
BUDGET SURVEY

On February 3, 2009, Superintendent Janssen sent an invitation to all district employees via email to participate in an online survey intended to obtain feedback concerning district budgetary issues¹. Dr. Janssen's letter highlighted the need to make operating budget cuts of \$63-68 million for the 2009-2010 school year. Dr. Janssen's letter cited recently approved cost-cutting measures including school closings, transportation savings and a summer 4-day workweek. Further proposed cost-cutting measures were then cited, including those relating to facilities, programs and services, transportation, health insurance, employee furloughs and salary reductions. Input was then requested concerning these and related cost-cutting measures currently under consideration. This report is intended to summarize feedback provided by employees concerning the cost-cutting measures included in the budget survey.

METHOD

SURVEY

An online survey was made available for all district personnel to complete between February 3, 2009 and February 11, 2009². The survey was introduced by highlighting some ideas already being discussed by representatives of employee groups through bargaining. Feedback was then requested concerning ten items including:

1. Reduce personnel at district level and schools
2. Change employee health insurance coverage and cost-related issues (family coverage)
3. Reduce number of paid work days for employees
4. Reduce number of paid holidays
5. Reduce transportation costs (other ideas)
6. Textbooks - decrease purchase of textbooks
7. Curriculum - delay implementation of any new curriculum or initiatives
8. Reduce employee salaries
9. Reduce or eliminate some extracurricular activities
10. Other

Respondents were then asked whether they were instructional, support, or administrative personnel. Information concerning years of experience and grade level (if any) were also requested of respondents.

Design

Feedback in response to each of the ten items was requested through open-ended responses limited to 150 characters in length. The disadvantage of this approach was that only brief responses were possible, which the respondents were asked to provide. This method was selected as several thousand responses were expected and limited time was allotted to analyze this data and to prepare a report.

¹ See attachment 1

² See attachment 2

The open-ended response format necessitated a qualitative approach to data analysis. Qualitative approaches are useful for the purpose of soliciting input. This approach is also useful in terms of identifying a particular respondent group's perspective concerning an issue. The goal is generative rather than confirmatory. As such, this method was appropriately suited to the goal of obtaining input and individual perspectives from the respondent group consisting of school board employees.

The main drawback of this approach is that findings are not as unequivocal as quantitative results in response to multiple choice questions. The intent of analysis is to find patterns of results in the data from an unbiased review of the comments submitted. These patterns are then summarized. Responses that present unique perspectives may also be highlighted in addition to the main themes. Investigators may place individual comments into groups with a common theme and then report the percentage of comments that were coded into each theme. To do this reliably for thousands of responses requires a substantial amount of time, the choice was made to present themes without attaching numerical values and to present the themes based upon the best, unbiased impression of trends that were found after reviewing all the comments received.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 15,672 instructional, support, and administrative employees in the district, who make up the potential participants of this study, were invited to take part in the survey. Overall, 2,803 school board employees completed the Budget Survey. 2,699 employees indicated whether they were instructional, support, or administrative personnel. Results presented in Table 1 indicate that 22% of instructional personnel in the district responded to the survey, while 10% of support personnel responded and 34% of administrative personnel responded. Of all respondents to the survey who stated their group status, 69% were instructional, 25% were support, and 6% were administrative personnel. Themes were selected to be included in this report based upon frequency of occurrence; given that 69% of respondents were instructional; their views were most likely to occur with the highest rates of frequency. Follow-up questions could be asked concerning similarities and differences in views across groups. However, for the purpose of this report, themes and specific comments were selected without regard to the respondent's group status.

Table 1					
	Number present in District	Percentage Representation in District	Number responding to Survey*	Percentage of each Group who responded to the Survey	Percentage of total respondents to the Survey
Instructional	8,463	54%	1,862	22%	69%
Support	6,752	43%	682	10%	25%
Administrative	457	3%	155	34%	6%
Total	15,672		2,699	17%	

* 104 respondents offered comments but did not state to which group they belonged

Results presented in Table 2 indicate that a total of 16,996 comments were provided. While some of these comments were simple "yes" or "no" responses, thousands of comments contained suggestions. The most responses were obtained in response to the first question in which 1,993 comments were offered regarding reduction of personnel at the district and school levels. The lowest number of responses was provided with regard to reduction in paid holidays. There were 1,352 comments regarding this issue.

