

Frequently Asked Budget Questions

How will the ratio of administrators to teachers be affected by potential layoffs? There is not a specific ratio to determine such numbers. During such difficult budget times, all people, programs and services are looked at as part of the big picture regarding cost-saving measures.

Is class size reduction on the table at this time?

Yes, CSR in grades K-3 is a consideration as a cost-saving measure. At this time, class size in grades 4-8 are near maximum levels. As the district seeks to reduce the budget deficit, everything is considered "on the table" at this time.

What cuts and/or reductions have been decided so far?

With the exception of the rollbacks agreed to by the district's 62 administrators and five confidential employees, no other cuts/reductions have been made or agreed upon at this time. No recommendations for cuts will be made until the Feb. 23 Board of Education meeting.

Why did district administrators accept pay raises, while asking teachers to take a pay cut?

Some administrators were compensated for step and column as part of their contracts and received stipends for completing advanced degrees. These increases are in line with all our employee groups and no different than the step and column received by 85% of all district employees.

What is the district administration doing to lead by example during this financial crisis?

Administrators have collectively and voluntarily agreed to a five percent salary rollback, a five-day reduction in the work year (furlough) and a cap on district-paid health insurance. This will help reduce the budget deficit by roughly \$700,000.

Shouldn't a 5-day rollback be considered on a percentage basis since teachers are on a 180-day calendar and administrators are not? Would such days eventually be restored?

Yes, the percentages are different for employees on a 180-day calendar and those on a longer work year. On top of the five-day shortened work year, administrators are also taking a five percent salary rollback and a cap on district-paid health benefits. Likewise, should our economic picture improve, the district would work on restoring compensation to employees.

If we shorten the calendar, would the entire district take part in this or just certain groups?

Administrators and confidential assistants have already agreed to a shortened work year. It would be up to each of the classified and certificated associations to determine whether they would want to agree to shorten the work year, or agree to any changes in salaries or benefits.

Why were the ARRA funds spent entirely this fiscal year when it was understood that those funds were earmarked for two years?

As Superintendent, I made the decision to use the majority of the ARRA funds this year to keep as many people working now as I possibly could, rather than split the funds over two years.

Do we know already, or is there a way to predict how many years back the district will go regarding potential layoffs?

At this time it is still unclear how many years back the district will have to go to determine the number of certificated layoffs. Determining this timeframe will depend on many factors.

Why did the district wait so long to implement the spending/hiring freeze?

As Superintendent, I felt it was necessary to get through the first part of this school year with some sense of normalcy before enacting our spending/hiring freeze.

Is early retirement an option and is there any incentive for those considering this route?

Yes, it is an option that the district will utilize to mitigate the impact of layoffs for both certificated and classified personnel.

Why has the district chosen not to pursue Race to the Top funding?

At this time, many unanswered questions remain regarding Race to the Top. The district is not applying due to several concerns. This is one-time funding that can eventually expose us to greater costs than what we could afford. Also, the program is heavily slanted to charter school interests.

Are employees going to be allowed to provide any input into solving the budget crisis?

Yes they will. I consider each and every suggestion submitted to me, and I will continue to encourage our site leaders to meet with staff to solicit possible cost-saving suggestions.

Is School Loop necessary, and why did the district sign a 5-year contract with School Loop, knowing that in one year the new student information system would offer the same parent communication access?

Yes, this program is necessary. It is helping to provide additional means for communication with our parents and community. Title I funds in the amount of \$273,000 were used to purchase the five-year contract – monies earmarked specifically for such purposes. Additionally, due to the County Office of Education making changes in the student information system we currently utilize, it was far less expensive for the district to set up its own system. Each system has its own specialized value to the district.

What is the purpose or intent of the unrestricted reserve and when can it be used?

Unrestricted reserves are primarily for emergency purposes. By law, the district's unrestricted reserve must not drop below 3 percent. Currently, our reserve is roughly 3.3 percent or \$5.6 million. These funds are set aside for emergency purposes.

Why can't the district sell property to help generate funding?

Funds generated from the sale of district property must be used for facilities purposes and cannot be used in the general fund or to pay salaries.

Where is the district getting the funds for the new football fields at the high schools?

Shouldn't the classroom be a priority instead?

The monies to pay for these renovations are strictly bond funds, as approved by the voters of Oceanside. Bond funds can only be used to pay for the construction and modernization projects as outlined in the bond plan. These are not general fund monies and cannot be used for salaries or classroom materials.

Will the district be closing any more schools?

No, our district will not be closing any more schools. We would not have the space to relocate students to other schools.