Mandated COVID Costs for School

Temporary (FY21) Expenses

Possible Long-term (FY22+) Expenses

Capital Costs

FY21 NPS operating budget appropriation request (March 9,2020)	**$71,532,279**
June 2020 Budget Adjustments:	
· Reduce ASAP revolving further	$ 50,000
· Reduce technology completely	$ 175,000
· Eliminate most new district positions, KMS compliance/new team maintained thru transfers, defer most student services until January (all dist - $296,763) + (KMS - $460,411)	$ 757,174
· 7 staff reductions due to retirements, resignations/non-renewals ($200K savings already included in March budget)	$ 241,070
· 0% COLA--all staff/no merit--ALL UNIONS, ALL ADMINISTRATORS, SUPERINTENDENT/CENTRAL OFFICE	$1,308,000
FY21 revised operating budget request (June 2020)	**$69,001,035**
Prepaid SPED	$1,903,789
FY21 Town Meeting Appropriation	$67,097,246

Since Spring Town Meeting Additional Cuts

7 unfilled positions originally cut from FY20 budget

- 5.6 positions transferred for SPED
- 2 positions (1.0 ELL, 1.0 KMS Para) still to be filled

(from staffing needed to run FY21 on a normal year, this was a net cut of 14.5 positions)

Below are the COVID-related Expenses NOT INCLUDED in budget voted June 9, 2020, but required to reopen school safely per CARES ACT employment dictates, Department of Public Health (DPH), Natick Board of Health (BOH) and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Human Resources	**$ 1,158,949.88**

- Costs for furloughed employees under the amplified (**CARES ACT MANDATE)** benefits (May-Aug)

$291,111.88*

- **CARES Family Leave (MANDATE) (EFMLEA)** allows 12 weeks for childcare and sick care leave (⅔ pay or $200/day, whichever is less. ($10,800 each FT teacher) $47,682

  NOTE: this may expand if children and family members become sick and diagnosed with COVID in the school year. Employees entitled to the above benefit.

- Long term subs to cover REMOTE ACADEMY teachers' classrooms (13@$14,500 each) (Though December 23, 2020) (**MANDATE DESE)** $188,000

- Class monitors to cover teachers who have to teach remotely due to quarantine/medical exemption **(MANDATE CARES, DPH, DESE)** or being assigned to remote learning due to medical complications (32@ $7,257 each) $232,224

  (Though December 23, 2020) (**MANDATE CARES ACT)**

- Permanent subs cohorted with each grade level and department (24@ $9,700 each) $232,800

  (Though December 23, 2020) (**MANDATE DPH)**

  · New positions required to cover both hybrid and remote schooling options ($63,010 per position x .4) -- (**MANDATED DPH)** $25,204

- Added healthcare for new positions added to cover schooling models, etc. (@9/1/20) $0
- Per diem department head costs to prepare remote learning curriculum $10,928
- Human Resources added support (temporary position) $60,000
  (increased FMLA and CVFR leaves, HR moves, prorated pay--not for full year)
- Business Office Additional Help/due to resignations and medical leaves $25,000
- Data administrator, Rauvna COVID tracking and checklist implementation $25,000

  Increased data tracking for grant funding and three learning models of data
- Leadership cost for administrative oversight of remote learning academy $10,000
- Cost for added month of ASAP health insurance (sub positions/monitors/keep staff on until ASAP reopens $11,000

Transportation and Tuitions (FEE/TUITION REDUCTIONS)	**$ 353,404**
Reduced ridership projected loss	$190,000
Preschool reductions to collected tuition	$163,404
Parking fees for NHS	$possible losses?

COVID Tracking/Compliance	**$ 30,000**
Ruvna COVID symptom tracking implementation cost	
○ Set up	$ 8,000
○ Annual fee	$ 22,000

Teaching and Learning	**$ 334,000**
Professional Development to Reopen School **(MANDATE DESE with MTA, DPH)**	$ 30,000
Digital Units of Study, Calkins, Teachers' College	$ 42,000
SWANK Digital Video Collection, district	$ 5,500

