

Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District Budget Override Election Information

Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District (COCSD) appreciates your interest in our district and upcoming election. To keep community members informed, we have prepared information pertaining to school elections that affect our district.

During the November election, the community will be asked to vote on two override ballot questions, one override question for COCSD and one override question for MUHS.

COCSD is the largest school district in the Verde Valley with 2,400 kindergarten through eighth grade students. We have five schools, Dr. Daniel Bright, Cottonwood Elementary, Cottonwood Middle School, Oak Creek Elementary, and Tavasci Elementary. In addition, we have two alternative programs, Success Class and Bridgeway Alternative program.

Below is a list of frequently asked questions and answers on the COCSD district budget override election.

What is a budget override?

The Revenue Control Limit (RCL) is a state formula that determines how much funding school districts are allowed to spend each year. With voter approval, Arizona State Law allows school districts to increase their budgets by a percentage of the RCL.

Why does a school district ask for voter approval to exceed its operating budget?

Exceeding the operating budget allows the district to provide a higher quality education, offer more programs and services to better meet the needs of students, and adequately prepare children to be successful contributing members of our community.

What is COCSD's history of overrides?

COCSD has had tremendous community support for override elections for the past 16 years. This support has enabled the district to provide a higher standard of education for our community's children. Thanks to the support of community members, COCSD students do well and are able to participate in a well-rounded education.

What is COCSD requesting from the voters?

COCSD is requesting a continuation of the district's ten percent Maintenance and Operations (M&O) override. The M&O budget override will enable COCSD to use funding for other maintenance and operations expenses, such as hiring additional teachers. M&O override dollars are used to offset costs for:

- Smaller class size
- Technology education
- Intervention programs such as Success class, Bridgeway Alternative program, nurses and counselors
- Music and physical education
- Extra-curricular programs such as field trips and sports programs

How have the override funds benefited COCSD students?

The override funds for COCSD have benefited students in a number of ways. The funds help the district hire teachers, allowing for smaller classes and more individualized instruction. COCSD override dollars also offset costs for programs that could not otherwise be offered. These programs include technology education, alternative education programs, advanced learner programs, counselors, nurses, music, physical education and extra-curricular programs.

How many years will an override provide additional funding to the district?

COCSD override elections provide funding to the school district for seven years. The district

receives the full amount of the funding for five years. In the sixth year, the amount decreases by one-third and in the seventh year, the amount decreases by two-thirds. Voters must reauthorize the override by the seventh year or the district ceases to receive the override funding.

What happens if the overrides are not renewed?

If the override is not renewed, based on the current fiscal year (FY 08-09) COCSD will have to eliminate \$1,138,920 from its budget. The reduction will come in phases over three years and will require the district to reduce its annual budget by one-third each year as the example below illustrates:

Impact to COCSD Budget without Override Dollars

Fiscal Year	Budget Reduced By
First Year (2010-11)	– \$379,640
Second Year (2011–12)	– \$759,280
Third Year (2012-13)	– \$1,138,920

If the override is approved, will my tax rate increase?

No, if the override is approved, your taxes remain the same because it is already reflected in your tax rate. COCSD is not requesting any additional funds, only a continuation of the current funding already in place.

- The current COCSD override tax rate is .3029.
- If the override is continued, the tax rate will be .2855.
- The tax decrease is due to our decreased budget based upon student enrollment and state funding reductions. Based upon this decrease, the average homeowner will pay \$28 per year on an assessed home value of \$100,000.

What would my tax rate be if the override is not continued?

If the override is not continued the tax rate for COCSD would be .1884, or a reduction of around \$10 for the first year on an assessed value of \$100,000.

If the override is not renewed, what would COCSD reduce or eliminate?

If the override is not renewed, COCSD would be required to reduce the number of teachers and increase class sizes. COCSD would be required to reduce or eliminate technology instruction, intervention programs such as Success class, Bridgeway Alternative program, Advanced Learner programs, nurses, counselors, music, physical education and extra-curricular programs.

When is the election?

The general election is November 3, 2009. Permanent early ballots will go out the first week of October. If you have any questions regarding your voter registration or early ballots you may call the County at 928-771-3250 or email elections@co.yavapai.az.us.

If you have further questions, please email or call:

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