

Dear Fort Bend ISD Staff Members,

I am sure each of you is well aware of the continued budget challenges our district is facing. We have all worked hard over the past few years to reduce costs where possible, while still providing quality instruction for our students. I commend you for your efforts, because even with tighter and tighter budgets, our students have continued to make steady gains in achievement.

The budget challenges we are going to face in the days and months to come are much more serious than ever before. Due to the failure of the Texas Legislature to provide necessary increases to district revenues since 2006, we are being forced into a position of having to operate with a deficit budget for the second school year in a row. We simply cannot continue this trend and must take drastic action to work toward developing a balanced budget for the coming fiscal year.

Most all of the school districts across the state and across the nation are facing severe budget challenges due to a lack of sufficient funding. Many districts have already had to take drastic measures including a reduction in force, increasing class sizes, cutting programs, raising employees' contributions to their health care plans, and foregoing employee pay raises for several years.

Our district has implemented very few of these drastic actions in recent years. Instead, we have maximized all available resources, including managing the budget and making fiscally responsible decisions, which have allowed us to be in a better financial position than many other districts. Despite these efforts, we still must make some hard decisions in the coming weeks to address the budget shortfall we will be facing in the fall.

I want you to know that the Board of Trustees and administration are carefully studying several options and strategies to reduce \$18,000,000 in costs. We know that we must make some very difficult decisions and that in some cases a different service delivery model will be needed. Our main focus, as we work through this difficult budgeting process, will be to not only ensure quality instructional programs, but to do so without loss of jobs. Nonetheless, I am equally sure there will be reassignments which must take place as we shrink the depth and extensiveness of our operations.

As soon as a strategy is in place, we will communicate the information to you. Our goal is to have a plan ready to share with staff in late February. While we work through these difficult times, I hope you will continue to remain focused on the positive progress we have made in Fort Bend ISD, as well as the progress we will continue to make. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Tim Jenney
Superintendent