

Cumberland School Department

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ROBERT A. MITCHELL
Superintendent

March 15, 2016

Ms. Lisa A. Beaulieu, Chairperson
Cumberland School Committee
2602 Mendon Road
Cumberland, RI 02864

RE: Superintendent's Recommended FY 2017 Budget Proposal

Dear Ms. Beaulieu,

On behalf of the students and staff of the Cumberland School Department, please accept the Superintendent's recommended budget for the 2016-2017 school year in the amount of \$64,056,199, a 2.6% increase over last year. The administrative team worked hard to develop a budget that would allow us to continue to improve the quality of education in our district. Our goals were to:

- Provide additional mental health support at every level;
- Provide more STEM related opportunities for students grades K-12;
- Address the need for more English Language Learner support due to a growing ELL population;
- Support continued professional development for the implementation of Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), Thinking Maps, curriculum mapping, and blended learning.

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 of approximately four million dollars. Given this seemingly insurmountable task, we took a shared approach to balancing the budget. For example, we are asking our certified staff to accept a one year contract that does not provide for a wage increase. We are asking taxpayers to provide the maximum percentage increase allowed by law in our request from the Town. Lastly, the district will 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 is being asked to absorb the burden of closing this budget gap.

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

Despite this challenge, I am pleased to announce that by re-allocating existing resources, and using more fund balance, we were able to begin to address some of our needs. As you know, there has been a Budget Task Force consisting of a variety of stakeholders that looked at both school and town finances. This task force included central office administrators, school committee members, the town council president, the town finance director and independent members of the community with expertise and experience in finance and business. The goal was to determine future budget shortfalls, consider ways to address these shortfalls and to develop a timeline and plan of action. The budget task force came to the realization, through their review of the school and town finances, that both the school department and the town have run lean operations. The town and school department have been operating below the rate of inflation. The Budget Task Force also discovered that due to expenses beyond the control of the school department such as pensions and charter school tuitions, budget gaps would exist each year into the foreseeable future.

I was asked to provide a list of critical items that the district needed to grow student achievement. The Priority of Needs included several items. A few of the more critical identified needs were mental health services, English Language Learner (ELL) services, and changing the high school and middle school start times. I am pleased to report that through creative problem-solving and the re-allocation of existing resources we have addressed some of these needs. The Priority of Needs document is attached for your review.

Next year, every elementary school will have a full-time school counselor to provide needed mental health support. Additionally, we have allocated funds to hire an outside contractor to assist students with more significant mental health issues. Since we will be adding 1.5 school counselors to the elementary level, the current social worker servicing three elementary schools can be moved to the middle level. Each middle school will have a .5 social worker. The social worker who was providing services to the two middle schools and the high school will now be assigned to the high school. The high school will have a full time social worker. The adding of the elementary school counselors will have a positive impact on the entire system grades K-12.

We will also be hiring an ELL coordinator to ensure that students with limited English language proficiency are being addressed. The Budget Task Force recommended the hiring of a grant writer to assist the district in obtaining potential monies that could be an added source of funding to the district. We have added a position to support this recommendation. We have also budgeted funds for a study to examine the cost of later start times at the middle and high schools.

Another exciting new initiative is the creation of three STEM literacy coordinators for each of our elementary schools. The STEM Literacy Program will feature an opportunity for all students to develop 21st century skills in the core areas of Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Technology.

These positions can provide a hands-on interactive unit of study that provides an emphasis in:

- student understanding of STEM topics
- student attitudes toward science and engineering (especially underrepresented students)
- teacher understanding of/attitudes toward STEM fields

With such a program we can encourage hands-on, engaging experiences that will help foster a student who is ready to contribute in a global scientific world. The Curriculum is rooted in Research and is used in all fifty (50) states. Units of study will be chosen from "Engineering is Elementary" a curriculum developed by the Museum of Science in Boston, Massachusetts. This Curriculum "addresses America's pressing need for effective STEM education or classroom instruction in science, technology, engineering, and math, through three initiatives" –

- curriculum development
- professional development for teachers and teacher educators
- a comprehensive program of educational research and evaluation

The instructional focus will be one that integrates engineering and technology concepts and skills with elementary science topics. Support for such a pathway comes from the National Science Foundation, as well as major corporations and foundations. The teacher's job will be to expose students to a plethora of experiences ranging from resourcefulness, basic Computer Science fundamentals, and Engineering concepts.

