

Poultney Town School District Budget 2016

It is budget time again and the Poultney Town School District Board of Directors would like to invite all interested parties to an early pre-budget setting forum on January 6, 2015 at 6:00 PM Poultney High School Library.

The purpose of this special meeting is to discuss with the public the budget being proposed, the reasoning behind the budget, answer questions pertaining to the budget, and to receive and give information to the taxpayers, parents, families that our schools effect.

The school board is interested in talking with the public about the budget process, constraints and options we have as to the funding of schools. Creating a budget for our schools is not always an exact science. We have some known facts and other factors that are best estimates. This happens because the timing of determining a budget and decisions on outside funding sources happen at different times.

At this point in time while we have a negotiated teacher contract that will take us through the next 3 years that give us a set of known facts, there is also much uncertainty about the legislative discussions and decisions that are being considered. Things like the tax rate (proposed at a \$.02 increase), the state base education rate (estimated at \$9459 per pupil), or grants that we rely on to provide much needed program assistance and professional development.

How Vermont's Education Fund has evolved and is used is a highly useful piece of information that is complicated and challenging to understand. We hope to provide some clarity for taxpayers how they provide the needed services that go well beyond the classroom staples of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The human service layer that is a critical piece of the wellbeing and growth of every child and the increase in needs has grown in many areas. The responsibility and cost of providing those services, which is mandated, has burdened our budgets as schools have become the providers of these services. This needs understanding by all. We know this part of the conversation should be crucial to the discussion revolving around reforming funding by the legislature but for the time being it is critical for all voters, taxpayers, parents, and families to also understand the needs so they may be informed of the approach we are required to take to provide for the needs of all students in our community.

Numerous articles and media presentations have been put forth over the past year or more painting a grim picture of education in Vermont. We want you as taxpayers to understand what the real picture is in our community and how decisions being made in Montpelier affect our community at the local level. We want to do this before the critical pressure of town meeting is upon us so that you can be well informed before it is time to go to the polls in March.

We encourage you to come out to this important forum so that we may discuss with you our budget and process of how we get there.

When: January 6, 2015

Where: Poultney High School Library -- 6:00 PM

Thank you for your attention and we hope to see you there.

School Board Directors, Poultney Town School District