

# Maine School Administrative District #49

41 West Street

Fairfield, ME 04937

207-453-4200

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## September 12th: Referendum Voting in area towns

<b>Town of Albion:</b> Albion Besse Building	<b>Town of Benton:</b> Benton Town Office
2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
<b>Town of Clinton:</b> Clinton Town Office	<b>Town of Fairfield:</b> Fairfield Community Center
12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

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*The questions and answers (Q&A) below are being provided by way of additional information for everyone regarding the 2019-2020 budget.*

**Q: What is the proposed MSAD#49 budget for the 2019-2020 school year?**

A: The proposed school budget for 2019-2020 is \$27,117,446.40.

**Q: Did the MSAD#49 board have priorities when creating the new budget?**

A: The boards priorities were to ensure students have a safe and healthy learning environment, adequate programming, a well-trained staff, as well as complying with Federal and State mandates and maximizing resources to create highly successful students.

**Q: How does the school district obtain funding for the schools? Is there an estimate of cost increase statewide?**

A: Public school funding is a mix of state and local funds. Each year the state determines the amount of subsidy (state share) they will contribute in order to meet the students' essential needs per district. The state also determines a required local (town) contribution. These calculations are based on many factors including the number of students, student-teacher ratios, property tax valuations for each municipality, the minimum required mil rate (8.28) and many other factors. The district determines the needs of the students and proposes a budget. By way of combining state subsidy, required

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local contribution, and other revenue then subtracting the proposed budget nets the difference yielding an increase/decrease to taxes.

For 2019-2020 based on statewide total cost of education, the Department of Education calculated a cost increase of 3.49% over the 2018-2019 school year. The MSAD#49 budget proposal increase is 2.34%.

**Q: How much will the school district receive in General Purpose Aid for the 2019-2020 school year? What is the actual tax amount required from the towns?**

A: The district will receive \$593,486 more in 2019-2020 than it did the prior year. That amount helped reduce the amount required by tax payers. The overall increase for 2019-2020 is \$662,143.28.

**Q: Did the MSAD#49 board reduce the budget after it failed to pass on July 23<sup>rd</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> budget)?**

A: Yes, it was reduced by \$250,834.53. This yields the lowest proposed budget in comparison to the first two. Article 2 consisting of Special Education was reduced by \$115,480 for one Special Education teacher based on current needs for the 2019-2020 school year and an Educational Technician that will be grant funded. Article 4 & 7 consisting of System & School Administration were reduced by \$53,854 combined by way of aligning the budget with changes in salaries and personnel benefits for the current year as well as adding \$10,000 expense incurred for referendum processing. Article 8 & 9 consisting of Transportation & Facilities Maintenance were reduced by \$81,500 combined. This amount included adjustments based on newly committed rate amounts for Natural Gas, Uniforms, as well as anticipated Electricity and flooring costs. \$7,500 of this amount was also removed for unplanned professional development in Facilities Maintenance.

**Q: Does the proposed school budget include increases to salaries of staff members?**

A: Yes, salary increases are included in employment contracts that are contracted and committed amounts for 2019-2020. Health Insurance increase for this year is 1.24%.

**Q: How is the Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) programs funded? Where is this program offered?**

A: Funding for Pre-K is mainly through a Federal Title I grant, but also general fund and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding support a portion. Title I grant funds for a Pre-K program must be used for the purpose of improving cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children.

Pre-K is offered in three schools this year: Fairfield Primary, Clinton Elementary, and Albion Elementary. These are offered through a partnership with Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP), a local Head Start agency.

**Q: Does the proposed school budget include changes to programming for students since the 2<sup>nd</sup> budget? Is Reading Recovery funded?**

A: The board reduced one Special Education teacher based on current needs for the 2019-2020 school year. The \$250,834.53 reduction does not change any programming or other staffing.

Yes, the Reading Recovery program is unchanged from last year. Most is funded by the Federal Title I grant.

**Q: How does the district compare in 2019-2020 with other districts by way of cost per student? What does cost per student mean?**

A: The 5 surrounding districts in central Maine per student costs are between \$13,758 - \$15,193. MSAD#49 cost is only \$12,969. Cost per student is defined as the amount it costs as an average to educate a student (budget total/enrolled students).

**Q: What is the estimated mill rate impact? What does mill mean?**

A: Albion, .82, Benton .91, Clinton .82, Fairfield .66.

Mill is the amount of tax payable per dollar of the assessed value of the property. For example, the town of Benton for this proposed budget it would mean an increase of \$91 total for the year for a \$100k home.

**Q: How does the district's budget increase in 2019-2020 compare to surrounding towns?**

A: The 5 surrounding districts in central Maine budget increases are between 2.86% - 4.51%. MSAD#49 proposed increase is only 2.34%.

**Q: What is the status of the new school construction project approved by the state?**

A: Fairfield Primary is currently #1 on the Maine Department of Education Priority list for Major Capitol School Construction Projects. The district should have more information by way of timeline and path forward during the 2019-2020 school year.

**Q: What type of State and Federal mandates must MSAD#49 comply with?**

A: Mandates include program and service requirements relating to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and compliance relating to the use of Title funds. Schools receiving Title funding must conduct a needs assessment, and funds must be dedicated to those identified needs. The district must also meet the requirements

set forth by Maine statute and the Department of Education relating to student academic progress and Response to Intervention, truancy, and chronic absenteeism.

**Q: Is there a cost to the district for holding an election?**

A: Yes, the cost is approximately \$10,000 each time a budget does not pass. This includes resource costs such as staff to hold the District Budget Meeting as well as facilities and staff costs during the Referendum along with printing of ballots.

**Q: Has the district made any commitments to cost savings over the last year?**

A: One area that has reduced cost for the district is reducing printing for various items throughout the district. For example, online tools such as Infinite Campus, School Dude, FamilyID, as well as streamlining processes to make registrations and day-to-day activities timelier and more cost effective.

**Q: Does the currently proposed budget support a great learning atmosphere in MSAD#49?**

A: Yes, the proposed budget provides an atmosphere that enables students to learn and grow. Resources included in the budget provide safe facilities, adequate technology products, supportive and innovative teaching, as well as a commitment to educating students to become college and career ready.

If you have any questions about the information above, please contact me directly.



Shawn Knox  
School Board Chair

**Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup> Voting:**

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