In the spirit of pursuing continuous improvement of services for our students, we are also in the process of discussing programmatic re-organization options for the high school guidance department. As today's global, knowledge-based economy continues to grow and transform, so must the manner in which we mentor and guide our students. In order for our students to be prepared for the future, we must have school counselors who are leaders in our school community and who can be partners with the administration in forging the path towards college and career readiness. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of support that our students receive in planning their career readiness so they are ready for those professions that currently exist and those that are on the horizon.

I hope that all stakeholders will support this budget plan even though it requires sacrifice. Working together, the Cumberland school system will continue to move in a positive direction.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Mitchell

Superintendent of Schools

cc: Cumberland School Committee

Attachments (2): Priorities of Need; Expected Revenues & Appropriations

**Cumberland School District
Budget Task Force
Priority of Needs**

Priorities	Rationale	Gap	Approximate Cost
<p>School Start Time</p> <p>Recommendation: Middle and High Schools start time of 8:30.</p>	<p>The results of a three-year research study by the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, conducted with over 9,000 students in eight public high schools in three states, reveal that high schools that start at 8:30 AM or later allow for more than 60% of students to obtain at least eight hours of sleep per school night. Teens getting less than eight hours of sleep reported significantly higher depression symptoms, greater use of caffeine, and are at greater risk for making poor choices for substance use. Academic performance outcomes, including grades earned in core subject areas of math, English, science and social studies, plus performance on state and national achievement tests, attendance rates and reduced tardiness show significantly positive improvement with the later start times of 8:35 AM or later. Finally, the number of car crashes for teen drivers from 16 to 18 years of age was significantly reduced by 70% when a school shifted start times from 7:35 AM to 8:55 AM.</p> <p>Organizations supporting a later start time based on research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Center for Disease Control ● American Academy of Pediatrics ● National Sleep Foundation 	<p>An additional 10 busses are needed to accommodate a later start time at the high school.</p>	<p>\$500,000 (10 busses at \$50,000 each)</p>

