



Westwood School Committee

February 23, 2026



Superintendent's Report

February 23, 2026

Seen Around WPS...



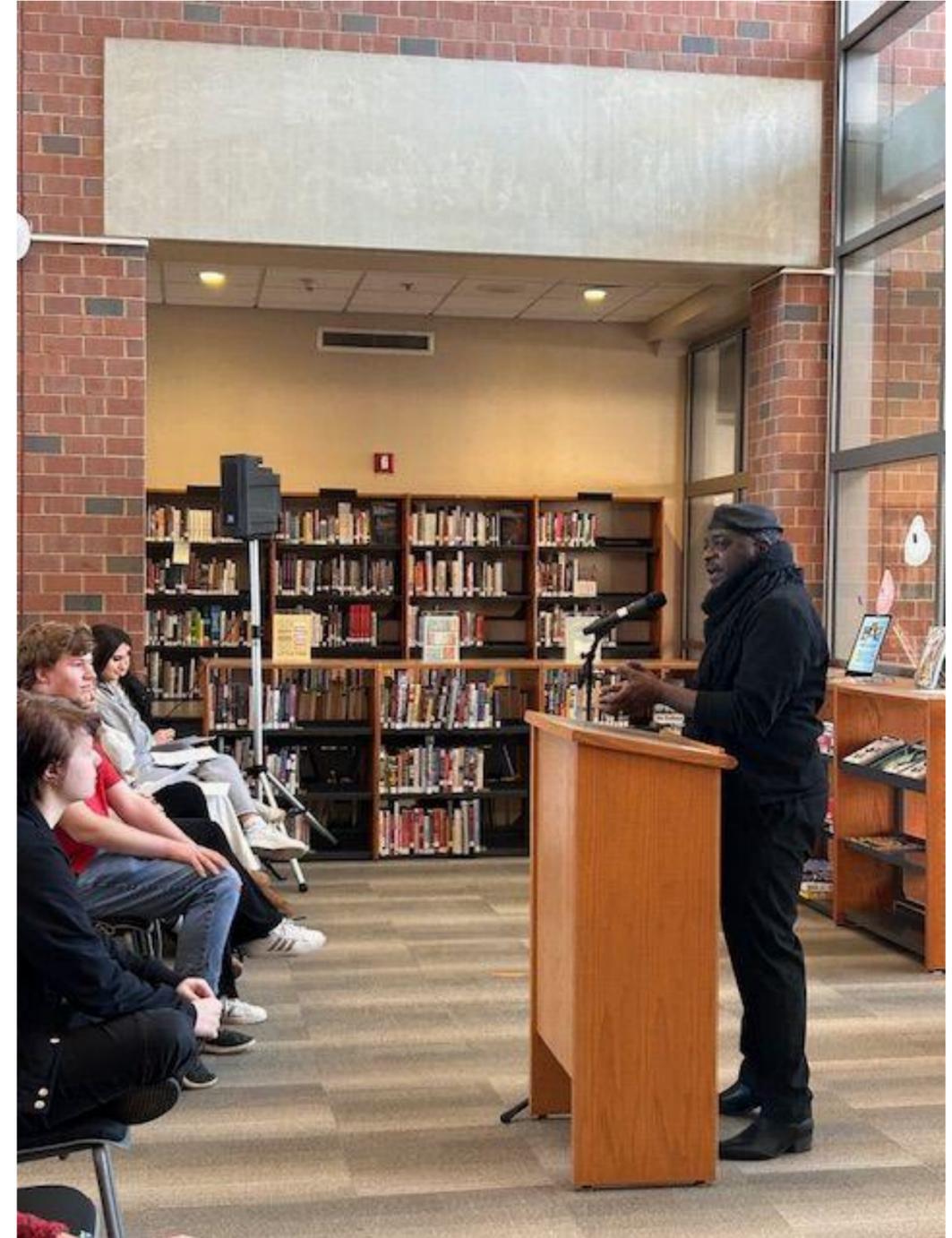
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Chair's Update



