



19710 State Route 534
Mount Vernon, WA 98274
Phone: 360-445-5785
Fax: 360-445-4511

May 20, 2019

Dear Cougar Families,

Conway School District finds itself in the same predicament as many other districts around the state. We have an expected budget shortfall for 2019-2020 of \$450,000 as the result of legislative actions around school levies. As part of the "McCleary Fix" in 2018 the state reduced the amount of levy funds we could collect to \$1.50 per \$1000 of assessed value. Which is great because it **reduced local taxes** to the lowest they have been in 20 years. At the same time through state property taxes funds were to be more equitably distributed to schools around the state. Unfortunately, the formula developed by the state left Conway and other districts receiving less through state funding than was taken away from our local levy. At the same time the state changed how district's receive funding for staff members, decreasing the amount we receive in that area as well.

While developing our school budget, we have to consider the impact of personnel first since it's the biggest part of our budget expenditures (approximately 85%). I have worked with staff to review our programs, services, and educational opportunities for students in Conway to determine areas where we can reduce. **In some cases, those reductions have allowed us to increase opportunities for students.** We used the following guides in our decision making:

- Least impactful to students and staff
- Maintain class size ratios K-8
- Continue our work on safety and security for students and staff
- Increase our academic offerings where possible through strategic scheduling; even with reduced staff
- Maintain our sports programs and academic clubs

We have identified the following areas for reductions and changes:

- Reduce by one elementary teacher. We have one staff member that was on a one-year only contract that ends this year.
- Reduce one part-time staff member (2 days per week). The social-emotional learning program was designed for two years and we are at the end of the second year, teachers will continue implementing the program in the regular classroom.
- Reduce temporary or part-time staff (1.5 positions) that will no longer be needed with a new lunch and supervision schedule.
- Decrease the number of staff in food services and consolidate responsibilities (2.25 hours per day reduction).
- Increase elective offerings at the middle school through a new schedule using reduced staff. Reducing 1 staff member who teaches two periods per day
- Consolidate administrative duties by having the superintendent take over the director of technology position, training of para educators, and additional grant management.

On April 28th the legislature finalized the state budget. While they increased revenue for schools in several places, such as school construction projects and special education, the new budget did not provide additional funding for school district's that are experiencing difficulty. They did make changes to the levy law, which allows schools to increase their levy collection. Conway has been committed to operating within the budget we have, we will not be asking tax payers for an additional levy amount as some districts will be doing. If there are any increases or decreases to our levy tax collection, it will take place in our next levy cycle which starts collection in 2021.

This last week Principal Dickinson started meeting with students to go over their options for classes for next year. Students have been excited about expanded options and new class choices with our new schedule and staff assignments.

It's unfortunate we were put into the position of needing to make these hard decisions, especially around staff cuts. One benefit during this process has been our opportunity to reorganize and prioritize; increasing students' educational offerings and becoming more efficient with staff assignments and workloads.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email or call.

Jeff Cravy
Superintendent
360-445-5785
jcravy@conway.k12.wa.us