

*The mission of the Epping School District is to focus on the potential of every student and engage them to be passionate, confident learners who demonstrate competence and have strength of character to reach their highest aspirations and thoughtfully contribute to a diverse and changing world.*



## EPPING SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT CARD 2011

The intent of the Epping School District Report Card is to share successes and challenges in meeting the district student learning, professional learning, and accountability goals. Student demographic and educational data and financial data are routinely monitored to determine our successes and challenges. Detailed student demographic and learning data and financial data may be accessed on the Epping School District website [www.sau14.org](http://www.sau14.org) under Accountability. Please note that data may be from several school years due to the availability of information from the NH Department of Education.

Demographically, our schools continue to change due to the economy and changing town population. Data has indicated that the enrollment decline that began in 2005-2006 has ended with 20 new students added over a two-year period. The economy has continued to significantly impact our student body with 26% of students, the highest number in 15 years, qualifying for free and reduced meals. For the past two school years there has also been a notable increase in the Limited English Proficiency student population with 2% of students qualifying for services. This school year the special education population decreased to 15% after peaking at 18% in 2008-2009. Home and charter school student enrollment has also stabilized with a slight enrollment decline.

This school year significant staffing reductions were made to address the state passing retirement costs down to the local level and to meet changing student demographics and needs. The additional grade 4 or 5 teaching position was not filled, the EES math/data specialist was reduced to 60%, the EMS/EHS nursing assistant position was reduced to 50%, the EHS credit recovery and study hall paraprofessional positions were eliminated, and the district curriculum/professional development position was reduced to 60% in order to address the unanticipated increase in retirement costs. An EES special education teacher and at-risk guidance counselor position were reinstated, an EMS Spanish position was increased from 20 to 40%, and an English Speaker of Other Languages paraprofessional was added to address the changing student demographics and needs.

Educationally, the district has continued to focus on reading, writing, and mathematics. Student reading and mathematics proficiency scores in grades 3 to 8 have trended upward with 77% reading proficiency at state average and 77% mathematics proficiency above state average. It is important to note that the district has emphasized student proficiency rather than the school in need of improvement designation. This decision has been recently supported by the NH Department of

Education and many other states submitting an intention for a federal waiver from the present adequate yearly progress (AYP) system with the argument that these designations utilize an arbitrary target rather than recognize individual student growth for all students. This school year the district adopted a new math program Math in Focus and began implementation in grades K to 6 with the intention of adding grades 7 and 8 next school year. Mathematics, science, world language, and unified arts committees are well on their way to complete their curriculum framework aligning with existing state standards and the newly adopted Common Core State Standards. Language arts and social studies committees will complete their curriculum framework next school year. Epping High School is to be commended for reducing the high school dropout rate below state average for the second year.

Financially, the district has continued the practice of returning funds in the form of fund balance. The cost per pupil has continued to be higher than state average due to the southeast region and the size of our schools. The district has met its goal of lower class sizes and has added an additional full time kindergarten program to address student needs early with the intention of reducing educational costs later. Benefit costs have continued to be an area of concern and the district has changed health insurance plans to include higher office visit and prescription drug co-payments for administrators, support staff, and paraprofessionals. The negotiated teacher agreement (warrant article 1) includes elimination of the most expensive health insurance plan option and institutes higher co-payments for teachers. The Epping taxpayer contribution has increased from 74% to 76% of the school budget due to reductions in state and federal funding. Thank you for supporting Epping schools!

#### Student Demographic Information

- Student enrollment has increased for the second year in a row with 11 additional students this school year. Data indicates that the enrollment decline has ended with 20 new students added over the two-year period. An additional elementary teacher in the 2011-2012 Budget was not filled due to retirement costs being downshifted from the state to the district level.
- Epping schools have continued to be predominately white with only 5% of our students meeting the criteria for ethnic/race diversity.
- The economy has continued to significantly impact our student body with 26% of our students, the highest percentage in 15 years, identified as socio-economically disadvantaged. This increase has been reflected in 21% of elementary students receiving Title 1 services.
- The Limited English Proficiency population has continued steady at 2% with 19 students receiving services this year and last. This school year and continued next year an English Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) paraprofessional was added due to increased student need.
- For the third year in a row special education student enrollment has declined from its highest level at 18% to 15% over this period.
- The home school student population has decreased slightly, but is still in the 20 to 25 range. Home school students have continued to participate in our schools in various different ways.
- The charter school population appears to have stabilized with 29 Epping students attending one of four area charter schools. The district has budgeted special education services for Epping students attending charter schools.

