



Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

**LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Henry J. Mroz Central Administration Offices  
Edith Nourse Rogers School  
43 Highland Street  
Lowell, MA 01852

Tel: 978-674-4324  
Fax: 978-937-7609  
email: [cscott@lowell.k12.ma.us](mailto:cscott@lowell.k12.ma.us)

## Budget Overview

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The School Committee and the administration have been analyzing the budget in anticipation of a \$ 7 to \$ 9 million dollar shortfall for the past six months. At this point, that projected shortfall has not changed. We have spent many hours considering various cuts - beginning at the Cabinet level and from the K-8 and High School levels. We have worked closely with our building based administrators as we have gone through this very difficult process. We have had numerous Financial Subcommittee meetings analyzing what additional cuts would mean to the K-8 level, the high school, student support services, curriculum and instruction, and the district office. After significant deliberation with the staff and the Committee the following recommendations, which fall drastically short of the anticipated deficit, are being made in the context of a school district that has suffered six years of cuts, over 500 positions lost, and many programs. As well, next year we are welcoming hundreds of refugee students from around the world and the Charter school.

Being cognizant of the very difficult financial times we face I am putting forward a realistic \$ 4 million dollar reduction to our budget because to recommend any more than that would, in my professional opinion, do permanent damage to the district. But first I would like to give the history behind how we have made cuts in the past, in particular at the K-8 level. The building principals were given the directive to cut a number of positions. Basically, they chose the cut that they felt would do the least amount of harm to their school. We asked the same question this year and presented the results of this process to the School Committee during the K-8 Finance Subcommittee meeting. After receiving feedback from the School Committee, the staff and the public, we feel this year is the time to ensure that we have a core curriculum that is the same in all of our K-8 schools. The recommendation being put forward is that the staffing core at all of our K-8 schools consist of a principal, assistant principal, classroom teachers, music, art, physical education and a library aide in order to keep the libraries open. We can no longer afford the different staffing models that have existed across the system. We need to streamline all of the programmatic offerings to ensure the core program is of the highest quality. The Cabinet's goal was to ensure that staffing levels and programs were equitably distributed across all of our schools. We have re-met with all of the K-8

principals to share this rationale with them. The response from our principals has been supportive of this position. The proposed cut for K-8 at this time is \$ 2.5 million dollars.

The proposed cuts at the high school have also been discussed at many Finance Subcommittee meetings and staff meetings. The cuts before us will definitely impact the high school but given the financial situation we find ourselves in this year and the forecast for next, I believe the proposed cut of \$ 1.5 million dollars for the high school is equitable based on the larger class sizes and the lack of resources at the K-8 level. The proposed cut at the high school would result in the elimination of 13 teachers, raising the average class size at the high school to 23. It should be noted that I have made tiered cuts for the Committee to examine but do not feel it is possible to go beyond the Tier I cut that is proposed for the K-8 schools and the high school without doing permanent damage to our entire school system.