

**MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

Questions and Answers from FY13 Budget Presentations

Question: What can we do as citizens and parents to help influence both the Warrant Committee and Town Meeting of the need to fully fund our schools? Answer: Citizens can advocate the need for an override and can lobby Warrant Committee and Town Meeting members. The Warrant Committee works very hard and very closely with the School Department and other town departments throughout the budget process to make sure the budget cuts are as equitable as possible. It is, however, the Warrant Committee’s responsibility to recommend a balanced budget for the entire town at May’s Annual Town Meeting.

Question: Over the weekend, I read about other states getting sued because they were funding public education well enough to uphold their end of the bargain for funding public education. Has that happened in Massachusetts? How much does the state contribute to Milton’s budget? Answer: Yes, the state has been sued for under-funding public education and the result of the first major case was the State Supreme Court found for the plaintiff, agreeing the state was not upholding it’s Constitutional obligation to fund public education, and the state legislature passed Education Reform Act of 1993 which significantly increased the state’s funding for public education. The most recent case that went to the State Supreme Court was in 2005 and the court found the state was honoring its Constitutional obligation to adequately fund public education, so no significant change was made in total state funding.

Depending who you asked, you might get a slightly different answer to what % of the money comes from the state and what % comes from the town. In court, this matters much more than in general conversation. In FY11, the state contributed \$5,474,895, in general education aid commonly referred to as Chapter 70 funds.

	A	B	C	D	
Fiscal Year	Foundation Budget	Required Net School Spending	Actual Net School Spending	FY11 EYOR Total School & Town Spending for Annual Operations	Chapter 70 Aid
2011	33,177,678	33,436,960	39,203,433	45,332,458	5,474,895
% funded by MA	16.5%	16.4%	14.0%	12.1%	
% funded by Milton	83.50%	83.63%	86.03%	87.92%	

The Foundation Budget (A) is what the state builds its budget upon and is the floor for which public education funding is built upon. The Require Net School Spending (B) is minimum the town must spend or risk losing some state funding (Chapter 70 funds) for public education and it excludes certain categories of spending from its responsibility such as transportation, debt payments, and regional school assessments. Those items are considered local responsibilities. The Actual Net School Spending (C) reflects what we actually expended in those categories to educate the children in the MPS. The End of Year Report reflects the total spending (D)for public education and what many would reasonably consider the more accurate calculation.

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Question: Who our state legislators and how do we contact them? Answer: They are:

<http://www.mass.gov/governor/constituentservices/contact/>

Boston, MA Massachusetts State House

Office of the Governor

Office of the Lt. Governor

Room 280

Boston, MA 02133

888.870.7770 (in state)

Fax: 617.727.9725

TTY: 617.727.3666

<u>Legislator and email address</u>	<u>Office Phone #</u>
walter.timilty@mahouse.gov	617-722-2230
linda.dorcenaforry@mahouse.gov	617-722-2080
angelo.scaccia@mahouse.gov	617-722-2060
brian.joyce@masenate.gov	617-722-1643

Question: Why are all the cuts coming from staff positions and not from other spending such as supplies, etc.? Answer: The majority of the budget (approximately 83%) is people and spending for other items such as lighting, heat, supplies, insurance, and other contracted services is not as flexible. Over the last few years we have cut the non-salary supplies as tight as we believe we can and still operate our programs.

Question: The level dollar starting point has not been adjusted \$96,000 for the removal of the facilities director from the School Department budget. This amount is carried in the FY13 Consolidated Facilities budget. Answer: The level dollar starting point has not changed because technically, the appropriation has not been changed at town meeting. The change is made for FY13, but not FY12. Making the change in FY12 will lower the FY12 budget number and increase the FY13 request above level funding. However, that would not change the other items listed in the level service or the advancement budget request.

Question: The proposed cuts for a level dollar budget fall primarily in instructional staff. Has the team evaluated whether some cuts could be made in the administrative and leadership staffing? Answer: When the leadership team collaboratively brainstorms and then agrees upon budget reductions, ALL services are reviewed and discussed with the impact of the reduction on the particular school and the system. There are no more administrative and reductions to be made. Over the past few years there have been cuts in reductions in the administrative leadership staffing. Please review the “Then and Now” comparisons below.