FY27 Budget Update

Initial Budget

- On January 21, the originally proposed FY27 budget was \$61,296,182
 - 4.31% increase over FY26
- This budget was developed by initially examining the cost of level services:
 - Contractual salary obligations for existing staff
 - Known non-discretionary increases in transportation and tuition
 - For FY27, level services also impacted by a reduction of federal grant funding for special education
- When combined with the need to make required staffing additions to ensure legal compliance with education regulations for special education and English Learner students, material personnel reductions were made in other areas

Scenario Development

- On January 28, the School Committee asked for two new budget scenarios to be presented:
 - A \$300,000 increase over the originally proposed FY27 budget
 - An FY27 budget at an amount consistent with the cost of level services
- Three scenarios presented on January 28:
 - Scenario 1: \$300,000 increase from proposed (4.82% above FY26)
 - Scenario 2: \$352,400 increase from proposed (4.91% above FY26)
 - Scenario 3: \$517,850 increase from proposed (5.19% above FY26)

Scenarios from February 5 Meeting

- In developing both the originally proposed budget, and the three new scenarios, the guiding principle was to focus on direct student-facing positions, with a priority of preserving access to educational opportunities for students
- In building the new scenarios, the highest priority was to address class sizes that were projected to be over School Committee guidelines at elementary schools for 2026-2027:
 - Downey, Grade 4
 - Martha Jones, Grade 1
 - Pine Hill, Grade 2
 - Sheehan, Grade 5

Scenario 2 - Recommended

- Originally proposed budget from January 21, with the following changes:
 - Restore 1.0 FTE Classroom Teacher, Downey: \$77,000
 - Restore 1.0 FTE Classroom Teacher, Martha Jones: \$91,800
 - Restore 1.0 FTE Classroom Teacher, Sheehan: \$91,800
 - Add 1.0 FTE Classroom Teacher, Pine Hill: \$91,800

Proposed FY27 Budget - Enrollment

FY27 Projected Enrollment and Classroom Sections by School/Grade Level

	Downey	Martha Jones	Pine Hill	Sheehan
Grade K	40 (2)	40 (2)	76 (4)	54 (3)
Grade 1	50 (3)	45 (3)	74 (4)	42 (2)
Grade 2	35 (2)	41 (2)	96 (5)	36 (2)
Grade 3	52 (3)	52 (3)	78 (4)	59 (3)
Grade 4	52 (3)	39 (2)	80 (4)	44 (2)
Grade 5	46 (2)	46 (2)	82 (4)	51 (3)
TOTAL	275 (15)	263 (14)	486 (25)	286 (15)

FY27 Budget - Revenue

- Tuition and Fees for Self-Sustaining Programs
 - Building Use Rental and Prodigy fees previously set for FY26-FY28
 - Recommended 4% increase for Extended Day tuition
 - Other Fees (bus, athletic, preschool tuition)
- Bus Fees: Change from \$290/student to \$300/student
 - Family cap increased by \$30/family per year
- Athletic Fees: Change from \$320/student to \$334/student for most sports
 - Family cap increased by \$56/family per year

FY27 Proposed Budget Request

FY26 Budget		\$58,761,682
Net increase for salaries for existing personnel		\$1,978,902
Special Education Reorganization	3.6 FTE	\$250,270
Other Staffing Changes	(2.2 FTE)	(308,620)
Net increase to various non-salary accounts		\$966,348
Total Change	1.4 FTE	\$2,886,900
FY27 Superintendent's Proposed Budget		\$61,648,582

FY27 Proposed Budget Request - Categories

Major Budget Category	Voted FY26 Budget	Proposed FY27 Budget	Incremental Change (\$)	Increment Change as %
Total Salaries	\$50,128,551	\$52,049,103	\$1,920,552	3.83%
Non-Salary	\$8,633,131	\$9,599,479	\$966,348	11.19%
Special Education	\$2,931,392	\$3,863,901	\$917,478	31.14%
Utilities	\$1,202,182	\$1,202,182	-	0%
Facilities	\$924,335	\$924,183	(\$152)	(0.02%)
All other non-salary	\$3,565,441	\$3,609,213	\$49,022	1.38%
TOTAL	\$58,761,682	\$61,296,182	\$2,886,900	4.91%

