

**HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Hopkinton, Massachusetts

**School District Budget Proposal**  
**Fiscal Year 2009**  
2008-2009



**PUBLIC HEARING**  
THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2008  
7:30 PM  
Middle School Library

**TOWN MEETING**  
MONDAY, MAY 5, 2008  
7:00 PM  
High School Athletic Center

*Revised 5/5/08*

# HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2008-2009 BUDGET PROPOSAL

## Table of Contents

	Page(s)
School Committee Budget Message .....	3
Budget by State Functions .....	4
Budget Increases by Program Areas .....	5-6
Questions and Answers.....	7-10

Dear Citizens,

The Hopkinton School Committee is presenting the community with a budget for fiscal year 2009 that represents a significant reduction in services from FY 08. With the Board of Selectmen's decision not to give citizens an opportunity to vote for an override, the School Committee had to make difficult decisions about reducing services and introducing a new elementary bus fee.

The school district's proposed budget for FY 09 is \$31,654,425, which represents an increase of 1.7%. The budget will support a projected student enrollment of 3,434 students, which reflects a decrease of 20 students. The School Committee, administration, and staff have worked hard to develop a responsible budget that will enhance student achievement and protect core programs. With an increase of 1.7% for the second year in succession, however, services in the school district are beginning to erode.

Recognizing the town's financial constraints, the Superintendent proposed a responsible budget increase of 3.6%, which the School Committee later adjusted to 3.7%. As a result of the 1.7% increase, the School Committee has reduced staff, cut expenses, and expanded bus fees to students in grades 1-6 who live within 2 miles of their school. The major impacts of the School Committee budget are as follows:

- Elimination of 16.0 positions (on top of 17.5 positions in FY 08)
- Increased class sizes at the Elmwood, Hopkins, and the Middle School
- Elimination of remedial math program for students in grades K-8
- Elimination of funding to purchase computers coming off a lease at the High School, which were targeted for the elementary schools
- Reduction in clerical supports at Elmwood, Hopkins, and the High School
- Reduction in custodial services at Center and the Middle School
- Elimination of the High School Fitness Coordinator
- Expanded bus fee to include elementary students in grades 1-6 who live within 2 miles of school

To help deal with the town's structural deficit, School Committee member Phil Totino and Appropriation Committee member Stuart Cowart formed the Financial Plan Working Group. Its membership included representatives from the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, school and town administration, and the Chamber of Commerce. The group developed a ten-year financial planning model and a series of recommendations to enhance revenue and reduce expenses. The School Committee has been aggressively pursuing the recommendations under its purview. The community will have the opportunity to express its voice on one of the key recommendations in the report, Legacy Farms, at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting.

As citizens, you have made a significant investment in your schools over the years that has translated into increased student achievement, an enhanced school district reputation, and an appreciable increase in the value of your homes. Please take the time to familiarize yourselves with the school district's budget. We encourage your participation in the May 5, 2008 Town Meeting and look forward to your support during these challenging times.

Respectfully submitted,

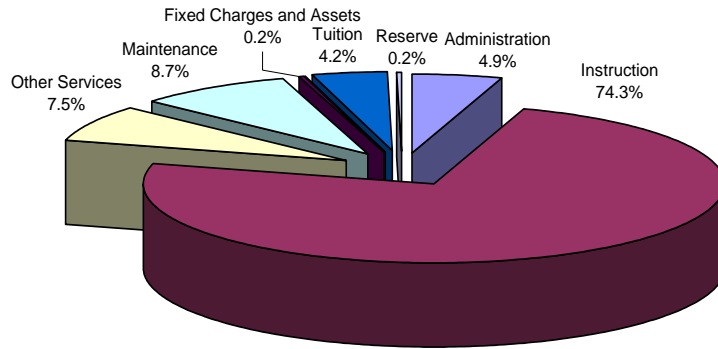
Rebecca Robak, Chair  
Nancy Burdick, Vice Chair  
Lyn Branscomb  
Dave Stoldt  
Phil Totino



# HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## TOTAL BUDGET BY STATE FUNCTION

The Massachusetts Department of Education requires all school districts to annually report their expenditures by the state functions identified below.



**Instruction:** Includes all the instructional salaries of teachers, principals, and the special education supervisor, as well as professional development costs, textbooks, instructional equipment, library services, guidance, psychological services, supplies and materials, substitutes, tuition reimbursement, and conference expenses.

**Maintenance:** Custodial services, utilities, maintenance of buildings and grounds, and extraordinary maintenance. It includes all related salaries, equipment supplies, materials, tools, travel expenses, and contracted services.

