

TO: School Committee

FROM: Tim Piwowar, Superintendent

DATE: November 14, 2025

RE: Special Education Review Update

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As discussed at previous committee meetings, we have contracted with Ribas Associates to conduct an external review of our special education department in the district. The consultant team began their work in late summer, and the work has continued throughout the fall, meeting with district and building level administrators, special education staff, and families, while also reviewing the district budget, student and staff data, and additional documentation.

As our consultants have been working in the district, it has become clear that a more thorough review requires additional work beyond the initial contract scope. We have amended the original contract to include the following additional items:

- Interviews with general education teachers at all levels
- School visits to view programs and services
- Additional interviews with families, instructional assistants, and ABA tutors
- Development and implementation of family and staff surveys

I am confident that taking these additional steps in the review process will allow the review team to gain a stronger understanding of our current state in Westwood, and as a result they will be well-positioned to make recommendations that will better address our areas of need. The tradeoff of adding additional scope is that these additional steps take time, which will delay the release of the final report by one month. The report will now be issued at the January 15 meeting of the School Committee.

Although the original schedule has a release of the report in December to coincide with our FY27 budget timeline, we fully anticipate that we will have sufficient knowledge about the report's recommendations in late December/early January in order to adequately inform the development of our initial FY27 budget proposal.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer any questions at our meeting on November 20.