
Coventry School Committee

Almeida: 'We are at the point of fiscal crisis'

Coventry super shows budget to school comm; asking for \$1.5M increase

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COVENTRY — A full auditorium of teachers from the middle school filled the Central Office Annex for Tuesday's school committee meeting as Coventry School Superintendent Mike Almeida shared the bare bones of the proposed FY 2014/2015 budget.

Almeida said he'll be asking for a \$1.583 million increase.

"Anything we're asking for is from unanticipated impacts," he said. "We're truly at that point where we are bare bones. We're at break point."

Already cut have been the high school's JROTC program for \$157,000 in savings, two supervisory assistants at \$52,350, supplies totaling \$90,400 and severance at \$100,000 for a total of \$399,750.

According to his presentation, over the past five years, the district ab-

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— Mike Almeida,
Coventry Superintendent of Schools

sorbed a number of costs including, in part, out-of-district special needs education, DCYF, certified pension and full time ESL teachers.

Some of the cuts included bus monitors, physical plant supplies, clerical position, an administrative position and closed Oak Haven Elementary School.

Almeida explained that anticipated expenditures include certified staff salary increase, school-related personnel salary increase, district staff health care and dental and transportation.

The school superintendent pointed out that unfortunately, unanticipated

cost drivers include, in part, out-of-district tuition (\$55,000) loss in state aid (\$41,996), certified pension (\$735,081), state-wide transportation (\$90,000). "Without exaggeration, we are at the point of fiscal crisis," he said. "Our FY 2014 budget was frozen in October just to accommodate the unanticipated expenses that are now in our 2015 budget."

"The really tough thing in all this is

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that some of the most important things we really need aren't even included in the budget... Common Core resources such as texts, software and other items, professional development to support the Common Core standards, professional development to support Next Generation Science standards, all-day Kindergarten, JROTC and additional math interventionists," Almeida said.

The strategic objectives stated by the district are: to implement common core state standards, implement next generation science standards, develop an assessment program to monitor student progress, employ interventions to struggling learners, expand enrichment opportunities, provide student access to technology for PARCC and the acquisition of 21st century skills, provide professional development to staff, provide support to students to meet graduation requirements and explore and develop a plan for all-day K.

Members of the school committee, along with Almeida, supported this budget, despite its harshness, and asked everyone to support it as well.

"These things driving our budget are drivers that are out of our control," said School Committee Chairwoman Kathy Patenaude. "If we don't do this, we're looking at devastation."