

CUMBERLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"A SMART SCHOOL DISTRICT GETTING SMARTER"

A FINANCIAL PLAN TO SUPPORT LEARNING IN CUMBERLAND SCHOOLS

FY 2010-11

"During the course of the past five years, we have made incremental changes that have now placed a strong foundation to ensure that every student has access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum in each and every classroom in our district. At times these changes came slowly and, at times, they seemed to come in waves, but inevitably, the face of the district has been markedly changed and improved.

In the past five years, we have taken a bold step to claim that it is our responsibility to meet the needs of all students... to state clearly to everyone who will listen that the district's goal is to "meet the needs of 100% of our students, 100% of the time."

Beginning today, we must be brave enough to say that we have not met that goal and that the answers are likely to be found both inside our organization and outside in the community at-large. We must be brave enough to reach out and ask for each other's help. We need to create a collective, shared knowledge of solutions that work to accelerate student learning for all students.

I ask you to accept this challenge so that we can create another new future for Cumberland students. I have every confidence we can make this future happen."

*Excerpted from Remarks by Superintendent Morelle
to Cumberland Faculty, Staff and Administration
Opening Day Welcome Back Assembly
September 1, 2009*

INTRODUCTION

CUMBERLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

		Term Expires
Chairperson	Donald J. Costa	November 2010
Vice Chairperson	Earl T. Wood	November 2010
Clerk	Ryan W. Pearson	November 2010
Member	Lisa Beaulieu	November 2010
Member	Brian Kelly	November 2010
Member	Dan Pedro	November 2010
Member	To Be Appointed	November 2010

2009-2010 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Superintendent of Schools	Donna A. Morelle, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent	Susan C. Carney, Ph.D.
Director of Administration	Joseph A. Rotella, Esq.
Director of Facilities Services	Richard Hilton
School Business Manager	Alexander Prignano
Director of Special Education	Lisa Colwell, Ed.D.
Deputy Director of Special Education	Frederik Schockaert
Director of Information Technology	C. Michael Chandler
Network Manager	Jessica Deroche
Athletic Director/Transportation Coordinator	Frank Geiselman
Cumberland Preschool Center Principal	Kathleen Gibney
Ashton School Principal	Nidia Karbonik
B.F. Norton School Principal	Paula Maloney
Community School Principal	Cheri Sacco
John J. McLaughlin Cumberland Hill School Principal	Donna Reinalda
Garvin Memorial School Principal	Thomas Stepka
Joseph L. McCourt Middle School Principal	Armand Pires
Joseph L. McCourt Middle School Assistant Principal	Andrew Anderson, Ed.D.
North Cumberland Middle School Principal	Richard Drolet, Ed.D.
North Cumberland Middle School Assistant Principal	Jason Masterson
Cumberland High School Principal	Dorothy Gould
Cumberland High School Assistant Principal	Scott Fuller
Cumberland High School Assistant Principal	Brien Keller
Cumberland High School Assistant Principal	Donna Zannelli

2008-2011 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Cumberland Public Schools will prepare all students to become responsible, contributing members of a complex global society through a partnership with home and community.

VISION

The vision of the Cumberland Public Schools is to support the educational development of the whole child through proven strategies and a guaranteed and viable curriculum. As a result, students are aware of their global community, are active civic participants and achieve proficiencies which allow them to make valuable life choices. Through high expectations and best practice, students are led by an academy of teachers, administrators and staff dedicated to academic excellence. We envision a learning community established and supported through collaboration among students, families, educators, and the community.

PARAMETERS

- We will always respect the dignity and honor of each person.
- We will develop educational programs and related support services in response to community and student needs.
- No new program will be implemented unless they are grounded in valid and reliable research, supported by the appropriate professional development and sufficient resources are allocated.
- Additional resources will not be sought until the use of existing resources has been evaluated.
- We will resolve or eliminate policies or procedures that are known to impede success.

The Cumberland Public Schools, School Committee, and staff envision schools where:

EDUCATION in Cumberland is a flexible system and supports a wide range of teaching and learning approaches. Students, teachers, parents and schools are valued and know exactly what is expected of them. They can measure their progress against focused statewide expectations. Schools, teachers and families have easy access to services and expertise to help them manage their school operation efficiently and provide high quality instruction for all students.

The **CUMBERLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE** is a dynamic organization that nurtures and contributes to an exemplary learning community which prepares students for life and career. It identifies and responds to emerging educational trends in, and beyond, the Town of Cumberland. The committee promotes community engagement in and dialogue about education. Members ensure a level of rigor that exceeds state standards and allows students to achieve beyond the standards. It creates a safe and healthy environment that supports learning, maintains an environment that nurtures positive attitude, and encourages accountability among all within the Cumberland Public Schools.

TOWN GOVERNMENT funds and keeps education at the forefront of its agenda. Education is seen as the most important service that the Town government provides. Funding of education is responsive to the needs of the community, varying student needs and is fair to taxpayers.

STUDENTS come to Cumberland schools eager to learn. All students have high expectations for themselves and produce meaningful work that demonstrates a knowledge of skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and social sciences, as well as the ability to communicate clearly. Students demonstrate an appreciation for their national heritage, fine arts and other cultures of their world as well as the multicultural contributions within the community. They participate in healthy activities, avoid at-risk behaviors and interact with others with respect. They have access to the latest technology to help master challenging content and individualize learning. After-school help and summer enrichment programs provide on-going support for all students. All students' learning is enhanced by school-to-work experiences, service learning, and the use of state of the art technology applications. Students display pride in Cumberland schools and demonstrate educational excellence.

TEACHERS are highly qualified and certified in their area and have high expectations for all students. They demonstrate improved student performance with a variety of assessments such as portfolios, exhibitions, and performance assessments. Teachers are lifelong learners. Professional development helps teachers connect daily experiences to a process of continuous improvement. New teachers are supported through mentoring programs. Teachers work individually and collaboratively to identify best practice strategies to meet the varying needs and learning styles of all students. Teachers participate in key decisions about how their schools operate. Teachers work with parents to improve student performance. All educational staff demonstrates pride in Cumberland schools and help to maintain a safe, clean and healthy environment for learning.

ADMINISTRATORS are educational leaders in the district and in their schools. In their respective roles, they model high expectations for teachers and students through a balance of management and vision. They work to establish the district and individual schools as a learning community. School leaders place student and adult learning at the center of all decisions. Administrators actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

PARENTS participate actively in decision-making at the district and school level and share the responsibility, authority and accountability for improving schools. Parents are actively involved in their child's education. They support safe, clean and disciplined classrooms. Cumberland schools are free of drugs and violence. Students and families are directed to a system of support services to meet the physical and emotional needs of their students.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS volunteer in classrooms, help to improve school facilities, and support education expenditures. They are stewards for school success and improved performance of all children. Community members value Cumberland public schools as a high achieving system that is a hallmark of the community.

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYERS are in partnership with schools and share directly in the success of schools by participating in classroom enrichment and student mentor programs, providing consultation, and helping schools to run their operations more effectively. They recruit new employees from among Cumberland graduates whose skills meet or exceed the needs of their industries. They support and participate in the school-to-career system for all students.

HIGHER EDUCATION institutions welcome Cumberland graduates knowing that they are well prepared and equipped to meet the new learning challenges. They hold high expectations for student performance, consistent with the standards of the PK-12 system. They are partners with the district and with schools in support of improved teaching and learning.

Cumberland Public Schools Budget Fiscal Year 2010-11

Executive Summary

The Leadership Team for the Cumberland Public Schools has assembled a set of budget recommendations to support the District Strategic Plan and the individual School Improvement Plans.

This year, perhaps more than any year in past memory, the Leadership Team experienced a significant professional challenge balancing the urgency for accountability for learning with the economic plight of the State and Town. A guiding principle in the decision-making process was to weigh the “cost to meet the need” versus the “cost to ignore the need” and we acknowledge that many requests made by departments and schools are not included in the Superintendent’s recommended budget.

The final budget proposal approved by the Cumberland School Committee was developed in an environment of competing priorities and reflects a *minimum* threshold necessary to provide the supports for students to continue to make advances in student achievement in Cumberland schools.

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Goals and Objectives

In October 2008, the Cumberland School Committee approved a three-year Strategic Plan focused on six overarching goals.

