

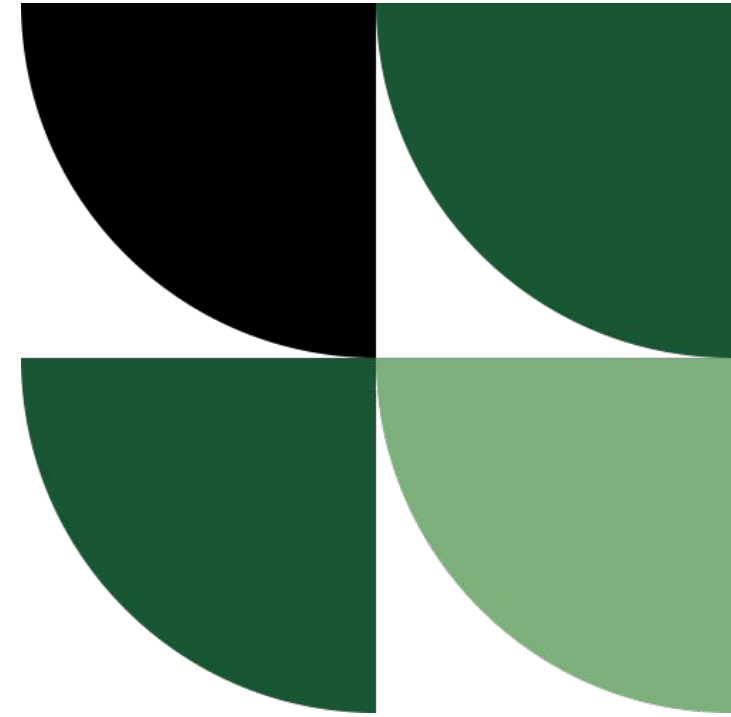
# **Westwood Integrated Preschool**

## **Structure and Tuition**



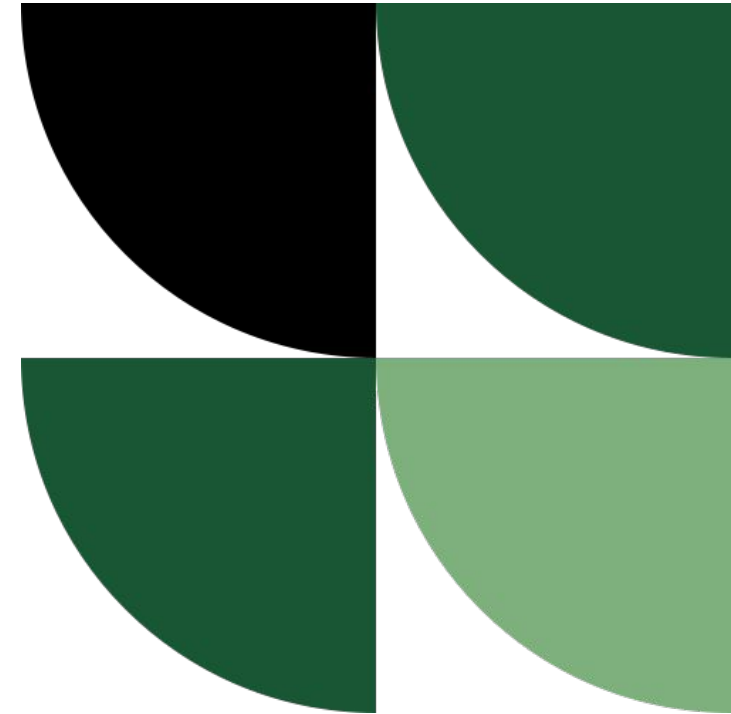
# Context

- Typical integrated preschool classrooms in Massachusetts have a class size of 15
  - Seven students receiving special education services
  - Eight peer model students
  - State guidelines require the number of peer model students to exceed the number of students receiving special education students in a classroom
- The current Westwood Integrated Preschool houses three classrooms
  - Students attend 4 or 5 days, with various dismissal times
    - 11:15 AM, 12:45 PM, 2:30 PM
  - At maximum capacity, the program supports 21 students with IEPs and 24 peer model students
- The number of students with disabilities who are entitled to receive services increase as the year progresses
  - Westwood has been required to apply for class size waivers on an annual basis
  - In recent years, enrollment has grown to 17-21 students by the end of the year



# Student Referrals and Program Qualification

- Students are often referred to preschool by Early Intervention
  - Referrals occur when a student is 2.6 years of age
- As referrals come throughout the school year, spaces must be created in the program regardless of seat availability
- Typically, only 3-8 seats are open at the beginning of the school year
  - 2021-2022: 15 students qualified for a program seat mid-year
  - 2022-2023: 15 students qualified for a program seat mid-year
  - 2023-2024: 18 students qualified for a program seat mid-year
  - 2024-2025: 7 students qualified for a program seat mid-year (to date)
- Due to physical space limitations, class sizes have had to exceed 15 students, requiring a waiver from the state