#### Student Learning Information

- The elementary school remains a school in need of improvement (SINI) in mathematics although they have made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2011. Please note that it takes two

consecutive years of meeting adequate yearly progress to get out of School in Need of Improvement status. The middle school has continued to be a school in need of improvement in math after economically disadvantaged and educational disability subgroups did not meet targets. Professional development funds for improving reading, writing, and mathematics instruction have been continued in the 2012-2013 Budget.

- Reading proficiency has decreased slightly in grades 3 to 8 from 78 to 77% at state average, but the trend is still up. Reading proficiency in grade 11 has continued to be sporadic as there is no student continuum due to only one grade being tested. Reading and writing continue to be supported by professional development throughout the district and classroom libraries in EES.
- Mathematics proficiency has significantly increased with 77% of our students in grades 3 to 8 testing proficient in mathematics in comparison to 71% state average. The high school has continued to produce poor results as did the entire state. The district mathematics committee completed their district mathematics curriculum and recommended a new math program called Math in Focus to align with Common Core State Standards and address parental concerns. This year the program is being implemented in grades K to 6 with grades 7 and 8 to follow next school year. The 2012-2013 Budget has continued with additional professional development for mathematics.
- Elementary and high school grades tested above state average in writing. Results have been spotty due to a lack of a student continuum with only one grade being tested in each school.
- The trend in science testing is upward, but results continue to be poor for both the district and state. The district science committee has nearly completed district science curriculum. This school year the district invested in non-fiction reading materials for EES classroom libraries to promote reading in science and social studies. Next year's budget includes an elementary science teacher to focus on hands-on science instruction.
- Advanced placement results have continued to lag behind the national average; however it is important to note that 35% of advanced placement exams have yielded a passing grade eligible for college credit.
- In 2009-2010 a significant decrease in Epping high school graduates pursuing post-secondary attendance was evidenced. This will need to be monitored to determine a change in trend.
- In 2009-2010 Epping high school graduates demonstrated their patriotism surpassing state average with 5% of students planning on entering the armed forces.
- Epping High School has produced two years of high school dropout results less than state average. From 2009 to 2011 altogether 4 students have not received a high school diploma or GED certificate in comparison to double digit results in previous years.

#### Financial Information

- The assessed tax rate of \$24.27 increased by \$1.00 with the schools responsible for 33 cents. Epping schools portion of the tax rate decreased from 79 to 77%.
- This year Epping's equalized tax rate narrowed the Epping to state comparison from \$2.16 to \$2.08.
- The district continued to return a healthy fund balance of \$494,371. Under-expenditures were realized in salaries due to rehiring, health insurance due to the rate setting process, special education due to the nature of changing student need, and utilities due to unpredictable rates. Surplus revenues were also realized in tuition and reimbursements for special education costs.
- The 2010-2011 district cost per pupil continued to be higher than state average by \$1,970, but decreasing from a difference of \$2,105 in the previous school year. Both elementary and high

school per pupil costs increased while the middle school decreased.

- The district starting teacher salary declined to 95 out of 160 school districts. However, this school year the district instituted a new salary schedule significantly increasing starting teacher salary.
- The district has continued to strive for class sizes of 20 or less in the primary grades and 25 or less in upper grades. One additional elementary classroom teacher position was not filled as the class size goal was met and these funds were redirected to address increasing retirement costs downshifted from the state. An additional full time kindergarten class was added to keep the class size below 20 and meet student need.
- Benefit costs have continued to significantly affect the budget, increasing to 22% this school year due to retirement and health insurance costs. As noted previously the 2011-2012 school year was significantly impacted by the elimination of state retirement contribution. Health insurance has continued to be a major cost contributor. This school year the district implemented higher contributions for administrators and higher office visit and prescription co-payments for administrators, paraprofessionals, and support staff. The teachers' agreement warrant article includes similar changes to be implemented next school year.
- This school year Epping taxpayers have directly contributed 76% of the school budget with the federal government contributing 4% and the state contributing 20%. The local tax portion includes the state tax which is paid by Epping taxpayers in support of Epping schools.

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