



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Tel: 508-841-8400 Fax: 508-841-8490

schools.shrewsburyma.gov



Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Margaret M. Belsito
Assistant Superintendent
Student Services

Amy B. Clouter
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Patrick C. Collins
Assistant Superintendent
Finance & Operations

Jane O. Lizotte, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Community Partnerships & Well-Being

Barbara A. Malone
Executive Director
Human Resources

June 23, 2020

To: School Committee

From: Joe Sawyer

Re: Recommendation to authorize "Phase I" budget reductions for Fiscal Year 2021

Dear School Committee:

At your June 17 meeting, you heard a report outlining \$1.95 million in recommended cost reductions for Fiscal Year 2021. These represented cuts that were recommended in early March as well as newer developments, such as the determination to freeze the compensation of all non-union administrators and support staff at current year levels.

Because the Annual Town Meeting has been delayed until later this summer due to the Coronavirus pandemic, a final budget has not yet been established for the School Department's appropriation. In order to bring more certainty to our planning for next year, I am recommending that you vote to authorize the "Phase I" reductions of \$1.95 million that were presented to you in order to bring certainty to this element of next year's budget so that we can continue planning for next year with more confidence.

Unfortunately, due to the projected loss of state and local revenue and additional costs related to COVID-19, a projected budget gap of approximately \$3.3 to \$3.9 million remains to be closed for the FY21 Budget, even *after* this \$1.95 million is accounted for.

These “Phase I” cost reductions will compromise our schools’ ability to provide the expected level of education to our town’s young people by reducing educational programming, cutting teaching and support personnel, decreasing investments in curriculum materials and staff professional development, and reducing operational capacity.

As a reminder, when creating this plan, the school district’s administrative leadership team considered various cost reduction measures, with the following guidelines in mind:

- 1) Focus on efficiencies in operations first
- 2) Maintain class sizes within School Committee guidelines wherever possible
- 3) Avoid reductions that would compromise the district’s strategic priorities and goals
- 4) Minimize layoffs of staff (such as by using attrition where possible)

The recommended Phase I reductions are:

Recommended cost reduction	Amount	Additional information/potential impact
Operations		
Operational efficiencies	\$16,000	Revised copier lease, vendor change for custodial supplies, etc. No negative impact.
Changes in personnel projections for next school year	\$153,145	Replace known maternity leave with long-term substitute; reduce allowance for salary rate for teacher hires to replace vacancies, which means less flexibility in hiring educators with more experience.
Site-based discretionary funding reduced by 3.2%	\$10,000	Less discretionary funding for principals and department directors to utilize for supplies, materials, staff conferences, etc.
Reduce one bus from transportation program	\$72,000	Examine routing for further efficiencies to reduce the need for one bus. May require longer travel times for students on certain routes.
Reduce funding for technology hardware &	\$98,000	Defer purchases of some networking equipment and other infrastructure items; end subscription

software		to ThoughtExchange community survey service.
Reduce funding for textbooks & curriculum materials	\$25,000	Some purchases will be deferred instead of acquiring updated books and materials.
Reduce funding for staff professional development	\$100,000	Reduces ability to provide trainers, attend conferences, or provide substitute coverage to free up educators for training; compromises ability to implement new programming; will seek grants and other alternative funding to offset reduction where possible.
Operations reductions subtotal	\$474,145	
Program & Personnel		
Reduce funding available for compensation increases for non-represented administrators (Central Office administrators & principals) and non-represented support staff	\$134,954	All compensation frozen at the current year's level for all non-union administrators and support staff.
Reduce overtime for Central Office & Information Technology support staff	\$15,000	Some overtime necessary to maintain for school year start up phase; otherwise, timelines for certain reports and services will need to be expanded.
Eliminate position for assistive technology teacher (1.0 FTE)	\$20,000	Teacher resigned prior to start of current year, and district has successfully used a contracted services model to address needs; represents net savings for removing teaching position for FY21 and using contracted services instead.
Reduce summer curriculum per diem work at elementary level	\$11,700	Less availability of curriculum coordinators/instructional coaches to support planning for upcoming school year.
Eliminate remaining elementary level door monitors (1.0 FTE)	\$19,000	Part-time door monitors at Coolidge and Spring Street to be eliminated. Reliance internal coverage for secretaries to monitor doors during school day.
Reduce Transportation,	\$30,000	Change work year from year-round to school