1. By June 2011, 100% of Cumberland students will demonstrate academic proficiency by achieving or exceeding the standards as measured by data including, but not limited to, state and district defined assessments.
2. By June 2011, 100% of Cumberland students will graduate into post secondary programs or careers as measured by data including, but not limited to, student surveys and post secondary program admissions.
3. By June 2011, 100% of Cumberland students will adopt safe and healthy lifestyles as measured by data including, but not limited to, SALT data, discipline data, climate surveys, state Health assessments and student interviews.
4. By June 2011, 100% of Cumberland teachers will utilize effective instructional techniques that accommodate diverse learning styles as measured by data including but not limited to, SALT data, Cumberland Teacher Evaluation data, feedback from classroom walkthroughs and increases in scores on state and district defined assessments.
5. By June 2011, all Cumberland schools will be safe and effective centers for learning as measured by data including, but not limited to, discipline data, drop out rates, SALT Visit reports, SALT Survey data and facilities data.
6. By June 2011, the community will respect and support the mission of the Cumberland schools as measured by data including, but not limited to, participation in school activities, committee involvement, community partnerships, and adequate funding.

Budget Development Process

The development of the district's financial plan is a year-long process which begins annually in November when schools and departments preparing budget requests for the following school year.

For the past five years, the Cumberland Public Schools has embraced a strategic approach to budget development, known as zero-based budgeting. Zero-based budgeting, in general terms, is a financial planning model in which there is a 'zero-base.' In an incremental budgeting model, only a request which is an increase over the previous level of expenditure is reviewed. By contrast, in zero-based budgeting, all requests for spending are reviewed independent of whether the line item is increasing or decreasing.

In the district's zero-based budgeting model, emphasis is placed on aligning requests with student learning needs. Basing budget requests on an analysis of student learning outcomes and school improvement goals makes budget discussions more meaningful. Although this practice substantially increases the time to prepare a budget, the analysis is more comprehensive and assumes that all revenues and expenditures have been reviewed and approved, rather than only increases.

Additionally, in the development of the FY 10 and FY 11 budgets, the zero-based budgeting model has been expanded to include the concept of student-based budgeting as defined in the literature.

"There are many ways to organize...systems to achieve results and equity – that is, to support high academic performance for all students, eliminating significant differences in achievement based on race, ethnicity, gender, primary language, or family income...[t]hree functions are essential for success:

- providing schools, students, and teachers with needed support and timely interventions;*
- ensuring that schools have the power and resources to make good decisions;*
- making decisions and holding people throughout the system accountable with indicators of school and district performance and practices."*

Excerpt from "First Steps to a Level Playing Field: An Introduction to Student-Based Budgeting,"
(June 2002, Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University)

This additional layer of budget review enhances the equitable distribution of resources by ensuring that some resources are distributed based on a foundation enrollment and that additional resources are based on the achievement profile of the school. With the recent release of a Funding Formula Proposal by Commissioner Gist, it becomes clearer that the budgeting practices which have been embedded in the district under Superintendent Morelle are aligned with the strategic direction of the Rhode Island Department of Education. The key components of this formula driven funding system are:

- Core instruction amount;
- Student success factor;
- State share ratio; and
- Categorical funding.

As we proceed in upcoming budget cycles, we will continue to analyze our practices and incorporate any modifications which will further shift our budgeting system to a student-based budgeting model.

The school department's local operating budget is prepared at the school and department level, and submitted to the Superintendent. The Superintendent of Schools, with assistance and input from members of the Central Leadership Resource Team (CLRT), reviews the requests and submits a budget proposal to the School Committee that will work to accomplish the district's goals, recognizing the need to operate within the fiscal constraints of the Town of Cumberland.

The Committee is required to submit an approved school budget to the Town Finance Director by the first Monday in March for inclusion in the Mayor's Budget Proposal. According to the Town Charter, the Mayor's Budget must be submitted to the Cumberland Town Council on or before the second Monday in May for review, adjustments, and approval on or before July 1. In instances where the Town Council allocates less than the School Committee's proposed budget, the Superintendent recommends changes to the proposed budget to close the gap and the School Committee adopts a final budget to fit within the Town's allocation to the schools.

Federal funds, restricted state funds, and private grants are allocated to accomplish district initiatives consistent with the intended uses and restrictions on these funds. These program initiatives and funds in combination are known as the Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP). The CRP is primarily developed through the annual planning process associated with the review, revision and monitoring of the District Strategic Plan and occurs annually in the late spring concurrent with timelines established by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Resource allocation within the local budget is largely nondiscretionary and is determined by contractual commitments for staffing levels, salaries, and benefits; by contracts for outsourced services for transportation, food services, and facilities maintenance and repair; by state mandates including special education requirements for staffing levels, support to charter and nonpublic schools; and by debt obligations. Discretionary funds include funds for such things as staff outside collective bargaining units, maintenance, textbooks and educational supplies, furniture, and educational equipment.

Cumberland Public Schools Accomplishments

The Leadership Team of the Cumberland Public Schools has identified a representative list of accomplishments for inclusion in the annual budget presentation. These academic, organizational and financial accomplishments demonstrate the cycle of continuous improvement sponsored by the administration under the leadership of Superintendent Morelle and her administrative staff.

Major Organizational and Academic Accomplishments FY 2007 – FY 2010

Multi-Year Strategic Plan Approved for Cumberland Public Schools

In October 2008, the Cumberland School Committee approved a three-year master plan for the school department concentrating resources in five targeted areas:

- 21st Century Practices: Support for Students
- 21st Century Practices: Support for Staff
- Curriculum Consistency
- Integration of Technology
- Building a Town Learning Community

Through the implementation of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, the district is making a commitment to the educational development of the whole child; the development of a learning community dedicated to academic excellence; collaboration among students, families, educators and community; extra learning opportunities for students to meet high expectations; and professional support for all teachers to develop deep expertise in their content knowledge.

Town Wide Learning Community

In particular, significant attention was paid to the development of the action plan for the Town Wide Learning Community. With a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, the Cumberland Public Schools and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce co-sponsored a World Café event on January 9, 2010. This event brought together almost 100 stakeholders from the community to engage in a dialogue about the possibilities that could be created if Cumberland was a model for townwide learning for all residents.

Specifically, at this event, participants were asked to *"Imagine a town where lifelong learning is a priority for everyone; young and old alike. A place where learning is a core component of the town's culture. Where a dedication of townspeople is committed to raising families, growing business, embracing our natural landscape and continuously learning and developing. A place where the town bands together to give everyone opportunities to grow and capitalizes on its existing resources by bringing together key stakeholder to make a difference."*

Additional themes embedded in the planning of the Town Wide Learning Community are:

1. Value of learning and education for all;
2. Outcomes achieved through collaboration; and
3. Importance of voices of all members of the community in action planning.

Cumberland High School Awarded Accreditation

As stated by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), "accreditation is a system of accountability that is ongoing, voluntary, and comprehensive in scope. It respects differences in institutional populations, missions, and cultures, and fosters institutional change grounded in the judgment of practicing educators. It is based on standards which are developed and regularly reviewed by the members and which define the characteristics of good schools and colleges."

Cumberland Public Schools recognizes that NEASC sets the standard of excellence for educational institutions. For parents and the community, the accreditation status also symbolizes a level of accountability to a mission of equitable educational opportunities for all students in Cumberland. Although it was the totality of the community's efforts that resulted in this approval, several key improvements had a significant, positive impact on this outcome.

On September 28-29, 2008, the Commission on Public Secondary Schools reviewed the Five-Year Progress Report of Cumberland High School and continued the school's accreditation. In particular, the Commission removed the school from warning status for the following two Accreditation Standards: Teaching and Learning Standard on Instruction and Support Standard: Community Resources for Learning.

Since the Commission's visit in 2003, the high school faculty, administration and support staff has worked diligently to address the recommendations of the visiting team. Specifically, the following goals were met in order to achieve the accreditation status:

- The provision of opportunities in all classes for students to assess their own learning;
- The provision of common planning time to grade nine teachers;
- The substantial increase in the number of available computers to support the integration of instructional practice in technology throughout the curriculum and as a foundation for the use of electronic portfolios;
- The completion of renovations known as CHS 2010 that includes the new cafeteria & science wing;
- The addition of two full-time technology positions; Director of Information Technology and Network Manager.

The Commission also acknowledged the following progress made by Cumberland High School:

- Increased opportunities for students to earn college credit in high school;
- Development and implementation of common assessments;
- Increase in the number of instructional hours in the school year;
- Decrease in the number of course levels from four to three to increase the rigor for students previously scheduled in lower level courses.

District Builds Capacity to Support Student Learning

In Spring 2009, the Cumberland Public Schools was awarded funds from the RI Department of Education and the Wallace Foundation to develop and implement a distributive leadership evaluation model for our schools based on the newly adopted Rhode Island Leadership Standards. In order to develop and implement a standards-based evaluation system for leadership, the district established a Steering Committee responsible for the project outcomes. The Steering Committee members, comprised of representatives of the Leadership Team, were selected for their ability to contribute specific knowledge,

skills and dispositions toward the successful completion of the evaluation leadership standards project. With support from the RI Department of Education, they developed an educator evaluation framework for educational leaders in Cumberland which was approved by the Cumberland School Committee in September 2009.

