



Springfield School District

To: Springfield School Board of Directors

From: Zach McLaughlin, Superintendent of Schools

Date: Monday, March 18, 2019

Re: How to Understand the Impact of the Loss of Positions

At our last meeting, you indicated that you wanted to have a better understanding of the potential impacts of the loss of positions. I asked the principals to contribute their thoughts on that question. Below you will find their descriptions of the consequences of particular positional cuts. The positions are listed in the same order as they appeared on the "Previously Discussed Budget Adjustments" sheet.

ELM 1st Grade Classroom Teacher

At Elm Hill, we currently have five 1st grade teachers and 86 1st grade students. This year, 1st grade classroom teachers are responsible for 16-18 students. If this position was to go, there would be four 1st grade teachers and first-grade class sizes would move to 20-21 students (based on current kindergarten enrollment). This increased class size would have a critical impact on classroom climate, student achievement, and staff morale. In addition, the loss of this position would also mean that we would likely have to shift other resources to provide additional supports to 1st grade teachers and students.

USS Planning Room

A loss in the ability to address and provide academic, social and emotional needs in this setting (Planning Room), a loss in the ability to provide programming options, unable to provide a proactive approach if we did not have this position it would be a reactive approach and just managing it would decrease the ability to have success for these students, this will increase the staff and student safety concerns/ risk increase and a loss in additional supervision.

RMS Family and Consumer Science (FACS) Program:

At Riverside Middle School the FACS position is filled by 1 certified FACS teacher who serves 6th, 7th and 8th graders. When broken down by quarters the FACS teacher is responsible for teaching approximately 100 students per quarter. This program offers FACS curriculum which offers the knowledge and

skills that students need as family members and citizens both now and in the future. The curriculum is designed to stress teamwork, leadership, and technology. It applies math, science, and communication skills to everyday living along with subjects such as nutrition, budgeting, cooking, family living, sewing, childcare, fashion design and many others with average class sizes at 20 students. FACS the position offers the following course:

- Becoming a Fashion Designer
- Entrepreneurship
- Lights, Camera Action
- Cosmos Culinary Competition
- 6th Grade FACS
- 7th Grade FACS

These courses offer choice and relevance to our students. This allows our students the opportunity to choose courses they already have an interest in or to experiment with new interesting topics of study. These class sizes vary and we will re-evaluate these courses based on interest for next school year. All of our classroom teachers serve in the capacity of interventionists with the implementation of our universal reading program, Reading Plus. All of this programming would be lost with this programming cut. It would also impact the schedule, requiring a significant overhaul.

SHS World Language (French) position:

We will only be able to offer one world language course to our students. We also have a 2 year world language requirement for all of our graduates. By cutting this position, it will be extremely difficult for our students to take 2 years of a language. Student options will be limited and trying to fit these classes into their already booked schedules will be difficult as well. We have tried online world language classes in the past and they have not been successful. You really need to have a teacher available to you in order to build upon and master the language.

SPED Instructional Assistant at Union:

Decreases the ability to respond to multiple requests for student support.
Reduces the ability to provide ELA support in the Special Education setting. Loss of specialized instruction in the area of literacy. ELA targeted support groups will have an increase number of students that will have to be served by the Special Educator.

RMS Computer Science:

The Riverside Middle School Computer Science program is 1 certified Computer Science Teacher and was added to RMS through a grant. The program is new this year to RMS. The program serves the 6th, 7th and 8th graders. In 6th and the first half of 7th grade curriculum the class focuses on computer literacy, things that might included in computer literacy are: Digital Citizenship, Typing fluency, Basic Program Navigation, Google Suite, word processing, website creating, spreadsheets and forms. The second half of the 7th-grade curriculum includes an intro to Programming and webdesign. This program was implemented with the roll-out of our 1-to-1 chromebook initiative. This course is critical in supporting the development of the skills needed to utilize the devices. This program is part of our ongoing efforts to develop programming that is providing relevant skills now and the future for our students.

ELM 2nd Grade Classroom Teacher

At Elm Hill, we currently have five 2nd grade teachers and 82 2nd grade students. This year, 2nd grade classroom teachers are responsible for 16-17 students. If this position was to go, there would be four 2nd grade teachers second-grade class sizes would move to 21-22 students based on current first grade enrollment. This increased class size would have a critical impact on classroom climate, student achievement, and staff morale. In addition, the loss of this position would also mean that we would likely have to shift other resources to provide additional supports to 2nd grade teachers and students.

