



Kelso School District #458
601 Crawford Street
Kelso, WA 98626

Mary Beth Tack, Superintendent
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March 11, 2019

Dear Families of Kelso Students,

Kelso School District has a long history of transparency and stakeholder input. Over my twenty-six years in Kelso School District, I have been a part of an amazing team that faces challenges head-on, and keeps our mission and what's best for students at the heart of decision-making. This team cares for all – all students, all staff and the Kelso community. These key attributes of teamwork, compassion and courage are needed more than ever over the next several months.

Kelso School District faces a \$4 million budget shortfall forecast for the 2019-2020 school year. Although the state legislature provided an additional \$7 million of McCleary money to Kelso School District for 2018-19, the levy swap takes away \$3.8 million for 2019-20 by imposing a cap on local levy resources. This has been referred to as the “levy cliff”. As a result, districts throughout the state are anticipating major financial challenges in the coming months and years. Even after the McCleary investments, the state continues to underfund K-12 education. Additionally, Kelso School District experienced a declining enrollment from the 2018-19 school year.

In addressing our shortfall, our district leadership team has developed a responsive timeline to maintain a strong fiscal foundation with student learning at the heart.

The recommended **proposed draft** budget savings of \$4 million will be shared with the school board on Monday, March 25. This **proposed draft** will serve as the document for stakeholder feedback. Your input is highly valued and essential in order to make the best decisions for Kelso.

Here is the timeline for our work together:

- March 11: School board budget workshop @ 5:00 pm -
District Office Board Room
- March 25: School board hearing @ 6:00 pm – KHS Library
- March 26 – April 18: Online Survey
- April 10: Listening posts – 6:00 – 7:30 pm – KHS Library
- April 18: Listening posts – 6:00 – 7:30 pm – KHS Library
- May 6: School Board takes action on budget reductions @
6:00 pm – District Office Board Room

Our number one goal is to maintain programs and people. Yet in reality, there will be extremely difficult decisions made. For our affected team members and programs, this news is devastating. As a team, we are committed to supporting each other through this challenging time.



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How can you help? You have multiple options to voice your thoughts including the school board hearing, online survey, and listening posts. Personally, I continue to work with local legislators and OPSI to address the new education funding system. I encourage you to contact our state elected officials throughout the legislative session to let them know that their work on the McCleary legislation is not finished. Here is the link for contact information: <http://sdc.wastateleg.org/takko/district/>

To be clear, this shortfall of \$4 million has nothing to do with our voter-approved bond measure from February, 2018. By law, these voter-approved bond dollars can only be used for our six priority areas: (1)Safety & Security; (2)Two School Replacements; (3)School Modernization; (4)Adding & Updating Classrooms; (5)Traffic & Parking; and (6)Athletic Facilities.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude and honor to all our Kelso staff. These are challenging times. As a team, we must support each other throughout this process.

Respectfully,
Mary Beth

Mary Beth Tack
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Kelso School District
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Share Your Thoughts

To address the \$4 million shortfall, the Kelso School District has put together a draft of recommended savings. In keeping with our long history of transparency and stakeholder input, we have several opportunities for you to share your thoughts.

Your input is invited, valued and essential in order to make the best decisions for our students, staff, and community.

SURVEY

MARCH 26 – APRIL 19

PUBLIC HEARING

MARCH 25

6:00 PM

**KELSO HIGH SCHOOL
LIBRARY**

LISTENING POSTS

APRIL 10 & 18

6:00 – 7:30 PM

**KELSO HIGH SCHOOL
LIBRARY**

Questions? Contact Beth Grambo: beth.grambo@kelsosd.org