Shrewsbury School Committee
Priorities & Guidance for Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Development
Revised Draft for Discussion & Vote on October 26, 2022

Overview

This document provides the community with information about the School Committee's priorities for the Fiscal Year 2024 School Department Budget. It is also designed to provide guidance to the Superintendent of Schools and the School Department administration regarding the development of its initial Fiscal Year 2024 School Department Budget proposal.

Clearly, we have moved past the most significant medical aspect of the Coronavirus pandemic and now face the lingering effects on student social and emotional well-being and learning loss. In FY23 we put into place a number of staff resources to address both of these important areas.

For FY24 we shift focus in now having to deal with the significant and varied economic impacts of a historically high level of inflation. In addition, we look forward to a renewal and refresh of our Strategic Priorities as we plan ahead with optimism for the next five-year period, 2023-2027. With this context we set forth the following Budget priorities and Guidance for development of the FY24 annual operating budget.

Priorities

The initial FY24 School Department Budget proposal shall include resources to address each of the following priorities:

1. *Meet commitments as detailed in the March 16, 2021 Override Statement to the Residents of Shrewsbury and agreed upon between the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee*

   This compact includes specific commitments towards budget planning transparency, engagement with the community, and limitations on annual budget increases.

2. *Resources for Continued Progress Towards Fulfillment of the 2018-2022 Strategic Priorities and Consideration of the Highest priorities Emerging from the 2023-2027 Strategic Planning Process.*

- To maintain class sizes within School Committee guidelines.
- To consider what additional resources may be necessary to explore the creation of in-district vocational programs at the high school or create partnerships with area businesses for similar types of student experiential learning opportunities.
- To consider what investments will advance the district's commitment to its core value of equity, particularly as it works to advance equity and anti-racism throughout our school communities.
- To provide adequate resources for our English learner population that is growing in size and complexity.

Resources for Continued Progress Towards Fulfillment of the 2018-2022 Strategic Priorities and Consideration of the Highest priorities Emerging from the 2023-2028 Strategic Planning Process. [continued from previous page]

- To factor the financial impacts of a potential change in school start times for the 2023-2024 school year.
- To make investments in district-based programming and resources in order to provide high-quality, cost-effective opportunities to educate students with all forms of specialized needs within their own community's schools rather than specialized placements outside of the district. One such opportunity is the launch of the district's transitions program [aka RISE Program] for students with special needs who require post-high school education up to age 22.
- To consider resources to address the district's functional capacity related to personnel, organization, space, and technology, within the context of evolving demands placed upon the organization under current conditions, while also considering previous recommendations found in the University of Massachusetts Edward J. Collins Center for Public Management's Central Office Organizational Study completed in Spring 2019.

Assumptions & Guidance

It is assumed that the initial FY24 School Department Budget proposal will:

1. Provide adequate resources to meet all legal mandates required of the school district.
2. Reflect the terms of collective bargaining agreements and other contractual obligations.
3. Provide sufficient resources to maintain a) the existing educational program and b) staffing levels necessary to meet mandates and priorities.
4. Forecast the inflationary impact on all goods and services to include bidding for a new transportation contract and factoring the state-approved tuition rate increase of 14.1% for private special education schools throughout the Commonwealth.
5. Utilize the best available information to project changes in costs (such as tuitions) and revenues (such as state funding through the Chapter 70 and Circuit Breaker programs, grants, etc.).
6. Estimate level funding for all federal and state grants and plan for the continuation of programs or services, as desired, that were previously funded by Covid-related grants.
7. Review fee levels for all programs and make recommendations that consider the School Department's increased costs to operate, while also taking into account the associated challenges for families to pay more in a high inflation environment.
8. Examine ways to reduce or shift costs in order to achieve district priorities without requiring additional funding allocations wherever possible.
9. Given space constraints at the secondary schools, the administration should assume no new School Choice seats will be voted by the School Committee for approval.
10. Display data and budget information in new ways including further use of the *ClearGov* web-based platform.