1. **What is being done to make sure that Sumner, Vashon and Beaumont receive the same computer technology services that magnet high schools receive?**

A: In general, the district’s Information Technology Department is charged with ensuring that technology is available to all schools equitably. The IT Department works with school principals and the operations/facilities staff to assess technology needs for each school and whether the building has the capacity to meet the electric service requirements for the technology. When purchasing new technology is necessary, the IT Department consults with the Finance Department regarding whether SLPS funds, federal funds or other sources are available.

Furthermore, Proposition S bonds include funding for technology upgrades and enhancements across the district to ensure that all students and staff have access to modern technology that will contribute to academic achievement.

1. **How can a five year financial plan be in place if there is a two-year budget deficit?**

A: The district’s accumulated operating deficit from previous years is the product of general operating expenditures exceeding revenues. The current General Operating Budget (Fiscal Year 2011) is balanced, which will prevent the accumulated deficit from growing. The five-year financial plan is an effort to plan for and address the district’s future financial needs in order to continue operating with a balanced budget while aligning expenditures with academic priorities and eliminate the accumulated deficit.

1. **Is it possible to move towards smaller classroom sizes?**

A: Class size is defined by the pupil-teacher ratio. Across the district, the pupil-teacher ratio meets the “Desirable” level as defined by the State of Missouri. This is the smallest ratio the State defines. This year, SLPS determined the appropriate pupil-teacher ratio for a school based on the average daily attendance of students at the school.

1. **Is it possible to open an International Welcome High School for newcomers to this country?**

A: See Question 5.

1. **Can family literacy services be extended to students who are newcomers?**

A: (Questions 4 & 5): The International Welcome School was established to provide a transition for immigrant, ESOL students (grades PreK through 9) and their families in anticipation of placing the students in their assigned school. The school orients the students and their families to public education in the United States. Right now, most students in the high school grades attend Roosevelt High School after attending IWS. SLPS is considering additional program improvements to ensure the students’ success in high school.

Regarding family literacy, IWS does provide literacy programs for family members. For more information, please contact the International Welcome School at (314) 776-3285.

1. **Can the power plant aviation program be re-instituted at Gateway Institute of Technology?**

A: The former power plant aviation program at Gateway Institute of Technology was a five year program, which was difficult to implement since Gateway, like most high schools is a four-year high school. At this time, the district is not aware of any four-year power plant aviation programs.

1. **What happens to students who want to talk openly to their teachers but are afraid to do so?**

A: If a student or parent is uncomfortable talking with a teacher, the school principal should be approached. If a resolution is not reached with the principal, the associate superintendent overseeing the school should be contacted. If a resolution is not reached, the superintendent should be contacted. If there is still no resolution, a member of the Special Administrative Board should be contacted.

1. **Why is there no transportation for those students who need tutoring services? Can outside transportation be identified to transport these students if the district can’t do it internally?**

A: The district provides transportation for students in afterschool programs. However, there must be a minimum of 20 students at a school that are in-need of this transportation service in order for a bus to be provided.

1. **When will Gateway Institute of Technology receive air conditioning?**

A: The cost to install HVAC at Gateway Institute of technology is very high – nearly equal to building a new school. Therefore the district is assessing how many additional A/C window units should be installed.

1. **Is it possible for McKinley School to receive a Spanish teacher?**

A: Each school is staffed based on needs and available resources. Currently the Office of Human Resources is working with the school’s principal to make that determination.

1. **Why are there no hot lunches served at Jefferson School and why are the school’s volunteers never recognized?**

A: Many schools are not equipped to prepare the nutritious meals set by the district’s health and wellness policy which mandates student meals meet the Missouri Advanced Eat Smart Guidelines. Converting kitchens to meet these guidelines is expensive and will take time. This year six schools received equipment funding in the 2009 –2010 school year to convert to self production sites: Hodgen, Adams, Hamilton, Clay, Ford and Cole. In addition, an assessment has been prepared for the development of a central production/satellite facility at Central VPA which would then transport food to four elementary schools: Mason, Kennard, Shaw and Mallinckrodt.

