



NASHOBA

Regional School District

FY 2009 BUDGET NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2008

Superintendent's Message

The Nashoba Regional School District continues to thrive! While budget deliberations are always challenging, they generated a thoughtful dialogue about the most important policy on which the School Committee votes. Deciding how our community will use its financial resources speaks volumes about our priorities. The budget reflects our commitment to maintain class size, address the continuum of services for students with special needs, and provide the necessary support resources that allow students to access the regular classroom with greater predictors of success.

The FY 09 Budget is \$43,483,401, up an increase of 4.88 percent from last year. The District is able to offset this amount with \$1,986,324 in grants, local receipts, and resources from the excess and deficiency account. This makes the net budget \$41,497,077 or 5.65 percent more than the FY 08 net budget amount of \$39,279,372. The greatest investment for the school system is in its employees. We have over five hundred employees in all three towns. We manage this portion of the budget very carefully. One shining example is that our insurance costs have been tempered by an outstanding effort by our administration and the two unions to eliminate the indemnity offering and have in its place an option that is less costly, but equal in quality. We do examine all requests for new personnel and this year are asking for the addition of two new fifth grade classroom teachers for Stow and Bolton to maintain class sizes within our guidelines. But because we review all classes, this year we are filling these two positions by moving teachers from grades that will have fewer students. By using our existing resources, we gain greater efficiencies and keep quality teachers who we have trained and mentored.

The District is continuing to address student needs that are tangential to the classroom, but equally as vital. One is the addition of a guidance counselor for the high school. With over nine hundred students, the school has met students' needs with only four counselors for some time. The average caseload for comparison schools is closer to one hundred and eighty five students. This additional counselor will enable our current team to focus on the full range of student needs. In addition, there will be an increase in special needs students in our high school this year and we are recommending that we add a special needs teacher for inclusion. Studies show that learning disabled students who are taught by highly qualified teachers in the content area are more likely to succeed in a classroom that is team-taught. This includes a teacher who is trained to be able to modify the curriculum, differentiate the instruction, or provide a greater variety of assessment techniques. This position will afford the high school one special education teacher for each grade. We are also completing a transition to a full continuum of services for special needs students, which renders a need to add staff to one of our Life Skills classrooms. Programming such as this is an excellent way to have all Nashoba students remain in our community and be included in our schools.

We continue to address the transition from being three individual towns to a District that is united in philosophy, mission, and vision. To that end, this budget looks at the support services that are necessary for students who need greater scaffolding for success in the regular curriculum. The challenge is that the supports look different in each grade and in each school, and we have to make sure that the financial resources follow the need. The FY 09 budget proposal includes a new Literacy Teacher planned to work at Mary Rowlandson Elementary School. After a careful review of our own assessment data, it was determined that we were not providing enough hours of additional literacy support.

There were tough decisions to be made as a result of our deliberations. The School Committee did have to adjust some positions from full time to part time and others had to be eliminated altogether. The administration is committed to the Nashoba community that this will not come as a cost to quality or timeliness of services to our students, parents, and teachers. We will manage the impact the best way we know how. The School Committee reduced a District nurse position to part time, eliminated a half time English Teacher from the high school, a full time secretary from Florence Sawyer School, and two instructional aide positions.



Nashoba Regional HS



Florence Sawyer School



Luther Burbank MS



Hale Middle School



Pompositticut School



Mary Rowlandson Elementary



Center School



FSS/Emerson Wing



Members of the NRHS Jazz Ensembles Receive School Committee Recognition:

Back row (from left): Superintendent Michael Wood, Michael Flaherty, Travis Johnson, Alexander Doucette, Tom O'Toole-Band Director
Front row (from left): Ellen Hartford, Giulia Rizzo, P.J. Gjeltema

Superintendent's Message - Continued

On the operations side of our budget, we have confidence in our proposal, but express some trepidation about the outcome one year from today. Oil prices have been volatile. The electricity market is also on edge, but we have locked into a price. Energy management, however, has been the strength of our Facilities Department, so I know we will be able to keep the School Committee informed throughout the year of our progress. Each town will be addressing its own capital needs for the PK – 8 elementary schools. The budget does have some resources for scheduled maintenance. Our biggest project is the Turf and Track Construction Project (see below) which was approved by the School Committee on April 3rd, which does not have any impact on the FY 09 budget. We will provide more information about the project's impact on the operating budget for FY 10. The regional offices will be staying at the Emerson Elementary School for school year 2008 – 2009; however, we may need to move one or two offices into Hale Middle School for the school year to allow education space to take over from the PK – 8 space needs in Bolton.

The District has received new bids for transportation services which appear to fit within our budgetary constraints. The provider will again will be Dee Bus Transportation for a one year proposal. We will bid again next spring and may bid one year at a time until the fuel costs stabilize.

