

FY10 School Department Budget Approved

Damaging staff cuts could be lessened if BTU accepts wage freeze

On March 25th, the School Committee unanimously approved a FY10 budget of \$812.6M, a 2.5% reduction from the current FY09 budget of \$833.3M. Upon receiving an expected \$16.2M in federal IDEA and Title I funds for operations, the spending plan will increase to \$828.8M and the reduction will drop to 0.5%. The small budget-to-budget reduction does not reflect cuts that were made to absorb built-in spending growth for expenses such as salary and step increases (\$39.8M) and employee benefits (\$6.5M).

Approved BPS FY10 Budget	
In Millions	
FY09 Current Appropriation	\$833.3
FY10 Target: Feb 4th	\$786.9
% Cut FY09-FY10 Superintendent's Budget	-5.6%
Mayor's Increase to Target Approved FY10 Budget	\$25.7 \$812.6
% Cut FY09-FY10 Approved Budget	-2.5%
One-Time Recovery Funds Expected FY10 Spending Plan	\$16.2 \$828.8
% Cut FY09-FY10 Expected Spending	-0.5%

The severity of the School Department's budget reduction was limited by the Mayor's decision to increase the FY10 budget appropriation by \$25.7M to \$812.6M. The increase was awarded after it was determined that collective bargaining and state and federal obligations would require \$20.5M of the \$21.6M in proposed spending cuts to be restored.

The School Department will also receive approximately \$30M in federal recovery funds in FY10, of which \$16.2M will be applied to general operations to restore 200 positions. Positions propped up with these one-time funds will need new revenues to be sustained when the recovery funding stops in two years.

The \$828.8M spending plan will cut the current workforce by 6.1% or 536 positions. Without recovery funds, the School Department would have had to cut over 700 positions. Central and student support services were cut heavily to minimize reductions in classrooms. The administrative (-91), instructional aide (-90) and secretarial positions (-28) that support the classroom were reduced as were custodial, safety, and technical positions (-95).

Teacher reductions (-193), achieved through 134 layoffs, eliminating vacant positions and attrition, represent 35.9% of the total position reduction. The additional resources provided to the School Department will make the FY10 teacher reduction less painful than when local aid was last cut. In 2003, teachers represented 397 positions or 62% of a 640-position cut.

The savings from the layoff of 134 teachers and 78 instructional aides is comparable to the savings that would be achieved if the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) agreed to a one-year wage freeze. If the BTU agreed to the freeze, the School Department could ensure that no teacher or aide in good standing would be laid off.