Volunteers should be recognized for their contributions to schools. Currently, the Office of Volunteer Services is working to set up a volunteer recognition program; however, please know that the district appreciates the time and energy given by every volunteer and would like to encourage more families and community members to learn more on how to become involved with a school.

1. **Can there be a special program where foreign students can receive GED services?**

A: The district is looking into options which will allow it to open a GED site at the International Welcome School. However, in the meantime, all SLPS students currently can receive GED services through the Office of Career and Technical Education by calling (314) 345-5727.

1. **What is the possibility for every student to receive a network computer?**

A: Unfortunately the district does not have the necessary financial resources to provide a network computer for every student at this time. However, numerous gains have been made at each school to improve access to technology and internet connectivity. One step was joining MOREnet, the Missouri Research and Education Network, which provides several resources such as faster Internet connectivity, free online educational resources, and additional security. In addition, computer labs are being added and/or updated at school sites to meet the emerging demand for technology.

1. **What are your plans to get ESOL students up to speed (academically) such as receiving GED services?**

A: Last school year the district opened the International Welcome School to meet the educational needs of students and their families in the ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) Level 1 & 2 program at Central VPA. Due to the overwhelming interest and success of the program the program was moved to its own building to allow more students to enroll. Students attending the International Welcome School receive advanced English training and academic instruction in grades preK through 8 to prepare them for a traditional American school. In addition, all ESOL students in Level 1 through 4 can enroll at one of the international welcome sites throughout the district and receive academic support services.

1. **What is being done to address overcrowding, unattractive/unclean bathrooms, lead paint challenges and no air conditioning at Mann and Mullanphy Schools?**

A: Funding through Proposition S, the $155 million bond campaign passed by voters earlier in the year, will address many of these issues. Improvements will focus on three key areas: Improving Academic Achievement, Improving student Safety and Security, and promoting a healthy lifestyle for students.

1. **Can there be more teachers at the International Welcome School? Can more pre-school teachers be hired there?**

A: The International Welcome School has been a popular and welcomed addition to the St. Louis Public School District. Last year, during its inception, the program was located at Central VPA; however, due to the overwhelming demand for its services, the program was moved this year to its own school building. Since the program does continue to grow, plans are being put into place to expand the school to meet those needs.

1. **(Dunbar parent) Will the breakfast and lunches be improved? Where are the bus monitors and why isn’t there more homework for the students?**

A: Currently, all breakfasts and lunches served district-wide meet the Missouri Advanced Eat Smart Guidelines, which are designed to specifically improve the health of district students.

Bus monitors are only assigned to buses with students that have certain IEPs. Plans are being evaluated to institute a bus monitor program, which would be managed by our Office of Operations and our Office of Safety and Security. Once a comprehensive plan has been finalized it will be presented to the Special Administrative Board for approval.

Homework is assigned on a teacher by teacher basis. If you feel that your student is not being challenged enough academically then please speak directly to your child’s teacher. If your concerns are not remedied at that time then please talk with the school principal. If those steps still do not remedy your situation then please contact Dr. Paula Knight, Associate Superintendent for Elementary Schools, at (314) 345-2346.

1. **Will there be air conditioning placed at Mann School? Is there a way for the bathrooms can become cleaner?**

A: Funding through Proposition S, the $155 million bond campaign passed by voters earlier in the year, will address many of these issues. Improvements will focus on three key areas: Improving Academic Achievement, Improving student Safety and Security, and promoting a healthy lifestyle for students.

1. **Why isn’t there a third and fourth grade teacher at Laclede School? Why are there split classrooms?**

A: This year the district changed hiring practices to staff based on attendance versus enrollment. The Office of Human Resources is working with the principal to determine the needs and the available resources to ensure that class size remains at the desired pupil-teacher ratio.

