

“Building Awareness of Five Star Needs” - Spring 2016

Spring 2016 was a time of building awareness of the needs in our district, both from state funding decreases and facility improvements. The fall will be more of a campaign season advocating for a ballot measure the Board of Education decides on in August.

Engagement Activities this Spring:

- School and PTO/A “Five Star Needs” conversations with District and CAN (nearly 25 schools visited)
- Community online survey (2,500+ responses)
- Community Telephone Town-Hall (500+ listeners)
- Twitter Q&A with Superintendent Gdowski
- Gdowski email to parents about Five Star Needs
- School Facility Scorecards mailed to every household
- Quantitative polling over 500+ community members
- Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC) presented recommendation of priority needs to Board of Education and Superintendent

Late August: Weighing the LRPAC recommendation, community feedback, and survey data, the Board of Education will determine whether or not to place an issue(s) on the November 2016 ballot. *Date TBD.*

Five Star Needs Talking Points

State Funding:

- Even though the economy is growing, limited state funding is putting pressure on all Colorado schools, increasing the need for additional funding resources.
 - State cuts to education through the “negative factor” mean we will receive \$959 less per student than we should, which results in a \$39.9 million cut to Adams 12 Five Star Schools.
 - Since the state’s “negative factor” was created in Fiscal Year 2009-2010, our schools have lost \$251.2 million in funding.
 - *See the “State and District Funding 101” flyer for detailed information on TABOR, School Finance Act, Negative Factor, our state budget and district general fund, etc.*
- On top of these funding limitations, the state does not provide funding for school buildings. Capital for building new schools or repairing old ones only come through Bonds.
- *See the “Funding Mythbusters” flyer for myths about the marijuana tax and housing market increases.*

District Funding:

- Current budget projections only show a one percent increase to education funding for 2016-17 school year, resulting in a \$10-15 million cut affecting operations costs for this year alone.
- Even though the state is not “cutting” K-12 funding, a 1 percent increase does not cover the cost of inflation or rising costs for health care and PERA, competitive salaries and increased expenses for nearly everything but gas.
- Another concern for our school budgets is a decline in enrollment from previous years. Even though some parts of our community are witnessing significant housing growth and have schools that are over capacity, other schools in the district are facing enrollment declines of 50-100 students for next year.

- These enrollment reductions are the result of declining birth rates and kindergarten enrollment; escalating housing costs that are pricing some families out of our community; and the aging of some neighborhoods without an influx of younger families. As a system, we're projecting a net decline of 12 students for next year, resulting in no additional funds from enrollment growth to soften the pain of the negative factor.
- See the *"Funding FAQ" flyer about information on district reserves and cutting administration costs.*

Five Star Needs

- **Aging Buildings:** Adams 12 Five Star Schools has more than \$90 million in deferred maintenance, where building components are beyond their useful life. It would cost over \$1 billion to fully replace all buildings. Maintenance extends the life of the building but due to lack of funding, we are behind – leaking roofs, failing heating and cooling systems, weakening sewage systems, cracking structural beams, drafty buildings, mold issues, etc.
- **Overcrowding:** While some schools are losing students, several schools are overcrowded, leading to mobile classrooms, enrollment caps and lack of space to most effectively teach students.
- **Innovative Programming:** Schools need education resources like presentation walls and furniture that promotes collaborative learning. Lack of funding has prevented technology upgrades to keep our learning current and our teachers effective.
- **Operational Costs:** See "District Funding" above.
- Learn about each school's facility scorecard here: www.adams12.org/facilityscorecard

Bond/Override History:

- Bond/Mill History: We last passed a bond in 2004 – more than a decade ago. The last time we passed an override was in 2008. We have failed to pass a Bond in 2008 and both in 2014.
 - Bonds provide capital for building or renovating actual education space (**B**ond = **B**uildings).
 - Overrides are for operational costs such as educators, curriculum, programs (**O**verride = **O**perations).
 - See the *"Bond/Override History" flyer for detailed information on where the money was spent in 2004 and in 2008.*

Empowering our Parents/Community

- **Voter registration:** One way to increase the likelihood of passing a bond or override is the increase the amount of parents who are registered in our school district boundaries. Not to increase the amount who vote yes or no, but those who simply vote. In 2014, our issue wasn't parents who voted against us, it's that our parents didn't vote.
 - According to voter records, only 43% of the parents in our district are registered voters.
 - To reach our goal, we need to increase our voters at each school by 25%.
 - See the *"Voter Registration" flyer to learn how to do this at your school.*
- **Other ways to encourage parent/community participation:**
 - Talk with your neighbors at soccer games, BBQs or community events.
 - Talk with your principal about having a community or PTO/A conversation on funding concerns with your school.
 - Write the Adams 12 Five Star Board of Education or your state senator or representative.
 - Attend Board of Education meetings where ballot measures will be decided/discussed.

Five Star Needs Conversations Toolkit: <http://bit.ly/5StarNeedsToolkit>

Detailed funding information: www.adams12.org/Funding101