- Zearn, replacement for TenMarks Math, digital math practice $ 17,500
- Added Preschool Manipulatives (**MANDATE DPH)** $ 6,000
- REMOTE ACADEMY Elementary **(MANDATE DESE)** $ 95,000
- REMOTE ACADEMY Secondary **(MANDATE DESE)** $ 61,000
- conversion of classes required to run remotely in live school/create digital interface $ 20,000
- Library security/collection bins that comply with COVID safety (**MANDATE DPH**) $ 9,000
- TECCL Electives **(MANDATE DESE/REMOTE ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL)** $ 48,000

Special Education **$ 276,798**

- Anticipated Compensatory Services **(THROUGH FULL YEAR, MANDATE DESE)**

(services missed in remote closure last year must be made up this year) $ 202,576

- new required online testing materials, technology and training for special education $. 47,597
- Staff Training for Speech and Language instructors for remote serv (10 hrs each) $. 3,050
- Powerschool training for special education outside of remote learning $. 4,025
- 7 scanners for sped virtual transition of IEPS to online only (only virtual IEPS and meetings will occur now) $ 1,750
- 42 days additional summer days for 7 coordinators (6 days per person all summer) to work to implement new learning models/ re-schedule/create cohorts for new learning models **(MANDATE DESE)** $16,800
- Microphones for hearing impaired students who must learn remotely **(MANDATE ADA)** (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT) $1,000

Facilities **MANDATED DPH AND BOH** **$3,243,457.63**

- Classroom air purifiers $280,000**
- Air purification medical isolation zones @9 $ 14,400

- Weekend disinfecting in between cohorts($6,000.00 x 27 weeks) $162,000
- Staff Rate Daily Coverage for Absences/Vacations/Quarantines (**FULL YEAR)**
  ($39.2027 avg salary x 56hrs/week = 2,195.3512 x 27 = $59,274.48
- Staff Rate KMS custodians **(FULL YEAR)**
  (2 people @ $18.2752 x 40 hr work weeks = $1,462.0160 x 27 weeks) $39,474.43
- 2 additional Part Timers @ $16.00/hr x 20/week = $640.00/pay period
  if they work 20 hrs each week for 35 weeks (start Sept 16) $ 22,400
- Canopy Rentals for mask breaks in inclement weather, 2 @ each school, **(FULL YEAR)** $135,000**
- Johnson Sun/Mask Canopy $ 8,000**
- 1 added Ben Hem Tent $ 7, 800
- Increased energy costs due to open windows and doors **(ESTIMATED through 12/23)**
  Electricity $300,000
  Natural Gas and Oil $75,000
- Controls for the district HVAC $60,000

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Additional Custodial Expenses for the next 10 months $254,445.72

(FULL YEAR (10 months) EXPENSES/MANDATED DPH/BOH)

- Masks $1,500.00/mo $15,000.00
- Gloves $600.00/mo $6,000.00

- Sanitizer $4950.00/mo $49,500.00
- Paper Towels $3750.00/mo $37,500.00
- Soap $4500.00/mo $45,000.00
- Disinfectant $2,000.00/mo $20,000.00
- Batteries $31500.72 for year $31,500.72
- Wipes 500 cs/2 mo = $9,995.00 x 5mo (for a total of 10 months) 49,945.00

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HVAC Additional Repairs (in addition to above, already done in 2020): $105,000

- Filters for Univents and Rooftop units - $15,000.00
- HVAC contract services - $30,000.00

ALC Controls Agreement -$60,000

Classroom/Office Partitions $1,496,269

- NHS/Preschool: $480,165
- JO $52,617
- BH $164,179
- WMS $346,819
- Brown $162,728
- MEM $137, 626
- Lilja $152, 135

· Other building modifications & supplies $204,394

Installation of water bottle fillers $20,000

GRAND TOTAL

$5,396,609.51

***18 weeks of this can be included in the CRVF grant ($108,000), only through 12/31

**included in the town-managed COVID CARES ACT relief grant)

*unclear if the town has been appropriately charged for this; a refund may be in order

Grants Obtained

CVRF grant @5500 students x $225	$ 1,237,500
DESE Technology Grant	$116,000
Reallocation of PD funds Title II A (reduced new teacher coaches and mentors)	$ 60,000
Vacation and Weekend Education Grant	$ 36,000
Original CARES allocated to Schools via town application for	$ 2,809,209.72
TOTAL GRANTS TO SPEND	$4,258,709.72

$5,396,609.51 - $4,249,500=

TOTAL NET NEGATIVE POSITION **($1,137,899.79)**

Dear Town Meeting Members:

