

## **REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The initial proposed School Department FY'20 Operating Budget reflected a "level-services" approach with attention to growing needs for special education services, increasing high school enrollment, crucial facility needs, as well as resources required to meet state DESE and other legislative mandates. In addition, the request included additional Central Office Human Resources support in light of increased enrollment and staff, expanding complexities of employment law, and additional state mandates. The School Committee decreased the Administration's original budget request by \$620,624 to mirror the Advisory Committee's recommended budget, which will support many, but not all, of the requested additional needs of the School Department.

School Committee funding priorities include, but are not limited to: Special Education funding, such as positions at the High School and Middle School to better facilitate inclusion services, introduction of two in-district programs to reduce costs, and a pilot program to revamp Home Services that will offset contracted costs; much needed Central Office support; and partial funding of requests for additional high school and middle school core subject instructional positions. We expect the Special Education pilot programs will improve the quality of service and enhance the District's ability to control costs in future years, as well. Additionally, the district will take over three expensive special education transportation runs by leasing vans and delivering the service in-house at a lower cost.

As in the past, the School Committee and School Department have advocated for school funding that allows for continued educational improvements, represents a reasonable balance between maintaining important Town services and achieving the Town's long-term financial objectives, while also recognizing limited sources of revenue. We acknowledge the collaboration and leadership of the School Administration, the Board of Selectmen, the Advisory Committee and its Education Liaisons, and the Town Administrator in reaching consensus on the proposed budget.

Town Meeting is asked by the Advisory Committee to approve an appropriation of \$54,319,826 to operate the Hingham schools for next year, an increase of 4.45% over the FY'19 appropriation. It is important to note that the proposed Hingham Public Schools operating budget is "net" of grants from state and federal governments and other offsets from fees, tuitions and other revenue generating operations. Grants include federal and state entitlement grants, as well as state program grants. Other offsets include fees for athletics and activities, use of school property such as building and grounds, and tuitions generated from Kids-in-Action, the Integrated Pre-K program, and Full Day Kindergarten. Grants and revenue generating programs and activities reduce the gross budget costs by nearly \$4.3 Million in FY'20.

The largest funding grant/offset in FY'20 is the state's Circuit Breaker reimbursement of \$1,781,419. The amount of the Circuit Breaker reimbursement fluctuates from year-to-year, with a nearly \$350,000 increased offset in FY'20. Full Day Kindergarten personnel costs will continue to be partially offset in FY'20 by parent paid tuitions. Tuition has been increased by \$100 to \$3,750, which equates to a 2.74% increase. The district offers a sliding scale tuition formula based on household income to ensure that income is not a deterrent for families to participate in Hingham's program.

In addition to the operating budget, the Advisory Committee and Capital Outlay Committee have recommended a Capital appropriation for the Hingham Public Schools of \$975,971 versus the \$1,869,793 requested by the School Committee. This appropriation includes funds to maintain buildings and update infrastructure components, meet technology needs, replace aging furnishings and obsolete equipment, and enhance safety and security within the schools. In addition to the capital appropriation, the School Department is requesting funding in a separate warrant article for the High School Clerestory windows replacement in the amount of \$550,160, and a special warrant article for Foster School Extraordinary Maintenance in the amount of \$350,000.

The High School window project was recognized last year with Town Meeting authorizing \$60,000 to design and bid the project so that a firm price to complete the project could be introduced at the April 2019 Town Meeting. The current article reflects a confirmed bid amount plus a contingency for the replacement of the Clerestory Windows in the gym, which will be completed in the summer of 2019 pending Town Meeting Approval.

The Foster School Extraordinary Maintenance warrant will be used to fund extraordinary maintenance that will be required until a permanent solution for the aging Foster School building is determined. We note that the MSBA did not select Hingham's Foster School to participate in the Core Program for the second year in a row and the Extraordinary Maintenance funding is necessary to ensure the viability of the building as we await the decision of our third SOI application to the MSBA filed this month. Results of the 2019 SOI application can be expected by the end of calendar year 2019.

**More detailed information about the proposed budget for FY'20 is available on the HPS website ([hinghamschools.org](http://hinghamschools.org)); click on Administration and then select Business Operations from the pull-down menu.**

**HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Michelle Ayer, Chair	Carlos Da Silva
Liza O'Reilly, Vice Chair	Libby Lewiecki
Kay Praschma, Secretary	Kerry Ni
Edward Schreier, D.D.S	

**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Dorothy Galo, Ph.D.