



**Mr. Jerome R. Belair**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Mr. Craig C. Powers**  
*Assistant Superintendent*

January 31, 2012

Ms. Kathleen McCarty, Chairperson  
Board of Education Members

Mr. Ronald Fedor, Chairperson  
Board of Finance Members

Mr. Thomas Dembek, Moderator  
Representative Town Meeting Members

Dear Moderator, Chairpersons, and Members:

We have entered this budget season fully aware that we have a very difficult budget year before us. This budget is the result of months of work and is needs-based and data-driven. We began meeting with Town Boards last spring and those meetings informed us of the financial challenges facing Waterford in the upcoming fiscal year. The administration began the budget process this summer and our review with the entire administrative team in early November has provided you with this recommended Operating Budget. The principle pressures on the decisions that have to be made, as I see them, are:

1. The Board of Education's desire to maintain high quality education, programs and services.
2. The Long Range Fiscal Planning Committee's guideline of a 3% increase to the Board of Education budget.
3. The NESDEC projection of a modest decline in enrollment and grade level enrollment fluctuations.
4. IDEA legislation, unfunded and underfunded mandates, and our district's responsibility for education costs of no-nexus students placed in one of the Waterford Country School's Safe Homes or Shelters.
5. The continuous escalation of health insurance costs.
6. Aging computers in need of replacement.
7. The Waterford Public Schools' commitment to continuous improvement.

Our response to these pressures must be accomplished through a careful balance of our continuous improvement efforts and the challenging economic times.

After extensive analysis, debate, and thoughtful consideration on the part of many, I bring to you this budget. In the spirit of balance and restraint, the resources requested in this budget are needed. We have worked hard to reduce costs before it gets to the Board level. This was accomplished by the administration thoroughly reviewing each cost center and exploring increased efficiencies and cost containment in all areas of the budget.

We welcome your questions and analysis of this budget. I am confident that we can emerge from this process with a reasonable and responsive budget for the Waterford Public Schools. I believe this request has been honed to a minimum and that it is both educationally sound and fiscally responsible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerome R. Belair". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jerome R. Belair  
Superintendent of Schools