



# **Westwood Public Schools**

## **FY26 Proposed Budget**

**January 16, 2025**

# Building the FY26 Proposed Budget

# How did we build the proposed FY26 budget?

## Annual budget drivers for the WPS Operating Budget:

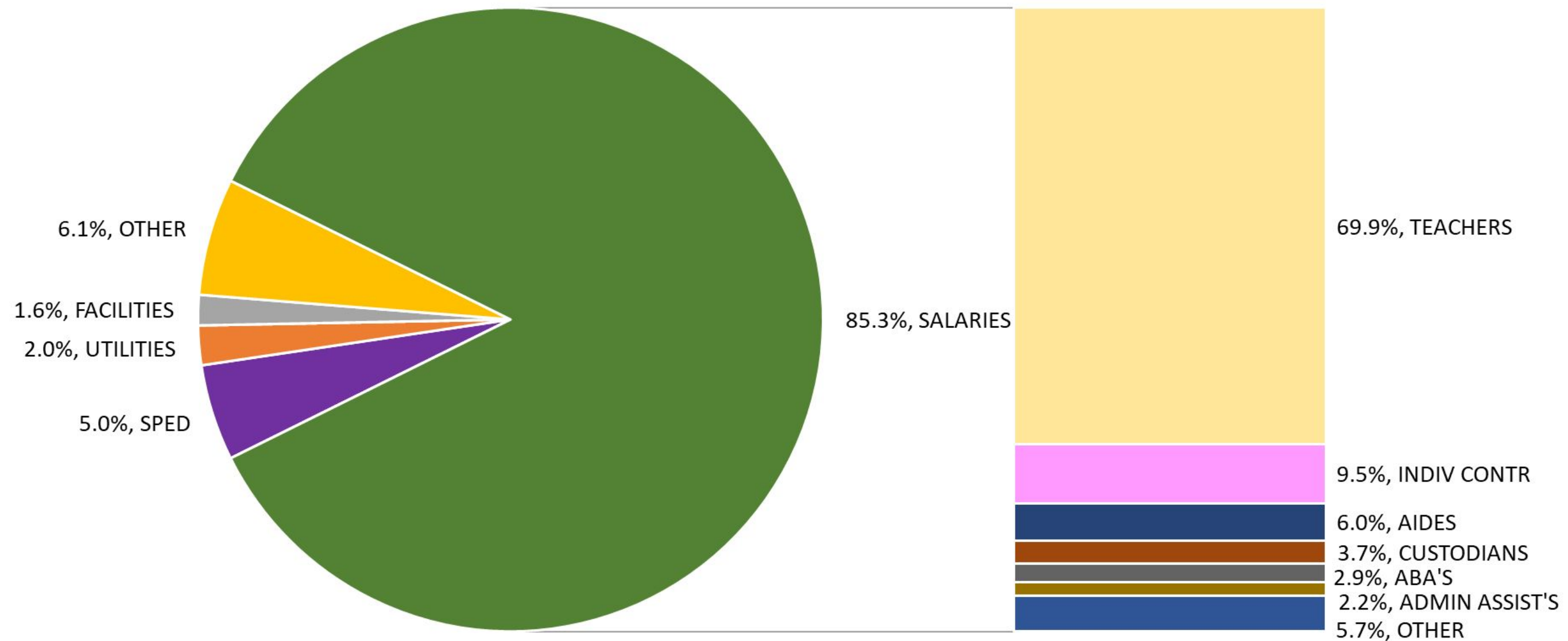
- Meet contractual salary obligations
- Meet other inflation-impacted costs (e.g., transportation, utilities)
- Maintain class sizes consistent with School Committee goals
- Address special education needs
- Continue to make progress on educational goals articulated in the district *Bridge Strategy for District Improvement*

# How did we build the proposed FY26 budget?

- Start with an a level-services budget by assessing contractual salary obligations and fixed costs
- Respond to changes in enrollment patterns and student needs
- Identify strategic additions and/or reductions consistent with district goals

