**Summary of the Preston Budget Development Process FY24**

There are many steps in the development of the Preston Learning Community budget. There are several important dates where action is finalized and moved to the next level, ending in a public vote. Yes, it is a drawn out process with several critical junctures where Board actions could greatly impact the extent and quality of our program next year. Please review below:

* Budget Development: From October to January district departments and district leadership gather data from staff, students, community and financial entities.
* From January through March the **BoE Finance Committee** and the Board of Education review every aspect of the budget line by line and page by page to move toward a final approved Board of Education budget that is sent to the town Board of Finance.
* This year the calendar for budget development was moved up a few weeks so that the resulting referendum would position the town to act on its year end financial obligations more effectively.
  + **CRUCIAL DATE #1**: The Board of Education held a  meeting and voted on **March 13th** to approve their recommended budget that will be sent to the Board of Finance. On  **MARCH 13, 2023 the Board of Education voted unanimously to move forward a budget increase of $1,321,283 for a total budget of $14,780,777.**
  + **CRUCIAL DATE #2: On March 30, 2023** the Board of Education will present their budget to the Board of Finance. On **March 29, 2023** the Selectmen will present their budget to the Board of Finance. **These meetings will be held at Preston Plains Middle School (PPMS) at 7:30PM.**
  + **DATE #3:** After the Board of Finance (BoF) hears the Selectmen and Board of Education budget presentations they may act or hold a follow up meeting. This tentative date is **April 5, 2023 at PPMS at 7:30PM.**
  + **CRUCIAL DATE #4:** **Board of Finance Public Hearing:** **April 27, 2023 at 7PM at Preston Veterans Memorial School (PVMS)**. At this meeting, the BoF will set the dollar increase for the Selectmen and the BoE. They cannot make line item reductions to the BoE budget but they can reduce the request by any dollar amount they wish. This sets the budget number and frames the tax mill rate to be considered at Town Meeting. This is the final time that the budget can be increased before going to a vote.
  + **CRUCIAL DATE #5: Town Meeting:**  **May 11, 2023 at 7PM at PVMS**. At the town meeting the budgets of both the town and the school district will be debated again. At this meeting the budgets **CAN ONLY BE REDUCED** before moving to referendum. **This final vote holds very high importance for the town and the school district and their vision for the future.**
  + **CRUCIAL DATE #6:** **PUBLIC REFERENDUM: May 25, 2023 at PPMS.** If the budget passes it is set for next year. If it does not pass it must be returned to the Town and/or the District for further discussion. Typically more reductions are made. **Reductions are not a requirement.** Sometimes the Board of Education remains committed to its original recommendations and organizes to advocate for the budget as it moves to another referendum.
  + **DATE #7:**  If the first referendum fails on the first vote, a second vote is scheduled. Tentatively, the second vote is scheduled for **June 8, 2023 at PPMS.**

**THERE CAN BE multiple referenda.** There was a year where there were five referenda held throughout the summer.

PLEASE attend these meetings if you can. There will be information shared via traditional school newsletters and other forms of printed messaging. There will be budget documents posted on Facebook and our webpage, a powerpoint and other details will be presented on **March 30, 2023 to the Board of Finance** and will be updated as we move through the process.

PLEASE contact the Superintendent's Office or the Director of Finance Office if you have any questions. As these are complex times and the matters at hand are also complex, we encourage you to reach out to the Central Office and the members of the Board of Education as primary sources of information regarding the district budget.

We recognize that the budget process can be long and that our budget this year is challenging. Our world has changed significantly in these last few years, so please do what you can to understand and support our learning community. Reach out or be present and participate in the crucial votes and dates noted above.