**Other Services:** Attendance, health, student transportation, athletics, and other co-curricular activities. Includes all related salaries, equipment, supplies, contracted services, and uniforms.

**Administration:** Includes general administration, administrative support, administrative technology, legal services, all related salaries, supplies, travel expenses, dues & subscriptions.

**Tuitions:** Tuition/payments to other public schools in Massachusetts, private schools and collaborative for Special Education, and vocational services.

**Reserve:** Unallocated funds to cover potential costs for the unemployment, benefits for new employees, salary increases, and emergency repairs.

**Fixed Charges:** Insurance programs, rental of land and/or buildings and crossing guards.

**Fixed Assets:** Acquisition of land or existing buildings, improvements in grounds, construction of, or additions to buildings, and remodeling of buildings.

<b>2008- 09 Budget</b>	
Instruction	\$23,727,209
Maintenance	\$2,779,273
Other Services	\$2,391,075
Administration	\$1,577,523
Tuitions	\$1,332,083
Fixed Charges	\$71,481
Reserve	\$65,686
Fixed Assets	\$15,095
Funding from Other Sources (Offset)	-\$305,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31,654,425</b>



# HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## BUDGET BY PROGRAM AREAS

**Building and Grounds**                      **Total: \$24,305**                      **Percentage of Total Increase: 0.1%**

The buildings and grounds department budget is increasing slightly in the FY 09 budget. This budget eliminates 2.0 custodial positions, level funds extraordinary maintenance, and reduces utility costs slightly. The increase results from contractual obligations and the lease cost for the central administration offices. A grant from the state has funded the lease cost for the administration offices for the past two and a half years. The lease was needed to free up classroom space in the Middle School to accommodate growing enrollments and special education programming needs.

**Athletics**                                      **Total: \$12,381**                      **Percentage of Total Increase: 0.0%**

The athletic budget for FY 09 is essentially flat. Contractual increases for coaches' salaries have been offset by the elimination of a 1.0 Fitness Coordinator and 0.4 FTE clerical positions. The athletic budget is subsidized by gate receipts and athletic fees, which are kept in a separate revolving account and fully utilized to mitigate the cost of athletics.

**Occupational Day**                              **Total: \$2,401**                      **Percentage of Total Increase: 0.0%**

The occupational day budget funds tuition increases for vocational students who do not attend the Joseph P. Keefe Technical School. Under state law, the school district must pay the tuition cost for students who attend other vocational schools to pursue a program that is not available at the Joseph P. Keefe Technical School.

**Professional Development**                      **Total: (\$23,390)**                      **Percentage of Total Increase: (0.1%)**

For the second year in a row, the professional development budget for teacher training and conferences has been reduced. As a result, funding for professional development has now been reduced 75% over the last two fiscal years. Full funding for professional development was last budgeted in FY 07.

**Funding from Other Sources**                      **Total: (\$160,600)**                      **Percentage of Total Increase: (0.5%)**

The FY 07 budget was offset with a one time, unexpected increase of \$400,000 in Circuit Breaker funds. The FY 08 budget was offset by \$144,400 in fee increases for bus transportation, parking, and facilities use. These increases are now part of the on-going budget. In FY 09, all accumulated remaining balances in revolving accounts were tapped for a one time \$305,000 offset to the budget. Offsets of this size are occasional and are not anticipated any time in the near future.

**Central Office**                                      **Total: (\$668,076)**                      **Percentage of Total Increase: (2.1%)**

The Central Office budget has decreased substantially due to a reduction in the salary reserve account. The salary reserve account includes monies for potential contractual increases for collective bargaining groups and the school district's non-unit employees. After settling contracts with the Hopkinton Teachers' Association, the Custodial Union, and other non-unit employees, funds in the FY 09 budget have been distributed into the appropriate budget line items. As a result, the salary reserve account has been decreased by \$589,453 in the FY 09 budget. A substantial decrease of \$69,692 has also been included in the offset for teacher intents. This account has been established to decrease the budget for those teachers who have declared an intention to move to a higher salary scale in FY 09 but may not complete the credits to do so. Since prospective salary increases need to be budgeted, a centralized offset account provides a tool to manage/forecast this risk.

# HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **Q. Why should the community support this budget?**

**A.** There is no greater commitment that a community can make than to support the education of its children. The School Committee, administration, and staff have worked hard to develop a responsible budget that will promote student achievement and protect core programs. The School Committee's Proposed FY 09 Budget of \$31,645,425 reflects an increase of \$542,170 or 1.7%. By comparison, the School Committee proposed a budget with a 3.7% increase that would have provided close to level services. The proposed budget represents a significant reduction in services for the school district.

