



Shrewsbury School Committee Priorities & Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Development

Overview

This document provides the community with information about the School Committee's priorities for the Fiscal Year 2022 School Department Budget. It is also designed to provide guidance to the Superintendent of Schools and the School Department administration regarding the development of its initial Fiscal Year 2022 School Department Budget proposal.

Clearly, the Coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted all aspects of our lives. Our top priority must continue to be the health and safety of students and staff and we must plan for sufficient resources to support this.

With health and safety as our top priority, we acknowledge that some of the goals and objectives included in our Strategic Priorities & Goals Plan for 2018-2022 will take longer to achieve.

It is also very important to note that *prior* to the pandemic the school district experienced a budget crisis that required significant cost cutting due to lack of fiscal resources, totaling about \$1.9 million in reductions and almost 30 full-time equivalent positions. The budget process for Fiscal Year 2022 should consider the impact of these reductions and what restorations might be warranted in addition to the complicating factors of the ongoing pandemic and the opening of the new Beal Elementary School next year.

Priorities

The initial FY22 School Department Budget proposal shall include resources to address each of the following priorities:

1. Coronavirus Planning and Resources:

To provide adequate staff, equipment, services, and supplies to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment in all of our schools as we continue to deal with the Coronavirus Pandemic. Planning must necessarily include the budget options of full in-person learning, possible continuation of the current hybrid model, or partial/complete remote learning.

2. Opening New Beal Elementary School:

To provide the necessary staff and other operating resources to open the new Beal Elementary School and fully implement our elementary redistricting plan.

3. Resources for Continued Progress Towards Fulfillment of the 2018-2022 Strategic Priorities & Goals

- To maintain class sizes within school committee guidelines.

- To consider what investments will advance the district's commitment its core value of equity, particularly as it works to advance equity and anti-racism throughout our school communities.
- 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 further fulfill the recommendations of the University of Massachusetts [Edward J. Collins Center for Public Management] Central Office Organizational Study by providing resources to address district capacity related to personnel, organization, space, and technology.

Assumptions & Guidance

It is assumed that the initial FY22 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 level of funding for all federal and state grants.
6. Review fee levels for all programs and adjust, as necessary, to reflect market price conditions and specific cost structure of each program. With respect to the Full-Day Kindergarten Program, the administration should prepare a financial plan that continues the plan to eliminate the tuition fee in anticipation of providing universal, full-day kindergarten starting in the Fall 2022 in connection with the completion of the Beal Project.
7. Examine ways to reduce or shift costs in order to achieve district priorities without requiring additional funding allocations wherever possible.
8. Given space constraints, the administration should assume no new School Choice seats would be voted by the School Committee for approval.
9. Display data and budget information in new ways including further use of the *ClearGov* web-based platform.
10. Similar to FY21, the Superintendent's budget recommendation should be separated in a way that costs for a "status quo" or "level services" budget are totaled and any new resources to meet the challenges of the Coronavirus, the opening of new Beal School, and fulfillment of the Strategic Priorities and Goals calculated separately.