

back on track

Students and teachers feel the cuts made in the budget after failure of November 2010 levy

350,000 62,000
5.8 MILLION
 24,000 150,000
IN TOTAL COST REDUCTION
 300,000 75,000

Another area of budget cuts that affected students was the new pay to play policy, where student athletes pay a fee to play sports -- \$100 for middle school and \$150 for high school--according to Mason High School Athletic director, Scott Stemple.

Stemple said that because the fee is new to the district, the effect is not completely clear yet.

"Being that this is Mason's first year to have a fee, there are some unknowns," Stemple said. "We are not sure at this time what type of impact the fee may have on participation levels, especially in multi-sport participation. Potentially, it could range from \$200,000 to \$275,000."

Zaki said that she thinks that the pay to play may effect student participation, holding back some athletes that may possess great talent.

"Some people have a great gift, but maybe they don't have the money to be able to [play]," Zaki said.

Another cut that affect's student's high school experience is larger class sizes at MHS. According to Broaddrick, with the increase in class size comes a challenge to keep control and management throughout the classroom.

"[Larger class sizes] bring more chaos into the classroom just because you have so many more people; it can be much harder to get through question and answer time," Broaddrick said.

Not only does it get harder for teachers to answer questions, but the amount of grading increases as well, according to Broaddrick.

"[Larger classes] increase the amount of grading, because I have the same number of classes, but I have a lot more students, so it takes longer to get through grading," Broaddrick said.

With these challenges, Zaki said that it just makes it harder for students and teachers to work together.

"I think class sizes have been increased a lot more," Zaki said. "It makes it definitely a lot harder for the teachers, and for the students to be able to get help as well. You can't get as much one-on-one time [with teachers.]"

Another area where the Board made cuts is in staffing throughout Mason.

"Our biggest area of expense is staff and, unfortunately, that's where we found we needed to make the most cuts this time around when the... levy failed in November," Delp said.

As a district, there was a RIF (reduction in force) of ten teachers, six administrators, 14 paraprofessionals and six custodial/maintenance cuts, according to the 2011 Financial Update.

However, since the RIF, the board offered the positions back if the teachers wanted them and nine new teachers were brought to the district. 28 teachers took a retirement incentive in the district as well, according to Mason's "Cost

Reduction Plan."

Another cut teachers faced was a pay freeze that they offered to take, according to Delp, which has now been put in place.

"One of the things that has happened... is the teachers offered to take a two year zero-increase," Delp said. "[Which means] two years without an increase in their contract."

Teachers also take on the task of being more "green," according to Broaddrick, in order to cut costs.

"We get e-mails a lot about [reminding us,] don't forget to unplug things before you leave, turn off your lights, close your blinds, even adjusting the printers," Broaddrick said.

As the district heads deeper into the 2011 school year, Delp said that the main goal for the district and the board is to keep the budget steady through the year.

"[We need to] watch the budget and make sure we've stayed on budget, [and] that we don't kind of get lax about that," Delp said.

With all of the cuts, the board has been pleased with the cooperation with administration and equates that to the success of the district finances, according to Delp.

"[The board has] been very pleased with the way the administration has kind of jumped on board and made the changes that we've needed to make [as a district]," Delp said.