

Cambridge Public Schools
159 Thorndike Street, Cambridge, MA 02141

Thomas Fowler-Finn, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

To: All Families
From: Thomas Fowler-Finn
Re: 2005-06 Budget Proposal
Date: April 7, 2005

The School Committee adopted the 2005-06 Plan for Education (Budget for 2005-06) proposed by the Superintendent and revised by the School Committee at the meeting of April 5, 2005. That proposal now goes before the City Council on May 5, 2005 at City Hall for the final phase of adoption.

I feel privileged to be encouraged by the School Committee to develop a plan with them for next year that in my opinion will advance the education of the children of this community – with your continuing help. We are moving forward with supportive resources and are able to improve the educational program in fulfillment of our vision to help all children succeed. In other words, we are “budgeting a plan” rather than simply “planning a budget.” The overall net dollar increase of 1.6% is the smallest net increase in more than a decade, but it is terrific financial support for ongoing efforts and new programs within our schools at a time when many other communities are struggling with finances.

This proposal for the 2005-06 school year plus the adopted budget from last April (for the current 2004-05 school year) has reduced more than 3 million dollars from administrative/support areas and used that money to finance school and student programs. Class sizes will be smaller next year, and new initiatives in professional development, instruction, and student services continue to be implemented in pursuit of the goal of raising academic achievement for all students and closing the achievement gap. I anticipate great progress during the next school year as we continue to focus and align our resources, implement school improvement plans, and improve classroom instruction to demonstrate to the community that we are a continually improving school district.

Highlights of the plan for next year are:

A. Budget Costs:

- Salary increases of 4.25%
- Charter School cost increase of \$471,000
- Health Insurance increase of 11% (employee contribution rate to remain the same)
- Pension increase of 2.5% (employee contribution rate to remain the same)
- Special Education Tuition rate increases of 9%

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- Transportation Cost increase of 5%
- Energy/Utilities increase of 15%
- Reduction in administrative/operations staffing of slightly over \$1,000,000
- Reduction of teacher and paraprofessional positions due to declining enrollment (decline of 256 students from current budget to next year not including charter school students) and converting paraprofessional positions into teaching positions. Natural attrition and retirements should resolve the net reduction of teacher positions (2.5) while the same will be true for most of the paraprofessional positions (19).
- Reduced tuition/enrollment at Minuteman Regional High School of more than \$550,000
- Continued reduction of consolidation and one-time costs of more than \$850,000
- Reduced debt service costs of \$1,500,000
- Special Education Tuition One Time Circuit Breaker reimbursement savings from the state of \$2,500,000

B. Budget Priorities, Adjustments and Initiatives:

- Increase in “per pupil” allotments to schools for supplies, books, materials, etc. from \$115/pupil to \$140/pupil next year
- Increase in School Improvement Plan (SIP) funding allotted to schools: \$250,000
- New RSTA Media Arts Program equipment investment of \$55,000
- Graham & Parks Reading Recovery Program (final school to adopt program)
- Reduced class sizes K-8 from 19.7 students per class in 2004-05 budget to 18.5 in 2005-06 budget. The teaching staff has been set based upon current enrollment projections. The loss of students to a new charter school will reduce class sizes below 18.5. Reduced class sizes are also expected at CRLS as well.
- RSTA staff increases to respond to 30% increase in student time spent on technical courses to meet DOE vocational requirements.
- Continuation of Science Initiative at \$250,000.
- Continuation of free Summer School at \$360,000 despite the loss of state aid support for summer school.
- **Professional Development Increases** (funding for **all** professional development is over \$11 million, equal to approximately 10% of the total school budget)
 - Block schedule transition \$200,000 in addition to CRLS per pupil regular professional development allocation
 - Increased allocation to schools from \$20/pupil to \$40/pupil
 - Literacy and Mathematics in-service for paraprofessionals: \$15,000
 - District-wide in-service: \$100,000
 - Two teacher Sabbatical Leaves in addition to two Conant Fellowships
 - 3 Aspiring Leaders Internships (2 @ K-8, 1 @ CRLS) at full teacher pay plus \$5,000 stipend and additional in-service
 - Harvard Leadership program (with Dr. Elmore) for principals: \$150,000
- CRLS Graduate follow-up Study: \$15,000
- Special Education transitional program for students 18-22: \$60,000
- Nextel Security Communications system for all schools: \$33,000
- Debt Stabilization fund for future school capital projects: \$450,000

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- Capital Projects for facility improvements: \$500,000
- CRLS Reading Program for 9th & 10th grade students: \$20,000
- AVID Program at all middle schools that requested the program (Cambridgeport, Fletcher-Maynard, King and Graham & Parks): \$55,000
- Smartboards technology for Middle School mathematics instruction: \$55,000
- Expansion of K-8 Literacy Collaborative with Lesley University: \$275,000
- Extended Day Program after regular school hours at all K-8 schools for improved proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics: \$370,000

The School Committee members and I are enthusiastic about the advancement of education and high standards of achievement supported in this budget and plan for next year. Should you have questions or comments about the information contained herein, please feel free to discuss it with your principal or email the superintendent at superintendent@cpsd.us.

Cambridge School Committee

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