



## District 46 ready to talk finances with residents

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Grayslake Elementary District 46 will host a second community forum, this time exclusively focusing on finances.

Board members Wednesday night agreed to hold the informal session Sept. 8 at Grayslake Middle School, with a tentative start time of 6 p.m.

District 46 officials said the reason they wanted to have finance as the community forum topic is because the 2009-10 academic year budget is set for approval Sept. 23.

Board President Mary Garcia said the Sept. 8 event will allow the public to provide informed feedback before the budget becomes official.

"If it (the forum) were to take place after the budget hearing, the budget already would have been approved," District 46 board member Susan Facklam added.

About 80 residents attended the inaugural forum June 17 at Grayslake Middle School. Spending and other financial issues received most of the attention.

Many parents began pushing for the forum because regular board meetings don't offer a chance for give-and-take with District 46's elected officials or administrators.

Concern also was voiced at that session about \$2.8 million in budget cuts and elimination of 29 jobs for 2009-10, as well as \$25,250 spent to send 25 employees to a consultant's convention and awards banquet in Myrtle Beach, S.C., in December 2008.

Although some District 46 board members last month questioned the need for another forum, officials went ahead and scheduled the second event.

Garcia said the chief school business official, Brad Goldstein, already is prepared for next month's forum. In addition to taking prepared queries in advance, Garcia said, there will be plenty of time for a question-and-answer period with the audience.

"That's one piece the community felt we didn't offer enough of," Garcia said of the Q&A time that was set aside at the June 17 event.

Neighboring Woodland Elementary District 50 has been hosting board forums for at least 10 years. The Gurnee-based district's first of three scheduled school board forums for the 2009-10 school year is for Tuesday, Nov. 3.

District 46 officials have said they would be interested in holding forums with rotating topics, such as finance and curriculum.