Table 2	
QUESTION	TOTAL COMMENTS
1. Reduce personnel at district level and schools	1,993
2. Change employee health insurance coverage and cost-related issues (family coverage)	1,471
3. Reduce number of paid work days for employees	1,650
4. Reduce number of paid holidays	1,352
5. Reduce transportation costs (other ideas)	1,696
6. Textbooks - decrease purchase of textbooks	1,875
7. Curriculum - delay implementation of any new curriculum or initiatives	1,577
8. Reduce employee salaries	1,897
9. Reduce or eliminate some extracurricular activities	1,607
10. Other	1,878
TOTAL	16,996

PROCESS

Data are presented in a descriptive manner. The goal was to present the main themes that emerged with the highest rates of frequency in response to each question. For each question, review of the comments would present certain ideas that repeated frequently. A strict cutoff was not used in terms of the number of times a comment was repeated in order to qualify as a theme. Given the time allotted, professional judgment was used to select themes from the almost 17,000 comments submitted without regard to any judgments concerning the relative merits of any suggestion. If a theme was repeated, it is presented.

After identifying these main themes, comments were selected that appeared to present a distinctive perspective or idea. Attention was given to avoid only presenting comments that conformed to any particular bias or perspective. If the comment was unique, it was presented.

Nine specific topics as well as one "other" category formed the basis upon which feedback was solicited through the Budget Survey. These topics were chosen to coincide with themes that had emerged from communication with employee groups through bargaining. An "other" category was included to allow employees to present ideas that may not have related to the nine issues presented.

Selection of themes and specific comments was made without regard to the potential legal implications of any theme or comment. Employees who provided comments as well as those writing this report are not attorneys. PCS employees provided their ideas, which are the basis for this report. Clearly, a review of the applicable law is necessary as the Board and Superintendent consider any theme or comment presented in this report.

This survey was designed to gather feedback from the employees of PCS. Parent and community groups have provided feedback and recommendations concerning the budget through several other sources. The views of PCS employees are presented in this report with the understanding that those of parent and community groups not included in the present survey should also receive consideration. Ongoing communication and feedback from all constituent groups is essential.

RESULTS

REDUCE PERSONNEL AT DISTRICT LEVEL AND SCHOOLS

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a “yes” or “no” response were much more likely to provide a “no” response to this issue.

Administration Cuts: Comments suggested that any personnel cuts should start with administration at the district level.

Superintendents: Comments specifically suggested cuts at the assistant/associate superintendent level and among regional superintendents.

Staff Developers: Comments suggested that staff developers and teachers on special assignment should be returned to the classroom. Comments supported all instructional staff working directly with the students.

DROP: Comments suggested that those in DROP and ‘double dippers’ should be cut. Some offered the alternative to re-hire these employees at lower salaries if they are irreplaceable.

12-month Employees: Comments suggested that 12-month employees’ time should be reduced. Administration building staff and school principals were the main focus of this recommendation. Questions were raised concerning the necessity of having employees in these positions during the summer months. Other groups mentioned included campus police and some categories of food service employees.

Specific Comments: Certain specific comments that were not frequent enough to conform to a theme yet may provide a unique recommendation to address this issue included:

*Look at all the jobs, eliminate duplicates, unnecessary
Consolidate positions in admin bldg
Pro-Ed and TDE
Training through cyber, moodle, or change the requirement for certification
Region office and staff
ESE classes, staffing model
A 4 day school year all year round
California two-month on / one-month off, year-round schedule
Consolidate EBD centers into k-6 at Sanders & 7-12 at Bayside
Evaluate all positions
Job sharing here at all levels
Petition the State to Use Capital Outlay!*

CHANGE EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND COST-RELATED ISSUES (FAMILY COVERAGE)

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a “yes” or “no” response were much more likely to provide a “no” response to this issue.

