

Education411 Newsletter



Getting the Word Out! November 15, 2006

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### **Dates, Links and Frequently Asked Questions**

- Dates, Dates, Dates
- Links of Interest
- FAQs

Greetings!

Thank you for your interest in Education411. We are thrilled with the tremendous feedback received to date. Education411 is committed to celebrating Westwood's tradition of educational excellence and to helping foster informed civic discussion about issues facing our public schools. E411 is a non-partisan group with a long-term mission of keeping the community involved in the education of Westwood's kids.

Set forth in this newsletter are important dates, interesting links and answers to some questions that we have heard asked frequently. We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions. We also welcome your participation in this endeavor. Please reach us at [WestwoodEducation411@yahoo.com](mailto:WestwoodEducation411@yahoo.com)

### **Dates, Dates, Dates**

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With Halloween behind us and Thanksgiving looming, we all realize how quickly 2007 will be upon us. Get out your calendar and mark down the following dates. Important discussions impacting the schools will occur during these meetings. Education411 will attempt to provide summaries but if you have never been to a School Committee meeting then you should do so at least once to capture the full flavor of these important community discussions.

School Committee Meetings are held in the Little Theater of the High School at 7:30 p.m. Upcoming meetings will be held on November 16, December 14, January 11, January 18, January 20 (Public Forum - - time TBA), February 15, March 22, April 26, May 17 and June 14.

Important Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Dates

- December 22 Superintendent's Recommended '08 Budget Sent to School Committee
- January 11 Superintendent presents '08 budget recommendation to School Committee
- January 18 School Committee budget deliberation

- January 20 Public Forum on the '08 Budget
- February 8 School Committee Budget Deliberation
- February 15 Statutory Public Hearing on the '08 Budget and School Committee adoption of budget
- May 7 Annual Town Meeting

Links of Interest

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The amount of information available about public education is staggering. Set forth below are just a few of the basic links that are worth checking out when searching for information about Westwood's public schools and, more generally, the state funding of public schools.

Westwood Schools Website <http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us>

Finance Commission <http://www.townhall.westwood.ma.us>

Massachusetts Department of Education <http://www.doe.mass.edu>

**DID YOU KNOW?**

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WHEN IS THE 2007-8 BUDGET ESTABLISHED?

The 2007-8 budget process is underway now. Cost center managers submitted their budgets to the Assistant Superintendent on 10/31/06. The Superintendent is scheduled to deliver his 2007-08 budget to the School Committee on December 22, 2006. The first opportunity for the public to hear the proposal will be at the January 11th School Committee Meeting. The entire month of January is devoted to budget deliberations with a public forum scheduled for January 20th. Don't wait, if you have concerns, make them known now. Town meeting approval in May merely represents the final formalistic step in the budget process.

WHAT DOES A "LEVEL-FUNDED" BUDGET MEAN?

A "level-funded" budget is one which matches the total dollars set in the prior year. Westwood had level funded budgets for 2004-5 and 2005-6. A small budget increase of 4.64% was made in 2006-7, but not enough to offset rising fixed costs. The challenge Westwood and other communities face is that costs (such as oil) have increased substantially but that dollars budgeted have not. This has resulted necessarily in additional service cuts. To name a few, this year, 6.34 Full Time Equivalent employees were cut, fees were increased, four buses were eliminated and elementary "specials" were reduced resulting in the need for DEAR time, Drop Everything And Read.

IS THE TOWN OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE BUS TRANSPORTATION?

The Town is only obligated by law to provide bus transportation to those who live more

than two miles from the school.

**WATCH EMAIL FOR FUTURE NEWSLETTERS AND PLEASE HELP US GET THE
WORD OUT!**

Contact Information

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email: [westwoodeducation411@yahoo.com](mailto:westwoodeducation411@yahoo.com)

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