School Has Vastly Changed in the Past 6 Months

Since the passage of the Natick Public School's FY21 budget at the spring town meeting held in July, the world of education as we know it has changed completely . One cannot scan the headlines of any medium and not read about the ongoing adaptations required by public school systems across the United States to deal with this ongoing pandemic. Here in Natick we continue to work diligently to provide a high quality and safe educational experience for all students, while attempting to adhere to strict health care protocols from the federal, state and local levels. We have written a Reopening Handbook, as mandated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to revise our district practices to meet with the public health, education and local mandates which had to be enacted in order to allow children to remain in school and to allow their parents to return to work. Here is an Executive Summary of some of the changes for your convenience. All resources cited in this memo are on our COVID website, including this letter with interactive links if you prefer to read it there.

Some of the measures we have enacted have involved student, staff and teacher safety. These include the retrofitting of school and administrative buildings with social distancing measures such as Plexiglas desk and office barriers, signage, upgraded air systems, touch free equipment, tents for mask breaks, sanitizer stations, etc., to name only a few. To meet the educational needs of our students, we have developed a wide range of curriculum options such as remote, hybrid and in person learning opportunities. Technology has been added with the purchase of additional hardware and software to ensure all students have access to our rote learning options. Countless hours of a hardworking and dedicated staff, researching and developing programs, were spent in order to design a program of study to meet the needs of each student, regardless of their abilities. This has included adapting special education programming in order to provide services necessary based on a child's individualized educational program.

Due to the space restrictions and social distancing guidelines required for in person learning, additional staff have been added to assist in ensuring the highest of academic standards are met for teaching and learning, while providing a safe environment. Bus transportation has adapted to the new requirements with appropriate social distancing standards for those children who rely on this service, so they can be safely transported from home to school and back. Newly enacted employment laws, designed to assist and protect staff and faculty, have required us to provide a path for those who are medically fragile, are caring for someone who is medically fragile, or must remain at home due to school age children. To help address these issues we have added a district supported childcare model to care for educator's children during the day so teachers can remain available to teach. Other staff who choose to remain home were replaced with substitute staff. For those students in our remote program, administrators have been hired to oversee our remote learning academy. We have signed contracts with software firms to provide a robust, online learning experience and to track student virus trends as well as their symptoms. Our central office team is dealing with the ever-changing landscape that requires us to maintain and report on numerous items. This includes the hiring and oversight of new staff, application and oversight of new grants, along with daily check in of the pulse of the health and safety of staff on a day-to-day basis. This has required us to add additional administrative support to address these issues.

In concert with the Natick Health Department, we have established baseline thresholds if and when we might see any outbreak of COVID in our school district along with protocols and procedures on how to deal with any issues we may confront. Parents and guardians were surveyed, which has resulted in developing many of the models we have chosen. We continue to maintain an aggressive social presence in order to keep both the public, staff, students and families with the most up to date information as things constantly evolve.

In order to adequately educate our staff about these changes and to comply with a state MOU DESE agreement with the Massachusetts Teacher Association (MTA) we had to provide 10 additional days of professional development for staff and created a Parent Education Academy so parents could manage their child's education and the changing models.

These mandates come with additional costs that were not included as part of our FY21 budget. We are fortunate to have been the recipient of several federal and state grants to help cover some of the additional costs associated with the "new normal" of attending the Natick Public Schools. Those grants have assisted in providing relief to several of the additional costs stated above and are part of the financial detail provided above. However, the additional funding we have received to date does not adequately address all of the items. The above serves as a recap of the additional costs the Natick Public Schools have added due to this pandemic. These costs were not optional but mandatory in order to provide the health, safety and educational requirement the citizens of Natick have come to expect and the Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) which is a legal mandate in our country and a Constitutional one in our Commonwealth.

The Expectations Continue to Unfold

This memo provides the funding we have been required to spend per mandates and developments in the COVID reopening of school **thus far.** It is entirely possible that new mandates may occur. For example, in the coming week, new mandates for athletics will be enacted and there may be new developments due to these changes.