# How did we build the proposed FY26 budget?

- Education is a “people business”, with 85% of budget dedicated to salaries



# Proposed FY26 Budget

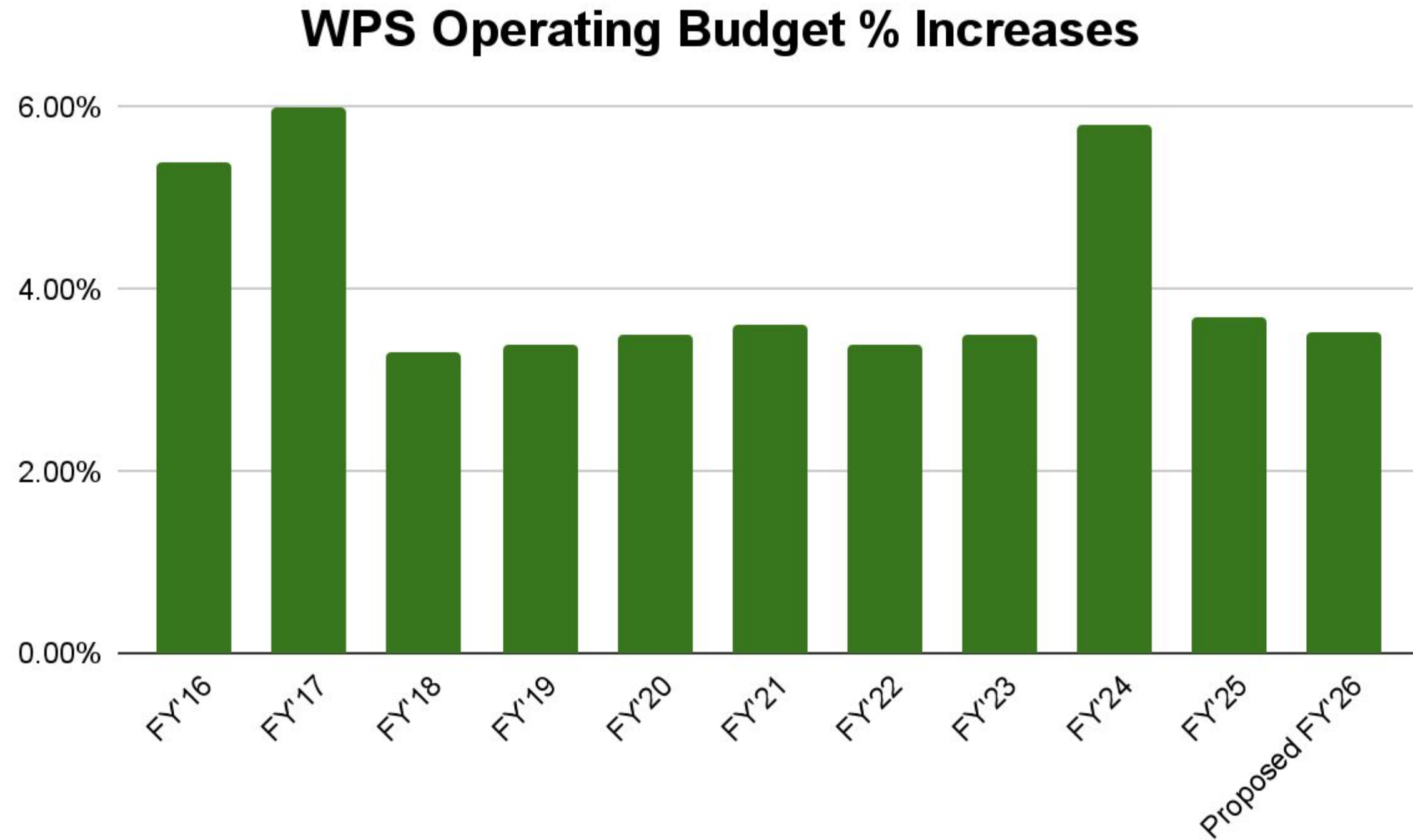
# Proposed FY26 Budget - Cost Drivers

- The biggest cost driver is contractual salary obligations
  - Currently in negotiations with teachers and administrative assistants for contracts that expire in June 2025
- Cost escalation in other areas:
  - Transportation
  - Special Education
    - Both non-salary (tuition) and salary (non-discretionary service additions)
- The financial impact of a level services budget for FY26 is a 3.88% increase

# FY26 Proposed Budget Request

- FY25 proposed budget increase is 3.52%
  - This is below the level services percentage of 3.88%
- This budget request allows us to make programming changes consistent with our strategic priorities for improvement, while maintaining our fiscal responsibility to the community
- Recommended budget for FY26 is **\$58,761,682**

# FY26 Proposed Budget Request



# FY26 Proposed Budget Request

<b>FY25 Budget</b>		<b>\$56,763,603</b>
Net increase for salaries for existing personnel		\$1,835,350
Student Support Staffing at Thurston MS	(0.6 FTE)	(\$82,353)
Instruction Staff and Supports at Westwood HS	0.8 FTE	\$25,298
Instructional and Admin Support Staff, PK-5	(2.3 FTE)	(\$211,133)
Net increase to various non-salary accounts		\$266,211
<b>Total Change</b>	<b>(2.1 FTE)</b>	<b>\$1,998,079</b>
<b>FY26 Superintendent's Recommended Budget</b>		<b>\$58,761,682</b>

# FY26 Proposed Budget Request - Categories

Major Budget Category	Voted FY25 Budget	Proposed FY26 Budget	Incremental Change (\$)	Increment Change as %
Total Salaries	\$48,406,465	\$50,138,332	\$1,731,867	3.58%
Non-Salary	\$8,357,138	\$8,623,350	\$266,212	3.19%
Special Education	\$2,711,168	\$2,931,392	\$220,224	8.12%
Utilities	\$1,262,182	\$1,202,182	(\$60,000)	(4.75%)
Facilities	\$864,335	\$924,335	\$60,000	6.94%
All other non-salary	\$3,519,453	\$3,565,441	\$45,988	1.31%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$56,763,603</b>	<b>\$58,761,682</b>	<b>\$1,998,079</b>	<b>3.52%</b>

