



It's About Learning

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From Tracy Wrend Superintendent Elect

Traditionally, the winter edition of *It's About Learning* has focused upon providing information on the upcoming school budget requests that communities will consider on Town Meeting Day. This edition will continue that tradition and includes two page summaries of budget information for Elmore, Morristown, and Stowe including information on the impact of Act 68 on the tax request in each town.

There has been extensive discussion across the state of Vermont regarding the cost of public education and the impact upon local taxes. Although news for some, affordability is not a new subject in LSSU; we have been paying close attention to it for a long time. Elmore's spending per equalized pupil was among the lowest in the state in 2007-2008, ranked 245th of 251 Vermont school districts, with 1 being the highest and 251 being the lowest. Similarly, Morristown ranked 231st of 251 Vermont school districts in terms of equalized per pupil spending in 2007-2008, in the bottom 8% compared to other districts in Vermont. Stowe's average budget increase over the past 10 years is 3.89%. This compares favorably to the recent statewide trend where budget increases range from 6.6% in 2004-2005 to 4.1% for the 2007-2008 school year. The Boards of Directors serving each of the communities of Lamoille South Supervisory Union have been sensitive to the impact school budgets have on their communities and have always presented fiscally responsible budgets that balance the instructional needs of students with community affordability. This year's budget requests are a continuation of that trend.

The fact that we continue to be able to offer responsible budgets that support essential instructional programs is a testament to the diligence of each board. Budget constraints that School Directors have little or no control over drive significant portions of school budgets; rising fuel and utility costs, increasing health insurance rates, and federally mandated services take increasing resources from the total budgets in each town. Recent legislation places further controls on School Directors by imposing a statewide calendar, setting spending benchmarks, and imposing two vote provisions for some towns in upcoming school years.

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Elmore School District FY09 Budget Development Tax Rate Worksheet

	<u>LINE</u>	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>	<u>FORMULA</u>
1)	Budgeted Expenditures	\$1,553,725	\$1,677,100	
2)	Budgeted Available Revenues	\$400,600	\$430,400	
3)	Capital Debt Service Aid	\$0	\$0	
4)	Education Spending	\$1,153,125	\$1,246,700	= Line 1 – Line 2 – Line 3
5)	Equalized Pupils	142.87	137.87	
6)	Education Spending per Equalized Pupil	\$8,071	\$9,043	= Line 4 / Line 5
7)	Base Amount	\$7,736	\$8,210	
8)	District Spending Adjustment	104.33%	110.14%	= Line 6 / Line 7 (minimum of 100%)
9)	Statewide Homestead Tax Rate	\$0.87	\$0.85	
10)	Adjusted Equalized Tax Rate	\$0.9077	\$0.9362	= Line 9 x Line 8
11)	Common Level of Appraisal	99.60%	93.81%	
12)	Local Homestead Tax Rate	\$0.9113	\$0.9980	= Line 10 / Line 11
13)	Statewide Non-Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.36	\$1.34	
14)	Local Non-Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.3655	\$1.4284	= Line 13 / Line 11
15)	Income Sensitivity Statewide Percent	1.80%	1.80%	
16)	Local Percent for Income Sensitivity	1.88%	1.98%	= Line 15 x Line 8

Elmore School District

FY09 Budget Development Highlights

General Information

- The Elmore School District's overall budget growth is \$123,375, a 7.94% growth in the budget. Revenue increases of \$29,800 offset approximately 25% of the budget increase.
- The cost of tuitioning students to other school districts has increased by \$63,475. Students in grades 1 and 2 will attend the Lake Elmore School next year. Kindergarten (proposed full day, beginning in FY09) and grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 attend school in Morristown. Students in grades 7 through 12 may choose, within legal guidelines, the school they wish to attend. The vast majority of students and their families select Peoples Academy Middle Level, Stowe Middle School, Peoples Academy High School and Stowe High School.
- Approximately 25% or \$421,675 of Elmore's budget for FY09 is designated to meet the needs of students that qualify for special education. This is an increase of \$65,400 and accounts for approximately 53% of Elmore's overall budget increase. Please note that the Elmore School District anticipates receiving \$247,000 in state funding to offset 59% of these costs.

Indoor Air Quality Article

- The Elmore School District is proposing to address an indoor air quality concern at the Elmore School caused by the discovery of mold in the basement. The mold is the result of water infiltration from poor site drainage, a failing bulkhead, and an aging stone foundation.
- The Elmore School District is proposing to replace the Elmore School's foundation. This will remove all the mold from the basement, allow for installation of proper drainage, allow for exterior waterproofing of the foundation, allow for insulation of the foundation, replace the aging stone foundation, replace rotting sill plates, and provide much needed storage.
- The overall cost of this project is budgeted at \$99,000 of which \$29,700, or 30% will be funded by state construction aid.

