

CUTS/22 teachers could get temporary or per

lows the bitter taste of these losses, a second helping of hurt may soon be served.

As outlined in a memo sent to staff Monday afternoon, more layoffs could be coming.

Much more.

CATCH-22

The 4.13 full-time teacher and 3.5 support staff positions cut at Monday night's board meeting will save the district \$331,040 starting next year, which is within 1 percent of the \$334,801 needed to be removed to comply with state requirements.

The need for such cuts was created during the April 7 election, when a referendum to maintain classroom staff sizes was defeated after receiving only 43 percent support from voters.

Though Monday's vote resolved this issue, the district has a new problem.

It was announced over the weekend that Gov. Jim Doyle is proposing to cut school aid by 5 percent for the 2009-10 school year.

In addition, the proposal would prohibit school boards from raising local property taxes to recoup the cut state aid.

Upon hearing the news, Zimman and Ripon School District Business Manager Rick Ketter started examining options Monday morning to combat this dilemma.

Based on their findings, a memo was sent to staff Monday afternoon regarding 22 potential layoffs.

These would be in addition to the more than seven full-time equivalent positions already cut among teachers and support staff.

"Teacher layoffs at this time are recommended as a precautionary means of protecting the district's financial condition until we know for certain what the state will be doing

about school funding for 2009-10," Zimman wrote in the memo, adding "We cannot make any final decisions about staffing and budgets at this time. Layoffs allow us some flexibility to cut staffing within the parameters of the agreement between the board and the REA. Teachers may be recalled — partially or fully — from layoff as decisions are made in Madison."

The state budget needs to be finalized by June 30.

In response to the nearly two dozen layoffs recommended, Zimman said the choices had nothing to do with performance, but rather followed the agreement the district has with the Ripon Education Association (REA).

"It's a simple mathematical calculation of hiring dates and seniority and certification in accordance with the teachers' own contracts," Zimman said.

In response, Sue Mokler, REA co-leader, said she understands the suggested layoffs aren't unique to the Ripon school district — or anyone in the current economic climate — but she is concerned about the impact it would have in local classrooms.

"We understand that these are

being done because of the situation at the state level, that it is not a local, district decision — but who will be impacted is," Mokler said.

Thus, in order to salvage the quality of local education, Mokler said the REA will do its best to fight for the rights of those teachers being suggested for lay-offs.

"We are trying to proceed very carefully, because we know that we have the data and the research that says that classroom teachers are the most important piece of the education of a child," Mokler said, adding, "We want to be very, very careful to maintain the teacher-student ratio."

On the block

The 22 teachers told they might be laid off:

Mary Wagner
Kristan Boruch
Steve Brooks
Vicki Ermatinger
Jill Puhlmann-Becker
Erin Ermis
Janet Holba
David Wilkins
June Christianson
Ann Brumley
Linda Kinziger
Becki Baird
Kim Pruss
Noah Saecker
Kelly Esala
Linda Riegle
Kathryn Dreifuerst
Lisa Burdick
Melissa Palecek
Steve Hazell
Sherry Byng
Linda Fleschner

'KICK IN THE TEETH'

Mere hours after news of the 22 potential layoffs were announced, a crowded School Board meeting began with more than 30 minutes of passionate public comment, most