

Daniel Boone board cuts equivalent of 9 full-time positions

By Greta Cuyler
Reading Eagle

The Daniel Boone School Board cut the equivalent of nine full-time district positions Wednesday night and said the teachers union had rejected its request for wage concessions to balance the 2010-11 budget.

"Unfortunately the Daniel Boone Area Education Association has refused to entertain the board's request for any help," board President Kevin F. McCullough read from a prepared statement.

The district's proposed 2010-11 budget is \$53.4 million, up from \$49.2 million.

McCullough said concessions from the teachers would have saved the district \$1.3 million and contrasted their position with those of administrators and bus contractors who have agreed to concessions.

In a letter dated April 14, union President Brad Gross said reopening the teachers contract would weaken educational programs and increase costs because teachers might leave the district.

The board did agree to tentatively cut approximately \$630,000 from next year's budget by:

- Eliminating preferred substitutes, who report to the district every day regardless of absences, \$148,000.
- Reducing the technology budget, \$114,000.
- Cutting 7.5 classroom aide positions, \$150,000.
- Reorganizing district library staff and reducing half a position at the high school and half a position at the middle school, \$50,000.
- Having staff handle remedial math at the high school, \$66,000.
- Combining small general music classes at the middle school, reducing half a position, \$25,000.
- Reducing custodial overtime, \$75,000.

After making their tentative cuts on Wednesday, the board is still \$2.2 million short of balancing its budget, McCullough told the crowd of about 50 residents.

The board has tentatively agreed to use \$1.5 million in capital reserves to help balance the budget, but McCullough said he doesn't believe the majority of the board is comfortable taking too much out of the \$4.9 million fund.

During the public comment period, a woman who identified herself as an aide said cutting classroom aides will cost the district in the long run.

"The dollar value you're saving is going to be lost in other ways," she said.

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