

Boone considers job and program cuts to help balance budget

Another \$1.36 million would be trimmed for 2010-11 through eliminating 23 positions, making other cuts

By **Greta Cuyler**
Reading Eagle



The Daniel Boone School Board on Wednesday went public with more of the cuts it is considering as it works to close a gaping hole in its proposed \$53.4 million budget for 2010-11.

The board was working from a 20-item list of potential cuts that include eliminating up to 22 classroom and special education aides across the district, eliminating German at the middle school, cutting a middle school librarian and eliminating band for fourth- and fifth-graders.

Together, the 20 represent a potential savings of \$1.36 million.

All of the items are still preliminary and many will require the approval of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Superintendent Gary L. Otto told the board at the budget workshop.

The board's task was to give district administrators a sense of what cuts they might consider.

"Balancing this budget is a problem," Otto told about 30 residents in the audience. "These ideas are solutions. We don't want to see any of these things go."

These cuts are in addition to \$625,000 in so-called Tier 1 potential cuts that Otto revealed last week.

The new ones were divided into Tier 2, \$440,000, and Tier 3, \$919,000.

The tiers referred to the impact the cuts would have on the district, Tier 1 having the least and Tier 3 having the most.

Tier 1 included not replacing departing teachers and aides, cutting supplies, cutting the meal allowance for away sports games and playground aides.

Tier 3 included reducing kindergarten to a half day from full day and eliminating elementary band and regular classroom assistants.

The preliminary budget is up from about \$49.2 million this year, officials said, and the board wants the number reduced to avoid a tax hike.

Union Township resident Shane Kochel suggested the board consider cutting more coaching positions instead of classroom positions that directly affect education.

"When people find out that you're even considering getting rid of a foreign language, music and a librarian " he said, trailing off. "My kids play sports and that's not part of the education of learning; it's an extra."

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At the board's next budget workshop, on April 21, the board plans to vote on each proposed staff and program cut.

Board member Alan D. Ross was adamant that he does not want to see cuts to the elementary school music program.

He also suggested that administrators come up with a fewer number of classroom aides to be cut, especially in light of anticipated larger classroom sizes next year.

"I think it's too deep a cut," Ross said. "I don't think this is good for education."

"Nor do we," Otto said.

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