

May 24, 2017 Financial Town Meeting

Barrington Public Schools: Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Operating Budget

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The following information from the Barrington Public Schools and the Barrington School Committee provides members of the community with additional detail about issues related to the school district's proposed operating budget for the 2017-2018 school year.

1. What is the FY18 Budget as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations (COA) that will be presented at the Financial Town Meeting?

Originally, the Committee on Appropriations (COA) recommended "level funding" for the school district next year, in contrast to the "level services" budget that had been proposed by the Administration and School Committee. Level funding would mean that funding for the schools would be the same next year as it is this year. At a meeting of the COA on May 16, this recommendation for level funding was revised to restore \$800,000 to the COA's recommended FY18 operating budget, for a total recommended FY18 operating budget of \$48,766,398. This amount is \$402,448 less than the level services budget proposed by the Administration and the School Committee.

2. What was the FY18 operating budget as proposed by the Administration and the School Committee?

The Administration and the School Committee submitted a budget proposal of \$49,168,846. This budget provides for "level services", meaning that it would cover the increased costs associated with maintaining all existing programs and services, with no funding for new initiatives or programs. A level services budget would require an increase of approximately \$1.2 million over this year's budget, including \$794,000 associated with contractual obligations for staff salaries and benefits, and an estimated \$370,000 increase in special education student support services.

This level services budget request was the result of significant work by the Administration to identify reductions in many areas where greater funding had originally been proposed in order to minimize the impact on taxpayers.

3. What would the impact of the COA's recommended budget be on the Barrington Public Schools?

In order to close the gap between the requested "level services" budget and the "level funding" budget originally recommended by the COA, the Administration proposed, and the School Committee approved, approximately \$1.2 million in cost reductions for next year.

The COA's recommended schools' budget for FY18, as revised on May 16, restored \$800,000, but is still \$402,448 less than the level services budget proposed by the Administration and School Committee. Because the COA's recommended budget does not cover the increased costs associated with a level services budget it will not allow for preservation of all current academic, athletic and extracurricular programs. The Administration and School Committee will be required to identify \$402,448 in reductions for next year.

4. If the COA's recommended budget is approved, how will the Administration and School Committee identify areas for reduction?

The Administration will, once again, utilize a comprehensive process for the identification of possible reductions to the FY18 operating budget. The Administration will evaluate all components of the pre-K to 12 educational program, looking carefully at the impact of any potential cuts on programs and schools. State and Federal mandates, the Rhode Island Basic Education Program (BEP), and graduation requirements as defined by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will be prioritized. Class size in core subject areas will be reviewed again with the Barrington High School administrative team. The Athletic Director will provide information regarding the District's athletic offerings, including student participation in different programs and the cost per student by program. Any potential cuts will have an impact on students in the form of higher student/teacher ratios and the elimination of programs and electives. Once a budget has been approved at the Financial Town Meeting, any additional required reductions, as identified by the Administration, will receive close scrutiny by the School Committee.

5. Given the proposed elimination of all Middle School athletic programs and some High School athletics, could these programs be preserved by charging a fee to the families of participants?

No. State laws and regulations prevent school districts from charging the user fees that some neighboring states impose.

6. What are the property tax levy increases associated with the COA's recommended school budget as compared to the budget as submitted by the Administration and the School Committee?

The COA's recommended FY18 total schools' operating budget, including the reinstatement of \$800,000, would result in a property tax levy increase of 28 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The level services budget of \$49,168,846 as submitted by the Administration and School Committee, would result in a property tax levy increase of an additional 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, for a total increase of 42 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. This does not include the tax increase resulting from the municipal budget, capital budget, and Middle School Bond.

7. What are the total property tax levy increases associated with the COA's recommended budget as compared to the budget as submitted by the Administration and the School Committee?

The COA's recommended budget would result in a **total** property tax levy increase of \$1.38 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The level services budget, as submitted by the Administration and School Committee, would result in a **total** property tax levy increase of \$1.52 per \$1,000 of assessed value, according to Town Finance Director, Kathy Raposa.

