

RedondoBeachPatch

SCHOOLS

RBUSD Cuts Positions to Help Close Deficit

The reduction of 6.5 school support staff jobs will save \$300,000, the district says.

By **Jenna Zwang** May 4, 2010

The Redondo Beach Unified School District Board of Education voted unanimously April 27 to cut 6.5 classified positions in the upcoming school year to help close a \$3.6-million deficit.

The reduction of these school support staff positions will allow the district to make up \$300,000 of the deficit. One delivery driver, one maintenance position, one account clerk, 1.5 clerk typists, one secretary and one receptionist were eliminated.

"We're looking very hard with each person who is cut to see if we can put them in a vacancy somewhere else in the district," said Nancy Billinger, assistant superintendent of human resources.

These cuts come in response to Gov. Schwarzenegger's 2010-2011 budget proposal, which includes \$2.5 billion in cuts to public education.

"With the budget cuts, it was necessary to have the reduction in our employees," said Jane Diehl, a Board of Education member. "We are hoping that there are going to be openings so that most of the employees will be able to stay with Redondo, but we have to cut positions."

The decision to eliminate these positions comes on the heels of the March 15 approval to issue layoff notices for 31.8 full-time, classified positions, which included the dismissal of 24 elementary school teachers. Cutting elementary school teachers, Billinger said, allows the district to increase class size at the kindergarten-third grade level.

"It's going to be a significant change for the teachers but also the parents, because our parents have gotten used to 20 [or] 22 to 1 for many years. We believe the quality of instruction will still be excellent, but it will cause teachers to have to re-plan their lessons," Billinger said.

The Redondo Beach Educational Foundation is trying some creative ways to close the deficit, including the Club 360 competition, which pitted the schools against one another to see which could raise the most money. The program brought in \$208,280, with Tulita Elementary raising the largest amount and earning a \$3,000 cash grant.

"I don't think that's going to erase it completely by any means, but I appreciate however the community can reach out, even if it doesn't help me," said Edward Auttapibarn, a fourth-grade teacher at Tulita. Auttapibarn is in his second year of teaching and is worried about future cuts.

The RBUSD is in negotiations with the California School Employees Association and Redondo Beach Teachers Association to adopt two furlough days, which would save the district \$440,000.

"If we were able to save that money, we would be able to bring back some of those teachers we have laid off," Billinger said.

Amy Santa Cruz, president of the RBTA says furloughs should not be the next step.

"They have the reserve money, if they wanted to use it so that they would not need to do furloughs," she said.

Santa Cruz said that the district reserve money is currently at 3.8 percent, which is 0.8 percent more than what is required.

The RBUSD is also offering incentives to teachers who take advantage of the early retirement plan. Their vacated positions would allow other teachers to retain their jobs.



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