

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 Regional School District Committee delegates the development of the District budget to the Finance Policy Sub-Committee which will, with the Superintendent-Director, Business Manager, and the District Treasurer, develop annual budgets for the operating and maintenance of the District, and such capital budgets as shall be necessary for the pursuit of the goals of the District and the educational programs proposed and approved by the District Committee.

Said budget shall conform to the guidelines as set forth by the Legislature in Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws and directives and regulations as set forth by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, and shall be in compliance with the foundation budget. It is acknowledged that the foundation budget reflects the minimum recommended spending for a District, and excludes transportation costs, debt service costs, and costs associated with the acquisition of fixed assets. The aforementioned items must, therefore, be budgeted in addition to the foundation budget, and funds to support those expenditures must be raised from the member communities, after the use of any offsetting revenues received from the state.

A budget is a spending plan, which is developed well in advance of the fiscal year. Circumstances may occur which necessitate changing spending priorities and redirecting funds within the budget accordingly. Revisions to the budget may be made from time to time by the Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent-Director.

The annual budget for the District shall be developed with input from the School Council, and shall reflect the priorities established in the Annual School Improvement Plan.

The District Agreement notwithstanding, there shall be no requirement for the annual operation and maintenance budget for the District to be adopted prior to the receipt of funding estimates from the state.

In developing a budget, care shall be taken to make the documents associated with the budget clear and understandable to Finance Committees of member communities and to the general public.

At the discretion of the Budget Subcommittee, an informal public information meeting may be held to solicit input from the general public. In accordance with the District Agreement, a public hearing shall be heard prior to the adoption of the Final Operating and Maintenance Budget by the District Committee. The Superintendent-Director and members of the Budget Sub-Committee will make every effort to fully inform all member communities and their officials of the budget plans of the District.

Assessments to member communities shall be made in compliance with the foundation budget, which may, in certain instances, differ from the apportionment under the District Agreement. When there is a conflict, state law shall prevail. In assessing for expenditures which are excluded from the foundation budget, the District Agreement shall determine the apportionment of assessments after the District Committee has applied all applicable state aid.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:16B; 71:34; 71:37 and 71:38N

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 school 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 District 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 behalf 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 schools is derived from local property taxes, and the District 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 schools.

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 school system's goals and objectives.

In the budget planning process for the school system, the District 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.

Before presenting the final budget for approval by Member Town Finance Committees and Town Meeting members, the District Policy Sub-Committee will review all line items of a proposed Preliminary Budget in a series of Open Meetings.

The Superintendent-Director will have overall responsibility for budget preparation, including the construction of, and adherence to, a budget calendar.

BUDGET ADOPTION PROCEDURES

The annual Regional School District budget as adopted by two-thirds vote of the Regional School District Committee shall require the approval of two-thirds of the local appropriating authorities of the member municipalities.

In the event the regional school budget is not approved by at least two-thirds of the member municipalities as required, the Regional School District Committee shall have thirty days to reconsider, amend and resubmit a budget on the basis of the issues raised.

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

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY

In keeping with the need for periodic reconciliation of the school department's budget, the Regional School District Committee will consider requests for transfers of funds between established schedules of accounts as they are recommended by the Superintendent-Director.

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.

All funds in the general account not expended by the close of the fiscal year will be placed in an excess and deficiency fund not to exceed five percent of the operating budget. Any added funds shall be returned to the member municipalities as outlined in M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 16B1/2.

LEGAL REF.: MGL 71:16B1/2

FUNDING PROPOSALS AND APPLICATIONS

The District 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 students in the School.

The Superintendent-Director will keep the Committee informed of all funds which may be available to the School under the various state and federal programs, and from other sources, and the manner in which these funds can best be used in the School.

The Superintendent-Director is authorized to sign all reports for these projects and is 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

FREE ADMISSIONS

If an admission fee is charged for entry to a School event, the District School Committee may authorize the waiver of such fee upon such conditions as it deems appropriate. For School athletic events, the admission fee may also be waived pursuant to the policies of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:16, 71:47

REVENUES FROM GIFTS, GRANTS AND BEQUESTS FROM PRIVATE SOURCES

The District School Committee may accept on behalf of and for the benefit of the School District any bequest or gift of money or property for a purpose deemed by the District School Committee to be suitable, and may utilize such money or property for such purpose.

The District School Committee may establish criteria for the acceptance of gifts, and procedures for examining and evaluating offers of gifts to the District.

The Superintendent-Director may accept all non-monetary gifts on behalf of the School subject to the criteria established by the District School Committee.

All monetary gifts accepted by the District School Committee will be deposited with the Treasurer, and may be expended for the purpose(s) of such gift by vote of the District School Committee without further appropriation.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:16, 44:53A, 11:31 A

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

The treasurer and the assistant treasurer are authorized to sign check withdrawals and to sign the appropriate bank forms for the Regional School District.

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

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS

Each employee of the school system or District School Committee member 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 District.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:16A

FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

The Superintendent-Director will be ultimately responsible for receiving and properly accounting for all funds of the school system.

The accounting system used will conform with state requirements and with good accounting practices, providing for the appropriate separation of accounts, funds, and special monies.

