Updated October 26, 2009

Parking Lot Questions

Q. Can PTOs fund out-of-district field trips?

A. Elementary students are allowed one out-of-district field trip per year as requested by the school. Field trips are funded by third party funds and PTOs frequently pay for them.

Q. Do schools pay for cheer or drill team or do parents pay for that?

A. The district purchases uniforms and some props for drill team members. The uniforms are replaced every 10 years. Most of the personal clothing and equipment are purchased by the drill team members.

For cheerleading teams, the first year a high school opens the district provides one set of uniforms for each squad member and they become the property of the school. Accessories are purchased by the participant (shoes, ribbons, megaphone, poms). Camp gear and any other uniform they decide to purchase is the responsibility of the parent. In many cases, fund raisers (homecoming game, cheer camps, etc) are used to off set these costs. The Athletic Department contributes $1860 yearly to each school for camp or travel fees. Some schools choose to use it for competition travel and others use it to off set camp fees.

At the end of their term, cheerleaders may sell their items to incoming new squad members at a reduced cost thus reducing the cost for new members.

Q. Doesn't PTO pay for D.A.R.E.?

A. The DARE program is funded through a federal grant, Safe and Drug Free Schools. Participation in the program, however, is a campus-based decision and many PTOs provide funds for additional activities related to the DARE program, such as DARE Graduation.

Q. What is JJAEP?

A. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) is the alternative educational placement for students who commit discipline infractions that warrant expulsion as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. State law requires that counties with 100,000 or greater population establish a placement for students who commit expellable offenses so that these students are not expelled to the streets.

Q. Have the cuts to our transportation program had a negative impact on Average Daily Attendance?

A. The district's attendance rate was slightly lower during the first six weeks of school as compared to the first six weeks of last year; however, we believe this decrease is more reflective of current health concerns related to H1N1.

1sr six weeks 2008-2009 – 97.4
1st six weeks 2009-2010 – 95.7

Q. When CFISD principals are asked "what can be cut from the budget" what is their answer?

A. Since the schools have already lost teachers and other campus-based personnel in previous budget cuts, their general recommendations include services, programs and personnel that do not directly effect classroom instruction. Reductions may include non-

academic services such as field trips, DARE, ROPES, curriculum coaches, more streamlined transportation, combined responsibilities of various ISC curriculum and administrative positions, limited extracurricular offerings, reduced number of extracurricular competitions, reduced summer school offerings and the elimination of low-enrollment courses.

Q. Can LCF members receive Dr. Anthony's Monday Morning Notes? It might help us better understand the day-to-day reality of the district.

A. LCF can receive any MMNs that are focused on the budget/finance issue in the district. However, those MMNs that are inspirational or motivational would provide little benefit to the LCF members.

Q. Can the Cy-Fair Education Foundation's mission be changed to more proactively raise money that be used for programs?

A. We have no control over the mission of the CFEF. The board of directors for the CFEF is committed to providing scholarships to our students for which they spend approximately $300,000 per year and teacher grants for which they spend about $88,000 per year.

Q. When our teacher unions are asked for ideas on how to cut the budget, what are their answers?

A. Their main concern is that we do whatever is necessary to retain employee jobs and provide raises. The only budget reductions that they support are in the administrative and service areas, since most administrators are not members of TSTA/NEA, CFFT, or ATPE.

Q. How, and in what ways, can we increase revenue? Weighted Average Daily Attendance (WADA) is set by the state – how can we raise funds beyond the WADA? We cannot cut much more!

A. We continue to investigate and implement ways to increase miscellaneous revenue such as advertising on buses. Although revenue is generated, it represents a very small percentage compared to the revenue needed to provide relief for the district for the next few years. The district only has two options for significant revenue relief.

One way was to eliminate the optional homestead exemption prior to HB3646 becoming law. However, HB 3646 is now law and includes a provision that limits per WADA revenue increases from one year to the next. In our district, the tax collections resulting from the elimination of the homestead exemption would exceed the revenue limitation preventing CFISD from retaining all of the revenue, locally.

The second option is to increase the M&O Tax rate through a successful Tax Rate Rollback Election. Any increase in the tax rate beyond the current rate must be approved by the voters of the community.

Q. What programs and services are mandated by the state?

A. Programs and services such as pre-kindergarten (Pre-K), special education, dyslexia services, bilingual education, gifted and talented programs and career and technical education (CATE) are state and/or federally required programs. These programs have specific requirements; however, the design of the program and specific course offering are determined by the district.

In addition to these programs, districts must offer comprehensive course offerings to satisfy state graduation requirements. For example, fine arts and foreign language courses are required as well as the core courses (mathematics, science, language arts and social studies).

Q. What is elementary at-risk support staff in 2008-2009 budget cuts?

A. The district staffing guidelines provide for additional staff based on the campus percentage of economically disadvantaged students (students who meet free/reduced lunch guidelines). For the 2008-09 school year, the formula was changed to increase the percentage of economically disadvantaged students to receive additional staff.

Q. What are "curriculum helping teachers" who were reduced in 2008-09?

A. Curriculum coaches (formerly known as helping teachers) are district-wide instructional support positions. Coaches work with teams of teachers or individual teachers to plan effective instruction based on the needs identified through data analysis. Coaches work with teachers in lesson planning, lesson design, modeling lessons, and classroom management.

Due to an increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students, the district received additional Title (federal) funding. The additional money was used to fund the curriculum coaches, therefore reducing the general operating budget.