

Below is a statement from superintendent Dr. Dain Butler - both sent to ABSS staff on Friday evening, February 2, and issued as a statement to the press a few minutes later:

Below is a statement that summarizes my recommendations to the Board of Education regarding a Reduction in Force. [I am hopeful that this will clarify any confusion, rumors, and inaccuracies. Sentence included in statement to staff, but not in press statement.] I am hopeful that this will clarify any confusion, rumors, and inaccuracies. This recommendation will be presented to the Board on Tuesday, February 13.

These decisions are never easy. Unfortunately, they are necessary at this time. I appreciate your understanding and support as we attempt to stabilize our budget. We will make every effort to assist employees and treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Dain Butler, Ed.D.

ABSS Potential Reduction In Force Statement: FEB 2, 2024

Quick Summary of Potential Separations

5 out of 57 Assistant Principal positions

6 out of 30 Social Workers

5 out of 30 Nurses

6 out of 6 (Part-Time) Middle School Office Support

2 out of 2 Elementary Drama Teachers

Total: 24

Quick Summary of Potential Staff with Reduced Months of Employment:

1 out of 6 Bus Coordinator

2 out of 10 High School Online Facilitators

7 out of 20 Lead EC and Student Services Staff

5 out of 57 Assistant Principals

14 out of 55 Counselors

1 out of 30 Nurses

Total: 30

Grand Total: 54 people impacted out of 2870 total employees, which is 1.9% of total staff.

We feel it is necessary to update the community on the potential Reduction In Force (RIF) plan that the Board of Education will review on Feb 13, 2024. We waited to release these numbers until Human Resources notified all impacted employees in person.

Last May, the Superintendent recommended and the Board approved \$7.5 million in cuts aimed largely at Central Services as an initial attempt to control spending and restore our fund balance while limiting classroom impacts.

On November 30, 2023, our Board of Education made an urgent plea during a media conference at Cummings High School for a greater investment in public education.

Board Chair Sandy Ellington Graves stated, "We are in a financial crisis." She warned of the District's financial challenges: "Now we face unimaginable choices, cutting resources, cutting programs, and potentially cutting staff."

The audit results shared in November also revealed a dangerously low fund balance/savings account caused by years of overspending that promoted an immediate hiring freeze.

For the past few years, ABSS has used more than \$2 million annually to balance the District's budget.

The numerous reductions made since last year have not gone far enough to sustain ABSS going forward. Over the past few months, District leadership has reviewed the budget line by line to determine the next steps. Before impacted employees were notified in anticipation of the February 13 work session, board members were also made aware.

Additionally, the District is looking at a potential reduction to elementary and middle school specialty programs (Leader in Me, A+ Arts, Spanish Immersion) currently being offered. More specific information will be shared at the work session.

Protecting classroom teaching positions remains our priority. Factors include years of overspending beyond state allowances, continuing to pay staff hired with temporary ESSER funds no longer available, and overstaffing at some schools.

While there may be questions about how the recent mold remediation impacted these budget decisions, those costs were covered separately through our capital budget and did not affect the areas addressed in this RIF plan.

These are challenging economic times requiring difficult decisions as we uphold our commitment to students. This plan will ensure that we remain financially stable through the end of this fiscal year.

We appreciate the community's understanding during these continued tough times.

We have a meeting scheduled with our state delegation on Thursday, Feb. 8, ahead of our work session on Tuesday, February 13. [Editor's note: According to an announcement from the Alamance County commissioners, they are also to be included in a 2:30 p.m. meeting with state legislators and ABSS school board.]