as well. Achievement Compacts are designed to align district learning targets and strategies to state learning outcomes for college and career readiness. The Board-appointed Achievement Compact Advisory Committee collaborates over the course of the year to review results and to develop and communicate achievement targets and strategies. This proposed budget serves to invest in strategies and work plans aimed at achieving those targets. We are proud to say that we have always believed in preparing students to the highest levels of learning possible and have created pathways for all students to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to prepare them...for the world.

## **Strategic Thinking for 2014-2015 and Beyond**

For 2014-2015 we are submitting a balanced general fund budget of \$81,459,380. We are moving into the second year of a two-year state budget cycle. Our budget is based on a state funding level equivalent to \$6.85 billion. The state has allocated \$6.65 billion to be distributed through the State Funding Formula and another \$200 million dollars has been made available through PERS reform. We anticipated last spring that this level of funding would be necessary to maintain and improve on our current level of service. Staff continue to work thoughtfully and tirelessly to generate staffing and program plans for all schools that that can be accomplished with the resources available and provide for the excellence our children deserve. We have also considered the future beyond 2014-2015 and how the ending of our bond support after this year and the sunset of our current local option support after 2014-2015 may effect our investment decisions.

**In developing a balanced budget for the 2014-2015 school year we have made the following assumptions.**

### **Revenue Assumptions:**

- State revenue will be based on the equivalent of a \$6.85 billion state budget.
- The 2014-2015 budget reflects less dependence on one-time funding sources than in the past.
- Revisions and refinement to State School Fund allocations have resulted in increased ADMw for WLWV and an increase in per pupil allocation.
- We will receive approximately \$175,000 more in local option than last year.
- Our current local option will expire at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.
- Our ADMw is projected to increase by approximately 100 students.
- A redistribution of Regional ESD funds and services will enhance general fund revenue availability.
- We will invest approximately \$3.2 million of our 2013-2014 ending fund balance.

### **Expense Assumptions:**

- Wage and benefit costs will increase by approximately \$3.3 million dollars from our current operating level and reflect a \$5.1 million dollar increase from last year's budgeted amount.
- Increased investment will be necessary for teacher support, professional development, and curriculum development as we transition to revised standards.
- Increased costs for deferred maintenance, repairs, and purchased services will be assumed by the general fund as the bond closes this summer.
- Costs will increase for utilities, materials, supplies, and purchased services.
- Increase investment in reserve is necessary given the future uncertainty of the availability of bond and local option revenues.

## Staffing and Program Assumptions

- We will offer a full academic year and full academic schedules.
- We will sustain our current level of programming and provide support for increases in student participation in enrichment and co-curricular activities.
- We will sustain 29 FTE added this year and assign them strategically this spring.
- We will add an additional 16 FTE for 2014-2015 and place them strategically to reduce class size and provide necessary support services.
- We will add resources to provide for quality professional development, curriculum development and support, and for coaching and mentoring of teachers and leaders.
- We will increase support for student services and counseling.
- We will increase support and partnerships for STEM programming, dual credit, and access to careers in the fields of technology and engineering.
- We will increase staff support and professional development for the integration of technology in classrooms.

While we are optimistic, we still have a ways to go. We are very grateful to our state legislators for beginning the process of rebuilding our financial commitment to public education. However, funding for K-12 education in Oregon is still more than \$2 billion below the level of adequacy defined by the Quality Education Commission. We look forward to working with the legislature to continue prioritizing education so our schools can take advantage of the great potential they hold for closing the opportunity gaps that still exist between what every student deserves and what they have, regardless of the district, school, or classroom they attend.

In West Linn-Wilsonville we will continue to engineer ways to increase our efficiency and effectiveness. We will continue to look for opportunities to maximize and leverage our resources as we work strategically to achieve our goals. Sincerest thanks goes to everyone who has participated in this budget development process by attending meetings, staying informed, providing feedback, sharing suggestions, making presentations, and in offering your assistance to move our mission forward. Your collaboration and ongoing support is very much appreciated as it lays the foundation for our children to experience the miracles in learning.

Respectfully submitted,

William B. Rhoades, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

*WLWV Budget Information available on homepage: <http://www.wlww.k12.or.us/Page/254>*