

January 29, 2010

Budget Message to the Longmeadow Community from E. Jahn Hart, Superintendent

**The FIRST DRAFT of the FY11 School Budget was submitted to the School Committee on Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. On Thursday, February 4, 2010, the School Committee will have a Special meeting to review the budget recommendations and any new budget information from the Town. On Monday, February 8, 2010, the School Committee will hold a Budget Hearing on the FY11 budget and they will vote on the budget either that evening or on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>.**

The School Committee charged the Superintendent of Schools with drafting a balanced budget that addressed reductions in local, state, and federal revenues.

In this **FIRST DRAFT** of the budget (January 25, 2010), the total proposed recommendation for the **FY11 Budget** is **\$30,089,068.06**, which is an actual **decrease** of **\$1,554,749.94** from the total FY10 revised School Department budget. However, due to diminished special revenues and mandated increases, additional expenses had to be moved to the general fund, necessitating total reductions to the school department general fund budget in the amount of

**\$1,855,484.54 or \$1.86 million dollars.**

This FIRST DRAFT of the budget includes the **reduction of 35.35 positions** as described below.

***Please note that this budget, including the proposed reductions, is subject to revision based on changed assumptions, including staffing and enrollment alterations, as well as additional revenue adjustments.***

## **FISCAL YEAR 2011 PROPOSED BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **BUDGET DEVELOPMENT**

Our budget development process included the following steps, which are outlined in detail in my Executive Summary of the FY11 Budget:

- Review and Reaffirm the School District's Values
- Establish Timelines for Development and Delivery of Budget
- Review Current and Projected Enrollment
- Respond to Town Manager's Budget Instructions
- Review Opportunities for Additional Cost Efficiencies

Right now, the Executive Summary is in DRAFT form as we work through modifications and adjustments to the budget. Once the document is finalized, I will post the entire document to our district web site.

I worked with the administrative team to make these determinations equitably across the district and with the least negative impact on student learning. These were difficult decisions made in the context of previous budget reductions and future effects.

### **Budget Instructions**

Last year, the Town Manager informed us that the full tax levy capacity plus \$963,783 in reserves set aside from the 2007 operating override would be used to balance the FY2010 budget and that *"use of these reserves is a one-time revenue, designed to carry the Town through FY2010; these reserves will not be available in FY2011."*

This year the Town Manager's FY11 Budget Instructions included the following statements regarding revenue projections, expenses, and budget targets:

*"It will come as no surprise that Longmeadow, like most communities in the Commonwealth, is likely facing further reductions in state aid and local receipts. Without use of reserves, the potential FY2011 budget shortfall is \$2.1 Million. At its meeting on December 7 (2009), the Select Board directed the Town Manager to deliver a budget that allocates this shortfall as follows: \$1,470,000 to the School Department and \$ 630,000 to the non-school departments. It is my intent that mandated and essential services (including life safety and property protection) be preserved and, to the degree possible, those quality of life services that Longmeadow residents value. I understand that departments have worked diligently to improve services and performance over the past few years, often under difficult circumstances. The Town continues to be challenged by unfunded mandates and forces outside of our control. It is important that we continue to work as a team during this process in order that our organization can weather this difficult time."*

### **Budget Targets**

Based on estimated revenues and fixed costs, the overall general fund budget targets for FY2011 are as follows: School Department: \$27,484,837; all other departments' total: \$10,534,563.

## **BUDGET DETAILS**

### **Proposed Staffing Reductions in the FY2011 Budget**

This fall, the Finance Subcommittee of the School Committee reviewed the updated financial data and charged our Administrative Team in October with developing draft budget scenarios that would result in a reduction of \$1.25 million dollars in FY11. (That reduction was increased to \$1.47 million dollars on January 1<sup>st</sup> per the Town Manager's Budget Instructions and then to \$1.67 million dollars, and most recently, to \$1.86 million dollars after additional expenses and reduced revenues were identified.) The Administrative Team reviewed their fall 2008 budget development guidelines and adjusted them this year in the fall of 2009. All budget proposals, including reductions, were identified within the following framework of Guiding Values:

### **Longmeadow Public Schools' Values**

*(non-prioritized order)*

*We acknowledge that budget reductions will negatively impact our ability to adhere to these values.*

- Keeping a focus on "eyes on the child - learning": balancing the basics of core curriculum with electives, special courses, and extra curricular activities (whole student approach)
- Maintaining appropriate and manageable class sizes, especially at the primary level
- Maintaining workforce stability
- Sustaining essential and valued programs
- Maximizing meaningful learning time
- Developing and maintaining high quality instruction
- Maintaining and enhancing common planning / collaboration time
- Providing and expanding the ability to provide early intervention and remedial support to students and the resulting impact on referrals to special education.

