

Parents in Partnership

Please come to a District-Wide Community PTO Meeting to discuss updates, issues and solutions to the Dartmouth school funding crisis.

All residents are welcome.



Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Cushman School Gymnasium

Issues to discuss:

- **Proposition 2 ½ override — pros and cons**
- **Fees vs. Overrides — how they affect you**
- **Long-term solutions to funding our schools**

The following town leaders also have been asked to attend:

Dr. Stephen Russell, Superintendent;

Manuel Cordelro, Business Manager;

John Quinn, State Representative

School Committee Members;

Finance Committee Members;

Select Board

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Parents in Partnership

Dear Families,

As Dartmouth residents, we are facing a critical money shortage in our town. This shortage is affecting our children's education! Here's the problem: The town of Dartmouth does not have enough money each year to successfully run its departments. As parents, you should know that our schools do not have enough money to educate our children.

We are now at a crossroads. Our choices are not easy — we can do nothing and watch our town and schools continue to spiral downward — or we can step up as a community and make a change. Dartmouth schools need more money and it's up to us as citizens to help.

Dartmouth has long prided itself on maintaining one of the lowest property tax levels in the state. For many years this level has been sufficient and our town has run successfully. This is not the case any longer. What town residents and businesses pay in property taxes does not cover what it costs to run our town.

The Proposition 2 ½ Law allows a town to raise property taxes by only 2 ½ percent per year. A 2 ½ percent increase this year would NOT even begin to solve the shortage the school system, the police department and the DPW face. One option to consider, among many, would be to override Proposition 2 ½. The decision to do this would increase our town property taxes for the direct benefit of the school system and other under-funded town departments. For most residents, the annual cost increase would be less than \$150 per home. That increase would spread the responsibility of educating our children and running our town out across all citizens of our community.

We don't have the power to change what has happened in the past, but we can change the way we fund our schools in the future. Students who graduate from our schools compete with other Massachusetts students for college admissions and jobs. These students become members of our community — they will be our future leaders, workers and care givers. We need to stop cutting back on our schools and our children's educations, and start investing in them.

Please come to the All- School Parent Meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at Cushman School. We will discuss all options including the pros and cons to raising taxes.

Investing in our schools is an investment in our children.

Here's what could happen if we did nothing about our town's money shortage:

- ☞ School activity fees
- ☞ No after-school programs
- ☞ Closing the schools at night — no school dances, no concerts, no family nights, no indoor band practices, no indoor sports
- ☞ No school on Fridays
- ☞ No Friday night football games
- ☞ Lower MCAS scores
- ☞ Fewer students graduating
- ☞ Reduced trash collection
- ☞ Beach closings

What we spend per student compared to other towns:

- Dartmouth = \$7,484 per student
- Mattapoisett = \$9,814 per student
- Marion = \$10,102 per student
- Carver = \$8,406 per student
- Plymouth = \$8,392 per student
- Falmouth = \$9,497 per student
- Barnstable = \$8,739 per student
- Chatham = \$12,339 per student
- Somerset = \$9,686 per student
- Mashpee = \$8,891 per student
- Avon = \$9,226 per student
- Hull = \$9,929 per student

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