# FY26 Proposed Budget Request - All Funds

Major Budget Category	Voted FY25 Budget	Proposed FY26 Budget	Incremental Change (\$)	Increment Change as %
Total Salaries	\$50,499,222	\$52,313,197	\$1,813,975	3.59%
Non-Salary	\$10,249,846	\$10,668,888	\$419,042	4.09%
Special Education	\$3,786,279	\$4,153,366	\$367,087	9.70%
Utilities	\$1,344,682	\$1,284,682	(\$60,000)	(4.46%)
Facilities	\$904,335	\$964,335	\$60,000	6.63%
All other non-salary	\$4,214,550	\$4,266,505	\$51,955	1.23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$60,749,068</b>	<b>\$62,982,085</b>	<b>\$2,233,017</b>	<b>3.68%</b>

# Enrollment Considerations

# Proposed FY26 Budget - Enrollment

- There is no significant change in FY26 enrollment at high school or middle school
- Overall elementary enrollment at the elementary level is relatively steady from FY25 to FY26
  - Number of class sections is determined not by overall enrollment, but by distribution across schools and grade levels
- Continued challenges with use of census data to predict incoming kindergarten enrollment
  - The FY26 budget relies on the same methodology as FY25, projecting level kindergarten enrollment from the previous year

# Proposed FY26 Budget - Kindergarten

## Kindergarten Enrollment

### Difference Between Actual and Census Data by Year

	Eligible K Students in Town Census	Enrolled K Students (as of Oct. 1 report)	Difference (Actual to Census)
2019-2020	185	206	21
2020-2021	174	203	29
2021-2022	181	201	20
2022-2023	177	197	20
2023-2024	157	225	68
<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>70</b>

# Proposed FY26 Budget - Kindergarten

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# Proposed FY26 Budget - Enrollment

- For each grade level in each school, we adhere to School Committee guidelines for elementary class sizes:
  - 18-22 students in Grades K-3
  - 18-24 students in Grades 4-5
- Based upon shifts in enrollment in schools and grade levels, the FY26 budget has a net reduction of 2.0 elementary classroom teachers
  - Addition of 1.0 FTE at Pine Hill
  - Reduction of 1.0 FTE each at Downey, Martha Jones, and Sheehan

# Proposed FY26 Budget - Enrollment

## FY26 Enrollment and Classroom Sections by School/Grade Level

	Downey	Martha Jones	Pine Hill	Sheehan
Grade K	38 (2)	41 (2)	88 (4)	34 (2)
Grade 1	38 (2)	41 (2)	88 (4)	34 (2)
Grade 2	47 (3)	54 (3)	79 (4)	55 (3)
Grade 3	52 (3)	40 (2)	78 (4)	43 (2)
Grade 4	44 (2)	46 (2)	84 (4)	50 (3)
Grade 5	46 (2)	58 (3)	77 (4)	53 (3)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>265 (14)</b>	<b>280 (14)</b>	<b>494 (24)</b>	<b>269 (15)</b>

# Staffing Changes

# FY26 Proposed Budget - Staffing Changes

- The FY26 budget calls for staffing changes in three areas that are responsive to enrollment shifts and student needs
- The changes are in three categories:
  - Student Support Staffing at Thurston MS
  - Instructional and Support Staffing at WHS
  - Instructional and Administrative Support Staff, PK-5

# FY26 Proposed Budget - Thurston MS

- Add 1.0 FTE Language-Based Special Education Teacher
  - District-wide elementary language-based special education program (LEAP) at Sheehan
  - Oldest students in the LEAP program are currently in Grade 5
  - Addition at Thurston provides necessary program and continuity for students
- Add 0.4 FTE Adjustment Counselor
  - Responsive to increased student mental health needs
  - Brings total at Thurston to 2.0 FTE
- Reduce 2.0 FTE Instructional Aides
  - Able to be realized through an analysis of student needs and a configuration of staff schedules to optimize efficiency

# FY26 Proposed Budget - Westwood HS

- Add 1.0 FTE Wellness Teacher
  - Need identified through curriculum review, initially presented in 2023
  - Provides programming to students in Grades 11 and 12
  - Ensures students can meet local graduation requirements and state law
- Reduce 0.6 FTE World Language Teacher (Mandarin)
  - Spanish and French offered in middle school; Mandarin does not begin until HS
  - Historical struggle to maintain enrollment; only 9 students currently in Mandarin I
  - 0.2 FTE remains in budget to support students currently enrolled
- Add 0.4 FTE Building Substitute
  - Increases coverage to 2.0 FTE, commensurate with TMS and Pine Hill

