

WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Weston Board of Education

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Sonya Stack
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January 29, 2010

To: Boards of Selectmen and Finance

From: Philip L. Schaefer

RE: Letter of Transmittal - Board of Education's Budget request for FY 2011

Dear Board Members:

The Weston Board of Education respectfully presents the attached FY 2011 operating budget for the school system. This plan was thoughtfully developed based on our community's desire for educational excellence and high expectations, while also recognizing and understanding the economic conditions facing our town and its citizens.

Through open dialogue, collaboration and shared problem solving amongst the Boards of Education, Selectmen, Finance, and our town officials, thoughtful decisions have been made, and it is the Board of Education's goal to continue this tradition and become stronger as a result of these challenging times. We have also listened very carefully to members of our community, and have benefited from some of their suggestions. This entire process has helped us to put forth a financial plan that supports the needs of our 21st century learners, while we continue to explore and find new ways to save money.

As many of you know, over the past several years the school district has implemented numerous changes that have avoided or reduced costs, and improved efficiencies. Our focus has been on employee benefits, transportation, energy conservation, and support services. We have developed high quality specifications and aggressively bid these services. In addition, we have modified and changed the way we deliver certain services and employed sound business practices in daily operations. One example is the implementation of a self-operated mini-fleet for students transported to facilities located outside of Weston. The district saved money and improved the service.

The FY 2011 budget reflects a decrease in the area of employee health benefits when compared to FY 2010 of more than \$200k. The following factors and budget assumptions enabled this reduction:

- Assume a 5% rate increase from Cigna, anything over 5% will be absorbed by the Internal Services Fund
- Transition 50 additional employee to the Health Savings Plan, anything below this will be absorbed by the Internal Services Fund*
- Plan design changes for those remaining in the PPO & HMO Plans
- Increase in employee cost share

*Note: The district is currently developing and evaluating a program that would provide an incentive for employees to change to the Health Savings Plan.

As you will see in this document, savings in these areas and the assumptions regarding health benefits have enabled us to maintain the educational programs in FY 2010 with no increase in the budget, and in FY 2011 with a modest increase of 1.64%. Throughout this process, our work has been transparent and presented in a straightforward, understandable format. We have worked hard to earn the respect and confidence of the local Boards and the community as a whole.

Accordingly, the Weston Board of Education respectfully presents the attached budget for your consideration. This budget was developed by our administrators, and presented to the Board of Education members earlier this month. After careful review, consideration and modification, the Board voted to request a budget of \$44,697,023. As mentioned above, this budget request represents a 1.64% or \$721,422 increase. Once again, we believe that this request is both fiscally responsible and provides for the educational programs that Weston expects. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Philip L. Schaefer
Board of Education Chairperson