

Competitive D38:



THE REASON FOR AN ASK

- District leadership and the Board of Education are weighing the difficult decision of asking the D38 community of taxpayers to approve a reasonable tax increase for the sole purpose of funding educator salaries.
- Over the past two school years, D38 has had a 20% average turnover rate.
- D38 conducted a comprehensive study, learning staff are underpaid by on average 10% across licensed, classified and administrators.
- The cost of this turnover is not only dollars and cents, but the growth of our district's children and our region's future leaders.
- The proposed solution would increase discretionary mill levy rates by 7.450 mills. Based on updated tax revenue estimates, that would yield \$4.55 million to address teacher and support staff salaries for D38 and \$1 million for Monument Academy to tackle the same goal.

FOCUSED ON PEOPLE

D38 spends 80+% of its budget on salaries and benefits. We employ 750 staff, only 35 (5%) of whom are administrators, and we know that a strong district, which can elevate the future of our region, starts with attracting and retaining quality educators and leaders.

FUNDING DISPARITY

D38 has traditionally done more with less. Compared to our 10 surrounding regional districts, D38 has the second-lowest base funding per pupil at \$9,000 per student in 2022-2023. Factoring in other PPR funding sources, D38 is the lowest funded of all surrounding school districts by about \$900 (8.5%).

INVESTING IN EDUCATORS

- In this current hiring cycle, D38 has had to hire more than 80 new teachers to fill our ranks of 400 licensed teachers.
- Starting teachers in D38 are paid just over \$38,000 per year, which is the lowest in the region.
 - A new goal would be to get starting teachers to around \$45,000 per year.
 - Paying staff and faculty more would allow them to reinvest in our district by living and shopping in our boundaries.
- D38 is third to last in regional average teacher pay at just over \$51,000 per year.
- A large factor of student success is teacher quality and stability. Quality teachers protect and preserve D38 values.
- This proposed tax increase would not go to raising administrator pay.



FISCAL STEWARDS

- By refinancing our existing bonds, we are saving taxpayers \$1.9 million on their tax bills through 2029-30.
- Through strategic partnerships, including the one with Schneider Electric, D38 will save \$9.8 million in future utility costs by utilizing efficient utility systems.
- Despite an initial estimate to fix the PRHS geothermal field for \$6 million, D38 innovated a \$2.5 million fix to finish the project.
- In partnership with the Town of Monument we increased building fees for cash-in-lieu of land by a significant margin, which projects to add \$200,000 per year for capital projects.
- D38 has reestablished its Financial Advisory Committee with the goal of validating our fiscal stewardship. This committee, with additional appointees from D38 and MA would serve as an oversight committee for these proposed tax dollars.

STRATEGIC WORK AT D38

Our people help accomplish our comprehensive and current strategic plan.

- **Priority 1: Safe, Healthy and Welcoming Schools**
 - Our people help keep our students safe and feeling a sense of belonging.
- **Priority 2: World-Class Education**
 - Teachers and support staff make D38 a district which prepares students for future success.
- **Priority 3: Value our people and commit to continuous growth**
 - We are committed to finding the best staff members for our team, and providing staff with professional growth opportunities.
- **Priority 4: Practice fiscal stewardship and transparency**
 - D38 is transparent with spending and is consistently seeking new revenue streams.
- **Priority 5: Build strong relationships through effective communication**
 - By engaging our community, we can accomplish our goals for years to come.

BUSINESS COST

- This measure would increase total mills by 7.450, to a new total of 47.474 (2022).
- An annual increase per \$100k in assessed business value is \$17.38 per month.
 - This equates to \$208.60/year per \$100k.

Note: The 2021 tax year cost of D38 to business owners per \$100k is \$92/month.

HOMEOWNER COST

- This measure would increase discretionary mills by 7.450, to a total of 47.474 (2022).
- An annual increase per \$100k in assessed home value is \$4.32 per month.
 - This equates to \$51.78/year per \$100k.

Note: The D38 2021 tax year cost to homeowners per \$100k is \$23.48/month based on assessed property valuation

PARTNERING LOCALLY

D38 is a committed partner to local business. From being a longstanding member of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, to supporting local businesses who supply books, print services, food services and more, our school district is committed to investing in our region. Beyond this, the students we serve will go on to flourish, and will be able to reinvest in our area as future residents, employees, patrons and leaders.



Ballot Issue Arguments



Reasons For:

Argument 1: With Lewis-Palmer School District 38 underfunded compared to all regional schools, and D38 staff underpaid by about 10% compared to those same schools, this initiative would provide a much-needed boost at a critical time, preserving educational quality and promoting stability in schools, combating a high 26.5% turnover rate.

Argument 2: A fixed mill rate, as opposed to a fixed dollar amount Mill Levy Override means the initiative can go as the community goes, and it will not lose its buying power over time, as the 1999 fixed-dollar MLO has. The 1999 MLO has lost 44% of its impact over time due to being a fixed dollar amount, and not adjusting for growth or inflation.

Argument 3: As stability of the district is a vital point of this ballot initiative, a sunset clause is not included in this to specifically create funding stability for operations. This means D38 and its staff will have certainty on future annual funding, which stabilizes its competitive position compared to peer districts.

Argument 4: This Mill Levy Override will allow Lewis-Palmer School District 38 to be competitive with surrounding school districts. Currently, all surrounding school districts receive significantly more funding than D38. To simply get to the regional average within this comparison, D38 needs \$890 more per pupil, or 8.5% of our Per Pupil Funding.

Reasons Against:

Argument 1: This would increase the tax burden on residents, with a \$500,000 house absorbing about \$260 in increased taxes.

Argument 2: As it is a fixed mill rate, taxes will proportionately increase slightly as property values increase. (IE: 5% growth in property value = 5% growth in property tax)

Argument 3: This Mill Levy Override will impact the community in perpetuity, as there is no sunset clause.

Argument 4: This Mill Levy Override does not get D38 to a funding leadership position with neighboring districts. D38 would still be in the middle of the pack in terms of funding.



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www.lewispalmer.org/competitived38