Annual Capital Budget

Annual capital increase from \$1.14M to \$1.28M, with some shift of priorities between categories:

CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY

Description	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Actual FY25	Actual FY26	Proposed FY27
Technology	130,000	120,000	150,000	100,000	180,000
Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	30,000	80,000	67,000	150,000	100,000
HVAC	200,000	132,000	200,000	100,000	0
Roofing	150,000	100,000	250,000	200,000	400,000
Building Improvements & Security	487,000	400,000	350,000	430,000	480,000
Copiers	20,000	60,000	0	0	30,000
Vehicles	0	125,000	0	160,000	90,000
Total	1,017,000	1,017,000	1,017,000	1,140,000	1,280,000

Next Steps

- Finance Committee Presentation: **March 10, 2026**
- Annual Town Meeting: **May 4, 2026**

Buffer Zones

What are Buffer Zones?

Buffer zones are areas identified on our district zone maps where newly registered students, or students whose home address is changing, may be assigned to one of two elementary schools.

Families of these students in these zones do not automatically know the student's school assignment when registering. School assignment is determined by the district on a rolling basis, in accordance with the proposed guidelines.

Why Buffer Zones?

- Given the uncertainty of kindergarten enrollment, and the relatively small size of our elementary schools, buffer zones create greater flexibility in student assignment
 - Supports classes within class size guidelines
 - Supports staffing in a fiscally responsible manner
- FY2027 budget contains eleven kindergarten classrooms:
 - Four (4) classrooms at Pine Hill
 - A combined seven (7) classrooms at Downey, Martha Jones, and Sheehan
- Budget tables currently have three (3) kindergarten classrooms at Sheehan; distribution will depend on actual student enrollment

Guidelines for Implementation

- Existing school assignment zones will remain unchanged
- Siblings will continue to be assigned to the same elementary school together
 - Current Grade 5 students (rising Grade 6) not considered
 - Existing practices for student assignment to Special Education programs unchanged
- Families in buffer zones will be able to state a preference for which school
 - Considered with other information; not sole determining factor
- Buffer zone assignment will be used when the volume and pace of student registration suggests enrollment at the start of the school year will likely exceed class size guidelines

