

## MONEY WOES FOR NEW HANOVER SCHOOLS — LOSS OF POSITIONS LIKELY

Parents passionately entreated the school board to look for cost-saving strategies that don't include losing five teachers for gifted students.

The board approved Superintendent Markley's 2017-18 budget request to the county. The request includes cutting costs by trimming 22 positions across the district, including the five AIG teachers.

A state mandate to cut K-3 class size that would have forced the district to find 48 new teachers was delayed until 2018. The district still needs to pay for an 11 percent increase in students and cover the increasing costs of employee health insurance and retirement. They must also plan for increasing the County supplement to teachers if the State raises teacher salaries which is likely.

Among the planned changes for the 2017-18 school year are sharing assistant principals between small schools, replacing 13 school-based technology experts with 11 district-wide positions and sharing AIG teachers at elementary schools with fewer than 400 students.

Board chairman Ed Higgins expressed worry the county's proposed budget, which would give schools significantly less than requested, would mean further cuts. The school board's budget calls for \$2,750 in per pupil spending, but the county is recommending \$2,670. That would leave the schools \$2 million short on next year's budget priorities.

### **What the school board requested from the county:**

\* Operating budget: \$76,525,302

\* Capital budget: \$3,600,000

\* Per-pupil funding: \$2,750

\* Operating increase\*\*: \$3,282,276

\* Capital increase\*\*: 1,485,000

\* Per-pupil increase\*\*: \$88

\*\*Over 2016-17 appropriation

The budget now heads to New Hanover County's commissioners for review. The board must set its final budget in July.

Submitted by,  
Nancy McCoy-Fennell