

## **FISCAL MANAGEMENT GOALS**

The quantity and quality of learning programs are directly dependent on the effective, efficient management of allocated funds. It follows that achievement of the school system's purposes can best be achieved through excellent fiscal management.

As trustee of local, state, and federal funds allocated for use in public education, the Committee will fulfill its responsibility to see that these funds are used wisely for achievement of the purposes to which they are allocated.

Because of resource limitations, there is sometimes a temptation to operate so that fiscal concerns overshadow the educational program. Recognizing this, it is essential that the school system take specific action to make sure education remains central and that fiscal matters are ancillary and contribute to the educational program. This concept will be incorporated into Committee operations and into all aspects of school system management and operation.

In the school system's fiscal management, it is the Committee's intent:

1. To engage in thorough advance planning, with staff and community involvement, in order to develop budgets and to guide expenditures so as to achieve the greatest educational returns and the greatest contributions to the educational program in relation to dollars expended.
2. To establish levels of funding that will provide high quality education for the students.
3. To use the best available techniques for budget development and management.
4. To provide timely and appropriate information to all staff with fiscal management responsibilities.
5. To establish maximum efficiency procedures for accounting, reporting, business, purchasing and delivery, payroll, payment of vendors and contractors, and all other areas of fiscal management.

## **ANNUAL BUDGET**

The annual budget is the financial expression of the educational program of the school department, and it reflects the goals and objectives of the School Committee to meet the needs of all students.

The budget then is more than just a financial instrument and requires on the part of the Committee, the staff, and the community, an orderly and cooperative effort to ensure sound fiscal practices for achieving the educational goals and objectives of the school system.

Public school budgeting is regulated and controlled by legislation, state regulations, and local School Committee requirements. The operating budget for the school system will be prepared and presented in line with state policy and local strategic planning. It will be developed and refined in accordance with these same requirements.

The Superintendent will serve as budget officer but they may delegate portions of this responsibility to members of their staff, as they deem appropriate. The three general areas of responsibility for the Superintendent as budget officer will be budget preparation, budget presentation, and budget administration.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:34; 71:37 and 71:38N

## **BUDGET DEADLINES AND SCHEDULES**

Preparation of the annual budget will be scheduled in stages throughout the school year with attention to certain deadlines established by law and charter. This will include at least one public budget presentation.

The calendar year for budget preparation will be determined by calculating backwards from the final adoption date.

Whatever dates are assigned, the final date for the submission of the budget to the Selectmen will be arranged cooperatively with the School Committee and finance committee. The Selectmen have authority to impose a date as early as December 31.

In reaching its decision on the budget amount that it will submit to the Selectmen, the School Committee will also observe the statutory requirement of holding a public hearing on the proposed budget not less than seven days after the notice for this hearing has been published in a local newspaper.

Established by law and charter

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 71:38N  
                          Town Charter (See local reference)

## **BUDGET PLANNING**

The first priority in the development of an annual budget will be the educational welfare of the children in our schools. However, the District will also attempt to balance the valid interest of the taxpayers.

In addition to the annual operating budget, the School Committee will develop and maintain 3 to 5 year operating forecast and multi-year projections for capital planning purposes.

Budget decisions reflect the attitude and philosophy of those charged with the responsibility for educational decision-making. Therefore, a sound budget development process must be established to ensure that the annual operating budget accurately reflects this school system's goals and objectives.

In the budget planning process for the school system, the School Committee will strive to:

1. Engage in thorough advance strategic and capital planning, with staff and community involvement, in order to develop budgets and guide expenditures in a manner that will achieve the greatest educational returns and contributions to the educational program in relation to dollars expended.
2. Establish levels of funding that will provide high quality education for all our students.
3. Use the best available techniques for budget development and management.

The Superintendent will have overall responsibility for budget preparation, including the construction of, and adherence to, a budget calendar.

## **BUDGET ADOPTION PROCEDURES**

Authority for adoption of the final school budget lies with the citizens who comprise, and who are entitled to vote at, the town meeting. The school budget is presented as part of the total town budget for action at the annual town meeting.

Established by law and charter

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:34  
Town Charter, (See local reference)

## **BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY**

In keeping with the need for periodic reconciliation of the school department's budget, the School Committee will consider requests for transfers of funds as they are recommended by the Superintendent.

The Committee wishes to be kept abreast of the need for these adjustments so that it may act promptly and expedite financial record keeping for the school system.

All requests for transfers between the major accounts (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Chart of Accounts defines these as the 4 digit accounts ending in 00) must be submitted to the School Committee for approval. Transfers between line items within a major account must be reported to the School Committee as part of the Director of Business and Finance's quarterly report at the business meetings of the School Committee.

All funds in the general account not expended by the close of the fiscal year will be returned to the municipality.

## **GRANTS, FUNDING PROPOSALS, AND APPLICATIONS**

The School Committee will encourage the administration to seek and secure possible sources of state, federal, and other special funds that will enhance the educational opportunities for the children in our schools.

The Superintendent will keep informed of possible funds available to the school system under the various state and federal programs, and in what manner these funds can best be used in the school system.

