



Survival in a Down Economy: A Budget Reduction Process for Superintendents

By E. E. 'Gene' Davis, Jack A. Coffland

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Dramatic reductions in the dollars available for public education require a new and systemic approach to balancing school district budgets. This manual provides numerous examples of successful budget reduction strategies based on a six-step process that has demonstrated its effectiveness in small, medium, and large school districts. Supported by bargaining units and community leaders, the process described in this manual can enable the leadership of a district to plan its way through a financial crisis.

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Editorial Review

Review

These two authors are eminently qualified to give practical advice to school leaders. The recommendations come from a wealth of experience. I urge you to read these pages carefully and give credence to what the authors are saying. I have learned much from them and continue to marvel at their wisdom. Your time invested will be well rewarded. (Ivan W. Fitzwater, professor emeritus, Trinity University; AASA Distinguished Professor of the National Academy of School Executives)

School financing operations are challenging across the country. This manual has wisdom for leadership that is required to manage school resources and to improve student achievement?at the same time, balancing fiscal resources and accountability. As a chief financial officer, the advice on allocating resources during tough economic times is invaluable and will be used to assist our district in accomplishing our educational mission. (Guy G. Bellville, chief financial officer, Cherry Creek Schools, Colorado)

This manual is an easy-to-use, practical guide, which all superintendents in any size or type of school district would find extremely helpful as they deal with complex school district revenue shortfalls. The timely realistic case studies included of actual school funding problems superintendents face today illustrate well the six-step, district-wide process recommended. (Thomas A. Kersten, assistant professor of school finance, Educational Leadership Department, Roosevelt University; former superintendent, Skokie Pu)

I have been directly involved with school district finance for the last fourteen years. I have experienced both 'years of plenty' and 'years of drought.' The information contained in this manual provides the tools for a budget reduction to be conducted in an atmosphere of cooperation and trust. I was privileged to review a draft of the manual, and I used that information to make the budget decisions that have allowed our district to remain solvent. I highly recommend this manual, and I believe it should be a part of any superintendent's resource library. (Scott L. Crane, superintendent, Blackfoot School District 55, Idaho)

School district administrator Davis and educator and author Coffland have written a manual to help school district superintendents work with budget shortfalls and other financial challenges. A combination of text and worksheets, the book focuses on reducing budgets to match revenues and outlines how that task should be approached and the guiding principles for budget reduction recommendations. (*Book News, Inc.*)

In *Survival in a Down Economy: A Budget Reduction Process for Superintendents*, Gene Davis and Jack Coffland combine their experiences as school district leaders and as university professors to identify numerous elements of effective leadership that apply to budget building. Complete with examples of helpful worksheets, the authors explore sound policy-development and board-relationship strategies that are useful, regardless of economic conditions. Davis and Coffland thoughtfully suggest how superintendents can adapt processes and strategies to small, midsize or large school systems. Their work is based on a strong orientation toward shared decision making when resolving complex, difficult budget choices. (*School Administrator*)

About the Author

E. E. 'Gene' Davis has more than twenty years of experience leading school districts and fifteen years in higher education working with school districts to improve organizational effectiveness.

Jack A. Coffland has taught in public schools, led teacher training and leadership departments in higher

education, and served as a director of an accountability systems department serving 56 school districts. He has authored several books, five workbooks, and eleven software programs in the field of mathematics education.

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Juan Harrell:

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Richard King:

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