

The Ottoson Middle School's Budget Requests

I want to thank the school committee for inviting me here tonight to discuss the budgetary needs of the Ottoson Middle School. I also want to thank Dr. Bodie and Dr. MacNeal for all their help and support.

The Ottoson Middle School's top priority is keeping average class sizes below twenty-five students. There are many benefits of lower class sizes:

1. Smaller class sizes help build relationships between the students and their teachers.
2. Struggling students are more likely to be noticed.
3. Students participate more in class discussions.
4. Teachers have more time to give feedback.
5. Teachers spend less time on classroom management.

Our staffing requests are:

1. Add a half-cluster in eighth grade next year. (2 FTEs)

Reason - Next year's eighth grade will have 444 students. At our current staffing levels, the cluster classes (English, math, science and social studies) will have an average of over 25 students per class. Having four eighth grade clusters would reduce class sizes to 22.

2. Add a School Counselor. (1 FTE)

Reason - The social emotional needs of our students are increasing, and the role of a school counselor is becoming increasingly important. Next year there will be 906 students at the middle school. Currently we have three school counselors and their caseload would increase to 302 students. Contractually, the caseload for school counselors is limited to 300 students. Adding another counselor would reduce their caseloads to 226 students. Four counselors would also help our internal organization and communication. It would allow the middle school to have two counselors per grade instead of having three counselors divided between two grades. Lastly, we will not need to add another school counselor during the next five years.

3. Add a .6 Spanish Teacher

Reason - We have 187 students taking Spanish in seventh grade. Currently we have six sections of eighth grade Spanish. Next year there would be over 31 students in our eighth grade Spanish classes. Adding two sections of Spanish would reduce class sizes to 24. We have 208 students taking Spanish in sixth grade. In seventh grade, we have

eight sections. This would result in having 26 students per class in seventh grade Spanish. An extra section of seventh grade Spanish would result in classes of 23 students.

4. Add a .6 PE Teacher

Reason - Currently there is an average of 25 students in our PE classes. Next year class sizes will increase to 27. Adding a .6 PE teacher will reduce class sizes to 23. It will also give us the same number of sections as technology, FACS, and art.

5. Add a .4 French Teacher

Reason - We have 84 students taking French in seventh grade. Currently we have three sections of eighth grade French. At our current staffing, next year we would have 28 students per class. Adding an extra section would reduce our class sizes to 21 students. We have 114 students taking sixth grade French. Currently, we have four sections of seventh grade French. At our current staffing level, we would have 28 students in seventh grade French. An extra section would reduce our class sizes to 23.

6. Add a .4 Music Teacher.

Reason - Next year we will have over 100 students in our orchestra. As a result, we are hoping to have separate seventh and eighth grade orchestras. We are also hoping to add a .3 music teacher. Currently, the seventh grade has 23 students per class. This number will increase to over 24 next year without extra sections.

7. Add a .1 Administrative Assistant

Reason - Next year we will have 46 more students at the middle school. Currently we have 2.4 administrative assistants for 860 students or a secretary for every 358 students. To keep us at the same level we need to add a .1.

8. Add a special education teacher for the Summit Program. (1 FTE)

Reason - To create a sub-separate therapeutic program at the middle school. This will limit demand for out of district placements.

9. Requesting that all teaching assistants be considered behavior support personnel. (10)

Reason - It is difficult to retain qualified staff at their current pay rate. This helps align us

with the high school.

10. Add a special education teacher for the 8th grade. (1 FTE)

Reason - To support the students in the new cluster.

Our supply requests are:

1. Eighth grade social studies textbooks (\$45,484)

Reason - The eighth grade curriculum is being changed. We need to buy textbooks, teacher editions, and digital access for the new curriculum. Eighth grade social studies supplements (\$2,334)

Reason - Class set of *We the People* for eighth grade for the new curriculum.

2. Seventh grade social studies text (\$12,000)

Reason - New seventh grade Global Studies course will be piloted in 2019-2020, fully launched in 2020-2021. National Geographic Global issues will be needed.

3. Replacement of the choral risers (\$13,000)

Reason - The choral risers are in poor condition and need to be replaced, with students' safety being a primary concern. The risers are over 15 years old. They are used in the classroom and in all school concerts.

4. Completion of the implementation of science resources (\$42,000)

Reason - The Ottoson science resources have not been updated for several decades as new standards were developed. Seventh grade is piloting a new curriculum this year, and eighth grade will pilot a new curriculum next year. We need to buy textbooks, digital access, and other materials for these new curriculums.