



Milton Town School District

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February 1, 2021

To: Members of House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs
From: MTSD Board of Trustees Chair, Rick Dooley and MTSD Superintendent, Amy Rex
Re: H81 and H63

It is our understanding that the House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs is considering two bills this week that propose making changes to the process for Statewide collective bargaining for public school employees' health benefits.

We are requesting that this letter be entered into the written testimony of the Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs on H.81 and posted on the Committee's website.

Additionally, we would like you to know that we support H.63 because it balances appropriate access to health care benefits and cost containment that provides for the financial sustainability of the benefits. In the Milton Town School District educational opportunities for students and the maintenance of our facilities have been adversely impacted in the absence of cost containment of benefits beyond our local control.

In our FY22 proposed budget, we had to dedicate \$3,467,506 to health care expenses, this represents 10.9% of our total budget. Each year, we have experienced a year over year increase: FY21 - 10.7%; FY20 - 10.0%; FY19 - 9.0%.

Healthcare for FY22 attributes for 99.6% of our General Fund budget increase (other funds were excluded as they are not presented to the voters). It is important to note that for the General Fund, healthcare cost increases totaling \$189,437 were offset by \$109,841 in HRA costs due to a change in the assumed percent of HRAs that would be used. In total for all funds, these amounts are \$225,902 and \$112,568, respectively.

Most importantly to note though is the impact on educational programming and facilities. In order to reach a budget increase palatable to our voters (.26%), we had to make reductions totaling \$250,000, including:

1. A program that supports youth and adult partnerships in the development of personalized learning for students
2. Deferment of new curriculum materials to support a diverse selection of culturally responsive literature
3. Reducing classroom supplies ranging from science equipment, musical instruments and visual arts
4. Shaving back in all areas of facilities (supplies, furniture, maintenance) as well as foregoing the use of the wood chip boiler and moving funding for equipment purchases from the General Fund to Capital Repair and Replacement Reserve Fund

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.