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City Councilors:

I thank you for the careful consideration of the Dover School District Fiscal Year 2019 Budget. It is my understanding that the Dover School District is directed to make a $700,000 reduction in the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget. To achieve the proposed reduction, I will recommend to the Board the following:

1. The elimination of the new positions to support the District's Strategic Plan which is inclusive of the Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning, as well as the Elementary Dean of Teaching and Learning. These two positions would have supported the planning, implementation, and accountability aspects of Strategic Plan Goals One and Two. The elimination of these positions will directly affect the progress with Strategic Plan Goals One and Two and will especially delay the implementation of competency-based education. The elimination of the two positions will result in a $210,000 reduction.

2. The elimination of the additional middle school special educator. The District's legal and educational responsibilities will be met with the current positions, but will require a different delivery model. The elimination of the position will result in a $80,000 reduction.

3. The elimination of the additional IT position. During the presentation of the District's budget to the City Council, I explained the gap that was occurring in the District's technology. With the elimination of the additional position, the District will maintain the current capacity of service to the District's technology system. The elimination of the position will result in a $50,000 reduction.

4. The additional English as a Second Language teacher had been recommended based on the enrollment increase in these areas. This will require further study to determine if a reduction can be made in this area. If the position can be eliminated, it is a reduction of $80,000.

Any further reductions will result in a reduction of the District's current programs and services. Board Chair Amanda Russell clearly stated during the budget presentation that the objective was to restore past eliminated positions and to continue to move the District forward. It is recognized that reductions extending beyond those identified as new positions have potential consequences on the effectiveness and availability of programs and services accessed by students and their families.

In conjunction with the administration, the Board will need to review and decide what positions, programs, or initiatives will need to be reduced to achieve the target of the $700,000 reduction. The Board will need to establish the priorities to identify which positions or budget items will be eliminated to achieve the additional $280,000. The following is the menu of items the Board will have to consider:

POSITION	REDUCTION AMOUNT	CONSEQUENCE
Reduction of one school counselor	$80,000	Increase per student ration per counselor.
Athletic Contingency	$5,500	Limits the capacity to pay for additional coaching services.
Camp Explore	$4,000	No summer pre-kindergarten experience for students entering kindergarten.
Professional Development	$12,500	Restricting the capacity to provide professional development.
Reduction of six paraprofessionals	$180,000	Reduces paraprofessional services in the regular classroom.
Reduction of four classroom teachers	$320,000	Increases student to teacher ratio.
Reduction of 1 Float Nurse	$80,000	Impacts the quality of health care for students.
Reduction in the purchase of IT equipment	$90,000	Widens the technology gap.
CIP	$115,000	Delay in establishing appropriate amounts in the fund impacting future projects.

Any reductions that require a school district to eliminate services is detrimental, and with time will affect the overall quality. As demonstrated in the budget process, it is difficult to restore a position once it is removed from the budget. It is unfortunate that the quality and effectiveness of the District must be compromised by the limitation of revenues that are generated for the budget. It is my hope that the City Council will continue to make education a priority in the current budget, as well as future budgets. With future budgets, it is vital that the support of the Dover School Strategic Plan receives appropriate financial support. A highly effective public education system is vital to the future of the community.

Again, I thank you for your efforts and investment in the budget process for Fiscal Year 2019.

Respectfully,

William R. Harbron, Ed.D.
Superintendent