

## The 2008-2009 School Budget: Where cuts will be made

Because the Town again has revenues that are not sufficient to keep pace with rising costs for level services, the School Committee had to make difficult decisions about cutting services and adding fees for the 2008-09 school year. We tried to protect the classroom experience as much as possible. The trade-off for this was to cut support services. We are not happy with the budget, but it is the best that we could do under the circumstances.

The proposed school department budget of \$31,654,425 for FY09 represents a 1.7% increase (\$542,170) over the current year's budget. This is in contrast to the initial level-services budget that called for a 3.7% increase (\$1,157,805).

To meet the Town's 1.7% increase, we would have had to reduce our preliminary budget by \$615,635. However, we learned that bus transportation costs would go up by \$97,293 more than expected and new special education placements would require \$31,385 more. Adding those three numbers, the School Committee had to reduce its level-services budget by \$744,313.

We offset some of this amount by adding a new fee that would generate \$99,000. This brought the reductions needed down to \$645,313. In making the reductions, our goals were to avoid severe impact on any particular area and to ensure that we maintained the essentials of what was needed in all areas. Table 1 summarizes the reductions.

With respect to fees, the School Committee will institute a new \$180 per year fee for K-6 bus service for students living within 2 miles of the school that they attend. State law prohibits charging a fee for K-6 students who live more than 2 miles from their school. There already is a bus fee for all students in grades 7-12 (also \$180 per year). Table 2 contains information about fees.

The major impacts from the School Committee's proposed budget are:

- Increases in class sizes in some grades at the elementary and middle school levels
- Inability to provide academic supports in math for struggling students at all schools
- Reduced clerical support at the Elmwood and Hopkins schools and in the athletic department
- Elimination of the athletic fitness coordinator and closing of the fitness center to the community
- Reduction in staffing for custodial services at the Center and Middle schools
- Reduction in professional development
- New bus fee for K-6 students who live more than 2 miles from their school

By school, here are some explanations of the cuts and impacts.

Center School –

- Class sizes will be at 20 in Kindergarten and 21 in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
- Academic support in math will not be available.
- Custodial staffing will be lower.
- A bus fee will be in place for students living within 2 miles.

Elmwood School –

- Class sizes will go up to 23 in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and remain at 23 in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Academic support in math will not be available.
- The number of teaching assistants will be reduced from 3 to 2.

- Clerical support will be lower.
- A bus fee will be in place for students living within 2 miles.

Hopkins School –

- Class sizes will go up to 25 in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and remain at 25 in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Academic support in math will not be available.
- The special education team chair will be eliminated.
- The librarian will remain half-time.
- Clerical support will be lower.
- A bus fee will be in place for students living within 2 miles.

Middle School –

- Class sizes will remain the same in 6<sup>th</sup> grade but increase in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Academic support in math will not be available.
- Custodial staffing will be lower.
- A bus fee will be added for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students living within 2 miles.

High School –

- 3 teaching positions will be shifted from elementary grades with lower enrollments to control class sizes as high school enrollment continues to increase.
- Academic support in math will not be available.

Athletic Department –

- The position of fitness coordinator will be eliminated. One impact will be the closing of the fitness center to the community.
- Clerical support will be cut in half.

Technology

- The computers coming off lease at the high school will not be purchased and therefore the computers will not be waterfalled to the elementary schools

The School Committee is not pleased with the severe actions that are required to accommodate the fiscal situation confronting the town. A redoubled commitment by town leaders to pursue revenue enhancement initiatives will be required in the future in order to provide the kind of public education that the community desires at a price that it can afford.

Hopkinton School Committee:

Rebecca Robak, Chair

Nancy Burdick, Vice Chair

Lyn Branscomb

Dave Stoldt

Phil Totino

<b>Table 1: FY09 Staff Reductions in addition to 3.0 in Preliminary Budget</b>			
<b>School/Department</b>	<b>Position/Item</b>	<b>Full-Time Equivalent</b>	<b>Budget Impact</b>
All schools	Professional Development		\$ (24,635)
Various	Corrections to preliminary budget	(0.3)	\$ (4,085)
<b>Total System-wide</b>		<b>(0.3)</b>	<b>\$ (28,720)</b>
Center	Custodian	(1.0)	\$ (37,750)
Middle	Custodian	(1.0)	\$ (37,750)
<b>Total Buildings &amp; Grounds</b>		<b>(2.0)</b>	<b>\$ (75,500)</b>
Center	Remedial math	(0.5)	\$ (24,390)
<b>Total Center</b>		<b>(0.5)</b>	<b>\$ (24,390)</b>
Elmwood	Clerical	(0.4)	\$ (15,355)
Elmwood	Remedial math	(1.0)	\$ (48,780)
Elmwood	Teaching Assistant	(1.0)	\$ (19,568)
<b>Total Elmwood</b>		<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>\$ (83,703)</b>
Hopkins	Clerical	(0.4)	\$ (15,355)
Hopkins	Librarian	(0.5)	\$ (24,390)
Hopkins	Remedial math	(1.0)	\$ (48,780)
Hopkins	Teacher	(2.0)	\$ (97,560)
<b>Total Hopkins</b>		<b>(3.9)</b>	<b>\$ (186,085)</b>
Middle School	Remedial math	(1.0)	\$ (48,780)
<b>Total Middle</b>		<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>\$ (48,780)</b>
High School	Remedial math	(1.0)	\$ (48,780)
<b>Total High</b>		<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>\$ (48,780)</b>
Special Ed	Hopkins Team Chair	(0.5)	\$ (26,890)
<b>Total Special Ed</b>		<b>(0.5)</b>	<b>\$ (26,890)</b>
Technology	Computer Buyout		\$ (69,000)
<b>Total Technology</b>			<b>(69,000)</b>
Athletics	Fitness Coordinator	(1.0)	\$ (38,110)
Athletics	Clerical	(0.4)	\$ (15,355)
<b>Total Athletics</b>		<b>(1.4)</b>	<b>\$ (53,465)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>(13.0)</b>	<b>(645,313)</b>

<b>Table 2: FY09 Fees</b>			
<b>Fee</b>	<b>FY08</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>Additional Revenue</b>
Athletics	\$125; no family cap	\$125; no family cap	\$0
Bus (K-6 < 2 miles)	\$0	\$180	\$99,000
Bus (grades 7-12)	\$180; \$360 family cap	\$180; \$360 family cap	\$0
Parking	\$180	\$180	\$0
Facilities Use	\$10/hour	\$10/hour	\$0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$99,000</b>