We have had many accomplishments within our District that demonstrate the quality of our programs, our staff, and the community investment in education. Our high school was recognized as a Silver Medal Winner in the U.S. News and World Reports magazine for 2007. The high school science, engineering, and technology program was recognized for being one of a handful of high schools in the state to have all of the students who took the science, engineering, and technology MCAS pass the very first time. One of our eighth grade students in Lancaster was the top speller in Worcester County and will be going on to Washington D.C. in June for national competition. And lastly, we were the Division III State Champions in Boy's Indoor Track.

The FY 09 budget process included hearing from all of our town representatives. They were very helpful in keeping the School Committee informed of the financial constraints they were facing. I believe that our budget is a reflection of listening to their needs, while making the needs of Nashoba a priority. In my opinion, the budget is a strong statement of the support we provide for our work, our progress, and our accomplishments.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Wood, Superintendent of Schools



Community Competition Complex

On April 3rd the School Committee voted to authorize \$1,280,000 of debt for the purpose of installing a synthetic turf field and reconstructing the track at Nashoba Regional High School. Both projects have been in the planning stages for a few years, as the current track and field infrastructure has deteriorated greatly.

The new field will allow the District to address the problem it faces with the shortage of fields, enhanced this year by the emergence of our varsity lacrosse program for girls and boys. The track and field is the final stage in the stadium restoration project. Virtually all varsity games for football, field hockey, soccer, and lacrosse will be played on the field. In addition community events, camps, and youth sports will have substantial access to the venue. The track will be state of the art featuring an electronic timing system and an eight lane straightaway. The track will be regularly available to a wide range of community groups.

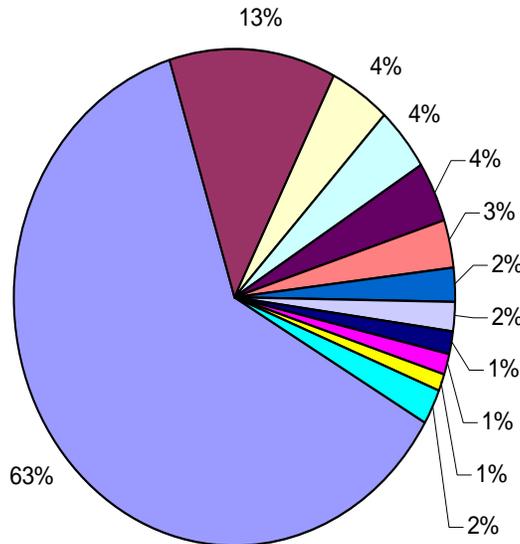
The cost of the loan repayment is estimated at \$159,000 a year for ten years. The District is committed to managing this payment in the annual budget and is not requesting a debt exclusion or special appropriation. State law allows member towns to object to the issuance of this debt within a sixty day window through a vote of Town Meeting. The deadline for such action is June 6th and construction will start a few days later, with the track and field being complete by the fall sports season.

Please check our website www.nrsd.net for continued updates on this project.



The values learned on the playing field--how to set goals, endure, take criticism and risks, become team players, use our beliefs, stay healthy and deal with stress--prepare us for life." ---Donna de Varona

Budget Drivers



- Salaries for Existing Personnel (incl. subs)
- Insurance and Benefits
- Existing Site-Based and Department Funds
- Special Education (non-salary, w/o transp)
- Transportation: Regular Day
- Utilities (gas, electric, propane, telephone)
- Facilities Department (non-salary)
- Transportation: SPED
- High School Debt Service
- Other System-Wide Operating Expenses
- Deficit Bond Payment
- Other Expenses (Less than 1% of Budget)

How Are Assessments Calculated?



The District's budget information is entered into a formula used to calculate assessments for our three member towns. Town meeting officially votes the District's assessment. Below is some assessment information:

Local Minimum Contribution:

The State Department of Education sets the local minimum contribution for each town, which as the name implies, is the absolute minimum a town can contribute towards public education. The District has no control over this amount.

Please find a breakdown of the FY 09 minimums below based on the Governor's budget:

- Bolton \$7,005,852
- Lancaster \$5,705,307
- Stow \$8,446,280

Enrollment Percentages

Once all of the District's revenue sources are added to the minimum contributions, the remaining amount needed to fund the school district budget is apportioned to the member towns using a 5-year rolling average for enrollment..

The enrollment percentages for FY 09 are below:

- Bolton 31.31%
- Lancaster 32.55%
- Stow 36.14%

Capital Assessment:

Capital items in the operating budget are apportioned differently. Those costs are distributed using enrollment information, at a specific location, for the current fiscal year. The only capital item in the FY09 budget is the debt service payment for Nashoba Regional High School. Thus, that amount (\$601,866) is assessed to the member towns using FY08 enrollment figures for the *high school only*.

