

Frequently Asked Questions about the Arlington Public Schools and the FY2011 Budget Challenge

What is the total budget for the Arlington Public Schools for the 2009-10 school year?

The approved budget for this school year is \$45,654,902.

What are the sources of revenue for the school district's budget? Please indicate how much revenue the schools receive from each source?

The School Committee approved the FY 10 (2009-10 budget), using the following revenue projections by source:

- **Town Revenue Contribution** **\$ 36,767,241**
- **Grants** **\$ 2,678,556**
- **Fees (including Circuit Breaker)** **\$ 4,195,750**
- **American Recovery Act (State Funds)** **\$ 914,028**
- **American Recovery Act (IDEA funds)** **\$ 749,327**
- **F-1 Visa Students** **\$ 100,000**
- **LABB Free Cash Distributions** **\$ 250,000**

What did we receive in state and federal aid for the 2009-10 school year? Please provide the allocation by category (e.g., Chapter 70, Unrestricted General Government Aid, Circuit Breaker, etc.)

Within the \$36,767,241 FY '10 allocation from the Town of Arlington is \$6,229,294 in Chapter 70 funds (funding from the state for public education in Arlington). Circuit Breaker was estimated at \$1,319,500, but actual amount is \$855,528. ARRA Funding was as predicted in the approved budget. An additional \$719,928 in ARRA IDEA (Special Education) funding was received during FY10 which had not been anticipated. The present plan is to use \$359,964 in FY10 and move the same amount forward into the FY11 budget.

When will we know what the FY 2011 level of state aid will be?

The Governor provided his recommendations to the state legislature at the end of January. By law, the legislature is required to pass a budget by June 30th for the following fiscal year. The Governor has proposed that legislators adopt a Local Aid Resolution by March 15.

We have heard that Arlington is receiving less state aid than the town did in 2002.

Arlington is one of 20 communities that receive less state aid than it did in 2002. Since 2002, the state changed the formula for distributing Chapter 70 and Additional and Lottery Assistance (now known as "Unrestricted General Government Aid").

What would the total budget be if the school department had a "level services budget" for the 2010-11 school year (e.g., offered the same services next year that we offer this year)?

Approximately \$48.1 million, assuming zero percent Cost of Living increases in faculty and staff salaries, and no increase in tuition rates for out-of-district special education placements.

What is the school department projecting it will receive in revenue from the town, state and federal government for the 2010-11 school year?

As of February 1, 2010, the school department is projecting the following:

- **\$38.3 million in revenue from the town**
- **\$2.2 million in grant revenue**
- **\$3.25 million in fees (current fee revenue of \$2 million, \$550,000 in new fees, and \$700,000 in Circuit Breaker reimbursements)**
- **\$350,000 in IDEA funding**
- **\$44,100,000 Total**

An estimated \$6.8 million shortfall was presented to the School Committee on January 12, which has since been revised downward. Some have suggested a best case that is significantly lower. What is the best case deficit?

If the Governor's local aid budget numbers hold, the deficit could be as low as \$4 million, which is our current estimation.

Why is the school department facing such a large budget deficit for the 2010-11 school year?

All revenue projections, including the Governor's proposed budget, are down 3% from the FY10 approved budget, the "standing still" growth rate (whereby we keep operating the way we're currently operating) is 5-6%.

Please detail the fee per student for various non-core programs (e.g., sports, all-day kindergarten, etc.) and the total amount of revenue from these fees.

Fee	Amount per student	Family Cap	Total FY '10 Approved Budget Fee Revenue
All Day Kindergarten	\$2,400	Sliding fee scale	\$766,500
High School Athletics	Varies by sport	\$850	\$178,550
Instrumental Music	\$425	\$850	\$120,000
Field Usage	Varies		\$10,000
Facilities Rental	Varies		\$315,000
Total From Budget			\$1,390,050
Total Projected Amount	As of 2/1/10		\$1,317,381

Will the School Committee survey parents to see if they would support an increase in fees? If so, when will the survey take place?

Yes. The Budget Subcommittee anticipates conducting a survey in late February to inform discussions on fees that will take place in March.

What is Arlington's cost per student and how does it compare to neighboring communities such as Belmont, Lexington, and Winchester (please provide the specific cost per student for each community)?

Cost per student information can be found on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Please see http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/schfin/statistics/function08_detail.aspx?ID=010 for more information. The most updated figures are for FY 08, as which time Arlington's cost per student (\$11,685) was less than the state average (\$12,449).

How much money will the Arlington Public Schools spend on special education for the 2009-10 school year, including the total costs to the district of out-of-district placements and the cost of special education services provided in-district?

The school department budgeted \$5,612,047 for out-of-district placements; however, estimates indicate our actual out of district expenses for FY10 will be close to 6,100,000. This does not include Transportation costs. Total budget for FY10 Special Education, less out-of-district tuition, totals \$9,162,525, for a combined Special Education FY10 budget of \$14,774,572.

How many students do our special education programs serve? What percent of our student body does this represent?

Our 2009-2010 student body (PK-12) was 4,848, of whom 18% (885 students) received special education services.

Is there a contractual, District or State limit on class sizes or the ratio of adults to children that must be in a classroom?

No. The teachers' contract has suggested class sizes, but the contract does not bind the district or the teachers to maximum class sizes.

How much can kindergarten tuition fees be increased?

Fees can cover the difference between the cost of all-day kindergarten and the grant the town receives for the program. Under the terms of our current grant, the fee could be increased by as much as \$600 per child without compromising our kindergarten grant eligibility.

When will we see some specific scenarios for cuts to programs and teachers?

Starting in late February and continuing through April, detailed proposed budgets will be presented and discussed.