

Voters in the eight RSU 19 towns will head to the polls on Tuesday, August 20th to consider approving the current fiscal year's budget. The first attempt was defeated in a close vote in June.

There have been some important changes from the earlier version of the budget for this second try. One important aspect of this vote for taxpayers is the reduction in local allocation for every town in the RSU from the first attempt. Eight towns will be asked to raise almost \$191-thousand LESS than what was proposed in June. Two towns will pay less than last year. In the other six towns, the increase ranges from 0.2 percent to 3.66 percent. Here are some other key facts.

In fiscal year 2013, voters approved spending \$23,324,296 to support the education of 2260 students, or about \$10,320 per student. Last year the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) amount determined by the Department of Education was \$21,600,015, so voters chose to pay \$1,724,281 or eight percent more than EPS on behalf of students. That budget passed in one try.

For the 2014 year, voters will be asked to approve \$22,650,503 (down by \$673,793) to support 2241 students or \$10,170 per pupil (a decrease of \$150/students from the prior year). This year the EPS amount is \$21,976,074. Approving the adopted budget amount would mean voters would approve spending \$674,429 or three percent more than EPS rather than the larger percentage from last year. Education costs in RSU 19 have decreased for fiscal year 2014.

This year six towns are participating in paying almost \$400-thousand for a "revenue stabilization loan" and the State is requiring the RSU to assume over \$300-thousand in teacher retirement costs. Neither was part of the 2013 budget. Without these expenses the operating budget would have been over \$1.3-million less than last year. The cost of operating the district has decreased by almost 6 percent. The RSU continues to do more with less and still deliver quality education to students at the eight district schools. Comparisons of average expenditures per student reveal that RSU 19 operates at almost thirteen hundred dollars per student LESS than the state average.

To recap –

- RSU 19 continues to operate at a lesser per pupil cost than the state average and most other neighboring districts.
- The adopted operating budget is less than last year. Operating costs have been cut by almost 6 percent.
- Cost allocations to towns are less or minimally more than last year.

A "Yes" vote will on August 20th will allow RSU 19 to continue providing cost effective education to students for the coming year.

Gregory Potter, Superintendent
RSU 19