



# HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Paul Austin, Ph.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

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## MEMORANDUM

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DATE: February 1, 2021  
TO: Hingham School Committee  
FROM: Paul Austin, Superintendent of Schools  
John Ferris, Director of Business and Support Services  
RE: **Proposed (by Administration) FY 2022 Preliminary Operating Budget Overview**

### **Special Budget Statement – FY 2022**

For the past several months, the Administration and the School Committee have been working on a proposed FY 2022 budget for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. The purpose of this communication is to provide an overview of our proposed budget in advance of our upcoming public budget hearing on February 8, 2021.

This preliminary FY 2022 budget proposed by administration is focused on equitably meeting the needs of all children in Hingham Public Schools and on the district's ability to respond to the deficits produced or revealed by the pandemic. The proposed budget ushers in a new school year that seeks to ensure that every child receives the social/emotional and academic supports and services necessary to account for all that has been lost during the pandemic. We understand that this proposed budget is an extraordinary ask, but are committed to advocating for what we believe the children of Hingham both need and deserve in order to “recover” from this very difficult time.

As we look to the future, having a vaccine that could be available by summer gives us hope that the end of this terrible pandemic is near. With that, we believe that our schools will be fully operational to start the year (if not sooner). However, when we do open the 2021-2022 school year, we must be ready to aggressively respond to the needs of our students and be willing to meet them where they are at. With our exceptional group of educators, support staff, and administrators, the proposed FY 2022 budget will enable the district to address the needs of its students appropriately and swiftly.

### **FY 2022 Hingham Public Schools Budget as Proposed by Administration**

This budget document includes information about the administration's preliminary proposed operating budget for FY 2022 and the assumptions upon which the budget was based. Comparisons between the FY 2019, 2020 and 2021 approved budgets and the FY 2022 proposed budget are provided along with the administration's rationale for proposed FY 2022 additions. Comments about special circumstances that impact projected costs of some functions and concerns about unknowns and future revenues are also included.

Budget Categories	FY 2019 Approved	FY 2020 Approved	FY 2021 Approved	FY 2022 Proposed	Preliminary % Change
Regular Education	\$39,267,938	\$41,032,360	\$42,313,177	\$46,653,484	10.26%
Special Education	\$12,612,073	\$13,098,565	\$14,244,334	\$15,505,526	8.85%
Vocational Education	\$126,685	\$188,902	\$173,474	\$202,287	16.61%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$52,006,697</b>	<b>\$54,319,826</b>	<b>\$56,730,985</b>	<b>\$62,361,297</b>	<b>9.92%</b>

The **Budget Development Guiding Principles** are listed on the next page and were initially discussed during the October 3, 2020 planning meeting and then later approved during the November 16, 2020 School Committee meeting. These Guiding Principles served as the starting point for the administration’s development of this budget proposal. We are characterizing the budget as a “Covid Recovery Budget” broadly defined as the district’s response to the reality of anticipated services needed to “recover” from the COVID 19 Health Crisis. The recovery budget needs to address the academic and social/emotional needs of students who have been adversely impacted by the pandemic while providing resources that ensure equity. The budget also needs to address ongoing facility needs, meet contractual obligations, DESE requirements and other legislative mandates. And as Hingham Schools rebuilds the future, funding is required for a rigorous strategic planning initiative.

As is likely true with most school budgets, the goal of this proposed preliminary budget is to find a mutually acceptable balance between what administrators believe reflects a comparable level of services as in FY 2021 and what Town resources are deemed to be available. With that in mind, the District has historically believed that developing School Committee approved budget guidelines is an important first step in the annual budget process. The Budget Guidelines statement for the FY 2022 budget follow, as do the lists of Assumptions and Special Concerns that the administration used in developing its preliminary proposed budget. As this document is intended as an overview, the requests submitted by the staff are summarized according to whether they have been included in the preliminary budget or not. More detail has been provided in work session documents.

