

February, 2019

The Board of Directors of the Mill River Unified Union School District is pleased to share this overview of important work underway in our schools as we approach Town Meeting Day on March 5, 2019. **Please be aware that the Annual Meeting of the MRUUSD will be held on February 28, 2019 in the MRUHS Library.** You should receive your MRUUSD Annual report in the mail by Saturday, February 16, 2019.

School District Finances

The school property tax is a state tax, and the calculations that ultimately decide education property tax rates are made at the state level. Our local budget decisions are only one part of the state's calculations. We continue to try to be responsible, good stewards of your money and make decisions each budget year that take the needs of our schools AND our community members into account. We want to offer great value to our taxpayers for the money that we are asking from you, and believe that the proposed budget does exactly that. For this budget, we are seeing our overall expenditures increase by 5.11%. We estimate the tax impact on a \$200,000 home based on our budget to be an increase of \$106, however, each town's local appraisal figures will result in further adjustments to that estimated tax impact based on the unique characteristics of each town. We will not know the exact tax rate impacts until the state releases that information in June.

Buildings and Grounds Plans

The bond that taxpayers approved last year met specific district facility needs (mostly focused on roofing, siding, and building envelope) and was not used for regular building maintenance and repair, which are a regular part of our budget. Our Buildings and Grounds Committee and Director have worked for many months to identify and prioritize needs in order to recommend actions that will best serve the community. We hope to enter into an energy performance contract that will address our fuel and electricity needs for the long term, and that will have NO TAX IMPACT. The performance contract is focused on critical mechanical and electrical needs that have to be addressed. The guaranteed savings and built in efficiencies from the performance contract will equal the cost of the bond issue that would finance them. We will review this information in detail at our upcoming Annual District Meeting. In order to move forward with that contract we will be asking the community to consider a \$2.3 million bond question on Town Meeting Day, and will hold the required public information session about that bond request during our Annual Meeting. We are pleased with the course that we have chosen to meet our current facility needs while ensuring that everyday, ongoing maintenance and repair remains up to your expectations, while proceeding in an efficient and cost-effective way. Many of our buildings are in need of repairs with varying degrees of urgency.

Exciting Initiatives Underway

We have a number of very exciting developments in progress in the district. Related to this year's budget, we have made concerted efforts to focus funds in areas that we seek to enhance in order to better serve our community and set our schools apart as premiere. We have plans in the works for an expansion of our PreK programming for 3 and 4 year olds at all four elementary schools, to include the option of after school childcare for families that need it. Additionally, we are seeking to enhance our arts programming at MRUHS with additional staffing and focus, with future attention turning to our elementary school arts programs in order to ensure that they effectively integrate with the middle and high school opportunities that our students deserve. Overall, we believe that it is important to enhance the performing arts AND expand school offerings to our youngest learners in order to continue our district's effort to create and sustain premiere schools.

The Trailhead Project, which involves the development of a unique focus at each of our elementary schools and the creation of a specialized high school program, continues to move forward strategically. Much of the Trailhead Project will occur with existing staffing and material resources and will not result in immediate budget impacts. For this year's budget, there is \$10,000 designated for supplies and professional development. In future budgets we may see addition of a staff position or two. That will be determined in the coming year. It is important to note that NONE of the requested bond funds will be utilized toward the Trailhead Project.



EXPLORE. DISCOVER. THRIVE.

Mill River

Unified Union School District

We are very excited to share our newly-developed school district logo with you! In addition to this new logo, we have also developed new academic and mascot logos for our elementary schools, and a new academic seal that can be used at MRUHS. Don't worry - the Minuteman mascot and identification is core to MRUHS, and will always be at the foundation of who we are. The MRUHS athletic logos remain in use exactly as they are...they are a part of our fabric! To check out the school-based logos that have been developed, feel free to look at the link on our website at www.millriverschools.org.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION INCLUDED FROM YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD.

DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING IS SET FOR FEBRUARY 28, 2019 IN THE MRUHS LIBRARY.

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