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Dunlap schools budget OK'd Employee salaries make up about 70 percent

By SCOTT HILYARD (shilyard@pjstar.com) Journal Star Posted Sep 10, 2009 @ 11:48 PM

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DUNLAP — In stark contrast to the deficit woes in neighboring Peoria School District 150, the Dunlap district will operate the 2009-2010 school year with a balanced budget. "If everything goes the way we've planned, we should end up with a positive fund balance at the end of the year," said Kelly Funke, Dunlap District 323's new business manager. The school board approved an education fund budget this week of \$21,935,022, an 8 percent increase from the previous school year. Last year's budget was \$20,151,125.

About 70 percent of the education fund is taken up by employee salaries. This year it includes a 5 percent pay increase for teachers who are in their third year of a three-year contract. Another 7 percent of the fund is taken up by employee benefits.

The fiscal health of the district continues to be driven by increased student population coupled with increased equalized assessed valuation.

"We've continued to increase our student population, and as our enrollment grows so does the money allocations that come from the state. And we continue to see increases in the assessed value in the district," said J. Jay Marino, district superintendent. "Together, that's given us a pretty flat tax rate for the last 10 years."

Dunlap saw another year of record enrollment. The district grew by 142 students for its 13th consecutive year of increases. For the first time, the high school will have more than 1,000 students at the end of the school year.

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The biggest capital expenditure in this year's budget, \$800,000, is for a new roof at Wilder Waiter Grade School and this summer's parking lot reconstruction at the high school.

"There's no fluff in this budget," Funke said.

The board held a hearing on the budget at its Wednesday meeting. There was no public comment.

Scott Hilyard can be reached at 686-3244 or at shilyard@pjstar.com.

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