

FY'21 Budget Update



The Budget Landscape

The budget landscape has many unknown variables.

- Chapter 70 funding
 - State revenue projections down \$3-4 billion.
 - No clear estimate how large the resulting impact on Chapter 70 will be.
 - Frame of reference: In 2008, Chpt. 70 was cut by about 10%.
- Our operating budget includes about \$1.5 million in federal funding (grants and “circuit breaker” reimbursement, plus revenue from other revolving account.. This revenue is included as offsets in the operating budget.
 - Significant concern that this funding will be substantially decreased
 - Circuit break currently reimbursed at 75%; during prior economic downturn in 2009, was cut to 30%.
- Uncertainty about revenue generated through revolving accounts if next year is disrupted.



The Budget Landscape

- Our anticipated costs or potential costs have changed since the FY'21 budget was developed as a result of the unprecedented and unanticipated world situation.
 - Enhanced cleaning protocols, requiring additional cleaning equipment, supplies, washing stations, and personnel hours
 - Increased special education costs related to compensatory services and Extended School Year (ESY)
 - Additional technology costs?
 - Disrupted or alternate schedules?
 - Need for social distancing in classrooms or on buses?
 - Staff who require and qualify for LOAs?
- This costs could be substantial, but are difficult to estimate with any certainty with current information.



CARES Act - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds

So far, ESSER funds have been tied to the Title I formula. Westwood, therefore, has received very little ESSER assistance .

Dedham	\$264,212
Medfield	\$20,000
Needham	\$81,318
Norwood	\$345,607
Westwood	\$20,000



“We don’t know how much money we will have or what we are trying to budget for.”

- A veteran MA superintendent and former school business manager



Stabilizing the Budget

- Need FY'21 to be approved by the end of the fiscal year at proposed level.
- Through Budget Steering process, Town has indicated that it is prepared to fill the gap created by a decrease in Chapter 70 funding.
- Need to change how we allocated funds in the proposed FY'21 budget so that we can “backfill” gaps created by offsets that may be cut and address emerging needs and costs.
- This is challenging given that the school’s budget is mostly comprised of salaries.



Guiding Principles

- Make decisions around hiring and scheduling this spring that will allow us to preserve programs, stabilize the budget, and adapt to this new unprecedented environment.
- To the extent possible, maintain class sizes with SC guidelines. If not possible to do so, continue to prioritize reasonable class sizes in grades K-2 given early literacy and numeracy needs, at moments of transition (Grade 6 and 9), and for vulnerable populations.
- Make hiring/staffing choices that are sustainable given upcoming enrollment trends and potential elementary consolidation.
- Maintain student mental health and social/emotional programming and services.
- Carefully consider HS student elective choices; to the extent possible fill elective sections using student alternates, rather than running very small classes.
- To the extent possible, maintain momentum on important priorities and initiatives, recognizing that new initiatives for 2020-2021 will probably be put on hold.
- With all of the above in mind, examine what can be accomplished through attrition.



Strategy

- Implement a hiring freeze.
 - Examine educational impact of not filling positions that are vacant due to retirements, resignations, non-renewals, or are new.
 - Hire only those positions where the impact is untenable.
 - Create a master schedule and make teaching assignments based on this assumption.
 - If there is more certainty at the state and federal level by August, consider which positions could be filled.
- Carefully examine non-salary items for elimination and/or defer purchasing.
- Continue to make projection about next year's needs and costs by engaging in planning for various re-opening scenarios and structures.
- Assess the level of financial risk that the SC is comfortable with
- Work collaboratively with bargaining units who are currently in negotiations.



Tier 1

- 5.2 FTE teaching positions at the high school.
- 1.0 FTE teaching position at TMS.
- 1.0 FTE elementary instructional assistant
- 1.0 FTE elementary library
- .4 FTE K-12 Library Director
- .4 FTE Director of Safety and Security (new)
- 1.5 FTE HS instructional assistants (new)
- Eliminate daily substitutes at the high school

Total: (\$790,000)

Minus anticipated turnover: \$690,000



Tier 2

- 3.0 Elementary classroom teachers
 - Retain 1.0 FTE teacher at Deerfield to co-teach in grade 2 and grade 3 singletons, which are projected to be over 3-4 students over guideline. (Half day in each class for core academic instruction.)
 - Collapse from 3 to 2 sections (grade 3 Downey, grade 3 Hanlon, and grade 4 Sheehan)
 - Considers placement of students in substantially separate specialized programs

Total: \$270,000

Minus anticipated turnover: \$195,000



Tier 3

- .5 FTE TMS ELA Specialist (new)
- .5 FTE Administrative Assistants

Total: \$70,000



Next Steps