Negotiate: Comments suggested dissatisfaction with Aetna. There was support to put health coverage out to bid to provide other companies an opportunity to offer services superior to that of Aetna. There was also support to provide more options to employees in the form of having more carriers and plans from which employees can choose.

Family Coverage: There was variation in employees' views concerning family coverage. Some comments suggested that cutting family benefits would hurt employees considerably, while others recommended cutting family coverage and only providing benefits to employees. The latter group commented that rates for single employees should not be used to subsidize family rates. A compromise option offered was to have a sliding scale in which employees with more children pay more for health coverage.

Morale: Comments indicate that health insurance is a particularly important benefit that attracts employees to PCS. Comments suggested that this may be particularly true among support staff, some of whom may choose lower paying positions in PCS as opposed to elsewhere in order to access health insurance benefits. Comments suggested that reductions in health benefits would severely affect employee morale at a minimum, and may be a direct reason for some to seek employment elsewhere.

Cost: Comments noted that health insurance costs have already risen and suggested that further increases would put a considerable strain on workers. Sentiments were particularly strong in this regard. There were concerns that employees may not be able to secure health insurance outside of their jobs if they lose insurance through PCS.

Specific Comments: Certain specific comments that were not frequent enough to conform to a theme, yet may provide a unique recommendation to address this issue included:

Small increase in co-pay, prescription or ER services
Allow for dependent coverage without primary coverage
Bargain with Hillsborough, Pasco, Sarasota for better rates
Board pay 80% of employee only - employee pays for all of family coverage
County should self insure. Link with medical schools such as SPC and USF med schools
Employee Board Contribution should be based on salary (this is called indexing)
Get rid of AON consulting/negotiating fee for bargaining our ins. plan
Has there been any thought about a FSA combined with a high-deductible plan
Convince the government to allow children of employees to transfer to Florida KidCare then just cover employees
Join the state health insurance let the school board pay the employer contribution
Since we are in the FRS why can't we look into the State's healthcare?
Make all new employees wait 90 days to be insured and receive benefits
for those over 65 - no county contribution

REDUCE NUMBER OF PAID WORK DAYS FOR EMPLOYEES

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a "yes" or "no" response were much more likely to provide a "no" response to this issue.

12-month Employees: Similar to comments following Question #1, there was strong support for reducing the time worked by those who work for 12 months. Comments again suggested that principals may not be needed to work in schools in the summer. Comments suggested shutting down the entire school district in July. Others suggested that administration work the same number of days as teachers.

4-Day Workweek: There appears to be strong support for institution of a 4-day workweek throughout the year. While a clearer estimate of the degree of support for this measure would be obtained through responses to a multiple-choice question, the volume of support provided in these comments appeared to suggest that this may be a popular cost-saving alternative. Comments cited the cost savings of this measure in terms of transportation and energy costs. Comments suggested that this alternative was preferable to a pay cut.

Pre-post School Days: Comments supported reducing the number of pre- and post-school days. Comments generally appeared to support a reduction in training days. Comments suggested that some meetings may repeat information resulting in an inefficient use of time. Some comments suggested introducing shorter, school-based professional education training days.

Furloughs: Comments did support use of furloughs to a degree. However, comments generally supported their use mainly for those on 12-month contracts.

Specific Comments: Certain specific comments that were not frequent enough to conform to a theme, yet may provide a unique recommendation to address this issue included:

Be equitable for ALL employees
Be mindful of the workload
Prefer the 4 days week or furlough than pay cut / layoffs
Study hall/mentor time/club time could be incorporated into extended day
Summer four day work week 7.5 hr instead of 10 hr days
Cutting salaries 4 days per month over the summer, 12 total per year
District to offer a 'goodwill' clause - For example: Employees are able to leave one hour early One day a week
Get state to reduce number of days students must be in school during this economic crisis.
Reduce number of days only if students days are cut
Possibly split shifts
Allow employees five personal/five sick days. This will allow for less days to be paid at the end of service
The 11 month contracts can go to instructional time frame contracts Take 1 sick day from 6 instead of not paying us to work less days

REDUCE NUMBER OF PAID HOLIDAYS

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a “yes” or “no” response were much more likely to provide a “no” response to this issue.