The process of developing the school administration’s recommended FY 2022 Operating Budget began with: (1) a School Committee planning and goal setting meeting followed by the development and SC approval of Budget Guidelines and Calendar, (2) re-submission of unfunded FY 21 critical needs adjusted for COVID recovery, and (3) restatement of FY 21 level services needs adjusted for inflation where appropriate. Every line item in the FY 2021 approved budget was reviewed and adjusted up or down as appropriate to reflect anticipated costs before any new requests were added to create our proposal for FY 2022.

**ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING DEVELOPMENT OF THE FY 2022 OPERATING BUDGET**

The Hingham School Committee voted unanimously on November 16, 2020 to approve the following Guiding Principles for the Development of the FY 2022 School Committee Budget:

**Preamble:**

Due to COVID 19 and the lack of visibility for FY 2022, the FY 2022 budget process will be truncated and a proposed budget will be developed based on needs identified for the FY 21 budget with several key initiatives added that the administration believes are essential for meeting the needs of our students and school community in FY 2022 and going forward. With the basic premise that Hingham will

maintain its focus on providing the highest quality education for all Hingham students, the following parameters and presumptions will be used in the development of the FY 2022 budget:

- a. The budget will presume a continuation of enrollment from the March 1, 2020 enrollment counts.
- b. The budget will presume a continuation of all FTEs approved in the FY 2021 budget.
- c. All personnel salaries will be stepped up according to terms specified in the appropriate collective bargaining agreements or individual contracts.
- d. Where CBAs have not yet been completed as the budget process begins, an allowance will be provided for two years.

**The adopted budget of the School Committee will:**

1. Provide for expanded Hingham’s Tiered System of Support services (HTSS) necessary to remediate the loss of academic progress resulting from COVID 19.
2. Fund the process and development of a five-year Hingham Public Schools strategic plan.
3. Provide staffing and support for Special Education to ensure that the district is able to appropriately and adequately address the needs of students, staff and the community.
4. Fund resources required for year one (1) of the District’s Equity and Inclusion plan.
5. Provide for needed personnel support for Central Office Administration, which includes the addition of a Payroll Clerk, and an Administrative Assistant to perform data analytics, and provide School Committee, Social Media and Communication support.

**SPECIAL BUDGET CIRCUMSTANCES, CHALLENGES, AND UNKNOWNNS**

**Contract Negotiations:**

Although three of the six bargaining units have reached agreement on successor contracts that began on July 1, 2020, three units are still in negotiations at this time. With that, there is some degree of uncertainty about how these contract negotiations will impact the FY 2022 budget. As such, an allowance for negotiations has been included in this FY 2022 proposed budget.

**Student Enrollment:**

During this COVID 19 crisis, a significant number of families chose to withdraw their children from HPS to pursue homeschooling, while others chose to enroll their children in private schools. While enrollment remains uncertain for FY 2022 at this time, the School Committee agreed to build this budget based on the March 1, 2020 enrollment data.

**The future availability of state and federal funding to offset gross operating budgets:**

With the ongoing COVID 19 Health Crisis and the impact it has had on state revenues, it is unclear at this time how our town will fare in regards to funding. Although the federal government has committed to assisting schools across the Country with the cost of reopening, it

still remains uncertain as to what dollars will become available to Hingham Public Schools. As Hingham enrollment declined with COVID, it is uncertain as to what impact, if any, last year's decreased enrollment will have on state funding. Grants (both Federal and State) have been assumed at similar levels to previous years.

**ITEMS REQUESTED BY STAFF FOR INCLUSION IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S FY 2022  
PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGET**

**Included in the preliminary/proposed budget:**

**Districtwide Requests:**

*Central Office Administrative Assistant* – To assist the District and School Committee in effective communications with the public and for collecting and analyzing district/student performance data.

*Mathematics – HTSS Intervention Program*– As we prepare for the implementation of the new HTSS – Academic Intervention program in FY 2022, we have included a budget allowance for a Mathematics Intervention Program that will be made available to assist school teams in identifying students in need of services, providing direct intervention services to students, and assessing progress relative to the interventions provided.

*William James College Interface Referral System* – To assist the District and School Counseling Department in meeting the social and emotional needs of students through a clinical referral system that connects students with appropriate community resources.

