



OVERRIDE FACT SHEET

AND

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Budget Override?

School districts in Arizona are allowed by state law to increase their Maintenance and Operations (M&O) budgets each year by up to 15% of the revenue control limit imposed by the state legislature. M&O funds are used at GBUSD exclusively for teacher/staff salaries and funding for kindergarten (half-day) since the state funds the other half of kindergarten. About half of the districts in Arizona (representing 70-80% of the students) presently have budget overrides in place.

How are schools funded?

School district funding is formula-based, and is dependent on student enrollment. When creating budgets, the district takes their enrollment and multiplies it by the base funding level. Districts cannot increase their budgets beyond the basic formula without asking voter permission through an override election.

How long do override funds last?

An override lasts for seven 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.

Have voters in the Gila Bend Unified School District passed Budget Overrides in the past?

Yes, we currently have an override in place that is about to expire.

Why is the district asking for an override now?

Our current override is about to expire and losing these funds would result in teacher/staff layoffs. Additionally, the district is having a difficult time attracting highly qualified teacher candidates to fill open positions, whether at the beginning of the year, mid-year when teachers leave unexpectedly, or at the end of the year when open positions are first known.

Why is teacher recruitment and retention a problem?

There are many reasons recruitment and retention has become an issue over the past several years. Contributing factors include:

- Colleges are not turning out teachers. There has been a marked decrease in the number of candidates attending teacher career fairs. Over the past five years the district has been recruiting in state, nationally, and globally.
- Young college graduates are not necessarily interested in leaving their home state or living in rural Arizona. Whether recruiting in state, nationally, or globally students report

that they are not interested in leaving their homes or the city to live and work in rural Arizona.

- Gila Bend's community is unique in that there is a high student mobility rate. For several years, students move in and out of the school district. At the same time, a large percentage of our students qualify for some sort of state assistance based on income. Research is clear that students in these situations need specific teaching strategies and practices, which require more work by teachers: these requirements are not always necessary in other districts.

How does the teacher recruitment and retention problem affect our education?

Unfilled positions are often filled by substitute teachers, most of them have no education beyond their high school diploma. Mid-year teacher departures have resulted in shifting students and teachers amongst existing teachers, meaning increased class sizes. Beside the disruption for students, staff turnover requires constant retraining, which takes time, energy, and money.

How will an override help?

Money from the override election will be used exclusively for teacher/staff salaries and funding for kindergarten (half-day) since the state funds the other half of kindergarten. While money may not be everything, we believe it may help to draw and keep teachers/staff in Gila Bend.

How much will the override cost the average taxpayer? The average property value of a home in Gila Bend is \$37,528. Our current override which is about to expire was approved by voters at 10%. The taxes for the current 10% override is \$7.40 per year/\$0.62 monthly. We are asking to continue the override but at 15%. This increase is due to losing 20 students during the 2016-2017 school year. We need to make up for this loss in student funding. The new 15% override tax is \$11.10 per year/\$0.92 monthly. This is an increase of \$3.70 per year/\$0.30 monthly.

Phase I and Phase II - Override & Bond

Phase I (November 7, 2017): The school district is asking voters to vote by mail or go to the polls on November 7, 2017 to vote yes or no on continuing our current override. The current override is set at 10%. The new override is set at 15%. Why? We lost approximately 20 students last school year which equals approximately \$160,000 loss in funding to the district. The 15% override will cover this loss in funding.

Phase II (November 6, 2018): The school district is asking voters to pass a school district bond to replace/renovate most of our decaying rundown school buildings.

Thank you for taking the time to educate yourself by reading this fact sheet.