<p>Social Workers</p> <p>Recommendation: Hire an additional 2 social workers.</p>	<p>Currently there are 2 social workers servicing 4438 students in the district. There is one social worker providing mental health services to our five elementary schools (2001 students) and one social worker providing services to our high school (1302 students) and middle schools (1135 students). Listed below are some of the services provided by Social Workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating in special education assessment meetings as well as Individual Educational Planning Meetings ● Working with those problems in a child's living situation that affect the child's adjustment in school. (home, school, and community) ● Preparing a social or developmental history on a child with a disability. ● Counseling (group, individual and/or family) ● Mobilizing family, school, and community resources to enable the child to learn as effectively as possible in his or her educational program ● Assisting in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies. 	<p>Currently there are 2 social workers and we need at least an additional 2. The School Social Work Association of America recommends a student to Social Worker ratio of 250:1.</p>	<p>\$220,000 (2 social workers at \$110,000 each including salary and benefits)</p>
<p>School Psychologists</p> <p>Recommendation: Hire an additional 2 psychologists.</p>	<p>School psychologists provide direct support and interventions to students, consult with teachers, families, and other school-employed mental health professionals (i.e., school counselors, school social workers) to improve support strategies, work with school administrators to improve school-wide practices and policies, and collaborate with community providers to coordinate needed services. They help schools successfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote student motivation and engagement ● Conduct psychological and academic assessments ● Individualize instruction and interventions ● Manage student and classroom behavior ● Monitor student progress 	<p>Currently there are 5.5 psychologists in the district. There is one psychologist in the high school, one at each middle school and 2.5 at the elementary schools. An additional 2 are needed. According to the National Association of School Psychologists, psychologists providing comprehensive and</p>	<p>\$220,000 (2 psychologists at \$110,000 each including salary and benefits)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect and interpret student and classroom data ● Reduce inappropriate referrals to special education. ● Improve students communication and social skills ● Assess student emotional and behavioral needs ● Provide individual and group counseling ● Promote problem solving, anger management and conflict resolution ● Reinforce positive coping skills and resilience ● Promote positive peer relationships and social problem solving ● Make referrals to and help coordinate community services provided in schools 	preventative services such as counseling, behavioral interventions and crisis response, the ratio should not exceed 500 to 700 students per psychologist.	
<p>English Language Learner (ELL Administrator)</p> <p>Recommendation: Hire an ELL administrator</p>	<p>According to the Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners Authorized by R.I.G.L. 16-54-2, we are required to hire an ELL administrator because Cumberland is now a high incidence district. A high incidence district is a school district with a total of 150 or more English Language Learners. We currently have 165 ELL students. High-incidence school districts must appoint a full-time ELL Administrator whose primary responsibility is the development and management of the district's ELL program.</p>	Currently all we have is a part time ELL coordinator.	\$140,000 (Salary and benefits for an administrator)
<p>Response to Intervention (RTI)</p> <p>Recommendation: Hire an RTI coordinator</p>	<p>Approximately 20% of our students (880) are receiving intervention support in grades K-12. Response to intervention (RTI) is a process used to prevent academic and behavioral failure through universal screening, early intervention, frequent progress monitoring, and increasingly intensive research-based instruction or interventions for children who continue to have difficulty. RTI is a multileveled approach for aiding students that is adjusted and modified as needed.</p>	Currently principals are facilitating the RTI process in their schools. A consistent district-wide process is needed to manage this time intensive responsibility.	\$110,000 (Salary and benefits for the coordinator)

	<p>The RTI coordinator's responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting district and school administrators in the implementation of RTI, balanced assessment, assessment literacy, and Classroom Assessment for Student Learning. • Monitor and maintain student achievement data associated with RTI providing regular updates to central office and building administrators. • Provide professional development to administrators and certified and classified staff on RTI, balanced assessment, assessment literacy, and Classroom Assessment for Student Learning. • Provide coaching and assistance to reading specialists, math interventionists, and all certified staff in schools to improve student achievement. • Evaluates, purchases, distributes, and provides support for intervention materials. • Collaborates with district and building administrators to design an individualized plan for each school that is focused on the fidelity of implementation of RTI programs, monitoring of student achievement data, and use of formative assessments. 		
<p>Technology Support</p> <p>Recommendation: Hire an additional Tech Support person.</p>	<p>The district has an inventory of approximately 7,000 devices including desktops, laptops, iPads, and Chromebooks. Additionally, there are approximately 350 projectors across the district. In the past three years we have purchased approximately 3,500 Chromebooks. All of the systems in the district (ex. Aspen, Budget Sense, AESOP, PARCC, Unified Chart of Accounts, etc.) are connected to technology in some way. An additional Tech Support person is needed to install, maintain, and repair this technology.</p>	<p>Currently we have one support technician handling the bulk of the building based service work. An additional person is needed to handle the sheer volume of devices we have in the district.</p>	<p>\$80,000 (Salary and benefits)</p>

