



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

TO: School Committee

FROM: Caitlin Ahern, Assistant Superintendent

DATE: May 14, 2026

RE: Elementary Math and Literacy Specialist Allocation

This memo outlines the process and outcomes for allocating our elementary Math and Literacy Specialists for the upcoming school year. We are moving away from a static model of staffing specialist roles by individual school buildings toward a data-informed, equitable distribution of staffing and resources across the district. In Westwood, we are committed to educational equity, and this process is one way in which we demonstrate that commitment in service of all students.

Process for Determining Need

To determine an equitable distribution, we first had to define "need" in a way that was objective and centered on students who require the most support. We developed a process that incorporates multiple data points to better quantify student need in each building; the data points include:

1. **Total Enrollment:** The number of students in each school
2. **Student Subgroups:** We took into account the number of English Learner (EL) and students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), acknowledging the increased resource intensity required to support these learners.
3. **Academic Need:** Academic need has two components: the percentage of students not meeting expectations on standardized assessments (MCAS grades 3-5, 2025), and the percentage of students well below benchmark on universal screeners (as measured through mCLASS Literacy and Math Mid-Year Screener Scores).

We then used this score to allocate the total available specialist FTE proportionally based on each school's share of the total district-wide need score.

Addressing Logistical Constraints

The data-driven approach allowed us to identify the theoretically optimal allocation; however, we recognized the need to overlay logistical constraints to ensure our decisions were reasonable and implementable for the people and schools involved. The process prioritized avoiding excessive staff impact while maximizing student benefit. Crucially, we worked to ensure that travel requirements—such as a specialist moving between two schools—were manageable and did not negate the benefits of the FTE shift. For example, the planning included ensuring traveling specialists avoid non-specialist duties and scheduling their time at the start or end of the day with only one transition per day.

FTE Allocation Changes for Next Year

Based on this equitable allocation process, the following changes to Math and Literacy Specialist FTE are being implemented for the upcoming year:

- **Math Specialist Allocation:** The calculated need indicated a deficit in Math Specialist support at Pine Hill. The implementation plan includes:
 - .5 FTE shifting from Martha Jones to Pine Hill
 - .25 FTE shifting from Downey to Martha Jones
 - For a total change of Pine Hill increasing Specialist support by .5 FTE, and Martha Jones and Downey reducing Math Specialist support by .25 FTE each.

School	25-26 Math Specialist FTE	26-27 Math Specialist FTE
Downey	1.5	1.25
Martha Jones	1.5	1.25
Pine Hill	2	2.5
Sheehan	1.5	1.5

- **Literacy Specialist Allocation:** Pine Hill also demonstrated the highest calculated need for Literacy support. The implementation plan includes:
 - .3 FTE shifting from Martha Jones to Pine Hill.
 - .3 FTE shifting from Downey to Pine Hill
 - For a total change of Pine Hill increasing Literacy Specialist support by .6 FTE, and Martha Jones and Downey reducing Literacy Specialist support by .3 FTE each.

School	25-26 Literacy Specialist FTE	26-27 Literacy Specialist FTE
Downey	1.8	1.5
Martha Jones	1.8	1.5
Pine Hill	2	2.6
Sheehan	1.5	1.5

- **Literacy Paraprofessional Allocation:** We also used this process to identify and address disproportionate allocation of literacy support staff. The implementation plan includes:

- .4 FTE shifting from Sheehan to Martha Jones
- .3 FTE shifting from Sheehan to Downey and an increase of .1 FTE to the position for a more equitable distribution across the buildings

School	25-26 Literacy Para FTE	26-27 Literacy Para FTE
Downey	0	.4
Martha Jones	0	.4
Pine Hill	1	1
Sheehan	1.2	.5

The full details regarding the final personnel assignments for the FTE shifts are being finalized and communicated internally to the impacted staff this week. We know that it is difficult for schools to lose even a portion of FTE in literacy and math support, and the district and school leaders will be mindful of the impact to teachers in buildings losing FTE. Additionally, we will evaluate the impact of these shifts over the course of the year, and update the process as we see necessary and in response to the data next spring.

We are grateful to Molly Singh, Elementary Math Coordinator, Marisa Wyler, Elementary Literacy Coordinator, and to elementary principals Deb Gallagher, Reid Jones, Matt Kuklantz, and Donna Tobin for their creative and thoughtful participation in developing this process and plan.