# FY26 Proposed Budget - PreK-5

- Reduce 2.0 FTE General Education Classroom Teachers
  - Responsive to shifts in enrollment by school and grade level
  - Addition of 1.0 FTE at Pine Hill
  - Reduction of 1.0 FTE each at Downey, Martha Jones, Sheehan
- Add 0.125 FTE Preschool Administrative Assistant
  - Work has historically required additional hours than budgeted
  - Increased support to help with program structure change in PK
- Reduce 0.4 FTE Administrative Assistant for Registration
  - School department historically subsidized position in municipal IT
  - Need absorbed by automation and existing school department personnel

# Special Education and Non-Salary Changes

# Proposed FY26 Budget - Special Education

- The most variable part of any district budget is special education
- Westwood has created several district-wide programs that allow us to educate almost all of our students in-district
  - In FY25, less than 1% of students attend out-of-district SPED placements
- Operational Services Division (OSD) has set a minimum 3.67% increase on school tuitions for FY26
  - 4.69% in FY25, 14% in FY24
  - Prior to FY24, 2-3% was the typical increase for tuitions

# Proposed FY26 Budget - Special Education

Tuition	FY25	FY26	Difference
Residential Tuition	\$145,805	\$367,286	\$221,481
Day Tuition	\$1,538,058	\$1,573,624	\$35,566
Collaborative Tuition	\$401,426	\$410,295	\$8,869
<b>Tuition Total</b>	<b>\$2,085,289</b>	<b>\$2,351,205</b>	<b>\$265,916</b>
Transportation	FY25	FY26	Difference
Out-of-District SPED Transportation	\$596,470	\$698,248	\$101,778
In-District SPED Transportation	\$485,116	\$474,603	(\$10,513)
<b>Transportation Total</b>	<b>\$1,081,586</b>	<b>\$1,172,851</b>	<b>\$91,265</b>

# Proposed FY26 Budget - Non-Salary

- Increase in Special Education Tuition and Transportation: \$210,318
  - Net impact of tuition, transportation, and Circuit Breaker offset
- Increase in Yellow Bus Transportation: \$55,893
  - Existing vendor contract for transportation
- Increase in Building Maintenance: \$60,000
- Decrease in Electricity at Westwood HS: (\$60,000)
  - Shift of budget funds to reflect historical spending

