



Watertown School Committee

WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472-3492

School Committee

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TO: Michael J. Driscoll
Town Manager

FROM: Anthony P. Paolillo, Chairman
School Committee

RE: FY '10 BUDGET

DATE: June 23, 2009

As a follow up to our conversation this morning I would like to further explain the difficulties that the School Department faces as a result of the just-passed State budget. Because of the decrease in the Circuit Breaker money -- from 65% last year to 42% in the just-passed state budget -- the School Department is now faced with a funding gap \$419K below your proposed budget and \$638K below the level approved by the School Committee. To cover the most recent gap the School Department is now proposing the elimination of an additional eight to nine positions. This brings to at least fifteen the number of positions that would be eliminated by the School Department at this point in time. This reduction in positions would include seven layoffs.

To avert just layoffs of personnel, the School Department needs an additional \$220K. To meet this minimum need, the School Committee is seeking support from the Town and the Watertown Educators Association. If the Town can provide an additional \$154K, and with some help from the WEA, we hope to avert any layoffs within the School Department for this fiscal year.

However, even with averting layoffs, the School Department will be losing eight positions that will affect the quality of education that we are providing the children of Watertown. Examples of that are as follows:

- Middle School classes on average will increase to 24-25 from 20-22
- Middle School art classes are decreased by 30%
- Student user activity fees will be needed to generate \$50K
- ESL class sizes will increase
- Library/Media programs reduced at the elementary schools
- Loss of custodian position
- High School class sizes increased
- Estimates made on SPED and utilities could cause future deficits
- Necessity to use all of the Stimulus funding FY '10
- Regular education supplies will continue at an unacceptably low level

In addition, uncertainties continue in our budget. Special education and utility costs have been estimated to the best of our ability, but these areas are subject to unforeseen fluctuations. Further, there may be restrictions on the use of stimulus money for special education and Title 1 that may reduce our flexibility to use these monies in the budget.

The requested additional funding from the Town will be very much appreciated; this will help address the very significant personnel and program cuts we now face. However, we recognize that this will go only part way in dealing with the situation. As noted, we are seeking support from the WEA to help in addressing this situation. Without such help, we will need to make reductions and layoffs that will reduce the capacity of the School District to provide for the education of the children of Watertown.

Once again, I want to thank you for your help, cooperation and commitment to our students during these extraordinary times for the Watertown Public Schools.