



FBRC Plus Gap Analysis – Fairhaven Public Schools

As a result of the the 1993 Foundation Formula Budget, educational and financial gaps are very much so apparent in the Fairhaven Public School District. Below is each gap that exists within our District and a brief explanation of what it means to FPS.

Foundation Formula Gap

The significant gap between the actual expenditures in health insurance and special education between the proposed legislation in House 1 for changes to the foundation budget calculation for FY 20. Fairhaven is underestimated for health insurance and special education by \$2,863,674.00 **using the proposed legislation in House 1 for changes to the foundation budget calculation for FY 20.**

Town Funding Gap

Beginning with the economic downturn in 2009, many communities were forced to make financial decisions that created a “new normal” for school districts. Any reduction to the level service request has resulted in the elimination of educational programs, re-structuring, and reductions in force. Our school department’s ability to absorb budget reductions beyond our level service budget request no longer exists. The funding gap between the town appropriation and our level service request for FY 20 is \$442,247. The funding gap is primarily in Out of District Tuition and Special Education Transportation.

Out of District Tuition/Special Education Transportation

Our out of district actual costs continue to increase. However, our circuit breaker offset has decreased from 779,741 to 235,633 in five years. As a result, the impact of out of district expenditures to the regular town appropriated budget continues to increase considerably.

Transportation of special education students is a budgetary item that has increased from \$419,536 in FY 2014 to a projected \$839,233 in FY 2020. All special education transportation services must be provided, as

they are legally required, however, they are not found in the dated 1993 formula.

Generation Gap

Over and above health insurance and special education costs, level service dollars are being diverted from instruction to deal with the onslaught of behavioral issues that occur in our schools. The current environment that exists within our schools today is exponentially more complex than the issues that took place one generation ago. The components that make up the current foundation formula of 1993 are not the realities that take place in the educational system of 2020.

Children affected by trauma are displaying actions that require an immediate increase of adult services. Within the past five years, we have re-apportioned classroom teacher budgeted dollars to behavior interventionist, school psychologist and social workers/adjustment counselor positions. Our school district is often expected to "fill the gaps" that have been created by other systems failures. A family's inability to access wrap around services due to insurance restrictions, as well as, community partners who are unwilling to contribute their fair share of resources limits the service provided to high risk students and families. Stakeholders and community partners continually look to school districts to be the "primary", if not the "sole" provider for student needs, especially those with high needs.

Adolescents are asked to deal with the exponential growth of social media and external stimuli whether they are developmentally ready or not. The ramifications of this societal condition, causes our faculty and staff to consistently address issues of anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation in our student population. We cannot even get to instruction if our students are not socially and emotionally well, and more often than not, this responsibility falls solely on our schools.

Equity Gap

The substantial gap that exists between the communities that can and do spend above the foundation formula and those communities that cannot or do not has created the haves and the have nots. Today, the average district is spending approximately 26% above foundation. There are about 160 communities that spend at or near foundation levels. Boston Magazine publishes the highest achieving schools on an annual basis. The methodology utilized for this publication ranks 150 public high schools in towns or districts within, or partially within I-495. The range of the top 20 performing non-regional high schools spends between 126.3% and 25.5% above net school spending with an average of

62.7% above net school spending. The term funding gap is consistent with a ruling that just occurred in Connecticut where it was stated that, “rich districts flourish and poor districts flounder.” All communities are measured utilizing the same statewide accountability system. However, we cannot claim that a race to educational achievement is fair if the participants begin from such diverse starting points.