

Larger Class Sizes Among CMS Money-Saving Options

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CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent Peter Gorman described the budget year ahead as "not pretty" Tuesday night.

CMS cut \$87 million from their budget last year, and Gorman believes even more cuts will come this summer.

At Tuesday night's school board meeting, the board heard a presentation on ways to save millions.

The new options might not sit well with some teachers and parents.

Increasing class sizes topped the list of cost-cutting measures. A report given by Education Resource Strategies, a nonprofit organization that works with school districts to make data-driven decisions, said that increasing class sizes wouldn't negatively impact students. The study shows increasing class sizes by just one student would mean about 200 fewer teachers, and would save CMS nearly \$10 million in salaries.

Another option mentioned was eliminating some advanced courses and elective classes. The report shows vocational classes and arts classes cost the most money. If those classes aren't full, getting rid of them could save the district millions.

CMS will also consider employing fewer teachers and more support staff in elementary schools.

Gorman said the data from the report will help to direct the district's budget proposal, but that no final decisions have been made.

The board has months to decide if any of these options will become reality. It doesn't have to adopt a final budget until the summer.

Gorman said the governor's office has already asked the district to figure out how to operate with a 3 percent, 5 percent and 7 percent reduction in state funding next year. The board will have its first budget workshop at the end of January.

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