



EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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What will our children lose?

To the East Hampton School Community,

On Monday evening, March 26 at 6:30 PM at the East Hampton Middle School there is a Public Hearing on the 2018-19 Town and Education Budget. This annual Public Hearing is conducted by the members of the Board of Finance who are in the difficult position of determining a budget to send forward to the town. While their task is not enviable given the state reductions in municipal aid, I feel I must address the concerns presented by any potential cuts to the education budget.

One of the things in which I have taken pride during my three years of compiling a budget is precise and actual accounting for the upcoming year. I have often been criticized by those who feel I should add a few items or a few extra dollars to accounts in order to sustain cuts made by either the Board of Finance or the Town Council. I have argued against doing that in order to gain the trust of the voters and town officials and have instead developed budgets of only those things that are essential to move the schools forward. For three years, I have presented a budget that I can honestly say represents actual requests and no line items "padded" with extra dollars.

Budgeting with complete transparency and honesty makes cuts to the budget difficult because it immediately translates to valuable programs lost or the few new items requested eliminated. As we prepare to engage in the Public Hearing and continuing budget discussions, I am urging parents and community members to express their thoughts on the budget. The Board of Finance is genuinely interested in hearing the thoughts of those who support the budgets as presented and those who feel the budgets are too high. The members of the Board of Finance each have their own opinions on the process as we move forward. The views expressed at last week's Budget Deliberations (March 19) included moving the budgets forward to the voters as they stand to presenting a lean budget that still moves the town forward.

In order to help members of the school community understand the implications of cuts to the budget, I am presenting possible reductions. The following list contains positions and programs that would be considered for elimination (in no particular order) depending on the ultimate budget amount. The final decision regarding cuts is made by the Board of Education after the budget is approved by voters at referendum.

Reduction	Implication of reduction
High School Math Teacher	Reduction of sections of math classes and/or electives – higher class sizes
High School English Teacher	Reduction of sections of English classes and/or electives – higher class sizes
Center School Grade 5 Teacher	Reduction of 7 sections to 6 sections – higher class sizes
Middle School Librarian	Replace Library Media Specialist with Circulation personnel – no research
Memorial School K Teacher	Reduction of 7 sections to 6 sections – higher class sizes
Cheerleading Assistant Coach	New item would be eliminated at the Middle School level
Math series - 7 and/or 8 Grade	New item would eliminate the continuation of the program that exists in K-6
Spelling Program	New item that is being piloted K-5 eliminated
Curriculum Writing	New curriculum writing reduced and/or put on hold
Science supplies	New supplies to promote the new national standards reduced and/or eliminated

** Additional cuts identified as necessary (all require approval of Board of Education)*

The education budget increase as it stands represents what is needed to maintain current staffing levels. There are no new teaching positions in the budget for next year. In fact, there is one less teacher funded in the budget. The teaching positions listed above that are under consideration for elimination would result in the loss of existing teachers and courses. Even the items that are listed above as “new” are continuation of existing programs already in place or being piloted.

Please note that none of the cuts are presented as rallying material intended to create hostility during the budget process. Having actual facts presented up front by the Superintendent is meant to accurately inform voters as we move through the next months of the budget process.

If you have any questions as to the implications of these cuts, please feel free to contact me and I will be glad to arrange a meeting time at your convenience. You are also welcome to address the Board of Education at their meetings of Monday, April 2 and Monday, April 23 (High School, 6:30 PM). You are also encouraged to play an active role in the town’s Budget meetings as follows:

- Monday, March 26 – Board of Finance Public Hearing at the Middle School Library, 6:30 PM
- Wednesday, March 28 – Board of Finance Budget Vote at the Middle School Library, 6:30 PM
- Wednesday, April 18 – Town Council Budget Vote at TBA, 6:30 PM

Sincerely,

Paul K. Smith

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Superintendent of Schools

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