

## PLAINFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANS 64 JOB CUTS TO BALANCE BUDGET DEFICIT



To meet a projected \$3.2 million budget deficit for 2012-13 the Plainfield School District maintains the traditional way out of job cuts. It has decided upon 64 full time positions that are to be dropped. The school district voted unanimously for the decision. However, according to the district officials the danger still has not passed as state aid remains unpredictable, and the district may soon face further deficits over transportation and pension costs. The jobs that were approved to be cut include the equivalent of 27.4 full-time teaching jobs and the equivalent of 35.3 full-time support staff. The school district says that the job cuts would lead to a savings sufficient to balance the present budget deficit with the additional job cut of one special education administrator. Seven deans lost their jobs, one each at John F. Kennedy, Timber Ridge, and Aux Sable middle schools, and a further seven middle and high school instructional technology specialists to also save \$452,800. New chairs at high schools would be multitasking and be responsible for multiple departments. The job cuts range from the top of the academic hierarchy down to support supervisors and copy clerks. The full-time equivalent of six learning lab teaching assistants, nine custodial subs, three attendance secretaries, special education job coaches and media teaching assistants have lost jobs. In spite of taking the decision to cut so many vital jobs board member Rod Westfall admitted, "It sickens me to cut one position." The board members expressed during the unanimous vote that while the board appreciates its employees, the deficit will not go away without substantial cuts. The reason, the board added is that the state government is failing to pay transportation costs and floating plans to freeze property taxes and shift teacher's pensions to local school districts. The district has been successful in reducing its expenses to the tune of \$43 million since 2009 through their successful strategy of staff cuts, program cuts, and operational savings. However, recent state attitude has made the district more conservative, and officials fear that another burden of \$10 million may come on the district if the state government decides to shift teacher's pensions to the responsibility of local districts.

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