



**The Public Schools of Brookline**  
Town Hall  
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**Ben Lummis**  
Interim Superintendent

November 15, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Last night, at their request, I presented an update on the Fiscal Year 2021 budget process to the School Committee. Following the meeting I shared my presentation with all school staff and I want to take a moment now to also share it with you.

The financial news about the year ahead is difficult. At this point, we anticipate that we will need to identify between \$2 million and \$3.5 million in cost savings to balance the FY21 budget. These cuts are on top of \$2.5 million in cuts we have made in planned spending over the last three years to balance our budget each year. The presentation shows how we have made cuts in expenses, supplies, and other areas to make up for unanticipated costs in personnel, special education and transportation, and for decreases in revenue from the 2018 override.

In all of my communication this year with staff and with families, I have tried to be clear, direct, and respectful, even when delivering difficult news or making tough choices. In sharing this budget information with you, the School Committee, PSB staff, and the broader Brookline community, my aim is to be open and transparent about the major factors impacting our budget and the difficult choices ahead.

In the attached presentation I highlight:

- The difficult choices made over the last three fiscal years to balance our budget each year;
- How our personnel costs are the major driver of our budget growth;
- The challenges we anticipate in the upcoming budget; and
- The potential budget impact of proposed salary increases.

The information in this presentation is the best information we have right now. While the picture is not entirely clear, we need to plan now so that we are prepared to make difficult decisions as the budget process proceeds. District coordinators, directors, principals, and members of my leadership team will be working to identify potential cost savings over the coming weeks and we will share more information with our staff in December. Simultaneously, the School Committee will also engage in work to better understand our budget challenges and identify areas where we can cut costs.

I believe this presentation has a level of candor and detail that is different than in years past. While it may be difficult news, I prefer to have everyone – staff and families - aware of the challenges we face. I do understand that this news will cause unease and concern, especially because we do not have clear answers at this point. It will take time and thoughtful planning to work our way through the budget process. I ask for your patience as our educational leaders and educators develop ideas and ways of finding solutions. In the coming months, I will

continue to provide more information as financial numbers get firmer and we proceed through developing the budget.

We are a strong school community. Working together we will see our way through the difficult choices ahead.

Sincerely,

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

Ben Lummis  
Interim Superintendent