Winsted school panel cuts 3

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WINSTED — A frustrated Board of Education last night eliminated three teaching positions and made other cuts totaling nearly $400,000 in next year's proposed budget but a selectman who attended the meeting said it falls short of the reduction selectmen want.

The board voted to cut kindergarten, physical education and eighth grade teaching positions as well as the equivalent of an administrator's position. Eliminating the positions reduced the spending plan by $181,132.

By eliminating the positions and other items, the panel lopped $396,416 from its proposed 1991-92 $11.6 million budget, bringing the total to $11,262,329, a 4.5 percent increase over the current $10.7 million spending plan.

But Selectman Nancy Habbal, who attended the meeting, said selectmen want the budget reduced by $543,916. "The gravy train has stopped people, we can no longer afford it," she said.

The board eliminated one bus route. With one less bus, students, some even of kindergarten age, may be dropped off two miles from their homes, according to school Superintendent Norman T. Michaud. The reduction will save $20,000.

In addition, the board cut $11,844 for a pre-kindergarten aide who works with at-risk children in the home, $10,739 for paraprofessionals that help in kindergarten classes, $14,318 that would have paid for two special education aides at the Isabelle M. Pearson School, and $3,635 for

teaching positions

a part-time music teacher at the Mary P. Hinsdale School.

The board will also request that The Gilbert School reduce its $3.6 million budget by $109,488.

Community Lawyer Charlene LaVoie told the board that it should not be cutting services that have an impact on students; instead it should be looking to chop administrative positions.

Board Chairman Thomas M. Condon told LaVoie that negotiations with administrators and teachers were continuing with the hope that their contracts could be renegotiated.

Town Manager Wayne W. Dove has instructed the board that the number they need to cut from the education budget is $543,916.

The board agreed to aim at a reduction of $396,416. The number assumes that selectmen will share with the school board half of the nearly $300,000 in additional tax revenue that the town expects to get as the result of a growth in the grand list.