

April 4, W. Aurora lays out staff cuts

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AURORA – More than 120 West Aurora school district staff members could lose their jobs if the upcoming referendum fails.

On Tuesday, reduction-in-force notification letters were sent to 128 staff members, including 44 nontenured teachers. Custodians, teacher's aides, and bus monitors were among the other staff members who received notices.

Along with staff members being let go for performance and efficiency reasons, the district also is considering cuts if the referendum doesn't pass.

“We've got some very good teachers who unfortunately received notices,” said Chris Crouch, the district's assistant superintendent for human resources. “We are hoping to bring back as many as possible.”

The state deadline that requires school districts to notify teachers – the district has 845 – of their job status falls before Election Day.

Certified teachers must be told no later than 45 days before the end of the school year, and 60 days for other staff members, district spokesman Mike Chapin said.

Officials said the district would have to make \$4.2 million in cuts this year if voters do not approve the referendum, with an additional \$2 million in cuts next year.

The school district recently announced the elimination of seven positions, including five administrator positions, to help shore up its finances.

The latest moves follow seven cuts made last year that altogether saved the district more than \$1 million.

The district projected a \$1.9 million deficit for its fiscal 2006-07, and said operating deficits would continue unless the referendum was approved.

Board members approved the budget in June.

A 50-cent tax increase would boost the district's operational tax rate to \$3.53 per \$100 of assessed valuation from its current \$3.03 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

The question is on the April 17 election ballot.

The owner of a \$100,000 home would pay an additional \$167 next year in taxes if the referendum was approved.

As proposed, the operational tax rate would remain at \$3.53 through 2010.