We collected and analyzed data; we reviewed and critiqued budget reduction proposals, and ultimately made decisions within our priority framework that we believe will do the least harm. Unfortunately, however, every single one of our listed values was compromised with this budget proposal:

- Electives, special courses, and extra curricular activities will be reduced.
- Class sizes will be higher than recommended or desired.
- We will lose talented and valued staff members.
- We will lose valued programs that enrich our curriculum.
- We will lose some meaningful learning time as students' schedules in grades 7 – 12 include more "study time."
- While maintaining high quality instruction, we will be providing significantly fewer opportunities for professional development
- We will lose time and opportunities for collaboration time to support the advancement of Professional Learning Communities.
- We will lose some key resources to provide early intervention and remedial support to students – with the likelihood of increased referrals to special education, unless restored in a timely fashion.

Ultimately, we made decisions that enabled us to meet the budget targets set by the School Committee and Town Manager.

*Notes about staffing reductions:*

***The decision to eliminate staff positions again this year was extraordinarily difficult. These are not just "jobs" – they are people: our colleagues and team members. They are respected educators who chose to work in the Longmeadow Schools. They were selected among other highly qualified applicants through a rigorous hiring process, and many left other districts to join us here. As educators who value a stable work force of high performing staff, it is with extreme regret and sadness that we anticipate the loss of these individuals from our ranks. The 35.35 positions that are included in this list of staffing reductions represent 8.0% of our work force. This will have a significant impact on our operations and on our students***

Again, we are cautiously optimistic that some of these positions will be restored if the legislature follows the Governor's lead and protects local aid or at least if the reduction in local aid is lessened from the current projection of 15%.

Below is a chart of the proposed staffing reductions for 2011, followed by a description of the rationale used for selection.

## Proposed FY2010 Staffing Reductions

### REDUCTIONS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Location / Level	FTE	Eliminated Positions or Resources	Expected Result	Anticipated Impact
ELEM	-1.20	5th grade instrumental & choral music	Elimination of Elem Instrumental & Choral Music	Negative impact on districtwide music program
CTR	-0.10	Music	Aligned to reduction in classroom sections	Operations/Mgt - decreased flexibility in schedule
CTR	-0.20	Library	Aligned to reduction in classroom sections	Operations/Mgt - decreased flexibility in schedule
CTR	-0.10	Art	Aligned to reduction in classroom sections	Operations/Mgt - decreased flexibility in schedule
CTR	-0.10	PE	Aligned to reduction in classroom sections	Operations/Mgt - decreased flexibility in schedule
WS	-0.20	Library	Aligned to reduction in classroom sections	Operations/Mgt - decreased flexibility in schedule; reduction in technology instruction.
WS	-0.10	Art	Aligned to reduction in classroom sections	Operations/Mgt - decreased flexibility in schedule
WS	-0.10	PE	Aligned to reduction in classroom sections	Operations/Mgt - decreased flexibility in schedule
ELEM	-2.20	Math Resource Teachers (.70 CTR/WS, .80 BBH)	Elimination of Elem Math Remediation & Resource	Possible increased SPED referrals/lower MCAS - AYP; Reduced RTI
ELEM	-1.50	Reading Asst. (.5 FTE at each school)	Reduction in Elem Reading Remediation & Resource	Possible increased SPED referrals/lower MCAS - AYP; reduced RTI; Increased Reading Specialist tasks with resulting reduction in Reading Specialist's services
ELEM	-3.25	Kindergarten Asst. (1.00 at CTR, WS, 1.25 @ BBH)	Reduction in classroom support at K	Reduction in differentiated instruction; Reduced RTI and PLC; Reduced targeted early intervention; possible increase in 1st grade referrals
ELEM	-0.75	Part-time Secretary (.25 at each school)	Reduction in office and student support	Reduced support for safety, security; reduced data reporting; increased administrative tasks
ELEM	0	Discretionary Budget (\$2,500 from each school)	Reduction in supplies & resources	Reduced support for curriculum & enrichment
ELEM	-4.50	Classroom Teachers (1.5 BBH, 1CTR, 2 WS)	Higher class size	Higher class size; reduction in differentiated instruction; reduced RTI and PLC; Possible increased SPED referrals
<b>Total Elem FTE:</b>	<b>-14.30</b>			

### Elementary Staffing Reductions

The 14.3 staffing reductions listed above include the elimination of 4.5 classroom teachers, which will result in higher class sizes. The specific grade reductions will not be identified until late May when more accurate enrollment data is available. If appropriate, we will make further staffing decisions at that time and again during the summer if enrollment at the primary grades is significantly altered.

