

Message from the Superintendent sent to FBISD employees:

From: Jenney, Dr. Timothy
Sent: Friday, March 05, 2010 12:00 PM
To: All E-Mail Users
Subject: Message 4

Dear Colleagues,

As I mentioned in my last communication, we will continue throughout this semester to work on our plan to develop cost-cutting measures to eliminate an \$18 to \$20 million deficit and produce a balanced budget for the 2010-2011 school year. We are continuing to analyze data from every service area in the district, including evaluating your suggestions, so that we can determine all available options.

Some of you have asked when we can expect to move through this budget crisis and be able to resume operating without facing a deficit budget. I must be frank and tell you that the financial situation will not improve for our district unless we receive additional revenue, either locally or from the state—and that is not likely to happen for another two to three years at the earliest. It is important for our staff and community to remember that FBISD, along with other districts, receives funds from the state based on complex and predetermined formulas. Our district, like many school districts in the state, is experiencing budget deficits due to the failure of the Texas Legislature to provide inflationary increases to district revenues. Since 2006, we have been operating on a fixed revenue formula from the state, with the burden falling on our patrons and residents to fund our programs and services at the levels to which the community has become accustomed.

That said, as we progress through this budgeting process, I want to provide you with as much information as possible so you will know where we stand. I realize that the major questions in most minds are, “When will we know what cost-cutting measures the district will need to adopt, and what will those be?” The answer is that we are beginning now. In my last communication, I said that it was necessary for the Board to act on a resolution declaring *financial exigency*. Included in the language of the resolution must be an identification of the areas which may be affected. For example, we are increasing the staffing allocation formula for regular secondary schools from 20:1 to 21:1 on average, and likewise at our Title I secondary campuses, as well as our at-risk secondary campuses, by a ratio of one student per class. This is reflected in the category of “secondary teachers.” It will be up to the principals to create a new master schedule based upon the new allocation formula.

Standards have been created or modified to affect staffing allocations. For example, all department chairs at the secondary level receive a stipend for the job; and in many situations, they receive a second planning period in addition to the stipend. The second planning period will no longer be allowed. In addition, coaches will assume more teaching responsibilities in their areas of certification. Also, allocated resources based upon the size of campus enrollments will be strictly enforced.

Included in the reduction list is a pro rata reduction from Central Office administrators, including but not limited to: human resources staff; business and finance staff; benefits staff; purchasing staff; community relations and partnerships staff; organizational development and accountability/testing staff; internal audit staff; and instructional administrators. Also, we are working our way through the November 2009 Texas Association of School Boards Staffing Review Study, and there will be some reductions of social workers, homebound teachers, helping teachers, academy coordinators, and specialists.

The most significant change in our special education delivery system will be our approach to the prevailing co-teach model. We will be moving more toward the inclusion model. The TASB study recommended reducing 180 teaching positions. However, we recognize it will take some time to get to that number so as not to experience difficulty in maintaining a “highly qualified” workforce as defined by No Child Left Behind. We have estimated the reduction of 100 teaching positions. Included in that reduction are 25 department heads that did not teach at all but now will be required to do so.

There are several other program reductions affecting operations, but I will save those until the next communication. We will continue to keep you informed as we have new budget information to share. Thank you again for your commitment and patience.

Sincerely,

Tim Jenney