

Tac Titooqan Article
August 2014

Please remember to exercise your right to vote in August. Please be on the lookout for a ballot in the mail with a postage-paid return envelope. The Lapwai School District Board of Trustees approved a second attempt at a supplemental levy for \$250,000 on the August 26th ballot. This is half of what was requested during the unsuccessful primary election in May. The next election ballot will be mailed to all registered voters with a postage-paid return envelope. Those who are not registered can register and vote at the Nez Perce County Court House at 1230 Main Street in Lewiston. The Lapwai levy in May was the only one not to pass in the region. Prior to that election the district had not run a supplemental levy since 2009, while all other districts in our region run one every year.

The school district has been proactive in reducing expenses; unfortunately this has also reduced resources for students. Several positions have been absorbed and eliminated including 4.5 teachers, a mental health counselor, 3 para-educators, a bookkeeper, an attendance secretary, a custodian, and a bus driver. The district has also reduced to a half-time business manager, sharing services with the Highland School District. Ownership of the former district office building was returned to the Nez Perce Tribe as well. This change will save the district approximately \$11,000 per year in utility and insurance expenses. We have relocated to the Lapwai High School campus. The entrance is through the front doors of the high school gym. Our office is just off the lobby.

The facts shared in the last election included:

- There are 142 special needs students in the district with a required matching cost of \$8,302 per child during the 2013-2014 school year.
- Maintaining small class sizes and student to teacher ratios is a priority in the Lapwai School District. Your support would ensure we are able to maintain this for our students.
- Music is no longer funded for preschool through 12th grade. Your financial support could reinstate music instruction in the Lapwai School District.
- Federal Impact Aid funding is 1/3 of our operating budget. Our funding this year is \$145,563 less than 2009-2010 levels.
- Lapwai has two full-day kindergarten classes to meet our growing enrollment needs. The state only funds half-day.
- Lapwai has full time developmental preschool staff. The state only provides \$3,000 in funding.
- \$82,000 or 36% of transportation costs are not funded by the state.
- The state does not fund athletics. The district funded \$88,041 in athletic costs in 2012-2013.
- The Lapwai School District is in direct competition with surrounding school districts for highly qualified, hard to fill teaching positions. Your support would ensure continued competitive compensation to attract and retain the very best teachers possible.
- The Lapwai Elementary School building is approaching 30 years old, requiring replacement and repair of maintenance and facilities equipment. A cooling tower for the HVAC system required replacement this year at a cost of over \$73,000.

Please remember to exercise your right to vote in August. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at 208-843-2622 ext 202.