

February 11, 2011

Dear AISD Colleagues:

I am contacting you because tonight the District will post for the public, as an Agenda Item for the Monday, February 14, Board Work Session, the list of positions that the Administration has proposed for elimination as part of a districtwide Reduction in Force.

Over the past two years, Austin ISD has already cut \$27 million from our budget, by eliminating more than 100 Central Office positions and initiating other significant austerity measures. However, this year it has become increasingly clear that AISD will be forced to take many painful steps, in addition to those that we have already implemented, in order to balance our budget over the next two legislative budget cycles. The State of Texas faces a two-year budget deficit of approximately \$27 billion, and state funding cuts to public education are projected to be as high as \$10 billion over the next two years. As a result, at this time, the District anticipates having to reduce our annual operating costs by a minimum of \$94.4 million, which is about 13 percent of the District's operating budget. We are also facing significant losses of state and federal grants.

Since more than 85 percent of our operating expenses are personnel costs, it is not possible to make these reductions without eliminating staff positions. As we make these difficult decisions, we realize that there are names, faces, and careers behind these positions, and that makes this process gut-wrenching.

But unfortunately, there is no way to balance our budget without such steps. Last night, I notified the Board that, regretfully, the Administration has identified more than 1,000 positions that would be affected by a Reduction in Force. These include 771 campus-based and 246 Central Office positions, for a total of 1,017 positions, out of a total current workforce of nearly 12,000. These reductions will cause an administrative reorganization, which means that there will also be some new, re-tooled positions created, as we reorganize and restructure, for a more cost-effective, leaner model. The Board will consider these Reductions in Force on Monday, February 14, and is scheduled to take action on Monday, February 28. The reorganization is expected to be presented at the end of March.

Our primary goal, as we face this very difficult challenge, remains on providing quality academic instruction with more limited resources. Make no mistake: reductions of this magnitude will have a fundamental effect on public education as we know it today in Austin. But as we restructure, the District will make the most effective use of our more limited resources, and we will continue our efforts to improve student achievement.

In the months ahead, as the budget picture at the state level and the availability of other resources becomes more clear, we will do our very best to minimize the painful effects that this Reduction in Force will undoubtedly create. As we move forward, our Human Resources office pledges to work diligently with each employee whose position is eliminated. These steps include:

- Each employee will be assigned a contact person from the Office of Human Resources.
- A representative from Human Resources will meet with each employee impacted by the reduction in force, review the implications for his/her future employment, and deliver an official letter of notification.
- HR will provide employees with information regarding the application and interview procedures.
- The HR web site will be utilized to provide relevant information to employees regarding the reduction in force.
- A list of vacant positions will be generated and distributed to employees.
- An external hiring freeze will be implemented in the employment areas impacted by the reduction in force.
- HR will facilitate opportunities for employees to interview for vacant positions.
- HR will provide assistance for employees to obtain additional teaching certificates.
- And, an internal job fair will be held for employees impacted by the reduction in force.

I appreciate the professionalism of the entire AISD staff, particularly under such trying times. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Meria Joel Carstarphen,

Superintendent