As the Longmeadow school department has made budget and staffing reductions over the last decade, the elimination of elementary instrumental and choral music has repeatedly been proposed, but not implemented. The proposal focuses on two major factors:

- o The desire to avoid increasing class sizes in the elementary classroom
- o The scheduling of instrumental and choral music as a "pull out program" does not affect the overall special subject curriculum (general music would still be offered to all elementary students).

Longmeadow is proud of all of its curricular programs. Besides our core subject offerings, we have outstanding k-12 programs in art, physical education, library, computer, and music. Introducing instrumental music and chorus in the upper elementary grades has provided a strong base for the district music program. Last year, the Administrative Team jointly decided, along with the Finance Subcommittee, to recommend that the reduction to elementary music be restricted to an elimination of grade 4 instrumental music in FY2010. Unfortunately, the extensive budget reductions required for FY2011 have resulted in the complete elimination of the pull-out instrumental and choral music program.

The .1 and .2 reductions in general music, art, physical education, and library will result from the reduction in classroom sections – requiring less special subject time.

The reduction of math resource teachers is made with significant reservation. These positions have provided valuable early intervention and elementary curriculum coordination. As indicated above, we are concerned about the impact on student performance and curriculum improvement.

The reductions of reading and kindergarten assistants are also proposed with much reluctance and concern about the impact on teaching and learning.

The elementary schools have long looked for an increase in secretarial support to assist with the many responsibilities related to daily operations as well as data collection and reporting. The proposed reduction will result in increased administrative responsibilities.

We sincerely regret the loss of the personnel that will result from these staffing reductions at the elementary schools.

### REDUCTIONS AT MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Location / Level	FTE	Eliminated Positions or Resources	Result	Impact
MIDDLE	-1.00	English teacher grade 7/8	Higher class size	Reduction in differentiated instruction; Reduced RTI and PLC; shared staff; reduced effectiveness of team structure/student support
MIDDLE	-1.00	Science teacher grade 7/8	Higher class size	Reduction in differentiated instruction; Reduced RTI and PLC; shared staff; reduced effectiveness of team structure/student support
MIDDLE	-1.00	Social Studies teacher grade 7/8	Higher class size	Reduction in differentiated instruction; Reduced RTI and PLC; shared staff; reduced effectiveness of team structure/student support
MIDDLE	-1.00	Math teacher grade 7/8	Higher class size	Reduction in differentiated instruction; Reduced RTI and PLC; shared staff; reduced effectiveness of team structure/student support
MIDDLE	-2.00	Math Intervention teacher	Elimination of Middle School Math Remediation & Resource	Increased SPED referrals/lower MCAS – AYP; Reduced RTI
MIDDLE	-1.00	Foreign Language teacher (GBK)	Higher class size	20% reduction in instructional time
MIDDLE	-0.50	Music teacher (.25 at each school)	Elimination of middle school orchestra	Negative impact on districtwide music program
MIDDLE	-1.00	Secretary (.5 at each middle school)	Reduction in office and student support	Reduced support for safety, security; reduced data reporting; increased administrative tasks
<b>Total Middle School FTE:</b>	<b>-8.5</b>			

### Middle School Staffing Reductions

At the middle school level, the proposed staffing cuts are a reduction from 3 to 2.5 teachers of seventh and eighth grade English, math, science, and social studies, at each school. This would mean a reduction from 6 to 5 sections of each course, at both grades seven and eight, at each school. Average class size at grade 7 would increase from 22.2 to 26.6, and average class size at grade 8 would increase from 19.9 to 23.9. The eight half-time teaching positions created by this cut would most likely be converted to four 1.0 FTE positions by creating traveling positions where teachers would teach half a day at each school.

This new “shared” team would require a schedule overhaul at both buildings. While the impact would be felt at Williams, the impact at Glenbrook would be much more significant. At Glenbrook, the long standing practice of “looping” or having grade 7 and 8 students remain with the same group of teachers for both years would probably need to be discontinued. These reductions would also significantly impact teacher collaboration time. With the continued focus this year on essential learning outcomes, common assessments and differentiating instruction, much of the team meeting time has been used for this work. The reduction in staffing and the change in schedules will greatly reduce the two schools’ ability to sustain this work.