Morale: Comments suggested that holidays were a key contributor to employee morale. Any potential creative solutions appeared to be outweighed by comments suggesting the potential negative impact of a reduction in the number of paid holidays upon employee morale. For example:

No, Our paid holidays helps towards the countless hours we spend above and beyond our 7.5 work day No, we have to look forward to something
No,No,No we need the breaks
Teaching is emotionally, mentally and physically draining. These holidays are sometimes the very thing we need to give our sanity a boost
Too demoralizing

As a Last Resort: Some comments endorsed this option only as a last resort in lieu of cuts to salary and health insurance. Some suggested that the equalization process might dampen the effects of any cuts in paid holidays. Others suggested that cuts in preschool or training days would take precedence over cuts in paid holidays.

Specific Suggestions: This question elicited both the fewest number of comments and appeared to elicit the fewest unique suggestions. Where suggestions were offered, they were generally vague, such as “limit to 1 or 2 days” or “get rid of some paid holidays”. Some comments suggested that 12-11-11.5 month employees and administrators might be in the best position to handle a cut in paid holidays. Another comment suggested the reinstatement of trade days as “teachers will use their own time and other organizations’ facilities to get that training in”.

REDUCE TRANSPORTATION COSTS (OTHER IDEAS)

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a “yes” or “no” response were substantially more likely to provide a “yes” response to this issue. Overall, there was very strong support for changes in transportation.

Capacity: Comments cited buses running at less than capacity. Some comments noted that buses may sometimes have only two or three students. Comments highlighted the need to find creative ways to increase the number of students on each bus; combining routes for middle and high students was often suggested as a means of increasing bus capacity.

Zones: There appeared to be strong support for providing transportation only to students attending their zoned schools. Comments suggested that there was much less support for transportation for grandfathered students as well as those attending magnet and fundamental school.

Walking Radius: Comments suggested that the distance to school after which bus service is offered should be lengthened. These comments indicated that this would encourage more walking which can both increase student activity level and reduce bus costs.

Parental Cost: Comments suggested that parents pay either the whole cost or a fraction of the cost of transportation; referencing that this has occurred elsewhere. Others suggested that parents could be offered some form of financial incentive to provide transportation for their children. Others suggested that parents of students who attend fundamental or magnet schools might pay for transportation services. Others suggested that parents be made responsible for all student transportation needs or pay on a sliding scale according to student lunch status.

ESE: Comments suggested that exceptions could be made for ESE students who attend schools that are outside their zone if restrictions were placed on the provision of transportation services for students outside their zone. Others suggested that ESE students from separate schools could combine on the same bus or that smaller busses could be used to transport ESE students. Other suggested that similar exceptions would not extend to gifted students.

Bus Assistants: Comments suggested perhaps more efficient means of utilizing bus assistants for ESE students through grouping together students who require assistants to be present.

District Vehicles: Comments suggested that use of district vehicles by staff could be restricted after school hours.

Sports: Comments suggested that use of buses for after hours sporting events could be reduced or eliminated. Comments suggested that parents could either provide transportation or find creative ways to fund transportation to sporting events (car pools / boosters).

PSTA: Comments suggested that high school students could utilize public transportation through a partnership between the school district and PSTA.

Pony: Comments suggested reduction in the number of days that the pony is used per week- others cite technology as a more efficient means of conveying information.

4-Day Workweek: Comments in this section once again referred to implementation of a 4-day workweek throughout the year as means of reducing transportation and other related costs.

