

LTUSD budget leaves 1% in reserves

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District is essentially creating parallel budgets because of items on the November ballot that would affect the bottom line. But the reality is the board will be asked at its June 26 meeting to approve just one budget for the 2012-13 school year.

CF0 Deb Yates on June 12 presented the board with the most up-to-date numbers, though they seem to change several times within a week based on projections coming from Sacramento.



The state's budget deadline is June 15. The deficit currently sits at \$15.7 billion. A capital insider told *Lake Tahoe News* on June 13 it's likely Republicans won't be given a copy of the budget before a vote is taken and that deliberations will start late in the day Friday to make it look like lawmakers were working all day and into the night on it.

LTUSD is not alone as it struggles to figure out what its ledger should look like when the state keeps changing its numbers. If money matters were still calculated on paper with pencil, there would be a hole from all the eraser marks. That in turn would be a perfect metaphor for the hole the state is creating for schools, cities and counties.

If Gov. Jerry Brown's tax plan doesn't work in November, LTUSD will be out \$1.6 million.

The state has added 15 days to the five already allowed that districts may cut the school year by. If the November ballot measure fails, LTUSD could be looking at cutting a dozen

school days for 2012-13 to close its budget gap.

LTUSD is spending down its reserve, keeping about 1 percent – the minimum allowed. This compares to the state average of a 16 percent reserve.

The district is also wondering where the \$80,000 in redevelopment money it's supposed to receive from the city's successor agency is. Yates said she sent a letter last week inquiring about it.

Another potential problem for the district is average daily attendance numbers are at 3,592 when the estimate was 3,652. If this holds true, it could mean \$175,000 less from the state. However, enrollment is steady. But how the state calculates what it pays per student is how many show up on average, not how many are enrolled.

The LTUSD board will meet June 26 at 6pm to approve the final 2012-13 budget to meet its deadline even if the state doesn't meet its requirements.

In other action:

- The district this year is not automatically promoting students. South Tahoe Middle School started monitoring 115 at-risk students. Of those, 12 seventh-graders will be retained and nine eight-graders.