Safety, & Security Coordinator position by 50% (0.5 FTE)		year schedule, mostly half days except for opening phase of school year; less administrative capacity to respond to needs in these areas, some responsibility shifted to district administrators or other support staff.
Reduce literacy tutor program in grades K-6 by 40% (4.0 FTE)	\$90,000	Reduce positions and/or hours of part-time literacy tutors to save 40% of cost of these supports; will reduce ability to support students who are reading below benchmarks; program will be revamped to serve students with greatest identified needs, regardless of school site, and shift support over the course of the year as needs change. Reductions may be a combination of attrition, reduced hours, and eliminating part time positions.
Reduce instructional aide support at elementary level by 60 hours (20 hours at Floral Street School, 10 hours each at Beal, Coolidge, Paton, & Spring Street Schools (2.0 FTE)	\$50,000	These same 60 hours were added back to the program in FY16. Will result in less adult academic support for students in grades K-4 and less capacity for day-to-day operational support in those schools. Reductions may be a combination of attrition, reduced hours, and eliminating part time positions.
Eliminate academic tutor position at Oak Middle School (1.0 FTE)	\$25,000	Reduces academic support for students in grades 7 & 8. Another position for staff member will be available through attrition elsewhere.
Do not fill open position due to leave of absence for Grade 3 teacher at Floral Street School (1.0 FTE)	\$61,981	Class size increases but remains within School Committee guidelines (projected average of 23.3 students per class); does not affect a specific staff member due to leave of absence
Do not fill open positions due to retirement of math teacher, physics teacher, and Spanish teacher at SHS (3.0 FTE)	\$194,250	Five fewer class sections, resulting in slightly higher class sizes and/or fewer course offerings (depending on ongoing course selection process). Does not affect specific staff members due to attrition. Note: Savings between veteran educator salary and replacement salary was already reflected in initial budget projection, further reduction

		eliminates replacement cost.
Do not fill open position due to resignation of drama teacher at Oak Middle School (1.0 FTE)	\$91,379	Drama will not be part of allied arts programming at Oak next year; position currently filled by long-term substitute.
Reduce size of preschool program by closing Wesleyan Terrace site & reduce aide allotment per classroom (7.3 FTE)	\$162,735	Reduce number of classrooms for Parker Road Preschool from 8 to 7, which reduces 1.0 FTE teacher and 2.0 FTE aides (requires reconfiguration of 1 space at Parker Road currently used for occupational & physical therapy); reduction of aide/classroom ratio from 1.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE per class, resulting in an additional 4.3 FTE reduction of aide positions. Given level of turnover/attrition in paraprofessional positions, hope is that no aide layoffs will be necessary. Transfer opportunity available for teacher affected.
Eliminate one Grade 5 two-teacher team at Sherwood Middle School (2.0 FTE)	\$115,159	Projection will increase class size to average of 25.5 students (1.5 above guidelines), similar to Grade 6 next year. Transfer opportunities available to teachers affected subject to licensure.
Eliminate advanced math coach positions at Sherwood Middle School & Oak Middle School (2.0 FTE)	\$152,762	Reduces opportunities for students with advanced math performance and for support for classroom math teachers to provide enrichment. Transfer opportunities available to teachers affected subject to licensure.
Eliminate Grade 6 foreign language program at Sherwood Middle School (2.8 FTE)	\$184,658	Delays students' study of Spanish, French, & Mandarin by one year. Requires revamping of schedule at Sherwood that affects educator collaboration periods. Eliminates 2.5 FTE teaching positions and reduces a 1.0 FTE position to 0.7 FTE. Transfer opportunities currently not available.
Leave Paton principal position	\$119,756	Assistant Superintendent for Community

vacant for the 2020-2021 school year (1.0 FTE)		Partnerships & Well-Being will serve as acting principal at Paton for the 2020-2021 school year
Program & Personnel reductions subtotal	\$1,478,334	
Total FTE eliminated from budget plan	29.6 FTE	
Total Recommended Cost Reductions	\$1,952,479	

I look forward to answering any questions you have regarding this recommendation at your meeting this evening.