

WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS



PROPOSED FY'18 OPERATING BUDGET EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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OF THE WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS





WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

January 19, 2017

Dear Westwood School Committee and Westwood Residents,

I am pleased to present to you an Executive Summary of the *FY'18 Superintendent's Recommended Budget*. This document is a “big-picture” overview, but one that also provides detailed explanations of our budget requests. It is written with the goal that any Westwood resident can read it and fully understand the school budget. I hope you find it clear, concise, and easy-to-read, as one of my primary goals is to provide a high level of transparency during the budget process. As in past years, you will notice the use of a “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” format and a table of contents for easy reference.

My budget request for FY'18 totals \$43,226,362, which represents a modest 3.34% increase over FY'17. It should be noted that the increase is actually below the 4% guideline that was agreed upon by town officials during last year's budget discussions. However, it is an excellent budget that allows us to meet many of our needs. Our ability to keep the budget increase at this level was due to several factors, not the least of which is that *last year's* budget allowed us to address some long-overdue and neglected areas. Having a “base budget” that is adequate allows for more consistent and reasonable budget increases year over year.

Before you read the summary, I want to point out the major highlights of my FY'18 budget request. More detail can be found later in the document.

- A 3.34% increase over FY'17
- No cuts to programs or services.
- Contractual salary increases of \$967,862.
- The addition of 6.96 FTE new personnel district-wide. This total includes 4.93 FTE Special Education staff that are required due to students' legally-mandated Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).
- A net increase in Fixtures, Furniture & Equipment (FF&E), Technology, and miscellaneous non-salary accounts of \$70,192.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this budget or any other school related matter. I can be reached by e-mail at jantonucci@westwood.k12.ma.us, or by phone at 781-326-7500 x1341. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

John J. Antonucci

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LOOK FOR THIS SYMBOL WHICH MARKS IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS



LOOK FOR THIS SYMBOL WHICH MARKS ANY MENTION OF PERSONNEL ADDITIONS OR CHANGES. NOTE ALSO THAT THE TERM "FTE" IS OFTEN USED AS AN ABBREVIATION FOR FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT.



LOOK FOR THIS SYMBOL WHICH MARKS ITEMS FOR YOUR INFORMATION (FYI)



WHAT IS THE FY'18 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST?

As the table below illustrates, my recommended budget for FY'18 totals \$43,226,362, which represents a 3.34% increase over FY'17.

Final FY'17 Budget	\$ 41,830,053
Proposed FY'18 Budget	\$ 43,226,362
Increase (\$)	\$ 1,396,309
Increase (%)	3.34%

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR BUDGET CATEGORIES?

The following table breaks down the total budget into five major categories. As you can see, **salaries**, by far, are the greatest budget driver. Salaries account for 85.8% of the overall budget, which is consistent with past years.

Major Budget Category	FY'17 Budget	Proposed FY'18 Budget	Incremental Change (\$)	Incremental Change (%)
Total Salaries	35,754,181	37,080,298	1,326,117	3.71%
Special Education (non-salary)	1,273,098	1,091,216	(181,882)	-14.29%
Utilities	1,432,650	1,432,650	-	0.00%
Operations and Maintenance (non-salary)	818,225	918,376	100,151	12.24%
All other non-salary	2,551,899	2,703,822	151,923	5.95%
TOTAL	41,830,053	43,226,362	1,396,309	3.34%



WHAT ARE THE CHANGES TO THE BUDGET?

FY'17 TO FY'18

The following chart lists all of the changes included in my budget proposal. It is intended to show the progression from the Final FY'17 Budget to my FY'18 Recommended Budget. In short, it is “how the budget is built”.

