



Fall River Public Schools

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NEWS RELEASE

Fall River Superintendent presents budget proposal for 2011-2012 school year

*\$86.3 million proposal maintains current level of service
to support the district's academic priorities*

FALL RIVER, MA – Fall River Public Schools Superintendent Meg Mayo-Brown today presented a budget proposal to support the district's academic priorities for the 2011-2012 school year.

The \$86.3 million proposal represents a “level service” budget, meaning it covers the increased cost of doing business to maintain the current level of programs and services. Superintendent Mayo-Brown emphasized that any allocation lower than the requested amount would require reductions in staff.

“This budget proposal calls for continued investment in high-quality teaching and learning to ensure the success of all students,” said Superintendent Mayo-Brown. “We are committed to providing schools and classrooms with the resources required to meet the needs of children and families.”

The budget proposal submitted to the Fall River School Committee for fiscal year 2012 requests a \$2 million increase over the current budget. The Superintendent attributes the increased need to several major factors:

- Contractual salary increases for teachers and other staff, as outlined in collective bargaining agreements (\$800,000);
- Loss of short-term federal stimulus funds awarded to the district in each of the past two years (\$800,000);
- Additional investment in the redesign of Viveiros Elementary School (\$400,000).

As the School Committee reviews the budget proposal, district leaders will continue to work with City officials to determine the level of resources available from local, state and federal funding sources.

School Committee Vice-Chair Mark Costa, who Chairs the Finance Subcommittee, said, “I am in full

support of the proposed FY12 School Department budget. I understand the challenging fiscal times that the city of Fall River is facing. However, it is my responsibility to advocate for adequate educational funding to ensure that the progress the district has made through the recovery plan is sustained. The success of our city depends on our ability to improve public safety, increase property values, and attract innovative new businesses. The key to ensure that happens is in making a financial commitment to fully support and accelerate the progress we have made in education.”

Investments in Fall River Public Schools’ education reform initiatives have enabled schools to improve academic performance, including cutting the dropout rate in half and increasing the four-year graduation rate by nearly 12 percent.

The Superintendent also noted that the district has adopted a number of measures to manage school finances more effectively, including:

- Opening of the Stone Therapeutic Day School this year, reducing costly out-of-district tuitions by serving middle school students with emotional and behavioral disabilities in district, with expected annual savings of \$200,000; and
- Revamping the district’s approach to annual budget estimates for personnel, accounting for unanticipated mid-year vacancies, with an annual cost savings of \$1 million.

The Superintendent added, “In this challenging economic environment, we must be both prudent and creative in order to provide classrooms with the resources they need to deliver a first-rate public education to the families of Fall River.”

The School Committee will hold a public hearing about the proposed budget on Wednesday, May 18, 6:00 p.m., at B.M.C. Durfee High School Auditorium, 360 Elsbree St. Superintendent Mayo-Brown is sending a letter to all families and staff, summarizing and inviting public comment on the budget proposal.

Fall River Public Schools serves nearly 10,000 students in 16 schools and employs approximately 700 teachers. For more information, visit www.fallriverschools.org and follow @frpsinfo on Twitter.

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