

Akron Beacon Journal

EDUCATION

Akron school board approves \$11 million in cuts, avoids teacher layoffs



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May 12, 2026, 6:05 a.m. ET

In a 6-1 vote on May 11, Akron school board members approved the [superintendent's plan](#) to cut \$11 million, preventing a [financial shortfall](#) in the next school year.

Of that amount, about \$1.66 million in cuts will eliminate 17 positions, including six deans of students who will fill vacant teaching roles. The reductions are part of [Superintendent Mary Outley's plan](#) to reduce the district's \$386 million main operating budget by at least \$11 million without teacher layoffs.

School board member Rev. Gregory Harrison, who voted in favor of the cuts, described the "tough" decision the board had to make.

"I have to look at this with an eye if we don't receive any money from any other sources. We know the state is trying to defund public education and undermine our school system," Harrison said, noting that [five school levies were defeated in the May 5 election](#). "I understand the deans are a hard pill to swallow."

School board member Rene Molenaur voted against the proposal, citing public pushback and support for the eliminated roles.

More: [Akron school board rejects superintendent's budget cuts proposal](#)

APS may need to cut \$58 million to avoid state oversight

The school district may need to cut \$58 million over three years – including the \$11 million approved May 11 – to avoid state oversight, according to a superintendent proposal presented during the April 15 finance committee meeting. Harrison noted that the board also will have to consider roughly \$27 million in cuts next year.

How the proposal aims to cut \$11 million

The \$1.66 million cuts six deans of students, six career and technical education paraprofessionals, four library technicians and one art therapist. A previous resolution, which the [board rejected in a 5-2 vote on April 13](#), would have cut the same 17 positions.

The six deans will become teachers to fill vacant teaching positions, the proposal explained, noting that all schools would have a dean of students.

"Deans are often veteran educators with advanced certifications," the document explained, noting they could help improve APS data that shows 23% of students are proficient in math and 35% are proficient in reading.

Deans of students, board member Summer Hall said, often act as assistant principals. Without the deans, principals could be stretched thin, she cautioned. If a principal were out sick, she asked what would happen.

Outley said her administration has three plans for when a principal is out. If they are sick or out for a meeting, APS administrators can fill in. If the principal is needed at a hearing, Outley said the hearing would be shifted to the school.

The bulk of the cuts — about \$9.4 million — come from administrative and operational budget reductions.

These include eliminating vacant administrative positions or restructuring roles, reducing overtime and postponing the \$3 million adoption of new math textbooks to fiscal year 2028, according to the April 15 proposal.

APS adjusts budget for this school year to reflect higher costs for transportation, salary, benefits and services

In other business, the school board unanimously approved revisions to the fiscal year 2026 general and severance funds. These changes address increased transportation costs for special education students using van transportation vendors and state changes to retirement eligibility requirements.

Roughly \$8.7 million was added across salaries and wages, fringe benefits and purchased services, while about \$4.7 million was taken from the capital outlay and "other" sections of the general fund, according to the May 11 agenda. The severance fund increased by \$250,000.

District 'back to the drawing board' in search for North High School construction manager

In a 5-2 vote, the school board rejected a resolution establishing the value rankings for construction management companies in the North High School construction project.

The list ranks potential companies by best value. The highest-scoring company for this project was C.T. Taylor Inc., according to the agenda. The runner-ups were Hammond Construction, Shook Construction and Panzica Construction.

Projects: [APS' Pfeiffer Miller South, North HS, Buchtel stadium projects updated](#)

The vote came after members of a local labor union urged the board to contract with a company that supports local, unionized workers. Some board members also expressed concerns that the district was not sufficiently supporting unionized labor.

Others were concerned about estimated budget increases for the [Pfeiffer Miller South and the Buchtel stadium](#) projects.

"Now, we go back to the drawing board," Board President Barbara Sykes told the board after the vote.