

Shrewsbury Public Schools



Fiscal Year 2021

Superintendent's Cost Reduction Recommendations

March 4, 2020

“You absolutely cannot make a series of good decisions without first confronting the brutal facts.”

– Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

Developing a budget is a series of decisions that represent an organization's values, its priorities for achieving its mission, and its needs – within the constraints of what is possible.



Our mission

The Shrewsbury Public Schools, in partnership with the community, will provide students with the skills and knowledge for the 21st century, an appreciation of our democratic tradition, and the desire to continue to learn throughout life.



Our core values

Respect & Responsibility

Collaboration & Communication

Commitment to High Standards & Expectations

Equity

Our vision



Our priorities



Brutal fact:

The Fiscal Year 2021 budget cycle for our school district will be difficult, as the constraints regarding what is possible will compromise our ability to advance our priorities, and meet our needs.

What is the same about next year?

There will not be enough revenue to meet budget needs due to the structural funding dilemma that Shrewsbury faces.

What is different about next year?

Unlike this year (but like many previous years), the status quo budget will not be sustainable due to the magnitude of several cost drivers.

Cost drivers

- The cost of doing business for a successful school district
- Fluctuate from year-to-year depending on circumstances
- Many factors are outside of our control, even when managed well (e.g., mandates)
- Doing the right thing for children & families

Main cost drivers for Fiscal Year 2021

- 1) Out-of-district special education tuitions
- 2) Out-of-district special education transportation
- 3) Vocational technical high school tuitions
- 4) Employee compensation
- 5) Weaning off of full-day kindergarten tuition
- 6) In-district transportation

Status quo recommendation for School Department town-appropriated budget

\$70,579,913

Increase of \$4,277,873, or 6.45%

**Budget gap compared to initial Town
Manager's Budget = \$2.9 million**

How will we mitigate the anticipated budget gap?

- 1) Reduce costs where possible during the *current* fiscal year
- 2) Increase revenue through increased fees and tuitions
- 3) Increase alternative funding where possible through competitive grants, partnerships, sponsorships, & philanthropic gifts
- 4) Reduce costs in next year's budget through reductions in investments in materials, equipment, technology, professional development, programming, and/or staffing

Cost Reduction Planning Guidelines

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

Cost Reduction Plan

Operations

Operational efficiencies	\$16,000	Revised copier lease, vendor change for custodial supplies, etc. No negative impact.
Changes in personnel projections for next school year	\$80,655	Replace known maternity leave with long-term substitute; reduce allowance for salary rate for teacher hires to replace vacancies, which means less flexibility hiring educators with more experience.
Site-based discretionary funding reduced by 3.2%	\$10,000	Less discretionary funding for principals and department directors to utilize for supplies, materials, staff conferences, etc.
Reduce substitute budget	\$44,850	If budgeted amount is not sufficient to cover short- and long-term absences as year evolves, may require limits on number of substitutes provided and require more internal coverage by other staff.

Cost Reduction Plan

Operations

Reduce one bus from transportation program	\$72,000	Examine routing for further efficiencies to reduce the need for one bus. May require longer travel times for students on certain routes.
Reduce funding for technology hardware & software	\$98,000	Defer purchases of some networking equipment and other infrastructure items; end subscription to ThoughtExchange community survey service.
Reduce funding for textbooks & curriculum materials	\$25,000	Some purchases will be deferred instead of acquiring updated books and materials.
Reduce funding for staff professional development	\$100,000	Reduces ability to provide trainers, attend conferences, or provide substitute coverage to free up educators for training; compromises ability to implement new programming; will seek grants and other alternative funding to offset reduction where possible.

Cost Reduction Plan

Operations

Operations Reductions Subtotal:

\$446,505

Cost Reduction Plan

Personnel/Program

Reduce funding available for compensation increases for non-represented administrators (Central Office administrators & principals)	\$31,230	Includes Superintendent's recommendation to freeze his own compensation at the current year's level.
Reduce overtime for Central Office & Information Technology support staff	\$15,000	Some overtime necessary to maintain for school year start up phase; otherwise, timelines for certain reports and services will need to be expanded.
Eliminate position for assistive technology teacher (1.0 FTE)	\$20,000	Teacher resigned prior to start of current year, and district has successfully used a contracted services model to address needs; represents net savings for removing teaching position for FY21 and using contracted services instead.
Reduce summer curriculum per diem work at elementary level	\$11,700	Less availability of curriculum coordinators/instructional coaches to support planning for upcoming school year.

