

BROOKLINE TOWN MEETING, MAY 19, 2021

STATEMENT OF EXPLANATION

ARTICLE 34

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In this time of national crisis, Brookline can call upon its history of innovation and leadership in creating local solutions to national and global policy challenges. Brookline has been a pioneer in addressing the climate crisis through organizations such as Climate Action Brookline, the Select Board's Climate Action Committee, and the Green Caucus; in eliminating the use of Styrofoam and single-use plastic water bottles and bags, in encouraging solar rooftops and fossil-fuel-free new construction, and in implementing a green electricity program making it easy for homeowners and businesses to purchase 100% renewable electricity. Brookline High School created several cutting edge programs -- the African American and Latinx Scholars Program (AALSP), the Calculus Project, Steps to Success, ACE, and School within a School (SWS); and Brookline created the Brookline Early Education Program (BEEP) and Facing History and Ourselves.

This warrant article calls upon the Select Board to build on this record by adopting a program that encourages Brookline households with high net worth to make annual voluntary tax-deductible contributions to the Town of Brookline. Brookline does not have a large commercial tax base nor a large number of residential taxpayers relative to the number of students in the public schools. Brookline does have high net worth households. In 2019, the median price for a single-family home sold in Brookline was over \$2.1 million, the highest median price in Greater Boston¹. Brookline also has a well educated population, with 84% of the adult population having at least a bachelor's degree, and 14% of Brookline adults having a doctorate, the highest percentage in the country.

Brookline 2019 Demographics²

Race	Population	% of Population	Poverty	% in Poverty
Total	59,180	100%	7,250	12%
Asian	10,258	17%	1,913	19%
Black	1,746	3%	569	32%
Latinx	4,012	7%	752	19%
Multirace/Other	2,896	5%	574	20%
White	40,268	68%	3,442	9%

Clearly we are not meeting the needs of many people of color and those who live in poverty. This warrant article seeks to enhance ways the Town helps less advantaged households, including disadvantaged seniors, disabled individuals, and families and individuals of color, to receive the services and care more advantaged households have. This includes nutritious food, housing and timely housing repairs, reliable and affordable wifi services, and youth employment. Within the Public Schools of Brookline, these funds can support tutoring; greater access to social workers; guidance counselors to help with college applications, financial aid documents, and overnight arrangements for college visits; and after-school, weekend, and summer enrichment. Funds received can also be used to address issues such as racial equity and climate change.

¹ <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/property/single-family-home-prices/>

² <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/brookline-ma-population>