

As promised, here are the ideas coming from the Round Table Discussion held on February 18, 2009. These ideas came from representatives of several districts and we appreciate the input provided. There are likely more ideas being considered across the state, but these may help some in getting started with this painful but necessary process. For more information on this issue, please see the newsletter article.

Main Budget Cutting Ideas From the February 18 Round Table Discussion:

- Implement a hiring freeze
- Reduction of staff by non-renewing interim contracted employees
- Review calendar days to save money by reducing the days in the contract, or implement furlough days and / or reduce sick/personal/vacation days
- Reduce insurance costs by looking at FTE amount that qualifies for benefits or look at not “bundling” positions to qualify a person for benefits
- Cancel recruitment fairs or reduce/eliminate out of state recruitment fairs – consider using non-conventional ways to recruit such as FACEBOOK
- Increase class size – reducing number of teachers
- Implement tuition based all day kindergarten
- Charge fees or increase existing fees for sports
- Have sports participation kept within the district to reduce costs
- Consider transportation fees or increasing existing fees
- Transport only students legally required to transport
- Freeze on out –of- state travel and reduce or control in-state travel
- Shift expenditures to other funds from M&O
- Reduce substitute rate of pay
- Reduce salaries – (beware of legal parameters when doing this)
- Defer leave payouts- (beware of legal parameters when doing this)
- Reduce utility costs
- Have administrators substitute in the classroom periodically to reduce sub costs

- RIF (Reduction in Force) including all employee groups from administrators at the district office, teachers on assignment, librarians, RNs, mentors, paraprofessionals, custodians, assistant principals, etc.

Some important points to consider when looking at the above ideas:

- Communication of budget reduction tactics is very critical to the staff and to the community during this budget reduction time. Some districts have regular memos/newsletters from the leadership such as the district Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. Others prepare newsletters, PowerPoint, or pod casts for principals to share with staff and parents. Districts in the southern region recommended holding community engagement socials or coffees for communication purposes. Some districts use a combination of these communication venues.
- If you plan to reduce in force (RIF) it is important to contact your district's legal counsel for advice on procedure. You should also begin reviewing and/or renewing your RIF written procedures as soon as possible.