

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Happy New Year! I am pleased to report that, with a change in last year's state legislation, the BOE approved a SHS graduation date of Friday, June 12, 2020. We can only hope the weather will cooperate with no more snow days and the rest of our students can complete the school year on June 15, 2020.

As we start the new year, we initiate our annual budget process. For your convenience, our [BOE Budget website](#) offers a timeline of the budget process on its main page and a printable schedule of upcoming budget meetings. As budget presentations are made to the BOE they will be posted on the budget website.

During a discussion at our December 10th Board of Education (BOE) meeting, I presented some information on the fixed costs that impact our budget, primarily salaries and insurance. The increase in fixed costs total a 3.26% increase over the current budget. With reductions, due to five certified staff retirements, the overall percentage lowers to 3.08%. Enrollment increases may result in the need for upward of 3 additional teachers.

The Board of Finance (BOF) has provided the BOE and the Board of Selectmen (BOS) with a guideline as we prepare our budgets. At the December 3rd joint meeting, the BOF put forth a range of a 2.5% budget increase. Their objective is to keep the mill rate increase below 2%.

The primary responsibility of the BOE is to design budgets that maintain the quality of programs for students, and thus we will remain mindful of the balance that must be attained between our high standards for programs and fiscal responsibility.

Although the budget takes much of our time and attention over the next several months, we continue to work on the [School Facilities Master Plan & Reconfiguration Study](#). Later this month we will bring the Facilities and Enrollment Task Force together to review alternate options that will be developed by Tecton Architects based on feedback from the November public forum. The BOE Communications Committee has met to discuss creation of a community wide survey. We will also begin scheduling school and community meetings to garner further feedback as we work to identify the best plan for the future of our community, its schools, and the students we serve.

As we settle in to the rhythms of our work for a brand new year, I wish you all the best for a happy and healthy 2020.

Sincerely,

Matthew T. Curtis

Superintendent.