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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 mirrors the problems and difficulties that confront the school system.

The budget then is more than just a financial instrument and requires on the part of the Committee, the staff, and the community 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 will be developed and refined in accordance with these same requirements.

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

The budget statement shall present the expenditures recommended by the School Committee. The detailed budget shall explain the changes in the proposed budget from the preceding school year budget.

The detailed budget shall contain:

1. A summary of the proposed expenditures in the standard accounting classifications established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
2. A summary of proposed expenditures by major budget categories: for those school activities which produce income, both expenditures and receipts shall be estimated.
3. A summary of the budget by major services or functions: shall indicate the approximate amounts of the budget allotted to various services or functions.
4. A brief explanation of significant increases and decreases from the preceding budget.

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.

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

For dates requirements for budgeting the District will use M.G.L. 71 Sec 16, M.G.L. 71 Sec 16B and Department of Elementary & Secondary Education regulations.

In reaching its decision on the budget amount that it will deliver 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)
 M.G.L. 71 Sec 16
 M.G.L. 71 Sec 16B
 D.E.S.E. Regulations

BUDGET-APPORTIONMENT OF EXPENSES

The Regional District School Committee shall annually determine the amounts necessary to be raised, after deducting the amount of aid such district is to receive pursuant to section sixteen D, to maintain and operate the District school or schools during the next fiscal year, and amounts required for payment of debt and interest incurred by the District which will be due in the said year, and shall apportion the amount so determined among the several municipalities in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

The amounts so apportioned for each municipality shall be certified by the Regional School District treasurer to the treasurers of the several municipalities within thirty days from the date on which the annual budget is adopted by a two-thirds vote of the School committee, but no later than April thirtieth.

The Regional School District treasurer shall include in the certification to each municipality a statement setting forth the amount which the District is to receive under said section sixteen D for the ensuing fiscal year and the proportionate share of such aid for such municipality.

In addition to amounts appropriated for long-term debt service, school lunches, adult education, student transportation, and tuition revenue, each municipality that belongs in the Regional School District shall annually appropriate for the support of the Regional School District, an amount equal to but, not less than the sum of the minimum required local contribution.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Regional School district agreement, each member municipality shall increase its contribution to the Regional District each year by the amount indicated in that district's share of the municipalities' minimum regional contribution in that fiscal year. The District shall appropriate the sum of the minimum regional contributions of its member districts as well as all state school aid received on be half of member municipalities. The District may choose to spend additional amounts; such decision shall be made and such amounts charged to members according to the District's required agreement.

Except as required by General Law, each school district may determine how to allocate funds appropriated for the support of public schools without regard to the categories employed in calculating the foundation budget.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L.. 71:16B

BUDGET PLANNING

The major portion of income for the operation of the public school is derived from local property taxes, and the School Committee will attempt to protect the valid interest of the taxpayers. However, the first priority in the development of an annual budget will be the educational welfare of the children in our school.

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 region's goals and objectives.

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

1. Engage in thorough advance 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 meetings.

Established by law and charter

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:34

BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY

In keeping with the need for periodic reconciliation of the school district'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.

FUNDING PROPOSALS AND APPLICATIONS

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

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

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
 Board of Education 603, CMR 32:00;34:00

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

The Superintendent of Schools will sign payrolls presented for approval.

The District Treasurer signs all checks drawn against school district funds. The Assistant Treasurer is also authorized to sign checks.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 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 cost of the bond will be paid by the regional school district.

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 district.

The accounting system used will conform with state requirements and 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 district. Such other financial statements as may be determined necessary by either the Committee or the administration will be presented as found desirable.

LEGAL REF.: Board of Education 603 CMR 10:00

AUDITS

An audit of the school district's accounts will be conducted annually.

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

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71 Sec 16E

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 will serve as purchasing agent or his/her designee. He/she will develop and administer the purchasing program for the schools in keeping with legal requirements and with the adopted district budget.

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

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 his/her 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

BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

The School District will follow Chapter 30B, or Chapter 149 or Chapter 7 depending on the procurement to be made. The purchasing agent for the District may award bids less than \$50,000. Amounts over \$50,00 will need to be approved by the School Committee.

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

CROSS REF.: DJA, Purchasing Authority

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

All claims for payment from regional district funds will be processed in accordance with regulations developed by the Superintendent. 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 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 treasurer for processing and subsequent payment by the district treasurer. Actual invoices, statements, and vouchers will be available for inspection by the School Committee.

The Superintendent 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 the school.

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

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

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

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

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

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

That mileage reimbursement for employees of the Somerset Berkley Regional School District will be consistent with the rate established by the Regional District School Committee.

SCHOOL PROPERTY DISPOSITION

For the Regional School Committee, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall be authorized to set procedures for disposal of obsolete books, equipment and supplies. The highest price possible will be sought. No private sales shall be authorized.

At the local School Committee levels, obsolete books, equipment and supplies will be disposed of in accordance with the respective town by-laws.