

Minutes in Brief

Southern Oregon ESD SOESD Budget Committee

Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 6:00 PM

SOESD Operations Center, 101 North Grape Street, Medford, OR 97501

Budget Committee Members in Attendance:

Mary Barton	Present
Ariel Bloomer*	Present
Brian Clark*	Present
Jessie Hecocta*	Present – 6:11 pm
Rhonda Lawrence	Absent
Ana Mannenbach	Present
Bob Moore	Absent
Rebecca Mueller	Absent
Richie Owens	Absent
Emily Cozza	Present
Janet Melsness*	Present

Staff and Guests in Attendance:

Mark Angle-Hobson Ryan Swearingen
Colton Cochrane Jeanetta Woodside
Stephanie Cossey
Forest Evergreen
Kylee Harrison*
Liz Littleton

*Attended via video/audio conference

1. Call to Order — Chair, SOESD Board of Directors
On Wednesday, May 13, 2026, a meeting of the Southern Oregon ESD Budget Committee was held in the upstairs conference room of the SOESD Operations Center located at 101 North Grape Street, Medford, Oregon.

Board Chair Ana Mannenbach called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Introductions
Board Chair Mannenbach welcomed the Budget Committee and introductions were made.
4. Election of Budget Committee Presiding Officer
IT WAS MOVED BY MEMBER BARTON, SECONDED BY MEMBER MELSNESS TO:
To elect Emily Cozza as Budget Committee Presiding Officer.
Barton: Yea, Bloomer: Yea, Clark: Yea, Cozza: Abstain, Hecocta: Absent, Lawrence: Absent, Mannenbach: Yea, Melsness: Yea, Moore: Absent, Mueller: Absent, Owens: Absent
Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 5, Abstain: 1

5. Presentation of Proposed 2026–2027 Budget

5.A. Budget Message

Superintendent Angle-Hobson presented the 2026–2027 budget as a “year of purposeful transition,” noting alignment with the Board’s five-year strategic plan and core values. He highlighted increased investment in staff driven by the previously bargained 3% COLA and corresponding administrative adjustments, as well as facility updates including the new district office in Phoenix, a remodeled classroom in Grants Pass, and the planned relocation of the Klamath Falls office to reduce leased space and long-term overhead. He clarified that increases in Administration & Operations FTE reflect the correct placement of existing positions rather than new staffing and noted the creation of a Communications and Partnerships budget line to support ongoing communications work and strategic plan implementation. He emphasized that program budgets were adjusted based on actual needs and spending patterns, and that the overall budget is designed to move the organization from planning to action while maintaining transparency and stewardship of public resources.

5.B. SOESD Overview

Superintendent Mark Angle-Hobson presented an overview of SOESD using the budget flip book, explaining that its design intentionally mirrors the Local Service Plan (LSP) to ensure consistent communication with districts and the community. He walked the committee through the pages outlining the Budget Committee’s purpose and membership, the Board of Directors and organizational chart, and the Board-adopted vision, mission, core values, and lexicon, emphasizing that the 2026–2027 budget is structured to reflect those guiding documents. Superintendent Angle-Hobson highlighted that SOESD’s services are organized around the four state-required core service areas—Administrative Support, Special Education, School Improvement, and Technology and that funding flows primarily from the State School Fund and local property taxes under an equalization formula designed to provide equitable support across regions. He noted that aligning the budget presentation with the strategic plan and LSP is a deliberate transparency measure so readers can clearly see how resources support SOESD’s mission and commitments to its component districts.

5.C. 2026-2027 Financial Review

Chief Financial Officer Jeanetta Woodside presented the proposed 2026–2027 SOESD budget of \$88.2 million, noting that the General Fund and state grants each comprise about 38%, with 17% from federal funds and 5% from internal service funds; capital projects drop to roughly 2% following completion of the district office. She explained that SOESD’s State School Fund allocation—based on roughly 9% of statewide ADMw—must return at least 90% to districts in services or cash in lieu, and that the proposed budget allocates about 92.2%, exceeding this requirement. Key assumptions include a 3% inflation factor (covering COLA and general costs), rising health insurance through OEBB, modest increases to internal service funds driven by Paid Leave Oregon, and reliance on the Legislature’s \$11.4 billion State School Fund level. Woodside clarified that several large apparent line-item shifts result from reclassifying and isolating programs (e.g., Autism, School Improvement, Communications, Library Services) and cleaning up historical placeholders, rather than adding new spending, and she noted that while enrollment declines are pressuring revenues statewide, SOESD’s share of the ESD allocation has slightly increased relative to other regions. She added that reserves are invested in the Local Government Investment Pool (earning about 4%), private donations are tracked and spent only for their intended purposes, and that SOESD’s cash position is strong, supported by contingency planning for potential federal funding changes.

6. Discussion and Comments from the Audience

Questions from the Committee focused on assumptions, risk, and structural changes in the budget. In response, CFO Jeanetta Woodside and Superintendent Mark Angle-Hobson explained that:

- The 3% inflation assumption includes some built-in cushion because not all costs escalate equally, and contingencies and transfer authority provide additional flexibility.

- The ESD is managing uncertainty in federal funding through conservative spending, reserves, and program-level contingency plans that prioritize staff stability and allow time for reductions if required.
 - Reserves are invested in the Local Government Investment Pool, currently earning about 4%, and private donations are tracked and spent strictly for donor-intended purposes.
 - New lines or apparent large changes in the budget largely reflect program reclassifications and cleanup, e.g., Communications & Partnerships, Autism, School Improvement, Library Services, Klamath Promise, SORS, rather than new spending, with offsetting reductions elsewhere.
 - Declining enrollment reduces funding over time through the equalization formula, but SOESD's share of the statewide ESD allocation has slightly increased relative to other regions, even as districts face revenue pressure.
 - Health insurance cost increases through OEBS are a major, largely unavoidable cost driver that must be budgeted.
 - The long-term debt line reflects scheduled payments on the Phoenix district office financing.
7. Budget Committee Action
IT WAS MOVED BY MEMBER BARTON, SECONDED BY MEMBER MANNENBACH TO:
Approve the proposed 2026 -2027 budget in the amount of \$88,217,139.00 and set the rate of .3524 per one thousand dollars of assessed value.
Barton: Yea, Bloomer: Yea, Clark: Yea, Cozza: Yea, Hecocata: Yea, Lawrence: Absent, Mannenbach: Yea, Melsness: Yea, Moore: Absent, Mueller: Absent, Owens: Absent
Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 4,
8. Adjourn
Board Chair Mannenbach adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.