*Funding for the implementation of a District Equity and Inclusion Plan*– To fund year one (1) of the district's plan for meeting the needs of all students by ensuring equity and inclusion.

*Funding for Strategic Planning*– To fund a comprehensive strategic planning initiative that will lead to the development of a five-year district strategic plan for addressing the needs of the district.

**Secondary Requests:**

*Hingham Middle School STEM Teacher for grades 7-8* – This new position is in response to ensuring alignment to the MA Tech/Engineering standards and to allow expansion of STEM instruction at the Middle School to meet student demand.

*Hingham Middle School Math Specialist/Interventionist* – This new position is necessary to support a new HTSS-Academic Intervention program at the Middle School to address the needs of children who have historically struggled to meet local and state math standards, which are expected to increase as a result of the disruption of education due to COVID-19.

*Hingham Middle School Math Tutors (2)* – These new positions are necessary to support a new HTSS-Academic Intervention program at the Middle School to address the needs of children who have struggled to meet local and state math standards, which are expected to increase as a result of the disruption of education due to COVID-19.

*Hingham Middle School Literacy/Writing Specialist/Interventionist* – This new position is necessary to support a new HTSS-Academic Intervention program at the Middle School to

address the needs of children who have struggled to meet local and state literacy standards, which are expected to increase as a result of the disruption of education due to COVID-19.

***Hingham High School Guidance Counselor*** – To address the increased need for counseling services as a result of enrollment increases at Hingham High School, which are required to meet the social/emotional and academic support needs of all high school students.

### **Elementary Requests:**

***Elementary Literacy Specialists/Interventionists (4)*** – These new positions are necessary to support a new HTSS-Academic Intervention program in the elementary schools to address the needs of children struggling to meet local and state literacy standards, which are expected to increase as a result of the disruption in education due to COVID-19.

***Elementary Math Tutors (4)*** – These new positions are necessary to support the new HTSS-Academic Intervention program. We currently have 1 math tutor for each elementary school and these new positions will allow each elementary school to have two dedicated math tutors. These tutors will provide direct intervention services to students who struggle to meet local and state math standards, which are expected to increase as a result of the disruption in education due to COVID-19.

***Elementary Math Para-Educators (4)*** – These new positions are necessary to support the new HTSS-Academic Intervention program. These para-educators will work collaboratively with the Elementary Math Tutors to provide direct intervention services to students who struggle to meet local and state math standards, which are expected to increase as a result of the disruption in education due to COVID-19.

***Elementary Adjustment Counselors (Contracted – 2 FTE)*** – These contracted positions are necessary to support elementary students in their return to full, in-person learning in the fall. These positions will provide direct support to students and assist them with their social and emotional needs as a result of the disruption in education due to COVID-19.

### **Special Education Requests**

***Special Education Teachers (4)*** – These new special education teachers are added to the FY 2022 budget to address the need for caseload growth and for increased support for students and families with special needs, which have increased as a result of COVID-19.

***Special Education Speech/Language Pathologists (3)*** – These new special education speech and language pathologists are added to the FY 2022 budget to address the need for caseload growth, need for evaluation, and for increased support for students and families with special needs, which have increased as a result of COVID-19.

***Special Education Administrator (2 – Elementary and Secondary)*** – These new positions are added to meet the increased needs of students, families, and the district for oversight, planning, implementation, and compliance monitoring of special education services.

## **ITEMS THAT ARE RECOMMENDED BUT NOT INCLUDED IN THIS BUDGET**

The administration believes that these positions would be beneficial to the District but are not necessary in a budget year where the primary focus will be on recovery from COVID. These items will be discussed in the funded strategic planning initiative as Hingham “rebuilds the future”.

1. **Director of Fine Arts**
2. **Assistant Principal for Hingham High School**

The School Administration looks forward to the opportunity to clarify details of its proposed budget during the School Committee’s required Public Hearing which will be held at its regular School Committee meeting of February 8, 2021. Due to the nature of this budget development during COVID-19, the School Committee has yet to schedule a formal budget adoption vote at this time.

Thank you,

Paul Austin and John Ferris