

# Boulder Valley School District seeks outside budget help

## 'Budget advisory committee' will advise on school cuts

By **Vanessa Miller**, Camera Staff Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:01/23/2010 05:51:06 PM MST

### Budget Advisory Committee members

Don Stensrud, principal of Fairview High School

Scott Randall, town manager of Superior

Jennifer Hoffman, assistant to the city and county manager for the City and County of Broomfield

Jane Brautigam, city manager for Boulder

Heather Balsler, deputy city manager for Louisville

Chris Cameron, Lafayette mayor

Erika Smith, budget director for the University of Colorado at Boulder

Melissa Tingley, president of the Boulder Valley Education Association

Paula Miller, co-president of the Boulder Valley Educational Office Professionals

Debi Depinto, co-president for the Boulder Valley Paraeducators Association

Lexi Kermani, president of the Boulder Valley Classified Education Association

Michelle Krezek, intergovernmental affairs director for Boulder County Government

Teegan Sheanin, chair person for the District Accountability Committee

John Greff for Impact on Education

Tron Welch, co-chair for the

After poring through dozens of applications, Boulder Valley School District Superintendent Chris King has selected the 30 civic leaders, school district officials and community members who will help his staff develop one of the tightest annual operating budgets in years.

The list of members named to the district's first-ever "budget advisory committee" include city managers, a mayor, the University of Colorado's budget director, the presidents of the district's employee unions and a former president of a major manufacturing company.

"I think the different parts of the community have different needs, and I'm very excited that they're doing this," said Lafayette Mayor Chris Cameron, who is serving on the committee. "This is going to give decision makers a varied perspective."

The goal of the district committee is to provide Boulder Valley budget coordinators with input, ideas, strategies and concerns regarding their annual budgets. Members will discuss short- and long-term budget planning, and they'll problem-solve complex fiscal issues facing the district -- advising King on administrative issues as well.

Although the group's most immediate concern is this year's daunting budget, the committee is intended to be a long-term fixture.

"This is not just a group that is forming in a budget crisis," King said. "I see this as a long-term group that we will have together in good times and in bad times to help make better financial decisions."

Make no mistake, however, this year's budget is a crisis, King said.

"The immediate and more urgent and pressing issue is building a budget for the 2010-2011 school year," he said. "There are a lot of unknowns, and we're still getting news out of the Capitol that changes things."

Facing an expected \$1 billion shortfall in next year's state budget, Gov. Bill Ritter submitted a proposal in November calling for \$260 million in cuts to education spending. The plan could mean a cut for Boulder Valley of up to \$20 million, King said.

"It's a moving target, and we're looking at numbers of between \$14 (million) and \$20 million," he said. "But there are definitely scenarios that could put it closer to \$20 million."

The budget advisory committee met for the first time Jan. 6 to have an organizational discussion. They'll meet again Wednesday to talk about enrollment projections, and they might start talking about the process for making cuts, King said.

"We are going to look at every aspect of our programming," he said.

The group, according to King, has enough financial "heavy hitters" to help the district make wise moves in tough times.

"We were definitely looking for people who have some experience in long-range planning for large organizations," King said. "Some of them have gone through similar problems and have similar perspectives about how to solve them. That helps us think outside the box."

The total group membership includes 15 "at large" members from local businesses, civic organizations, non-profit organizations, parents and other interested community members.

District Parent Council

Robert Abeyta, an at-large member from Broomfield

Paul Atcheson, an at-large member from Gunbarrel

Wendy Fiedler, an at-large member from Broomfield

Kathleen Gebhardt, an at-large member from south Boulder

Paul Gross, an at-large member from central Boulder

Karen Herz, an at-large member from east Boulder

Julie Maier, an at-large member from north Boulder

Richard Morgan, an at-large member from Louisville

Andrew Muckle, an at-large member from Superior

Jim Pollicita, an at-large member from Louisville

Liz Ryan, an at-large member from south Boulder

Brian Schuller, an at-large member from Gold Hill

Cathy Shoenfeld, an at-large member from central Boulder

Robert Smartt, an at-large member from east Boulder

Tom Ward, an at-large member from east Boulder

*Source: Boulder Valley School District*

The 15 "standing members" come from local governments, higher education institutes and district employee associations.

Scott Randall, town manager for Superior and budget advisory committee member, said he likes that Boulder Valley is soliciting input to solve complex budget problems. He said, for example, that municipalities can provide unique insight into enrollment projections because of their experience predicting housing vacancy rates.

"We are familiar with housing starts and vacancy rates and the comings and going in our community, so we as a municipality have guidance that we can provide," Randall said.

Louisville deputy city manager Heather Balsler said her community has been dealing with budget cuts for years.

"So we know how to look at these kinds of things," she said. "The entire district is going to feel some effect from whatever comes from these big cuts, so any chance we have to be involved in assisting -- we're happy to be there."

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