# Revenue Assumptions

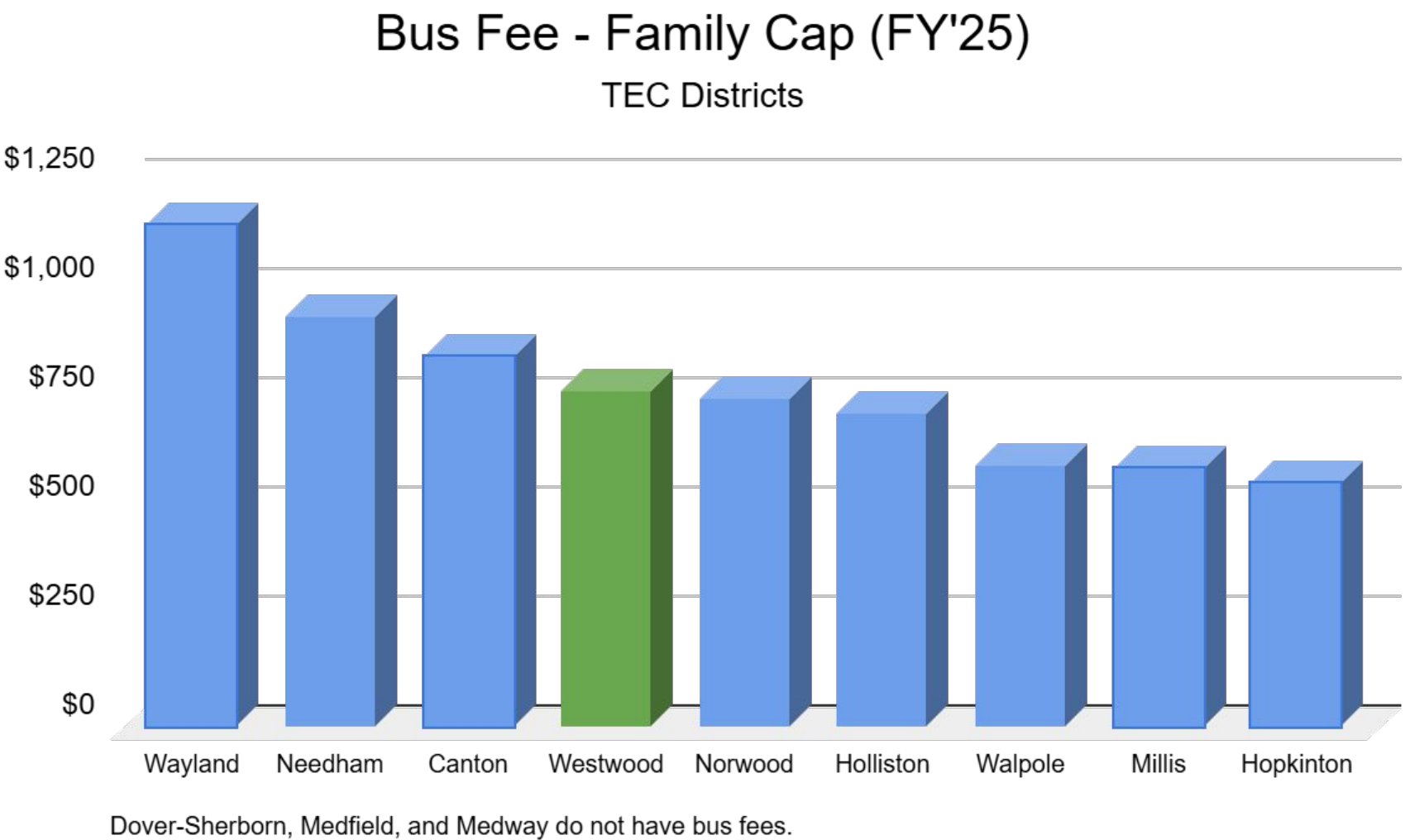
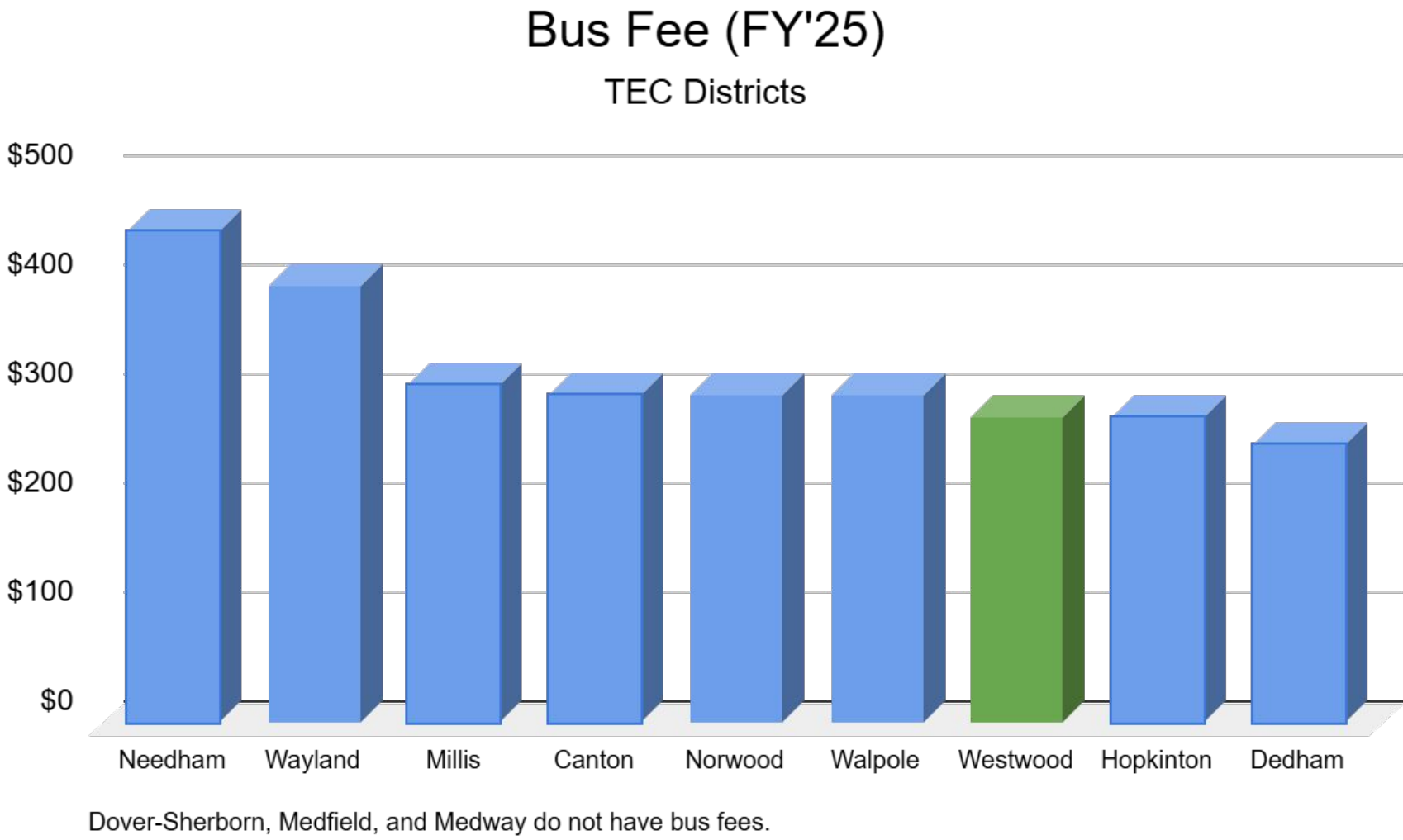
# FY26 Proposed Budget - Revenue

