

At a recent School Board meeting, several Board members requested that it would be a good idea to ask the teachers for their input on helping the school district find ways to save money. CCEA took that challenge and surveyed our members by asking just one simple question: “How could the district best save money?” What follows is the consolidation of hundreds of teachers’ suggestions in Collier County. Most, but not all, of the repetitive suggestions have been omitted.

CCEA applauds the School Board’s request for this input. Decisions made at the Board or upper-administrative level oftentimes have unforeseen implications at the classroom level. Classroom teachers, therefore, frequently have the best vantage point to see the full ramifications of many of these decisions. The suggestions that follow are offered to help cut some possible superfluous costs so that the Board can better direct its limited resources to where they are needed most – educating our students.

The cost cutting ideas have been separated into three general categories. These include ways to save money in the areas of curriculum, physical plant, and administration. While some of the responses were general in nature, the majority focused on very specific ideas where money could be saved. As with all CCEA surveys, this is in no way a scientific project rather, this is a simple compilation of suggestions gathered from members who chose to respond to our simple query.

Many of our respondents took this very seriously. We hope you do too.

CCEA  
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## CURRICULUM

Teachers know their curriculum. It is the one area they feel they should be consulted when programs change or need updating.

### Communication:

- Please listen to us and don't make us feel that our concerns are not valid. We are glad to go above and beyond IF it is in the best interest of our kids.
- If the county would listen to the teachers when new initiatives are started it could save those lots of time and trouble. When teachers have concerns about new initiatives we often feel our opinions are inconsequential.

### Programs:

- Stop buying more programs we do not need and give us time to implement the programs we have.
- Testing must drive instruction but aren't we on overkill at this point? When do we teach?
- The fluency test for students in Read 180 is a waste of sub money. The Read 180 program already tests fluency.
- Benchmark tests- this was a HUGE waste of personnel and resources
- Stop jumping on the "educational bandwagon" every time a new program rolls around. We waste more money and resources in starting programs, purchasing supplies and implementing, only for those programs to fall by the wayside.
- The school system appears to always be switching "programs" so money is always being spent on new programs.
- Re-organize the ESE program to make it more effective and cost effective.
- Stop adding new programs. We have everything we need to teach well, all we need is the time to do it.
- Be more efficient in initiating costly programs.
- I think that we need to thoroughly research a program or activity before we ask teachers to implement it.

### Paperwork:

- E.S.O.L. in the elementary level needs to be revamped. We are paying for staff to do paperwork and not to work with students who need help.
- Duplicate or redundant paperwork (for example: IEP, AIP, ESOL plans - Why there are multiple plans for 1 student?)
- Eliminate most of the ESOL paperwork.

- Combine subject tests to one/two papers in a wrap up of the week.
- We need to eliminate AIPs as we differentiate anyway. We could also make interims shorter.
- Too many pages or "required info" on AIPs is being copied
- Not having to print AIPs for meetings, etc. Access on-line.
- ESE is expected to complete 8 progress reports/year on each student that is served and to make copies of each to be filed in the red audit file.
- Eliminate AIPs for ESE students who have IEPs which is a federal document and more legally binding.
- AIPs are redundant.
- Running records is a waste of paper because any teacher working with a reading group knows where the student is and why s/he is there.
- Some schools have to electronically submit guided reading lesson plans. That takes extra time each week to do that. Not all people do their plans on the computer so that is a time-taking task. It just seems if you do your plans and an administrator needs to see them they can come to the classroom to look at them instead of being turned in each week.
- Eliminate AIPs as per State Commission.
- In ESE, student progress reports on IEP goals are now generated 8 times yearly. With the Excent program, a self-contained student's IEP progress report can run as much as 20-30 pages, depending on how many goals/objectives are listed (especially for severely handicapped students).
- Revamp/streamline the teacher CTAS/evaluation program.
- Buy workbooks that are consumable each year instead of all the copy paper and copy machine cost.
- Writing IEPs and doing ESE progress reports take a lot of time to write and a lot of paper to print.
- Have paraprofessionals log the ESE encounter logs from data provided to them by therapists & allow professionals more time for instruction & planning.
- We have double paperwork, putting it on paper and in the computer.
- Have students save their work under their student user ID on the network. Instead of making copies of handouts, teachers could post the handouts in a folder on the network for students to access.
- One way to save money on paper is to stop making teachers print out interims for every student.
- AIPs are another paper wasting and time consuming aspect of teaching.

- We are now issuing interims for each student. This takes an extra 2 hours each quarter. We are also required to document behaviors repeatedly and it takes four pieces of paper to send a student to ISS.... time away from teaching.

