

# Cumberland School Department

Office of the Superintendent  
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ROBERT A. MITCHELL  
*Superintendent*

March 12, 2019

Mr. Paul DiModica, Chairperson  
Cumberland School Committee  
2602 Mendon Road  
Cumberland, RI 02864

*RE: Superintendent's Recommended FY 2020 Budget Proposal*

Dear Mr. DiModica:

On behalf of the students and staff of the Cumberland School Department, please accept my recommended budget for the 2019-20 school year in the amount of \$71,461,336. The requested amount is a 2.80% increase over last year. As the Superintendent, I have the responsibility of submitting a budget that meets several goals. First and most important is to keep students and staff safe and to improve the academic performance of all students. We also have a responsibility to submit a budget that is fiscally responsible. And last but not least, we want to maintain the positive growth we have experienced in recent years and not regress in any way. As you know, our goal as a district is to be one of the top five performing districts in the state at every level -- elementary, middle and high school. Based on the most recent RICAS assessment results, we are a top five performing district in grades three through eight. We will be focusing our attention on helping the high school achieve this goal. This budget meets these goals and is aligned with the District's Strategic Plan.

By all accounts, the Cumberland School District has made significant strides in the last five years. To continue this positive pattern of improved academic performance, we will be focusing our attention on a fixed Tier 2 structure that appropriately supports students in achieving grade level proficiency for grades K through 12. Currently students fall into one of three categories when assessed. Tier 1 students are those that are responding well to the core instruction that takes place every day. Tier 3 students are those students who struggle academically. These students get support from special educators and interventionists on a regular basis. Our intent with this budget is to focus on the 456 students in math and the 399 students in ELA or students that fall in Tier 2. Our intent is to focus on moving these students to proficiency. We believe that our primary responsibility is to support all students in achieving grade level proficiency in both math and ELA. We owe that to our students and their families.

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.

To support this identified need, we will be recommending the addition of 6.6 positions to support Tier 2 students at both middle schools and the high school. To offset the cost of these positions, we are recommending the elimination of 6 positions both certified and noncertified that will become vacant at the end of the year. We will essentially be reallocating existing resources. These positions will provide additional instructional support to students struggling with core instruction based on a variety of student assessment data.

In addition to the Tier 2 support, this budget includes funds to replace dated technology throughout the school department. The plan is to replace Chromebooks at two grade levels in the high school at an approximate cost of \$218,000 and provide grade 6 Chromebooks at the middle level at a cost of \$116,000. We also plan to complete the third year of our three year plan to replace other technology devices throughout the district (desk tops, projectors, and Hovercams) at a cost of \$150,000.

Another highlight of this budget includes funds to support the adaptation of a new K-2 curriculum at a cost of \$250,000. Our student performance data supports the need to change this curriculum district wide. Our plan is to fund half of the total cost (\$125,000) in this years budget and the remaining amount in FY21.

We also have a responsibility to continue our focus on school safety. In a recent meeting with Mayor Mutter, he pledged his support to issue the remaining \$2 million allocation of a \$5 million master lease. The \$2 million are the remaining funds of the \$5 million master lease previously approved by the Town Council. These funds will be used to install new boilers at the high school (\$1.2 million) and provide added building entrance security (\$800,000) at several of our schools. The Town will receive a 45% reimbursement (\$900,000) for this work.

We believe that this budget will support the positive academic growth that the Cumberland School District has experienced in recent years. We respectfully request the School Committee's support for the 2020 proposed budget.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Mitchell  
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Cumberland School Committee