

May 2009 Spotlight on Education

Recently the Woodstock Board of Education finalized its budget for presentation at the annual town meeting on May 21st. After the town meeting, the town budget will go to a referendum vote on Thursday, May 28th. On that day, the polls at the town hall will be open from 12 p.m. until 8 p.m. The Woodstock Board of Education urges all Woodstock voters to grab a friend and vote! If the proposed budget does not pass at referendum on May 28th, we will be required to make additional cuts to an already bare-bones budget. Please come out to vote on May 28th!

Each year the Woodstock Board of Education strives to ensure progress towards our educational objectives while keeping in mind the realities of difficult budget constraints. For the last several years, as part of the budget process, the Board has asked the school administrators to identify a list of additional needs of a “good school.” This evaluation process and resulting list recognizes that there is a gap between the programs and resources that the town of Woodstock currently funds and those that would better prepare our students to perform and succeed in the 21st century. The following is the list that the administration prepared as part of the 2009-10 budget development process.

Direct Instructional Needs:

- Speech/Language Pathologist
- Special Education Teacher to meet No Child Left Behind Mandates
- Physical Education teacher to share between both the WES and the WMS
- WES Technology teacher
- 4 Foreign language teachers
- After school tutorial program
- 2 teacher assistants for Math remedial program

Indirect Instruction Needs:

- Increase Special Education secretary to full time
- Social Studies Coordinator
- Science Coordinator
- Assistant Principal to share between both the WES and the WMS
- Nurse clerk to share between both the WES and the WMS
- Technology network administrator
- Webmaster

Supplies

- Increase allotted per student supplies from \$31.40 to \$65

Textbooks

- Language Arts – supplemental materials to textbooks
- Foreign language textbooks

Media/Technology

- Increase volumes to meet needs and then annually grow the collection
- Purchase mobile laptop computer lab for WES
- Purchase 2 LCD projectors (1 per school)
- Purchase 52 Smartboards

Other

- Reinststate bus drivers for field trips
- Increase the two $\frac{3}{4}$ custodial staff to full time
- Increase the funding for professional development

The Woodstock Board of Education intends to evaluate how the administration's identified needs will better prepare students for the 21st century, and then prioritize those needs. The Board intends to explore strategies that address our objectives and high standards of student achievement by implementing these needs in the future, while still recognizing the current difficult economic reality. We welcome community input on the list of needs of a "good school" and how the items on this list might be prioritized. Please send your comments to asktheboard@woodstockschoos.net

District Highlight

The 4th annual Jog With Judy 5k road race held on May 2, 2009 was a phenomenal success. The weather was perfect for a road race and hundreds of people turned out to remember Judy Nilan, show support for the community and get some healthy exercise. In addition, the funds that the Jog With Judy road race generates, benefits numerous programs in the Woodstock school system that reflect Judy Nilan's efforts to create community and foster confidence and healthy living. Some of the programs that the funds raised from the 2008 Jog with Judy road race include:

- A unique 8-week after school self-empowerment program for girls called Girl Power that included the final goal of completing the 2009 Jog With Judy road race.
- The D.A.R.E. program for all 5th graders, which focuses on teaching students the life skills they need to avoid substance abuse and violence.
- "Ryan's Story" – a bullying and suicide prevention presentation by the family members of a young boy who committed suicide after experiencing cyberbullying.
- A day of team building for the 6th grade at Camp Woodstock.
- A presentation for Red Ribbon Week on stress management & healthy choices.
- Supplies for the Woodstock Elementary Physical Education Program.
- Student Leadership and Character Development training with Ed Gerety, a renowned leadership development speaker.
- A visit from Breath Express – a large camper that features large visuals on the physical effects of tobacco use.
- Staff stipends for development of Character Counts curriculum.
- Life skills/Health Class supplies and curriculum
- A community mixer.

These programs have tremendous value to Woodstock students and the larger community. Particular thanks to Woodstock Middle School teachers Chris Mayhew, Jennifer Prather and Susan Rioux who devote so much time and effort to making the race such an annual success!