



BERLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

238 KENSINGTON ROAD □ BERLIN, CONNECTICUT 06037-2648
OFFICE (860) 828-6581 □ FAX (860) 829-0832

MICHAEL T. CICCETTI, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT
OF SCHOOLS

RENA P. KLEBART
ASSISTANT
SUPERINTENDENT

MARGARET A. BUTLER
DIRECTOR OF PUPIL
PERSONNEL SERVICES

ROMAN J. CZUCHTA
DIRECTOR OF
BUSINESS OPERATIONS

JOSEPH J. COSTA
DIRECTOR OF
HUMAN RESOURCES

April 6, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am writing to update you on the status of the 2009-10 Board of Education Budget.

Town Budget Hearing: The date for the Berlin Town Council's annual Town Budget Hearing is set for **Tuesday, April 7, 2009, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at McGee Middle School.** (It was originally scheduled for April 14, but moved a week earlier due to the April vacation.) Both the Town and Board of Education budgets will be presented that evening, after which any Berlin resident may offer comments on either budget. The Town Council welcomes input from the community, most especially this year given the economic challenges.

Board of Education Budget: In early January, I presented the Superintendent's Proposed Budget to the Board of Education. Recognizing challenging local, state and national economic conditions, my proposed budget reflected a **4.48% increase**; the lowest requested increase in more than ten years. The budget did not include any requests for new staff or programs. It contained the essential elements needed to maintain the district's continuous improvement work, especially in support of our struggling learners.

I emphasized with the Board that this budget was merely a starting point in a long process and was based on whatever information was available in early January. In early February, the Board of Education adopted a budget reflecting a **3.34% increase**, 1.14% - or \$406,700 - less than the Superintendent's budget. Even with savings from more favorable insurance rates, this reduction required reductions in supplies, materials, textbooks, conferences, professional development, substitutes, clubs, and co-curricular athletics. The Board's budget was then sent to the Town Council.

After several positive and collaborative meetings with the Town Council's Finance Committee and with the town manager, the Town Council voted to reduce the Board of Education's budget from a 3.34% increase to a **2.0% increase.**

The 2.0% Budget Increase: In order to reduce the Board of Education budget from a 3.34% increase to a 2.0% increase, **approximately \$480,000 will need to be eliminated.** The Board's Resources Committee and administration have begun identifying possible areas for reduction. Listed below are areas that will be recommended to the full Board of Education *for consideration* at their April 13 meeting. The Board will not finalize its budget until the Town Council communicates a final dollar amount, which typically occurs in mid-May. The areas listed below will certainly impact the quality of the instructional and co-curricular programs we provide for students. They will not, however, totally eliminate any programs.

Certified staff (teachers, human resources director*)	\$191,000
* position to be shared with Town Hall	
Non-certified (paraprofessional, custodian, clerical)	150,000
Supplies, materials, textbooks	70,000
Co-curricular (clubs and athletics)	60,000
Diesel gas, savings from contract	25,000
Grant for additional Open CHOICE Students	22,500

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I encourage you to attend the Town Budget Hearing on **Tuesday, April 7**, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at McGee Middle School so that you can learn more about the Town and Board of Education budgets as well as share with the Town Council any thoughts you have on either budget.

I assure you the Board of Education and administration are working very hard to navigate this challenging budget season. Please contact me at 828-6581 should you have any questions or wish to discuss any aspects of the budget process.

As always, I am very grateful for your support of our efforts to provide the highest quality education for your child. I extend my very best wishes to your family for this holiday weekend and for the vacation week.

Sincerely yours,

Michael T. Cicchetti

Michael T. Cicchetti, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

/MTC