Specific Comments: Certain specific comments that were not frequent enough to conform to a theme, yet may provide a unique recommendation to address this issue included:

2 school pick up same time

A depot system where parents get their child to a depot not a bus stop in North/Central/South

ABSOLUTELY. Consider bio-fuel at some point

Add Hydrogen fuel cells on Busses and other vehicles with 20 to 40% fuel savings

All busing for "choice" schools should be eliminated

Any child outside of 2 mile zone, parent must supply transportation if they choose to go to specific school

Arrange school start times so that middle and high school can travel on the same bus, as they do SUCCESSFULLY in Pasco County

Bus drivers should drive in close to home zones. They waste time, money and fuel.

Dual Enrollment - parents should share cost

Charge for transportation under two miles as a service- that are not full are going by many of the homes anyway

Compressed natural gas

Consolidate the deliveries to schools- everything comes once a month

Have maintenance department also consolidate their trip to schools

Convert fleet of diesel school busses to bio-diesel. Then ask a corporation, (McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, KFC) to get free fuel

Cut out county cars for Route Coordinator and Field Supervisors- allowance of \$50.00

Talk to FedEx about routing- they have greatly reduced their costs

Use smaller for smaller groups

TEXTBOOKS - DECREASE PURCHASE OF TEXTBOOKS

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a "yes" or "no" response were substantially more likely to provide a "yes" response to this issue. Responses strongly suggested that considerable waste may exist in this area. Overall, several options were offered to reduce these costs. .

Adoption Time: Responses suggested that textbooks are updated too often in PCS. Comments often citing the recent reading update in particular as unnecessary. There appeared to be strong support for lengthening the time between new textbook adoptions.

Freeze: Comments support a freeze on new textbook spending until economic conditions improve

Math/Reading: Comments suggested that the material does not change much in these areas. As a result, new textbooks may be particularly unnecessary.

Internet/CDs- Comments suggested that in many cases technology has reduced the need for new textbooks. In areas where information can be accessed via the internet or through CDs, the need for new textbooks or in some cases any text book is less necessary. Some commented further that textbooks were becoming an outdated method in light of advances in technology.

Missing/Damaged Books- Comments suggested that even with a freeze or reduction in new adoptions there may be a need to replace missing or damaged textbooks. Comments also suggested more stringent enforcement of penalties for not returning books or returning damaged textbooks.

Home Copies- Some questioned the need for students to have two sets of textbooks- one for school and one for the home. Some suggested having a class copy only and then loaning books for home use when necessary.

School-based Decisions- Some suggested that books are provided whether the teachers want them or not. They suggested that decisions be made at the school level through consultation with teachers whether new textbooks are necessary at each school and the quantity needed

Non-Use- Comments suggested that many textbooks are never used and either sit in closets in classrooms or in the warehouse. Comments suggested that a more efficient system could reduce the number of unused textbooks.

Worksheets/Consumables- Comments were somewhat mixed concerning the use of worksheets and consumables. Many comments suggested that in many cases these were completely superfluous and not used. However, there were some comments suggesting the workbooks were the only type of book used. It appeared that a clearer idea of which workbooks are used and which are not could cut costs in this area.

CURRICULUM - DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY NEW CURRICULUM OR INITIATIVES (1577 COMMENTS)

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a “yes” or “no” response were more likely to provide a “yes” response to this issue. Overall, comments suggested that support exists to delay implementation of any new curriculum or initiatives.

Stress: Comments suggested that the rate of implementing new curriculum may often induce stress and that slowing adoption of new curriculum may serve to reduce stress.

Basics/Mastery: Comments also suggested a need to emphasize basics rather than new curriculum. There was also a related suggestion that perhaps a stronger focus could be placed upon mastering existing curricula rather than adopting new curricula. Comments such as “we are Jacks of all trades but masters of none” and “Pinellas jumps on too many bandwagons” were frequent.

Staff: There were comments suggesting that curriculum developers may not be necessary. Comments suggested that returning Staff Developers and Teachers on Special Assignment to the classroom may be a more efficient use of resources. Comments also suggested that Reading Coaches may be employed more efficiently in other capacities.

Training: Comments suggested that the training associated with implementation of new curricula can be an unwise use of limited financial resources both in terms of the time spent by teachers and the money paid to outside professionals to provide the trainings.