Budget Request	FTE (if personnel)	Budget Impact
Final FY'17 Budget	-	41,830,053
Increase salaries for existing personnel (contractual)	-	967,862
High School: Add 0.75 FTE Science teacher (class size mitigation)	0.75	45,000
High School: Add 0.25 FTE English teacher (class size mitigation)	0.25	15,000
Thurston: Add 0.70 FTE Music teacher	0.70	42,000
Thurston: Add 0.20 FTE Wellness teacher	0.20	12,000
Elementary: Add 0.50 FTE Elementary Science Content Specialist	0.50	30,000
Elementary: Increase Kindergarten assistants by 3 hours/week to accommodate new schedule	0.63	16,500
Elementary: Decrease Grade 5 teaching staff at Downey School due to declining enrollment	(1.00)	(60,000)
Special Education: Add 4.33 FTE Instructional Assistants/ABA Tutors to meet requirements of students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)	4.33	109,770
Special Education: Add 0.6 FTE Teaching staff to meet requirements of students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)	0.60	36,000
Athletics: Add Assistant coaches in Cross-Country, Basketball, and Soccer; Adjust coaches/officials line item to reflect actual expenditures.		28,313
Miscellaneous adjustments to salary and extra-curricular stipend line items to reflect actual expenditures (no FTE impact).		83,672
Net Increase to Miscellaneous Non-Salary accounts. Drivers include: increase to School Bus Transportation, decrease to SPED Tuition/Transportation, additional supplies and materials for J-Term implementation, and increase to District budget for Communications/Outreach consultant.		15,041
Net increase to Fixtures, Furniture & Equipment (FF&E), Technology, and other miscellaneous non-salary accounts. Drivers include: Curriculum supplies for Elementary Science and Literacy, Cafeteria tables at Deerfield and Downey, Student desk/chair replacement at Thurston, and ceiling mounted projectors at Thurston.		55,151
FY'18 Superintendent's Recommended Budget	6.96	43,226,362

WHAT ARE THE BUDGET DRIVERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

As we have said in past years, Special Education is, without a doubt, the most volatile of all school department budget items. The reason is that we are legally mandated to provide a certain level of service to students with special needs, as defined in the student's Individualized Education Plan, or "IEP". As it relates to budget requests, it is important to note that as students' needs change, the budget must also change. This interdependent relationship between a) mandated services, b) student needs, and c) school budgets means that forecasting Special Education expenses is a difficult, if not an impossible challenge for school administrators throughout the country.

In FY'18, we estimate that the two largest Special Education budget drivers, *Tuition* and *Transportation*, will decrease. More information is below:

Tuition: This budget takes into account a stable, and relatively low, number of students in out-of-district placements. We expect to have between 22 and 24 students in out-of-district placements next year, which is approximately 5% of our total special education population.

SPED Tuition	FY'17	FY'18	Difference
Residential Tuition	281,005	213,218	(67,787)
Day Tuition	1,167,944	909,662	(258,282)
Collaborative Tuition	204,738	334,552	129,814
Total	1,653,687	1,457,432	(196,255)

Transportation: This budget, in addition to reflecting projected costs for actual students requiring transportation, also reflects the impact of a recently negotiated contract with a new Special Education transportation provider, Van Pool. New rates for FY'17 (this year) were approximately 8% below FY'16 and, importantly, the level of service has been exceptional.

SPED Transportation	FY'17	FY'18	Difference
In-District Transportation	189,599	269,829	80,230
Out-of-District Transportation	588,036	464,179	(123,857)
Total	777,635	734,008	(43,627)

ARE THERE NEW POSITIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Yes. There are a total of 4.93 FTE new personnel in Special Education. The staffing requests were developed based on IEP requirements for service district-wide and input from Principals and staff. An additional driver is our ongoing commitment to educate the vast majority of our students in their home community and the commensurate requirement to provide appropriate services. The budget requests include:



2.50 ABA Tutors (\$75,000)

This request includes the addition of 2.0 FTE ABA Tutors at Downey School to accommodate the needs of students rising from the Westwood Integrated Pre-School into in-district programs at Downey. In addition, Westwood High School will need 0.5 FTE ABA Tutor to accommodate the needs of students rising from Thurston Middle School.



ABA is an abbreviation for “Applied Behavioral Analysis”. Behavior analysis focuses on the principles that explain how learning takes place. Positive reinforcement is one such principle. When a behavior is followed by some sort of reward, the behavior is more likely to be repeated. Through decades of research, the field of behavior analysis has developed many techniques for increasing useful behaviors and reducing those that may cause harm or interfere with learning. Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the use of these techniques and principles to bring about meaningful and positive change in behavior.