- Circuit Breaker
  - Offset based on previous year's receipts
  - FY26 offset is \$146,863 higher than FY25
- Grants
  - Increase of \$54,299 in IDEA Special Education grant
  - Increase of \$2,427 in Early Childhood Special Education grant
  - Increase of \$4,777 in METCO grant
  - Reduction of \$1,121 in the Title II grant

# FY26 Proposed Budget - Revenue

- Approximate 3% increase to Bus Fees, Athletic Fees, and Preschool Tuition
- Bus Fees: Change from \$280/student to \$290/student
  - Family cap increased by \$100/family per year
  - Anticipated revenue increase of \$10,553
- Athletic Fees: Change from \$310/student to \$320/student for most sports
  - Family cap increased by \$200/family per year
  - Anticipated revenue increase of \$10,729

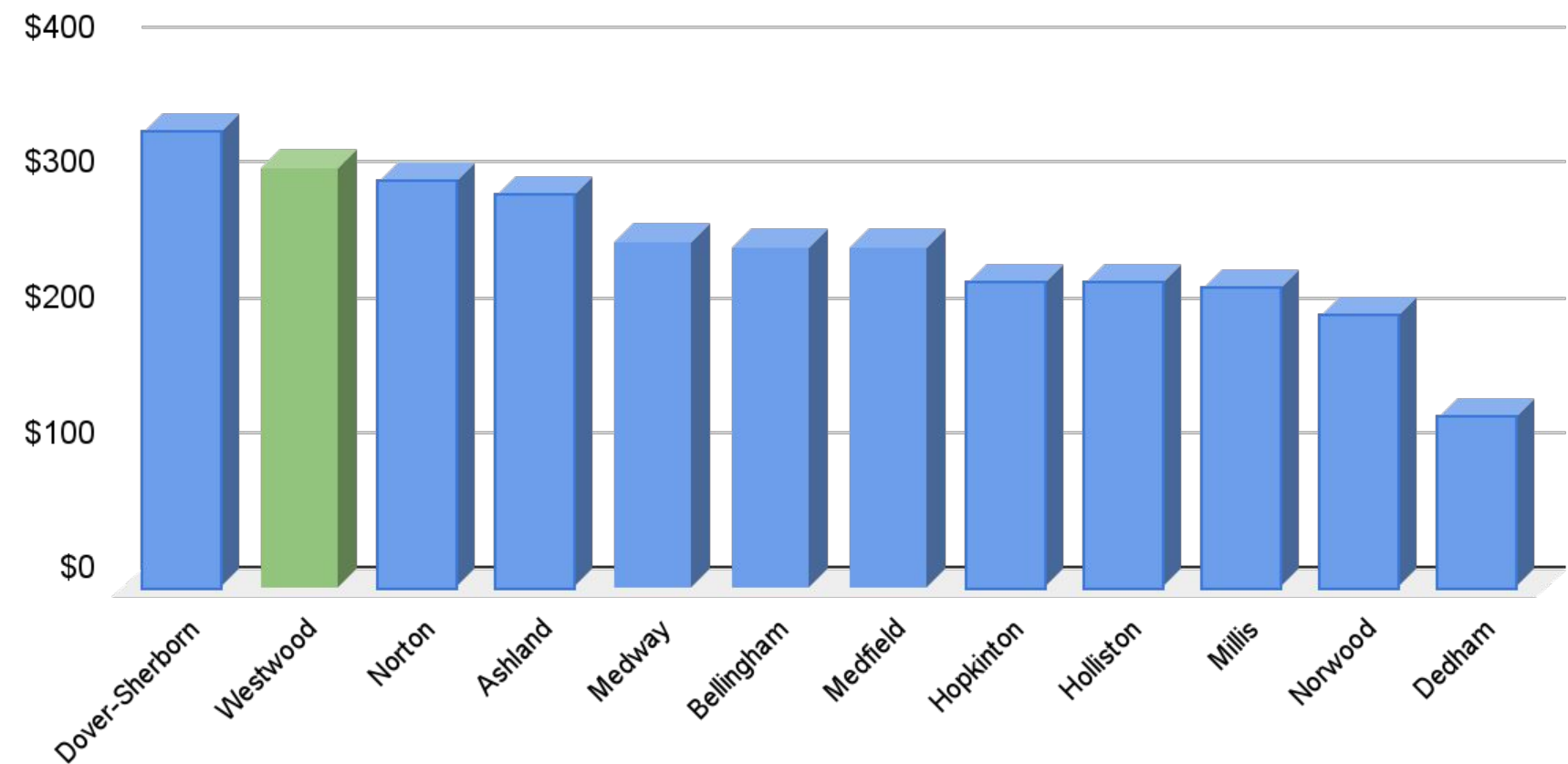
# Bus Fees in Comparable Districts (TEC)