Specific Curricula- There were several comments that suggested certain programs may be inefficient or ineffective. This list is by no means an adequate way to evaluate any of the specific programs suggested. However, the existence of several comments in which specific programs were identified as potentially ineffective relative to cost suggests that there may be substantial savings to the district associated with audits of such programs.

Why do we have SLC? It is an interruption and it isn't effective. No value in SLC Yes, including new pilot IEP- PEER-not needed at this time!!

Eliminate training such as Spence Rogers -too costly

No TDE's NONE

ABSOLUTELY! 3 years and 3 reading adoptions? It's staggering to think about the \$ collecting Eliminate Read 180. Is there any data that supports its success?

There are many programs the district invests millions of dollars in and then drop i.e clarity, Also new computer programs such as SASI. Nothing should be decided on a few people's whim

No new initiatives should be mandated. No pilot programs (PEER IEP)

No Kaplan type programs as the district has been overwhelmed with this stuff over the years

Stop Centers For Learning curriculum
Discontinue summer school programming
Stop centers of excellence, make all schools just plain old high schools
Close "boutique" programs such as IB, CAT, etc. that turn a few schools into private school situations at great expense
RRR all other feely touchy courses & self esteem out...
CHAMPS training is a huge waste of money
CPI can go. What a waste in time/\$ to renew people every 2 yrs- retrain trainers every 4 and pay the trainers
No new testing programs- elementary reading
PEAK-Spence Rogers is VERY expensive when we pay him plus teacher stipends for 2-3 weeks.
Restrict the start of new programs. Eliminate ELP funds and the metametrics program
Do not fund 2 reading programs....ex. Fast Forward or SAI

REDUCE EMPLOYEE SALARIES

Yes/No: Those providing brief comments in the form of a "yes" or "no" response were overwhelmingly more likely to provide a "no" response to this issue with the exception of cuts to administrator's salaries perceived as excessive and those receiving compensation through DROP.

Reasons: comments by employees did not favor reduction of their own salaries. Reasons provided focused upon a lack of salary increases recently due to steps or cost of living. Others cited a lack of competitiveness of salaries in Pinellas compared to neighboring counties and salaries in other states. Many commented that their existing salaries were already low.

Morale: Comments cited a current lack of morale and the potential negative effect of a salary decrease upon morale. Some indicated that teachers may discontinue using their own funds to support activities in their classrooms should they receive a cut in salary. Others indicated that teachers may be less inclined to stay after work to prepare for the next day if morale is lowered further.

Administration: The only cuts that received support were those that would cut administrators' salaries at the "Taj". Some cited Tom Tobin's article in the *St. Petersburg Times* in which his analysis depicted administration as 'bloated' in Pinellas in terms of pay relative to other districts.

DROP: Issues concerning rehiring after completion of "DROP" also emerged again as a main theme in terms of being among the limited salary cutting options that may be acceptable. Comments suggested that employees should not be rehired after completing "DROP". Some offered the alternative to re-hire these employees at lower salaries if they are irreplaceable. Others suggested that the initial five-year term of "DROP" should be eliminated.

Threshold or Graduated Cuts: There was also similar support for cuts for those making over a certain threshold of salary. Others suggested not reducing pay for teachers or support staff. Others suggested making smaller percentage cuts or no cuts for those making less money.

Consistency: Comments indicated that if any cuts were made they would not want to see those at lower pay levels receiving cuts while those at higher pay levels did not.

Retirement: Comments expressed concern that cuts would particularly hurt those within five years of retirement due to the effect upon their retirement benefits.

As a Last Resort: A few comments indicated that pay cuts would be accepted only as a last resort in lieu of firing co-workers.

Alternatives: Some expressed that they would be more willing to accept temporary furloughs or days off without pay than a pay cut. Similarly limited support was offered for a pay freeze rather than a pay cut.