Guidelines for Implementation

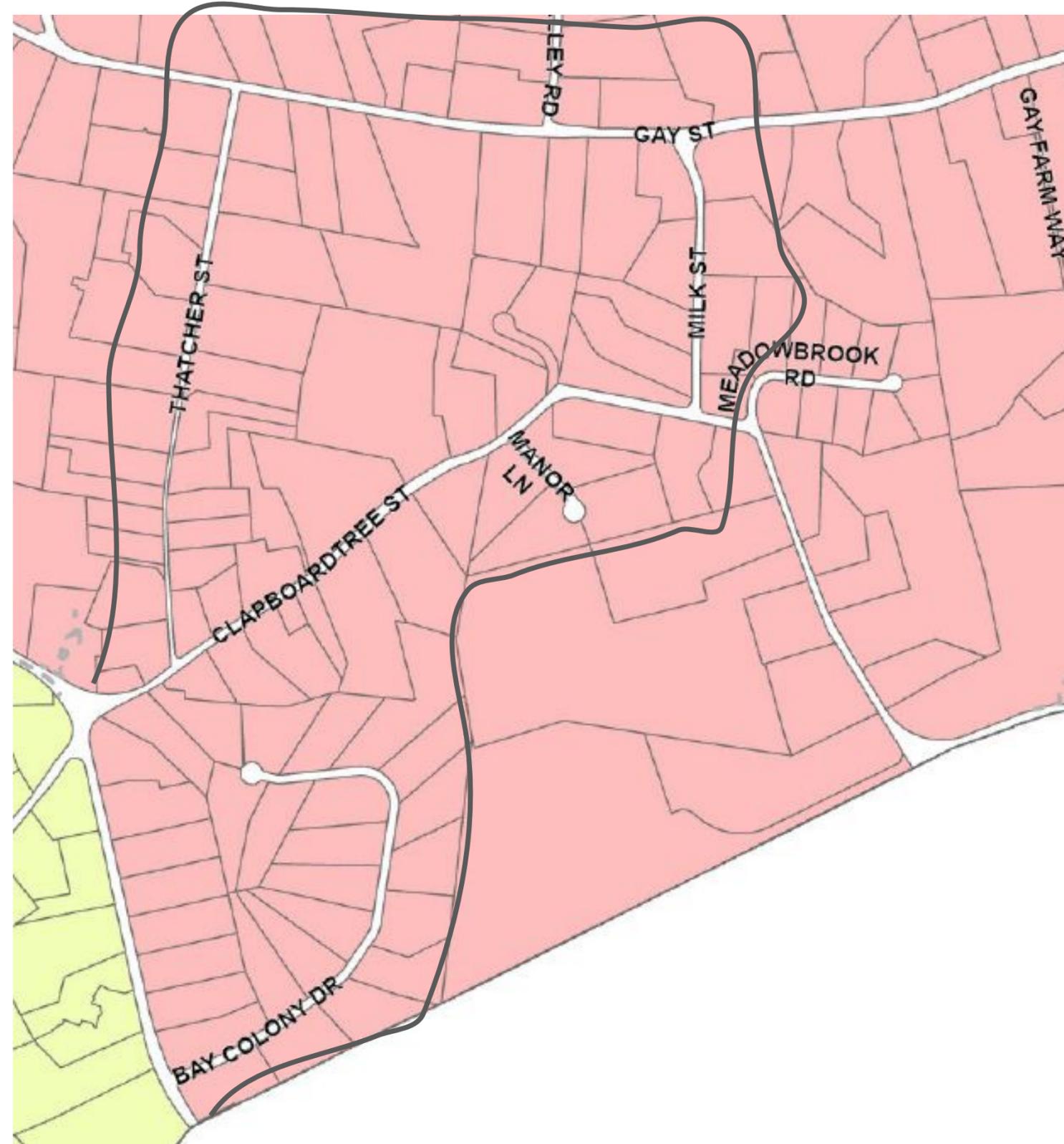
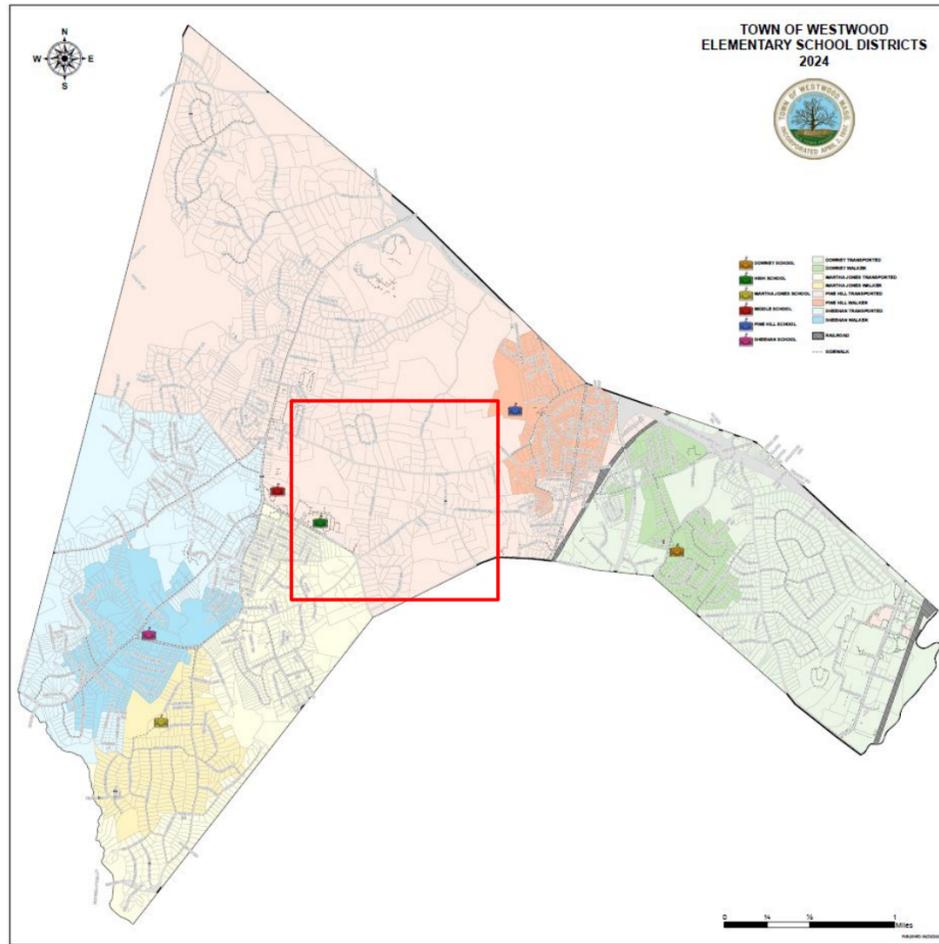
- Buffer zone assignment will not be used before enrollment reaches these thresholds:
 - Grades K-3: 18 students per classroom
 - Grades 4-5: 20 students per classroom
- Bus detours and the length of bus rides will be minimized wherever possible
 - The ability of students to walk to school will be taken into consideration
 - Eligibility for bus transportation will be consistent with Committee policy
- Families that reside in buffer zone addresses will be informed of school assignment in accordance with their date of registration
- Final decision about school assignment for students in buffer zones rests with the Superintendent and is not subject to appeal