1. **Will schools be closed this year?**

A: The District has no plans to close any school during the current school year.  However, the District will continue monitoring enrollment levels at all schools and will make decisions for the 2011/2012 school year based on current and projected enrollment figures.

1. **Is it possible for more teacher assistants to be hired?**

A: Staffing levels are based on need and resources.  The District’s Human Resources Department is working closely with all schools to ensure classrooms are properly staffed.  The Special Administrative Board has made a commitment to staff schools at the “desirable” pupil-teacher ratio.

1. **Can the United States Government bailout our school district? Can teacher salaries be increased?**

A: The District receives funding from the Federal Government, State Government and Local taxes.  The Federal Government has provided the District with an additional $4.2 Million Grant to assist 11 schools via the School Improvement Grant Program.  Like all districts and most companies in America, SLPS has had to reduce expenses in light of the current economy.  Salaries and benefits are the largest expense for the District and will be adjusted as the budget allows.

1. **Where is the school district stand on teacher accountability?**

A: Providing a high-quality education for our students is the primary focus of the District.  To that end, all employees, including teachers, are held accountable.  The District has a teacher evaluation process in place, including the St. Louis Plan – a peer review process for first and second year teachers.

1. **How can teachers receive incentives when their students do well in school? What about merit pay for teachers?**

A: Teachers are evaluated based on several criteria.  However, SLPS doesn’t have a teacher merit pay policy in place.

1. **What should a parent do when they speak with their child’s teacher about their child’s lack of progress and the teacher dismisses the parent’s concerns? (Bunche parent complained that her child can’t read.)**

A: If a parent has a concern about a teacher, the parent should first discuss the concern with the teacher.  If the parent does not feel the concern has been properly addressed, the parent should then discuss the concern with the school principal.  If the parent does not feel the concern has been properly addressed by the principal, the parent should contact the principal’s supervisor at Central Office via the Academic Office.  If the parent does not feel the concern has been properly addressed by the principal’s supervisor, the parent should contact Superintendent Dr. Kelvin Adams.  If the parent does not feel the concern has been properly addressed by Dr. Adams, the parent should contact the Special Administrative Board office.

1. **Can the busses improve in terms of student safety? How can discipline be improved?**

A: The District works daily with First Student to monitor bus safety.  Students committing discipline infractions on a school bus are subject to the same discipline measures as those committing discipline infractions in the school building.  Bus drivers, students and on-board cameras are all utilized to improve discipline on the busses.

1. **How many consulting firms have been hired by the district (in order to carry out district business)?**

A: The District only hires consulting firms to provide expertise in areas beyond the scope of District employees.  An example is the hiring of KWAME to oversee the Prop S construction projects.  KWAME is an expert in the construction field and will help ensure Proposition S funds are maximized on construction projects.  Prior to hiring a consultant like KWAME, the District publicly solicits Requests for Proposals and reviews and votes on these proposals and recommendations in a public forum.

1. **Is Special Education a part of SLPS? Can parents, who have children with special needs, get their voices heard through an open forum such as this? Why was Gallaudet School closed?**

A: Yes, the District provides its own Special Education services.  With the success of the Town Hall Meeting about the “State of the District,” it is very likely additional Town Hall Meetings will be held going forward.  The Special Education subject will be considered as a future Town Hall Meeting subject.  Gallaudet School was closed due to low enrollment and the recommendation to place students in the school in mainstream schools for educational purposes.

1. **What grade level is the dropout rate the highest?**

A: At the high school level, students drop out at the highest rate at the 9th grade level. The District feels the decision by 9th graders to drop out is formed at a much earlier age and is working with middle school students to identify the factors that lead to a student dropping out in 9th grade and address them during the middle school years.

1. **Does the federal government allocate money to school districts who are not accredited?**

A:  The Federal Government does not penalize a district financially for being unaccredited.  In fact, the Federal Government is providing additional funding to help improve low performing schools, regardless of the district’s accreditation status.

1. **Are there entrance exams given to students who are being considered for special education or gifted services?**

A: Yes, students are evaluated by special education professionals to determine if special education services are required.  Gifted students are tested to see if they qualify for the gifted program.