The District School Committee will receive periodic financial statements from the Superintendent-Director 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

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AUDITS

An audit of the school department's accounts shall be conducted annually.

Upon the completion of each audit, a report there on shall be made to the Chairperson of the District School Committee, and a copy sent to the Town Managers Office in the member municipalities.

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

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

PURCHASING

The District 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-Director's office of the school system.

The Superintendent-Director will serve as purchasing agent. He/she will develop and administer the purchasing program for the schools in keeping with legal requirements and with the adopted school budget.

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

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-Director 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.

The Business Manager is the Chief Procurement Officer of the School District.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30B

CROSS REF.: DJE, Bidding Requirements

PURCHASING PROCEDURES

The Business Manager shall be the chief procurement officer.

The Business Manager shall serve as purchasing agent and shall be responsible for the purchase order system. The purchasing procedures shall be the responsibility of the Business Manager. All acquisitions shall be centralized in the office of the Business Manager.

The Business Manager shall insure that the staff members are aware of and follow the established purchasing procedures.

No person shall contract by bill on behalf of the District School Committee unless it shall have been authorized and the order has been given on the prescribed purchase request form approved by the Superintendent-Director or the Business Manager.

Purchase request forms shall be signed by the appropriate administrator and the Business Manager. If a staff member fails to use the proper request forms or to obtain the required signatures, the District will not honor the invoice submitted to it for the item involved.

Purchase request forms have been developed by the Business Office to assist School personnel who are responsible for placing orders for equipment, supplies, and materials or for requesting a contracted service essential to their instructional assignment. The filing of this form constitutes a formal request by an authorized person for the School business office to purchase an item or to contract a service which was approved by the District School Committee during its budget deliberation.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30B

PETTY CASH ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager shall administer Petty Cash funds in accordance with the following procedures:

- Petty cash may be used only to purchase items costing less than \$50.00.
- No purchase will be reimbursed through a Petty Cash Account unless accompanied by a receipt and noted on the Petty Cash Report.
- The Petty Cash Report and accompanying receipts, shall be delivered to the Business Office for reimbursement on a timely basis.
- When the Petty Cash Account is reimbursed, the appropriate account will be charged.
- All cash received shall be delivered to the Business Manager. The appropriate fund will be credited.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:16, 44:53

BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

All purchases of materials and equipment and all contracts for construction or maintenance in amounts exceeding \$35,000 will be based upon competitive bidding.

An effort will be made to procure multiple bids for all purchases in excess of \$35,000. When recommending acceptance of a bid, the Superintendent-Director will inform the District School Committee, whenever possible, of the competitive price of a reasonable substitute for the item specified.

When bidding procedures are used, bids will be advertised appropriately. Suppliers will be invited to have their names placed on mailing lists to receive invitations to bid. When specifications are prepared, they will be mailed to all merchants and firms who have indicated an interest in bidding.

All bids will be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Superintendent-Director and plainly marked with the name of the bid and the time of the bid opening. Bids will be opened in public at the time specified, and all bidders will be invited to be present.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the bid that appears to be in the best interest of the school system. The Committee reserves the right to waive any informality in, or reject, any or all bids or any part of any bid. Any bid maybe withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for the opening of the bids. Any bid received after the time and date specified will not be considered. All bids will remain firm for a period of 30 days after opening.

The bidder to whom an award is made may be required to enter into a written contract with the school system.

Votes to approve bids must be by a two-thirds vote.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [7:22A](#); [7:22B](#); [30B](#)

CROSS REF.: [DJA](#), Purchasing Authority

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PAYMENT PROCEDURES

All claims for payment from the School District's funds will be processed in accordance with regulations developed by the Superintendent-Director. 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 District 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 District School Committee. Actual invoices, statements, and vouchers will be available for inspection by the District School Committee.

The Superintendent-Director 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.

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

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

When official travel in a personally owned vehicle has been authorized for School business the employee shall be reimbursed at the rate currently approved by the Internal Revenue Service. .

District personnel and officials who incur expenses in carrying out their authorized duties may be reimbursed by the District upon submission of a properly completed and approved voucher and such supporting receipts as required by the Business Manager. Such expenses may be approved and incurred within the limits of budgetary allocations for the type of expense.

All travel outside of the state must have the prior written approval of the Superintendent-Director.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:16

SCHOOL PROPERTIES DISPOSAL PROCEDURE

1. The Business Manager is authorized to conduct disposal of surplus supplies or equipment with an estimated net value of less than \$5,000 as required.
 - a. The identified items will be valued by the appropriate staff specialists and documented with photographs for the reverse bid process.
 - b. The advertising for Disposal of Surplus Supplies will be initiated on the district intra-net with an applicable reverse bid form and required bid submittal date.
 - c. If no reverse bids are received from the intra-net advertising, the level of advertisement will escalate to the District Public website, then to local newspapers.
2. The District School Committee shall authorize the Business Manager to conduct disposal of surplus supplies or equipment with an estimated net value of greater than \$5,000 utilizing either sealed bids or public auction in accordance with MGL Ch.30b.
3. Disposition shall be in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.
4. Interpretation of applicable state and federal laws and regulations shall be by counsel to the District School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30B:15