Tax Information

- The FY09 homestead education tax rate for the Elmore School District is based on a district spending adjustment of 110.14% as defined by Act 68 (see line 8 on the previous page). The adjusted equalized tax rate for the upcoming year is \$0.9362, a slightly less than three cent increase in the adjusted equalized education tax rate from the current year.
- The FY08 district spending adjustment for Elmore was 104.33% or 245th out of 251 Vermont school districts, placing Elmore's district spending adjustment in the lowest 2% of districts statewide. In FY09, the district spending adjustment is proposed to increase from 104.33% to 110.14%.
- The indoor air quality article will add an additional 2 cents to the local homestead tax rate if financed over 3 years; or an additional 3 cents on the local homestead tax rate if financed over 2 years; or an additional 5.6 cents if funded entirely in FY09.

Morristown School District FY09 Budget Development Tax Rate Worksheet

	<u>LINE</u>	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>	<u>FORMULA</u>
1)	Budgeted Expenditures	\$11,412,150	\$12,150,850	
2)	Budgeted Available Revenues	\$3,472,350	\$3,860,500	
3)	Capital Debt Service Aid	\$0	\$0	
4)	Education Spending	\$7,939,800	\$8,290,350	= Line 1 – Line 2 – Line 3
5)	Equalized Pupils	839.84	845.77	
6)	Education Spending per Equalized Pupil	\$9,454	\$9,802	= Line 4 / Line 5
7)	Base Amount	\$7,736	\$8,210	
8)	District Spending Adjustment	122.21%	119.39%	= Line 6 / Line 7 (minimum of 100%)
9)	Statewide Homestead Tax Rate	\$0.87	\$0.85	
10)	Adjusted Equalized Tax Rate	\$1.0632	\$1.0148	= Line 9 x Line 8
11)	Common Level of Appraisal	106.60%	100.64%	
12)	Local Homestead Tax Rate	\$0.9974	\$1.0084	= Line 10 / Line 11
13)	Statewide Non-Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.36	\$1.34	
14)	Local Non-Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.2758	\$1.3315	= Line 13 / Line 11
15)	Income Sensitivity Statewide Percent	1.80%	1.80%	
16)	Local Percent for Income Sensitivity	2.20%	2.15%	= Line 15 x Line 8

Morristown School District

FY09 Budget Development Highlights

General Information

- The Morristown School District's overall budget growth is \$738,700, a 6.47% growth in the budget. Increases in revenues of \$388,150 offset more than 52% of the budget increase.
- The proposed Morristown School District budget expands the kindergarten program to full day and lengthens the school year from 175 to 179 student days.
- Special education costs represent 19% of the proposed Morristown School District budget or \$2,320,275. The \$2,320,275 is partially offset by anticipated funding revenues of \$1,316,500 or 57% of the budgeted expenditures.
- Transportation to and from school amounts to about 2% of the proposed Morristown School District budget or \$251,925. This cost is partially offset by anticipated funding in state transportation aid in the amount of \$85,000.
- Vocational education costs amount to approximately 2% of the proposed FY09 budget. The budgeted expenditures of \$267,100 are offset by anticipated revenues from the Vocational Education Grant in the amount of \$139,950.

Tax Information

- The FY09 homestead education tax rate for the Morristown School District is based on a district spending adjustment of 119.39% as defined by Act 68 (see line 8 on the previous page). The adjusted equalized tax rate for the upcoming year is \$1.0148, or 4.8 cents lower than the current adjusted equalized education tax rate.
- By decreasing the FY09 proposed equalized education tax rate from the FY08 rate, the Morristown School Board insured that no part of the local homestead tax rate increase was the result of budgetary decisions. The increase in the local homestead tax rate is caused entirely by the change in the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA).
- The FY08 district spending adjustment for Morristown was 122.21% or 231st out of 251 Vermont school districts, placing Morristown's district spending adjustment in the lowest 8% of districts statewide. In FY09, the district spending adjustment is proposed to decrease from 122.21% to 119.39%.

Stowe School District FY09 Budget Development Tax Rate Worksheet

	<u>LINE</u>	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>	<u>FORMULA</u>
1)	Budgeted Expenditures	\$8,631,100	\$9,110,050	
2)	Budgeted Available Revenues	\$1,209,775	\$1,289,750	
3)	Capital Debt Service Aid	\$57,000	\$30,000	
4)	Education Spending	\$7,364,325	\$7,790,300	= Line 1 – Line 2 – Line 3
5)	Equalized Pupils	625.62	622.98	
6)	Education Spending per Equalized Pupil	\$11,771	\$12,505	= Line 4 / Line 5
7)	Base Amount	\$7,736	\$8,210	
8)	District Spending Adjustment	152.16%	152.31%	= Line 6 / Line 7 (minimum of 100%)
9)	Statewide Homestead Tax Rate	\$0.87	\$0.85	
10)	Adjusted Equalized Tax Rate	\$1.3238	\$1.2947	= Line 9 x Line 8
11)	Common Level of Appraisal	96.48%	89.13%	
12)	Local Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.3721	\$1.4526	= Line 10 / Line 11
13)	Statewide Non-Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.36	\$1.34	
14)	Local Non-Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.4096	\$1.5034	= Line 13 / Line 11
15)	Income Sensitivity Statewide Percent	1.80%	1.80%	
16)	Local Percent for Income Sensitivity	2.74%	2.74%	= Line 15 x Line 8

