

## CARLSBAD: Carlsbad Unified School District will ask employees to take pay cut

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[Carlsbad Unified School District](#) officials say they plan to ask employees to take a pay cut next year to help balance the district's budget.

It's too early to know how much pay employees will be asked to give up, but in light of the budget outlook from the state, each employee's salary and benefits would be cut by 20 percent to balance next year's budget, Superintendent John Roach said last week.

Teachers in Carlsbad are willing to take a pay cut, but they want to make sure that it's really needed, said Sally Estep, president of the [Carlsbad Unified Teachers Association](#).

"As of right now, the district is financially solvent," she said. "We would never want them to be in financial dire straits; so of course, we would go in and take cuts that are necessary ---- not Draconian, but necessary."

A lot could change between now and when the school board approves the district budget in June, but so far, it looks as though the district could have a shortfall of nearly \$11 million next year, Roach said.

That number is based on the district's revenue and expenses this year, assuming they'll be similar in 2012-13, said Devon Vodicka, assistant superintendent in charge of business services for the district.

This year, district officials expect to bring in about \$71 million and spend roughly \$82 million. The district has enough in reserves to cover the difference this year, but won't have enough next year, Vodicka said.

Over the last four years, revenue has declined in the district from \$89 million in 2008-09 to \$83 million last year and the projected \$71 million this year.

Because the district has already increased class sizes, eliminated positions and earmarked most of its savings, balancing the budget could require drastic spending cuts next year, he said.

Schools could get more money next year if property taxes increase or federal lawmakers pass a proposed jobs bill. However, budget cuts at the state level could lower revenue further.

In December, school officials need to present a preliminary spending plan to the county for the 2012-13 school year.

District officials said last week that they plan to meet soon with leaders from the district's two employee unions to figure out how to reduce spending.

"What we want to find out from our employees is how they want to go about doing this," Roach said.

The teachers union wants to survey its 550 members to get their thoughts on how to proceed, as well as let them know more about the district's budget before heading to the bargaining table, Estep said.

Any salary cuts would include teachers, support staff and administrators, Roach said.

The Carlsbad Unified school board will discuss cost-cutting measures at their next meeting, which is scheduled to start at 6 p.m. Wednesday at City Hall, 1200 Carlsbad Village Drive.

Several other North County school districts ---- including Oceanside Unified and Vista Unified ---- have already negotiated temporary pay cuts for employees.