### **Q. Why is the school district continually facing budget difficulties?**

**A.** As a school district and town, we are facing a structural deficit. In simplest terms, this structural deficit is occurring because town budget needs are rising faster than town revenues every year. The immediate impacts of this structural deficit are reflected in the proposed budget. As a school district and town, we will continue to see this deficit every year until the town generates new sources of revenue. Visionary leadership and thinking will be needed in the years ahead to improve municipal finances.

### **Q. What is the School Committee doing to help address this structural deficit?**

**A.** To help deal with the town's structural deficit, School Committee member Phil Totino and Appropriation Committee member Stuart Cowart formed the Financial Plan Working Group. Its membership included representatives from the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, school and town administration, and the Chamber of Commerce. The group developed a ten-year financial planning model and a series of recommendations to enhance revenue and reduce expenses.

The School Committee has been aggressively pursuing the recommendations under its purview. To enhance revenue, the School Committee has been looking at implementing school choice, expanding advertising, charging facility fees for after school programs, adding new fees, putting the High School Program of Studies on-line, accepting special education students on a tuition basis, and developing a special education life skills program for students ages 18-22. For FY 09, approximately \$125,000 in new revenues has already been generated through fees for after school programs and a new elementary bus fee.

In addition, the School Committee has been exploring opportunities to reduce expenses. To this end, the School Committee has worked with town departments to consolidate school and town operations and to look at alternative energy sources. As a result of these efforts, the school district will be providing leadership for all town technology during the next fiscal year. In addition, the school district has submitted an application to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative for a free feasibility study. The organization is currently conducting a desktop analysis of school sites to see if they can accommodate a wind turbine.

### **Q. What are the major impacts of the proposed budget?**

- A.** The major impacts of this budget are as follows:
- Elimination of 16.0 positions (on top of 17.5 positions in FY 08)
  - Increased class sizes at the Elmwood, Hopkins, and the Middle School
  - Elimination of remedial math program for students in grades K-8
  - Elimination of funding to purchase computers coming off a lease at the High School, which were targeted for the elementary schools
  - Reduction in clerical supports at Elmwood, Hopkins, and the High School
  - Reduction in custodial services at Center and the Middle School
  - Elimination of the High School Fitness Coordinator
  - Expanded bus fee to include elementary students within 2 miles of their school

# HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q. How many positions are reduced in the proposed budget?**

**A.** The proposed budget includes a reduction of 16.0 full-time equivalent positions. These reductions include a loss of 4.1 regular education teaching positions, 3.0 special education teaching positions, 1.2 clerical staff, 2.0 custodians, 7.3 teaching assistants, and a 1.0 fitness coordinator for a total of 18.6 positions. The budget also adds 2.6 technology staff, which results in a net loss of 16.0 positions.

**Q. How will class sizes change in the elementary schools in the proposed budget?**

**A.** Class size impacts at the elementary level are summarized in the table below:

Grade	FY-06	FY-07	FY-08	FY-09
Integrated	18	19	18	18
K	20	19	21	20
1	21	20	21	21
2	23	20	22	23
3	24	22	23	23
4	27	23	23	25
5	25	26	25	25

**Q. How will class sizes change at the Middle School in the proposed budget?**

**A.** There will be a slight increase in class size on each of the academic teams at the Middle School. In the related arts areas, class sizes will also increase.

**Q. How will class sizes change at the High School in the proposed budget?**

**A.** The percentage of classes at the High School with more than 25 students will decrease as a result of the addition of 2.0 regular education teachers at the High School. The School Committee reallocated resources to the High School because enrollments are projected to increase by 67 students since staff was last added in FY 07. In FY 03, 9% of the classes had greater than 25 students. For the current school year, 23% of the classes have more than 25 students. For FY 09, we estimate that 19% of the classes will have more than 25 students.

**Q. Why is class size important?**

**A.** The latest research indicates that class size has the greatest impact at the elementary level and recommends class sizes of fewer than 20 students. The research further indicates that the gains are greatest the more years students are in smaller classes and indicates the gains are retained through the upper grades. Smaller class size also helps elementary students more quickly assimilate the rules of school culture, results in more individual attention, increases rates of student participation, reduces class disruptions, and improves children’s self-esteem.

# HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **Q. What fee increases are included in the proposed budget?**

**A.** State law requires school districts to transport students K-6 who live more than two miles from school free of charge. The FY 09 budget institutes a new \$180 bus fee for elementary students who live within two miles of school. The same fee is currently charged to students in grades 7-12. The school district expects to generate \$99,000 in revenue from this new fee.

