

Ashford School  
Board of Education  
2016-2017 Budget Proposal

**Summary**

Town Meeting, April 19, 2016

The 2016-2017 Ashford School budget is zero based. Meaning that what was spent in previous years has been examined for accuracy and appropriateness, and that information applied to determine the budget you see before you. By constructing our budget in this manner, each account is accurate and does not reflect any overage or underage carried forward from previous budget years.

We have built this budget with two goals in mind. First, to continue to provide our students with an exemplary education, and second, to be fiscally responsible, balancing needs with costs.

Budget History Summary

Budget Year	Approved Budget Amount	% Change Increase/(Decrease)
FY 13-14	\$7,035,706 Budget	(0.7%)
FY 14-15	\$ 7,288,036 Budget	3.6%
FY 15-16	\$ 7,423,071 Budget	1.8%
FY 16-17	\$ 7,406,140 BOF Approved	(0.2%)

**What comprises this budget:**

- Salaries make up 61% of the total budget. Both certified and non-certified salaries are the result of mediated contract negotiations.
- Employee benefits account for 23% of the total budget, also the result of contract mediation.
- The remaining 16% must cover books, supplies, equipment (including technology), utilities, maintenance, professional services, outplaced and magnet school tuition, transportation, school bus repair and maintenance, and all other expenses associated with daily operation of Ashford School. We have kept this aspect of our spending manageable through careful purchasing and planning.

**Major Changes found in this Budget:**

- The second year of the after-school clubs and activities program has been refined and expanded  
*The after school clubs and activities program is essentially an extended school day designed to enrich student learning and afford our students opportunities to enjoy exploration of their individual interests.*
- Addition of a 1.0 FTE Certified Special Education Teacher/Behavior Interventionist in response to identified student need  
*One of the goals of the special education department has been to keep students in our school and minimize outplacements. This position will be integral in meeting that goal by addressing difficult situations within the district.*
- Reduction of one paraprofessional whose role will be absorbed by the addition of the above certified staff interventionist.

Continued...

## Major Changes found in this Budget Continued:

- A reduction of two middle school certified Staff positions, addressing changes in instructional strategy as well as in response to declining enrollment  
*The reductions are based upon a change in approach to improvement of student writing skills at Ashford School. These two positions were created a few years ago in response to a desire to improve writing instruction, beginning at the middle school level. We now are ready to move the program to grade 2-6 students, focusing on writing instruction at those grade levels. An existing certified staff member will transfer from a classroom instructional position to this position. This addresses two educational goals: it reduces a classroom in response to declining enrollment, and it provides us with an early writing instruction and intervention program.*
- Staffing realignment in response to declining enrollment  
*Each year we reassign staff to teach in those grades with the highest enrollment.*
- Upgrade network and critical data backup storage as part of improved IT system integrity as recommended by auditor.  
*We continue implementation of our District Technology Plan. Following this plan ensures that we provide technology necessary to support student learning and to meet state mandates.*

## MBR – Minimum Budget Requirement

School District budgets are controlled in part by a legislative formula that dictates the minimum budget allowed for in any given year. Our FY 17 budget request was increased by \$15,000 at the Board of Finance meeting on April 5, 2016, to ensure compliance with the state’s mandated minimum budget requirement.

Faculty Staffing and Student Enrollment by Grade for 2016-2017 supported by this Budget

Grade Level	# of Students*	# of Teachers	Average class size
PK	48	2	12
K	32	3	10.7
1	41	3	13.7
2	33	2	16.5
3	43	3	14.3
4	30	2	15
5	42	3	14
6	37	3	12.3
7	38	2	19
8	50	3	16.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>393</b>		<i>Class sizes are projections based upon current enrollment. 3/24/16</i>

## Class Size:

We have kept class size manageable by moving teachers each year into those grades that have the most students. We believe that a low class size is desirable, and are comfortable with our current staffing levels. As you can see through the above class size table, classes are at a very reasonable level, allowing us optimal instructional ability, yet remaining responsive to the shifts in enrollment.

## Conclusion:

This budget proposal is based upon our desire to serve the community in the most efficient way possible. We have kept all of our expenses as low as possible, while continuing to improve instruction, and utilize the latest technology and support materials. Because we have enjoyed the support of the community, we have been able to make Ashford School one of the best schools in the area.

Please call or email me if you require further information or have any questions regarding the decisions that are the foundations of this budget. **We thank you all for your support.**