



Shrewsbury School Committee Priorities & Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Development

Overview

This document provides the community with information about the School Committee's priorities for the Fiscal Year 2018 School Department Budget. It also is designed to provide guidance to the Superintendent of Schools and the School Department administration regarding the development of its initial Fiscal Year 2018 School Department Budget proposal.

Priorities

The initial FY18 School Department Budget proposal shall include resources to address each of the following priorities for Fiscal Year 2018:

- To sustain the improvements in class size realized through the Fiscal Year 2015 budget by keeping as many sections as possible within School Committee guidelines for class size. These guidelines are: Preschool: 15; Kindergarten: 17-19; Grades 1 & 2: 20-22; Grades 3-8: 22-24; Grades 9-12: 18-20.
- To continue investing in instructional materials, curriculum personnel, and staff professional development in order to ensure that the district's educational program meets local expectations for academic rigor, as well as state mandates.
- To make sufficient investments in technology in order to realize the educational and operational benefits available through digital resources and to provide sufficient capacity for the state's new testing system, while creating opportunities to benefit from short and long term cost efficiencies.
- To make investments in district-based programming and resources in order to provide high quality, cost effective opportunities to educate students with all forms of specialized needs within their own community's schools rather than specialized placements outside of the district.
- To respond to the increase in English Language Learner students and provide sufficient staff and programmatic support for them to be successful learners and master their English comprehension, writing, and speaking skills as quickly as possible, per the state's legal mandate for such services.
- To evaluate and assess the level of administrative support and adjust accordingly to adequately serve our growing student population and meet the ever-increasing compliance and reporting requirements of the federal and state governments.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the initial FY18 School Department Budget proposal will:

1. Provide adequate resources to meet all legal mandates required of the school district.
2. Reflect the terms of collective bargaining agreements and other contractual obligations.
3. Provide sufficient resources to maintain a) the existing educational program and b) staffing levels necessary to meet mandates and priorities.
4. Utilize the best available information to project changes in costs (such as tuitions) and revenues (such as state funding through the Chapter 70 and Circuit Breaker programs, grants, etc.).
5. Estimate the level funding of all federal and state grants and factor known increases or reductions from FY17.
6. Review fee levels for all programs and adjust, as necessary, to reflect market price conditions and specific cost structure of each program.
7. Examine ways to reduce or shift costs in order to achieve district priorities without requiring additional funding allocations wherever possible. This includes a review of our FY17 School Choice seats and consideration of offering any new, additional seats in FY18.

8. Consistent with prior practice, the initial budget proposal will take into consideration the town's tax levy constraints.
9. Budget document preparation will be modified to align with the best practices inherent in the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) Meritorious Budget Awards Program.

Guidance

The School Committee recommends that the administration's initial FY17 Budget proposal should reflect the School Committee's fiscal and strategic priorities so that there are sufficient allocations for the following (categorized by strategic priority in no particular order):

Strategic Priority: Engaging & Challenging All Students

- Sufficient number of teachers to stay as close as possible to class size guidelines, based on enrollment projections and available classroom space.
- Curriculum and instructional materials necessary to align the district's curriculum with the updated Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the proposed new state assessment system.
- Professional development for educators to successfully adapt to new curriculum and assessment requirements and initiatives, technology initiatives, and state mandates.
- Creation of innovative programs that extend student learning beyond the classroom and leverage expertise and proximity of institutions of higher education and area business enterprises.

Strategic Priority: Promoting Health & Wellbeing

- Equipment and training necessary to further enhance safety and security.
- Comprehensive support for students experiencing significant social, emotional, mental and behavioral health issues.

Strategic Priority: Enhancing Learning Through Technology

- Continued investments that provide access to digital learning opportunities.
- Increased capacity to implement technology to provide cost-effective, in-district supports for special education.
- Investments to increase opportunities for quality online learning and to improve operational efficiencies.

Strategic Priority: Increasing Value to the Community

- Investments to build additional capacity for creating innovative and cost-effective in-district programs so that cost savings may be applied to minimize impact on taxpayers.
- Expansion of efforts to procure alternative sources of revenue to offset the appropriated budget through sponsorships, grants, and donor giving.