

SHARON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SHARON, MA 02067

TO: Members of the Finance Committee  
FROM: Dr. Claire W. Jackson, Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: March 22, 2007  
RE: 2008 Fiscal Budget

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Enclosed you will find the FY 08 budget for the Sharon Public Schools. The sections in the binder represent the budget that matches available funding as presented in the Priorities Committee meeting on March 1, 2007. This funding is \$472,174 above the present year, or 1.57% and reduces resources to the schools to an untenably low amount affecting everything from sports, to arts, to class size. This non-override budget represents what I believe to be an "at risk" budget for the Town of Sharon and the Sharon Public Schools. The failure of last year's override, combined with the current non-override budget, leaves the Sharon Public Schools in a state that will contribute incrementally to the diminution of the quality of the school system that makes Sharon an attractive location to buy a home or to start a business.

The non-override budget reduces staff from 435 to 415 FTEs in addition to reductions in administration, instructional support, sports and student activities. The reduction of nearly 16 teaching FTEs will raise class size to untenable levels, eliminate regular education academic support and cut all instrumental music at the elementary level. Please see the summary of these cuts on the following pages. [\*\*Note in FY06, Sharon employed 289.8 teaching FTEs and for FY07 going into FY08 and prior to cuts, we employ 274 FTEs.]

While it is the charge of the Finance Committee to monitor town wide expenditures and to insure an appropriate balance between expenditures and resources, I feel compelled to tell you that your support of an override for the Sharon Schools is critical. For the past six years, the School Department has operated within the constraints of Town Meeting approved budgets amidst wildly erratic increases and decreases that have made it nearly impossible to maintain programs and attract qualified teachers. I will draw your attention to page 3 of the LINE ITEM budget that indicates if the school budget in FY03, at \$26,659,611 had increased consistently by 3.6% each year, the schools would not have sought an override in any of the years that followed.

It is perhaps helpful for you to know that we have reduced faculty and staff by nearly 10% since FY 02 – a total of 35.0 FTEs. During the same period, student enrollment decreased by only 2.5%. The bottom line is that the Sharon Public Schools will have 35 fewer teachers and staff than FY02 without an override.

The Sharon School Department has kept faith with the Town of Sharon and has saved the Town nearly \$500,000 annually due to savings in SPED and contributions through Medicaid. The expectation that the School Department can continue to improve on an annual basis while reducing staff and programs is simply unrealistic and unworthy of a community that takes so much pride in the high achievement of its schools.

Enclosures

Sharon Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or sexual orientation.