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Brighton's school budget plan cuts jobs

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BRIGHTON — The Brighton Central School District's \$63.1 million preliminary budget comes with proposed job cuts.

At a budget review meeting Tuesday night, the district proposed eliminations that include the equivalent of 8.25 teaching positions. Additional cuts or consolidations could affect 28.5 paraprofessional positions, along with other staff members.

"There's a significant human impact," said Superintendent Kevin McGowan, acknowledging that the cuts weren't being taken lightly. But, "Our first priority is to provide excellent programming for students."

The district currently expects a spending increase of 1 percent, which would result in a tax levy and rate increase of 0.9 percent, or \$46 for a home valued at \$200,000.

At Tuesday's meeting, McGowan said the major cost drivers include mandated retirement system contributions, special education costs and an anticipated reduction in state aid.

The district is proposing cutting \$606,739 through job consolidations, \$284,450 through jobs eliminated and \$275,500 through jobs eliminated due to enrollment. Supplies are also proposed to be reduced by \$261,629. Salary negotiations could likely contribute to a major cut in spending. There will also be a voluntary freeze on the salaries of the superintendent and assistant superintendent.

A small cut in athletics — \$28,720 — is also proposed. But no teams would be lost, said athletic director Fritz Kilian.

The district has more than doubled their use of reserves since the 2009-10 school year, with plans to use \$2.62 million for the 2011-12 budget.

The proposed eliminations would include three part-time teachers' jobs, and reductions in hours for eight other teachers. No full-time teaching positions were proposed to be eliminated.

McGowan will present his executive budget proposal on March 29, by which point budget details may change.

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