

However, speakers at the January board meeting were most concerned about the proposed cuts to fifth-grade music and district libraries.

Among the options under consideration for the 2027-28 school year are eliminating fifth-grade band and orchestra classes (\$315,000), cutting library aides (\$73,384) and reducing the library program overall (\$414,000).

"As someone who has been here as long as I have, it is kind of heartbreaking to see," music teacher John Ashfield told the board.

Previously, fourth- and fifth-grade students had the option to take either general music classes or learn to play an instrument in band and orchestra classes. According to Gracia, 200 out of the district's 300 fifth graders chose to take either band or orchestra class.

The district has already eliminated fourth-grade differentiated music, but the proposed cuts would eliminate fifth-grade differentiated music as well.

Without exposure to instruments, Ashfield is concerned about the impacts it will have on middle school music programs since students would have had no experience playing instruments.

"Middle school has already been impacted by cutting fourth-grade music

can't. Several board members asked Gracia to figure out other ways to reduce expenditures to save the fifth-grade music program. Several community members and teachers also spoke in favor of reducing the cuts to the library program.

"My previous school's library functioned mostly as a checkout desk to the trickle of students who visited and that changed entirely at Hillview because (Hillview Librarian) Amy Mathenia was relentless in her pursuit to collaborate with teachers and support instruction," Hillview Middle School English teacher Jessica Ross said.

"In fact, tomorrow I am taking my classes to the library so that (Mathenia) can support me in teaching research and note-taking of reliable sources for ELA 7's (seventh-grade English Language Arts) new curriculum on human rights, for which Amy has played an integral role in securing funds and developing," Ross added.

Other cuts the district is considering is merging math intervention, which was started with one-time funds from the pandemic, with reading intervention (\$321,636). The district also will eliminate all math aids (\$185,612), Spanish immersion interns (\$13,455)

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