1.83 FTE Instructional Assistants (\$34,770)

The addition of 1.83 FTE Instructional Assistants will allow for service delivery requirements to be met in all schools (in particular the High School as enrollment increases) and programs as students continue to stay in-district and receive comprehensive special education services.

0.4 FTE Resource Room Teacher at Hanlon School (\$24,000)

This increase in staffing is in response to recent enrollment changes at Hanlon and frequent turnover in the part time position. The increase creates equalized staffing in this role across the five elementary schools.

0.2 FTE Learning Center Teacher at Westwood High School (\$12,000)

Increases current 0.8 FTE Learning Center to teacher to full-time. This addition allows us to meet the demands of increased caseloads due to rising enrollment, as well as accommodate high-needs students rising from Thurston Middle School.



WHAT ARE THE BUDGET PRIORITIES AT WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL?

With enrollment at Westwood High School still on the rise, the budget priorities are focused, once again, on mitigating higher than desirable class sizes. While there are needs in multiple departments, the highest priorities for the high school administration are in Science and English. More detail is below:



0.75 FTE High School Science Teacher (\$45,000)

Increased enrollment at the high school has led to high class sizes. In addition, over the last several years, WHS has seen an increase in student enrollment in science electives such as Computer Science and Engineering. In fact, currently 85% of WHS seniors choose to enroll in more than one science class. This position will allow us to decrease class sizes in some core high school classes, such as Biology, and add a new Environmental Science and Ecology elective, while also maintaining the existing science elective program.

0.25 FTE High School English Teacher (\$15,000)

This position will allow a modest decrease in class size by expanding a current part-time position to a full-time position.



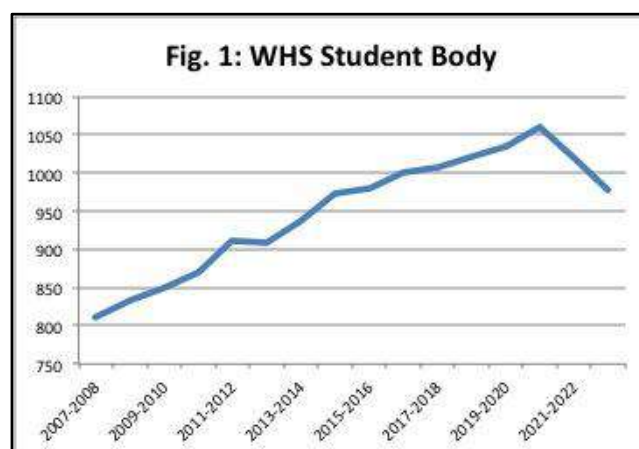
Enrollment by Department: 2016-2017

Dept	fewer than 15 students		15-19 students		20-24 students		25-29 students		30+ students		Total Sections	Total Students	Class size average
	Total	% of sections	Total	% of sections	Total	% of sections	Total	% of sections	Total	% of sections			
Art	5	22.7%	7	31.8%	9	40.9%	1	4.5%	0	0.0%	22	316	17.6
English	4	7.4%	15	27.8%	24	44.4%	11	20.4%	0	0.0%	54	1113	20.7
Foreign Lang.	13	26.0%	21	42.0%	15	30.0%	1	2.0%	0	0.0%	50	17	17.2
Math	5	9.6%	14	26.9%	22	42.3%	11	21.2%	0	0.0%	52	1095	21.1
Science	3	5.7%	18	34.0%	17	32.1%	15	28.3%	0	0.0%	53	1147	21.6
Social Studies	8	15.4%	12	23.1%	27	51.9%	5	9.6%	0	0.0%	52	20	20.1
SIPP	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	21	21.1



Looking Ahead

Westwood High School currently serves 1,000 students, a population that has grown by 190 students in the last nine years (Fig. 1). The projected student populations for the upcoming years show that this marked increase will continue (to a peak of 1,059 in 2020-2021) and will require staffing increases in key areas.



WHAT ARE THE BUDGET PRIORITIES AT THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL?

