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Dysart's fiscal planning keeps budget balanced

DYSART SCHOOLS — As the Dysart School District moves into the second month of the 2009-10 school year, the district continues dealing with state budget unknowns that impact K-12 education. Dysart Unified School District, however, has been very vigilant and conservative and made adjustments that keep the district budget balanced with revenue and expenditures, even in light of state funding challenges.

As the state budget projections continued to indicate a decline in revenues, Dysart made budget adjustments, by working with the district staff, to identify areas that would result in savings but have less of an impact on direct instruction in our classrooms. Maintaining class size and staffing to meet school needs was a priority. Keeping highly qualified staff is essential to student success, thus, maintaining adequate funding for salaries is critical. Continuing support for special programs including our K-3 reading interventions, continuing our fine arts programs, providing extra curricular programs and continuing professional support for teachers is critical to providing a quality and comprehensive education for all students.

However, reducing a budget means cuts must be made somewhere. The Dysart District put budget savings initiatives in place for this school year including reductions in maintenance services, such as reducing the number of days per week for cleaning services. Dysart initiated efforts to save on utility costs which also support our green initiatives. The district is using technology to make the delivery of services more efficient while saving costs in supplies and staffing. Dysart has also frozen all capital spending, which includes technology and limiting the purchase of new resources including software and books.

Although there are other cost savings initiatives implemented, these examples indicate how the district is maintaining critical services to students by continuing its fiscal responsibility and relying on our committed staff to help ensure students come first. Any additional cuts to the district budget will have a very negative impact on the ability to maintain the educational services and commitment to district priorities. Dysart will, however, continue wisely using all resources provided through local tax initiatives and state funding to fulfill the commitment to educational excellence for students.