

20-Jan-16

Health Insurance:

The affordable care act was passed in 2010 and the district must comply July 1, 2016. This federal law requires school districts of our size to come into compliance this summer. The ACA requires districts to offer their insurance plans to a wider base of employees and does not allow discrimination between employee groups, (classified, certified, administration). Our existing policy does not provide insurance to employees who work between 30-40 hours a week. Current options being considered include containing cost by a reduction of hours, reducing staff to provide for insurance cost, adjusting the insurance plan to spread across more employees, or a combination of these strategies.

It is not economically feasible for our current health insurance benefit to be distributed amongst a larger number of employees. The financial impact of each person that adds our insurance plan is between (\$6,000 - \$17,000). The current benefit plan structure has resulted in more employees adding district insurance than in the past. Some believe equity concerns exist with our current contribution framework. The current span of benefits is (\$6,000 - \$20,000) depending on individual family situations.

Due to the complexities of the ACA, the range of health benefit options, to avoid a conflict of interest, and to have an objective viewpoint the district chose to contract an insurance broker to evaluate, advise, and make recommendations to the district. This was communicated at an open board meeting. Our agent is recommending a committee consisting of representatives from each group, (administration, certified, classified) work on recommendations on insurance carriers and plan designs that can be brought back to the board for approval. For clarity the role of the insurance committee and the negotiation over the districts contribution are separate items. Group benefits should be designed to be fair and equitable across the group and not tailored to any individual situation.

How can we (Thompson Falls School District) develop a plan that will be a good benefit to our employees and is sustainable by the district? What are our options? Do you have any ideas?

Recommended Time Line:

November 2015	ACA Compliance Data to MUST (completed)
January 2016	Begin working on renewal options (2016)
April 2016	Finalize Thompson Falls District options
May 2016	Open enrollment options
July 1 st , 2016	New District Benefit Plan Year Begins