

Cumberland School Department

Office of the Superintendent
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ROBERT A. MITCHELL
Superintendent

March 9, 2017

Mr. Raymond T. Salvatore, Chairperson
Cumberland School Committee
2602 Mendon Road
Cumberland, RI 02864

RE: Superintendent's Recommended FY 2018 Budget Proposal

Dear Mr. Salvatore:

On behalf of the students and staff of the Cumberland School Department, please accept my recommended budget for the 2017-2018 school year in the amount of \$66,040,147, a 3.4% increase over last year. The School Department is faced with a budget gap of approximately \$5.6 million dollars, resulting from the need to use one time revenues, increasing healthcare costs and contractual obligations. The administrative team worked hard to develop solutions; however, the School Department cannot close this budget gap through reductions alone. The proposed budget calls for an estimated \$2 million dollars in cuts, many of which are certified and noncertified personnel. In an effort to resolve the budget shortfall, we are recommending a three prong approach:

1. The school department has recommended \$2 million dollars in cuts.
2. We need the maximum effort of 4% from the town (\$1.6 million).
3. We need relief from charter school tuitions (approximately \$3.9 million).

This year's budget preparation has been an extremely challenging one. When we began the process, we knew we were faced with a budget shortfall. Given this challenging task, we took a shared approach to balancing the budget. For example, we are eliminating a significant number of positions including both certified and non-certified staff and we are also asking administrators to take a salary freeze. We are asking taxpayers to provide the maximum percentage increase allowed by law in our request from the Town. Lastly, the district will once again use a significant amount of fund balance to support the proposed budget. This budget asks the Cumberland community to share responsibility in supporting our school system. No one stakeholder can absorb the burden of closing this budget gap alone.

The Cumberland School Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, gender expression, race, religion, national origin, color or disability in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

R. Salvatore, CSC Chairperson
FY 18 Budget Proposal
March 9, 2017

By all accounts, the Cumberland School District has made significant strides in the last five years. Normally, I would share budget highlights that would demonstrate how we are planning to move the district forward. Unfortunately, the opposite is true in this year's budget submission to the school committee. Eliminating the positions required to balance the budget will set us back significantly. We have been adding positions over the last few years that provided needed additional academic and mental health support to students. Many of these positions are staples in other school districts, such as interventionists and content specific specialists. Given the budget shortfall, we will be making significant cuts in human capital.

Over the last few years, we have worked hard to hire highly skilled staff. Unfortunately, the newest hires will be the ones most impacted by these cuts.

The cuts represented in this proposed budget are difficult, will affect teaching and learning, and the intervention support we can provide to our most needy students. As Superintendent, it is my responsibility to provide all students with an optimal educational experience. I do not believe this budget achieves this goal, however, given these financial constraints, we will strive to continue the good work happening in the Cumberland School District.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Mitchell
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Cumberland School Committee