A noteworthy finding of the work group was that time needs to be allocated to this project to monitor the early implementation of the evaluation system as a means of providing assurances that we have developed an evaluation system that aligns with the following five [5] research principles:

1. The evaluations system measures what it is designed to measure.
2. The assessments are consistently applied and tested for fairness.
3. The assessments are seen as an ongoing process for professional growth.
4. The evaluation system reinforces our organization's core mission and goals.
5. The evaluation system provides actionable feedback and supports a culture of continuous improvement.

This framework is another step in the development of a comprehensive educator evaluation system aligned *Educator Evaluation System Standards* which were recently adopted by the RI Board of Regents. As stated in the *Educator Evaluation System Standards* (July, 2009), the "six standards were crafted to support the work of school districts to assure educator quality through a comprehensive district educator evaluation system that:

- Establishes a common understanding of expectations for educator quality within the district;
- Emphasizes the professional growth and continuous improvement of individual educators;
- Creates an organizational approach to the collective professional growth and continuous improvement of groups of educators to support district goals;
- Provides quality assurance for the performance of all district educators;
- Assures fair, accurate, and consistent evaluations; and
- Provides district educators a role in guiding the ongoing system development in response to systematic feedback and changing district needs."

Cumberland Literacy Initiative

For the past three years, the Cumberland Public Schools has been in a ground-breaking partnership with the Hasbro Center for Teaching Excellence/The Dunn Institute. The Dunn Literacy Initiative is a school-wide teacher training project that will provide expertly tailored teacher in-service education for all of the elementary teachers in the district. This initiative will provide overall support to all five elementary schools to create a high performing network of schools within the district.

The school-wide teacher training project being offered throughout the elementary schools includes:

- Five reading specialists trained to assume the role of literacy coach in each elementary school. They will provide leadership, resources, modeling, and coaching in the area of effective literacy strategies, with the goal of improving student outcomes. Literacy coaches meet weekly for professional development in data analysis, facilitation of school data meetings, and decision making. Most importantly, they are establishing consistency across the district in literacy procedures, such as effective routines, assessments, and student grouping options.
- Each elementary school has established a School-Based Literacy Team whose members are investigating effective elements and practices utilized by schools with strong literacy outcomes.

- All Kindergarten through Grade 5 teachers have participated in professional development in the administration and scoring of AIMSweb assessments with targeted benchmarks based on national norms, creating high expectations for all students. Interpretation of AIMSweb data is presently being used to group students for instruction, to determine interventions, and to progress monitor student growth.
- All elementary teachers received professional development to help them understand the continuum of phonological awareness and its impact on literacy outcomes. Additionally, teachers have received professional development in *Foundations*, a multi-sensory, systematic, researched based program, which will now be used as a source of academic interventions for students.
- Data meetings are scheduled for K-5 classroom teachers, special educators, reading specialists, and principals to facilitate interpretation of student data to drive instruction and increase student outcomes.

Cumberland Mathematics Initiative

The district has several initiatives underway which are intended to accelerate student learning and support our goal to meet the needs of "100% of our students, 100% of the time." One of these is the Cumberland Mathematics Initiative under the direction of the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. As you may also know, we are working on this particular initiative collaboratively with the Woonsocket Education Department and the Lincoln Public Schools.

Improved mathematics outcomes for students will be achieved through the consistent implementation of the following key practices:

- ❑ **Gap Analysis** intended to identify the problems in the instructional program causing the gaps in student achievement;
- ❑ **Study of the Standards** intended to generate a common understanding of the state curriculum standards and develop a strong working knowledge of the standards' effect on teaching and learning; and
- ❑ **Classroom Walkthroughs** intended to be both a tool and a process to gather and organize data about the curriculum and instructional program so that districts can improve teaching and learning schoolwide.

Digital Tools Move Cumberland Schools into the 21st Century

In classrooms throughout the district, new digital tools are being made available to assist teachers and students, creating long-awaited 21st century learning environments. Outside of the classroom, the district is adding support tools to substantially strengthen critical family/school communications as well as upgrade systems for the business and human resource departments. Cumberland Public Schools have experienced substantial improvements to both hardware and software systems supported by bond initiatives, assistance from the Town Council and the school district budget.

At Cumberland High School, eight Computer labs have been added to the two that existed before the CHS2010 project started. The labs include: Tech/Robotics lab, MIDI lab (music), CAD lab, Business lab, Language lab, Graphics Art lab, and two General use labs. With the availability of computers in classrooms, the district can now move forward with the addition of these advanced software tools thereby allowing the district to meet a number of goals:

- Increase communication with families;
- Create digital graduation portfolios for students;
- Assess and monitor elementary student progress;

- Employ state-of-the-art tools at CHS for scientific experimentation and inquiry; and
- Expansion of electives at CHS to include more technology offerings including courses such as computer repair, robotics, graphic design and computer aided drafting.

Direct District Communications

The School Committee approved the purchase of *Connect-ED*, an Internet-based school-to-parent communication service that enables school administrators to send personalized multi-lingual messages via voice, text message or email to staff and parents. Families and staff will receive timely information on school/district announcements such as events or school closings, attendance notification, and emergency alert messages. Effective communication with parents has a direct impact on the academic success of a student and now, with the financial sponsorship of the Cumberland Town Council, we have the right tool to help us close the backpack gap and help Cumberland parents stay engaged. This home-school communication has been further expanded with the use of I-Parent.

High School goes 'Digital' with its E-Portfolio System

CHS has begun the process of introducing students and staff to our e-portfolio system. Each student will have a secured digital portfolio, enabling them to store evidence of work in all of the academic areas. Evidence of this work may include, but is not limited to, text, multimedia, images, spreadsheets, and web pages. The portfolio facilitates students' reflection of their own work, offering a dynamic perspective of their achievements and plan of study. In addition to students and staff, parents will have the ability to securely view their child's portfolio.

Graphic Arts Software

To broaden the digital experience in web, graphics and photo editing for CHS students, the district has purchased Adobe Creative Suite. This software will complement courses in the newly created Fine, Applied and Technical Arts Department at Cumberland High School.

Student Assessment and Progress Monitoring

Through a collaborative agreement and financial commitment with the Cumberland Town Council, the district has purchased a student assessment system for its K-5 students. *AIMSweb* is an assessment system that 'informs' the teaching and learning process by providing continuous student performance data and reporting improvement to parents, teachers, and administrators to enable evidence-based evaluation and data-driven instruction. In the FY 11 Budget, funds are allocated for the purchase of a progress-monitoring system for middle level students.

Improved Financial Software

The school business office has used the technology upgrades in the district as an opportunity to streamline financial operations. In the last school year, the entire payroll process for Cumberland school employees was transferred in-house, creating efficiency, cost controls and improved production of district payroll. In addition, the Business Office is in the process of completing the transition to the UniFund Software program as required by the RI Department of Education.

Automated Substitute Placement and Management

In 2007, Cumberland purchased Aesop, an automated substitute placement service for K-12 school districts. The web-based service eliminates the need for traditional sub-calling programs, almost completely automating the process of substitute placement. As a result of this tool, the district's Human Resource Department has better information available for absence management.

Cumberland Diploma System & Proficiency-Based Graduation Move Forward

Cumberland High School Diploma System has received "preliminary approval" from the RI Department of Education through the Office of the Commissioner of Education. This step is part of an overall goal by the RI Board of Regents that all high school students in the state of Rhode Island successfully complete a rigorous RI Diploma Program that gives them access to college or post-secondary training, whether immediately after high school or when and if they so choose.

The Board of Regents' Regulations on Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements, initially promulgated in January 2003, set the course for high schools to develop their diploma systems. These regulations were recently amended (September 2008) and guide the following continued work of Cumberland High School faculty, staff and administration:

- ePortfolios will be updated as the product becomes a cumulative four-year project;
- Culminating student presentations will increase in rigor and community participation;
- Common mid-semester and final examinations will be established to increase equal access to the curriculum for all students aligned to the Rhode Island Grade Span Expectations; and
- Opportunities for student personalization will be expanded through the advisory program, elective offerings and a variety of clubs.

A further review of the Diploma System was conducted in January 2010. This review was primarily focused on access and opportunity, development of local assessments including standard-setting, and personalization, focused on the Individualized Learning Plan. In Commissioner's Gist's letter to the district, she stated, "*Through review of documentation and on-site collection of evidence, Commissioner's review teams reviewed evidence of implementation of the Diploma System...As a result of this review process, it is determined that Cumberland successfully completed the 2010 review process and has made progress toward meeting the 2012 criteria.*"

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Embedded in Practice In District Schools

A major advance in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a patchwork of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, restrooms).

Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occurs. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining school-wide, classroom, and individual systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) began four years ago in Cumberland as a grass roots effort by teachers at JJM Cumberland Hill School to respond to schoolwide and classroom behavior issues. Now in their third year of implementation, the success of the work at Cumberland Hill has led to a district-wide adoption of the PBIS initiative.

Initially, four district schools participated in this initiative; Cumberland Preschool Center, B. F. Norton School (Year 2), JJM Cumberland Hill School (Year 3) and Joseph L. McCourt Middle School (Year 2). In 2008-2009, Ashton School and North Cumberland Middle School faculty joined the ranks of Cumberland colleagues trained in the methodology of PBIS, as well as colleagues from Coventry, Barrington, Providence, East Providence, Warwick, and South Kingstown who have committed to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports as a district-wide initiative. During 2009-2010, Community and Garvin embarked on this PBIS initiative, supported also by the District Behavior Intervention Coordinator.

Curriculum Alignment in Mathematics, English Language Arts and Science

In an effort to strengthen the vertical articulation of the curriculum in the core subjects of Mathematics, English Language Arts and Science and to improve supervisory oversight of curriculum and instruction in these measurable areas, the district has adopted several measures that

Based on comparative data from the U.S. Department of Education Statistics, Cumberland Public Schools is in the top 15% of all school districts in the United States based on size. For a school system with over five thousand [5,000] students, Cumberland has a minimal number of staff who are accountable for the development and articulation of the curriculum. In fact, in recent years, the entire responsibility for the oversight of the PK-12 curriculum has been placed in the Office of the Assistant Superintendent. Finally, in the FY 09 and FY 10 Budgets, the district recognized this inequity and approved the positions of Literacy and Mathematics Coordinators to the instructional support staff.

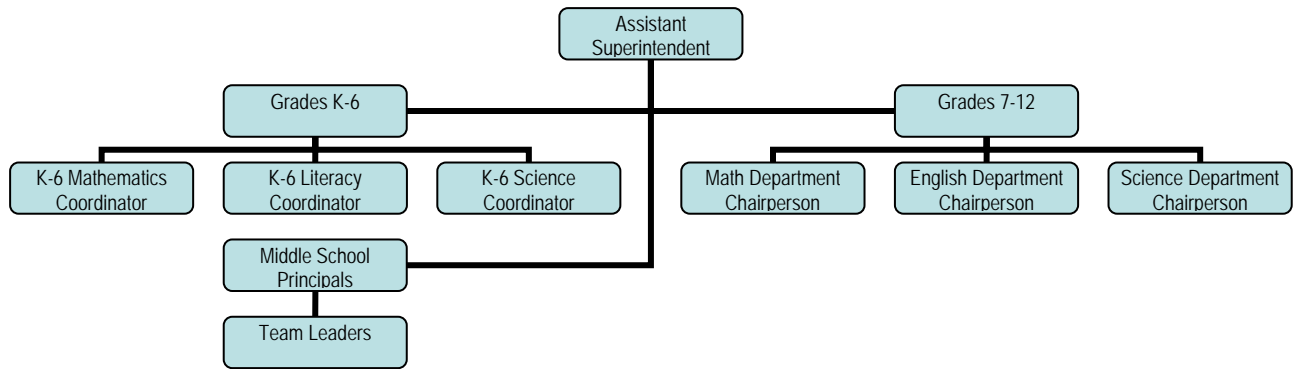
This modification to the table of organization was accomplished through the following sequence of steps:

Step 1: Eliminate the position of Curriculum Coordinators at the middle level (reduction of stipends for 8 positions at each middle school in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies.

Step 2: Add the position of Team Leader for each team in Grade 6, 7, and 8 at each middle school (see Middle Level Reform proposal in Budget Highlights).

Step 3: Enhance the responsibility of the Department Chairpersons by re-focusing their responsibilities as content specialists. Through this step, the district proposes to 1) expand the responsibility of the Department Chairperson from Grades 9-12 to Grades 7-12; and 2) increase the articulation between middle and high school and, therefore, create increased accountability for student learning outcomes.

Step 4: Add the position of K-6 Science Coordinator to the instructional staff to complement the positions of K-6 Mathematics Coordinator and K-6 Literacy Coordinator.



Middle Level Reform

In an effort to implement middle level best practices that will improve the education of all students at North Cumberland Middle School and Joseph L. McCourt Middle School, the leadership teams at the middle schools have proposed the implementation of two additional building blocks in Cumberland's middle level reform efforts; 1) Team Leaders to support the middle school teaming model; and 2) Individual Learning Plans (ILP).

Cumberland schools have made clear, intentional strides to ensure that a research-based model of middle school practice that supports high expectations for all students and builds personalized learning environment is implemented at both North Cumberland Middle School and Joseph L. McCourt Middle School. Components of this middle school model include:

- Heterogeneous grouping;
- Instructional teaming;
- Common planning time; and
- Advisory programs.

In 2007-2008, heterogeneous grouping was formally introduced to the middle schools. The plan to introduce this component of middle school practice was developed and endorsed by a Middle School Grouping Task Force. It included the implementation of heterogeneous grouping in Grade 6 for the 2007-2008 school year, with the expansion of these grouping practices to Grade 7 and Grade 8 in each successive school year. In the 2008-2009 school year, a scheduling change was approved that reduced the number of class periods per day from 7 to 6, and immediately realized an increase in the total contact time for core academic subjects from approximately 128 instructional hours to 158 instructional hours.

Findings from the November 2007 North Cumberland Middle School SALT Visit Report reinforce the overall direction of the middle schools to develop and implement middle school reform.

"This school is engaged in a variety of efforts to implement middle school reform. These reform efforts include heterogeneous grouping, middle school teaming with common planning time, and advisory. Collectively, these efforts represent necessary changes to advance learning and teaching. Each of these efforts is a work in progress and meets with varied support, success, and acceptance. Heterogeneous grouping in the sixth grade, to be rolled out into the seventh and eighth grades in successive years, allows equal access for all students to a rigorous curriculum and high expectations. Middle school teaming with

common planning time, when utilized effectively, provides an effective means for faculty and staff to coordinate and plan instruction and student support. Advisory that matches all students with one adult to build personal connections is helping to build upon this already strong and caring community." (p. 13)

In the FY 10 Budget, the middle schools received approval of a Team Leader position for each team at both middle schools. Team Leaders are a fundamental component of the middle school teaming structure. A team leader is selected from one of the teachers on each teaching team and serves as the liaison between the team and the school administration.

Team Leaders receive a stipend and are responsible for the following functions in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities:

- Attend professional development on teaming and the responsibilities of a team leader
- Serve on the school leadership committee
- Schedule and conduct team meetings
- Work with team members to coordinate programs within the team
- Work with other team leaders to coordinate programs across teams
- Familiarize new faculty and substitutes to school and team operations
- Coordinate and encourage interdisciplinary projects on within the team
- Coordinate parent meetings and track parent communication
- Serve as the first recourse for team members who encounter classroom problems
- Perform other functions as assigned by the Building Principal and/or Designee

Rededication of Cumberland High School

On September 27-28, 2008, the community celebrated the Rededication of Cumberland High School and completion of CHS 2010 with a weekend of festivities on the high school campus, including a formal rededication ceremony that included celebratory remarks from state and local officials; a proclamation from the Town of Cumberland offered by Mayor Daniel McKee and Council President James T. Higgins; and a Ceremonial Presentation of a Key by Superintendent Donna A. Morelle to Cumberland High School faculty, administration and students.

The CHS 2010 project, completed in April 2008, was divided into three parts: Phase 1 started with renovations to the Media Center and the creation of the new Writing Center; Phase 2 saw the construction of the Wellness Center and upgrades to the Auditorium and rest rooms in the main building in addition to exterior 'curtain' walls. Phase 3 implemented renovations to classrooms, installations of infrastructure for new technology and fire safety, the creation of the new Art and Band rooms by converting the old gym space, addition of a sixteen classroom Science Wing and the building of the new cafeteria. Also, At Cumberland High School, eight Computer labs have been added to the two that existed before the CHS2010 project started. The labs include: Tech/Robotics lab, MIDI lab (music), CAD lab, Business lab, Language lab, Graphics Art lab, and two General use labs.

Recommendations Implemented from Special Education Program Evaluation

The district contracted with the Center for Resource Management (CRM) during the 2007-2008 school year to conduct a program evaluation of the programs and practices associated with the implementation of special education services in the Cumberland Public Schools. The intent of this program evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the service delivery models within the district so programs supporting students with disabilities may be modified or developed to accelerate their

individual learning goals. The Executive Summary of Phase I and Phase II included commendations and recommendations which were presented to the District for consideration. Major findings in the Special Education Program Evaluation include:

Improving Data Access and Data Use

Cumberland Public Schools should take steps to improve data quality and data access across the district.

