

## **The 2007-2008 Final School Budget** (published on April 3, 2007)

In our last article, we listed the budget cuts and fee increases that would be required to achieve the FY08 budget number that the School Committee proposed on February 1, 2007. In the past two months, a couple of developments have occurred to mitigate the impacts of the proposed budget.

Firstly, the Board of Selectmen voted to approve a change in the way that the town recognizes payments from the water and sewer enterprise funds for the costs of shared services. The change will make the money received from these funds available for use in town budgets two years earlier than before. For FY08, this will provide \$493,472 more than would otherwise have been available.

Secondly, the School Committee has been able to lower budget line items for special education and supplies. During the past two months, many Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for next year have been developed. The costs associated with these plans have netted out lower than the conservative costs that the School Committee had built into its FY08 budget two months ago.

Regarding supplies, the administration has intensified its efforts to limit discretionary spending for the remainder of the school year. This will free up money to buy essentials such as new textbooks to accommodate increasing enrollment at the middle school and high school that were initially in the FY08 budget.

As a result, the School Committee has taken the following actions with respect to the FY08 budget:

- Rescinded the reduction of a teacher at the high school. As a result, the number of teachers at the high school will stay the same as it is this year.
- Rescinded the increase in athletic fees. The previous plan had been to increase the athletic fee from \$125 per student per sport to \$175.
- Rescinded the imposition of a \$50 per student fee for participation in clubs at the middle school and high school. There will be no charge for participation in clubs.

The School Committee has now voted an FY08 budget of \$31,204,200 which represents a 2.0% increase over the current year. This number was reached via a collaborative effort of the School Committee and Superintendent with the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, and Appropriation Committee. The other departments in town government collectively will also get a 2.0% increase.

The developments described above are rays of light on a bleak landscape. It is important to remember that, even after the adjustments that have been made, school department staffing will be reduced by 17.5 full-time equivalent positions from the current level, and fees will be increased for parking, bus use, and community use of school facilities. Table 1 lists the staff reductions. Table 2 lists the fee increases.

The major impacts of the budget remain as reported in our last article:

- An increase in class sizes at the elementary, middle, and high school levels
- Elimination of math and reading help for struggling students at the Middle School
- Higher caseloads for High School special education teachers
- Reduced guidance and counseling staff at the High School

- Reduced staffing in the Business Office
- A reduction in staffing for preventive maintenance
- Significant increases in fees for parents and students

Overcoming the structural deficit facing the town will require innovative thinking and close cooperation among all town departments. We are already seeing evidence of this new way of problem-solving. As the next step, the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, Appropriation Committee, and other key town officials with financial responsibilities will develop a long-range plan for dealing with the structural deficit.

The target date for completing the long-range budget plan is October 1, 2007 – prior to the start of the next annual budget cycle. There will be no easy answers. Perhaps the best that we can hope for is to minimize service reductions, fee increases, and the frequency and magnitude of overrides.

The School Committee is not pleased about the severe actions that are required to address the fiscal situation confronting the town. We are committed to working closely with our partners in town government to develop a plan that will enable the kind of public education and overall town services that the community desires at a price that it can afford.

Hopkinton School Committee:

Rebecca Robak, Chair

Phil Totino, Vice Chair

Lyn Branscomb

Nancy Alvarez Burdick

David Stoldt

**Table 1: Staff Reductions for the FY08 School Budget**

School/Department	Position	Full-Time Equivalent	Budget Impact	Notes
Center	Grade 1 Teacher	(1.0)	\$ (46,205)	
Center	Math Specialist	(0.5)	\$ (23,103)	moved to Curriculum Leadership
Center	K Teacher	(0.5)	\$ (23,103)	
Center	K Instructional Aide	(0.5)	\$ (8,848)	
<b>Total Center</b>		<b>(2.5)</b>	<b>\$ (101,259)</b>	
Elmwood	Wellness Teacher	(0.5)	\$ (23,103)	
Elmwood	Math Specialist	(0.5)	\$ (20,799)	moved to Curriculum Leadership
Elmwood	Grade 3 Teachers	(3.0)	\$ (138,615)	
<b>Total Elmwood</b>		<b>(4.0)</b>	<b>\$ (182,517)</b>	
Hopkins	Music Teacher	(0.1)	\$ (4,621)	
<b>Total Hopkins</b>		<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>\$ (4,621)</b>	
Middle School	Reading Teacher	(1.0)	\$ (46,205)	
Middle School	Wellness Teacher	(1.0)	\$ (46,205)	
Middle School	Teacher TBD	(1.0)	\$ (46,205)	
<b>Total Middle</b>		<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>\$ (138,615)</b>	
High School	History Teacher	0.8	\$ 36,781	this is an addition
High School	Science Teacher	0.4	\$ 27,307	this is an addition
High School	Language Teacher	(0.2)	\$ (13,637)	
High School	Math Teacher	(1.0)	\$ (46,205)	
High School	Guidance Secretary	(0.8)	\$ (28,947)	
<b>Total High</b>		<b>(0.8)</b>	<b>\$ (24,701)</b>	
Special Ed	Pre-K Teacher	(0.5)	\$ (28,789)	
Special Ed	Learning Specialist	(1.0)	\$ (43,635)	position at High School
Special Ed	Teaching Assistants	(4.0)	\$ (78,688)	3 positions currently vacant
<b>Total Special Ed</b>		<b>(5.5)</b>	<b>\$ (151,112)</b>	
Buildings & Grounds	Maintenance Worker	(1.0)	\$ (37,540)	
<b>Total B &amp; G</b>		<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>\$ (37,540)</b>	
Curriculum Leadership	Math Specialist	1.0	\$ 78,447	combines existing half-time positions at Center and Elmwood
Curriculum Leadership	Literacy Coordinator	(1.0)	\$ (70,000)	position currently vacant
<b>Total Curriculum</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>\$ 8,447</b>	
Central Office	Crossing Guard	(0.2)	\$ -	funded from bus fees
Central Office	Secretary	(0.4)	\$ (13,811)	
<b>Total Central Office</b>		<b>(0.6)</b>	<b>\$ (13,811)</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>(17.5)</b>	<b>\$ (645,729)</b>	

**Table 2: Fee Increases for the FY08 School Budget**

Fee	Current	Proposed	Additional Revenue
Bus (grades 7-12)	\$100; \$200 family cap	\$180; \$360 family cap	\$ 72,000
Parking	\$100	\$180	\$ 22,400
Facilities Use	\$5/hour	\$10/hour	\$ 50,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$144,400</b>