

**Special Board of Education Meeting**

**Monday, October 2, 2017 6:00 PM**

Somers High School Auditorium, 5 Vision Boulevard, Somers, CT 06071

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS
4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS
  1. 2017 Potential Budget Reductions 2

The Superintendent will discuss with the Board of Education the potential budget reductions in the 2017 budget based on the state's budget crisis.
5. ADJOURNMENT



# Somers Board of Education Administrative Report

Title of Report: 2017-18 Budget Reductions

Board Meeting Date: October 2, 2017

Action

Report

Information

Discussion

Submitted by: Brian P. Czapl

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## ***Executive Summary***

The state budget crisis continues to have negative impacts on both the town and the school system. In light of the uncertainty, the school system is forced to implement drastic budget cuts that will result in reductions in operational expenses and staff layoffs. It is important to note this plan represents a worst case scenario. We are hopeful this plan will be modified or rescinded pending the impact of the final state budget.

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## ***Report***

### **Overview**

Currently (as of the development of this report) there is no approved state budget. The only concrete allocation of municipal aid is from the governor's August 18, 2017 executive order. This order (effective October 1, 2017) drastically reduces municipal aid to the Town of Somers, including significant cuts to Educational Cost Sharing. In light of this scenario, the Superintendent implemented a spending and hiring freeze last summer. Additionally, plans have been developed for a 5% budget reduction (\$1,127,000). It should be noted this reduction is hopefully a worst case scenario and could be rescinded and/or modified depending upon the final state budget outcomes.

### **Operational Reductions/Savings**

We have made significant reductions to multiple line items that will have the following effects on the school system:

1. Pension - We will not make any contributions to the Secretaries and Paraprofessional Pension Plan. This will have significant impact on future budgets as we are obligated to



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fully fund the pension. We hope to make up this difference by increasing contributions over the next five years.

2. General Maintenance - This line item will be reduced by 25%. This is problematic especially in light of the recent Facilities Study conducted by CREC. We are committed to maintaining and providing students with a safe environment. Reducing the budget means that certain maintenance projects will not occur. Additionally, we will not address many of the items recommended in the CREC report. In order to properly maintain safe and healthy schools we anticipate making larger future budget requests for the Board of Education Budget Maintenance Accounts, larger capital improvement requests to the Somers Board of Finance and a higher than anticipate potential bond/referendum request to address the recommendations of the CREC report.
3. Supplies and Resources - Many classrooms do not have adequate supplies and resources to implement the curriculum as well as best pedagogical practices. This ultimately impacts student learning. By not meeting the learning needs of our students, we put them at risk of not having the proper skill sets to progress to the next level. Additionally, this could lead to greater future expenses for intervention, remediation and special education. Below is a partial list of supplies and resources cut:
  - a. Textbooks
  - b. Workbooks
  - c. Departmental supplies effecting Science, Technology Education, Foods and other resource intensive subjects
  - d. Library books and online subscriptions
  - e. Office supplies
  - f. Custodial supplies
  - g. Athletic equipment
4. Curriculum and Professional Development - We are not providing any professional development outside the school system. This means the instructional gains we have made will come to a halt. If teachers are not growing professionally, our children will not be exposed to the most recent and innovative teaching practices. Additionally, a rigorous, standards based curriculum is the foundation for student learning. We are not developing a unified curriculum that will assure common learning experiences for all students.
5. Capital Outlay - We are not replacing equipment that is failing, end of its life or in need of replacement. This has dramatically impacted our technology program. We are unable to replace aging equipment in the hands of students and staff. This impacts instruction as they are unable to effectively access the emerging technologies essential to 21st century learning. Additionally, not replacing aging infrastructure puts our telecommunications, network, information systems and data security at risk.



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6. Health Insurance - We achieved some savings in our health insurance due to many staff opting out of our plan as well as the hiring freeze.
7. Salaries - We achieved savings (projected through the end of the school year) by initiating a hiring freeze. This in turn has had a negative impact on staff and students. Staff has assumed increased workloads thus reducing time they can dedicate to individualized student instruction.

### **Staffing Reductions**

Despite our best efforts to reduce the budget through operational expenses, we could not find over \$1 million in costs savings. Unfortunately, the balance will come through staff reductions. We are currently in discussions with the bargaining units for concessions. We have asked each bargaining unit for two furlough days. In exchange for this we guarantee there will be no reductions in force from that unit.

Below is the reduction in workforce\*\* (pending outcomes of discussions with bargaining units):

Teachers:	5.7 positions
Administrators:	1.0 position
Custodians:	0.0 positions (savings achieved through early retirement)
Nurses:	0.5 positions
Secretaries/Paras	2.0 positions

*\*\* Effective November 1, 2017*

### **Impact**

These cuts, if enacted will have a devastating impact on the students in Somers Public Schools. We will be taking a step backwards in which it will take years to recover. Below are some of the critical impacts of these budget and staff reductions:

- Innovative classroom instruction will be hindered due to the lack of resources
- Entire instructional programs will be eliminated
- Class sizes could be impact
- Teachers will be forced to teach different subjects and/or grade levels
- There will be major disruptions due to mid-year rescheduling of classes and teachers
- Struggling students in need of additional interventions in order to succeed will not have access to them
- Students will not receive the individualized attention they deserve and are accustomed to
- The district cannot continue its development of 21st century curriculum and professional practice
- NEASC recommendations will not be addressed possibly affecting future accreditation
- Facilities will not be maintained to the standards the community demands



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- After school clubs and activities will be eliminated
- Technology integration, data security and information systems will not be properly maintained or supported