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Subject:

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To: **Board of Education** boe@brooklynschools.org, **Jeffrey Otto** jotto@snet.net, **Rick Ives** r.ives@brooklynct.org, **Sherry A. Holmes** s.holmes@brooklynct.org, **Sherry Holmes** holmes@brooklynschools.org



Good Morning,

Jeff Otto pointed out yesterday that we will need to account for an increase in cost for our high school students based on the increase in our receiving high schools' contributions to the teachers retirement system. He, of course, is right. Thank you, Jeff.

Assuming that the student:teacher ratio is similar at all schools, and that the teacher:retirement contribution ratio is similar in all schools, I used the ratio of students:contribution to extrapolate a number that might approximate the overall high school contribution. (Far from perfect but all we have.)

Attached is the revised document. Again, this is real. If the Board were to ask me to suggest reductions in its budget to compensate for the Governor's budget proposal, this is very close to what I would provide to the Board - no idle threats.

It is pretty devastating when you look at it.

Joan is bringing this document as a talking points memo today at CABE's Day on the Hill in Hartford. She will be visiting legislators from Eastern CT to share Brooklyn's story.

Mary



statebudgetreduction-
Brooklyn (1).pdf

March 8, 2017

Brooklyn is a small rural DRG E school district with approximately 1277 students, K - 12. Brooklyn educates 867 students in PK - 8 on our small campus and tuitions 410 students to neighboring area high schools at a cost of up to \$13,676 per student for the majority of students.

With a mill rate of 26.34 and the value of a mill at \$548,989, Brooklyn was spared the drastic reductions in ECS and Excess Cost that were received by other similarly sized districts in the Governor's proposed budget. The combined reduction of those two grants is \$2,475. However, should Brooklyn have to absorb a portion of the contribution to the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), \$769,783, it would prove devastating to our small district. **The total amount of the two reductions, \$772,258, is 4.4% of our current overall budget.** However, it does not stop there. Our receiving high schools will most likely increase tuition costs to cover their additional teachers' retirement contribution. Using the same rate as Brooklyn, our contribution through tuition would be an additional \$364,080 for a total of **\$1,136,338 or 6.5% of our current budget.**

Every school district budget has very little discretionary spending. In Brooklyn, the contribution to the TRS would completely eliminate the textbook line item (\$38,242) and the library book line item (\$9,950) and reduce the general supply line item (\$11,066) by over 12%. However, this is only \$59,258, or just over 5% of the amount needed to fund Brooklyn's portion of the TRS contribution.

The only other means a small district has to reduce the budget is to reduce the number of staff; thereby, reducing services and increasing class sizes. After the discretionary funding reductions, in order to fund the TSR contribution, Brooklyn would reduce 20.5 full time equivalent staff members: two custodians, the educational resource room monitor, two paraprofessionals, and 15.5 teachers (one at each grade level and several in related arts). This reduction would bring the range of our average class sizes to 20 (kindergarten) to 29 (grade 6) and eliminate world language for students and reduce options for our students in technology education, music, and health, as well. Additionally, students would no longer have the services of a certified library media specialist.

Governor's Proposed Budget Reductions

ESC and Excess Cost	2,475
Teachers' Retirement System	769,783
TRS for Receiving High Schools	<u>364,080</u>
TOTAL	1,136,338

Brooklyn's Reductions

Textbooks	38,242
Library Books	9,950
General Supplies	11,066
Custodial Staff* (2)	104,000
Paraprofessionals* (2)	48,970
Educational Resource Room	25,110
Teachers*	<u>899,000</u>
(PK, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/8 Reading (1.5), 7/8 World Language, Technology Education, Music, Health, Library Media Specialists (2))	
TOTAL	1,136,338

*Includes benefits

Sec. 12-123. Selectmen to make rate bill when town fails to lay sufficient tax. When any town has failed to lay necessary taxes or to lay a tax which, in addition to the other estimated yearly income of the town, is sufficient to pay the current expenses of such town, its selectmen shall make a rate bill upon its list last completed for the amount necessary, or for an amount sufficient to pay the deficit in such current expenses, and cause the same to be collected as other taxes.

(1949 Rev., S. 1804.)

No statutory right for taxpayer to enjoin collection of taxes that are not abuse of broad discretion conferred on boards of selectmen by section. 217 C. 303.

Cited. 32 CS 237.