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Schools

District Will Hire Literacy Chair After Saving On Bus Routes, Staffing

By making bus routes even more efficient than they were and realizing savings in staffing, the Ridgefield School District is now able to fill its need for a literacy department chair at the elementary school level.

By **Michael Gibney** | [Email the author](#) | August 24, 2011

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The bus system was masterfully efficient as it was - even the computers agreed.

But by tweaking routes just a bit more via an optimization study and advanced Edulog software, the Ridgefield School District found it could do with one less bus this year for a savings of about \$83 thousand (after the software costs), according to district business manager Paul Hendrickson.

With those funds now in place and around \$62 thousand saved by staying under budget in certified staffing for 2011-12, the Board of Education voted Monday night to hire a K-5 Literacy Department Chair for the coming school year.

The district made clear during April's budget season that the literacy chair had been identified as a need but the \$100-thousand-plus-benefits salary didn't fit into the funds approved by the Board of Finance.

And unlike last year, the district was able to meet budgeted staff-turnover projections, entering the new year without a deficit. Superintendent Deborah Low credited all three with providing the opportunity to fill the literacy position.

"The need has been there for a while," Low said. "I feel there's a door open here, an opportunity we need to take."

Currently, the literacy program is staffed by part-time outside consultants.

Low mentioned the newly adopted inter-state Common Core Standards Connecticut schools will need to meet by 2014-15 and said the literacy chair would play an important role in rising to those standards.

The bus-route savings came as good news to the district, and did so by a small margin.

The routing system formerly in place almost had the Edulog software at a loss for improvement, reported technology manager Josh Smith and transportation manager Rick Lupinacci, clearly proud of their prior work as well as the new savings.

Smith read from the Edulog draft report: "It is very unusual for us not to be able to find savings in any operation, but even with all out sophisticated optimizing tools, we were simply not able to find much room for improvement in this case. The current runs are efficient and well planned out."

But it turned out the software was able to find that one bus route to be eliminated.

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H Flag as inappropriate
3:46pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011
Let me get this straight, we take away German from incoming 6th graders in the middle schools due to lack of funds, saving us \$12,000, and as soon as a little money is found, we hire a \$100,000+ literacy chair. WHAT?

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John McNicholas Flag as inappropriate
11:46am on Thursday, August 25, 2011
Maybe I am a little slow on the uptake for this issue. Let's have all the parents of children in our district work with their children and help foster good literacy by encouraging reading and discouraging idle time. Maybe if the parents took some interest in the literacy of their children we could save another 100K plus teaching position. What does a literacy Chair do anyway? Supervise the reading teachers who are supposed to be teaching the children anyway? Sounds a little redundant doesn't it? Maybe the BOE should hire a math consultant because these numbers are a disgrace and dont add up for something parents should be doing anyway.

 **Sally Alexandroff** Flag as inappropriate
5:10pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011
Wonder which bus has been removed. Remember the chaos two years ago?

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renzo Flag as inappropriate
5:49pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011
BUS 10 and the parents are already complaining WOW WHO WOULD HAVE FIGURED

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renzo Flag as inappropriate
5:53pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011
Strange how the BOE takes credit for the savings. They had nothing to do with the routing or the bus that was CUT. Fascinating.

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WaitASec Flag as inappropriate
8:14pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011
I'm concerned the bus report said last year's bus routes were efficient and well planned out. The buses were late most every day at my child's elementary school. All you had to do was drive past the school 10 minutes after it officially let out to see the crowd of children still waiting on the sidewalk. The buses were late. Ask the parents. Ask the teachers. Ask the principals. How could this be called efficient? I shudder to think what will happen this year with one less bus.

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S Flag as inappropriate
8:24pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011
@renzo----schedule out??where can I find it??

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renzo Flag as inappropriate
8:33pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011
OK they already spent the savings on a new TEACHER. Not knowing if the bus they cut will even work. Also the late kids is a direct result of a 4 TEAR system that does not work. It was tried years ago and failed. So be it as it may the BOE is CLUELESS. And once again spending to much MONEY and not cutting. So what do they do THEY CUT THE BUSES. Which costs jobs and then they spend

the money on their PET PROGRAMS. Are you getting the message YET. These people have to be VOTED OUT. They are CLUELESS.

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ken dryden

Flag as inappropriate

8:34pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011

Sounds like the world's cushiest crony job.

[Log in to reply](#)

renzo

Flag as inappropriate

8:50pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011

What job are you talking about being CUSHY. The BOE or the Trans Supervisor. Both are pretty CUSHY. Please clarify!!

renzo

Flag as inappropriate

8:40pm on Wednesday, August 24, 2011

Basically 5 buses were cut in total counting last year. Each bus can hold either 66 or 71 KIDS. So do the math. It also creates a problem for the bus drivers. They get stuck in traffic and then try to make up the time OTHER WAYS??? Basically the BOE is cutting Transportation to the bone and they just don't get it. You need a good transportation system to get KIDS back and forth to home. They also have requirements over and above state regs on other aspects of the BUS SERVICE. If you think it was bad last year . You aint seen nothing YET!!!!!!

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