The need for further reductions at the middle school level resulted in the elimination of a 1.0 FTE foreign language position at Glenbrook, which will decrease learning time in French and/or Spanish. The loss of math intervention teachers will mean the termination of a program that has demonstrated strong success in assisting students who struggle in math. The music reduction will mean the elimination of orchestral music instruction at the middle school level. The proposed reductions in secretarial support will result in increased administrative responsibilities.

As with the other staffing reductions, the lost personnel represented by these cuts will take a personal and collective toll on our middle schools and are highly regrettable.

## REDUCTIONS AT LHS

Location / Level	FTE	Eliminated Positions or Resources	Result	Impact
LHS	-1.00	Business	Reduction in course offerings, electives, and/or increase in class size.	Possible negative impact on NEASC status.
LHS	-1.00	Foreign Language	Reduction in course offerings, electives, and/or increase in class size.	Possible negative impact on NEASC status.
LHS	-1.00	Math	Reduction in course offerings, electives, and/or increase in class size.	Possible negative impact on NEASC status.
LHS	-1.00	Science	Reduction in course offerings, electives, and/or increase in class size.	Possible negative impact on NEASC status.
LHS	-1.00	TBD	Reduction in course offerings, electives, and/or increase in class size.	Possible negative impact on NEASC status.
LHS	-1.00	Guidance	Increased case load for guidance counselors	Reduced guidance assistance; possible negative impact on NEASC status.
LHS	-1.00	PE	Reduction in p.e.	Reduced physical education and wellness for students
LHS	-0.40	Music	Reduction in course offerings and electives	Negative impact on districtwide music program
LHS	-1.50	Clerical	Reduction in office and student support	Reduced support for safety, security; reduced data reporting; increased administrative tasks
LHS	-0.40	Internal Suspension	Reduction in disciplinary options	Possible increase in external suspension
LHS		Graduation	Elimination of rental of Symphony Hall	Graduation returns to LHS
LHS		School Newspaper	Reduction in printing	Reduced circulation
LHS		Textbooks	Reduction in textbook replacement	Delay in updating of textbooks and curriculum
LHS		Furniture and Equip	Reduced funds for replacement of broken/damaged furniture/equipment	Negative impact on learning environment
LHS		Repair and Reconditioning	Reduced options for repair and replacement of damaged equipment	Negative impact on learning environment
LHS		Library Books	Reduced additions to library collection	Reduction in learning resources
LHS		Instructional Equipment	Reduced acquisition of classroom equipment	Reduction in learning resources
LHS		Stipends - Extra Curricular	Reduced extra curricular offerings	Reduction in enrichment opportunities for students
LHS		Plan Test	Reduction in career guidance tools	Reduced guidance assistance for students
<b>Total LHS FTE:</b>	<b>- 9.3</b>			

### High School Staffing Reductions

When Longmeadow High School was placed on “warning” by the New England Association Of Schools & Colleges, Inc. Commission on Public Secondary Schools (NEASC), the School Committee made great strides to address the need for a fuller academic schedule and more electives for the students.

For several years, the high school experienced budget and staffing increases in order to meet those standards. Last year’s budget challenges required that we make 3.0 staffing reductions at LHS, affecting the English, Social Studies, and Art departments. The massive budget reductions required for FY2011 have resulted in the elimination of another 9.3 positions at LHS, which will affect almost all remaining subject area departments. These reductions will affect the number of course offerings and electives, and/or result in an increase in class size.

Reduced staffing in the guidance department will reduce student services.

The proposed reductions in secretarial support will result in increased administrative responsibilities.

The decrease in internal suspension staffing will reduce disciplinary options and may result in an increase in external suspensions.

In order to achieve their budget reduction targets, LHS has also proposed significant decreases in their instructional and extra curricular resources.

These proposed reductions at LHS were not made lightly or without consequence. According to their "Substantive Change Policy," we are required by NEASC to notify them within 60 days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has a *negative impact* on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Among the 12 potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes that must be reported are the following relevant items:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services

We have attracted some very talented and highly respected educators to our high school. Losing these educators will diminish us.

