



**Ben Lummis**  
Interim Superintendent

**The Public Schools of Brookline**  
Town Hall  
333 Washington Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445  
617.730.2401

January 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to provide an update on the school district's FY21 budget. You may recall I shared budget information with you on November 15 and then again on January 6. Today I want to share the FY21 Budget Recommendation that I presented to the School Committee at their meeting last night.

Last fall, as we began to develop the FY21 school district budget, we anticipated a deficit of between \$2 and \$3.5 million. We immediately set to work reviewing revenues and costs, searching for ways to shrink the projected deficit while maintaining Brookline's commitment to educational excellence and meeting the needs of our diverse learners.

As the months have progressed, both the funding that will be available to the schools and our anticipated costs have come into clearer focus. Still we were faced with closing a \$2.8 million gap between anticipated spending and the funding we have for our schools.

As a result of the hard work of many people, and a making a few difficult choices, last night I was able to report to the School Committee that the *projected deficit has been reduced to approximately \$250,000*. We have been able to lower the projected deficit by:

- Making cuts in planned staff growth that are no longer essential because enrollment growth looks to be levelling off
- Having lower than expected mandatory special education and transportation costs
- Continuing supplies and materials cuts from prior years

The collaborative and deliberative process we used to address the projected deficit allowed us to prioritize what is important to our students, families and staff: maintaining the well-rounded learning experience for all our students, including programs, services and support, and preserving the integrity of the instructional environment for our teachers, educators and schools. Because of this thoughtful budget creation process, we will not need to make across the board cuts. As the budget process continues, I will work closely with principals, curriculum coordinators, and program directors to identify the limited and targeted adjustments needed to balance next year's budget.

Going forward, this means we will need to live within our means, including foregoing the addition of planned new positions. I am confident in our ability to do so. We will also look closely at spending – staffing, programs and services – based on the unique needs in each school as part of an annual assessment of what is needed in the coming year.

My full presentation to the School Committee last night can be found [here](#) and all of the FY21 budget materials can be found [here](#). As the annual budget process continues my office will be providing additional information including budget narratives and details for each school and department. Also, the public is invited to participate in the School Committee's annual budget hearing on Thursday, February 6 at 7:00p.m. on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Town Hall.

Thank you for your patience and support as we developed and shared the many facets of the school district's budget and operations over these past months. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BL", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ben Lummis  
Interim Superintendent