

Cromwell Public Schools

"Placing Students First"



DR. MATT A. BISCEGLIA

Dear Cromwell Community Members,

The Board of Education presented a budget proposal during the Public Hearing on April 2, 2009 that was the lowest request in 25 years. This year's .98% budget increase included multi-faceted reductions and came about as a result of hard work, creativity, and sacrifice on the part of Cromwell Public School employees. The .98% increase represents a substantial reduction from the original budget that was submitted to the Board of Finance. In the subsequent two months between the Board of Education's passage of the original budget and the revised .98% increase discussed at the public hearing on April 2, 2009, the administrators and I continued to work to bring the most affordable school budget to the town of Cromwell. The following provides a brief summary of where the majority of these reductions originated:

- ✚ The Board of Education supported an early retirement initiative for teachers who met very specific criteria. The March 12th deadline for eligible teacher to notify me that they were taking advantage of this incentive (well after the BOE approved budget of a 2.89% increase on Jan. 27th) contributed savings of an additional \$123,280.
- ✚ I have negotiated a High Deductible Health Plan/HSA in every new contract developed since I became Superintendent. We have seen that certified and non-certified staff are volunteering to take a health plan that saves the district more and more money each year. We will also be implementing wellness plans which, in addition to providing our employees with resources to stay healthy, will further reduce our medical premiums. Reductions realized in next year's Employee Benefits line item from these incremental initiatives total \$245,036.
- ✚ We continue to be vigilant in committing Cromwell tax dollars to any contracted service, and we invest an incredible amount of time and research into a process like oil, gasoline, natural gas, and diesel purchases. Because we committed at the most opportune time, and well after many other districts and municipalities did, we were able to realize a savings of the \$97,000 in our revised Energy & Utilities numbers.

I believe the Board of Education and I have demonstrated to the taxpayers that we are doing all that we can to lessen the eventual tax burden for Cromwell residents during these difficult times. However, we also understand that the Board of Finance must carry out their duties as well to ensure that Cromwell residents are not overly burdened. On April 14th the Board of Finance reduced the educational budget by an additional \$197,997. Our 09-10 budget now stands at

0.19%, a \$47,778 increase over last year and an \$869,200 reduction from our January 09-10 budget request.

With the budget process now nearly complete, it will be up to the taxpayers and voters of Cromwell to weigh in on this year's budget through their participation at the ***Town Meeting at 7:00 P.M. on May 12, 2009 at the Cromwell Middle School auditorium*** and ***during the referendum voting process on May 16, 2009 from 12:00 noon to 8:00 P.M. at the Cromwell High School gym***. I believe that we have shown this year, through ingenuity and strong management that we will continue to provide a quality education even in the midst of difficult economic times.

Sincerely,
Dr. Matt A. Bisceglia, Superintendent of Schools
Cromwell Public Schools