

LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT WANTS TO OUTSOURCE CUSTODIANS



The Lee County, Florida, School District is trying to cut \$25 million from the district's [budget](#) next year. One method to do so is to outsource custodial jobs in the district, according to a report from WINK News. If the district does outsource the jobs it would save \$4 million in benefits and retirement costs. The move would also affect hundreds of employees throughout the district, which is a step back that many are not in favor of making.

Don Armstrong, a member of the board, said that he does not favor the idea at all. Another board member, Tom Scott, noted that the board needs to consider all avenues prior to making a decision.

Scott said, "My point of view is we've been into reserves for 2 years in a row and I'm not interested in doing that for next year's budget so I think we need to look at everything including that, to see if it makes sense economically and operationally for us."

Scott said that he understands it would be a difficult thing to sell and that it might not be the best option for the district.

"I know there are people involved and the attempt would be if we do that, to make sure those people currently [working](#) for us would have the first opportunity to work for the contractor," Scott said. "We're talking about people. A lot of jobs, and we haven't clarified what we want to do, what those people might be entitled to do, that they might have a job with another company, we're in the exploratory stage and we're gonna do what's right for the district."

Dr. Joseph Burke, the district superintendent, said, "You give up control of the workforce, our schools are in really good shape now, they're kept really clean, we have a great custodial workforce out there doing the work now. So while from a budgetary standpoint it makes sense for us to keep that on the table for now, as a practical matter there is a downside that has to be considered."

The president of the Support Personnel Association of Lee County, Jamie Michael, is not in favor of the idea either. Michael said, "If they outsource the custodial staff, they're taking away a safety issue. Those people know the campus, they know the students, they know where to take students if something happens. We've gotten a survey from Collier County schools that say their schools aren't as clean as prior to the outsourcing. The teachers aren't happy."

The custodial staff was [outsourced](#) in Collier County back in 2008 and the move saved the county \$3 million.