1. **Do we get additional funding for students who are gifted compared to those students who are classified as special needs?**

A: The district receives state funding for gifted and special needs students on a weighted basis.  In addition, the District receives funding from the Federal Government for special needs students, but not for gifted students.

1. **What is being done about students who are reading drastically below their grade levels? What is being done about the Read 180 Program?**

A:  Individualized Academic Plans are being created to assist students based on their specific academic needs.  Additional time on task, as well as tutoring and mentoring assistance, are also being offered to these students.  District benchmark testing results are being used to prescribe corrective measures.  The Read 180 program is being utilized in the district, particularly in the schools receiving federal School Improvement Grants.

1. **How many children in the district are reading two are more levels behind?**

A: Based on District MAP results, 69% of District students in grades 3 – 8 are at the Basic or Below Basic level in Communication Arts.  A detailed study of reading levels has not been conducted to date, but will be provided to the Special Administrative Board in a future public meeting.

1. **How can grassroots community folks “help” the district where it is needed?**

A:  The most effective way for community members to help the District is to volunteer in our schools as a tutor or mentor.  Our students need the community to partner with the schools to provide a safety net, both during the school day and outside of the school day.

1. **What is the district going to do about the Charter School Law? What is being done to press charges/file suit against this unlawful act?**

A:  Through lobbying efforts and building relationships with elected officials, the District will continue to seek legislative support for the students of SLPS.

1. **Do Charter Schools directly impact SLPS AYP scores at individual schools?**

A: No, charter schools do not directly impact SLPS AYP status.  Charter schools are separate from SLPS and their scores are not reflected on SLPS reports.

1. **Will there be enough teacher assistants for special education students?**

A: Teacher Assistants, like all staffing positions, are determined by enrollment, attendance and available resources.  The District’s Human Resources Department works with each school to properly staff the classrooms based on the state’s “desirable” pupil-teacher ratios.  This includes the staffing requirements for special education students.

1. **Is student achievement a priority over balancing the budget? When will students begin to receive a quality education from highly qualified teachers?**

A: Academic achievement is the main priority for SLPS.  However, financial resources are limited and in order to regain accreditation the District must live within its financial means.  Regarding highly qualified teachers, the District currently has approximately 94% of its classrooms taught by a highly qualified teacher.  The District’s goal is to have 100% of its classrooms taught by highly qualified teachers.

1. **When will Dewey receive more support staff?**

A: Dewey, like all schools, is staffed based on enrollment, attendance and available resources.  The District’s Human Resources Department will continue to work with Principal Zitta to properly staff the school based on the state’s “desirable” pupil-teacher ratios.

1. **Regarding Proposition S, is there a list of projects that the $155 million will be spent on? Is there a timeline where the money has to be spent?**

