

\$\$\$**THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED AS A TAXPAYERS' GUIDE TO: THE NOTTINGHAM SCHOOL WARRANT AND BUDGET - To Be Voted On March 10, 2015, 8AM - 7PM**

Due to several changes proposed or instituted by the Nottingham School Board recently, YOU will see a significant increase in your next property tax bill and every tax bill, thereafter- **UNLESS YOU VOTE! TO STOP IT.**

ONE of the changes implemented by the school board is requiring Nottingham tax payers to pay the entire tuition to Coe-Brown, rather than the parents paying the difference from the Dover High School tuition. And, the school board did it retroactively to the 2014-15 school year, resulting in a refund to parents of Coe-Brown students. **This resulted in lost revenue amounting to \$247,000.00, which will now be paid by YOU.** For the last 10+ years the school board policy required parents to pay the difference between the Dover tuition and the Coe-Brown tuition if they chose to send their child to Coe-Brown. This new change, requiring Nottingham tax payers to pay the entire tuition to Coe-Brown, was implemented despite the school board's public policy- to the Nottingham tax payers that assured us that would not happen. **This change will also result in an additional \$335,776.00 loss in revenues for the coming school year, which will be paid for by YOU this coming year and every year, thereafter, including increases, if we do not vote to STOP this change.** The school board said the change was implemented on advice of counsel, due to a change in the law. The school board will not release the lawyer's opinion. Nottingham citizens have discovered that the law does not require Nottingham to pay the entire tuition to Coe-Brown and that parents in Barrington are still required to pay the difference to both Coe-Brown and Oyster River. Oddly, Barrington uses the same law firm as Nottingham. Further, at the school deliberative session Nottingham's school district attorney admitted that requiring parents to pay the difference in tuition was, 'not a legal question'. In other words, there really is no law requiring Nottingham tax payers to pay the entire tuition to Coe-Brown. **Dover is a very good high school**, as is Coe-Brown. The difference is in the cost. **Coe-Brown is nearly \$2,900.00 more**, per student, than Dover. Nottingham allows parents the **CHOICE** of sending their children to Coe-Brown, and they only need to pay the difference in the tuition. Nottingham tax payers already generously provide transportation to Coe-Brown and, they pay the entire tuition to Coe-Brown for those students economically disadvantaged.

These amounts, coupled with the increase in the total school budget of \$202,233.00 will results in an increase of over 3/4 of a million dollars in one year, while adding a total of only 4 children to our schools' populations: These huge, annual budget increases are unjustified and unsustainable.

RECOMMENDED VOTES FOR:
2015-16 SCHOOL WARRANT

Articles 2 - 11:

2: NO. A "NO" vote approves the "default" budget in the amount of **\$11,010,114.00**. The Budget contains the entire Coe-Brown tuition, with no provision to collect the difference from parents. Also, the school budget must be brought under control, **as the cost has increased over 37% in the last 10 years! While student population has increased only 3%!**

3: NO. A "NO" vote will allow all eligible teachers to receive their "step and track" increases, ranging from \$1,300.00 to \$2,800.00, this coming school year. However, in this new teachers' contract there is an added '**early retirement clause**', offering each of our 5 senior teachers a very lucrative **\$20,000.00** buyout- with a total cost to tax payers of up to **\$100,000.00**, that is unacceptable. Further, after reviewing the Nottingham School Board Minutes, it was discovered:

Prior to negotiations for the new contract, three senior teachers announced their intent to retire. One of the retiring teachers was also on the contract negotiating team. During the negotiations of the new contract the same three teachers withdrew their intent to retire and are now eligible for the additional **\$20,000.00 each! if this passes.** It may be legal to do this. But, **Is it right? NO!** When retiring, our teachers already receive a lump sum payment in their last paycheck ranging from \$4,000. to \$9,000. depending on years of service to Nottingham. This lump sum helps make their overall retirement benefits much higher. Our retiring teachers get very good benefits and should not attempt to obtain even more from the Nottingham taxpayer in this questionable manner. And, why are we encouraging our most experienced teachers to leave in the first place?

4: NO. The Coe-Brown contract would make Coe-Brown, not only a 'school of record', at a much higher tuition than Dover, but **it does not contain a cap** on future tuition increases. Historically, Coe-Brown's tuition has increased at a much higher rate than Dover. **This contract will bind Nottingham taxpayers for at least 7 years, with no way out- no matter how high the tuition gets.** This gives Coe-Brown a

'**blank check**' on tuition increases. Also, if this passes tax payers will be OBLIGATED to pay up to the Coe-Brown tuition- if a student chooses another school. A "NO" vote on this question will preserve the 'status quo', and parents will continue to have the **choice** of sending their children to Coe-Brown under an existing 'Memorandum of Understanding'.

5: YES. The Dover High School contract maintains Dover as our "school of record" and has a 4% cap on increases in tuition. (Also, the City of Dover has a 2% tax cap on spending.) And, if Dover High School exceeds the cap, under this contract we can renegotiate or terminate the contract.

6: YES. \$30,000.00: Capital Reserve Funds are a beneficial budgeting tool that prevents spikes in the tax rate for large planned expenditures.

7: YES. \$25,000.00: Capital Reserve Funds are a beneficial budgeting tool that prevents spikes in the tax rate for large planned expenditures.