### Technology/New Equipment:

- Constant replacement of perfectly good computer equipment.
- This District wastes money on technology. New equipment is purchased at great expense, and it sits. Also, the District buys junk. Instead of investing money in solid, lasting equipment, the District chooses equipment that breaks down easily.
- We would save money and countless teacher hours if we had computer programs that shared information.
- Stop buying technology that lasts a few years and then it is replaced.
- Stop buying all this technology when our kids aren't even at the basic academic level to utilize it. I would rather have another person in here helping with tutoring low students.
- Stop providing us with new computers so frequently.
- It's great to have 6 new computers in every classroom, but it doesn't accomplish a whole lot if a student still can't write in complete sentences or do basic math.
- I often see a lot of money being spent on technology (laptops, new programs, etc.), and then see it collect dust.
- Before purchasing more technology and claiming bragging rights for the technology department, perhaps you should get a feel for the amount of technology that can be utilized during the course of a day while teachers are trying to teach!
- Why did I need a new computer? I had never had any problems with the old computer and it handled every program I needed. Could we extend the replacement time? (I am not in a classroom but in an office.)
- Cut back on technology- it is costing a fortune!
- We are well equipped now, and if we maintain our hardware, we should be fine for a while.
- Stop spending money on more software and put it in to human resources. I would really like to be trained in the district's curriculum in core content areas before I am told to use another computer program that I don't have time to use.
- Re-vamp Data Warehouse.
- Online testing availability would save time for the teacher, as the computer grades the tests, and it would save money, not only for copies, but also for Scantrons.
- I think that we will save money since we have document cameras.
- When purchasing and distributing technology, the District needs to consider how much it improves the ability for students to learn to read.

### Time:

- Interim required on every student every marking period; we are now basically doing 2 report cards per marking period.
- Reduce to quarterly the requirement to run records.
- No need for pupil progression in elementary school for third grade because students are identified as in danger of retention on each report card and interim.
- Have nine hours per day, four days per week. Save energy on Fridays.

### In-Service:

- In-service days could be reduced and money could be saved on outside speakers.
- In this county we have a habit of renaming old concepts and then having a big workshop, or focus on it—which ends up bringing in consultants and costing lots of \$\$\$\$. Look in house first.
- In service programs that waste everyone's time because they are poorly done or irrelevant for the majority present.
- Focus money on training teachers, not “stuff”.

### Materials:

- Inventory and turn in all books and equipment each year.
- Do not replace perfectly good textbooks so often. It takes several years of using a text to fully utilize it.
- Many new textbooks and a vast number of components were ordered that are not being used.
- Buy workbooks so things don't need to be copied.
- Does kinder really need 5 computers in a room? Do primary children need them other than tech lab? Why buy programs that we have no time to utilize?
- Stop changing curriculum each year. For example, it was a waste of paper and time this year administering the Benchmark tests.
- Require students to pay for text books and graphing calculators that are lost or damaged.
- Unused equipment should be surplus while it can still be used.
- Stop storing 20 year old text books.
- Textbook adoption: Isn't it possible to extend the adoption deadline for textbooks to 6-8 years instead of 5?
- Extend the time that text books are used before new ones are adopted.
- Text book adoption is too frequent. Teachers are not able to utilize all of the material due to so many subject areas.
- I don't believe we have to have a new Science and Social Studies book in Kdgn.

- Textbooks which are not appropriate for our students are forced on us.
- Many items are ordered for classrooms by people who have not been there in years--- items are expensive and teachers of that curriculum should have input.
- Stop buying new text books so often! I still have copies of math books that were purchased more than 10 years ago, as well as some purchased over 5 years ago. Now I have some purchased 3 years ago! Enough.
- Introduce teachers to materials and equipment under consideration, and ask if we intend to use them.
- The math quarterly tests are a waste of time and paper.

#### Field Trips:

- Reward students by letting them play creative non-competitive or competitive games, inside or out. Build instructional and learning into the activities implicitly, develop team work skills, etc. Discontinue reward field trips
- Field trips need to have instructional benefit and value, not just as a reward, because they create a disturbance in the school, they cost more money than more effective rewards.
- Students need to develop the ability to perceive achievement and accomplishment as self gratifying, to be pursued throughout life for internal gratification. This is not easily learned, it takes years, and the reward field trips negate it.

#### Other:

- It is expensive labor to use teachers for sometimes 30 minutes per day to stand duty at the bus loop etc.

## **PHYSICAL PLANT**

#### Energy:

- Adjusting the temperature warmer by only two degrees would result in a savings.
- Stop chilling the buildings to sub-comfortable levels.
- Regulate the air conditioning correctly.
- The building temperatures could be monitored at a higher temperature
- Have air conditioning regulated better.
- Go to a 4 day school week with longer days- cuts transportation- energy bill.
- Adjust thermometers.
- Air conditioner controls should be set by the teacher.
- Eliminate the freezing temperatures in some rooms and never have the heat on.
- Moderate the temperatures in the school buildings more closely.

