

WARRANT ARTICLE 3 BUDGET

Shall the Epping School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$16,324,011**? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$16,307,568, which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Epping School District or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in any other warrant articles. The school board (5-0) and the budget committee (7-1) recommend this appropriation.

EXPLANATION

This article is recommended by the School Board (5-0) and recommended by the Budget Committee (7-1). The proposed budget of \$16,324,011 is \$16,443 more than the default budget of \$16,307,568.

Last budget season the district made some difficult choices in balancing the needs of the district and taxpayers. Once again we find ourselves in the same situation trying to maintain quality educational program while controlling costs of rising health insurance premiums, the state shifting retirement contributions to the local level, and the difficult economy. As a small school district these factors have significantly affected our budget.

The budget process started with the understanding that 2010-2011 was going to be a lean year. Staff, equipment, supplies, and facilities requests were submitted, reviewed, and decreased where possible. Staffing was reviewed taking into consideration overall student enrollment, elementary and middle school class sizes, high school course enrollments, special education case loads, and district priorities. Teaching assignments were made to maintain class sizes and meet educational needs. No reductions in teaching staff were recommended.

Student enrollments are constantly monitored by the district. In 2004-2005 the middle and high school student enrollment peaked at 727 including tuition students. The 2010-2011 projected middle and high school enrollment is estimated to be 501. As a result a decision was made to restructure the administrative and guidance functions in the middle and high schools by combining the principal positions and eliminating one guidance position. These decisions were not made lightly and difficult choices were made in balancing the needs of the district and taxpayers.

During the budget process the district was contacted about our eligibility to participate in the state's application for the federal grant Race to the Top. The district submitted a proposal to develop and implement a comprehensive research-based model for improved student learning throughout the district with special emphasis on the high school. Our proposal has been included in the state application and has the potential of \$550,000 in funding over a three year period.

To meet our local budget needs and the state and federal Race to the Top Grant requirements, the district will:

- Combine the middle and high school administration from two positions to one position.
- Keep intact the separation of the middle and high schools.
- Add a Race to the Top district coordinator to support professional development, staff evaluation, and school improvement with special emphasis on the middle and high schools.
- Open the middle and high school principal position and conduct a search using a committee.
- Select teacher content leaders across the district to develop teacher leadership in support of the administrative restructuring and school improvement.
- Restructure the middle and high school guidance functions to include one less position.
- Develop a district guidance plan to address student needs PK to 12.
- Keep the current teaching staff levels to meet student needs PK to 12.

The projected tax impact of the proposed budget is \$1.24. If voters defeat the proposed budget the projected tax impact is \$1.22. Without any budget cuts the projected tax impact would have been \$2.16.