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~ PRESS RELEASE ~

SOUTH PORTLAND SCHOOL DEPARTMENT – BUDGET CURTAILMENT SUMMARY

On November 20, 2009, Governor Baldacci issued a budget curtailment representing a decrease of \$38,098,223 in General Purpose Aid funding to local school districts. This curtailment resulted in a \$1,230,208 reduction of GPA to South Portland Schools for the current budget year.

To put these figures in context, \$1,225,000 represent the following:

- more than the entire athletic and co-curricular budgets for all schools combined,
- 16+ teaching positions,
- 95% of the district's transportation budget,
- The funding for all classroom teaching activities at either Dyer or Small School,
- All library, guidance and technology education programs at the five elementary schools plus one of the middle schools, or
- 8+ furlough days for the entire district.

In anticipation of this significant budget curtailment, a freeze was instituted on the current operating budget in late September. On November 4, 2009 a Budget Curtailment Task Force composed of association presidents, administrators, and a board representative was convened to identify areas for the Administrative Team to explore in compiling recommendations for reducing spending. The following reductions were identified by the Administrative Team, reported to the Budget Curtailment Task Force on November 18, 2009, and shared with the Board of Education on Monday, December 7, 2009.

Anticipated 2009-10 Budget Reductions:

Operating Budget reductions resulting from spending freeze	\$473,000
- Professional Development,	
- Travel,	
- Supplies and Materials,	
- Equipment,	
- Electricity and Utility Savings	
- Field Trips,	
- Dues and Fees, and	
- Miscellaneous Expenditures	
Contingency	150,000
Non-Essential Overtime	7,200
School Year Clerk Snow Day Hours	6,000
Unallocated 2009-10 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds	454,008
*One District Wide Furlough Day (April 26, 2010)	<u>140,000</u>
	\$1,230,208

"ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH QUALITY LEARNING FOR ALL."

One major area of anticipated savings is a reduction in district wide energy costs. Greg Marles, Director of Buildings and Grounds has indicated that a 5% reduction in electricity would result in a savings of \$35,000. Turning off classroom lights on average two hours per day will result in \$6.45 savings per classroom. A coffee maker running 2 hours a day costs \$5.00 monthly to operate. Personal space heaters running for 4 hours a day cost \$14.56 per month per heater. We are therefore asking all employees to join us in the following energy savings measures:

- ◆ Shutting lights off when a classroom is unoccupied or if natural lighting is sufficient for the educational needs of the students.
- ◆ Eliminating personal appliances in classrooms (coffee makers, personal space heaters, microwaves, etc.)
- ◆ Eliminating snow day extra-curricular and athletic activities thus reducing energy consumption to light and heat buildings on snow days.

Additionally, our school year clerks and library clerks have agreed to not work on snow days for the remainder of this school year. This agreement was approved by the members as a good faith effort to help with the curtailment. Please join me in thanking the clerks for supporting this measure.

Although the majority of recommendations can be accomplished through the identified reductions in spending, the plan for budget reductions includes one district wide furlough day. The Board of Education on December 7, 2009, approved changing the 2009-10 calendar to reflect moving the January 15, 2010 teacher in-service day to April 26, 2010. January 15, 2010 is now identified as a regular student attendance day and April 26, 2010 as a teacher in-service day with no student attendance required. Changing the teacher in-service day allows for the opportunity to negotiate the impact of April 26, 2010 being a district wide furlough day. Pending successful negotiations, a waiver request will be presented to the Commissioner of Education for the reduction in our calendar of one teacher in-service day.

Our goal throughout these deliberations has been to minimize the impact on students. At the same time, although it appears that we will be able to reduce the budget without initiating staff layoffs, we are well aware that these reductions come at a price to district staff. We would like to thank each staff member for their efforts to continue to provide a high quality education for the students of South Portland during these challenging economic times.

Suzanne Godin
Superintendent of Schools