Notification Timeline

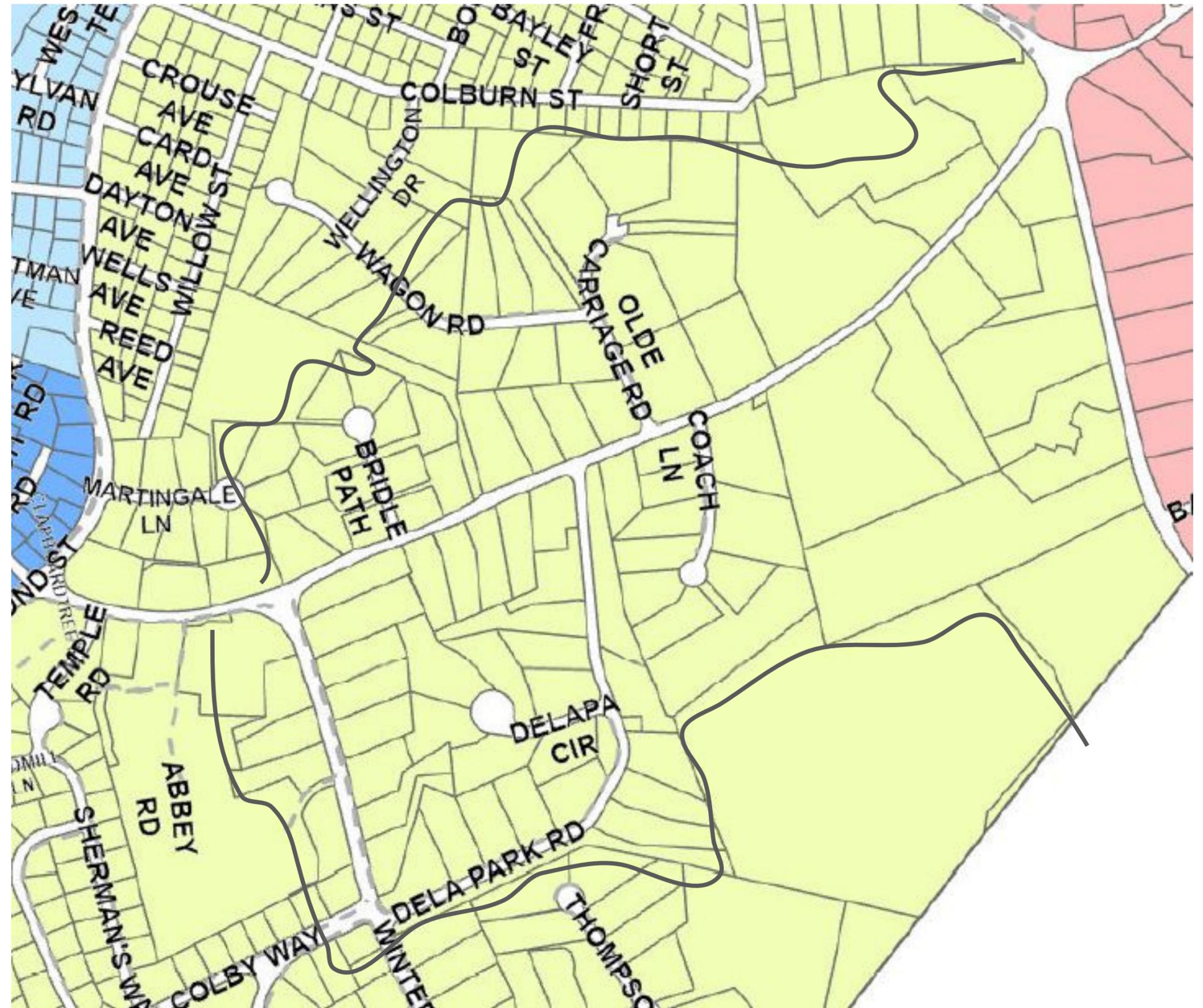
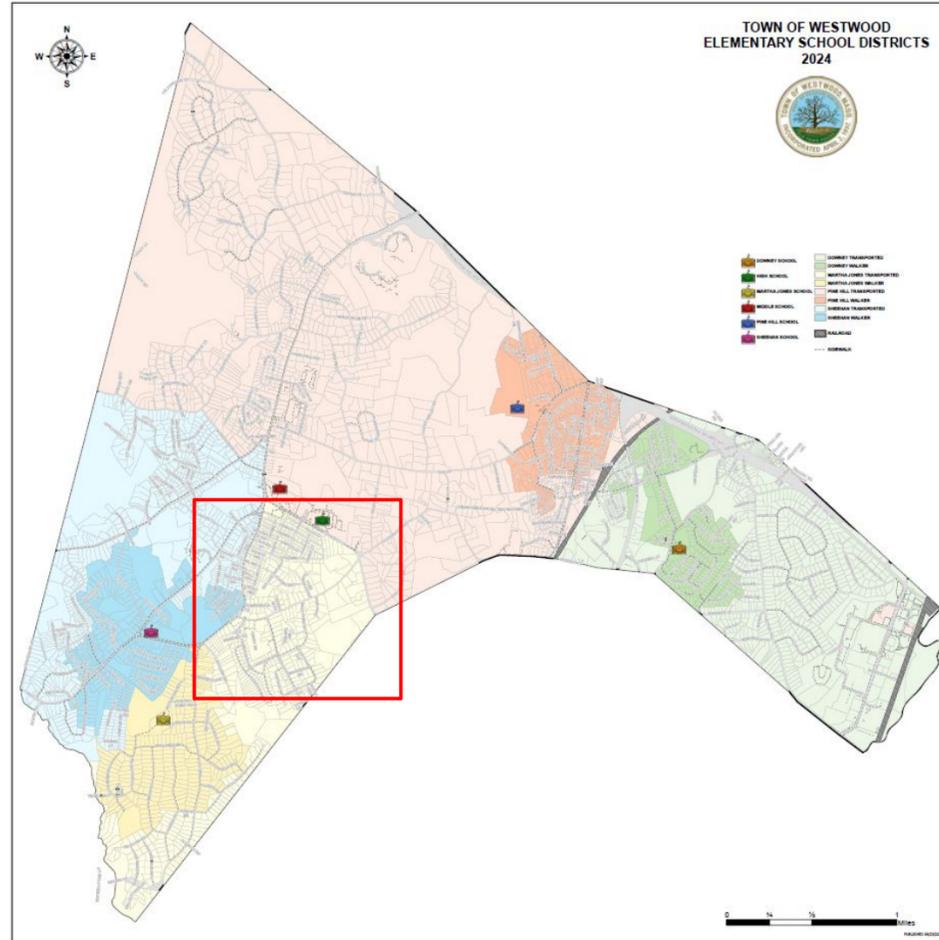
- Notification of school assignment for students in buffer zones will occur based upon the date of completed registration for school as follows:
 - If registered by May 1, informed by May 15
 - If registered after May 1, but on or before June 1, informed by June 15
 - If registered after June 1, informed within three weeks or by August 20, whichever comes first
 - If registered after August 20, on a rolling basis at the time of registration

