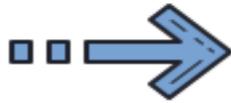


## Reframing Statements to Encourage More Creative and Positive Action

Scenario: A Superintendent discusses upcoming budget reductions in a leadership meeting.



DEFICIT FRAME	TO REFRAME THE CIRCUMSTANCES	POSITIVE FRAME
We are facing big budget cuts next year. Everyone is going to have to deal with it. Staff, students, and parents are going to be upset for lots of reasons. We are never going to make everyone happy. We just will have to make some hard decisions and power through.	<b><i>Speak in terms of the positive (what assets and strengths do we have to build on?) instead of talking about what we lack (expressing disapproval, sarcasm, cynicism).</i></b>	This team holds valuable, comprehensive knowledge about our district. We have a good track record of creative problem solving while respecting federal guidelines and boundaries. We have been successful in the past in identifying the short-term and long-term implications of our decisions. We are in this together; we have the expertise and we will figure it out together.
We need to make cuts due to the projected reduction in the per-pupil allowance. The state has told us to plan for \$500 or up to \$1000 cut per pupil. This reduction and the projected social distancing guidelines for reopening in the fall will put a huge strain on us. This will be a stressful time.	<b><i>Share and incorporate all relevant negative information in reframing the future we want to create.</i></b>	Our district is facing the same budgeting concerns as all districts in Michigan due to the impact of the Coronavirus on the economy. Our non-negotiables: reduce overall spending, follow the health and safety guidelines, and provide services to our students. How we make these financial and program decisions is up to us. It is too soon to know exactly how much the cuts will be so we need to plan for multiple scenarios.
With \$500 or \$1000 cuts to the per-pupil allowance, we will need to cut across the board.	<b><i>Seek others' perspectives instead of assuming the certainty of having the answer. Assume others have valuable information to share.</i></b>	What does your experience tell you about what we should do to educate students safely while still reducing our budget?
We will have to layoff teachers and paraprofessionals to make the budget work.	<b><i>Ask questions in order to explore all possible options.</i></b>	I value your experience and expertise. How can we safely provide services for students while reducing our budget?

Adapted from: Lee, S., Henderson, M., Whitaker, G “Positive Problem-Solving: How Appreciative Inquiry Works” ICMA Press, vol. 43, Number 3, 2011.