Stowe School District

FY09 Budget Development Highlights

General Information

- The proposed FY09 Stowe School District budget is a maintenance of program budget.
- The Stowe School District's overall budget growth is \$478,950, a 5.55% increase in the budget.
- Special education costs of \$1,235,375 represent 14% of the overall budget. Please note that revenues of \$635,400 offset over 51% of these costs.
- Transportation to and from school amount to about 3% of the proposed Stowe School District budget or \$256,125. This cost is partially offset by anticipated funding in state transportation aid in the amount of \$88,000.
- Vocational education costs amount to approximately 0.2% of the proposed FY09 budget. The budgeted expenditures of \$22,775 are offset by anticipated revenues from the Vocational Education Grant in the amount of \$11,925.
- Long-term debt is approximately 2% of the proposed FY09 budget. Long term debt addresses both the principal and interest costs from the 1991-92 construction and renovation project as well as the interest expense from the 2007-08 renovation work. The \$205,925 of expense is partially offset by \$30,000 of capital debt service aid.

Tax Information

- The FY09 homestead education tax rate for the Stowe School District is based on a district spending adjustment of 152.31% as defined by Act 68 (see line 8 on the previous page). The adjusted equalized tax rate for the upcoming year is \$1.2947, or 2.91 cents lower than the adjusted equalized education tax rate for the current year.
- By decreasing the FY09 proposed equalized education tax rate from the FY08 rate, the Stowe School Board insured that no part of the local homestead tax rate increase was the result of budgetary decisions. The increase in the local homestead tax rate is caused entirely by the change in the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA).
- The FY08 district spending adjustment for Stowe is 152.16% or 77th out of 251 Vermont school districts. Thirty-one percent of school districts in Vermont had a greater district spending adjustment than Stowe. In FY09, the district spending adjustment is proposed to increase very slightly from 152.16% to 152.33%.

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Despite these constraints, Boards remain committed to maintaining the essential instructional programs that reflect each community's unique needs and priorities for children. It is an important time for citizens to pay attention not only to the needs of children, but also to the balance between our tradition of local control and the influence of state and national priorities.

We hope that the information in this newsletter is helpful and we encourage your attendance at public information sessions.

Public Information Meeting Schedule

The Elmore, Morristown and Stowe School Boards will hold public information meetings to present and discuss their proposed 2008-2009 school year budgets. The schedule for those meetings as well as polling information is as follows:

ELMORE

Public Information Meeting: Monday, February 11, at 7:00 p.m. in the Elmore Town Hall

Polling: Elmore Town Meeting, Tuesday, March 4, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Elmore Town Hall

MORRISTOWN

Public Information Meeting: Tuesday, February 26, at 7:00 p.m. in the Morristown Elementary School Library (joint meeting with the Morristown Select Board)

Polling: Australian Ballot at the Morristown Town Offices*, Portland Street, on Tuesday, March 4, from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

* Please note that this is a change of location for polling for Morristown voters.

(Public Information Meeting Schedule continued)

STOWE

Public Information Meeting: Monday, February 25, at 7:00 p.m. in the Stowe High School Auditorium (joint meeting with the Stowe Select Board)

Polling: Australian Ballot at Stowe Middle School, Barrows Road, on Tuesday, March 4, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

NOTICE

All children and youth (ages 0-21) who are residents of Elmore, Morristown, or Stowe are eligible to receive an appropriate education at public expense, regardless of any disabilities they have. It is possible that the Lamoille South Supervisory Union may not be aware of all resident children and youth with disabilities. If you know a pre-school aged child (birth-5) who may be delayed developmentally or a school-aged child who may have a disability and may be eligible for special education services and who is not in school or otherwise being educated at public expense, please notify the Lamoille South Supervisory Union by calling or writing to Karen Weeks, Director of Student Services, Lamoille South Supervisory Union, P. O. Box 340, Morrisville, VT, 05661, (888-4541).

Students with a disability who live in one of the towns listed above and who attend an approved private school or who attend an approved private school in one of the towns listed above may be eligible for limited special education services. Contact Karen Weeks for more information.

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Lamoille South
Supervisory Union
— Serving —
Elmore • Morristown • Stowe

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