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ABCUSD needs \$6.5M in cuts

By Kevin Butler
Staff Writer
Posted: 02/18/2010 07:23:47 PM PST

CERRITOS - The ABC Unified School District is considering increasing class sizes, shortening the school year and charging parents for bus service as part of an effort to cut about \$6.5 million from its budget in the 2010-2011 school year.

District officials this week gave the ABC Board of Education a list of possible cuts, which come in response to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget, said ABC Deputy Superintendent Mary Sieu.

The school board is expected to decide which budget cuts to pursue at its March 2 meeting.

The list of options totals about \$12 million in savings, she said. The board only needs \$6.5 million of that total.

The options include a proposal to increase class sizes in kindergarten through third grades from 22 students per teacher to 24 students per teacher beginning this fall. That move would save about \$460,000, Sieu said.

ABC also is considering increasing class sizes in its middle and high schools from 31 to 33 students per teacher, saving about \$1 million, Sieu said.

This year, the district reached an agreement with its labor unions to shorten the school year by one instructional day. Employees also are taking four furlough days this school year, she added.

District officials are considering shortening the school calendar in 2010-2011 by a much as four additional instructional days and continuing furloughs on some level, Sieu said. The school calendar and furloughs would

_____ have to be negotiated with labor unions, she added.

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_____ ABC also may begin charging parents \$1 for each day their children take district buses to and from school, she added. The fee would not apply to special education students, she added.

Other options to balance the budget include using funds formerly reserved for areas like new textbooks, adult education and the Regional Occupational Program, which provides career courses.

The state government has loosened restrictions on those funds to free up more money for districts to use to shore up their budgets.

kevin.butler@presstelegram.com, 562-499-1308

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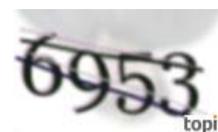
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