

## Redondo may give 25 layoff notices

By Douglas Morino Staff Writer  
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Faced with a budget deficit that may climb to \$4 million, Redondo Beach Unified School District officials are looking to increase class sizes and cut teaching as well as school management positions.

Pink slips could be handed out to up to 25 certificated employees as a result of spending proposals for the 2010-11 fiscal year that will be considered Tuesday by the district's Board of Education.

"This is the worst I've ever seen it," Superintendent Steven Keller said of this year's budget process.

A school principal and assistant principal are among the 10 to 25 employees who may be sent layoff notices, Keller said. The superintendent was unable to give exact numbers of possible layoffs because bargaining negotiations with the Redondo Beach Unified Teachers Association are pending.

"That number changes on a daily basis because of new information," Keller said.

State law mandates that school districts send out layoff notices to certificated employees by March 15. If additional funding is allocated, districts could rescind pink slips after March 15.

The possible layoffs in Redondo Unified would likely increase district-wide class size averages, currently at 22.7-to-1, in grades K-3. At a community meeting Wednesday, Keller said K-3 class sizes could go up to 30-1, the limit under California law.

"It's not a number any of us want," he said. "We want to keep class sizes in the 20s, but we don't know if we'll get there."

District administrators and teachers are currently negotiating furlough days - which could shorten the school year if more than three days are taken - and pay cuts. An agreement over concessions with the district's teachers union could be reached by Monday.

Concessions made by teachers will also be made by district management, Keller said.

"We're all in this together," he said.

Amy Santa Cruz, president of the Redondo Beach Teachers Association, said she would like the district to dip into its reserve fund to save jobs and maintain class sizes.

"Teachers don't want their district to overreact," she said. "I think on Tuesday the board is going to have a really hard call. As a teacher in the classroom, I would hate to see teachers losing their jobs."

Santa Cruz declined to give details of possible concessions, citing the ongoing negotiations.

"I think this year, just like everywhere else, it's not good all around," said Santa Cruz, a kindergarten teacher. "We have teachers losing their houses."

Janet Redella, Redondo Beach Unified's chief business official, said she would caution against spending the district's reserve - about \$2.5 million, equal to 3.9 percent of the district's overall budget.

"We want to do this in a manner that keeps as many people employed as possible," Redella said of budget reductions. "If we spend down those reserves and get hit with a midyear cut, it could impact our solvency. We're trying to make decisions based on what's best for the kids."