Thurston has requested a modest increase of 0.9 FTE new personnel. One position is to address programmatic needs; the other is to mitigate higher than desirable class sizes. More detail is below:

0.7 FTE Middle School Music (\$42,000)

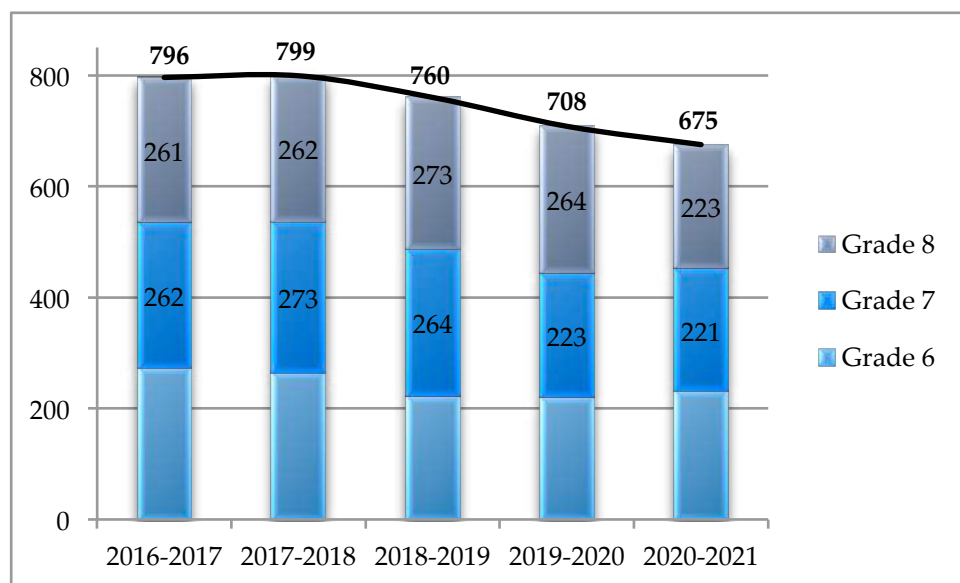
Currently, most students at TMS elect to take a performance-based music class (band, chorus, or orchestra). A portion of students opt for a general music class instead of a performance class. With current staffing levels, the general music class only meets for one semester. As a result, general music students are enrolled in an extra PE class for the other semester. This position would allow us to expand general music to a full-year course, while simultaneously updating the curriculum to tap into a wide range of students' music interests. This change would also help solve persistently high class sizes in PE.

0.2 FTE Middle School PE (\$12,000)

This position, in addition to the music position described above, would address large PE class sizes, particularly in grade 6. In addition, it would allow us to expand our adapted PE programming which gives some of our special education students the opportunity to work on both physical and social skills.



Enrollment has “plateaued” at Thurston at just under 800 students and our population is projected to hold steady for one more year before beginning to decline in 2018. Projected enrollment is as follows:



WHAT ARE THE BUDGET PRIORITIES AT THE PK/ELEMENTARY LEVEL?

0.5 FTE Elementary Science Content Specialist (\$30,000)

Our experience during year 1 of the planned 3-year implementation of a new elementary science program has highlighted the need for additional science content support for elementary classroom teachers. This position would increase content support and instructional coaching for teachers.



Increase Kindergarten Assistants by 3 hours per week (\$16,500)

This staffing change (a total of 0.63 FTE district wide) supports our transition to full day Wednesdays for Kindergarteners.

Decrease of 1.0 FTE Classroom teacher at Downey School (-\$60,000)

The budget is offset by a staff reduction at Downey School due to declining enrollment. Since Downey will “graduate” three Grade 5 classes this year, and we expect only two incoming Kindergarten classes for next year, the total number of classroom teachers will decrease to 12 from 13.

ARE THERE OTHER INCREASES TO THE SALARY BUDGET?

Yes. There are other changes to salary line items that do not have an impact to the total number of FTE's. They include:

- Increasing the High School Technology Support Specialist by 15 days. The volume of technology usage at the high school has increased significantly over the last several years, requiring significant maintenance, setup, and support at the end of the school year and in preparation for the start of the year. This increase adjusts the budget to reflect actual practice. (\$3,672)
- Increasing extra-curricular stipend line items at Westwood High School and Thurston Middle School to better reflect actual expenditures. (\$80,000)
- Athletics: Added Assistant coaches in Cross-Country, Basketball, and Soccer; adjusted the coaches/officials budget line item to reflect actual expenditures. (\$28,313)

WHAT ARE THE BUDGET DRIVERS IN NON-SALARY ACCOUNTS?