REDUCE OR ELIMINATE SOME EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Yes/No: There was wide variability in responses to this alternative both in terms of simple “yes” and “no” responses as well as more specific comments. It generally appeared that any decision might have an equal number of proponents and detractors with regard to cuts in extracurricular activities.

Sports: Decisions regarding sports received the most attention. Some comments were in favor of eliminating them completely while others supported retaining them strongly. Those in support of eliminating them focused upon academics as the central role of schools. Those who supported maintaining them often cited sports as a main reason why some students remain in school. Others suggested that a reduction in sports might decrease the chances of students to attend college through athletic scholarships. Some suggested that cuts in middle school sports programs would be preferable to those among high school programs.

Decision Basis: Comments suggested that decisions concerning which activities to cut could be made on a cost basis. From this perspective, activities that cost the district the most money to maintain could be cut. Others indicated that less popular activities in terms of enrollment could be cut. Others requested equality in any potential cuts between athletic and non-athletic activities.

Community Sports: Comments suggested that athletic activities/sports already based in community organizations can be cut within the schools.

Community/Parental Support: Comments suggested that increased community funding could be sought to support school-based athletics. Other comments suggested that parents could be asked to provide more assistance with transportation and financial support. Replacing paid coaches with volunteers was also suggested as a cost-cutting measure.

Pay to Play: Comments suggested that students could participate in extra-curricular activities if their parents paid a fee. Others supported charging admission fees to high school sporting events.

Centers of Excellence: One particularly unique idea suggested that PCS eliminate all extracurricular activities except at three high schools with one in north county, one in central, and one in south county. Centers of excellence could be created at each high school.

OTHER

The final question allowed employees to state a concern that they had stated in response to the nine specific categories. Many of the themes highlighted the strongest themes found in response to the initial nine questions. Some unique themes also emerged in response to this final question.

4-Day Workweek: Support for the 4-day workweek was once again stated in abundance. Without a quantitative vote format, we can't estimate the percentage support for a 4-day workweek throughout the district. However, the volume of open-ended support for this approach suggests that a considerable level of support may exist among employees for the institution of a 4-day workweek.

DROP: There is a similarly large volume of responses that support elimination of re-hiring after completion of DROP. In some cases, employees state support for re-hiring at a lower salary. Some go further to support elimination of DROP altogether. While the qualitative format of this survey doesn't allow us to quantify the level of support, the volume of responses suggests this is a central budgetary issue to PCS employees.

Administration: Once again, there appears to be considerable support for a reduction in salaries among administrators- particularly those at the “Taj”. Comments suggest that Tom Tobin’s analysis in the St. Petersburg Times has been associated with substantial support for a reduction in the administrative payroll.

Staff Development/Training/TsAs: Comments again stated a desire to reform the current staff development and training system. Comments recommended returning TsAs to the classroom. Some comments noted stress associated with staff developers visiting to evaluate teaching. Others suggested means to reform the current training system to allow teachers more time in their classrooms.

In addition to restatement of the above themes, several new areas were identified in this section:

Energy/Maintenance Costs: Comments focused upon different ways that Energy and Maintenance costs could be reduced. The volume of suggestions in this area was likely due to the absence of a specific question concerning these issues among the nine offered. Comments suggested that thermostats could be adjusted in building to save on energy costs. Comments cited buildings that were heated too warmly in the winter and cooled too much in the summer. Comments cited inefficient use of space and the potential savings that could be generated from consolidating offices. Several additional cost saving suggestions were offered, such as using more natural light in classrooms by opening blinds and turning off electric lights. Other comments cited inefficiencies in contracting for building repairs including \$12,000 to fix a door.

Paper/Copying Costs: Comments cited inefficient use of paper to provide information to school employees when email or internet access could cut down these costs considerably.

Early Retirement Incentives: Comments suggested development of early retirement incentives. Comments suggested that early retirement incentives may help to address what appears to be considerable dissatisfaction with extended DROP practices in the district.

Communication with the FLDOE: Comments supported communicating with the FLDOE to address restrictions such as those on classroom size and use of capital outlay funds for operational expenses.

