

## **New RCSD budget adds 132 teachers**

### **RCSD**

#### **Justin Murphy**

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

The Rochester City School District on Tuesday announced a 2018-19 budget proposal that uses the majority of the district's savings to close a daunting budget gap while adding 186 employee positions, including 132 teachers.

The \$957 million spending plan represents a 6.3 percent increase over the current year budget of \$900.5 million. It is still waiting on several pieces before becoming final, including the final state aid number.

The RCSD proposal assumes it will get an additional \$8 million in the state budget. It also takes a sizable \$28 million dip from the district savings account and removes \$3 million in contingency funds.

That will leave about \$11 million left in the general fund balance, Chief Financial Officer Everton Sewell said, assuming the district is able to return some money to it as predicted in the

See RCSD, Page [7A](#)

---

## **New RCSD budget adds 132 teachers**

### **RCSD**

Continued from Page 3A

budget.

There are an additional 38 special education teachers, 11 special education administrators, 22 reading intervention teachers, 10 behavioral specialists and 11 teachers for English language learners.

#### **Costs driving the gap**

- Compensation and benefits increasing by about \$48 million, reflecting an additional 186 positions.
- Debt service, rising by \$7.5 million.
- 453 additional students defecting to charter schools, costing about \$2 million.

#### **Actions to close gap**

- \$28 million taken from fund balance.
- \$15 million in mandated efficiencies spread across all departments, but not schools.
- \$6 million less in expenditures on students attending BOCES programs and other contracted services.

■ An additional \$8.2 million expected from the state budget.

■ \$3 million reduced contingency funds. The spending plan has been overwhelmed by other news in the district: the death of 14-year-old student Trevyan Rowe, the appointment of a distinguished educator and the ongoing problems in special education. All of those developments complicated the process in the last month. The news of the distinguished educator, in particular, came just hours before the district was to present its budget. Sewell was sent scrambling Tuesday afternoon to find \$200,000 or so more for that projected expense. In the aftermath of Trevyan's death, Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams said she wants to revamp the district's procedure for calling parents of absent children, possibly eliminating the automated system now in use. That would come with a significant price tag, but there was no immediate indication of a change in the early budget document.

The current school board committee on special education is developing recommendations that must be followed if the district is to avoid being sued by the Empire Justice Center. Those fixes, EJC Chief Counsel Bryan Hetherington said, will not be budgetneutral; the additional special education teachers and administrators should help in that regard.

The arrival of hundreds of Puerto Rican students fleeing Hurricane Maria gave the district its largest enrollment gain since at least 2002-03, and its first gain of any size since 2007-08. There will be a projected 27,056 students in RCSD next year versus 6,118 in charter schools.

Public hearings are scheduled for April 10 and April 25. Adoption by the school board is scheduled for May 15, followed by City Council on June 19.

*JMURPHY7@Gannett*

*.com*