

**Methuen Public Schools  
Office of the Superintendent**



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Methuen Public School District Wide Staff

FROM: Dr. Jeanne C. Whitten, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: March 29, 2010

**SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMORANDUM**

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This is the second in a series of memoranda which is intended to keep all informed relative to the city's fiscal situation and its impact on our school budget. As I stated in memorandum #1, "We believe that the FY 2011 budget process could be particularly difficult given the information that has been relayed to the School Committee in public Session."

At this meeting Senator Steven Baddour, Representative Linda Dean Campbell and Representative Barbara L'Italien outlined what they believe to be structural problems in the Governor's proposed budget. It was their strong belief that the Governor's budget is inflated.

Their opinion mirrors a concise quote from the Daily Hampshire Gazette of February 23<sup>rd</sup>. "Local aid, the money the state pays to cities and towns, has fallen by 381 million since FY '09, according to the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, a think tank. Yet the Governor's proposal to level fund local aid has been met with skepticism by legislators, who contend that Patrick relies on uncertain revenue streams to pay for the program."

According to the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center the problems for Massachusetts have become more critical in the last two years. "While Massachusetts has struggled with structural budget problems for over a decade, the acute problems of the last two years have been caused by a national recession more severe than any downturn since the Great Depression. Across the country, this recession has led to state budget gaps of close to 200 billion in 2010 and 180 billion in 2011."

Given the realities that we now face, in light of the best information available, the School Committee and this administration has committed itself to maintain current levels of service and staffing. In order to maintain this commitment it is necessary to ask for concessions from all individuals associated with the Methuen School community. The realities of today's economy are well known and their ramifications cannot be ignored.

As we progress through the budget process we will present the specifics of this crisis as they are presented to us. It is the hope of this School Committee and administration that a clear, accurate exchange of information is the surest way for us to collectively weather this economic storm.