

Hastings-on-Hudson School Budget 2020-2021

FAQ Sheet

This budget season New York State school districts were advised to prepare for a possible 20% reduction in State Aid due to the impact of the COVID-19 emergency on the state's revenues. The final reductions will not be known by the district until September and December of 2020. In preparation for a reduction in State Aid, administrators and department chairs worked diligently to spread the necessary cuts across all three schools and all departments. They shared the burden of reductions and found solutions to stretch resources. The reductions came after long and detailed discussions about the impact of each change. When the budget environment stabilizes, the BOE is committed to restoring areas of reduction to align with our community's values.

1) *What happens if the budget fails to be approved by the voters on June 9th?*

Typically, New York State provides that the BOE may submit its budget and/or proposition(s) to the voters a second time. However, this year, due to the budget vote's condensed schedule, a re-vote will likely not be feasible by the June 30 deadline. In that event, the Board must adopt a contingency budget. This [Lohud article](#) provides further information. The contingency budget requires an additional \$1.3 million to be reduced from our proposed tax levy by cutting our expenditures and/or increasing the appropriated fund balance by decreasing reserves.

2) *What were the reductions made and why?*

Position	Reason
Kindergarten teacher Kindergarten aide	Lower projected enrollment allowed for reduction of one Kindergarten classroom.
Second-grade teacher	The class size was lower than expected. Reduction of one section is aligned with projected enrollment.
Science teacher	Teacher retired. The BOE hopes to reinstate this position when funding permits.
French teacher	Teacher retired. World Language will begin in the 6th grade. The BOE will reconsider the approach to the World Language program when funding permits.
Spanish teacher/FLES	The BOE will reconsider the approach to World Language when funding permits.
Fifth grade teacher	Based on enrollment projections, reduction of one section from 4th to 5th grades.

Math specialist	The math program is currently being aligned to the new learning standards over the next year. The position will be re-evaluated in the future.
Reading intervention teacher	The reading teacher position was replaced by the Inclusion Facilitator. A dually certified special educator will provide reading services to students who need specialized reading support.
FMS Office Clerk	Position not filled, due to retirement. Each school office will still have two full-time support positions.
2 Special Education Aides	Decisions made before the budget season due to changes in student needs.
2 Special Education Assistants	Decisions made before the budget season due to changes in student needs.
Behaviorist reduced	Currently, we have a 3 day/week behavior specialist who works in the District. Initially, we intended to expand the role to 5 days/week but reduced the role back to 4 days/week.
1 part-time monitor	Driven by student needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eliminate ICT support for Earth Science ● Eliminate ICT Algebra ● Eliminate ICT Global History ● Eliminate ICT High School English 	Driven by enrollment that allowed sections to be combined without impacting class size.
Reduce .3 FTE HS Art	Reduce 3 half year electives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Athletic Training Services ● Assistant Coaches (3-4 positions - Volleyball, Field Hockey and Girls & Boys Basketball) ● Modified sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Before there were any cuts to staffing & programming, reductions were made to equipment, supplies, intramurals, repairs, security, entry fees, and transportation. ● Athletic Training services will become an hourly agreement with an individual to allow flexibility with our certified athletic trainer's hours of service. ● Assistant coaches: The proposed reduction is for 3-4 positions determined by the coach/athlete ratio, athlete safety, and the travel arrangements for each program. The BOE allocated an additional \$30,000 to be used for either electives, clubs, or restoration of a coach if needed. It is likely there may be some savings in Athletics if seasons are shortened due to

	<p>COVID. If this happens, no reductions would be necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified Sports: To maintain a limit of one coach per team for each modified sport there will be a team size limit established. The athletic department plans to support our students with increased opportunities for FMS students to participate in recreational and high level instructional intramural programs.
Theater Department	The theater budget was originally reduced by ~\$12K. At their March 18 meeting, the Board of Education allocated \$30K to Sports and Co-curriculars, \$6K of which is earmarked for the theater department to lower reductions to \$6K. The reductions were mainly to the costume and rental budgets.
Other reductions	In addition to the reductions listed in this chart, there were thousands of dollars in reductions to a variety of budget line items. These include reductions in professional development, contractual services, operations and maintenance department, supplies and furniture.

3) Why did we put \$1 million into reserves rather than use it to restore teachers and/or programs?

The additional funds put into the reserves this year were a result of savings gained from the Covid-19 closing. As this is a one-time savings, it can only be expended once and is not renewable. Using one-time revenues for recurring costs is not sustainable.

4) Why did the Board opt not to rehire positions for teachers who retired?

With retirements, our intention is to reinstate positions as budget funds are restored. With the potential of further cuts to State Aid in September and December, the District did not want to hire now and then lay these additional personnel off mid-academic year.

5) Why was the new position of Inclusion Facilitator created while retiring teachers were not replaced?

The District is able to create this position without increasing overall staffing in the Special Education Department. One person resigned, so there is an open position to be filled. The new Inclusion Facilitator will work with general education teachers to modify lessons, assignments, and assessments thus increasing the overall success of students at FMS.

6) What are the reserves for?

There are eight reserve funds. Please see this [Hastings Happenings Special Budget Issue](#) for an explanation of each fund and its balance. Designated reserve fund accounts play a

role in financial management. These reserve funds provide protection against obligations from pension liabilities to declines in real property values to State Aid cuts. The money held in reserves is to address these obligations that can fluctuate. Since so much is unknown in terms of state funds, these funds can be used to address the impact of any additional costs over the next few years. In every budget season, school board members must do more than balance expenses with revenue. They must determine if the district is saving enough to maintain the schools' financial health over the long term.

Please note that this information is current as of May 28, 2020. Executive Orders issued by Governor Cuomo or guidance by the State Education Department subsequent to this date may impact the information contained herein.