The largest unknowns to us are the following: energy costs increases (due to the mandate to open windows in all buildings no matter the weather or season, and the cost of long-term substitutes and monitors. These positions as detailed above have been hired on a September 8-December 23, 2020 basis, with the hope that NPS (and the Commonwealth) will be able to transition back to full live school in the new year. However, with no vaccine on the horizon and a predicted spike in infections, this may not be possible even in the 2021. If that is the case, we will need to continue these positions through the end of the school year (salary from 12/23 to 6/30). In keeping staff on for the remainder of the year, they will turn from short-term sub/positions to long term and will therefore also be eligible for benefits.

If DESE, DPH or any other agency enacts further mandates, that may also impact finances. We simply do not know what is to come in this arena. For example, we have been exploring pool testing as a means to further cease infection spread in Natick. If something like this becomes mandated, current pricing for the year could mean a $1.7 million bill for Natick to test all staff and students.

What happens if this funding is delayed until the end of the calendar year / not received at all?

Those unfamiliar with school finances have suggested that "schools like to remind us that they have bottom line authority" and therein we should simply delay services and spending in our current budget to address the additional spending required for COVID reopening or that perhaps we should just close and create savings as we did in the spring. It is not sound budgeting in my mind to count on closing schools to address budgetary issues. Nor does the NPS budget have $1.1 million dollars to spare unless we intend to stop educating students in April of this year. Here is the reason that these financial additions must be addressed now and should not be put off until the spring.

Reviewing the expenditure spending for Fiscal Year 2020 for the period ending April 30, 2020 without accounting for encumbered salaries and expenses, the Natick Public School Operating Statement was as follows:

Salaries……$40,219,633**
Expenses…….$10,894,095
Total……..$51,113,728
FY 20 Appropriation……..……$67,810,346

Available Balance……..……$16,696,618

However, to fully understand the financial position of the Natick Public Schools as of April 30, 2020, the following encumbrances must be understood and included in order to determine available funds:

Encumbered salaries……$13,303,828
Encumbered expenses…….$ 1,895,973

Subtotal including encumbrances……$66,313,529

Available Balance…..…….$1,496,817

**these numbers are unaudited at this time.

Encumbered salaries are forecasted to fiscal year end to determine contractually obligated salaries and encumbered expenses include such items as utilities, tuitions, bus transportation and other expenses that we are required to pay.

The bulk of spending in the Natick Public Schools for salaries (which indeed composes most of the budget) occur in September (when teachers and staff return to school) and June (when a final year end balloon payment is made to

teachers and staff who work on a school year versus year round contract). For discretionary spending, September and October reflects a timeframe when schools are purchasing supplies, technology and curriculum materials and tuitions, for the return to the classroom.

Once we begin the fourth quarter of the fiscal year (April, May, June) we have very little flexibility as it relates to any discretionary funds that remain. FY20 Appropriation was $67,810,346 and FY21 Appropriation was $67,097,246, a reduction of ($713,100). If we were faced with addressing a $1.137 million dollar shortfall in April 2021, we would have no ability to address any unanticipated expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year since the majority of our spending had occurred prior to this date. In FY20 discretionary spending from May 1st to June 30th equaled $1,434,265 leaving a final remaining balance of $66,313. This coupled with the reduction of $713,000 of town appropriation in FY21 would be devastating and require us to eliminate existing educator positions so we would not exceed our current appropriation. For example, this would be approximately **95 teachers** since these individuals had already been paid 75% of their annual salary as of April 30th, if we were to quantify this amount by teachers only.

We come to the fall town meeting and to the finance committee for review and are asking you to support additional funding to cover these unanticipated but necessary costs which may be only part 1 of the funding needed should the mandates continue. These monies were spent starting in June of this year and have already been enacted--if we did not, we could not open school at all. Please understand the mandate from DESE was that we should have just simply brought all children in with 3ft of social distancing! It was a complicated and costly endeavor to manage the mandates and we have tried to balance costs with the cost of a public health crisis in the schools.

We will continue to write grants and seek funding that will offset these costs, at this time we have sought and won all that is available. Should we (one can dream!) recover enough monies to gain a surplus, we will return monies to the town given for these purposes however we can. Over the summer, we returned approximately $256,000 of the bus subsidy to the town due to refunds we gave parents on their bus passes (they did not ride the buses from March - June). I share this as a symbol of how we intend to serve the town well in these financial matters, but had to be open and transparent about our current and forecasted status.

We will be glad to answer any questions you may have and thank you for your continued support.



Dr. Anna Nolin

Superintendent of Schools