



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Stacy Graham-Hunt

sgrahamhunt@bridgeportedu.net

203.667.7066

Bridgeport Public Schools Addresses \$38 Million Dollar Budget Gap

Bridgeport, CT – November 19, 2024 – The Bridgeport School District held a Finance and Facilities Committee meeting last night to address a budget gap of about \$38 million. This meeting was convened to discuss the causes of the budget shortfall and outline the steps the district will take to manage this financial challenge.

"Our priority is to ensure that our students continue to receive a high-quality education while we work diligently to resolve these financial issues," said **Dr. Royce Avery, acting superintendent**.

"While we foresee several cuts to the budget during the 2024-25 school year, we intend to make as few changes to academics as possible, which includes staffing and programs. We are committed to transparency and will keep the community informed throughout this process."

Key Points Discussed the Meeting:

- **Causes of the Budget Gap:**
 - The 2024-25 school-year budget was adopted with a \$26 million gap, with plans to use \$26 million from the District's reserve
 - Federal and state COVID funding has come to an end
 - Special education costs have increased due to unfunded state and federal mandates

The District is developing a plan to close the 2024-25 gap and to also provide budget relief for the 2025-26 year.

- **Immediate Actions:**
 - Identifying ways to save during the current year to prevent the gap from increasing for the 2025-26 school year. This could include downsizing and reevaluating all positions, programs, and services
 - Using \$14 million of the reserve during the 2024-25 school year (instead of \$26 million)
 - Charging \$6.5 million expenses in grants in accordance with FY 24-25 State-approved grants budgets

- Reverting District personnel and some programs to pre-COVID (ESSER) operation levels, which is estimated to save \$10.3 million within the last six months of Fiscal Year 2024-25
- Reducing costs by \$10.3 million by May 2025
- **Long-Term Solutions:**
 - Conducting a comprehensive review of the district's financial practices to prevent future gaps
 - Reducing the budget by \$12 million for the 2025-26 school year by reverting District personnel and some operational program to pre-COVID (ESSER) levels
 - Exploring the possibility of consolidating schools after completing a Facilities Master Plan and Demographics Study
 - Bringing Special Education services in-house, rather than sending students to programs outside of Bridgeport by constructing a new and expanded Special Education school in the District

Chief Financial Officer Nestor Nkwo said, " We understand the concerns this budget gap raises for our community. Our goal is to address this gap responsibly and sustainably."

Next Steps:

- **Board Meeting:** The district will provide additional details and updates on closing the budget gap at the next board meeting, Monday, November 25, 2024. Please check bridgeportedu.net for the time, location, and agenda for the meeting, which is expected to be shared by Friday.

The Bridgeport School District remains dedicated to maintaining the quality of education and services provided to its students. We appreciate the community's support and understanding as we navigate this challenging situation. Together, we can overcome these financial hurdles and continue to provide a bright future for our students.

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About Bridgeport Public Schools:

Bridgeport Public Schools envisions a culturally responsive, high-performing learning environment where students thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and civically. We model excellence and equity in education for every child at every level by focusing on quality instruction and providing efficient systems and structures in schools to sustain a culture committed to success.