

A Suburban District Trims Its Budget

Early in 2007 the press was reporting a budget imbalance in a modest-sized district near Saint Paul MN. The usual debate was under way about how to 'balance' the budget for the coming year. After the board's final decision Education|Evolving asked an associate to go back to the district, to see what changes had in fact been made.

She reported:

- O Nine teachers retiring will not be replaced because enrollment projections for next year show fewer students (saves \$750,000).

- O Q Comp reduction (saves \$1.2 million). This is a state program for performance pay for teachers.

- O High School band directors take over 5th grade band duties (saves \$58,000).

- O Freeze the supply budget. Ordinarily increased by 2% each year for inflation (saves \$28,000).

- O Eliminate the lead teachers in elementary school. When the principal is out of the school, certain teachers take over the principal's responsibilities and are given an \$18,000 stipend. These positions will no longer exist.

- O Reduce the middle school activities budget by \$24,000, by increasing fees or decreasing activities.

- O Reduce the high school activities budget by \$66,000 by dropping advisors and coaches (decided at school level).

- O Restructure district media and elementary specialists. Libraries will remain open, but will be maintained by one specialist, eliminating 10 positions (saves \$275,500).

- O Reinstate Special Education programs to save on the out-of-district tuition (saves about \$300,000).

- O Replace copiers and printers with all-in-one machines (saves \$100,000).

- O Reduce the number/time of registered nurses (saves \$163,400).

- O Switch from Occupational Therapists to Certified Occupational Therapist Assistants (saves \$189,375).

- o Freeze administrative salaries in non-union positions (saves \$100,000).

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