<p>Technology Clerk</p> <p>Recommendation: Hire a .5 clerk to support the technology department.</p>	<p>A clerk is needed to provide support to the IT department. All purchasing, inventory control, maintenance requests, and all other clerical responsibilities are taken on by IT staff. This is inefficient and an additional burden for an already overtaxed department.</p>	<p>There is no clerical support for the IT department.</p>	<p>\$50,000 (Salary and benefits)</p>
<p>Athletics</p> <p>Recommendation: Increase funding for athletics to reduce burden on families.</p>	<p>Athletics are underfunded in the district. Currently we are sixth from the bottom in our per pupil expenditure on athletics according to RIDE's unified chart of accounts. Sports boosters raise a significant amount of money to support the athletic programs in the district.</p>	<p>According to the RIDE chart of accounts, we are spending \$77 per student in the district. The average for K-12 districts is approximately \$131 per student. (Ex. Lincoln spends \$178 per student, Smithfield spends \$116 per student).</p>	<p>An increase of \$20 per student (4500) would result in an increase of \$90,000.</p>
<p>Librarians/Media Center Specialists</p> <p>Recommendation: Hire an additional 5 librarians</p>	<p>There should be a librarian in every school. President Obama has signed the Every Student Succeeds Act, drafted in part by Rhode Island Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, which includes language recognizing the importance of school library programs. Senator Reed was quoted in a press release:</p> <p>"Effective school library programs are essential supports for educational success. Knowing how to find and use information are essential skills for college, careers, and life in general. A good school library, staffed by a trained school librarian, is where students develop and hone these skills. In too many communities, libraries are neglected or considered an afterthought amidst the many other worthy education priorities competing for funding. But we know that school library programs can have a positive impact on student achievement, and we must invest in them."</p>	<p>Currently there are 2 librarians in the high school, 1.7 librarians in the elementary schools and none in the middle school.</p>	<p>\$400,000 (5 librarians at \$80,000 each including salary and benefits)</p>

Expected Revenues and Appropriations

Revenues	FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2016	FY 2017
	School Com	July-June	School Com	July-Dec.	School Com
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Proposed
Town Appropriation	38,690,573	39,587,082	40,137,242	14,607,724	41,405,001
Town Appropriation Add'l 2015	1,547,623	0	651,114	0	0
Town Appropriation Add'l 2016	0	0	198,886	0	0
Town Appropriation Add'l 2017 4.00%	0	0	0	0	1,364,935
Proceeds Master Lease Or Town Fd Balance	0	848,607	517,759	390,581	0
Town Appropriation Year 1 of 7 Year Plan	0	0	0	0	291,265
State Aid	15,732,748	15,664,394	15,732,748	7,750,624	16,552,780
State Aid Antic. Year 6 Formula Incl.s Density	0	0	952,956	0	1,134,923
Medicaid	400,000	370,855	400,000	135,905	400,000
Section 125 Co-Pays	1,450,000	0	1,450,000	569,890	1,500,000
Retiree Health, Dental & Life Insur.	294,800	0	305,000	201,380	275,000
Building/Pool Rentals	153,500	162,295	160,000	59,214	200,000
Energy Rebates	0	54,166	0	0	0
Tuitions From Other Districts	0	12,285	0	0	0
Private Donations	0	24,000	0	0	0
Pre-School/ Tuitions & Transportation	84,000	89,900	84,000	43,100	100,000
Summer School Tuitions	30,000	31,950	35,000	21,213	35,000
Food Service Reimbursements	78,800	0	30,600	0	30,600
Miscellaneous	32,448	6,210	35,000	132,555	16,695
Article 31 Technology	78,442	0	139,039	0	0
Literacy Set Aside	0	0	146,206	0	0
Fund Balance Designated Educational Supplies	0	0	230,204	0	0
Fund Balance Designated Capital	0	0	427,432	0	150,000
Fund Balance Undesignated	525,000	0	745,758	0	600,000
	59,097,933	56,851,744	62,378,944	23,912,186	64,056,199

Expected Revenues and Appropriations

Expenditure - Summary

Fiscal Years 2015-2017

	FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2016	FY 2017
	School Com	July-June	School Com	July-Dec.	School Com
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Proposed
Salaries	32,938,223	32,571,835	35,577,554	13,062,387	35,745,800
Fringes	12,614,856	9,846,991	13,596,405	6,070,745	14,295,728
Services/Dues	10,395,371	9,806,233	10,370,968	4,520,775	11,673,620
Materials	1,797,470	1,606,187	1,911,404	688,146	1,878,977
Capital Outlay	1,351,885	1,942,851	1,084,289	441,700	462,074
Retirement Incentive	0	0	0	0	0
Staffing	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	-161,675	0	0
TOTAL	59,097,805	55,774,097	62,378,944	24,783,753	64,056,199