The Superintendent will be responsible for seeking out and coordinating the development of proposals for all specially funded projects and for submitting the proposals to the Committee for approval.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign all reports for these projects and will be responsible for the proper expenditure of funds received for such projects.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 44:53A  
                          P.L. 874 Impact Aid  
                          603 CMR 32:00; 34:00

**AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES**

The Chair of the School Committee or designee and the Superintendent or designee will sign payrolls presented for approval.

The town treasurer, who also serves as the school department treasurer, signs all checks drawn against school department funds. No other signature is valid.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 41:41; 41:52

## **BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS**

Each employee of the school system who is assigned the responsibility of receiving and dispensing school funds will be bonded individually or covered by a blanket bond. The town will pay the cost of the bond.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5

## **FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING**

The Superintendent will be ultimately responsible for receiving and properly accounting for all funds of the school system.

The accounting system used will conform with state requirements and with good accounting practices, providing for the appropriate separation of accounts, funds, and special monies.

The School Committee will receive periodic financial statements from the Superintendent showing the financial condition of the school department. Such other financial statements as may be determined necessary by either the Committee or the administration will be presented as found desirable.

LEGAL REF.:           603 CMR 10:00

## **AUDITS**

An audit of the school department's accounts should be conducted annually. In addition, the Committee may request a private audit of the school system's accounts at its discretion.

The Committee will consider recommendations made by the auditor for maintaining an efficient system for recording and safeguarding the school department's assets.

## **PURCHASING**

The School Committee declares its intention to purchase competitively without prejudice and to seek maximum educational value for every dollar expended.

The acquisition of materials, equipment and services will be centralized in the Superintendent's office of the school system.

The Superintendent or designee will serve as purchasing agent. They will develop and administer the purchasing program for the schools in keeping with legal requirements and with the adopted school budget.

School purchases will be made only on official purchase orders approved for issuance by the appropriate unit head and signed by the Superintendent or designee, with such exceptions as may be made by the latter for emergency purchases.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 7:22A; 7:22B; 30B; 71:49A

**PURCHASING AUTHORITY**

Authority for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, and services is extended to the Superintendent or designee through the detailed listing of such items compiled as part of the budget-making process.

The purchase of items and services on such lists requires no further Committee approval except when by law or Committee policy the purchases or services must be put to bid.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30B

CROSS REF.: DJE, Bidding Requirements

## **PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS**

All purchases of materials and equipment and all contracts for construction or maintenance in amounts exceeding \$50,000 will be based upon competitive bidding. All purchases valued between \$10,000 and \$50,000 shall require the procurement officer to attempt to secure 3 quotes for all materials, equipment, or services. All purchases valued at less than \$10,000 shall require the use of sound business practices to secure the best quality at the best price.

An effort will be made to procure multiple bids for all purchases in excess of \$50,000. When recommending acceptance of a bid, the Superintendent or designee will inform the School Committee, whenever possible, of the competitive price of a reasonable substitute for the item specified.

When bidding procedures are used, bids will be advertised appropriately. Suppliers will be invited to have their names placed on distribution lists to receive invitations to bid. When specifications are prepared, they will be distributed to all merchants and firms who have indicated an interest in bidding.

All bids will be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Superintendent or designee and plainly marked with the name of the bid and the time of the bid opening. Bids will be opened in public at the time specified, and all bidders will be invited to be present.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the bid that appears to be in the best interest of the school system. The Committee reserves the right to waive any informality in, or reject, any or all bids or any part of any bid. Any bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for the opening of the bids. Any bid received after the time and date specified will not be considered. All bids will remain firm for a period of 30 days after opening.

The bidder to whom an award is made may be required to enter into a written contract with the school system.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [7:22A](#); [7:22B](#); [30B](#)

CROSS REF.: [DJA](#), Purchasing Authority

## **PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

All claims for payment from school department funds will be processed in accordance with regulations developed by the Superintendent or designee. Payment will be authorized against invoices properly supported by approved purchase orders, with properly submitted vouchers, or in accordance with salaries and salary schedules approved by the School Committee.

As an operating procedure, the Committee will receive monthly lists of bills (warrants) for payment from school department funds. The lists will be certified as correct and approved for payment by the School Committee and then forwarded to the municipal auditor for processing and subsequent payment by the municipal treasurer. Actual invoices, statements, and vouchers will be available for inspection by the School Committee.

The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for assuring that budget allocations are observed and that total expenditures do not exceed the amount allocated in the budget for all items.

The school building administrators will be responsible for observing budget allocations in their respective schools.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:41; 41:52 41:56

## **EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS**

Personnel and school department officials who incur expenses in carrying out their authorized duties will be reimbursed by the school department upon submission of a properly completed and approved voucher and any supporting receipts required by the Superintendent.

When official travel by a personally owned vehicle is authorized, mileage payment will generally be made at the rate currently approved by the Committee.

To the extent budgeted for such purposes in the school budget, approval of travel requests by School Committee members must have prior approval of the School Committee. Staff travel requests within budgetary limits may be approved by the Superintendent. Staff travel requests that exceed budgetary limits will require the approval of the School Committee and the identification of funding sources by administration. Each request will be judged on the basis of its benefit to the school district.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 44:58