

REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The FY '15 School Budget reflects a "needs-based" philosophy, one with attention to ongoing enrollment growth, mandated programs and required services, custodial and facilities needs and other provisions for programs and resources that meet the unique needs of students. The proposed budget would restore some eliminated services and staffing and tackle a backlog of requests that resulted from several years of level services or level funded budgets that were necessary during the financial downturn. As in the past, the School Committee and School Department continue to advocate for school funding that represents a reasonable balance between achieving the Town's long term financial objectives and providing an adequate level of financial support for important Town and school services. We acknowledge the leadership and collaboration of the Chairs of the Board of Selectmen, the Advisory Committee and its Education Subcommittee, and the School Committee; and we recognize the work and cooperation of their respective memberships and staff in striking the balance that the proposed FY '15 budget represents.

Town Meeting will be asked to approve an appropriation of \$43,490,722 to operate the schools next year, an increase of 3.95% from the FY '14 allocation. The recommended Capital Budget is \$648,674.

The FY '15 proposed budget includes growth-related additional staffing, such as for classroom instruction and special education services and added FTEs (full time equivalents) or increased hours to address social, emotional, and physical health needs and services. Increased enrollment for the coming year is a particular concern at the middle and high school levels. The budget also reflects the reality of increased utility costs, especially for heating and electricity for the new Middle School. Despite its efficient design, the size of the building and the complexity of the building mechanical systems and requirements of new Codes that govern their operation will result in higher operational costs.

Special education costs are projected to be down for 2014-2015, a combination of fewer out of district student tuitions in the current year and an increase in Circuit Breaker dollars (reimbursements for eligible costs for 2012-2013 special education students) that can be used to offset expected tuitions in next year's budget.

FY '15 reflects the first year of a School Committee Technology Initiative which includes costs of piloting new software applications and technology focused professional development, both reflected in the operating budget, and a larger capital allocation for elementary and high school technology purchases. Middle school technology needs for FY '15, including the first year of a "one-to-one" device initiative, will be fully funded by the Middle School construction budget, with the benefit of MSBA reimbursement dollars.

More detailed information about the proposed budget for FY '15 is available on the Hingham Public Schools website (hinghamschools.org). To access the original budget message and administrative proposal and subsequent PowerPoint presentations, with cost and backup information, click on Administration and then select Business Operations on the pull down menu.

HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Raymond C. Estes, Chair Andrew Shafter
Carol M. Falvey, Vice Chair Edward Schreier, D.D.S.
Dennis Friedman, Secretary Paul Gannon
Liza O'Reilly

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dorothy Galo, Ph.D.