



NEWS RELEASE

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NORWIN SCHOOL DISTRICT
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NO PLANS FOR ELIMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN 2017-2018 \$3.3 Million Budget Deficit Requires Streamlining of Educational Offerings

NORTH HUNTINGDON, Pa. — The Norwin Board and Administration are addressing a projected \$3.3 million budget deficit for the 2017-2018 school year by taking a comprehensive, strategic approach which doesn't target any one area or department, but instead looks at all areas for possible expense reductions.

At this point, the Administration projects that no programs or services will be fully eliminated in 2017-2018. However, because the District faces enormous financial challenges both now and in the future, some program offerings will need to be streamlined. For example, the Administration is considering realigning the current K-12 paraprofessional service model by eliminating 21 paraprofessional positions from among its approximately 75 paraprofessionals who serve as instructional or non-instructional aides. This would result in a savings of \$630,000 to the School District. The Administration believes this can be implemented in a way that continues to effectively meet the needs of students enrolled in special education programs.

The Administration and Norwin Education Association have met and will continue to meet to discuss ways to minimize furloughs and strategize internal professional staff reassignments based on dual certifications by subject. Also, with no promises or guarantees, the Board and Administration will consider an Early Retirement Incentive for teachers as an option which is financially practical for the School District and equally palatable for teachers who may be near retirement.

Through a series of motions leading up to a preliminary budget, the Administration will work with the Board to preserve 2017-2018 program staffing. The Board motions being considered for approval in April include the reduction of paraprofessionals, maintenance of full-day kindergarten for children with developmental needs, addition of 1.5 elementary classrooms for K-6 class size maintenance, and creation of a Middle School Learning Support teaching position to meet the changing needs of the school population.

The Board and Administration are committed to preserving quality education and will make every effort to sustain instructional programs and services through new delivery models. For example, the Board and Administration will learn about a potential bond refinancing in April that could yield approximately \$1 million in savings that can be primarily be realized in 2017-2018.

In March, the Board (based on Administration's recommendation) approved an increase in facility rental fees based on hourly rates for custodial, maintenance, and technical services. This could generate an additional \$50,000 toward operating expenses.

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Also, ten support staff employees, 5.5 teachers, and one administrative school psychologist have announced their retirement or resignation. Some of these positions will be replaced, and others will be eliminated through attrition and internal transfers.

The Board approved a new contract for Student Transportation Services with First Student that freezes 2016-2017 costs (with the exception of shared runs) for 2017-2018 and limits annual increases to 2.5 percent for the remaining years of a five-year contract. The contract also eliminates a minimum of two large passenger busses through a more efficient and cost-effective routing system for maximum ridership and increased state transportation reimbursement based on the current funding formula. Because the contract requires First Student to increase the efficiency of bus routing, there will be an anticipated cost avoidance of an estimated \$250,000 to \$275,000 per year compared to what Norwin School District would have been paying at current levels.

The possibility exists that the Administration may ask the Board in June to consider an increase in real estate taxes of 2.48 mills, which would provide an additional \$924,200 in revenue. No decisions have been made and the Board will approve a final budget in June.

Earlier this spring, the Administration had been exploring the possibility of contracting with Source4Teachers, a leading provider of substitute staffing services, for how the School District staffs substitute teachers and paraprofessionals. That is no longer an option at the present time, but it may be revisited in the future.

Norwin School District currently educates about 5,595 students in Grades K-12 in seven school buildings, as well as students in cyber charter schools and through out-of-District placements for students with special needs. This school year (2016-2017), Norwin School District provides this educational program on a budget of approximately \$67.4 million.

Norwin School District's tax rate is currently 75.2 mills in Westmoreland County, a figure which includes 1.2 mills that Norwin School District collects for Norwin Public Library, and 11.68 mills in Allegheny County. The Norwin School District has consistently had one of the lowest tax rates out of the 17 school districts in Westmoreland County.

[The Administration's Seven Guiding Principles for Academic and Financial Success](#) continue to be the basis of the Administration's philosophy and core beliefs of striking a balance between what is educationally sound for students while remaining fiscally responsible to Norwin taxpayers.

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