Certificate of Distinction: Comments suggested that yearly certificates of distinction may be suspended as a temporary cost-saving measure.

Auditing: Comments supported district-wide auditing as a means enhancing accountability.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this review was to summarize feedback concerning PCS Budgetary Issues provided through 16,996 comments from 2,802 school board employees. We hope that this report has faithfully captured the main themes offered by PCS employees that may be useful to board members charged with enhancing the efficiency of the Pinellas County Schools system in these difficult economic times. Continued communication and debate among all those affected by these budgetary concerns, including parents, students, and community members are necessary to ensure that all points of view are considered. The legal implications regarding enactment of policies associated with any of the themes outlined in this summary must be considered as well. The intention of this report was neither to evaluate the legal implications or relative merits of any particular suggestions or themes, but to highlight the issues and concerns expressed by the employees of PCS in as concise, yet thorough, a manner as possible.

Attachment 1

Dr. Janssen's Memo

On behalf of Julie Janssen, Superintendent:



Date: February 3, 2009
To: All Employees
From: Julie M. Janssen, Ed. D., Superintendent
Subject: Employee Input - Budget Cuts

By now, we all are being affected by the economic crisis that has directly or indirectly touched everyone in the nation. Our school district is faced with unprecedented budget challenges as the state and local economic situation continues to worsen. Due to revenue reductions, we need to make **operating budget** cuts of \$63-\$68-million for the 2009-2010 school year. Because of the current conditions and forecasts, we are considering a number of budget-cutting alternatives.

Over the past several months, we have identified areas that would generate the greatest savings for the district. Some cost-cutting measures already have been approved; school closings, transportation savings related to student assignment and a summer four-day workweek.

Other areas that are being considered are facilities, programs and services, transportation, health insurance, employee furloughs, salary reductions and other personnel-related items. (Areas such as buildings, computers, furniture and , etc., are paid for out of [capital funds](#). The state will not allow us to use capital funds to pay for [operating expenses](#) – salaries, benefits and daily operating expenses.)

I value your input and look forward to hearing your thoughts. **Below is a link to a secure website where you may voluntarily give your input. Your responses are anonymous.** Please remember that some of the ideas we receive may not be possible due to state restrictions or guidelines. **Please send in your ideas by the end of the day on Tuesday, Feb. 10.** Thank you.

[Employee Input - Budget Cuts](#)

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Attachment 2

Budget Survey

The following are some ideas already being discussed by representatives of employee groups through bargaining:

- Provide retirement incentives
- Continue "leave for any reason" provision
- Consider furloughs / paid holidays
- Encourage job sharing
- Implement hiring freeze / slowdown
- Rehire DROP employees at lower salary
- Review trade day use
- Explore delivery alternatives for professional development
- Reduce number of months worked
- Raise leasing fee for school district facilities
- Consider pay reductions

We are gathering additional input about budget-cutting options that will be recommended to the school board. If you have any additional ideas, please comment in the appropriate area below.

To make it easier to compile data, please keep your comments brief.

For any technical issues, please call the Help Desk at 588-6060.

1. Reduce personnel at district level and schools.

2. Change employee health insurance coverage and cost-related issues (family coverage).

3. Reduce number of paid work days for employees.

4. Reduce number of paid holidays.

5. Reduce transportation costs (other ideas).

6. Textbooks - decrease purchase of textbooks.

7. Curriculum - delay implementation of any new curriculum or initiatives.

8. Reduce employee salaries.

9. Reduce or eliminate some extracurricular activities.

10. Other.

Please provide some brief information about your job.

11. Please select the response that best applies.

- Instructional
- Support
- Administration

12. Please select if applicable.

- Elementary
- Middle
- High
- Adult School
- Non-school based

13. Please select one.

- I have less than 3 years experience.
- I have between 3 and 10 years experience.
- I have between 10 and 20 years experience.
- I have more than 20 years experience.

Thank you for taking the time to give your ideas. Your input is important as we work together to meet this challenge. Working closely with the employee organizations, we will determine how to make budget cuts and will keep you updated throughout the process.