Zones in Consideration

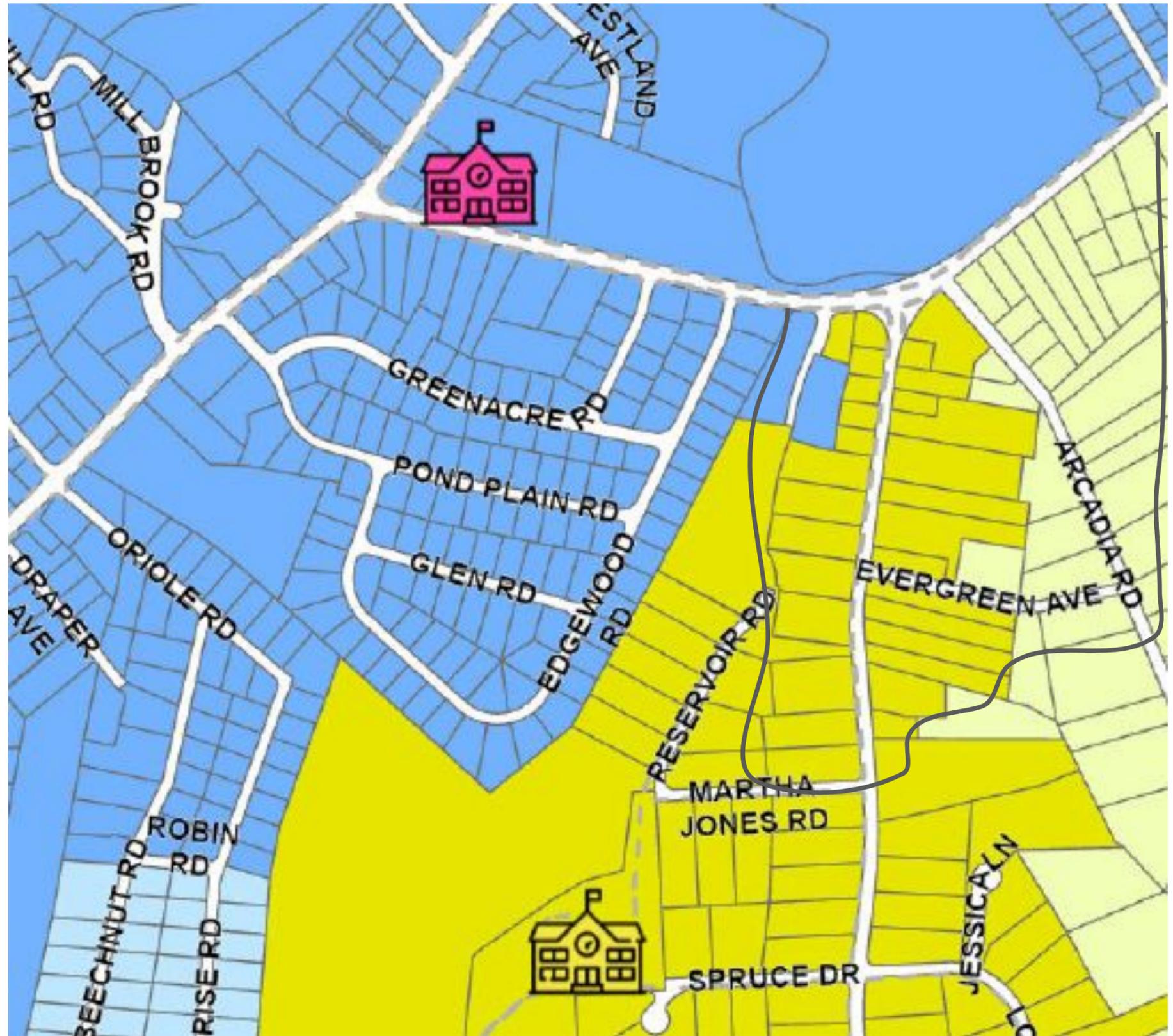
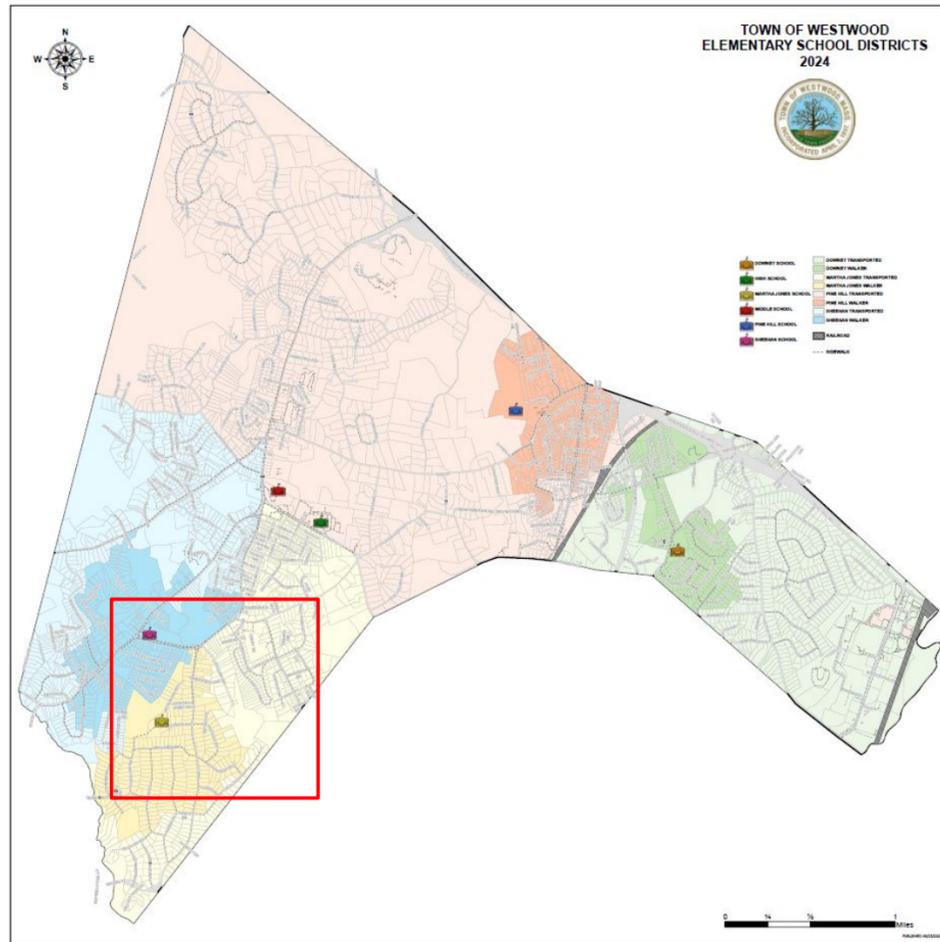
Pine Hill (Martha Jones Buffer)



Martha Jones (Pine Hill Buffer)



Martha Jones (Sheehan Buffer)



Additional Information

List of addresses in proposed buffer zones to be published on district website

Elementary school zone map will be refreshed with addresses marked accordingly

Frequently asked questions (FAQ's) to be posted on the district website