

# Teacher contract talks

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## Q&A

Here are answers to two questions we've been asked this week.

### **What would you have to do to free up enough money to pay the teachers what they're asking for?**

Since 83% of the district's budget is dedicated to employee salaries and benefits, this is the only area where there would be wiggle room. The remaining 17% goes to fixed costs and other necessities such as transportation, facilities maintenance, custodial services, utilities, school budgets, textbooks, student workbooks and other curriculum materials.

We have already reduced next year's expenditures by \$4.8 million in order to start rebuilding our Reserve Fund, which is now at an all-time low of about 2% of our total budget. To achieve this reduction, we had to eliminate 34 teaching positions, 10 administrative positions and 20 support staff positions. The School Board approved the budget reduction plan on March 18, after having studied the options and heard staff and parent feedback over a nine-week period. (PowerPoint on budget issue available)

To meet the union's three-year salary requests, we would need to make significant additional reductions in staff in all categories, an action that would have a grave impact on our schools.

### **How do Bellevue's central office administrative costs compare to other districts' costs?**

The state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction published information on its website on August 25, 2008 showing that Bellevue's 2006-07 "Central Administration" costs of 6% of the total budget were below some neighboring districts' -- Mercer Island (9%) and Seattle (9%) -- and on a par with districts of Issaquah (5%); Lake Washington (5%); and Northshore (6%). This was before we made reductions of \$1 million in administrative costs for 2008-09.