

## **Portsmouth School Department FY 2011 Budget Request 7-14-10**

### **How much of a budget increase did the Portsmouth School Committee request?**

- In the proposed FY 2011 School Department budget, the School Committee requested an overall budget increase of 2.51% or \$896,735.
- The requested increase in the locally paid portion of the budget is \$1,263,345 – a 4.5% increase in the town appropriation. (The total budget increase is at the lower level of 2.51% because other revenue sources – state education aid and Little Compton tuition – are declining.)
- This request is within the required tax cap of Senate 3050, and providing this additional funding to the schools would require a property tax increase of 34.14 cents – a 3% increase or just under \$120 per year on a \$350,000 home.

### **Does this request fully fund our existing system?**

- No, fully funding our existing system would have required almost \$1,480,000 in additional monies, as can be seen in the Initial Request column below. Consequently, the School Committee has made just over \$583,000 in reductions to remain within the cap. As shown below, the School Committee's budget request is now balanced as a result of these reductions.

\*The *Professional Services* increase appears artificially large due to accounting adjustments

that had to be made over the course of the past year due to the state's new Uniform Chart of Accounts. These adjustments resulted in approximately \$540,000 being moved from *Other Purchased Services* into *Professional Services*.

### **What reductions were made to achieve the savings shown above?**

- These reductions included:
  - Closing Elmhurst – savings of \$155,688
    - This includes reducing 4.6 certified and non-certified positions as well as other expenses, less additional transportation and one-time costs.
  - Reducing 3 additional staff positions – 1 at grade 5 and 2 at the high school – savings of \$180,000.
  - Reducing 1 part-time elementary aide – savings of \$8,500.
  - Reducing health insurance by \$18,500 above savings commensurate with staff reductions.

- Assuming that we will reduce the cost of the teachers' contract – savings of \$60,000.
- Reducing transportation costs by entering into a collaborative bid – savings of \$125,000.
- Reducing Special Education tuitions by \$25,000.
- Finding small savings in heating fuel and rubbish removal – savings of \$10,000.

**What other reductions have been considered?**

As the budget discussions progressed and the financial distress facing our community became even clearer, the administration brought forward an additional \$350,000 in budget cuts for the School Committee's consideration. These reductions have not been voted on and will impact children; but in the administration's judgment, they are the least harmful of the alternatives before us. These proposed reductions included:

- An additional 4 certified positions – 2.5 in Special Education, .5 in elementary guidance, and 1 at the high school, 1 non-certified special education aide, and 3 part-time positions – 1 bus monitor and 2 elementary aides for a savings of \$300,000.
- The reduction of 1 bus – savings of \$50,000.
- If these additional budget reductions were made, the increase in the School Department's overall budget would be \$546,735 (1.5%).

**Summary:**

*These reductions would bring the total staff reductions to 12.6 certified and non-certified positions and an additional 3 part-time position,s when our system is only projected to lose 42 students for the coming school year. These and any further reductions will severely impact academic and other programmatic offerings we are able to provide Portsmouth students for the coming school year.*