- Providing positive ventilation into the classrooms to enhance the air quality. (Save money by reducing the days teachers are out sick due to poor air quality.)
- Increase the size of the air-handlers in the classrooms to enhance the air quality and provide quality air flow.
- Turn off outside lighting during the day.
- Teachers shouldn't turn student computers on every day until they are needed.
- Let us adjust the air conditioning in our classroom.
- Create a competition among schools to see who can save the most electricity and base it on % saved.

#### Facilities Use:

- Even if it is another pot of money, whose idea or decision was it to build a portable city behind VES so classes could be housed during re-roofing? This must have cost a million dollars or more! The roof is being replaced on the weekends! Most of these portables will not ever be used.
- Portables were brought into Vineyards Elementary to be used when they fixed the roof. The roof is fixed and no students set foot into the portables.
- Old equipment is not being sold. It is being shipped to an area to rot.

#### Transportation:

- Stop busing students to a school that is farther away from their house than an existing school.
- With fuel cost the way it is, there is no reason to have students bused to a school that is not the closest school to which they live. For example, at GGHS, students right across 951 are bused to GCHS.
- In order to save money, rezone for bussing and portable reasons. Have an outside consultant look at zoning to eliminate political bias and only look at cost effectiveness.
- Why transport 5-7 students on a 60 passenger bus when a small bus/van could save?
- Be smarter about zoning. There are kids that live 2 miles from Golden Gate High School, but are bused 10 miles to Gulf Coast. With the rising cost of fuel, zoning shouldn't be political, but done by distance to schools.

#### Materials

- Stop ordering or buying equipment to put in new schools that the teachers or coaches will not use.

## Calendar

- The quickest way to save money is to look at the calendar. Our buildings are operational many more days than more effective schools across the country. Half days are useless in terms of instruction, and many dollars could be saved by not "running the buses" on those days. If you want teachers to be in-serviced, then have a full day set aside.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### Administrative Positions (MLK):

The majority of responses called for cuts at the upper administrative level. Collier County has a ratio of one administrator for every 12.17 teachers. The state average is 1:14.79. The average of similar sized counties is 1:14.08 (Clay, Escambia, Lake, Leon, Marion, Okaloosa, Osceola, Sarasota and St. Lucie).

- The Education Channel is a big waste of money.
- Eliminate some of the top layer of bureaucrats.
- The first step should be to look at the number of employees at the ad center. The number of administrators and teachers on special assignment is mind boggling.
- More hands-on positions are needed for actually working with students.
- Study the job responsibilities at the Ad Center. Previous audits have shown CCPS to be top heavy. Consider consolidating positions where possible.
- Some top administrator jobs could be consolidated to save money.
- Do we really need all that testing data on Data Warehouse to be changed and manipulated weekly into all these graphs and fancy reports?
- Too many people at the top and not enough people in the classrooms?

### School Administration

- Too many "extra people" not in classroom teaching positions; classroom teachers are overworked while these people leave each day without "homework".
- Eliminate ESPS (Elementary School Program Specialists).
- Eliminate Deans in elementary schools with Assistant Principals.

### Communication:

- The administrators would save themselves and the districts money if they would just communicate with the teachers who are doing the work instead of dictating all the time what we should do.
- Decisions are too “top down” when the people making the decisions are not faced with the decisions they make until it is too late.
- CCPS should seek teacher input before initiating programs.

### Paperwork/Programs:

- I would like to see someone gather data as to the exact amount (in dollars and cents) that is spent on the education channel.
- They could find a source in the community that would provide paper used on one side only. Recycle
- Have referrals and detentions done electronically!
- The amount of useless paper that comes down “from above” needs to be filtered or emailed.
- Stop the materials printed on elaborate paper being sent out from various offices in the Ad Center.
- To be blunt, AIPs at the high school level are useless.
- Do away with the multiple copy leave forms. They are incredibly expensive.

### Health Insurance:

- Health insurance: Shop coverage for all county employees (sheriff, county office, parks and recreation, library us to Blue Cross or whomever). Save on self insured costs and lower our premiums for families. No reason not to partner with these county agencies who are also struggling to keep people here.
- Offer to buy out sick days every so often at a reduced rate instead of waiting for everyone to cash out at the highest rate at retirement.

### Administrative/Board Salaries

- Freeze administrative salaries until instructional and non-instructional staff salaries “catch up” proportionally with pay according to work load.
- Give superintendent the same benefits as teachers upon retirement.
- Every school board member, CCPS Ad. Center administrator, and other qualified personnel (such as principals) should sub at least 3 times a year in our schools at no cost to the school system.
- Make School Board positions voluntary instead of paid.