

WAYLAND • PUBLIC • SCHOOLS

WAYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

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To: School Committee
From: Gary A. Burton
Date: December 4, 2009
Re: FY'11 Budget Message

In many ways, the budget that I am presenting to the School Committee Monday night represents a skillful dismantling of the school district. Many in the community should be concerned, as this is the first time in 29 years* that the schools' budget has experienced negative growth (-2.33%). For the past six budgets cycles, I have spoken about the adverse effects of limited growth on the overall operation of the schools. Recent budgets have been labeled "maintenance" and/or "preservation" in their obvious attempts to protect existing programs, while limiting the budget's overall growth. Since 2005, my recommended budgets have contained little that could be identified as new or innovative. Even our funding of technology, as capital equipment and outside the operational budgets, has been hampered by the town's need to control borrowing and spending. Previous budgets have all been well debated, and public outcry for what was lacking in each has been acknowledged by both school administrators and committee members alike. Financially, the past six years have not been particularly kind to the district as a whole, though in comparison to FY'11 these years may now be remembered more favorably.

Recognizing a district-wide decline in the number of students enrolled and national and state economies that were weakening, the last six budget requests have been artificially depressed out of respect for Wayland residents and a growing fear that their willingness to support the district would be reached or even exceeded. Whether publicly appreciated or not, recent negotiated contracts with the district's four unions have reflected this sentiment, too. The School Committee and administration are well aware of the public debate at committee meetings and forums about the level of taxation and public services that the community can afford.

Operationally, the district's administrators have continually examined all district functions and traditional expenses, sought greater efficiencies in energy and material consumption, and reduced staffing levels where and when appropriate. All of this is known to the School Committee and documented in earlier budget messages. In my opinion, there is no history of overspending within the Wayland schools. Student user fees have been implemented for school-related services and opportunities which previously were provided at taxpayer expense. School families now pay fees for their children to participate in the elementary instrumental music program, to park a car at the high school, to ride a bus to school, and to participate on an athletic team. Families of school-aged children have been asked more frequently to donate school supplies and contribute directly to covering the costs associated with long standing educational field trips. Fundraising activities are far more frequent than they used to be. The School Committee is aware of these recent changes, and I personally appreciate that you, as elected officials, have agonized over their implementation. In most cases, fees, once established, have been increased and expanded upon.

*1981-1982 (-3.88% nominal % change)

Against this background, the proposed FY'11 budget meets the Finance Committee's (FinCom) guideline and reflects their request that the schools' appropriated amount (before offsets) of \$31,835,263 for FY'10 be reduced by 4%. This has been accomplished, but not without considerable discussion among the administrators, as to how an overall loss of \$725,050 can be accomplished without hurting existing programs or eliminating some in their entirety. Remember, please, that the previous six budgets were barely adequate to keep up with demands of inflation and a high performing district.

To meet the FinCom guideline of \$30,386,713, much has been removed from the current budget, while little has been added. These reduction/additions are noted on the accompanying budget pages and will be explained in greater detail. Over the next month, Brad, Joy, Marlene and I are prepared to walk the committee members through the budget and answer specific questions. As difficult as it has been to construct this budget, I am confident that the administrators have selectively made reductions that should prove least harmful to the overall integrity of the district and our students' school experiences. Certainly, the district will function differently next year than it has in the recent past. This is to be accepted in light of declining student enrollments that are now noted at all three levels. Spending patterns are also reshaping the district as we seek additional efficiencies and the elimination of unnecessary or unwanted expenses. Historically, the district added staff and programs during times of student expansion and prosperity, and it is not unreasonable to expect that the size of the staff and even student opportunities will be reduced during periods of enrollment decline or financial recessions. The use of technology, and computers, in particular, is also changing the way our schools function. This is already reflected in spending patterns and will shortly impact staffing patterns. Technology has yet to realize substantial savings during a period that, for Wayland, must be considered "transitional." How we group, instruct and, more importantly, educate children with the aid of new technologies will ultimately change the way the Wayland schools are organized and operated. These changes are inevitable and should not be resisted. However, the future seldom arrives in a completed form, and changes and savings will be relatively small in the immediate future.

For the Committee's benefit, I would like to point out some things about the budget that may not be immediately apparent as you begin your review.

1. Both personnel and non-personnel accounts reflect decreases due to declining student enrollments at all three levels: elementary, middle and high school.
2. No salary increases have been budgeted for any administrators or non-union personnel.
3. As previously negotiated in current labor agreements, salary increases for union positions acknowledge step and lane changes only. Negotiations for successor contracts that result in any increase to existing salary schedules or job benefits will force the budget upward and beyond the FinCom guideline.
4. Some existing student fees have been increased, and two new ones (concerts and swimming pool rental) are recommended. Due to pending construction at the high school, we will lose all revenue from student parking fees.
5. Class sizes at the middle and high school levels will be increased, but should remain within established guidelines. The consolidation of the elementary schools has already realized this efficiency. (Of note, however, are two