Special Education Trends

Variations in special education rates at different grade levels should be examined by the district to ensure they do not reflect procedural differences or a lack of supports that would inhibit students exiting from special education.

Special Education Population by Disability

Cumberland Public Schools is providing services to a range of disability groups with students identified as having a learning disability comprising 27% of the K-12 population, followed by speech/language (26%), other health impaired (26%), emotional disability (9%), autism (6%), and other (6%).

Attendance

The district is to be commended for exemplary elementary attendance patterns for both special education and regular education students, but needs to monitor the increase in absence in grade 8, and proactively address the attendance problems at the high school.

Cohort Progress in Reading and Math

Cumberland Public Schools needs to intensify its efforts to provide the depth of reading and math intervention special education students need to improve their skills.

Improving the Performance of the Lowest Performing Students

The district needs to critically examine a lack of progress in improving the performance of the lowest performing special education students and develop a district-wide plan to address this issue.

Ongoing Financial Accomplishments FY 2007 through FY 2010

The Superintendent of Schools and her staff have achieved the following financial accomplishments on behalf of the Cumberland Public Schools working collaboratively with the Office of the Mayor, the Cumberland Town Council, members of the Cumberland School Committee and other elected and appointed officials representing the Town of Cumberland.

1. The Cumberland Public Schools along with the Town of Cumberland negotiated a new healthcare Administrative Contract extension with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Rhode Island that has resulted in savings and refunds of approximately \$650,000 for the school department in fiscal year 2008 and over \$800,000 over twenty four months. The reduced administrative costs have continued to realize savings in the healthcare budget for the district in each ensuing fiscal year since.
2. The creation of a new "Plan Group 65" has been offered to our retirees and their spouses once they reach age 65 or become disabled. The participants of this new plan must have participated and qualified for both social security parts A & B. The new plan allows them to save significant dollars in purchasing health coverage through the school department, and since the plan is a premium arrangement, the claims incurred by members of the plan are billed and paid by Medicare and Blue Cross and not the school budget. Numerous eligible members have switched over to this new plan, at a cost of \$341 per month to the member.
3. Additional savings have been realized through the formation of a healthcare consortium. The district joined a new Healthcare Consortium that includes Johnston, North Providence, Lincoln, Woonsocket, Cranston and Cumberland in order to reduce administrative fees from a \$69 fee in fiscal 2009 to \$28 in fiscal 2010.
4. Certified and administrative employee co-pays for health care have been increased through targeted negotiations. After a small breakthrough in the last contract from 10% to 11%, employee co-pay rates will increase as follows: 14.5% (2009-2010); 15.5% (2010-2011); 16.0% (2011-2012).
5. In the spring of 2009, the Business Office completed a re-enrollment of all employees who receive health benefits as well as their life insurance policies. The goal being to development our own data base of healthcare information that will assist the district in managing its health plan, ensure that only individuals who should be on Cumberland Plans are being provided benefits, and to make sure our beneficiary information is up to date on employees life insurance policies.
6. The School Department provided the \$3.5 Elementary/Middle School Building Committee with an additional \$229,000 in funding to complete renovation projects at Ashton and John J. McLaughlin elementary schools. These funds, realized through savings in fiscal year 2007, supplemented bond proceeds provided by the Town of Cumberland. Both the project at JJM Cumberland Hill Elementary School and Ashton School are now complete, and have provided new gymnasiums at both schools, expanded work space for school administration and school health services at the Ashton School, and a new media center at JJM Cumberland Hill School

7. In fiscal 2007, the School Committee repaid a \$172,695 loan from the Town for an advance to the School Department's food service account that had been outstanding since the mid 1990's.
8. The School Department balanced our budgets, while, at the same time, establishing both designated and undesignated fund balances and eliminated management comments, contained in the outside auditors "single audit report," that addressed concerns over fixed assets and software security.

The following additional savings were realized through negotiations and execution of the bid process in FY 07 through FY 2010.

1. Through a negotiated reduction in maintenance cost on copy machines, trading old copiers, and budget savings, the School Department was able to purchase seventeen (17) new copiers that were desperately needed in each school in the district. Each school received at least two new machines. The total cost for the new copiers was \$173,000.
2. Through a Request for Proposals, the School Committee negotiated a new contract for telephone services with Cox Communications. The contract provides the district with savings that result from a five year contract pricing arrangement, but is flexible enough for the district to terminate if there was a desire to change services. The savings from this new contract are expected to be approximately \$125,000 over sixty months.
3. The School Committee entered into a new contract with the vendor who provides food services to the district, Sodexo Food Services. The new contract provides for additional guaranteed revenues of \$45,000 to the district and a \$50,000 computerized Point of Sale system.
4. The School Department realized other savings by renegotiating the contract with the vendor who provides Medicaid reimbursement services (\$38,000), eliminated the services of a payroll consultant (\$52,000), and renegotiated the maintenance cost on copy machine contracts (\$55,000).
5. The School Committee reprogrammed capital dollars and other savings to purchase state of the art security systems for all school buildings (\$62,000), new modernized phone systems for the elementary and middle schools (\$34,000), and new lighting in both middle schools as well as Community and Garvin elementary schools (\$69,000) that are resulting in energy savings of approximately \$30,000 annually.
6. The School Department has also been praised by the Rhode Island Department of Education for having one of the most financially sound transportation contracts in the State of Rhode Island. The pricing that Cumberland has paid for transportation services is well below the pricing that the State achieved through a recent bid process. The recently mandated statewide transportation policy seeks to reduce transportation cost for non-public and special education students by having districts share buses when possible. The Cumberland contract is not only less expensive per bus, but also has no fuel escalation clause unlike the State bid.

The Special Services Office has worked diligently to provide the special education services required by Cumberland students through their Individual Education Programs (IEP) while at the same time containing costs incurred by the district.

1. According to the Kids Count data, Cumberland had approximately 1200 students enrolled as Special Education students on June 30, 2005, approximately 24% of the overall population at the time, and reaching a low of 18.4% in December 2009. The efforts of the Office of Special Services accounts for these decreases while continuing to provide inclusive educational opportunities for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Additionally the Office of Special Services has been collaborating with general education to establish Response to Intervention (RtI) supports for those students who are not eligible for an IEP yet require interventions to meet benchmarks.

2. As we approach the development of the FY 2011 budget, a review of data from the Office of Special Services provides an additional picture of the decreases in the number of students requiring out-of district placements. The proposed FY11 out of district tuition budget expenditures amounts to \$1,310,000 (27 students) which is a decrease of approximately \$1,000,000 when compared to FY07 (50 students). These savings have been realized as a result of the return of students from out-of district placements and the development of in-district specialized programs such as transition which meets the needs of students from ages 18-21. In addition specialized programs for students with autism have been created in grades k-8 as well as an elementary program for students with significant social/emotional needs.. For the FY11, the Office of Special Services plans to continue this trend with the development of additional Severe/Profound classrooms and a classroom for students with Autism at the high school level.

3. The development of in-district specialized programming meets the current needs of students with disabilities as well as builds capacity for the district to support these students within in their home community and any other identified students with similar needs.

History of Overall Special Education Population in Cumberland Public Schools:

Date	Total Special Education Population	Cumulative Reduction
June 30, 2005	1228	---
December 1, 2005	1143	85
June 20, 2006	1139	89
December 1, 2006	1087	141
June 7, 2007	1078	150
October 15, 2007	1036	192
January 29, 2008	1009	219
December 1, 2008	944	284
September 2009	929	299
December 2009	906	314

History of Out-of-District Enrollments in Relation to Tuitions:

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	Proposed FY 2011
Number of students with out-of-district tuition (as of June 30)	50	42	37	33	27
Proposed Tuition Budgets	\$2,361,649	\$2,341,303	\$1,769,954	\$1,571,000	\$1,310,000
Actual Tuitions	\$2,297,711	\$2,054,080	\$1,527,232		

Overview of Revenues and Expenditures

Revenues are classified as local or non-local. The local budget consists of unrestricted state aid, town appropriation, Medicaid reimbursements and other miscellaneous school revenues. Non-local revenues consist of restricted state aid, federal funds and grants.

In fiscal year 2010-2011, the Cumberland Public Schools is projecting a local budget of \$51,382,051. In fiscal year 2009-2010, the local budget is \$52,232,084 and is augmented by \$4,606,643 (see page 26 for details) of Article 31 dollars, literacy funds, federal funds, food service revenue, and grants to constitute a total spending plan of \$56,838,727. Below are fiscal 2009 and 2010 budgets, as well as the proposed 2011 budget. The district has assumed that the proposed FY2010 midyear reduction in state aid the governor has recommended will be carried forward by the state in FY2011. Also the district has assumed that the Town will provide a 1% increase in the local appropriation [\$362,000]. This would replace the \$373,000 the town reduced the district's fiscal 2009 appropriation by last November. The district realizes the severity of the town's financial condition and has only made this minimal request to replace funds that were previously allocated to the district..