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Positions Then	Action	Positions Now
1.0 English Dept Head 1.0 Social Studies Dept. Head	Combined	1.0 Humanities Dept. Head
1.0 Art Director K-12 1.0 Music Director K-12	Combined	1.0 Fine Arts Director
1.0 Health and PE Director 1.0 Athletic Director	Combined	1.0 Athletic, Health and PE Dir.
1.0 Math Dept. Head 1.0 Business & Tech Dept. Head	Combined	1.0 Math, Business, & Tech Dept. Head
1.0 Director of Guidance K-12	Reduced Days	1.0 Guidance Dept. Head
Elementary Math Coaches	Eliminated	None
Middle School Math Coach	Eliminated	None
Elementary Assistant Principals	Eliminated	None
Elementary Music Program Then	Action	Elementary Music Program Now
K 30 minutes per week	Same	K, 30 minutes per week
Grades 1-5, 40 minutes per week	Reduced	Grades 1-5, 30 minutes per week
Beginning Band, 45 minutes/week Advanced Band, 45 minutes/week	Combined	One Band Program, 45 minutes/week
Beginning Strings, 45 minutes/week Advanced Strings 45 minutes/week	Combined	One Strings Program, 45 minutes/week
4th Grade Chorus, 45 minutes/week 5th Grade Chorus, 45 minutes/week	Eliminated Eliminated	None None
Elementary Art Program Then	Action	Elementary Art Program Now
K 30 minutes per week	Reduced	K, 30 minutes every other week
Grades 1-3, 40 minutes per week	Reduced	Grades 1-3, 30 minutes per week
Grades 4-5, 45 minutes per week	Same	Grades 4-5, 45 minutes per week
Grade 4 ACE, 60 minutes per week	Eliminated	None
Grade 5 ACE, 60 minutes per week	Reduced	Grade 5, 50 minutes per week
Physical Education/Health Then	Action	Physical Education/Health Now
K-5, 2 30 minute periods per week	Reduced	K-5, 1 30 minute period per week, no health
Library K-5 Then	Action	Library K-5 Now
1 30 minute period per week	Reduced	Library, 1 30 minute period every other week
MHS Electives Then	Action	MHS Electives Now
MHS Wood Teacher MHS Shop Teacher	Combined	1 Wood & Shop Teacher

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Question: Is the SPED private tuition line item for placement outside of the MPS? How is this managed? Answer: The SPED Out-Of-District tuition is included in the SPED budget and managed by the Special Education Department, Central Administration and in accord with the Special Education Individual Education Plans. Those expenditures are included in the school's budget as we have the responsibility to educate those students whose parents chose to send their child to the Milton Public Schools.

Question: How does Milton's SPED expense total compare to other comparable sized school districts as a percent of total budget? Answer: Comparing Milton to districts that are similar per the DESE's criteria of ability to fund and student population size or with neighboring systems and other systems that abut Boston, we spend below the state average as a % of our total budget for education.

Special Education Spending as a Total % of Budget for FY2010

Rank	School District	Combined Special Ed Expenditures	Total School Operating Budget	Special Education Percentage of Budget	state average percentage
1	Westborough	8,073,504	44,128,199	18.3	20.0
2	Winchester	8,052,351	43,909,234	18.3	20.0
3	Milton	7,251,617	38,246,246	19.0	20.0
4	Needham	11,973,850	62,858,891	19.0	20.0
5	Belmont	7,499,013	37,825,331	19.8	20.0
6	Canton	7,451,258	35,711,242	20.9	20.0
7	Walpole	8,731,122	40,928,503	21.3	20.0
8	Hingham	8,307,106	38,732,312	21.4	20.0
9	Sharon	9,581,599	41,403,097	23.1	20.0
10	Dedham	9,761,518	37,267,807	26.2	20.0
11	Randolph	12,261,877	41,727,115	29.4	20.0

Question: Milton spent 90% of the state average per pupil in FY10 as compared to 94% in FY07. Do you have data for FY11 and FY12? Answer: The Per pupil data comes from the End of Year Reports each school system is required to submit to the state. The FY11 per pupil data has not been released yet, and has typically been released late winter early/spring. The 4 yr trend of per pupil data is in attached and in the Full Presentation in the budget binders and may help answer your specific question about how we are funding the schools.

Question: Will cuts to the Special Education program impact the elementary co-taught classrooms? Answer: No, that part of our delivery of Special Education Services will remain as is constituted in FY12.