The increase in general Non-Salary accounts and Fixtures, Furniture & Equipment (FF&E) is \$70,192, an amount that represents just a fraction (5%) of the overall budget increase of \$1,396,309. It should be noted that this is a *net* increase, and there are in fact increases to several non-salary line items that are offset by a large reduction in the Special Education Tuition and Transportation (see page 5). Some of the larger budget drivers include:

- **\$33,048 – Increase School Bus Transportation:** FY'18 will be Year 1 of a new bus transportation contract (we will be going out to bid this Spring). This amount reflects a projected increase for FY'18.
- **\$58,000 – Increase Student Services expenses budget:** There are several accounts in the Student Services budget that require adjustments to reflect actual costs, including: Legal, Testing, Extended School Year, and Tutoring.
- **\$45,000 – Increase Maintenance budget:** The proposed FY'18 budget is increased to reflect actual expenses in several Maintenance accounts, including: Roof, Elevator, Vehicle, Telephone, and Grounds.
- **\$25,000 - Thurston Middle School Student Furniture:** In FY'16 we launched a multi-year replacement plan for student desks and chairs at Thurston. This budget allows for continuation of the plan.
- **\$20,000 - Thurston Middle School Ceiling Mounted Projectors:** It is our goal to have 100% of our classrooms outfitted with ceiling-mounted projectors. This budget increase will fund the installation in approximately nine more classrooms.
- **\$20,000 - Elementary Science Program Supplies:** Based on our pilot of the new elementary science program (STEMscopes), we will be fully implementing the program next year, necessitating the initial purchase of materials kits for Life Science and Earth & Space science.
- **\$23,110 - Elementary Literacy: Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) Kits (\$23,110)**
The district currently has “pieces” of the LLI materials, as principals have been buying the materials one kit at a time over a period of years. This expenditure would result in all five elementary schools having a complete set of materials to support our work with struggling readers. It has been identified as a top priority by our Elementary Literacy Coordinator.
- **\$20,000 - Addition of a Communications/Community Outreach consulting line item:**
With several major initiatives being considered in the district (e.g. space and capital needs study, the study of later start times at WHS, etc.), the need for communicating and engaging the community has never been greater. This budget will allow the administration to engage the services of a communications consultant to aid in this effort.

DOES THIS BUDGET CUT ANY PROGRAMS OR SERVICES?

No, we are fortunate to have avoided any cuts to programs or services. This is something we should not take for granted, as many districts (even high-performing districts) continue to experience budget difficulties.

WHAT'S MISSING FROM THE BUDGET?

ARE THERE UNFUNDED NEEDS?

Absolutely. Every year there are legitimate and justifiable needs that are not included in the Superintendent's Recommended Budget. That is because there are finite resources and it is my responsibility to present a reasonable and sustainable budget to Westwood residents. However, as I have said repeatedly over the years, *because a need goes unfunded, does not mean the need has gone away*. Among the unfunded needs are:



- Teachers K-12 to address higher-than-desirable class sizes: If we had more flexibility in the budget, and had available physical space for additional classes, we would have likely requested additional personnel in other content areas and grade levels.
- Additional Elementary Science Specialists and Elementary Science Materials Coordinator
- Additional increases for equipment in Science, Engineering & Technology (e.g lab equipment, 3D printers, etc.)
- Additional increases for Operations and Maintenance to meet ever-growing needs at Hanlon, Sheehan, and Deerfield
- Reduction or Elimination of User Fees for *Transportation* and *Athletics*.

IS THIS THE FINAL FY'18 BUDGET?

WHAT COULD CHANGE?

The presentation of the Superintendent's Recommended Budget is only the first step in the budget process. Over the next few months, the School Committee will review the budget and deliberate. It always reserves the right to make changes, modifications, additions, etc. Also, the School Committee does not work in isolation. During the budget process, it will work collaboratively with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Commission to see how the School Department's request fits into the overall Town budget.

Thank you for your continued support of the Westwood Public Schools!