



# *DID YOU KNOW?*

A Publication of the Hopkinton Public Schools

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## **5 Common Misconceptions about the School District**

When people accept opinion as fact, it is often said that perception becomes reality. In the school district, we often face this challenge. Here are 5 of the more common misconceptions.

**Perception:** The schools were unaffected in FY 04 when the \$3.8 million override failed.

**Reality:** The schools were affected in FY 04 when the \$3.8 million override failed at the May 19, 2004 election. The School Committee worked with the Board of Selectmen, the Appropriation Committee, and other Town Departments, to develop new budgets that were contingent on the passage of a smaller \$900,000 override. To help get to this lower override figure, the School Committee reduced its original budget request by \$833,599. As a result, the school district lost 5.5 positions and deferred funding for textbooks, professional development, and extraordinary maintenance. The School Committee also increased fees for athletics and introduced fees for busses.

**Perception:** The school district spends too much money on the education of its students.

**Reality:** Based on figures released by the Department of Education for FY 05, Hopkinton's per pupil expenditure is \$8,494 versus the state average of \$9,076, a difference of \$582. Of the 23 MetroWest school districts, Hopkinton ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in per pupil expenditures on regular education, \$990 below the MetroWest per pupil spending average.

**Perception:** The school district is top heavy in administration.

**Reality:** The school district is not top heavy in administration when compared to both national and regional data. The percentage of Hopkinton's budget spent on district and school administration is 11.1%. In TEC (The Education Cooperative), a consortium of 13 area school districts including Hopkinton, the comparable percentage is 12.1%. Nationally, the percentage spent on school and district administration is 12.2%. We ranked 11 out of the 13 TEC communities in our spending on administration.

**Perception:** The school district is financing the property at 89 Hayden Rowe Street that will house the school administrative offices.

**Reality:** The building at 89 Main Street is privately owned by Honey Hill Farms LLC, which has completely financed the renovation of the building. The school district is leasing the building to free up classroom space at the Middle School that is currently occupied by school administration. The Middle School is currently short 3 classrooms for its programs. The lease costs for FY 06 through FY 08 are being paid with grant funds and not out of our operating budget.

**Perception:** The school district does not allow the community to use its facilities.

**Reality:** During the last school year, 61 community groups were issued permits for 3,493 hours of athletic field use and/or 4,480 hours of school building use for an average weekly use of 153 hours.