

**Bowman,
Bridge,
Estabrook,
Fiske,
Harrington,
Hastings**

Notes from review of FY08 budget with Principals on 1/23/07

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School Committee member

Concerns over Class Sizes

- Principals aware of budgetary issues and included minimal increases.
- Budgeted FTEs based on FY07 figures, but Pg. 18 of the budget book shows class sizes that not exceed SC preferred class size
 - Requires 130 classroom teachers, but budget carries 127 (to accommodate the 29 student increase from the new Avalon development) => Dr. Ash will project class sizes for 127 room elem. system
- Getting comparable educational experiences from neighborhood schools depends on balanced class sizes:
 - Neighborhood school philosophy leads to class-size discrepancies between grades and between school buildings
 - I am now convinced that we cannot balance class sizes through multi-grading because of MCAS and curriculum bench marks constrained by mandates.
 - More money or redistricting procedures (NOT boundaries) are our means to even class sizes.

Other requests

- Principals willing to look at cuts in all areas except class size. FY08 expense budgets increase of 3% and, as per the principals, supply needs will still require substantial supplements from parents and PTAs.
- The severe cuts of IT staff in our tech. dept. (3 techs/all of LPS) lead to slow response time for repairs => hard to rely on lesson plans requiring technology
- Greatly miss elem. tech. curriculum integrators, since teachers don't have the time to develop new lessons utilizing the technology
- If we need to make cuts, want to keep/get classroom teachers above all else.
- When FTEs shared among buildings .1 FTE is lost to travel, so splitting FTEs across buildings is less desirable than keeping staff in the same building

A Plea to the Community

- 2006 failed override had a severe impact throughout the system. In elementary schools students lost:
 - Elementary Foreign Language Program (Spanish)
 - Social Studies K-5 Curriculum Specialist
 - K-5 Health Educators
 - K-5 Technology Integration Specialists
 - Free instrumental music (fee now charged for all except recorder, resulting in 1/3 drop in enrolled students)

- Without community's financial support, educational excellence will be extremely difficult to maintain.