

VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT THIRTY

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Dear Valley Stream 30 School Community,

Budget

At Monday's Board meeting, the Board of Education adopted a proposed budget for the 2010-11 school year. The Board of Education and District worked very hard to develop a fiscally conservative budget that still maintains all programs for students. The budget-to-budget increase for 2010-11 is less than last year's budget-to-budget increase, which in itself had been the lowest budget-to-budget increase in 4 years. The 2010-11 proposed budget has a 2.7% budget-to-budget increase and, more importantly, a 1.36% tax levy increase which is the amount of money needed to be raised to fund the proposed budget. Using the most recent tax assessments numbers (and assessment figures can change), the 1.36% levy for homeowners would currently result in no property tax increase at all for next year.

There will be a budget hearing on May 10th with a full presentation of the programs, expenses and revenues in the Shaw Avenue Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. In addition, Ed Cullen, Assistant Superintendent, and I will be presenting information about the budget at various upcoming community and PTA meetings. The Budget Vote will take place on May 18th.

Strategic Plan

The Board of Education adopted the Strategic Plan for Valley Stream 30 for the next five years, at the March 22nd Board meeting. The plan will be reviewed and updated as circumstances warrant, but it serves as an overall blue print for upcoming District planning. For example, when the Curriculum and Assessment Council are determining instructional goals for Board approval for the 2010-11 school year, the Strategic Plan curriculum goals and timetable for accomplishment will serve as an essential guiding framework. The strategic plan is available for community viewing on our District website www.valleystream30.com.

The first goal area of the Strategic Plan is 21st century learning.

Goal Statement: Students in Valley Stream District 30 will develop the skills which are needed for their learning, social and economic success in the 21st century. Staff working on curriculum development projects will incorporate reference to 21st century skills (e.g. critical thinking, creativity, innovation, problem solving, collaboration, flexibility, adaptability, global awareness, environmentally literate) in each of the curriculum development projects underway. In a recent newsletter, I shared the Strategic Planning Science Goals for upcoming years. Below are illustrative examples of how the 21st century skills mentioned above can be incorporated into science.

ILLUSTRATIVE 21st CENTURY SKILLS IN SCIENCE*

Outcome: Students prepare and interpret a variety of methods for demonstrating understanding and explaining the results of investigations including charts and graphs, diagrams and illustrations, photographic images, and informational and procedural text

Example: A class envisions their school as a science museum and creates exhibit signage including text, images, and/or graphs to explain the science around them, within the school and on the grounds (e.g. how the water fountain works, information about school energy usage, or natural history information for identifying tree species around the school)

Outcome: Students understand that models are simplified representations of real objects and processes, and that models serve as a means to communicate ideas and knowledge about how things work

Example: Students seek out a variety of two- and three-dimensional models in their school and home (e.g. a globe, a diagram of the human body, a toy car) and create a table to record each model's type, purpose, and how it varies from a real object or process (e.g. changes in scale, spatial relationships, composition, shape, color, complexity). Student groups discuss why different models are useful for different purposes.

*Source: Partnership for 21st Century Skills

I wish everyone a wonderful weekend and spring break. Please email (ekanas@vs30.org) or call me (285-9881, ext. 222) with any suggestions, comments, questions, etc.

Sincerely,

Elaine Kanas

Elaine Kanas, Ed.D.