



NEWS RELEASE

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School Board Approves Budget Request for 2019-2020

Proposed budget focuses on meeting the needs of the whole child

Fayetteville – Meeting the needs of the whole child is the top priority of the Cumberland County Board of Education. Last night, the Board approved a budget request to send to the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. The budget request includes a proposed increase of \$8.9 million, which would bring the total allotment from the County to \$89,041,982.

To address the needs of the whole child and increase student success, the school system is requesting funding to bring Cumberland County Schools (CCS) to the nationally recommended average of one counselor and one social worker for every 250 students and one nurse for every 750 students over the next six years. Currently, CCS' 51,000 students are served by 35 school nurses, 59 social workers and 147 school counselors.

School counselors, social workers and school nurses all fall under the Student Support Services Division and provide a wide array of critical services to students, including monitoring mental health issues, supporting homeless students, making home visits, ensuring emergency care plans are in place for students with chronic disorders, supporting students to achieve their personal and professional goals, providing crisis intervention support and making the necessary referrals to community agencies to support the welfare of students.

Cumberland County has a Tier 1 designation and is ranked 20th in the state, which means it is one of the most economically distressed counties in North Carolina. Additionally, 75 percent of CCS students qualify for free-or-reduced-price meals based on their household income. External factors, such as limited access to healthcare and food insecurity, impact the success of students in the classroom.

“This budget request is a request to expand efforts that will help meet the needs of the whole child,” said Donna Vann, chair of the Cumberland County Board of Education. “While teaching and learning will remain a priority, we cannot disregard the fact that some of our students face challenges outside of the classroom setting that impact their success at school. Our educators and staff will continue to meet each child where they are and help them be prepared for college, career and life, but we need additional resources to support those efforts.”

Additional priorities in the proposed budget include:

- Providing funds to support the growth of our English as a Second Language (ESL) and Exceptional Children populations;
- Recruiting and retaining principals at some of the most challenging schools; and
- Investing in programs that promote school safety and community engagement.

More than one third of the requested increase in local funding is based on the projected legislative impact on CCS' budget, such as state salary increases and class size phase-in requirements.

“Our students deserve the very best educational experience that we can give them,” said CCS’ Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr. “This budget request may seem large, but the needs are great. Cumberland County Schools is the fifth largest school district in the state and the 78th largest school system in the country, and we need additional resources to move our school system forward. Strong schools make strong communities. This budget request is directly connected to students’ success in life and the economic outlook of Cumberland County.”

The Board is required to submit its request to the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners by May 15 for consideration.

To learn more about CCS’ proposed budget, visit www.budget.ccs.k12.nc.us.

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