



Highlights from the Chester School Board

February 1st, 2023

Note: You can always find information on our [website](#) and don't forget to follow Chester Academy on [Facebook](#)!

The **2023 – 2024 School District Budget** has been finalized and the Chester School Board (CSB) and Chester Budget Committee are in agreement on the required funding to support the District in the 2023 – 2024 School year.

The Chester School Board (CSB) and Chester Budget Committee (CBC) are also in agreement on the provisions and the cost of the new three-year **Chester Educational Support Personnel Association (CESPA) Collective Bargaining Agreement**.

Please join us at Annual School District Meeting that will take place at Chester Academy on **March 8th, 2023 at 7:00 PM** to vote on these items.

The annual School District Report will be published (**online and in print**) and available on **February 22nd, 2023** which contains many of the details on each of these Warrant Articles.

A summary of the 2023 Warrant Articles:

Warrant Article #3:

The proposed District Fiscal Year 2024 School District Budget was approved by the CSB on December 7th and was delivered to the Chester Budget Committee in January for their review. The Board and the Budget Committee worked throughout January (an Overview Meeting with the Budget Committee on **January 9th, 2023** then a Working Meeting with the Budget Committee on **January 23rd, 2023**) followed by a final meeting on **January 30th** where both sides agreed on the final figures and total appropriation amount.

Next up will be the Chester Budget Committee's **Public Hearing on the School District Budget** and associated Warrant Articles on **February 6th, 2023 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall**.

The proposed **School District Budget** for 2023 – 2024 will require that the legislative body raise and appropriate the sum of **\$14,659,959** which is an increase over the prior year of **\$644,701** or **4.60%**.

The projected Tax Impact associated with the appropriation of **\$14,659,959** to support the Proposed 2023 – 2024 Budget is **\$1.039** per thousand dollars of assessment. For a home assessed at **\$450,000** dollars this would result in an impact of **\$467.55** per year, or **\$8.99** per week.



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The School District Budget for 2023 – 2024 will be presented to the voters as **Warrant Article #3** at Annual School District Meeting.

Warrant Article #4:

In November, the Board completed negotiations with the **Chester Educational Support Personnel Association (CESPA)** on a new three-year **Collective Bargaining Agreement**.

(Note: CESPA personnel provide Paraprofessional services for our Special Education Students.)

- This agreement represents both an increase in wages and expanded healthcare benefits in compliance with the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
- A summary of the changes and the costs were provided to the Chester Budget Committee for consideration as part of the overall FY 24 Budget review process.
- The amount required to fund this agreement is not included in the proposed School District Budget as it requires the independent approval of the legislative body at the School District Meeting.
- As a result, it will be presented to the voters as a separate Warrant Article at the School District Meeting.

The approval of the tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2023 – 2026 will require that the legislative body raise and appropriate the sum of **\$236,023.91** which would result in an increase to the proposed District Budget in Warrant Article # 3 of **1.92%**.

The projected Tax Impact associated with the appropriation of **\$236,023.91** to support the year-one cost of the proposed Collective Bargaining Agreement is **\$0.318** per thousand dollars of assessment. For a home assessed at **\$450,000** dollars this would result in an impact of **\$143.10** per year, or **\$2.75** per week.

Note: The combined projected Tax Impact of the proposed Budget and the Collective Bargaining Agreement if both are approved is **\$1.357** per thousand dollars of assessment. For a home assessed at **\$450,000** dollars this would result in a total impact of **\$610.65** per year, or **\$11.74** per week.

The Chester Educational Support Personnel Association (CESPA) three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement will be presented to the voters as **Warrant Article #4** at Annual School District Meeting.



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Warrant Articles #6 & #7:

In addition, the Board will present **Warrant Article #6** which is a request to increase the balance of the existing **Boiler Replacement Capital Reserve Fund** created under the provisions of RSA 35:1 and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$20,000** to be placed in this fund. This amount would come from the fiscal year 2023 (FY23) unreserved fund balance (surplus funds) available for transfer on July 1st of this year. And **Warrant Article #7** to increase the balance of the existing trust fund known as the **Educating Disabled Children Fund** by the sum of **\$20,000** to be placed in this fund. The Educating Disabled Children Fund was established in March 2008 under the provisions of RSA 35:1. This amount would come from the fiscal year 2023 (FY23) unreserved fund balance (surplus funds) available for transfer on July 1st of this year.