# Athletic Fees in Comparable Districts (TVL)

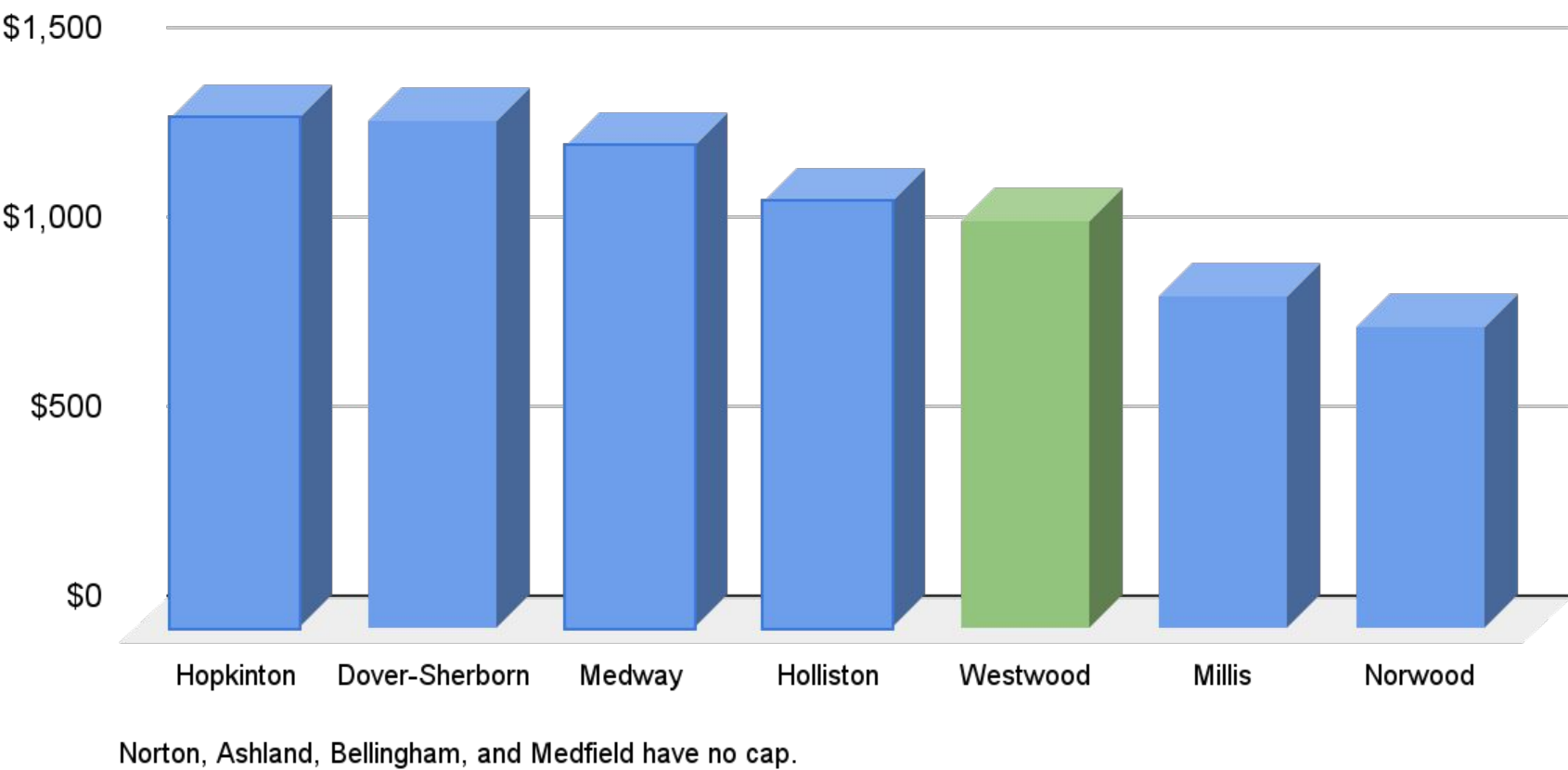
Base Athletic Fee (FY'25)

Tri-Valley Districts



Athletic Fee Cap (FY'25)

Tri-Valley Districts



# Capital Budget

# Annual Capital Budget

Annual capital increase from \$1.017M to \$1.14M, with some shift of priorities between categories:

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Proposed
Description	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Technology	130,000	130,000	120,000	150,000	100,000
Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	100,000	30,000	80,000	67,000	150,000
HVAC	217,000	200,000	132,000	200,000	100,000
Roofing	100,000	150,000	100,000	250,000	200,000
Building Improvements & Security	400,000	487,000	400,000	350,000	430,000
Copiers	20,000	20,000	60,000	0	0
Vehicles	50,000	0	125,000	0	160,000
Total	1,017,000	1,017,000	1,017,000	1,017,000	1,140,000

# Annual Capital Budget

Planned projects and other upcoming priorities:

- Roofing projects, including Sheehan and Thurston
- Rooftop HVAC units and other mechanical systems at High School
- 1-to-1 device refresh cycle in Technology
- Public Address (PA) systems and voice-over-IP (VOIP) phone systems
- Science laboratory equipment
- Security cameras
- Multi-function Student Activity Bus (14 passenger) for after-school or field trip transportation

