

# BETHANY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT



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February 7, 2017

### **Greetings from the Bethany Board of Education!**

Every spring, the Board of Education presents its proposed budget for the coming school year. We are writing you today to update you on this year's budget process. There will be an opportunity for you to come to ask questions about the budget, and any other matters, at our spring **Board Open Forum**, which will be on **Wednesday, March 8 at 6:30 PM**, in the school's Learning Commons.

The BOE budget is part of the larger town budget and must be approved by the Board of Finance and then by the electors of the town, typically at the annual Town Meeting in May. Superintendent Murray began work on the budget early in the fall. Formulation of the budget begins with input from all departments in the school regarding their needs. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Board's Finance Committee, then goes through a months-long process of projecting costs, seeking opportunities for savings, and balancing educational needs against the need to be responsible with the town's tax dollars. The Superintendent presented her budget to the Board in January. The Board will discuss it further at our regular meeting on Wednesday, February 8 at 6:30 PM and then, we anticipate, vote to approve it for presentation to the Board of Finance.

That presentation will be at the Board of Finance meeting on Tuesday, February 21 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall. Residents are welcome to attend. The BOF may then ask questions and suggest changes as they seek to balance our request against other town needs. They will present their overall budget for the town, including the BOE budget, at a meeting in April, hear any public comment, and finalize their budget proposal for a vote in May. We will publicize the dates of these public meetings once they are set.

This year, the Superintendent's proposed budget calls for a 1.9% increase compared to last year, comparable to the current rate of inflation. Getting to this small increase actually required some judicious cuts in the budget; keeping everything at the school status quo would have entailed a budget increase of 6.55%, due to contractual salary increases, state mandates, and other unavoidable expenses. We have been able to realize savings relative to this starting point due to the continuing gradual decline in the school's census and by finding other economies that do not hurt our children's education. The Superintendent's budget presentation, which includes many details, is available on the school website.

We invite you to attend our **February 8** meeting to hear further details and discussion, and to share any thoughts you may have on the budget. If you then have any further questions or thoughts about this budget or the process by which it was formulated, or anything else you would like to discuss with the Board and the administration, please join us at the Open Forum on **Wednesday, March 8**.

In partnership,

*Christopher Pittenger, Chair*  
*Adam Carrington, Vice Chair*

For the Bethany Board of Education