### **Q. Why is the school district leasing administrative office space?**

**A.** The School Committee entered into an agreement with Honey Hill Farms, LLC in August of 2005 to lease 5,000 square feet of office space at 89 Hayden Rowe Street to free up space at the Middle School that was being used for administrative offices. The Middle School needed this space because it was short three classrooms and was facing projected increases in enrollment through 2009-10. In addition, a need for more space was projected for the preschool, which is also located in the building. The lease cost for the administrative offices has been paid with grant funds for the past two and a half years. Beginning in FY 09, the cost of the lease will be carried in the operating budget.

### **Q. How does Hopkinton's per pupil spending compare with other communities in the State?**

**A.** Hopkinton residents get tremendous value for the money they invest in education. Based on the latest figures released by the Massachusetts DOE's Office of School Finance, Hopkinton's total per pupil expenditure for FY 07 under the state's new method of calculation was \$11,114 while the state average was \$11,789, a difference of \$675.

### **Q. What other state and federal funds support the operating budget?**

**A.** The school district actively seeks state and federal grants to supplement the operating budget. During FY 07, the school district received \$704,852 in grant funds. The town should also receive approximately \$50K in Medicaid reimbursement.

### **Q. Are there other sources of financial support for the Hopkinton Public Schools?**

**A.** Yes. The school district is extremely fortunate to receive substantial funding from the HPTA, the Hopkinton Education Foundation, the Hopkinton Music Association, the Hopkinton Basketball Association, the Trustees of the School Fund of Hopkinton, the Hopkinton Boosters, and EMC. These groups remain our most active school partners and generously donate funds, time, and services. Approximately \$300,000 is given annually by all of our community partners to support public education.

### **Q. Why is the School Committee bringing forward Article 48 for a feasibility study for the Center Elementary School?**

**A.** This study is required in order for the Town to receive reimbursement from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for this school building project. During this past year, 423 projects were submitted to the MSBA for funding. The Center School project was one of 49 projects selected by the MSBA for a Feasibility Study. The MSBA has advised the school district that it must authorize \$385,000 to cover the full cost of the study. The MSBA will reimburse the district a minimum of 40% or \$154,000. As a result, the Town will need to borrow \$231,000 for its share of the project. The study will explore construction alternatives, involve site testing, and will yield schematic designs for use in the bid process for full design and construction.

# HOPKINTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q. Why is the School Committee reconsidering the use of the Center School?**

**A.** Although the School Committee has voted to decommission the Center School, the MSBA has implemented a new process for funding school building projects. As part of the process, the MSBA and the school district must collaborate on the best solution for the problems the school district has identified with the Center School. While we feel the school limits our education programming, the classrooms are undersized, the facility is outdated, and the transportation patterns around the school are less than desirable, the MSBA has not yet reached that conclusion.

**Q. What are the possible outcomes of this Feasibility Study?**

**A.** The study will most likely examine four options: to renovate the Center School, to renovate and expand the Center School, to build a new school on the Elmwood School site, or to build a new school on the town's Fruit Street property.

**Q. How long will it take to complete the Feasibility Study?**

**A.** The MSBA estimates that it will take up 12 to 14 months to complete the Feasibility Study. Once the MSBA recommends the project to its board for funding, the town would have 120 days to schedule a Special Town meeting and approve funding for full design and construction. If all timelines are met, the school district anticipates that design and construction would be completed by January of 2012.

**Q. Why does the study cost \$385,000?**

**A.** The MSBA has advised the school district to allocate \$300,000 for designer fees and to also include monies for soil testing and an owner's project manager. The MSBA and the Town's Facilities Director have estimated the cost for soil testing at \$60,000 and the fees for an owner's project manager to be approximately \$25,000.

**Q. What happened to the money that was approved in 2005 for the construction of a new elementary school?**

**A.** The School Committee has an article on the Special Town Meeting warrant that would rescind its authority to spend that money. Of the \$3 million that was approved, \$65,328 was spent before the enrollment projections changed, and the new elementary school was put on hold. Under the MSBA's new process, a separate article specifically targeting the Center School project is required to get state reimbursement.

**Q. Why is the School Committee bringing forward Article 50 for improvements to school buildings and grounds to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990?**

**A.** A civil rights complaint was filed against the school district with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). A similar complaint was filed against the town because of other town buildings. As part of its investigation, this federal agency has confirmed that school buildings and grounds are not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Funding from this article will complete the work needed to address OCR's findings and to bring school facilities further in compliance with federal regulations. Cost estimates will be shared at Town Meeting. This article is jointly sponsored by the Board of Selectmen.