

November School Committee Letter

Greetings from the Sudbury Public School Committee.

October has flown by and now we welcome November with all the wonderful festivities that it brings.

Sudbury Public School teachers and administrators are working tirelessly and professionally toward Improving on Excellence in Education, which is our goal. Excellence is, and always will be, the Sudbury School Committee's expectation for our children, the students of Sudbury. As we all know, because of budget cuts for this school year, our efforts to Improve on Excellence hit some bumps in the road and some detours. Class sizes are larger, professional and curriculum development budgets were drastically reduced, and 1st grade and Kindergarten assistant positions were eliminated. The list is long with other seen and unseen cuts.

Not surprisingly, the budget season for the next school year has started and is in full swing. Unfortunately, the budget season has now become a full year effort, at times taking much needed time away from other initiatives; i.e, examining the issue of redistricting.

As members of the School Committee and as elected town officials, our responsibility is to advocate for the best possible education for our students and to preserve Sudbury's education within the fiscal restraints voted by the Sudbury Community and by the mandates of our state government. We ask that you come to the budget forums that are scheduled to learn about next year's budget constraints and their direct impact on Sudbury's education of our children. Also of importance are upcoming regularly scheduled School Committee and FinComm meetings when proposed budgets and background information will be discussed. We encourage all parents to attend these open, public meetings.

Like all of you, we have followed the economic news and are aware of the current economic climate. Nevertheless, we also strongly believe that it is our duty and the duty of other town committees to analyze and recognize in all discussions the impact of the budget proposals on town and school services and, in many cases, the reduction in services that would result.

As your elected School Committee members, we ask that all parents also understand the very real impacts on services for our students in 2009-2010 and beyond. As the administration, teachers and all our education professionals spend their efforts educating our youth, we ask for your support in listening to the details of the budget process and factual information so that we are all more informed consumers of our own town services and education. Please, put on your calendar the School Committee budget hearing scheduled for December 3, the SPS budget presentation to the FinComm that will be scheduled for January, and the Budget Forums that will be scheduled later in the budget process. These meetings are an excellent way to stay informed about the future budgets and impacts on services.

If you have any questions about the budget or the budget process, please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Sudbury Public School Committee. The Open Meeting Laws of Massachusetts guides the communications and workings of all town committees and officials. Except for Executive Meetings and Employee Negotiations which are closed to the public by Massachusetts State Laws, all town and school committee meetings are open to the public.

We welcome parents to our School Committee meetings, which do tend to run late at night, even if you come for a portion; we are told it is always informative and at times entertaining.

To help parents stay informed, we are including links that may be of interest. In many cases, it will be worth it to 'bookmark' these links so that you can refer to these for answers about Sudbury's budget and the budget process.

Of particular interest, is the recently updated **Benchmarking Data Report** which compares SPS data to other area school districts. Most of the data comes from the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reports.

- [Budget Review Task Force](#)
- [Budget Review Task Force Preliminary Report](#)
- [Benchmarking Data Report](#)
- [Sudbury Public Schools Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Redistricting update](#)
- Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center; Independent research/analysis of state budget polices www.massbudget.org/education
- Massachusetts Municipal Association <http://www.mma.org/>

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For the School Committee