



April 29, 2021

Dear Hamilton-Wenham Community,

With Town Meetings coming up this Saturday, as Superintendent I wanted to provide some [key points](#) related to the [FY22 budget](#) to assist voters in making informed decisions around funding for the HWRSD schools.

It is clear that this is a collective community that cares deeply about providing a strong educational experience for all of its learners. Last June, [substantial reductions](#) occurred in the HWRSD budget that have had a marked impact on the system's ability to provide high-quality instruction for all of its students. This FY22 budget is designed to responsibly and efficiently build back as much lost capacity as possible so that we can be well-positioned to meet the needs of all children who are entrusted in our care.

**FY22 Budget Highlights:**

- Second-lowest budget increase in the past 5 years
- Results in zero teacher layoffs
- Restores four teaching positions
- Restores the middle school model at Miles River Middle School
- Introduces an initial investment in the district's OPEB (other post-employment benefits) fund to address future liabilities
- Responsive to established district goals:
  - **District Goal #2:** *The superintendent will lead the work of creating an organizational chart and staffing plan for the central office that will inform the development of the FY '22 budget and address significant capacity issues at the system level.*

**Central Office Personnel** (Full Time Equivalents)

(Superintendent's Office, Finance and HR, and Facilities/Maintenance)

- FY20: 13.37
- FY21: 10.15
- Proposed FY22: 11.65

**Curriculum Administration** (Full Time Equivalents)

- FY20: 3.75
- FY21: 0
- Proposed FY22: 1.2

- **District Goal #4:** *Ensure that all HWRSD K-3 students experience a strong early literacy program, including a coordinated and robust intervention program, as a critical foundation to their future academic success.*
  - Funds a .7 FTE Elementary Director of Teaching and Learning position
  - Restructures 3 current teaching positions to building-based Instructional Coaches to work in classrooms to support student learning and to build aligned K-5 programming
  - Restores 3.34 FTE (full-time equivalent) Elementary Literacy Teaching Assistants eliminated in FY21 budget
  - Adds additional 1.8 Elementary FTE Literacy Teaching Assistants to increase capacity for intervention
  - Restructures the building-based Reading Specialist model to a single Elementary Literacy Coordinator supported by the 3 building-based Instructional Coaches and expanded Literacy Teaching Assistant support.
  - Moves an existing Elementary Reading Specialist position to fill a literacy intervention need at the secondary level
  
- Honors the commitments made by the HWRSD at last year's Town Meeting:
  - **Re-evaluate** existing programs and structures to find efficiencies and increase effectiveness
  - Create **predictable** year-over-year budget increases
  - Sustain **collaborative** and **unified partnerships** with the Town Managers, Boards of Selectmen, and FinCom Members

While there is a natural inclination to reflect on the last 14 months that we have spent at some level of crisis mode, I think it is more important than ever that we maintain a progressive, forward-looking outlook when it comes to our district. Thanks to a spirit of cooperation and collaboration exhibited by so many of our stakeholders, we have come through this unprecedented global health crisis in good order. Now, we have the opportunity to not only continue the recovery but also take the steps to reposition the district as one of which we can all be proud. I respectfully ask that you support that mission as you consider your vote on the FY22 budget.

Warm Regards,

Mary Beth Banios

**Town Meeting Times and Locations:**

- Wenham: 1:00 p.m. at Pingree Park
- Hamilton: 9:00 a.m. HWRHS Football Field