



**Amador County Public Schools  
Amador County Unified School District  
Amador County Office of Education**

**Facilities & Finance  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

September 27, 2018

In an effort to clear the air more and be responsive to questions from the community, the following information is provided. If you have more questions, please contact Superintendent Amy Slavensky at 209-257-5353 or Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Jared Critchfield at 209-257-5345.

**1. How were the 2002 bond funds used?**

The following projects were funded by the voter approved 2002 general obligation bond, totaling \$11 million:

- The Lone Junior High School multi-purpose room, at a cost of \$1.84 million with \$1.14 million in bond funds and the rest from state matching funds
- The Argonaut High School multi-purpose room, at a cost of \$2.75 million with \$1.85 million from the bond and the rest from state matching funds
- New paving at every school including parking lots and access roads, at over \$3 million
- The Transportation Department Facility including the road, the parking lot, the building and infrastructure, at a cost of \$2.2 million
- A variety of projects including restroom renovations, new electrical systems, fire alarm system upgrades, and ADA upgrades at every school site, through the use of the remaining 2002 bond funds

**2. How were the one-time \$633,600 Mule Creek Prison Impact funds used?**

The funds were used for the two new portable classrooms at Lone Elementary School, installed summer 2017, and a portion of the Argonaut High School Culinary Arts Facility renovation.

**3. How are Developer Fees used?**

Developer Fees may be used to help schools mitigate the impact of new students generated by development. According to law, since we utilize Level I Developer Fees as a unified school district and because many of our students attend schools outside of the city in which they live, this allows flexibility in use of the funds. Developer Fees have recently been used to fund the following completed projects: ADA compliant gymnasium bleachers at Argonaut and Amador High Schools, new playground equipment at Lone Elementary, Sutter Creek Primary and Jackson Elementary Schools, and the Culinary Arts Facility at Argonaut High School. Developer Fees are also being used for the Argonaut High School track renovation. \$4.5 million was used to fund the \$5.8 million two-story classroom building at Lone Junior High School.

**4. Are there any other funding sources to support facilities work?**

Currently, we are on the state's schedule to start Proposition 51 funded construction at Argonaut High School, Jackson Junior High School, and Plymouth Elementary School. The ACOE was eligible for these funds which will support the addition of Special Education buildings at the three locations. For other potential construction projects, state matching funds are available if the district has 100% funding up front.

**5. Why is the district seeking a multimillion dollar grant for new busses, when so much else is falling apart at our schools?**

The State Energy Commission is providing electric buses with no school district match. It's an opportunity to replace older, polluting diesel buses at no cost to the school district. The current board approved grant application, if funded, will provide two electric busses and the charging station in exchange for two of our older busses. The general obligation bond measure on the November 6, 2018 ballot, if successful, will address the many needs with our aging school facilities.

**6. Employee pension funds are contributed to by both the employee (teachers and staff) and the employer (school district/county office of education). If there was an increase in the cost, it should have been accounted for and budgeted. Was it?**

Yes, the increased State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) and Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) costs to ACUSD and ACOE have been budgeted each year and with budget approvals from our Board of Trustees and the California Department of Education. However, these increased costs with revenue sources not keeping pace have had an overall negative effect on our ending fund balance. This contributes to our challenges in maintaining a healthy reserve fund.

**7. Utilities should be cheaper. Don't we now have solar at two of the largest campuses?**

The energy conservation project has had many challenges and delays for a variety of internal and external reasons (i.e, construction delays, DSA delays, funding delays). The contract was approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2016, the same month Dr. Slavensky began in Amador County. Due to the delays, connectivity with PG&E was not established until late spring 2018. The school district has not yet received energy credits from PG&E but should very soon. Going forward, we anticipate significant utility cost savings. Utilities costs in general have increased throughout the state. Also, we just recently learned that AT&T has been over charging the school district for the past seven years and we are in the process of negotiating with them to collect those lost funds.

**8. How can personnel costs be unexpected unless the district consistently plans inappropriately for how many teachers each school needs?**

The district planned and budgeted for appropriate staffing for the 2018-19 school year and this is reflected in the smooth start of the school year. The unexpected personnel costs are directly related to multiple cases, last year and in earlier years, of employee misconduct and the associated legal fees and settlement agreements.

**9. Regarding the current financial status in ACUSD and ACOE, how is the previous administration responsible? What is the accountability for the current administration?**

It takes years to get to where we are now with ending fund balances that do not meet the required 3% (district) and 4% (county) reserve fund levels. This happened over a period of time and included deficit spending in 5 of the last 7 years (i.e., annual expenditures totaling more than the annual revenue relying on one-time funds and reserve funds to make up the difference), unexpected costs associated with utilities (see question 6) and facilities, unexpected costs related to personnel matters (see question 7), increasing Special Education costs statewide, and past budget development practices. While many of the financial commitments that led to this point were made years ago, confronting their impact is the responsibility of the current administration and the Board of Trustees. In the coming months, we expect to approach these challenges collaboratively. Accountability for our fiscal work exists at four levels:

- Level 1: The assistant superintendent of business services and the director of fiscal services work together with their team of six more employees who have responsibility for accounting, payroll, budget development/monitoring, and facilities improvement/support. Written, published and monitored systems are used for all procedures such as cash handling and use of credit cards.
- Level 2: A new external, independent auditing firm, hired by the Board of Trustees, conducts a comprehensive, annual audit and presents the report to the Board for acceptance and approval.
- Level 3: The Board of Trustees annually reviews and approves the joint ACUSD/ACOE Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and annual budget. The Board asks questions to ensure the LCAP and budget are aligned, appropriate, and in compliance with the 10 state priorities and state regulations.
- Level 4: The California Department of Education (CDE) approves and has fiscal oversight of the LCAP and annual budget. CDE staff closely review our LCAP and budget and give specific direction regarding any needed changes which are due prior to the annual deadline of October 8th. At this time, we have been told by CDE that they will approve both ACUSD and ACOE budgets with cautionary advice and time to submit a plan to restore the state required 3% (district) and 4% (county) reserve funds.

**10. Regarding the current financial status in ACUSD and ACOE, how/why did this just now get figured out?**

Each September, the business office team works to close the books on the prior fiscal year. The report that is completed is referred to as the Unaudited Actuals Report which is presented to the Board of Trustees at the end of September. Due to the myriad issues already discussed, budget concerns were discovered as the 2017-18 Unaudited Actuals Report was being completed. 2017-18 was the first budget year under Dr. Slavensky's new leadership. 2018-19 is the first budget year under Mr. Critchfield's business services leadership. Given a new senior leadership team, it takes at least this amount of time to discover challenges and calibrate spending plans.

**11. How much did the informational mailers for the General Obligation Bond Measure cost and how were they funded?**

The cost was \$12,954 for 14,000 mailers which included the design, printing and applicable postage. This is 92.5 cents per mailer. These were paid for with Developer Fees, not from the General Fund.