Cost Reduction Plan

Personnel/Program

Eliminate remaining elementary level door monitors (1.0 FTE)	\$19,000	Part-time door monitors at Coolidge and Spring Street to be eliminated. Reliance internal coverage for secretaries to monitor doors during school day.
Reduce Transportation, Safety, & Security Coordinator position by 50% (0.5 FTE)	\$30,000	Change work year from year-round to school year schedule, mostly half days except for opening phase of school year; less administrative capacity to respond to needs in these areas, some responsibility shifted to district administrators or other support staff.
Reduce literacy tutor program in grades K-6 by 40% (4.0 FTE)	\$90,000	Reduce positions and/or hours of part-time literacy tutors to save 40% of cost of these supports; will reduce ability to support students who are reading below benchmarks; program will be revamped to serve students with greatest identified needs, regardless of school site, and shift support over the course of the year as needs change. Reductions may be a combination of attrition, reduced hours, and eliminating part time positions.

Cost Reduction Plan

Personnel/Program

Reduce instructional aide support at elementary level by 60 hours (20 hours at Floral Street School, 10 hours each at Beal, Coolidge, Paton, & Spring Street Schools (2.0 FTE)	\$50,000	These same 60 hours were added back to the program in FY16. Will result in less adult academic support for students in grades K-4 and less capacity for day-to-day operational support in those schools. Reductions may be a combination of attrition, reduced hours, and eliminating part time positions.
Eliminate academic tutor position at Oak Middle School (1.0 FTE)	\$25,000	Reduces academic support for students in grades 7 & 8. Another position for staff member will be available through attrition elsewhere.
Do not fill open position due to leave of absence for Grade 3 teacher at Floral Street School (1.0 FTE)	\$61,981	Class size increases but remains within School Committee guidelines (projected average of 23.3 students per class); does not affect a specific staff member due to leave of absence

Cost Reduction Plan

Personnel/Program

Do not fill open positions due to retirement of math teacher, physics teacher, and Spanish teacher at SHS (3.0 FTE)	\$194,250	Five fewer class sections, resulting in slightly higher class sizes and/or fewer course offerings (depending on ongoing course selection process). Does not affect specific staff members due to attrition. Note: Savings between veteran educator salary and replacement salary was already reflected in initial budget projection, further reduction eliminates replacement cost.
Do not fill open position due to resignation of drama teacher at Oak Middle School (1.0 FTE)	\$91,379	Drama will not be part of allied arts programming at Oak next year; position currently filled by long-term substitute.

Cost Reduction Plan

Personnel/Program

Reduce size of preschool program by closing Wesleyan Terrace site & reduce aide allotment per classroom (7.3 FTE)	\$162,735	Reduce number of classrooms for Parker Road Preschool from 8 to 7, which reduces 1.0 FTE teacher and 2.0 FTE aides (requires reconfiguration of 1 space at Parker Road currently used for occupational & physical therapy); reduction of aide/classroom ratio from 1.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE per class, resulting in an additional 4.3 FTE reduction of aide positions. Given level of turnover/attrition in paraprofessional positions, hope is that no aide layoffs will be necessary. Transfer opportunity available for teacher affected.
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Cost Reduction Plan

Personnel/Program

Eliminate one Grade 5 two-teacher team at Sherwood Middle School (2.0 FTE)	\$115,159	Projection will increase class size to <u>average</u> of 25.5 students (1.5 above guidelines), similar to Grade 6 next year. Transfer opportunities available to teachers affected subject to licensure.
Eliminate advanced math coach positions at Sherwood Middle School & Oak Middle School (2.0 FTE)	\$152,762	Reduces opportunities for students with advanced math performance and for support for classroom math teachers to provide enrichment. Transfer opportunities available to teachers affected subject to licensure.
Eliminate Grade 6 foreign language program at Sherwood Middle School (2.8 FTE)	\$184,658	Delays students' study of Spanish, French, & Mandarin by one year. Requires revamping of schedule at Sherwood that affects educator collaboration periods. Eliminates 2.5 FTE teaching positions and reduces a 1.0 FTE position to 0.7 FTE. Transfer opportunities currently not available.

Cost Reduction Plan

Personnel/Program

Personnel/Program Reductions Subtotal:

\$1,254,854

Full Time Equivalent Positions

Eliminated from the Budget:

28.6 FTE

Cost Reduction Plan

Total

\$1,701,359

Remaining amount to close budget gap:

\$1,198,641

Other cost mitigation by School Department:

Current year cost-saving measures:
approximately \$300,000

Additional revenue from raising fees:
approximately \$55,500

Budget Gap Reduction

Original budget gap = \$2.9 million

Reduced by:

Current year cost savings = \$300,000

Additional fee revenue = \$55,500

Cost reduction plan = \$1.7 million

Remaining budget gap =

\$854,732

The brutal fact is that our financial situation is deeply troubling

- The town's structural funding dilemma is compromising the quality of public education in Shrewsbury
- We will not offer as much educational programming and support for student learning next year
- Hardworking, skillful, dedicated members of our staff are being negatively affected