



# Frequently Asked Questions



## What is an override?

*An override is a mechanism that allows voters in a school district to approve additional funding for operational expenses for its schools. The override would allow the district to exceed its budget 15%. If approved, the election authorizes an increase for seven years, but funding is reduced beginning year five.*

## What is the difference between a bond and an override?

*A bond allows the district additional funding to use for capital items noted in the voter pamphlet. Capital items are big things and include new buildings, additions to buildings, land, school buses, renovations to buildings, furniture, equipment and technology.*

*An override is for operational expenses including salaries, benefits, supplies, purchased services, utilities and insurance. An override allows the district to exceed its budget by up to 15%.*

## Has the district been operating under an override?

*Chandler School District has been operating under a 15% override since 2014.*

## How does Arizona fund schools?

*Arizona funds its schools based on the number of students and the miles that students are transported. It is formula-based funding, and a school district's budget limit does not increase or decrease if the assessed value in the district changes. Arizona provides a specific dollar amount per student for maintenance and operational expenses (salaries, benefits, supplies, services, utilities) and for capital (furniture, equipment, technology, vehicles, textbooks, library books, instructional aids). The capital allocation has not been fully funded for years.*

## Why is the district asking to renew its current funding level?

*The citizens budget committee unanimously recommended the Governing Board ask voters to renew the override. The funds will be used for the following:*

- 1. Manageable class sizes.*
- 2. Attracting and retaining great teachers.*
- 3. Maintaining effective programs.*

*What is the tax impact of a successful election?*

*Because this is a continuation of current funding level, there will be no tax increase..*

## **Has CUSD demonstrated that they have been good stewards of taxpayer money?**

*According to the Arizona Auditor General's office, CUSD has the highest dollars in the classroom of its peer districts. CUSD administrative costs and administrators per student are the lowest compared to its peers. The district annually has unqualified audits and is recognized for financial excellence in reporting by the Arizona Association of School Business Officials.*

## **How does the community know that the district is providing a quality education and a good return on their investment?**

*Students and staff are routinely recognized at the state and national levels for their excellence in academics, fine arts and athletics. The graduating classes of 2017 earned a combined \$118 million in college scholarship offers, 30,096 hours of college credit and 112,993 hours of community service. A complete list of CUSD accomplishments can be read at: [www.cusd80.com/accomplishments](http://www.cusd80.com/accomplishments)*

## **What exactly does a successful override mean to my school?**

*The funds will be used to maintain a low student teacher ratio, provide professional development for teachers, attract and retain the best teaching force available and maintain security programs.*

## **How does the teacher pupil ratio in CUSD compare to other districts?**

*CUSD has an average teacher to pupil ratio of 24. In a self-reported study, Chandler had one of the lowest teacher pupil ratio of the surrounding districts.*

## **How is the community included in the district's budget and financial decisions?**

*Taxpayers can count on the district to use funds wisely and for the items that voters have approved. The district utilizes a citizen's budget committee to verify expenditures for maintenance and operation. When the district is considering a bond issue, a citizen's growth committee is formed to help determine the must-have capital items. Please let us know if you want to participate.*

## **Why not pressure the legislature to sufficiently fund public education rather than holding an override election every five years?**

*Chandler Unified, along with school districts across Arizona, are advocating for state commitment to adequately fund public schools. However, what is extremely important to remember is that Chandler Unified has approximately 45,000 students enrolled right now... and they deserve a quality education today. They can't wait for other funding to possibly become available sometime in the future.*

## **The district purchased security cameras for their elementary schools and school buses. Wouldn't that money have been better spent for additional staff or salary increases?**

*The district purchased cameras with bond funds that were approved by the voters. These funds cannot be used for operational expenses like staff, salaries or benefits.*

## **Many community members donate \$400 to a school each year to obtain the Arizona tax credit. Why doesn't the district just find new ways to get more people to donate?**

*By statute, tax credit must be used for extracurricular support for students. The District could not legally use it for regular expenditures such as new teachers, salaries, benefits, supplies or utilities. Tax credit is important for providing those out of school day opportunities for students, but it doesn't provide more money for the district to spend. Expenditures in the classroom are prohibited by statute.*