The FY 2011 budget does not include a town master lease. After not receiving any master lease funds in fiscal years 2009 and 2010, many capital items that the district needs have not been purchased. However, realizing the town in this financial environment does not want to issue any debt, the district plans on entering into certain lease arrangements which will allow the district to acquire technology at both the middle and elementary levels and to complete certain needed capital projects.

Revenues	2009	2010	2011 Proposed	Increase/Decrease FY10 to FY11
Town Contribution	36,408,031	36,202,474	36,564,499	362,025
State Aid/Fed ARRA	12,590,773	12,055,368	11,039,979	(1,015,389)
Medicaid	375,000	450,000	500,000	50,000
Other Local	2,155,641	2,684,817	2,695,733	10,916
Master Lease				
Reimbursement Town	380,887	0	0	0
Fund Balance	508,780	839,425	581,840	(257,585)
<u>TOTAL</u>	52,419,112	52,232,084	51,382,051	(850,033)

(1) Article 31 dollars have been excluded from the general fund budget due to the legislated restrictions on their use.

As required by the Town Charter, school department expenditures are classified by object code within major categories: salaries, services, supplies and capital. Expenditures are also classified by department. The Rhode Island Department of Education requires an end of the fiscal year reporting by function using In\$ite, a computerized system that allows for uniform comparisons across all Rhode Island school districts. The Cumberland Public Schools uses the accrual method of accounting for revenues and expenditures, a practice that is consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting practices.

Expenditures in fiscal 2011 are projected to decrease by \$850,033 or 1.63%. The major sources of the decrease are from anticipated savings in union concessions, a retirement incentive and re-structuring of the elementary schools. Nearly all of the School Department's operating costs are determined by labor contracts, service contracts, state requirements, and health and safety requirements. Local funding (state and town appropriations) has not kept pace with increased costs resulting from enrollments, rising healthcare costs, state retirement contributions and certain increases in operating costs.

Expenditures:	2009	2010	2011 Proposed	Increase/ (Decrease) FY09 to FY 10
Salaries	\$ 29,530,269	\$29,889,332	\$30,367,383	\$478,051
Fringe Benefits	13,752,706	12,876,691	13,484,600	607,909
Purchased Services	6,430,446	6,753,830	6,718,557	(35,273)
Materials & Supplies	2,324,803	2,434,231	2,495,161	60,930
Capital	380,887	278,000	208,899	(69,101)
Concessions, Incentives, Restructuring		0	(1,892,549)	(1,892,549)
Totals	\$52,419,112	\$52,232,084	\$51,382,051	(\$850, 033)

The Cumberland Public Schools local budget consists of town funding, state aid to education, Medicaid reimbursements, and school revenue. The local budget is used to educate students, transport them to and from school, and maintain school buildings and equipment. It supports all school administration and other daily school operations. The local budget sponsors education programs like ESL, Special Education, summer school and kindergarten. All the salary and employee benefit costs for the staff required to carry out these listed services are appropriated in the local budget.

The non-local budget consists of restricted-use funds mostly from the State of Rhode Island and the Federal Government. These funds are typically very restrictive, but give the Department the resources to conduct professional development, improve curriculum, enhance classroom activities, purchase technology, and plan and implement school reform. These funds are used to train teachers and other staff, engage the parents and community, develop and implement a standards-based curriculum and curriculum frameworks, provide supplemental educational services, and offset the excess cost of special education programs for students with disabilities.

State entitlements include the Literacy Set-Aside, and Article 31. Article 31 funds are targeted for approved activities that support professional development and technology. The majority of the non-local funds are from the federal government. Non-local funding for Cumberland Schools in fiscal year 2009-2010 is listed on the next page, as amounts for fiscal 2010-2011 will not be available until May.

Non-Local Funding FY 2010

Funding Source	Amount	Purpose	District Programs Supported
Title I Title 1 ARRA	\$427,605 \$266,545	Improving academic achievement of disadvantaged students	Reading Recovery Literacy programs Knowing Mathematics Program
Title II, Part A	\$191,176	Teacher Quality Class Size Reduction	Classroom teachers to reduce class size Professional development in mathematics, science and curriculum development Support for Leadership Team development
Title II Technology	Competitive Grant received \$0	Technology	Professional development to support implementation of digital portfolio at Cumberland High School
Title III	\$19,879	Limited English Proficient Students	Professional Development in use of Rosetta Stone Software for individualized reading program
Title IV	\$19,100	Safe and Drug Free Schools	Contracted services for substance abuse counselors at middle and high schools
Title V	\$0	Educationally disadvantaged children and their parents	Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System (PBIS) Professional development for Leadership Team
IDEAB IDEAB ARRA	\$1,146,104 \$815,910	Special Education (offsets the excess costs of programs for students with disabilities)	Professional development Materials and supplies to support Individual Education Programs Salaries for staff Early Intervening Services (EIS)
Preschool Preschool ARRA	\$51,893 \$17,412	Special Education Preschool	Special Education preschool
Perkins	Funds sent directly to Vocational School	Vocational, technical, school-to-work programs	Vocational, technical, school-to-work programs
Literacy Set-aside	\$334,046	K-12 literacy, administrative infrastructure to support literacy	Literacy
Professional Development Article 31/Technology	\$116,973	School level and district level professional development	Targeted support to improve student learning "Professional Partners" Program offering mentoring and teacher induction
Food Service	Estimated \$1,200,000	Lunch Program Revenues	Lunch Program
Total	\$4,606,643		

State Fiscal Stabilization Funds of \$656,631 for fiscal 2010 are included with state aid on page 24.

Significant Trends

Cumberland schools are becoming increasingly more dependent on non-local funds, especially for its reform initiatives. In the last several fiscal years, funding from the state has been level funded and in fiscal years 2010 and 2011 is being proposed to be reduced by the Governor. This lack of support from the state has resulted in the town having to increase its contribution to the school department substantially during the last decade; however lost state aid to the town has resulted in the town contribution being dramatically limited over the last few budget cycles. In fiscal year 2009, the mid-year State budget crisis resulted in the mid-year state appropriation being reduced even after Federal Stimulus funds were used to offset a portion of the lost state aid. In fiscal 2010, once again the Governor is proposing a reduction in school aid that would be offset with stimulus dollars and pension changes that would save the school districts additional dollars to offset the lost aid. As of this budget submission, the General Assembly has not acted on the proposal. If the district once again loses state aid this will force the district to re-allocate dollars in order to balance the budget which will likely result in important purchases being deferred or eliminated.

In fiscal year 2001, state aid represented 30% of actual school revenues. In fiscal 2011, unrestricted state aid will represent only 20% of the school budget, which as mentioned above has resulted in the town having to increase its annual appropriation to fund schools, and has also forced the school department to limit resources available for non-discretionary items such as textbooks and educational supplies. In fact, these two important line items grew less than 1% from fiscal years 2003 through fiscal year 2007. However in fiscal year 2008, the School Committee increased the education supplies and textbook line items by approximately 10%, which resulted in an average increase of 2.4% over that time period. The fiscal 2008 increase was certainly a step forward, but with the volatility of budgets and the loss of state aid, these important line items have been either level funded or reduced, and in fact the district had to freeze dollars that were appropriated for library books in fiscal 2009 and only allocated \$65,000 for library books in fiscal 2010 due to budget constraints

The Cumberland Public Schools budgeted approximately \$500,000 for items such as textbooks, workbooks, library books, periodicals and educational supplies or approximately 1% of the fiscal 2009-2010 budget. Even when adding in pupil transportation and athletic services and materials, the amount is approximately 5.0% that goes directly to students. That compares to the approximately 83% of the budget spent on salaries and fringe benefits. In fact, just medical cost and pensions totaled \$10.8 million or 20.8% of the fiscal 2009-2010 budget, and is twenty times larger than the amount allocated for all books and educational supplies for students. Trends like these highlight how the school district has been forced to level fund, or in some cases reduce educational expenditures, in order to keep up with unsustainable fringe benefit costs. When combined with ever shrinking resources from the state and town, reducing the amounts spent on employee benefits and utilities is a must.

The next page shows budgeted expenditures since fiscal year 2007 and indicates the four year percentage growth as well as the annual average percentage increases.