A: SLPS recently selected a construction manager to assist district staff in overseeing the school facility improvements that will be funded by the $155 million in Proposition S bonds. The construction manager will assist the district in identifying specific projects within its $360 million inventory of identified school facility improvement needs. The goal will be to complete as many projects as possible, as economically as possible. The specific list will be completed by the end of the year. In terms of project categories, school facility improvements will be as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS - ESTIMATED RENOVATION COSTS* | | |
| *PRIORITIZED LIST* | | |
| *PROJECTS* |  | *COST* |
| *UPGRADE BUILDING ENVELOPES (Hazardous material abatement, tuck pointing, waterproofing, roofing, windows, doors)* |  | *$20,000,000* |
| *SAFETY (Exterior/Interior doors, metal detectors, hand held detectors, video cameras)* |  | *$1,300,000* |
| *UPGRADE PLAYGROUND / PARKING (Equipment / Asphalt)* |  | *$5,230,148* |
| *TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES  (Desktops, interactive whiteboards/projectors, mobile laptops, computer classrooms)* |  | *$5,465,500* |
| *ELECTRICAL SERVICE, LOW VOLTAGE, LIGHTING & POWER DISTRIBUTION UPGRADES (Energy efficient fixtures, motion sensors, fire & burglar alarm, public address systems, door intercom, clocks)* |  | *$27,000,000* |
| *RESTROOM UPGRADES (Fixtures, plumbing, ventilation, lighting, flooring, hand dryers)* |  | *$26,957,000* |
| *RENOVATE/UPGRADE CLASSROOMS FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN* |  | *$10,000,000* |
| *AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT UPGRADES (Elevators, chairlifts, ramps, egress)* |  | *$2,980,000* |
| *CAFETERIA AND KITCHEN UPGRADES (Equipment and building renovations including fire suppression)* |  | *$3,100,000* |
| *UPGRADE SCIENCE LABS, LIBRARIES AND AUDITORIUMS* |  | *$16,015,000* |
| *SPORTS FACILITIES UPGRADES / CONSTRUCTION* |  | *$5,082,900* |
| *SUBTOTAL* |  | *$124,248,497* |
| *CONTINGENCY (10%)* |  | *$12,424,850* |
| *CONTRACTING FEES (12%)* |  | *$14,909,820* |
| *INFLATION (2.5%)* |  | *$3,416,834* |
| *SUBTOTAL* |  | *$30,751,503* |
| *TOTAL* |  | *$155,000,000* |

It is anticipated that all projects will be completed by October 30, 2013, with no loss of classroom instruction time.

1. **What do you have in place to get today’s town hall meeting INFORMATION to the masses other than the web site?**

A: The district will broadcast the entire event on its local access station, channel 988.

1. **Has Central VPA made AYP?**

A: Central VPA did not make AYP in 2010. However, Central VPA’s results on the State of Missouri End of Course exams (the standardized test for high schools) show improvement. Central VPA students showed improvement on both the Math and Communications Arts End of Course exams compared to last year. Attendance is the third factor in determining AYP. The school’s attendance improved to 91.9 percent, which is 1.5 percent higher than attendance in 2009.

1. **What is being done with students who are pregnant and enrolled in traditional high schools?**

A: SLPS enters into a “contract” with pregnant students. As part of the agreement, the student pledges to regular prenatal visit with a physician. The school nurse pledges to meet at least weekly with the student to make sure that the school is aware of and accommodating any medical needs of the student. The school counselor and social worker meet with the student to meet other needs of the student and involve outside social service agencies when appropriate. The school also develops homework packets while the student is absent due to child birth in order to keep the student up-to-date on lessons.

For Vashon students, the district has provided the Parent Infant Interaction Program, which provides child care while the student attends classes.

1. **What is the new entrance process put in place at Central VPA?**

A: The admission and audition requirements for Central VPA have been established to create an environment that fosters high achievement in academics and the arts. As part of the process, students must submit the following:

* A copy of previous year’s report card. Student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5.
* A copy of previous year’s attendance. Based on 174 days of school, student must have an attendance rate of at least 90%.
* A copy of previous year’s discipline profile. Student must be in good citizenship standing (No out of school suspensions).
* At least two letters of recommendation. Two personal recommendation letters should come from (1) an administrator and (2) an arts teacher.

Once all required documents are received, audition dates and times will be scheduled.  Students who are granted auditions must attend at the scheduled date and time prepared to audition and personally interview with the administrative staff. Depending on the area of interest, additional preparation/materials may be required at the time of the audition or interview.

Because Central VPA programs sequence through 4 years, Central accepts 9th and 10th grade applicants only. All accepted students are expected to attend Central’s 9th grade transition program, parent orientation, and pre-registration and be present on the first day.

All documentation must be submitted to be scheduled for an audition/interview. Deadline to receive documentation is February 1st.

1. **Is there a process for allowing people in the community and district employees to make suggestions on how to save money in the district?**

A: Dr. Adams always welcomes input from the entire community. Any suggestions for improvement or concerns can be email to him at [supt@slps.org](mailto:supt@slps.org).