

School Budget: Difficult Decisions in Difficult Times

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By: Bryan Davis, Superintendent
Columbus School District

Our school district is focused on achieving two goals: 1) Improving teaching and learning and 2) Maintaining fiscal responsibility. During these difficult financial times, the tension between our goals increases and difficult budget decisions need to be made.

In preparation for the 2010-2011 school district budget, we have cut over \$225,000. These cuts have placed strains on our system but have not significantly compromised the education of our students. However, we have recently discovered immediate facility needs estimated at approximately \$400,000 that must be addressed in this budget. The needs are:

- 1) Maintenance to the Boilers throughout the District. This work needs to be completed so we can have heat in our schools this winter. This cost is estimated at \$20,000.
- 2) Maintenance to a leaking roof and wall in the Middle School. This work needs to be completed to avoid another mold problem. This maintenance is estimated at \$380,000. *Note: Our mold issue at the Elementary School in 2002 cost us over \$2 million in repairs.*

Maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our students and staff is a top priority. At our next school board meeting on October 11th at 7:00 pm in the High School Library, we will be discussing a proposed 11.97% increase to our tax levy. This increase will help finance our basic needs of safety and health for our students and staff. We understand this increase is significant in these difficult financial times, but we believe being pro-active in the maintenance of our aging facilities will avoid millions of dollars worth of reactive repairs and potential loss of school time for our students in the near future.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 920-623-5950.