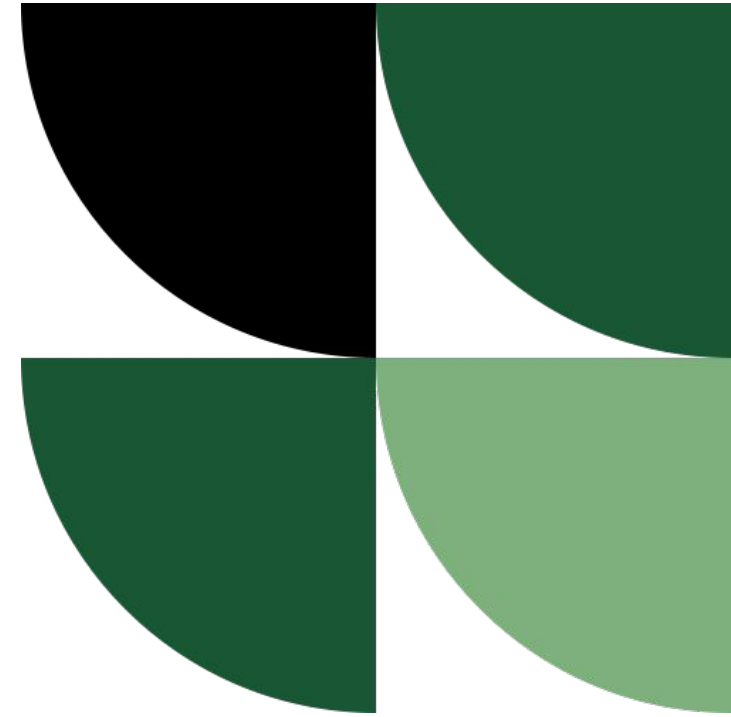
# Trends in Referrals

- Referrals over the past few years show increases in:
  - Autism related disabilities
  - Social emotional deficits
  - Developmental delays
  - Increasing behavioral challenges
  - Lagging social skills and readiness
  - Medical and physical challenges
- While WABA has historically been able to accommodate a few preschool-aged students with autism, enrollment numbers at Pine Hill are increasing and space must be prioritized for K-5 students



# Peer District Context

- Neighboring and comparable towns typical offer half-day preschool options to most students in the integrated preschool setting
  - Usually, 2.5-3 hours in length
- A half-day program is most often appropriate to achieve a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for most preschool students in special education
  - All districts offer extended hours for some students with greater needs



# Peer District Context

## Programs for Students with Moderate Disabilities

Town	Days of Programming	Hours per Day	Hours per Week
Westwood (Existing)	4,5 day options	4 or 5.75 hours	16-28.75 hours/week
Dover	3,4 day options	3 hours	9-12 hours/week
Hopkinton	4,5 day options	2.5 hours	10-12.5 hours/week
Medfield	2,3,4 day options	2.5 hours	5-10 hours/week
Medway	4 day options	2.5 or 6 hours	10-24 hours/week
Natick	2,3,4,5 day options	2.5 hours	5-12.5 hours/week
Norwood	3,4,5 day options	2.5 hours	7.5-12.5 hours/week
Wayland	2-3 half days or 2 full days	3 or 5 hours	6-10 hours/week
Wellesley	3,4,5 day options	3.0-4.25 hours	12-21 hours/week

# Plan Forward

- Goal: To open more seats for students with disabilities, while doing so within the current physical space and staffing model
- Proposed Model: For new preschool students, a program that consists of 4 or 5 half-days with 2.5 hours of instruction per day
  - Similar model to peer districts
- Students with moderate disabilities attend either:
  - Morning - 8:45AM - 11:15AM
  - Afternoon: 12:00PM - 2:30PM
- A full-day program will be operated for students with more severe disabilities, five days a week



# Plan Forward

- With 21 students graduating from the program in the current school year, this allows us to implement the change with the least disruption to families
- The full-day option that ends at 1:00PM or 2:45PM will be retained for existing students for the 2025-2026 school year
  - This option will no longer be available to new students or siblings of existing students
- Benefits to structure change include:
  - Increased opportunity to serve and support increasing population of student need
  - Ability to provide services for all students in a preschool setting
  - Allows Pine Hill to support increasing need of students recommended for WABA
  - Cost neutral, not requiring additional staffing or resources
  - Utilizes current space, keeping whole program together without satellite rooms
  - Decreases waiver requests with DESE for historical over-enrollment
  - Provides time for mid-to-long range solutions as part of facilities study





# Tuition Recommendation

- Westwood Integrated Preschool tuitions remain low when compared to other integrated public preschools and private preschool offerings
- Given the shift in program structure, a standard 3% increase is recommended for the 2025-2026 school year
  - Tuition increases from \$11.81/hr to \$12.16/hr
  - For full-day students who attend 5 days/wk, increases from \$11,543 to \$11,889 annually
  - Other students pay proportionately lower tuition based upon hours attending