- additional elementary classes due to the distribution of students at particular grade levels.)
6. Library services at both the elementary and middle school levels have been significantly curtailed.
 7. Reductions at the high school include FTEs of 4.05 certified staff, 6.0 support staff, 9 advisors, 3 coaches, 1 leadership stipend, and summer work opportunities. At the middle school, reductions include FTEs of 5.5 certified staff, a leadership stipend, and secretarial hours. At the elementary level, reductions include FTEs of 1.65 certified staff, 2.65 support staff, and secretarial hours. In central office, there will be a reduction of .5 in support staff and administratively, both the Athletics Director's position and that of the elementary math/science curriculum specialist will be reduced to .5 and .6 respectively. (With such sizeable reductions in staff positions, teaching and workloads for others throughout the district will be re-adjusted accordingly).
 8. At all three levels, non-personnel accounts for supplies, materials and texts will be reduced by \$66,000. Increases have been anticipated for transportation services and utilities.
 9. All existing academic programs remain intact with the exception of middle school Latin. (Due to low enrollment, instruction in Latin will most likely be phased out over the next two years.)
 10. The core of our extra-curricular offerings is preserved, thus allowing students a variety of after-school opportunities in athletics, the arts, and student government/leadership.
 11. Established offsets have been analyzed and adjusted and result in a slight increase in anticipated revenues.

I want to commend the other administrators for their work in this painful task. All take considerable pride in their assigned duties and, more importantly, the staff and students they hire and supervise. There is no satisfaction in dismantling a school district, yet this has been done with considerable forethought and a willingness to step back from their particular areas of responsibility and view the district as a whole.

In closing, I have written repeatedly that excellence within the schoolhouse has a price. Money does make a difference in the education of children, and for years Wayland has enjoyed and benefited from a reputation of having excellent schools. This reputation is often cited as the primary reason why young families choose this community over others. The FY'11 budget will be adequate; we will make it work. Still, it must be acknowledged that what this budget does not provide will seriously challenge the staff's ability to ensure quality opportunities for all of the students in their care. However, I have no doubt that our teachers and the support staff will carry out their duties with consummate professionalism. The education of their students will not be jeopardized. I hope that an improving economy and Wayland's taxpayers will not forget future Wayland students or those who have repeatedly proven exceptional in educating young people.

Please free to call any of the central office administrators directly if this will facilitate answering questions and assisting in understanding our recommended budget.

WSC Budget Principles: FY2011

"In concert with the Wayland Public Schools' Core Values and Mission Statement, the Wayland School Committee presents these Budget Principles to provide guidance for the Administration in developing annual operating and capital budgets."

1. Deliver a high-quality educational program to Wayland's children.
2. Place highest budgetary priority on personnel, budgeting for staff/pupil ratios in accordance with prevailing district policy, and on the supervision thereof, with an overall expectation that any budget reductions minimize the impact on student learning.
3. Provide for the continued development of programs as designated in the curriculum program review process and explore the possible creation of new programs.
4. Respect the fiscal priorities of the Town by considering cost reduction, new revenue, and program redefinition, with attention given to such considerations as staff patterns, operational efficiencies, and cooperative ventures.
5. Budget realistically, based on the needs of the system without the benefit of a contingency fund, for non-personnel items including materials, technology, maintenance, cleaning, and general operation of all school buildings.
6. Advocate for significant equipment and building capital needs.

Wayland Public Schools

Budget Purchasing Power

Year	Budget Year	School Budget	Nominal % Change
BASE	1979-1980	\$7,202,723	
1	1980-1981	\$7,490,639	4.00%
2	1981-1982	\$7,200,000	-3.88%
3	1982-1983	\$7,666,240	9.25%
4	1983-1984	\$8,222,063	4.52%
5	1984-1985	\$8,617,382	4.81%
6	1985-1986	\$9,031,382	4.80%
7	1986-1987	\$9,531,309	5.54%
8	1987-1988	\$10,033,702	5.27%
9	1988-1989	\$10,607,371	5.72%
10	1989-1990	\$10,767,832	1.51%
11	1990-1991	\$11,397,318	5.85%
12	1991-1992	\$12,043,151	5.67%
13	1992-1993	\$12,356,721	2.60%
14	1993-1994	\$12,889,221	4.31%
15	1994-1995	\$13,999,221	8.61%
16	1995-1996	\$14,568,221	4.06%
17	1996-1997	\$15,493,638	6.35%
18	1997-1998	\$17,293,638	11.62%
19	1998-1999	\$18,242,998	5.49%
20	1999-2000	\$19,054,740	4.45%
21	2000-2001	\$20,803,840	9.18%
22	2001-2002	\$22,845,840	9.82%
23	2002-2003	\$24,512,200	7.29%
24	2003-2004	\$25,462,202	3.88%
25	2004-2005	\$25,909,202	1.76%
26	2005-2006	\$27,379,743	5.68%
27	2006-2007	\$28,407,893	3.76%
28	2007-2008	\$28,722,212	1.11%
29	2008-2009	\$30,091,713	4.77%
30	2009-2010	\$31,111,763	3.39%
31	2010-2011	\$30,538,579	-2.33%