Cumberland Public Schools Budget "Drivers" FY 2007 – FY 2010

	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	% Incr.	Ave %
Expenditure	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010		
Salaries	\$28,843	\$29,409	\$29,530	\$29,889	3.6%	1.2%
Pensions	\$3,017	\$3,658	\$4,204	\$3,538	17.3%	5.8%
Utilities	\$1,281	\$1,278	\$1,462	\$1,355	(0.6%)	(.02%)
Medical	\$5,887	\$6,487	\$7,461	\$7,306	24.0%	8.0%
All Tuitions	\$2,990	\$2,926	\$2,314	\$2,163	(27.7%)	(9.2%)
All Other	\$8,200	\$7,654	\$7,163	\$7,981	(0%)	(0%)
Totals	\$50,218	\$51,412	\$52,134	\$52,232	4%	1.3%

The 2010-2011 budget continues to address controlling these budget drivers. The proposed budget proposes energy savings through hiring an outside vendor to assist in maintaining our facilities, as well as managing our custodial staff. The budget proposes reductions in healthcare cost and personnel costs through negotiations and additional efficiencies. Also, returning students from expensive out-of-district placements to classrooms within the district has continued to bring reductions to Special Education tuition payments. All of these (drivers) mentioned above are anticipated to be budgeted at lower levels in fiscal 2011 than in the current year.

State Aid

The Governor's original budget for the 2008-2009 fiscal year level funded school aid for Cumberland, at \$12,590,773. However, due to a mid-year state budget shortfall of approximately \$357 million, the state reduced state aid and replaced most of the reduction in the case of Cumberland with Federal Stimulus Funds and enacted pension savings that offset some of the aid that was originally included in the state FY 2009 budget.

In fiscal 2010, the Governor is once again proposing a reduction in State aid which would result in Cumberland receiving approximately \$1 million dollars in state aid with once again addition Federal Stimulus Funds and further pension changes being proposed to offset the lost aid.

For fiscal 2011, the district has used the Governor's proposed 2010 numbers as of this budget submission.

Rhode Island has not had a state education aid formula since the late 1990's, and is the only state that currently has no formula in place. The Rhode Island Department of Education is currently working on behalf of the Governor and General Assembly to create a fair and equitable formula for Rhode Island school districts. The substance of the formula as of this budget submission is unknown but taxing capacity and tax effort of a community, as well as the number of students that cost the district excessive amounts to educate are all expected to be a part of the formula. Though Rhode Island had an average \$13,660 per pupil expense (2006-2007) compared to a national average of approximately \$10,000, the state of Rhode Island only provided approximately 35% of the funding sources for school districts compared nearly 50% nationally in fiscal 2007. If Rhode Island were to contribute at the national average, it would result in about \$175 million in additional annual state aid. The state of Rhode Island has been working to finally develop a fair and equitable formula for the distribution of State Aid that will eliminate the outdated ways the state has distributed this aid for years. The new formula would result in an increase of over \$4 million dollars a year for Cumberland with full funding of this increase completed by fiscal 2016. Even if Rhode Island were to follow an equal and fair formula, without increasing the available resources dedicated to state aid, the result would be a shift in locations where state aid was distributed and would result in Cumberland receiving over \$4.0 million in additional aid.

The State continues to rely on municipal property taxes as the principal tax source to fund schools, bringing with it issues of tax equity among local property taxpayers as well as gaps in resources available for core instruction costs among school districts. In March 2004 a coalition of municipal leaders and the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council proposed an educational equity and tax relief act. In its 2004 session, the Rhode Island General Assembly established a joint legislative committee to establish a permanent education foundation aid formula for Rhode Island. The committee has undertaken an adequacy study on which to base a funding formula. Although a funding formula has yet to be established, survey data has been sought from schools and districts and this work has generated a dialogue regarding the wealth of a district and its capacity to tax along with the implications of establishing a foundation funding formula. However, the terrible state of the budget in Rhode Island has kept reform in the area of state aid at the discussion level only.

Property Tax Information

The Cumberland School Committee does not have the authority to tax citizens directly in support of schools. On an annual basis, the School Committee seeks appropriations from the Town Council for funds to supplement other revenues. Approximately seventy percent [70%] of the School Department's general fund is provided by the Town, which raises funds through property tax, fees, fines and permits. According to the Town Finance Director, the May 2009 property tax rate is \$12.81 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. In 2009-2010 the Town allocated \$36.2 of its budget to the Cumberland Public Schools.

Even though Cumberland taxpayers contribute over \$36 million to fund education, the town still has a lower tax burden than many other Rhode Island cities and towns. In fact, according to the Rhode Island Expenditure Council (RIPEC), Cumberland's "Estimated Effective Tax Rate" and "Property Tax Levy as a Percent of Value" were both ranked 29th in the state as of fiscal year 2006. With a median income that is in the top third in Rhode Island and a tax burden in the bottom third, the capacity to raise taxes to support both the town and school budgets has been more available than most other Rhode Island cities and towns and results in Cumberland receiving less state aid than communities who have less tax capacity and higher burden of taxes on its residents.

Per Pupil Costs

Almost all of the School Department's operating costs are determined by labor contracts, service contracts, state requirements, and health and safety requirements. Salary, substitutes, employee benefits, building maintenance, transportation, and administrative costs are appropriated centrally. Individual schools are allocated discretionary funds on a per student basis. These "School Improvement Funds" may be used by the school-level decision makers for activities aligned with their approved School Improvement Plan.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, Cumberland's per pupil cost was \$10,565 in fiscal 2009. In fact, in fiscal year 2007, the latest information provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Cumberland per-pupil expense of \$10,167 was \$601 less than the second lowest per pupil spending district in the state and represented 74.43% of the statewide average of \$13,660. Statewide spending data comparisons are available online at http://www.ridoe.net/ride_insite/Default.htm

Distribution and Allocation of Funds

The Department of Education measures five major categories of educational expense. Below are comparisons of Cumberland against the statewide average in fiscal 2005-2006.

Cumberland allocated 76% of its total funds to instruction, support, and leadership, 18% to operations, and 6% to other commitments in fiscal 2006-2007. The state averages for the same categories were 74%, 15% and 11% respectively, which mirror the Cumberland allocations, however the statewide average is \$3,493 greater.

EXPENDITURES (FY06-07)	State Average Per Pupil	Cumberland Per Pupil
Instruction	\$7,060	\$5,422
Instructional Support	2,239	1,757
Operations	2,054	1,802
Other Commitments	1,521	616
Leadership	<u>786</u>	<u>570</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$13,667	\$10,167

In fiscal year 2007-2008, Cumberland allocated 76% of its total funds to instruction, support, and leadership, 17% to operations, and 7% to other commitments and the per pupil cost increased to \$10,167 allocated as follows:

EXPENDITURES (FY08-09)	Cumberland Per Pupil
Instruction	\$5,652
Instructional Support	1,712
Operations	1,902
Other Commitments	729
Leadership	<u>570</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$10,565

Though statewide data for fiscal 2008-09 is not available, the \$10,565 spent may not have been enough to lift Cumberland from its previous designation as the district with the lowest per pupil expenditure in Rhode Island. This may be deceiving when you compare Cumberland to other districts that spend more on select employee benefits (for example, health care coverage for post-employment). Certain benefits add a significant dollar amount to per pupil costs in some districts, but do not add to

the amount the district is targeting to the educational curriculum. Cumberland schools must balance its ability to offer fair compensation to its employees in order to retain a skilled workforce without offering compensation packages that become excessively costly in the future.

Distribution and Allocation of Funds (continued)

In fiscal year 2010, salaries account for 57% of the budgeted appropriations. This figure increases to approximately 82% when fringe benefits are included. Services, including outsourced services such as transportation, maintenance, and special education services account for 12%. Supplies and equipment account for the remaining 5%.

In\$ite Financial Information

The Cumberland Public Schools, like all Rhode Island school districts in Rhode Island, is monitored by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). Each district must fulfill an annual financial reporting requirement. This requirement, In\$ite, is a collection of the district's financial data that categorize district expenses. The following is the definition of In\$ite taken from the RIDE website,

In\$ite – the Finance Analysis Model for Education – is software designed as an easy to understand information and reporting system for school district expenditures.

In\$ite includes all sources of funding (federal and state grants, town/city allocations, state aid and other funds that each district may receive) to analyze each district's expenditures. With millions of dollars being spent to educate students, it makes sense that decision-making data be available to district and state leaders regarding where resources are being spent. In\$ite is a tool that helps in this effort, as it provides consistent ways to review expenditures for every school district and in the future, every school.

Every district's costs should not be the same- there are many policy and program decisions that every district has the ability to make based on the resources available to them. Wealth of the community, labor contracts, etc. will all influence per pupil cost differently from district to district.