There will be **no tax impact** in Fiscal Year 2024 associated with either of these Warrant Articles.

Warrant Article #8:

Warrant Article 8 represents a request to see if the Legislative Body will vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to increase the amount retained from year-end unassigned general funds in an amount not to exceed, in any fiscal year, **five percent (5%)** of the current year's net assessment, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 198:4-b, II.

This amount is current set to a maximum of two and a half percent (2.5%). The monies in this fund balance can only be used for emergency expenditures and over-expenditures or to reduce the tax rate under RSA 32:11.

If approved, allowing for a larger Retained Fund Balance going forward, there will be **no tax impact** in Fiscal Year 2024 associated with this Warrant Article.

Summary:

The Chester School Board is ever mindful of our responsibility to fulfill your collective expectations to maintain a highly-effective team of professionals to educate Chester's students, as well as to ensure a stimulating, well-equipped and safe environment for learning while prudently managing the operations and finances of the Chester School District.

We encourage you to review these items and request your support of each of the 2023 – 2024 School District Warrant Articles (Warrant Article #3, Warrant Article #4, Warrant Article #6, Warrant Article #7, and Warrant Article #8) as presented to you.



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And finally, a word of appreciation

The Chester School Board would like to express their appreciation to the Superintendent, Finance Manager, Principal and the rest of the Chester Academy staff for their contributions and efforts to develop and deliver the 2023 – 2024 School District Budget.

Also, the Board would also like to recognize the work of the **Chester Budget Committee** as they devote many hours to reviewing and analyzing the School District Budget and then offering feedback and suggestions to the Board and Administrators. They play a critical role in the success of this process and the Board appreciates their insight and expertise in fiscal matters.

Chester School Board Upcoming Meetings:

Reminder: The Chester School Board typically meets on the [first Wednesday of the month](#) at 7:00 PM in the Media Center at Chester Academy.

The Chester Budget Committee will hold a **Public Hearing** on the School District Budget on **February 6th, 2023** at the Town Office building at **7:00 PM**.

The annual **Chester School District Meeting** that will take place at Chester Academy on **March 8th, 2023 at 7:00 PM**.

Town Elections will be held in the Multi-Purpose Room at 84 Chester Street, Chester, from 7:00am to 7:00pm on **Tuesday, March 14th, 2023**.

The next regular **Chester School Board Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 15th, 2023** with a start time of 7:00 PM.

The annual **Chester Town Meeting** will follow on **Thursday, March 16th, 2023**, in the Multi-Purpose Room beginning at 6:00pm.

Please note that the March Chester School Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **March 15th, 2023** with a start time of 7:00 PM. This is scheduled so as to follow the election for Town and School District Officers on **Tuesday, March 14th, 2023**.



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The public and our Chester Academy parents and families are welcome to attend our meetings and are encouraged to continue to provide feedback and comments to the Board and Administration at any time. (See contact information below.)

If you have general questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to any of your School Board members at any time. The e-mail contact information for each of the Board members is listed below as well as on the CSB website at: <https://ca.sau82.org/> under the tabs for SAU82 and Chester School Board.

Chester School Board Members:

Chair - Royal Richardson - richardsonr@chesteracademy.org

Vice Chair Jonathan Eckerman - eckermanj@chesteracademy.org

Sabrina Harris - harriss@chesteracademy.org

Brennan Holmes - holmesb@chesteracademy.org

Dana Theokas - theokasd@chesteracademy.org

SAU 82 contact information:

Phone: 603-887-1401 / Email: contact@sau82.org

Please note that 12 months of Chester School Board **Meeting Agendas** and approved **Meeting Minutes** are available online under the Minutes / Agendas Tab at: https://sau82.org/school_board/minutes_agendas