



DR. MATT A. BISCEGLIA

12/01/09

Dear Cromwell Community Members,

If the latest news from those charged with state financial matters is to be believed, every public and private organization and every Cromwell family will be facing another tough budget season. The Cromwell Public Schools are cognizant of this reality even as we begin developing our 2010-2011 budget. We are also mindful of potential fiscal challenges for the 2011-2012 school year which is when the two-year federal initiative, the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, are no longer available to supplement our town's budget. As a consequence, significant shortfalls in revenue will become another obstacle to our eventual recovery. Yet, through all these challenges, the Board of Education has continually restated its most important responsibility, i.e., to provide a quality educational experience for each and every Cromwell student. Our recently developed five year strategic plan builds upon this principle as demonstrated in our new *Mission and Belief Statement* highlighted below:

***The Cromwell Public Schools educate and inspire all students to apply the essential skills needed to become productive and responsible citizens in a rapidly changing world.***

***In pursuing this Mission, the Cromwell Public School community believes that:***

- **All students are valued and deserve an education that addresses their academic, physical, and social/emotional needs.**
- **All members of the community have a right to a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment.**
- **All members of the community value effective communication and the involvement of all partners in the educational process.**
- **All members of the community celebrate, respect, and appreciate diversity.**
- **All members of the community must uphold high expectations, be accountable, and demonstrate a commitment to excellence.**

Our Mission and belief statements also support our commitment to a strong core academic curriculum while also recognizing that a good education must include student access to the latest technology as well as exposure and experience in a broad range of

arts, humanities, sports, and other equally important extracurricular activities. To achieve our vision and dreams for our students, we must also continue to hire the best and brightest educators, people of good character, a strong work ethic, and a similar sense of mission and beliefs. We must provide our educators and those who aid them with appropriate professional development, administrative and peer support, and the necessary materials and supplies to allow them to succeed on behalf of students. Finally, it is the Board of Education's responsibility to insure, even in the most challenging economic times, our students and staff come to work each day in healthy, safe, and well-maintained facilities, a commitment, I believe, the BOE has successfully met time and time again.

As I've mentioned, budget development for next year is already underway and the BOE and the administration are formulating a plan that addresses this difficult economic environment. Budget guidelines sent out to all the schools included a prerequisite to budget controllable costs at or below last year's level. We will also continue to explore other venues for potential savings as we did last budget season including energy conservation, early retirement plans, consolidated bus runs, and alternative medical benefit options. However, financial obligations beyond our budgeting control include previously negotiated contracts, e.g., teacher, administrator, transportation, and technology contracts, as well as medical insurance coverage. Together, these obligations already represent an additional 2.5% to 3% to the 2010-2011 budget which would equal a \$625,000 to \$750,000 increase.

Accordingly, I have begun meeting with each of the seven (7) unions and seven (7) individual contract holders to explain the potential budget difficulties we could be facing. If these budget projections do indeed become a reality, without concessions from all of the unions and individuals, the Board of Education will have to begin the difficult process of identifying reductions in personnel and programs with the goal of lessening the impact on the many gains we have realized as a district during the last decade.

In conclusion, I encourage each of you to become engaged in the budget process this year. I also encourage you to read through all the detailed budget material provided by the Board of Education on our website and attend our monthly meetings and information sessions at the various schools. At the end of the day and after considering the justifications and reasons for our requested budget, I trust the citizens of Cromwell to do what they have repeatedly done in the past: support an educational budget that is in the best interest of Cromwell's most important resource: the students in the Cromwell Public Schools.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Matt A. Bisceglia  
Superintendent of Schools