

April 10, 2024

Franklin Town Council  
355 East Central Street  
Franklin, MA 02038

Dear Chair Mercer, Vice Chair Dellorco and Members of the Franklin Town Council,

Thank you for your time and dedication to our wonderful community. As we collectively face the financial challenges ahead, it's imperative to recognize the stark reality: The Town of Franklin is grappling with a \$10.1 million shortfall, and the School Department will need a \$9.3 million increase in Fiscal Year 2025 - \$7.3 million just to maintain current service levels and an additional \$2.1 million to stabilize and partially restore from cuts that were made last year.

In an effort to fund the school budget, there's been a reliance on temporary measures such as one-time investments, deferred projects, and depletion of reserve accounts. However, these strategies obscure the reality: the annual cost of educating students has risen far beyond what a 2.5% increase can accommodate.

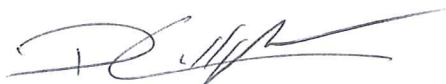
On April 9th, 2024, the School Committee voted to approve the FY25 School Budget in the amount of \$81,319,261. We are asking for the Town Council's support to fully fund this budget that addresses the \$9.3 million increase, up to and including initiating an operational override for the community to vote upon as a ballot question in time to fund the FY25 budget.

We recognize the economic impact of this request for our community, and it is not a decision taken lightly; however, there are also consequences of inaction. Without intervention, we can anticipate a future of continued layoffs, overcrowded classrooms, rising user fees, a "pay-to-play" system for athletics, and a general decline in services across the board.

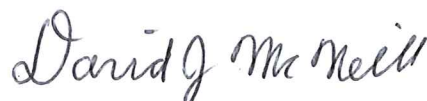
Fully funding the School Committee's approved FY25 School Budget will stabilize our budget moving forward, allowing the school district to maintain appropriate class sizes, provide much-needed mental health support, keep up with rising cost drivers and obligations, and continue to provide the host of educational services this community has come to expect. Moreover, the School Department can transition from a reactive budgeting approach to one that enables them to proactively implement meaningful changes which would result in a sustainable budget, fostering agility and efficiency in delivering education for years to come.

Thank you once again for your dedicated service to the residents of Franklin and the betterment of our community. We look forward to our open dialogue and collaboration with you toward our common goal of making Franklin the most vibrant community it can be.

Sincerely,



Dave Callaghan



Dave McNeill