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Town of Reading **Schools and Buildings** **FY09 Budget Message #5**

The School Department began its budget presentations in January. Based on the School District's Mission and District Improvement Plan the administration submitted to the Reading School Committee a "Baseline Budget" (2.6% increase over FY08), as requested by the Reading FINCOM, and a "Superintendent's Recommended Budget" (4.8% increase over FY08) that, in addition to the "Baseline Budget", included positions aimed at improving our schools.

Two items contained in the "Baseline Budget" to bring to your attention are the level funding of Special Education out of district placements and the level funding of natural gas for heating all the School and Town buildings. These two items are both contained in the "Accommodated Costs" section of the budget model and; therefore, the positive impact of no budget increases in these areas is helpful to both the Town and Schools.

The "Baseline Budget" for the most part had the same level of staffing as this year (FY08) and 2.3% increase in all the non-personnel lines. The "Recommended Budget" contained the following positions over the "Baseline Budget":

HS Science/Engineering Teacher	\$50,000
0.9 HS Music/Drama Teacher	\$45,000
HS Health Wellness Teacher	\$50,000
Middle School Reading Specialist	\$50,000
HS Mathematics Teacher	\$50,000
Technology Support Person	\$35,000
STEM Curriculum Specialist K-8	\$75,000
0.5 HS Technology Integration Specialist	\$30,000
4.0 FTE Teachers K-12 to Address Class Size, Enrollment and programmatic issues	\$200,000
Elementary Academic Support	\$50,000
HS Guidance Counselor	\$50,000

The School Committee, after numerous meetings on the budget topic, on January 30th voted a budget increase of 3.7% for FY09 (1.1% over Baseline). This budget contained the following positions:

RMHS Health Wellness Teacher	\$50,000
0.2 RMHS Technology Integration Specialist	\$12,000
RMHS Technology Support Person	\$35,000
0.9 Middle School Reading Specialist	\$45,000
Elementary Academic Support	\$47,500
0.9 RMHS Music/Drama Teacher	\$45,000
1.0 FTE RMHS Science/Engineering/Math Teacher	\$50,000
RMHS Guidance Counselor	\$50,000
1.0 FTE Teachers K-12 for Class Size, Enrollment, Programming	\$50,000

Additionally, the School Committee developed a strategy to fund a portion of the above request by increasing offsets and utilizing savings in the '07 and '08 budgets due to sound fiscal management and oversight. When asking for more funds the School Committee felt it was extremely important to come up with ways to contribute, at minimum, a portion of the financial solution.

The resulting "School Committee's Recommended Budget" and the proposed financing strategy was presented to FINCOM on March 12, 2008. Based on increased revenue from the State and an updated School Committee financing strategy, on March 26, 2008 the FINCOM voted unanimously to increase the initial "Baseline Budget" amount for the Schools by \$128,000. This amount plus the above mentioned changes to the budget allow the School Committee to include in its resulting FINCOM approved "Baseline Budget" the following positions:

RMHS Health Wellness Teacher	\$50,000
0.2 RMHS Technology Integration Specialist	\$12,000
RMHS Technology Support Person	\$35,000
0.9 RMHS Music/Drama Teacher	\$45,000
1.0 FTE RMHS Science/Engineering/Math Teacher	\$50,000

During the 2006-2007 school year the School Department overpaid its water bill due to a faulty meter. This issue was resolved but since the \$75,000 overpayment cannot be credited to the School Department water account as it would in a residential home, the FINCOM at its March 26th meeting voted unanimously to allocate to the School Department the amount of \$75,000 to be used in FY09 but not to be added to the "Baseline Budget" moving forward into FY10. This was a portion of the above mentioned savings indentified by the School Committee. This \$75,000 will allow the School Committee for the school year 2008-2009 to add a 0.5 reading teacher at the Parker Middle School and Academic Support Tutoring to each of the elementary schools.