8. Is it true that the Barrington Public Schools “spends down” its accounts in June?

The large increase in spending in June includes the advanced payment of teacher salaries and benefits. Article 24, Section 2 of the collective bargaining agreement with the National Education Association Barrington (NEAB) includes the following statement: “All persons on the Teachers’ Salary Schedule will be paid in twenty-six (26) equal installments commencing in September, provided, however, those payments due during the months of July and August shall be paid prior to June 30.”

9. Is it true that BPS ends every fiscal year with a budget surplus?

The Barrington Public Schools’ budget is a balanced budget, yet some expenses vary and are not easily estimated in advance, such as support services for special education and out-of-district tuition. During the year, the Administration monitors all costs and makes adjustments in spending as needed. As a result of this careful monitoring, the District has, in recent years, ended the school year within approximately 1.5% of the total approved budget. The Town and Barrington Public Schools have been acknowledged by bond rating agencies for their responsible fiscal management. Any surplus funds at the end of the school year are used for one-time, long-term capital improvement projects, which are eligible for 35% State Housing Aid reimbursement. The strategic use of these funds for facility repairs and improvements has allowed our community to avoid issuing bonds for many capital projects.

[Here is a link to the most recent completed projects.](#)

10. Although funding for the new Barrington Middle School (BMS) project is not part of the District FY18 Operating Budget, I’m interested in learning more about it. How can I follow its progress?

The BMS Building Project has its own website, <https://www.bmsproject.org>, that serves as a resource for all current and archived information relative to the project. You can also follow the progress of the project by attending a BMS Building Committee meeting. The BMS Building Committee meets on a regular basis, most often in the BMS Library. All meetings are open to the public and the meeting schedule is available on the project website. The next meeting of the BMS Building Committee will be held on Monday, June 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the BMS Library.

The following documents provide additional information about the approximately \$1.2 million in reductions proposed prior to the COA restoration of \$800,000:

- [PowerPoint: Impact report on proposed FY18 budget reductions](#), May 4, 2017
- [Memo: Superintendent’s FY18 budget update to the School Committee](#), May 5, 2017
- [Link to list of Proposed Programs Impacted based on the \\$1.2m Reductions](#) May 5, 2017

Barrington Public Schools
 Capital Project History
 Completed Project FY06 - FY16

Project	School	Completed Dates	Total
DTC Controls	Nayatt	11/1/2005	\$17,400
DTC Controls	Primrose	11/1/2005	\$16,500
Fascia	High School	4/1/2004	\$43,800
Soffit Replacement	Nayatt	9/1/2005	\$90,021
Soffit Replacement	Primrose	9/1/2005	\$90,021
Fire Doors	Primrose	9/1/2008	\$193,787
Fire Doors	Nayatt	9/1/2008	\$193,787
Fire Doors	Hampden	9/1/2009	\$84,120
Fire Doors	Sowams	9/1/2009	\$31,599
Parking Lot	High School	9/1/2011	\$776,026
Parking Lot	Sowams	9/1/2012	\$210,386
Parking Lot	Primrose	9/1/2015	\$665,793
Pre-School Playground	Primrose	8/1/2015	\$117,473
Removal Underground Tank	Primrose	8/1/2015	\$37,749
Removal Underground Tank	Hampden	8/1/2016	\$22,199
Removal Underground Tank	Nayatt	8/1/2016	\$10,475
Water main upgrade	Primrose	7/1/2016	\$20,200
Water main upgrade	Nayatt	9/2/2015	\$22,580
Office Civil Rights - ADA	High School	8/1/2015	\$130,858
Imm Health & Safety - Phase I	Elms	8/1/2015	\$1,207,870
ADA, Bathrooms, ramps, railings			
Imm Health & Safety - Phase II	Nay, PH, HM	8/1/2016	\$522,680
Office Security and Nurses Rooms			
			\$4,505,324