

Westwood Public Schools

Superintendent's Report to SC

October 13, 2022

2022-2023 ENROLLMENT					
	Deerfield	Downey	Hanlon	Martha Jones	Sheehan
Kindergarten	17	19	18	17	21
Kindergarten	17	20	19	17	21
K/1		19			
Grade 1	20	21	20	14	22
Grade 1	21	21	22	15	24
Grade 1				15	
Grade 2	17	15	17	17	17
Grade 2	18	15	19	18	18
Grade 2		16		18	19
Grade 3	14	21	17	17	22
Grade 3	15	21	18	17	22
Grade 4	13	21	17	21	20
Grade 4	14	21	17	22	20
Grade 4		23			20
Grade 5	15	17	23	18	14
Grade 5	15	18	24	19	14
Grade 5		18		19	14
Total Students	196	306	231	264	288
Total Sections	12	16	12	15	15
Elementary Schools			High School		
Kindergarten	196			Grade 9	202
Grade 1	210			Grade 10	218
Grade 2	224			Grade 11	235
Grade 3	184			Grade 12	251
Grade 4	229			SP	6
Grade 5	228			Total	912
Total	1271				
Total Sections	70				
			Summary		
Middle School			Preschool	42	
Grade 6	218		Elementary	1271	
Grade 7	214		Middle	662	
Grade 8	230		High	912	
Total	662		Total	2887	

2023-2024 School Calendar:

School Committee Start Date Guideline: *When Labor Day is September 1, 2, 3, or 4, the first day of classes will be the following Tuesday. When Labor Day is September 5, 6, or 7, the first day of classes will be the preceding Wednesday. In addition, there will be no school for students on the Friday preceding Labor Day.*

Contract Language: *“The beginning and end dates of the normal teacher’s contract shall not exceed ten (10) months, except to fulfill State law, and may commence on the Monday preceding Labor Day. In the event that teachers’ work year starts prior to Labor Day, the Friday preceding Labor Day will remain a non-school day.”*

2023-2024	Before Labor Day	After Labor Day
First day for teachers	Mon, Aug. 29th	Wed, Aug. 31st
First day for students	Wed, Aug. 31st	Tues, Sept. 5th
Students' last day (no snow days)	Wed, June 14th	Fri, June 16th
Students' last day (1 snow day)	Thurs, June 15th	Tues, June 20th
Teachers' last day (no snow days)	Thurs, June 15th	Wed, June 21st
Teachers' last day (1 snow day)	Fri, June 16th	Thurs, June 22nd

Budget Development Process:

- **Oct:** Initial discussion of priorities at Oct. SC meeting
- **Nov:** Cost center leaders submit requests
- **Dec:** District leadership team evaluates priorities and develops proposed budget
- **Jan:** Supt's proposed budget presented at Jan. SC; SC holds public budget hearing
- **Feb:** Proposed budget presented at Fin Com; SC votes school budget
- **Mar:** Fin Com public hearings; Review by Fin Com education subcommittee
- **Apr:** Town Ballot vote
- **May:** Town Meeting

Budget
Steering
meets
monthly

Budget Priorities - initial thinking:

Priorities based on our observation, listening, and data analysis:

- Continued focus on academic recovery and progress
- Continued focus on social emotional skill development
- Continued focus on providing emotional and behavior supports
- Capacity of in-house special education programs

Revisiting identified priorities that were considered and not incorporated into the FY'23 process

- ELL staffing
- Additional preschool classroom
- Restoration of library staffing
- Additional teaching staff to expand elementary specials offerings
- Expansion of the PEER Program
- Human Resources Director

Annual budget drivers:

- Meet contractual **salary obligations** and other fixed costs
- Maintain reasonable **class sizes**
- Address **special education** needs
- Continue to make progress on the **program goals** articulated in the WPS *Strategy for District Improvement*

Unique FY'23 and FY'24 Budget Drivers

Unique FY'23 and FY'24 Budget Drivers:

- Personnel costs
- Class sizes as we stabilize from pandemic
- Hanlon-Deerfield consolidation timeline
- Inflationary and supply chain pressures
- Increased costs and volatility in special education
- Specific capital needs

Personnel Costs:

- Unsettled contract with the WTA (our largest bargaining unit)
 - Settled in the spring with Custodians and Administrative Assistants; will bargain with IAs and Food Services this year
- Labor market disruption
 - Difficulty finding candidates for paraprofessional roles (e.g. Instructional Assistants, ABA Tutors, substitute teachers and substitute nurses)
 - Forced to use contracted service providers to meet legal obligations in special education
 - Model is more costly and creates non-financial impacts: Level of disruption, uncertainty, increased need for ongoing hiring and training, frequently onboarding/offboarding

Class Sizes:

- Current class sizes are almost all within the School Committee's class size guidelines.
- Continued desire to keep class sizes (especially at elementary) small as we continue to stabilize after the pandemic disruption.
- Over the last two years, we have seen more movement in the early grades over the summer, making kindergarten enrollment harder to predict.

Hanlon-Deerfield Consolidation:

- New building scheduled to open in February, 2024.
- Budget development is being conducted with an eye toward consolidation.
 - We don't anticipate much impact in FY'24. However, when considering staffing models or staff assignments, we think ahead to how positions will transition during consolidation.
 - General education classrooms will not be consolidated in Feb. 2024 (i.e. sections will simply be moved to new buildings);
 - May be opportunities to create more efficient class sections the following year

Inflation and Supply Chain Pressures:

- Rising transportation costs:
 - New 3-year yellow bus contract, with 7.43% increase in first year, including 3.3% attributable to fuel costs (we budgeted for 3% increase)
 - Year 2 (FY'24) - 7% increase; Year 3 (FY'25) - 3% increase
 - Negotiating special education transportation contract (10% increase this year, future TBD)
- Rising facilities costs (Ex. Recent quote for HVAC units, cost escalated 20% from 9 months ago)
- Anticipating increasing costs for heat
 - Electric utility costs are locked in through a fixed price contract until FY'27

Increased costs and volatility in special education:

- Notification from state's Operational Services Division (OSD) to expect a 14% increase in social service costs (last 12 years has been 2-3%; significant implication for special education tuitions)
- Multiple special education student "move-ins" requiring out-of-district placements on their IEPs
- New Extended School Year (ESY) transportation requirements

Special Education Costs:

- FY'23 special education costs are exceeding budget
 - As of Oct. 1, special education staffing, transportation, and tuitions are approx. \$1.14M over budget for FY'23. (**This is highly unusual at this point in the school year.**)
 - Held over approx. \$653K in IDEA grant funding
 - Will need to draw on special education reserve account (balance currently approx. \$900K)
 - Will request “extraordinary relief” from state
 - Continue to focus on realizing as much circuit breaker and Medicaid reimbursement as possible
- Significant implications for FY'24 budget
 - Examine our in-house programming (ex. PEER Program)
 - Increase funds available in the special education reserve account (conversation with Budget Steering)

Capital Needs:

Several needs that exceed the capacity of our \$1.1M capital allotment:

- Districtwide Network Upgrade, for which materials will be procured soon, is anticipated to cost \$1.13M (\$400K over budget)
- WHS auditorium lighting and dimming system, constructed in 2004, is reaching the end of useful life and will require update in FY'24 at an estimated cost of \$400K
- School vehicles for our Facilities team need replacement.
 - Tractor over 14 years old was replaced this year, when it suddenly failed.
 - Van purchase was delayed. Van for Maintenance staff will be 17 years old in FY'24.
 - On the horizon: A tractor will be required for Hanlon-Deerfield walkway snow removal.