



*“A Community of Empowered Learners for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”*

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*Karla Slovitsky, Director of Business Services*

Dear Parents and Community Members,

At the Governing Board meeting on June 13, 2012, the J.O. Combs Governing Board will consider a resolution to ask the voters in our community to reauthorize the existing 10% maintenance and operation override. If the Governing Board approves, the election will be held on Tuesday, November 6, 2012 for voters who are registered by October 8 and reside within the boundaries of the Combs School District.

The proposed override monies will allow the District to reinstate the competitive middle school sports program, implement general music in the primary grades, increase the variety of elective classes, reduce class sizes and maintain competitive salaries and benefits for staff. According to the National Association of REALTORS®, good schools are the most important amenity in a buyer’s decision to purchase a particular home. You can protect property values by investing in our schools.

Listed below are helpful facts regarding an override election. We would also like to extend an invitation to join us at an **information meeting on Wednesday, May 30, 2012 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at Combs High School, Library**, located at 2505 E. Germann Road.

**What is a Budget Override?** School districts in Arizona are allowed by state law to increase their Maintenance & Operations (M&O) budgets each year by up to 15% of the revenue control limit imposed by the state legislature. M & O funds are exclusively used for classroom supplies, academic programs, utilities, salaries and benefits. About half the school districts in Arizona (representing 70-80% of the state’s students) presently have a budget override in place.

**How long do Override funds last?** An override lasts for seven years. The district receives full funding for five years. If not renewed, the amount decreases by one-third in the sixth year and two-thirds in the seventh year. In year eight, it expires. Even though continuation overrides are not new taxes, per state law, they must be renewed through an election to continue for another seven years.

**Have voters in the Combs School District passed Budget Overrides in the past?** Yes. Combs voters first approved a 10% M&O override in 2007. The renewal of the override was not approved in the November 2011 election.

**As a result of the Budget Override not being renewed in the November 2011 election,** we are forced to enter into the first phase down period of the override. With the loss of override funding, the Combs District has reduced the budget by \$692,480 for 2012-2013. To address the budget challenges, the Combs District reconfigured the elementary sites to include 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. This reconfiguration along with additional reductions include:

The elimination of one counselor; one security guard; three elementary deans; three and a half custodians, and is replacing the competitive Middle School Sports program with intramural sports; the reduction of elective classes and the reduction of General Music classes at the elementary level.

**What will happen if the Budget Override is not renewed in November of 2012?** The Combs District will be forced to cut the remaining balance of the \$2 million dollars in reductions from its operating budget over the next two years. Additional reductions will occur, resulting in increased class sizes and elimination of extra-curricular and elective programs.

**If the Override is renewed, what will be the cost to the average taxpayer?** Currently a homeowner with a home-assessed full cash value of \$100,000 is paying \$156.50 annually in property taxes. If the 10% budget override is renewed, this same homeowner will pay \$155.64 annually – *a slight decrease from the current tax rate*. This decrease is due to the assessed values of property.

May 14, 2012

*Governing Board*

*Kathy Bourgeois  
Member*

*Shelly Hargis  
Clerk*

*Rhett A. Homan  
Member*

*Gary F. Kemp, Ed.D  
Member*

*Patricia J. Pinckard  
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