

Final Draft—4/8/05

**Wayland School Budget Presentation
Budget Hearing—April 11, 2005
Wayland Middle School**

Good evening everyone and thank you for coming to our School Committee budget hearing. First, let me introduce our administrative staff joining us this evening....Dr. Burton, Wayne Odgen, Joy Buhler, Doris Goldthwaithe, Mabel Reid-Wallace, Jean Tower, Charlie Ruopp, Alyson Mizoguchi, Charlie Schlegel, John Kavaleski, Cyndy Dunham, Debbie Bearse, Sue Abrams and Brad Crozier. Thank you all for your careful budget work and your time this evening.

I will begin with an overview of our Fiscal 06 budget. After I finish my presentation, I will turn the presentation over to Jeff Dieffenbach who will walk you through our override explanation. We will welcome your comments and questions.

The budget request of the town,\$27,379,743, provides for the operation of the Wayland Schools for the next fiscal year. This is an increase of \$1,470,541 or 5.68% above the current Fiscal 05 budget. The School Committee – and the approximately 3,000 students we serve – is grateful for the Town’s continuing support of the school system. This proposed budget is not excessive. It does, however, meet contractual and non-negotiable obligations, respects the current class size policy, and preserves core educational programs. The funds requested meet the Finance Committee budget guidelines that were given to us in February. This is a basics-only budget that will preserve the school system, its programs, and our commitment to high performance standards for students and staff alike The School Committee asserts that the proposed budget strikes a

proper balance between fiscal responsibility and the preservation of academic excellence throughout our schools.

For many years now, the School Committee has spoken of the need for adequate funds to ensure program quality and staff levels, while acknowledging the effects of shifting student enrollments and a community-wide desire to protect our district against fiscal uncertainties and reduced assistance from the state. This year, after an unusually lean budget year last year and extensive discussions with the Finance Committee, and in light of the state's reluctance to share revenues with many suburban communities, the School Committee decided that the budget's growth must be carefully managed. My fellow School Committee members and I believe that this strategy is wise and in the best long-term interest of our schools and the community in general. Thus, this budget does not contain many of the items and staff positions requested by our children's instructors. The School Committee, in agreement with Dr. Burton, ultimately reduced \$880,000 in administrator requests and increased offsets by \$300,000. Nonetheless, it is a sound budget and one that we, the School Committee, endorse.

Many of the important messages that the School Committee wishes to communicate to the Town are found in the School Budget Booklet, which was mailed to every household at the beginning of April.

My intent in the next few minutes is to highlight some of the significant issues that concern the School Committee. I also refer you to the budget booklet's introductory message and, in particular, to the questions and answers on pages 5-13, if you would like more detailed information about the schools' operation.

Due to the currently austere economic times, this budget contains both new and increased user fees, draws down various revenue accounts, and increases offsets for athletic fees, METCO, and our district's fee-based programs. You will find this information outlined on page 39 of the budget booklet. We have done this with reluctance, but deem it necessary to preserve existing programs throughout the district while still meeting the Finance

Committee guideline. By increasing our user fees, we are asking today's primary beneficiaries of the school system to shoulder a greater share of the town's financial burden. We think this is fair, and hope that it will be seen as a reflection of the school's true desire to keep faith with the broader Wayland community.

Now, let me review briefly what this level of budgeting provides.

#1--The budget will keep our core programs in kindergarten through twelfth grade intact.

#2--The budget provides for the operation of five schools with the same grade configuration, thus maintaining the fundamental stability of the school system.

#3--The Fiscal Year 2006 budget once again places a priority on quality educational programs for pupils throughout the system. In fact, a careful review of pages 14 and 15 in the budget booklet will show that the vast majority of school funds are used in support of daily instruction and direct services to our children. We believe that the percentage of the school budget allocated to instruction is proper and maintains our desired emphasis on student opportunities and performance outcomes.

#4--To ensure quality programs, the School Committee continues to place great budgetary emphasis on personnel as outlined on page 15: the quality and sufficiency of the professional staff, appropriate levels of non-certificated staff support, and the continual training and professional development of our certified instructors are a priority of this budget. Schools are a labor-intensive enterprise and, thus, a quality school system like Wayland must have sufficient staff and must be able to attract and retain personnel of high caliber. As was true last year, approximately 82% of the school budget is spent on district personnel.

#5--Overall, we anticipate a stable student enrollment with a net gain of two students. We project that both the elementary and middle school enrollments will be down slightly. However, because of distribution of students in the various schools, two new elementary positions are needed to comply with the district's class size policy. At the high school, enrollment is expected to increase by 21 students. Two positions are added to the high school faculty

for the same reason, and two positions have been included to address critical academic needs and preserve our commitment to student services districtwide. We will also be replacing certified instructors who leave our employment for retirement or other reasons.

It is not known at this time what steps will be taken to correct the physical shortcomings of the High School. The immediate impact of the vote of the town in January is clear, and the School Committee will be considering the next step. Significant physical shortcomings continue to exist at the High School. The School Committee expects to present a new plan to the Town next year. Most likely, that plan will propose to move ahead with design plans in order to be able to apply for reimbursement, but subject to the constraint that no construction funds would be expended until reimbursement is approved.

Overall, our schools are operating well despite a very tight budget situation. The School Committee and staff appreciate the continued support of the voters in our efforts to oversee this district. Wayland's well-respected position in education has been attained through decades of careful development, planning and solid support from the Town. Throughout the entire educational reform movement, our schools have remained strong and vibrant. Our schools also enhance the quality of life in this community for most residents as well as the economic value of our real estate. The investment that our citizens have made in the Wayland schools has served them and their children well, and has markedly enhanced the desirability of Wayland as a place to live.

The need for the proposed budget is immediate and real. Long ago, the School Committee developed a philosophy that trimmed operational and administrative services that were desirable, but deemed not strictly essential. All that remains for cutting is the instructional program and key personnel positions. At this time, such reductions would be ill advised, and it should be clear that they would adversely affect the quality of education that the town has come to expect from its schools. The upcoming Proposition 2 1/2 operational override of \$2.3M

will preserve this budget. If the town should deny passage of the override, the School Committee and administration will be faced with cutting \$1,518,987 from this budget. Residents of Wayland need to realize that removing this amount of money, or 5.5% of our proposed operating budget, cannot be accomplished without a meaningful loss of services and opportunities for the students of this town. Over 20 hours of administrative council time was spent carefully analyzing the budget and crafting a painful cut list that will be implemented should this override fail.

The School Committee has studied the requests of our administrators, not only at regular open meetings but at two special, open and publicized budget work sessions. We have also met with the Finance Committee. Based on our familiarity with the school system and acknowledging our need to monitor carefully the expenditure of community funds, the Committee voted a budget of \$27,881,368, less offsets of \$501,625 or a net of \$27,379,743 to be appropriated by the Town for Fiscal Year 2006. We respectfully request and recommend that the voters approve this school budget at Annual Town Meeting on April 28. Thank you for your attention as I framed our budget for you. Let me turn the program over to Jeff Dieffenbach who will walk you through our override presentation. Jeff will entertain questions, as will our committee members and our administrators in attendance this evening.

For the
WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Lori C. Frieling, Chair