8: NO. There already exists a mechanism in state law, which provides school districts the ability to cope with unanticipated emergency expenditures, and we have insurance. Further, to say that removing approx. \$150,000.00 from revenues will have no tax impact is inaccurate. Every dollar put into this account will be made up for and paid by YOU in your property tax bill.

9: YES. This Article, **submitted by Town residents**, reaffirms the Town's commitment to provide a quality education to all our students, by continuing to provide Dover High School, a school accredited by the NEASC, as our 'school of record'

10: YES. This Article, **submitted by Town residents**, protects Nottingham tax payers from having to pay any high school tuition above the Dover tuition rate, as has been the policy.

11: YES. This Article, **submitted by Town residents**, maintains "choice" as to where a parent sends their child to high school.

Links to Verify Information:

***Dover High School link:**

<http://www.dover.k12.nh.us/education/school/school.php?sectionid=3>

***Coe-Brown link:**

<http://coebrown.org/about/>

***School info: Including page 9(f) of teachers' contract & Dover & Coe-Brown contracts:**

<http://nottingham.k12.nh.us/images/2015DeliberativeSessionMaterials.pdf>

***SB min. 11/3/14, teachers' withdrawal of intent to retire, pg. 4 & 5:**

http://nottingham.k12.nh.us/school_board/sb_minutes/14-15/Nottingham.S.B.M.11.3.2014.done.APPROVED.pdf

CLARIFICATION TO SCHOOL BOARD'S 'MAILER': "Historical Tuition Rates", Comparison

- ❖ On March 3, 2015 the Nottingham School Board held an 8AM "public" meeting at the SAU office in Northwood.
- ❖ The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the final changes to a mailing that was being prepared by the SB to be sent to residents of Nottingham, prior to voting on March 10th.
- ❖ **DURING THE MEETING ONE OF THE SB MEMBERS POINTED OUT THAT THE "HISTORICAL TUITION RATE" COMPARISON, WAS CONFUSING AND COULD BE MISLEADING.**
- ❖ The SB member was concerned that the comparison was like that of "apples to grapefruit", because COE-BROWN'S TUITION FIGURES CONTAINED NO SPECIAL EDUCATION COSTS and Dover's tuition figures DO contain Special Education costs. Further, all the figures in the 'state average' column also contain Special Education costs. Which skewed the numbers so dramatically that they were of no actual use, except, perhaps, to make the Coe-Brown numbers look better.
- ❖ Despite the SB member's concerns the school board voted 2-1 to keep the "state average" column in their comparison, with a small caveat that these were "per pupil costs". Which distinction would mean little to the average voter.
- ❖ It is unfortunate that a majority of the Nottingham School Board has so little confidence in their proposals that they feel the need to employ, what can only be described as, "Electioneering", in order to move their agenda forward.
- ❖ Please Vote on March 10th and send a strong message that this type of 'politics' is not acceptable in Nottingham.
 - Please Vote: NO, on Article 4. Please Vote: YES, on Article 5 to keep Dover our high school of record.

PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL COST INCREASES

Facts:

- In 2014-15 (this school year), the SB decision to pay the full tuition rate to Coe-Brown will cost Nottingham tax payers approx. \$247,000.00 over the tuition rate at Dover High School, our traditional high school of record.
- In 2015-16 (this coming school year), if the Coe Brown contract is voted in, the cost of paying the full tuition rate at Coe-Brown will cost Nottingham tax payers \$335,776.00, over the Dover tuition rate and will likely increase annually for the next 7 years., with NO cap on how high it could go.
- In 2015-16, if the School Warrant passes as proposed, our tax rate will increase 9.56%, resulting in an increase of \$153.00 per 100-thousand dollars of your property valuation. On a median \$250,000.00 home, that could result in a \$375.00 increase in your property tax bill. Unless we vote "NO" on Article 4 and "YES" on Article 5.
- The Dover High School tuition, per student, is \$11,861.00. Coe-Brown's tuition is nearly \$2,900.00, more per student, at \$14,683.00. Historically, tuition at Coe-Brown increases year to year at a greater rate than Dover.
- If the Coe-Brown contract passes and the Dover contract fails, we could see nearly a 1/2 million dollar increase in school spending in the very near future- that will be paid for by you. And, which could amount to an additional \$110.00 per 100-thousand dollar of your property valuation, in your property tax bill.
- Dover High School is every bit as good as Coe-Brown. But the cost of Dover High School is far more affordable for Nottingham tax payers. Visit each school's web site, links provided, inside.
- Please Vote: NO, on Article 4. Please Vote: YES, on Article 5 to keep Dover our high school of record.

Concerned Nottingham Tax Payers:

- ❖ Gene Reed, Budget Committee member
- ❖ Mary Bonser, Selectman
- ❖ Gary Anderson, former Selectman
- ❖ Judy Doughty, former School Board member
- ❖ Elizabeth "Liddy" Smith, longtime resident

STANDARD MAIL
PERMIT #2
POSTAGE PREPAID
NOTTINGHAM, NH
03290

Resident
West Nottingham, NH 03291

Can YOU Afford Another \$375.00 or MORE Increase In Your Property Tax Bill?
VOTE – March 10th, 8am – 7 pm.