

**Talking Points** - School fleet funds help pay for additional classroom teachers

**1. This fall, 4J added teaching staff to reduce class sizes and respond to higher than expected enrollments at 12 schools.**

Our goal was to try to keep elementary class size at 30 students or fewer. Although we weren't able to achieve that in every classroom, we addressed many of the worst situations.

We also added staff at some schools that had higher than expected enrollment.

Overall, 4J added 17 teacher FTE, adding staff at (12 elementary; 1 middle; 3 high/ IHS) 16 schools.

**2. The district is drawing on its contingency fund and reserves, including school fleet funds, to cover this expense.**

The fleet fund is like a savings account. Schools and departments are allowed to carryover some of their unspent funds. These funds are then used to purchase workbooks, textbooks, technology and equipment and sometimes for short-term staffing expenses.

The district is using contingency and central office funds to pay for these additional classroom teachers. However, we also need to use some school fleet funds to pay for 25% of the cost.

**3. All schools benefitted, in some way, from this decision to add staff rather than reallocate staff after the start of the school year.**

The option of reallocating staffing, by reducing staff at some schools to add staff at other schools, would have destabilized our schools. We did reduce staff at one school, Awbrey Park elementary, which was a difficult adjustment after the school year was underway.

To avoid this turmoil, the superintendent decided to add staff, rather than to shift staff among schools.

**Q & A**

**How did we determine how much to draw from each school's fleet fund account?**

The formula we used considered:

- each school's enrollment,
- our needs index (considers FRL, special education, LEP and mobility)
- the school's current fleet funds balance (which takes into account ability to pay.)

We recognized that all schools need to maintain some fleet funds.

**If enrollment is higher, will 4J receive more state funding to pay for this staffing?**

Not this year. Although enrollment is higher than we projected, it still declined from 2011-12.

The state school funding formula allows a district to be funded at either the 2011-12 enrollment or 2012-13 enrollment, whichever is higher. This cushions the revenue drop for declining enrollment districts like 4J. 4J based our budget on state funding tied to our higher 2011-12 enrollment, so there is not an immediate revenue increase.

**What other funding sources were considered?**

The district first used its contingency fund, then department fleet funds before drawing on school fleet funds.

School fleet funds will pay for about twenty-five percent or a quarter of the \$1.6 million in additional staffing. The remainder is being paid from the contingency and other central resources.

All of the additional staff positions are assigned to schools.

**Will this happen again in the future?**

This is an extraordinary step and we hope not to do this again.

A work group is now talking about how to allocate staffing for next year. We want to avoid using unsustainable, one-time resources for classroom staffing.

A future bond measure could also help 4J pay for technology and for textbook adoptions district-wide. This would help all schools and alleviate some of the need to accumulate fleet funds.

**Will schools be able to transfer money to the fleet fund in the future?**

Yes, schools will be able to transfer money to the fleet fund, when the district has an adequate ending fund balance. This fall, we granted school requests to transfer 2011-12 funds to your school fleet fund.

11/30/12