

**Explanations of the Warrant Articles for the
2018-2019 Norwich School District Annual Meeting
March 5 and 6, 2018**

ARTICLE 1: Elect a Moderator of the Town and School District meeting for one year.

The moderator is voted upon annually and presides over Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 2: Elect Town and School District Officers for terms starting in 2018.

School district officer positions are voted upon annually. There are five Norwich School Board positions. Four of those are staggered three year terms and one position for a two year term, elected in odd numbered years. All positions also serve on the Dresden School Board, however the two year position does not hold voting privileges in Dresden. This year there are 2 board seats coming up for election in March, one 3-year term (Neil Odell) and one 2-year term (Lauren Morando Rhim).

ARTICLE 3: Hear and act on the reports of the officers of the Town and Town School District.

Each year the Norwich School District presents the proposed budget to the voters at Town Meeting. In odd numbered years the School District presents first, in even numbered years the Town presents first.

ARTICLE 4: To authorize the Board of School Directors to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenues for the next fiscal year in accordance with the provisions of 16 VSA § 562(9).

In the event that school district tax revenues are not received in a timely manner, the school district requests authorization from the electorate to borrow money to cover necessary expenditures.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the voters of the Norwich Town School District determine and fix the salaries of the School Board members in the sum of \$500 each per year in accordance with the provisions of 16 VSA § 562(5)?

The salary for school board members is voted upon annually. This figure is unchanged from last year.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters of the Norwich Town School District approve the school board to expend \$5,676,234 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing 2018-19 fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$18,403 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 0.67% higher than spending for the current year.

While the budget number shown here is solely for the Marion Cross School, the Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil includes the Dresden Assessment. While the gross expenditure amount of the Marion Cross School budget is increasing by 1.85%%, by the state's definition net "Education Spending per pupil" (that is, net education spending, after the application of appropriate income, divided by the number of equalized pupils) is increasing by .67%. This is the result of a decrease of (\$141,752) in the Dresden district assessment to Norwich. The estimated homestead tax rate is \$1.9024 or, a 9.02 cent increase, 4.98% more than the current year's \$1.8122. Several of the parameters are set by the State of Vermont during December 2017 and January 2018, and in some cases even as late as April or May. Certainly changes in the parameters as they are issued by the state will alter the tax rate estimate presented. Much of the increase is due in part to the \$50 million shortfall in the State's Education Fund and pressures from rising budgets across all Vermont school districts. The drop in the homestead property yield set by the State from \$10,160 to \$9,842, coupled with our local drop in Common Level Appraisal (CLA) from 99.28% to 98.29% along with our decline in estimated equalized pupils from 600.74 to 595.74 results in increased tax rates.

ARTICLE 7: In addition to the amount of money approved as necessary for the support of educational programs for the school year commencing July 1, 2018, shall the voters of the Norwich Town School District appropriate and expend \$100,000 for such purpose?

In an effort to keep tax rates stable and meet the needs of students, the administration made many tough decisions this year in building the budget, which may result in some changes to class size based on projections. After much discussion with parents, employees and the administration during the budget meeting sessions, it was decided to place a separate article on the warrant for the voters to decide whether or not to increase the Marion Cross budget by \$100,000 to be used if and when the School Board may deem it necessary. The School Board will ultimately make the decision on whether or not a need exists to change programming or employee levels.

This addition would result in education spending of \$18,571 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil would be 1.59% higher than spending for the current year. The addition would result in an additional increase of \$0.0174 on the projected tax rate listed in the description for Article 6 bringing it to \$1.9024. Resulting in an additional \$69 in taxation on a \$400,000 home.

ARTICLE 8: Transact any other business that may legally come before the annual meeting of the Norwich Town School District.