As mentioned previously, In\$ite groups school district expenditures by five major functions; Instructional, Instructional Support, Operations, Other Commitments, and Leadership. These functions provide an overview of how district funds are used to operate schools and educate students. Each major function is divided into sub-functions and then detail functions.

Rhode Island Laws Governing School Finances

The Constitution of the State of Rhode Island assigns the responsibility for public education to the General Assembly. (Article XII, Section 1). However, a 1995 court case determined that this section confers no fundamental and constitutional right to education, nor does it guarantee an equal, adequate, and meaningful education.

Rhode Island has not had a formula for allocating state aid to schools since 1998. Earlier legislation specifying a minimum per pupil expenditure and method for allocating state aid based on the city or town's tax capacity (Foundation Level School Support, R. I. Gen. Laws 16-7) was suspended. Districts now receive a base allocation determined annually by the Rhode Island General Assembly. Under Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative (R.I. General Laws 16-7.1), districts with children in poverty and limited English proficiency receive additional funds for professional development of teachers, early childhood education, full-day kindergarten, student equity, language assistance, student technology, and vocational equity. The total appropriated annually for these funds is distributed to qualifying districts based on enrollment and the proportion of students who meet the requirements of each fund. As a result of the lack of a state funding formula, and the appropriation of funds on an annual basis, state aid is not predictable year to year.

State Aid

More recent legislation (The Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act, R.I. General Laws 16-7-2) formed a joint legislative commission to establish a permanent education foundation aid formula for Rhode Island that provides for a school finance system predicated on student need and taxpayer ability to pay, promotes educational equity for all students, and reduces the reliance on property tax to fund public education.

Balance Budget Requirement

R.I. General Laws 16-2-9 sets forth the general powers and duties of school committees. Among those responsibilities are to "provide for" and "assure" the implementation of federal and state laws, regulations of the board of regents, and local school policies. This provision also provides that the school committee shall "adopt a school budget to submit to the local appropriating authority," and to "adopt any changes in the school budget during the course of the school year." Specific budgetary provisions in R.I. General Laws 16-2-23 require the Board to adopt a balanced budget. The relevant language is explicit: "The school committee of each school district shall be responsible for maintaining a school budget which does not result in a debt" and "The school committee shall, within thirty days (30) days after the close of the first and second quarters of the state's fiscal year, adopt a budget as may be necessary to enable it to operate without incurring a debt."

The "balanced budget" requirement also appears at R.I. General Laws 16-2-18: "If, in any fiscal year a school committee is not notified that estimated expenses may exceed total available appropriations, the school committee shall adopt and implement a plan to maintain a balanced school budget, which plan shall provide for continuous regular public school operations consistent with the requirements of section 16-2-2; provided, that in no fiscal year shall a deficit be permitted for school operations."

Rhode Island Laws Governing School Finances (continued)

R.I General Laws 16-2-21 sets forth another iteration of the “balanced budget” requirement. The relevant language is: “Only a school budget in which total expenses are less than or equal to appropriations and revenues shall be considered an adopted school budget”.

Finally, R.I General Laws 16-2-21.4 sets forth a process for requesting waivers from compliance with certain state regulations, when the appropriated budget is insufficient, so that the school committee “may operate with a balanced budget within the previously authorized appropriation.”

Consultation with City/Town Council

R.I. General Laws 16-2-21 requires that the School Committee and Town Council participate in a joint pre-budget discussion 60 to 90 days before the formal submission of the budget to the Town. At this meeting the Town Council is required to submit an estimate of the projected revenues for the next fiscal year, and the School Committee is required to submit to the Town Council a statement of anticipated expenditures, projected enrollments, and staff and facilities requirements. This law further requires the School Committee to submit a recommended budget to the Town Council at least 30 days before the Council meets to make appropriations and to submit an amended budget, if necessary, within 30 days after the Town Council determines its appropriation for the schools.

Property Tax Cap

Another significant section of RI General Law 16-2-21 is that the budget adopted by the School Committee can be in fiscal 2008 propose no more than a 5.25% increase in the appropriation of municipal funds over the amount of municipal funds appropriated in fiscal year 2007. This amount is reduced to a 5% increase in fiscal year 2009, 4.75% in fiscal year 2010; 4.5% in fiscal year 2011; 4.15% in fiscal year in 2012 and 4.00% thereafter.

National Comparisons Based on U. S. Department of Education Statistics

Table1. Number and Percentage of Districts and Students

Number and percentage of districts and students, by district membership size for regular public elementary and secondary school districts in the United States and jurisdictions: School year 2004–05

District size (number of students)	Districts			Students			Cumulative totals	
	Number	Percent	Cumulative percentage	Number	Percent	Cumulative percentage	Districts	Students
Total	14,174	100.0	†	48,451,378	100.0	†	†	†
100,000 or more	27	0.2	0.2	6,594,068	13.6	13.6	27	6,594,068
25,000 to 99,999	239	1.7	1.9	10,194,857	21.0	34.7	266	16,788,925
10,000 to 24,999	592	4.2	6.1	9,024,254	18.6	53.3	858	25,813,179
7,500 to 9,999	348	2.5	8.5	3,014,417	6.2	59.5	1,206	28,827,596
5,000 to 7,499	708	5.0	13.5	4,332,543	8.9	68.4	1,914	33,160,139
2,500 to 4,999	2,018	14.2	27.7	7,134,861	14.7	83.2	3,932	40,295,000
2,000 to 2,499	795	5.6	33.3	1,784,819	3.7	86.8	4,727	42,079,819
1,500 to 1,999	1,069	7.5	40.9	1,863,062	3.8	90.7	5,796	43,942,881
1,000 to 1,499	1,527	10.8	51.7	1,885,275	3.9	94.6	7,323	45,828,156
800 to 999	776	5.5	57.1	698,026	1.4	96.0	8,099	46,526,182
600 to 799	963	6.8	63.9	670,520	1.4	97.4	9,062	47,196,702
450 to 599	896	6.3	70.3	467,852	1.0	98.4	9,958	47,664,554
300 to 449	1,035	7.3	77.6	383,603	0.8	99.2	10,993	48,048,157
150 to 299	1,324	9.3	86.9	293,354	0.6	99.8	12,317	48,341,511
1 to 149	1,557	11.0	97.9	109,867	0.2	100.0	13,874	48,451,378
Zero ¹	39	0.3	98.2	0	0.0	100.0	13,913	48,451,378
Not Applicable	261	1.8	100.0	†	†	100.0	14,335	48,451,378

† Not applicable.

¹ Membership may be zero in two situations: (1) if the school district does not operate schools, but pays tuition for its students to attend a neighboring district; and (2) if the district provides services for students who are accounted for in some other district(s).

NOTE: Data include all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, four outlying areas (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Department of Defense dependents schools (overseas and domestic). Not included in this table are local supervisory unions, regional education service agencies, and state and federally operated agencies. The number of regular districts presented in this table differs from that presented in table 1, which represents all districts. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1c.

Appendix: Budget Timeline

Budget Timeline

January 11, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School budget presentations made to Central Leadership Team (CLRT) • CLRT budget presentations made to Superintendent of Schools
Week of January 11-15, 2010	Budget questions answered from school and department personnel on as needed basis
January 11-15, 2010	Ongoing budget discussions with Leadership Team as budgets are developed
February 5, 2010 (tentative)	Proposed FY 2011 Budget submitted to School Committee for review
February 18, 24, & 27, 2010	Cumberland School Committee Budget Workshops for FY 11 Budget as required by Town Charter
February 27, 2010	School Committee votes to approve FY 11 Budget
March 1, 2010 (first Monday in March)	FY 2010-2011 Budget for Cumberland Public Schools transmitted to Town Hall
March-April 2010	Discussions with Finance Director to review proposed School Department budget for FY 2010-11
April 19, 2010 (third Monday in April)	Finance Director shall submit his recommendations to Mayor as provided for in the Town Charter
May 10, 2010 (second Monday in May)	Mayor submits budget recommendations to Town Council as prescribed in Town Charter
May 10 – June 7, 2010 (concluded by first Monday in June)	<p>No less than two (2) separate public hearings with Cumberland Town Council as prescribed in Town Charter</p> <p>Excerpt from Cumberland Town Charter: <i>"Upon receipt of the budget, the Council shall make provision for no less than two public hearings thereon, to be held on separate days and to be concluded no later than the first Monday in June."</i></p>
No later than June 14, 2010 (second Monday in June)	Final approval of allocation for FY 2010-11 by Cumberland Town Council; Budget submitted to Mayor for signature
Thirty (30) days after final approval of budget by Town Council	Reconciled budget due to Cumberland Town Council
July 2010 – August 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and department budgets reconstructed to reflect final allocations • Supplies and textbooks ordered • Enrollments and staffing monitored • FY 11 budgets available for principals/directors upon return to work