



March 31, 2017

Dear RSU5 Community:

This week's Forecaster article seems to have created some confusion that I would like to clarify. The article states, "Reductions in programs and spending to reduce the now higher tax impact will come from cuts to the nutrition program, band, math, bus leases, and summer guidance at Freeport High School." Although the reporter was well meaning, I believe the way the article was written led to misinterpretation.

To lessen the tax impact from 6.43% to 5.25%, administration proposed to the Board to pay for some of the needed math and band materials from this year's budget savings, rather than in the proposed FY18 budget. No cuts are being made to either of those programs. In fact, there are increases from this current year's budget in mathematics to next year. We are requesting an additional math teacher at the middle school level, and will be adopting a new math program beginning in the fall at the middle school level. Additionally, there is an added position at Morse Street that could assist students who are struggling in math. Math is a priority for us this year, and will continue to be one for next year.

The "band" that the article referenced does not reduce staff or programming; instead, the additional equipment needed will be purchased from this year's savings.

There is no reduction to the nutrition program either. The Board planned to pay off the nutrition debt next year, but it will now be spread over two years. This will allow the RSU to utilize the \$100,000 that was going to reduce the nutrition debt to be used instead to lower the tax impact.

The reference to guidance reductions is focused on additional days for the guidance staff to work. The work they were planning to complete will now be done at the end of this year, rather than the beginning of next year. This helps to realize a savings of \$3,003 in next year's budget.

To summarize the above and to arrive at the current tax impact of 5.25% in the Adopted Board Budget from the previous overall tax impact of 6.43% in the earlier budget, the following occurred:

- \$88,531 in supplies and equipment will be purchased from savings in this current year's budget thus reducing expenditures from the FY18 proposed budget;
- \$16,941 in savings is being realized from flat funding amounts in supplies and books for next year, rather than the earlier proposed 3% increase;

- \$100,000 in revenue will be created in the shared revenue line by reducing the amount of prior nutrition program debt by spreading the debt over two years, rather than one;
- \$73,296 in other reductions:
  - Composting – \$925 (this will become a student led activity at Mast Landing School with no cost to the taxpayer)
  - Pownal cafeteria equipment (received needed equipment due to high school renovation)
  - Freeport High School purchased professional funds for Great School Partnership to consult with us as we move to a proficiency-based system will be funded through a State grant
  - Capital Improvements will still increase, but not as much as initially proposed, realizing a savings of \$25,000
  - Hiring savings – \$25,000: this is an amount that we are expecting to be able to reduce due to people retiring at a higher rate than the staff replacing them.
  - Weight Room Stipend – this is a new position due to the renovation at FHS. Instead of it being opened to students five days a week and year-round, we are proposing to reduce it to four days a week, and not include summer hours.
  - Postponing increasing ed tech hours at Durham Community School until the following year.

This totals a savings of \$278,768, reducing the tax impact from 6.43% to 5.25%.

Let me take this opportunity to remind you of the following dates:

April 12, 2017 Board Meeting at PES

6:00 -6:30: Q&A with individual Board Members regarding FY 18 Budget

April 26, 2017 Board Meeting at DCS

6:00 -6:30: Q&A with individual Board Members regarding FY 18 Budget

May 10, 2017 Board Meeting at FHS

6:00 – 6:30: Q&A with individual Board members regarding FY 18 Budget

May 24, 2017 at FHS Annual Budget Meeting

June 13, 2017 Budget Validation Referendum

We regret that there was a clerical error of any type in the earlier presented budget. Revisions between drafts of budgets before the Board adopts are common as more data becomes available and more feedback occurs from varying stakeholders. If you have any other questions or feedback, we are ready to provide the needed clarification at any of the upcoming Board meetings.

Sincerely,



Dr. Becky J. Foley  
Superintendent of RSU5