

Myth #1: "The district is in an extreme financial crisis."

Reality:

Last year, the State Board of Education gave District 207 its highest possible rating for financial strength. The State Board of Education recommends that schools keep a reserve (savings) fund of 2.5% of their operating budgets. For District 207, that would mean at least \$32.5 million should be in this reserve fund. Right now, our reserve fund stands at over \$86 million.

District 207's reserve (savings) fund is larger than many districts, including Hinsdale, New Trier, Lyons, Lake Park, Evanston, District 214, District 211, Glenbard, Glenbrook, and DuPage District 88 schools, in terms of percentage of yearly budget in savings.

The projections by administration are based on worst-case, doomsday scenarios. For example, the administration continued with their planned staffing cuts despite knowing that they underestmated its financial outlook on the consumer price index resulting in \$1.4 million in unbudgeted revenue for years 3, 4, and 5 of the projections.

The administration chooses not to take in to account a projected \$2 million per year in tax revenue from the future Des Plaines casino, which is expected to be complete by July 2011.

The administration chooses to include with its financial projections the complete elimination of state funding, despite the fact that no legislation addressing this has even been introduced.

Myth #2: "Cuts will have little impact on the quality of education for students."

Reality:

Class sizes will go up for every student in every single subject area, reducing the amount of individualized attention every student will receive.

Our students will face imminent course offering reductions in foreign language, fine arts, and other programs that enrich the high school experience. Extra-curriculars also face major reductions, including, but not limited to, debate, COACH peer tutoring, 20 instrumental programs, fencing team, boys' gymnastics, speech team, and jazz band. The board has stated that it will consider further reductions to other student activities and sports in the spring.

Students who are most in need won't receive the support they require as the district has cut 2 administrators, 9 teachers and 6 aides in the special education department alone.

35 clubs and 31 sports teams will be losing a sponsor or coach if 75 positions are cut.

Myth vs.

Reality

DISTRICT 207 BUDGET CUTS

Myth #4: "Cutting 1/6th of the teaching staff is the only option."

Reality:

This is not the only option. It is simply the only option the administration chooses to explore.

Community members must call and e-mail the Board of Education members to urge them to spend a fraction of the reserve fund (\$5 million of the \$86 million in the fund) to maintain the high quality of education in District 207. Our students are worth it.

Myth #3: "This is the teachers' fault."

Reality:

This is a crisis created by an unnecessarily aggressive reduction in educational quality. All districts are weathering this same financial storm.

In headlines throughout February and March, every major news organization reported on the deepening recession and rapidly declining stock market, which reached a 12-year low on March 9. Yet, the Board of Education, stating they had no idea that the financial situation was so severe at the time, approved \$6 million in expenditures in March and April of 2009 including field turf and stadium lights, three scoreboards, and workout facilities.

The former Assistant Superintendent for Business made a multi-million dollar accounting error that initially went unnoticed.

The district chose to embark on the largest capital expenditure plan in district history between 2007 and 2009, with \$24 million spent on capital improvements.

The school board needs to make the responsible choice to tap into the money sitting in reserve that the community has provided them. *Our students are worth it.*