

Budget Solutions to Consider Criteria for Decision-Making

Introduction:

Given the budget proposals from the House, Senate and governor, Vancouver Public Schools has forecast a budget shortfall ranging from approximately \$2 million to \$6 million for the 2010-2011 school year.

The primary objective in determining reductions for the 2010-2011 budget will be to maintain adequate staffing necessary to provide a comprehensive, high-quality instructional program that supports improved student achievement. Every attempt will be made to streamline and lower costs in areas that do not directly affect student learning. This approach may result in further reductions to support services or programs at the district level and in schools. Loss of revenue in special purpose program areas likely will be offset by cuts in those areas to minimize the impact on other valued programs.

Areas for consideration:

Consistent with public input received last year, the following areas are being reviewed for 2010-11:

1. Belt tightening and efficiency initiatives
2. Mutual agreements among all employees
3. Program integrations
4. Program eliminations
5. Revenue increases
6. Non-teaching personnel reductions
7. Teaching personnel reductions

Design II strategic plan priorities:

To ensure that resources are aligned with meeting the district's goals as identified in the Design II Strategic Plan (mission, core principles and strategic priorities), the following guidelines will shape resource decisions:

- Ensuring that budget decisions do not compromise the safety and security of students and staff
- Preserving the benefits of smaller primary class sizes
- Protecting teachers' time so that it can be focused on teaching and learning, including time for planning and preparation
- Continuing efforts to attract and retain high-quality staff members
- Providing a clear, common, guaranteed and viable curriculum and assessment program, including resources to adequately support implementation and sustainability
- Maintaining adequate support for school-level budgets
- Ensuring that direct classroom-level instructional support staff is kept at adequate levels (e.g., paraeducators)
- Ensuring that building-level administrative and instructional support staff is kept at adequate levels (e.g., principals, associate principals, counselors, media specialists)
- Recognizing increased requirements for staffing to meet differentiation and remediation needs
- Maintaining a comprehensive instructional program that provides opportunities for students to receive a rich and varied educational experience (e.g., the arts and electives, career and technical education, programs of choice)
- Ensuring that non-instructional support staff at schools is kept at adequate levels (e.g., custodians, playground supervision, clerical/secretarial)
- Maintaining adequate support for maintenance and operations of facilities to provide a positive learning and working environment and to protect the value of the community's capital investment
- Ensuring that district-wide administrative and instructional support is kept at adequate levels (e.g., central leadership, professional development, teaching and learning, and instruction/information departments)
- Ensuring district-wide non-instructional support staff is kept at adequate levels (e.g., facilities, fiscal, human resources, transportation, nutrition)
- Maintaining adequate support for extracurricular programs and facilities

When making recommendations, consideration also will be given to the initiatives contained within the Design II Strategic Plan with specific attention directed to the board's current and future priorities. Budget solutions must ensure the short-term and long-term fiscal health of the district.