



600 N. Lombard St., Wilmington, DE 19801  
Phone: 302-552-2610  
e-mail: laphamw@christina.k12.de.us

Wendy Lapham  
Public Information Officer

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 11, 2006

**CONTACT**

Wendy Lapham, Public Information Officer, Christina School District, 302-552-2610

**Christina Board Approves Recommendation  
to Proceed with Reduction in Force**

**Teachers Must be Notified by May 15**

*Wilmington, DE* - The Christina School District Board of Education met in special session on May 10 to review recommendations that would address the District's budget situation. The District has received a loan from the State of Delaware to address its immediate payroll obligations and help close its \$13.9 million budget deficit for this fiscal year. However, the District must reduce costs significantly in order to avoid a budget shortfall in FY07.

A significant portion of the District's operating budget is in the area of personnel. Delaware State Code 16:2 Section 1410 states that teachers must be given notice of layoffs in writing on or before May 15<sup>th</sup>. This requirement is also part of the current teacher's contract between the Christina Education Association and the Christina School District.

The Christina Board reviewed information that proposed staff reductions in virtually all areas of the district. However, there was an immediate need to address any reductions in force (RIF) that would affect teaching positions, because of the May 15 deadline for notification, and the board approved a recommendation that would satisfy that notification requirement.

The Board voted unanimously to accept the following recommendation by Dr. Lowery: "It is recommended that staff proceed with a reduction in force in compliance with stated Delaware Code and collective bargaining units' contractual language."

The reductions include a total of 75 teaching positions. Teachers affected by these cuts were notified by staff in person today, and will also receive official notification by mail.

(more)

Decisions are based on the seniority list published each year in accordance with the teachers' contract. If positions are reinstated, the district will follow specific RIF guidelines for rehiring.

“We do not want to give the impression that we are singling out teachers in this process,” said Superintendent Lowery. “The decision to announce these cuts now was driven by the May 15 deadline. There will be additional cuts in all areas of the district in both personnel and budgets. We are taking a particularly hard look at reducing non-instructional positions. The board will need to review those recommendations very soon.”

It is anticipated that additional cost savings will be gained by placing administrators currently working at the District office or on special assignment into positions in the schools. These placements reduce the number of new hires needed to fill vacancies, but are only made if the individual meets all certification requirements.

“Our objective is to be fair in our recommendation for staff reductions,” said Lowery. “We are working to reduce as much as possible on the administrative side, and will continue to develop plans to reduce and streamline administrative costs.”

Dr. Lowery also plans to align all the finance, procurement, and benefits functions under one department and strengthen reporting systems and financial accounting procedures. By recoding some positions to maximize existing state units, the District will see additional savings in local funds.

“We are undergoing a comprehensive look at all revenues and expenditures right now. Hopefully when the work is completed, we will be able to recall some teachers and minimize the impact to programs and employees.”

“We are going to have to rethink the way we are doing things now, and come up with some new strategies for meeting the same level of quality education for kids with fewer people,” Lowery said. “We will work in partnership with all of our collective bargaining groups to make sure that we are serving the needs of both our employees and our students.”