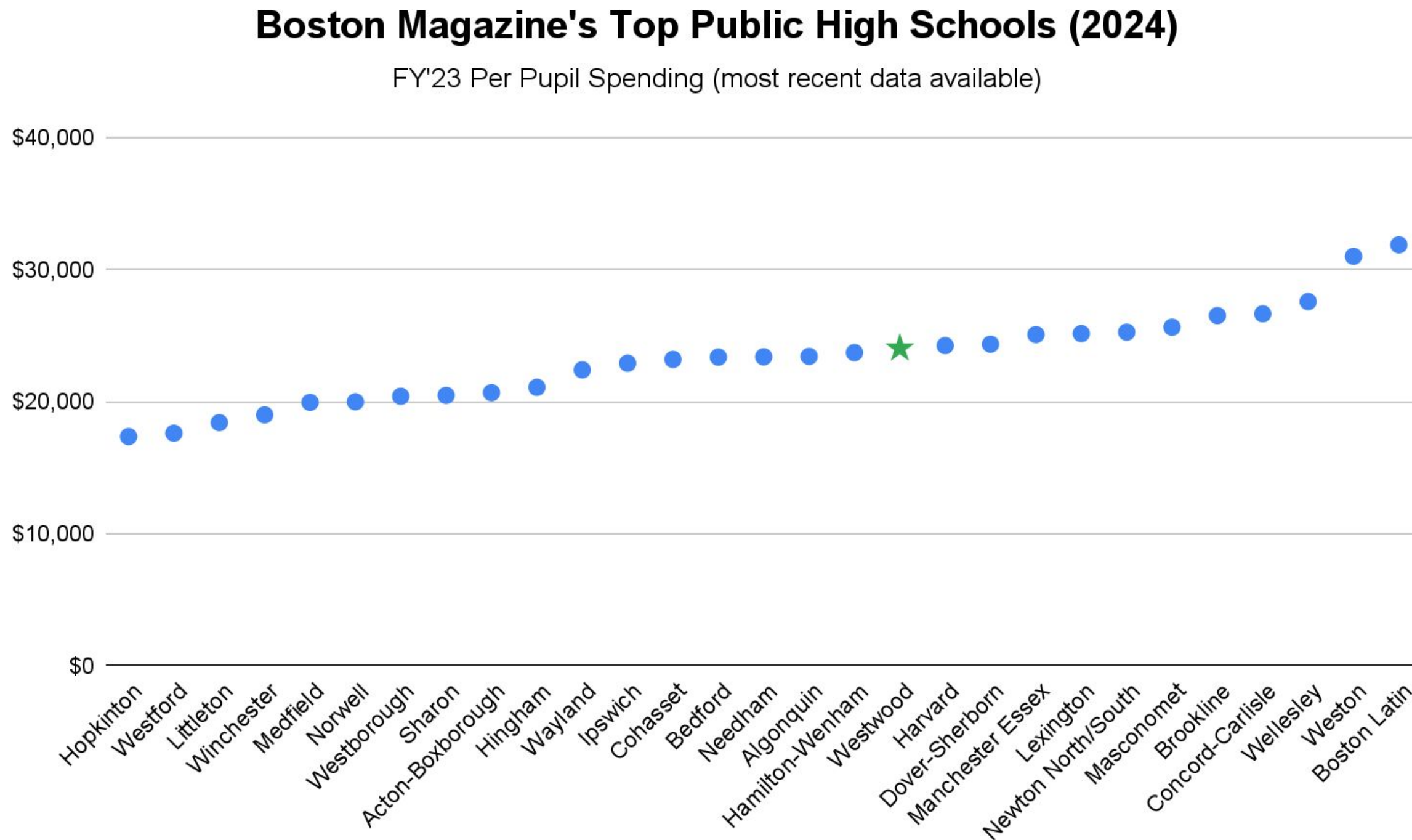
# Additional Capital Article

## Sheehan Electrical Sub-panel Upgrade

- SMMA engineers and Dore + Whittier engineers prioritized the Sheehan electric sub-panel replacements for the functionality and safety of the building.
- Work rose to the top of a list of district priorities, and should not be delayed.
- Estimated project budget is \$530K.
- Engineering specifications are complete, and work anticipated summer 2025.

# Comparisons and Future Priorities

# How does our Per-Pupil Spending Compare?



# Future Priorities

- Creation of an additional Preschool classroom
- Additional student mental health support
- District Data Analyst
- Enrollment-driven increase in classroom teachers
- Utility costs

Future priorities will also be informed by the next iteration of the district improvement strategy, as well as the release of the master facilities plan

# Next Steps

- School Committee Public Budget Hearing: **February 13, 2025**
- Finance Committee Presentation and Budget Hearing: **February 25, 2025**
- Annual Town Meeting: **May 19, 2025**