USS TBH Nurse Secretary:

Reduce in the number of students that can realistically be seen, reduction of services provided to students (we would have to prioritize) thus having more of a focus on high priority medical needs and a loss of educational programming. Decreased ability to respond to emergency situations.

RMS Health Program:

At Riverside Middle School this program is filled by one certified Health and Physical Education teacher who serves 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The curriculum supports learning around Advocacy or taking action in support of a cause.

- Students develop refusal skills, ways to say no effectively,.
- Communication skills, the sharing of thoughts and feelings with other people.
- Accessing information pertaining to health issues,

- Decision making that has impact and influence on health.
- Analyzing influences combining your own values and beliefs along with the opinions of family members and friends, your culture and messages from the media to affect your decisions.
- Stress management identifying sources of the body's response to real or imagined dangers and other life events and learning how to handle them in ways to promote good mental and emotional health.
- Healthful behaviors such as exercise regularly, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water and get a good night sleep.
- The impacts on drugs and alcohol on the individual and society.

The Health program offers two more specialized health offerings, Friends, Foes and Frenemies and Stranger Things, these courses offer more choice for our students in Health education. Again, we will re-evaluate these courses based on interest for next year's offerings. Some of these topics may be picked up or overlap with physical education and science but would take a great deal of time to redevelop curriculum in the other disciplines. All of our classroom teachers serve in the capacity of interventionists with the implementation of our universal reading program, Reading Plus. This loss would also impact our schedule as it is currently constructed.

SHS Instructional Coach

Our instructional coaches have been a valuable resource to all of our new and veteran teachers. This year alone every teacher has been apart of a coaching cycle with an instructional coach, instructional coaches have facilitated district and building level professional development opportunities, they are members of our leadership team and are important resources for all of our staff. I cannot express just how important these individuals are to our teachers, administration and students. They are leading the way to teacher improvement and increasing student learning and engagement.

SPED TBH Teacher RMS & SHS

The special education teacher position was going to be shared between RMS and SHS for those students that attended the non-traditional classroom that was cut last year. We still have several students that cannot access their education in traditional classrooms and need a space to go when they anxiety and level of frustration increases. They also need someone to support them in catching up on credits/graduation requirements. With this position cut, I am not sure what we will be able to offer to these students so that they do not drop out of school.

USS Planning Room Instructional Assistant:

Loss of additional student support in special education resource classes. This will take away the ability to provide additional support during the times when there is a high number of students in the planning room. A reduction in possible emergency situations/substitute coverage when understaffed, loss in supervision, reduction of staff to interact, deescalate, problem solve, and support for student success. This decrease will increase student and staff risk.

RMS Registrar position to .5 FTE

A school registrar is an administrative position whose role for Riverside Middle School is to assist students with enrollment and additions/withdrawals of classes. She/He maintains student records, test scores, attendance, schedule/schedule building, works with school counselors and handles other various administrative and clerical tasks as needed. A high level of technical proficiency is often required for this position. The loss of this position will impact the work of the Building Secretary, School Counselor, and Administration. It will also impact SHS operationally because of the ripple effect that will be felt because of the movement in staffing driven by contractual obligations.

SHS .5 FTE Music

We will only be able to offer two music courses to our students per semester. If this position is shared with RMS making a schedule will be difficult. The teacher will either do mornings at SHS and then afternoons at RMS (or vice versa) or will work here on Monday, Wednesday and every other Friday-which causes more issues in building a master schedule. Currently, our music teacher is doing a VTVLC class-this will no longer be an option.

RMS SAP Counselor:

Our SAP serves all of our students. SAP counselors identify students with substance use problems, intervene, and when necessary, refer them to community agencies for more specialized or intensive services. Since SAP counselors are continually interacting with students, they can identify students having problems through direct observation. Students may also be referred to counselors by teachers, parents, peers, or may seek help themselves. The counselors then screen the students and may refer them to local human service agencies for formal assessment and treatment (crisis screenings, suicide screenings). SAP counselor's follow-up with students to ensure they obtain the treatment they need. SAP's also give educational presentations to students and

community groups, work with community resources to develop services for students, train school staff to deal with troubled students, meet with concerned families, increase awareness of substance use problems in the community, allow teachers to concentrate on education instead of having to deal with substance use, run educational support groups. Riverside depends on this position to support our School Counseling Program which at this time only has one School Counselor who is responsible for 270 students. The School Counselor and SAP have been responsible for the development of the Middle School Advisory Program known as T3, a best practice, in middle schools where we provide our social-emotional learning opportunities for all students, community service opportunities, lessons on around Bullying and Harassment, cyber-bullying, Student Portfolios for Student Led Conferences. This position is one of the few ancillary support services we have left at Riverside Middle School. The daily support lost from the cut of this position would have a significant impact on our School Counselor and at-risk students.

