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Sacramento City Unified School District

surveyed his total school community and has prepared a plan of action which presents a set of priorities for teaching and learning. While he has a limited ability to solve the financial

- x Eliminate extra-curricular activities
- x Increase class size
- x Reduce elective programs
- x Reduce maintenance and other services
- x Eliminate transitional kindergarten
- x Reduce adult education
- x Incorporate furlough days

In addition, the district could ask the unions to make concessions on salary or benefits. However, none of these are easy or popular choices.

The district has reallocated \$15 million from categorical Tier III funds to fill \$15 million of the deficit. However, much more remains to be done in order to avoid cutting vitally important educational services and programs.

As with most school districts, 80% of the budget goes for salaries and benefits leaving only 20% for all other expenses such as books, buildings and grounds, utilities, maintenance, transportation, etc. Five employee groups have agreed to take at least three furlough days in 2010-11. The district may soon face mediation with its teachers' union. The district is presenting the SCTA a formal proposal to reopen negotiations on concessions. In years past, the district and unions negotiated salaries and benefits, such as the retiree health benefits, without a true understanding of the potential cost. The true actuarial costs were not understood and few anticipated the present recession. Now those benefits must be reevaluated. SCTA's budget cutting proposals are inadequate and unrealistic in relation to the size of the deficit. It must be willing to work with the district and community to do its share.

A continued unwillingness to modify some contractual agreements will result in district bankruptcy. With a school district bankruptcy, law dictates that all contractual agreements become null and void. This benefits no one. It is time for unions to become more of an advocate for children.

The superintendent has sought to create a program to improve educational quality. He cannot implement this program if he has to cut services to students such as the length of the school day or limit access to technology so desperately needed.

Conclusion

Superintendent Raymond has an enormous challenge of addressing an inherited accumulation of issues along with managing a fiscal crisis. The Sacramento County Grand Jury supports the superintendent's mission of improving student achievement and closing the budget shortfall. On the journey to these desired outcomes, the roadblocks of budget constraints will