### REDUCTIONS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

Location / Level	FTE	Eliminated Positions or Resources	Result	Impact
District		Other Admin Salaries	Reduction in salary adjustment lines for part-time staff and step increases	Reduced flexibility for contractually required salary adjustments
District		Long-term Substitutes	Reduction in line item for subs	Reduced ability to adjust to unexpected absences
District		Sub-nurses	Reduction in line item for nurse subs	Reduced ability to adjust to unexpected absences
District		Office Supplies - Admin	Reduction in line item for office supplies	Reduced ability to copy and print documents - will rely on more electronic communication; may not meet required office supply needs
District		Arbitration Expense	Reduction in line item for labor related legal expenses	May have deficit in account if arbitration-related legal expenses exceed line item
District		Furniture/Equipment - Admin	Reduced funds for replacement of broken/damaged furniture/equipment	Delay in replacement of broken/damaged furniture/equipment
District		Tuition - Collaborative	Reduction in line item for tuition	May have deficit in account if tuition expenses exceed line item
District		Advertising Expense	Reduction in line item for advertising (due to transfer to School Spring)	More cost efficient advertising should prevent need for additional funds in this line item
District		Interschool Travel - Admin	Reduction in line item for interschool travel	May have deficit in account if interschool travel expenses exceed line item
ID		Stipends – Curriculum Directors/ Dept Heads	Elimination of Curriculum Coordinators, Asst. Curriculum Coordinators, District Mentor Coordinator	Failure to implement curriculum review cycle; reduced activities for curriculum improvement, instructional support, and PD; postponement of science textbook pilot; mandated activities to be taken over by Principals and Central Office staff.
ID		Professional Growth Courses	Reduction in PGC course offerings	Minimal PD; significant reduction in continuous improvement activities related to teaching and learning & educator enhancement.
ID		Professional Development Subs	Reduction in release time for PD & curriculum work	Failure to implement curriculum review cycle; reduced activities for curriculum improvement, instructional support, PD, PLC, and RTI
ID		Professional Development Contracts	Reduction in consultant-provided PD	Minimal PD; significant reduction in continuous improvement activities related to teaching and learning & educator enhancement.
ID		Instructional Supplies	Elimination of district funds for purchase of new textbooks	Delay in updating of textbooks and curriculum; postponement of science textbook pilot
PS	-1.00	ASD program at GBK	Elimination of in-district SPED program	Reduction in time that resource room teachers have to plan with general educators; training costs
PS	-0.50	ELL teacher	.5 FTE reduction in ELL teacher support	Reorganization of services to meet student needs
PS	-1.00	Pupil Services Teacher	Consolidation of in-district SPED program.	Higher class size in program designed to address student needs to small group setting
Tech	-0.75	System Admin Tech	Reduction in technology staffing	Reorganization of services to meet school & district technology needs
TBD	TBD	Possible additional District reduction	Additional reductions need to be identified	Reduction in services or program offerings
<b>Total District FTE:</b>	<b>- 3.25</b>	<i>NOTE: There may be additional staffing reductions in order to address the shortfall of \$131,130.</i>		

## Central Office and Pupil Services Reductions

Reduced staffing in Pupil Services will be achieved through the reorganization and/or consolidation of services to meet student needs, which may also result in higher class sizes.

Reductions in District Technology staffing will be achieved through reorganization of services.

Over the last 5 years, the Central Office has experienced a reduction of support staff from 5 to the remaining 2 administrative assistants. Pupil Services has reduced their support staff from 3.5 FTE to 2.75 FTE. During that same period, Central Office has assumed more responsibilities such as centralized registration and management of the substitute placement and attendance system. Reductions in stipended positions and school-based clerical positions will result in increased Central Office responsibilities for data collection and reporting. It was determined that any reduction in either district or school-based administration would jeopardize the safety and security of our schools and prevent compliance with mandated requirements for supervision and evaluation, building management, and instructional leadership.

The reductions proposed by Instructional Services will severely limit our ability to make instructional and curricular improvements and will required a cessation of Strategic Planning initiatives, including the curriculum review cycle. Central Office and building level administrators will be required to assume additional mandated responsibilities.

FY11 Districtwide Reductions	FTE Staffing Reductions	Budget Amount of FY11 Reductions
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>35.35*</b>	<b>\$1,855,484.54</b>

\* May be increased.

### Next Steps

After direction from the School Committee at their February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and updated financial information from the Town about state and local revenues, the Administrative Team and I will work on modifications to these initial DRAFT budget recommendations. It is our hope that the extent of the budget reductions will be lessened. After those modifications have been made, a copy of the complete budget narrative will be posted to the district web site.

The revised FY2011 budget will be presented to the public at the Budget Hearing on February 8<sup>th</sup> in the LHS Cafeteria at 7:00 p.m.

The School Committee will vote on the budget to be presented to the Town Manager at their meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup> or, if needed, at a Special School Committee meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

It is sincerely hoped that these budget reductions will be temporary and that the staffing and resources that enable our school district to excel will be restored in the not-too-distant future.