

Facts about the RUSD Budget and What the Future Holds

1. Why are California schools having such a bad time financially?

California's budget has long been in trouble and now faces a new **\$20 billion deficit** for the year that just began July 1st. Over 90% of RUSD funding comes from the state, and California's budget woes have unfortunately made their way into the classroom. This year, RUSD has been forced to **cut \$44 million** from the General Fund. RUSD's state funding has regressed to the **2000-01 level** while costs remain at the **2010 levels**. Because of this, our district has joined as a direct plaintiff in an **historic lawsuit** aimed to restore funding to a level that allows us to adequately serve your students with whom we are entrusted each day.

2. Where does Riverside Unified get its money?

RUSD's annual income is currently about \$297 million. The majority of that comes from the state and is allocated based on student attendance – currently, about \$5,000 per student per year. We also receive “restricted” funds from state and federal sources that can **only** be used for certain programs. These are the “categorical funds” you have heard about.

3. Will Riverside Unified have to have to lay-off teachers and other staff?

Over the past 3 years we have laid off (and not returned) 373 of our valuable employees. Due to the state's continued fiscal crisis we are anticipating for 2011-12 a \$30 million dollar deficit for RUSD. Nearly 85% of RUSD's annual budget goes to our employees for salary and benefits. The vast majority of our employees are our teachers in the classroom. Therefore, when we are confronted with new, unprecedented cuts, we are faced with some very difficult, yet necessary choices. However, our goals will always include maintaining a motivated and experienced teaching core and dedicated support staff. We will work with our teachers and classified staff toward solutions that, undoubtedly with sacrifice, will maintain these valued employees.

4. How are staffing cuts made?

State law that governs schools requires that we use **seniority** (original date of hiring) to determine which staff members are issued notices of **possible** layoff. The Education Code also requires **when these notices** (March 15th and May 15th) are to be sent to employees – long **before** any state budget has been finalized by the Legislature and Governor.

5. How are we cutting costs?

RUSD has implemented a number of cost-cutting measures that include: furlough days for all management, certificated and classified staff; total shutdown of all district facilities for 15 days to reduce

energy costs; increased class sizes in the primary elementary grades; and other reductions to management and classified staff. This includes a 23% elimination of administrative personnel since 2007-2008.

The budget development process has already begun for the 2011-12 school year. The Board of Education **encourages** your participation in this process. Contact us with your ideas. Email information is available at: www.RUSDLink.org.

6. Will you have to cut the school year again?

It is not an option we prefer and is dependent upon the state budget as well. This year, one of the budget reductions authorized by the state and enacted was to reduce the school year by 4 instructional days and 1 non-instructional day to accommodate furlough days for our teaching staff. The furlough days were agreed upon by the District and the Riverside City Teachers Association (the union that represents RUSD teachers) to save jobs and reduce the impact of the budget crisis on classrooms.

7. How can you spend money on new schools and football stadiums, and still not have money for teachers?

Funding for these projects comes primarily from **Measure B**, a 2001 voter approved bond specifically targeting construction of new facilities and sorely needed upgrades to aging facilities in order to make our schools safer and better functioning learning environments. The provisions of the bond, as well as state law, prohibit use of that money for any other purpose, such as school operations, supplies or employee salaries.

8. So what does the future hold for California education and RUSD funding?

Much of this depends on California's budget. We recognize that school funding may never return to “normal.” Instead, we are confronted with the reality that, very likely, what we are experiencing today and for the foreseeable future is in fact the “**new normal**” for California school funding and for RUSD. California education and RUSD are at a critical point which will arguably shape how we deliver K-12 educational services for decades to come. It will take continued sacrifice and “out-of-the box” thinking and innovation to reshape a school system that conforms to these budget restraints, yet maintains our mission to provide RUSD students with an exceptional education which will prepare them for the next stage in their lives. We must embrace emerging technologies (i.e. digital text books, virtual libraries and online learning) and further collaboration. We also need you. Stay involved by returning often to our website: www.RUSDLink.org.