

Frequently Asked Questions for the King Philip Budget 2017-2018

A Collection of Answers by a Parent's Advisory Group

What are the sources of revenue for King Philip?

The primary sources of revenue are Chapter 70 aid from the state (22.2%), member town's assessments (66.5%) and grants/revolving funds (11.3%).

How is the contribution from each town calculated?

The state determines that formula. There is a minimum contribution required from each town based on enrollment combined with other factors. For specifics, see the KP District website under the "Budget" section.

Who is on the school committee?

Each town elects two school committee members on a revolving basis, and a third is appointed by the town's Elementary District (current sitting school committee member). Information on current representatives is available on the KP District site.

Why are costs for Special Education so high this year?

Costs in this area are determined by the number of students and their specific educational needs (whether they can be met in-house, through a collaborative or require a private placement). Students age out of services at 22 years of age, but King Philip has no students aging out this year which has increased our costs.

Why are we cutting teachers? What about administrators, clerical staff or janitorial staff?

The current cuts/savings total \$1.7m in administrative and operational items, prior to looking at teaching staff.

Why not cut athletics or band before teachers?

Current fees for athletics and band help to offset these costs, so the total dollars cut would not be as beneficial as it might appear. The School Committee Finance Subcommittee just voted to raise these fees for the coming year.

What else has been cut before turning to classes and teachers?

Operating expenses have been reduced and updates to technology and other equipment have been deferred. DECA and student band lessons, which the school committee had voted to include in the budget last year, are being taken out for the coming year as academic requirements. Instead, students can pay for private lessons and the statewide DECA conference will not be mandatory.

How does the school determine which teachers will be cut?

Much of this is determined by union contracts and tenure, but the school also examines course requirements and who is certified to teach particular courses. It is a complicated process of moving teachers around to meet needs.

How is class size determined?

Size is determined by classroom capacity, course requirements, interest and scheduling. Current average class size at the High School is approximately 30 and at the Middle School is approximately 26-28.

Can we charge for bus fees?

No. The state does not allow regional schools to charge bus fees. The current formula only reimburses KP 65% of costs

for regular transportation (about \$500,000); late buses and Special Education transportation are not included in the reimbursement calculation.

Do we have excess Administrative and Clerical staff?

A MASBO Operational efficiency study indicated the current administrative staffing level is below expected levels. The recommendation was to add four staff members; added only one person to handle Human Resources and benefits. The district also reduced its clerical staff by 1.2 positions last year.

How is tuition paid for Tri-County, Norfolk Aggie and Charter Schools?

Tri-County and Norfolk Aggie placements come from the individual Town budgets. Tuition for charter schools is based on a funding formula from the state and is paid out of the school's budget. As of October each year, the money paid for tuition stays with the charter school even if the student decides to come back to King Philip during that fiscal school year.

What are Circuit Breaker Funds?

Any special education student with costs that exceed \$40,000 per year, the state reimburses the school by a certain percentage. This goes into a revolving fund for SPED costs. The school tries to reserve \$350,000 for emergencies (e.g., new students coming into the district or students moving to out-of-district placements.)

What are Excess & Deficiency Funds?

Excess & Deficiency funds (E&D) are unused dollars from the previous year's budget up to 5% of the combination of Operating and Debt Service budget for the new fiscal year. It must be certified by the state (in October) after the school's annual audit. These funds are generally used to support capital improvements but can also be used for operational costs as needed.

Can we have students take Virtual High School (VHS) classes in place of a study hall if no other classes are available?

Options for this are limited. King Philip can enroll no more than three students per class due to union requirements (i.e., reducing opportunities for teachers to teach a course). In addition, there is a required teacher to student ratio even for online classes.