

Fairport schools' budget would cut 38 positions

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Beset by falling enrollment and reserve funds, the Fairport Central School District is proposing a 2017-18 budget that would cut 38 full-time positions, including 26 teachers. The \$127 million budget will go to voters May 16. It includes a 3 percent tax levy increase and adds more than \$1.3 million for special education, mental health initiatives and other intervention services. At the same time, it cuts 18 secondary teachers, eight elementary teachers, four paraprofessionals, an assistant principal, three clerks and a technology worker. Those reductions will save the district more than \$1 million in salary and benefits. With fewer students and fewer teachers, class sizes would increase incrementally under the current plan. There would be one extra student per classroom in K-2, and as many as four additional students per classroom at the high school. The district stressed that its projected class sizes would still remain within its own guidelines and past practice. Some of the 38 cuts could be achieved through attrition, but not all. They represent 3.3 percent of the district's total workforce of 1,161 people.

Fairport in recent years has dedicated more of its resources to mental health interventions, part of a campaign to confront toxic stress among students.

The main cause is a decline in enrollment. Fairport anticipates 5,778 students in 2017-18, down 6 percent from 2014-15, and sees even greater losses ahead. A December 2015 enrollment analysis predicted a 10-year decline of 11 percent, or 613 students, by the year 2025. It attributed that change to declining live births (341 in 2014, down from a high of 402 in 2007) and less new residential construction.

In 1999, there were 489 permits issued to build new single or multi-family houses in the district. From 2010 to 2015, there were an average of 42 permits issued per year.

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Students and faculty gather for the 50th anniversary of Martha Brown Middle School in Fairport.

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