SHS .5 FTE Art

We will not be able to offer all of the courses that are currently listed in the program of studies (gaming and coding, comics and cartooning, digital design, and possibly yearbook). With RMS potentially cutting their art position to .5 as well-we will be sharing another teacher-which will create the same concerns and issues as the sharing of a music teacher.

RMS .5 FTE Music

The Riverside Middle School Music Program is currently filled by 1 fulltime VT certified Music teacher. Through our music program, we offer a number of Fine Arts options, Band, Chorus and Drama. Musical training helps develop language and reasoning: Students who have early musical training will develop the areas of the brain related to language and reasoning. Learning music promotes craftsmanship, and students learn to want to create good work instead of mediocre work. We believe our Music program is a crucial offering because it gives students a way to connect with other people. Children are naturally very social, and it's important to encourage them to build relationships by providing them experiences to share with each other through the Arts. Especially students that don't always feel successful in the more traditional Core classes like Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies. The loss of .5 of this position will lead to the loss of either Band, Chorus or Drama. We will determine what aspect of the program we will cut based on our numbers/interest from students. The .5 loss of this program will significantly reduce when and what we can offer under music

and drama along with who will be able to access the program. It will have a significant impact on scheduling flexibility because it will require sharing a teacher with SHS.

SHS PE

With the cutting of a physical education teacher our class sizes will be larger and we will not be able to offer all of the classes at multiple times during the day and semesters like we currently do (personalized fitness, wellness for life, offseason training, to name a few). We also only have enough equipment available to accommodate classes with less than 20 students in attendance (those mentioned previously).

RMS .5 FTE Art

Riverside Middle School program is currently filled by 1 fulltime VT certified Art Teacher that serves 6th, 7th and 8th graders. The program consists of art history, art appreciation, and art criticism are integrated into the lessons as a framework of the curriculum. students express themselves creatively through drawing, graphics, sculpting, painting, metalwork, 3D ceramic sculpture, and jewelry to develop art skills and concepts. Class size average of 10 students. The impact of this lost .5 FTE would limit many students who receive extra academic supports access to this offering and it would impact the master schedule flexibility if we are sharing a teacher with High School. A school district with a reduced arts program leaves many students without an outlet for the creative capabilities and without options for expression of their talents. These are the students who are often overlooked and the ones who need an outlet the most. These are the students whose school boards must remember when looking when making these tough budget cut choices. Our art program has allowed many of our students an outlet during lunch time and other options for some of our students who struggle with our traditional school structure. Growth mindset can be nurtured through the arts, students develop skills like resilience, grit, and a growth mindset to help them develop their craft, do well academically, and succeed in life after high school. Learning an art form, students engage with the activity because it's fun (intrinsic motivation), extremely important for our students that struggle with other traditional offerings such as Math and Reading. The loss of this .5 FTE will significantly reduce when we can offer Art along with who will be able to access the program. It will have a significant impact on scheduling flexibility because it will require sharing a teacher with SHS.

SHS English position

We will have larger class sizes and a reduction of course offerings as other English teachers will need to take on other required courses first and then be able to cover elective type courses. Currently, the theater teacher is a member of the English department. With a reduction of an English teacher, the theater teacher will not be able to offer as many theater courses. These courses are already maxed out in enrollment (25 to 26 students per course per semester).

SHS Math position

Math is one of our continual improvement goals in our building and district for the required state CIPs (continual improvement plans). By reducing this position, we will increase the class sizes of all of our courses and make it more difficult for our teaching staff to provide the individual assistance that many of our students require. We will also have to look at our course offerings and make difficult decisions as to which courses we can and cannot offer in the years to come.

Plant .5 FTE Custodial

It is dependent on what happens to Park Street. If the property sells there will be very little impact if any. If the property does not sell we will likely see an overall decline in cleanliness at all the buildings as the result of the loss of 5 hours of custodial work per day.