

# Why Redlands Unified created a budget cut prioritization list

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(REDLANDS) The Board of Education adopted a list outlining potential cuts should the Redlands Unified School District face a \$3 million shortfall next year.

The adoption of the General Fund Budget Reduction Prioritization List on April 25 puts the district a step ahead in case Gov. Jerry Brown's preliminary budget for 2017-18 is adopted in May. The budget allocates less funding for education due to lower-than-previously projected state revenues, and comes at a time when RUSD is facing an increase in yearly employer contributions to state employee retirement funds, and planned pay increases for educators.

"We have to have a plan in place," said Donna West, BOE president, after the plan was unanimously approved.

The district learned of the cut in funding in January, and if approved as-is RUSD will receive \$1.45 million in general funds for the upcoming school year, leaving the district with a \$3 million gap in 2017-18 and a forecasted \$4 million unfunded balance for 2018-19.

Instead of waiting for the budget's approval, the district decided to take proactive measures by using the same budget-reduction process used during the last economic downturn. Bernie Cavanagh, RUSD's assistant superintendent of business services, [told this news organization in March](#) the move was necessary to "maintain fiscal integrity."

Per the district, more than 70 items were submitted from stakeholders and reviewed to help create the plan. Input groups, composed of staff, community members and parents, participated in the process and used a list of criteria outlined by the school board when taking potential cuts into consideration. This included placing potential "operational" cuts at the top of the list and staying far away from the classrooms.

The district's list is a "prioritized list of approximately \$3 million that may be used in descending order as budget reductions are needed beginning July 2017," per a document provided by RUSD officials. [The list is composed of four levels](#). Sample cuts at level one include moving Orangewood High School to non-potable irrigation and increase facilities use charges. Other cuts include the replacing of old thermostats with new "controlled" thermostats (level 2), the reduction of the management team by two positions and classified team by six employees (level 3), and the elimination of non-required Special Education pre-school transportation (level 4).

The actual "cut line" will be determined following the state budget's approval later this month if necessary.