

School board to vote Thursday on budget with \$1.2 million in cuts

June 24, 2020



Del Norte Unified School officials were able to trim \$1.2 million from the district's 2020-21 budget without implementing staff cuts.

Assistant Superintendent of Business Jeff Napier presented the budget June 18 to the district's board of trustees. The cuts came in response to a projected \$1.1 million deficit the school district faces caused by the pandemic's impact on shutting down the state's economy.

The school board is expected to discuss and take action on the budget Thursday at its regularly scheduled meeting at 4:30 p.m. in the district office, located at 301 West Washington Blvd., Crescent City. To watch or participate in the meeting via Zoom, go to <https://dncoe.zoom.us/j/193445536>.

Napier said each department and school was asked to make a 10 percent cut to its operations. He outlined cuts that will be made for to the 2020-21 budget and he also shared potential cuts should more be required. According to his report to the board, DNUSD still faces projected deficits of \$2.136 million in 2021-22 and \$3.33 million in 2022-23.

For example, transportation saved \$100,000 this year by eliminating its vehicle replacement budget, not including school buses. The department also found a way to save \$89,000 by combining some routes and eliminating others.

Napier's presentation included a list of unfunded staff vacancies that will remain unfilled and removed from the budget, which will save the district the biggest amount at \$1.1 million in salaries and benefits.

He said even though DNUSD must have its budget adopted by June 30, he expects to return to the board with revisions in August and December due to uncertainty and changes at the state level.

Napier pointed out that even though the Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom reached a budget agreement this week, it depends on an unguaranteed \$15 billion in federal relief money and still faces a \$65 billion deficit.

The state is looking at stopping apportionments of unrestricted funds in February and deferring education funds to the following year. Napier explained the problem is DNUSD is already not getting those funds in March through June, which amounts to \$17 million. This could lead to a spiral of borrowing.

“If we start getting into a position where we’re having to borrow a lot of money for deferrals, to bridge into next year, we’re not getting any more money the next year,” Napier said. “There may be additional cuts because those deferrals are then going to defer to the next year. You get into a cash crunch where you’re borrowing money to pay off money that you’ve borrowed and all of your money that you’re getting from the state is paying off what you’ve borrowed.”

Other departmental cuts to the 2020-21 budget included the following savings:

- \$72,000 by eliminating a maintenance position
- \$50,000 by implementing timecards
- \$100,000 cut to technology replacement, which includes about 300 ChromeBooks
- \$27,000 by suspending the Gifted & Talented Education program
- \$300,000 by reducing the textbook budget