**From:** Merklein, Trip [CO]
**Sent:** Friday, December 16, 2011 12:26 PM
**Cc:** Burkett, Kay [CO]; Docherty, Fran [CO]
**Subject:** Member Update 12/16/11

We are finally just hours away from a well-earned break! I hesitate to send this now but the information is important. The troubling news of the first topic is tempered by the last one.

**Board of Ed “Budget Work Session”  Wednesday, 12/14/2011** Thanks to the approximately two dozen SVVEA Members, ARs and Board Directors who came to the Board of Education’s Budget Work Session on Wednesday evening to become better informed, firsthand, about the status of the district’s budget. Personally, I was disappointed with the Board’s conversation about their budget priorities for 2012-13 and beyond. It appeared that SVVEA’s presence may have caused the Board to beat around the budget bush for an hour and forty minutes; I have heard many more pointed discussions about the harsh budget realities in regular Board meetings. I believe they’ll have more difficult conversations at a future time less accessible to teachers (i.e. during the workday), but the process will continue to be closely monitored by SVVEA leadership and your Negotiation Team.

There was little conversation about compensation, or in-depth discussion about the workload demands on our time, but there was at least some reference to “no new initiatives,” though that concept remains to be fleshed out and codified. Perhaps the most relevant conversation revolved around returning to the community for another mill levy override. With the continuing impact of dramatic state funding cuts, are the citizens of St. Vrain Valley willing to continue to support the direction taken by this Board since the passage of the 2008 MLO? If not, what are the program cuts that must be made?

Related news articles:

* Here’s the Times-Call’s take on the budget work session  [SVVSD additional cuts for 2012-13](http://www.timescall.com/news/longmont-schools/ci_19558671)  Superintendent Haddad states, “Everybody’s picking up more and more. People are taking on enormous amounts of work.” We can all agree with that - we experience it daily. Board President John Creighton observes, “A permanent pay freeze isn’t a sustainable strategy.” Unequivocally, he is absolutely right. Some significant change *must* occur soon. The human capital of the district is its most important resource.
* [SVVSD notified of immediate funding cut](http://www.timescall.com/news/longmont-local-news/ci_19550179?source=pkg)  addresses the impact of the state’s announcement Wednesday of decreasing funding for enrollment growth for this year, for the time being. This persistent bad budget news may be alleviated somewhat by the fact that the state may reverse course and increase the current year’s funding by tapping a reserve fund of $67.5 million set aside by last year’s legislative session for the purpose of increased enrollment. We’ll know more when the state legislature meets in January.

SVVEA leadership is committed to staying closely involved in their budget process and encourage you to do the same. Scaling back new initiatives, attaining a realistic workload, reducing unsustainable demands on teachers’ time, and appropriate compensation remain our goals. We must be a district that prioritizes what really matters most to students:  people, not programs.

I encourage you to take several minutes to view my response to the Board’s Work Session at [SVVEA President's Address to BOE 12.14.11](http://www.stvrain.k12.co.us/boardOfEducation/meetingsMinutes/2011/12/14/index.php#video)  (It takes a moment to load and then can be forwarded to minute 04:00; it ends at minute 12:00). The CDE standards implementation referenced is found at [CDE Standards Implementation Time Line](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sitoolkit/index.htm). It looks as if SVVSD is two years ahead of CDE expectations. That’s a district decision, not a state mandate, and a good place to look for rolling back “new initiatives.”

**Congratulations to SVVEA Special Education Members: Student Services Reaches 100% Compliance with CDE**   It’s a bit perplexing that there has been no official announcement, but Student Services Director Jackie Whittington indicated at the Superintendent’s Cabinet on 12/13 that our Special Education teachers and specialists have reached 100% compliance with CDE standards, up from 7% just a few years ago. They are deserving of special District recognition for their extraordinary efforts that have not been without considerable personal cost in many cases. SVVEA commends their exceptional accomplishment.

**Wishing you all peace, joy and happiness throughout the holiday season!**

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