



## Menasha schools face \$1.7 million deficit

By **Michael King** • Post-Crescent staff writer •  
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MENASHA — **Financial** uncertainty at the state level could lead to a worst-case scenario of a \$1.7 million deficit and more staff layoffs in the 2011-12 school budget.

Supt. Bob Kobylski told the Board of Education on Monday night that the projected shortfall could mean layoffs of 16 to 26 full-time equivalent positions next year.

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"We are going to be faced with some tough decisions," Kobylski said.

All positions — from administrators, teachers, paraprofessional and support staff — face potential layoff, he said. "I'm not suggesting that these are just teaching positions. Across the district we're looking at all the positions, looking for any opportunities for economies of scale and managing our operations more efficiently to help manage the budget deficit that we're projecting," Kobylski said.

The staffing plan for next year will be presented to the board at its Feb. 14 meeting.

"What's causing the concern for us at this particular juncture is the fact that there's so much uncertainty at the state level," Kobylski said.

"If we get a per pupil (state aid) increase then obviously that deficit is going to come down. But all the rhetoric that we're hearing from Madison is suggesting that we're not going to see a per pupil

increase and that's really going to affect the revenue side of our budget."

"We're also talking about program cuts of some kind," Kobylski said. But, based on the board's direction at a recent workshop, Kobylski said efforts will be made to try and "keep the cuts as far away from the classroom as possible."

Discussions will begin today with union leaders to lay out the challenges the district faces. Union contracts with over 400 teachers in the district expire June 30.

"That settlement will have a significant impact in terms of what that deficit will look like," Kobylski said.

In a related matter, the board approved a resolution supporting a fair funding plan being recommended by state Supt. Tony Evers. "It doesn't give our district more money but it gives our community more money," said board member Mark Mayer. "This is a fairer way for the state to distribute money."

A year ago, partial or full layoff notices totaled 22 full-time equivalent teaching positions, helping cover a \$1.5 million budget shortfall. By fall, 13 of the 33 affected teachers were recalled.

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