

Future

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on Title I and Title II and all the other funds. We have about 11 teachers affected by that."

Bietz said the other huge issue — the funding questions — the district faces did not go away because the opt-out failed.

"The proposals have been laid on the table," he said. "The deficit didn't go away. Unfortunately, we have to formulate a new plan and move forward with the resources we have. We know we do have some positions to fill because of resignations in positions that

were not cut. So, there will be advertisements. There will be positions to fill, just not as many as we would have liked."

Bietz said the motive behind the opt-out wasn't trying to pull something over on the community, it was reacting to something the school district felt was unfair from the state.

"Now we know where the community is at and we have to put together a plan," he said. "That is really what we want the state leaders to do: Put together a plan that we can respond to. A recession is one thing, but having the rug pulled out from under you changes the scope of how you can react."

Gertsema said that the district does not have a plan B at this

point in answering the shortfall in funding.

"I really don't know what the school board is going to do at this point," he said. "In the next couple weeks or month, the school board will have to decide what direction they would like to go. We are moving forward with the staff that is left after the cuts are made. We are getting ready for the 2011-2012 school year. I met with school administrators this morning and we are busy planning for the 2,700 kids that are going to walk in the door in August. That is all we can do right now."

Both Bietz and Gertsema said they appreciated that so many people of the community did turn out to cast their vote in the

election, even though the results were not what they had hoped for.

"I am grateful so many in the community had and interest in (the opt-out)," Gertsema said. "I think that speaks well for the people."

Bietz added: "The entire reason for having a vote is to let the people be heard. So in that respect, the turnout was good. To have ... over half the community show up to express their voice, now you know you have a true representation of where the community is at."

When reflecting on why they felt the opt-out failed, Bietz said he felt many people in the community believed that even if the opt-out did fail, the school would

still go on and the kids would still get a quality education.

"I don't think anyone disputes that," he said. "Even the teachers will tell you that the students will still get a quality education. But, it is going to be a whole lot harder to reach all of the kids when you have fewer teachers. Teachers will still teach; administrators will still be there to administer the schools; busses will still get the kids to and from school. There are just going to be fewer of each."

As far as the voting mechanics were concerned, Bietz said he did learn an important lesson in staging an election: not to combine districts 4 and 26.

"I think the election itself went very well, except for the lines at

Lincoln School," he said. "But we wanted to keep the process exactly like that of a school board election. So, that if someone knew where to vote for the school board, they would know where to go to vote for the opt-out. In retrospect, if we have another similar election, we will consider having a separate voting place out by the lake or maybe even having two election tables at Lincoln."

Much like the rest of the community, Gertsema said he breathed a sigh of relief that the election was over, regardless of the outcome.

"It is time to step back and take a look at where we are at, take a deep breath and think about something different," he said. "I think the entire community would echo those feelings."

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