

BUDGET RECOMMENDATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Weston Public Schools Administration, I am pleased to submit the Recommended FY 20 Operating Budget for review and adoption by the Weston Board of Education. The administration has worked intensively the past several months to develop a financial plan for the 2019-20 Academic Year that advances the Weston Public Schools as one of the preeminent school systems in the region and the nation. The recommended budget has been crafted with full knowledge of and attention to the financial pressures facing the Town and State of Connecticut.

The total recommended FY 20 Operating Budget is \$53,666,004, which represents a \$2,221,099 (or 4.32 percent) increase over the FY 19 Board of Education approved at Referendum in May 2018. Contractual obligations drive nearly all budget growth for FY 20. As summarized in the following chart, contractual obligations grow at 4.40%, but are offset by 0.08 percent in reductions across the rest of the budget, leading to the total growth of 4.32 percent. Stated differently, other than increases demanded by contractual agreements and financial obligations, the budget is flat or negative in all other areas.

	Increase (\$)	% of Total Growth
Non Personnel, Non Contractual Expenses	\$84,517	0.17%
RFP Savings	\$(101,539)	-0.20%
New Personnel/Stipend Changes	\$(27,349)	-0.05%
Total	\$(44,371)	-0.08%
Contractual Obligations	\$2,265,470	4.40%
Total	\$2,221,099	4.32%

The administration is acutely aware that the 4.32% increase is the largest on record in many years and is at the upper limit of what may be tolerable for Weston residents and taxpayers. Indeed, the administration decided not to request funding for \$785,557 in essential needs, knowing that the contractual and obligation growth would make other increases impossible for the Town of Weston to support.

The FY 20 proposed budget extends the formula used in developing the successful FY 19 budget. Last year, we offset larger than usual growth in the SPED/PPS budget with net-zero growth in all other areas of the operating budget. For FY 20, we have instituted the same formula, except now we are offsetting contractual and obligated growth with net-zero growth across the rest of the operating budget. For the second year running, we believe we have succeeded in instituting a wise budget cutback formula for managing budgets and the use of precious public funds in a time of fiscal austerity and cutbacks.

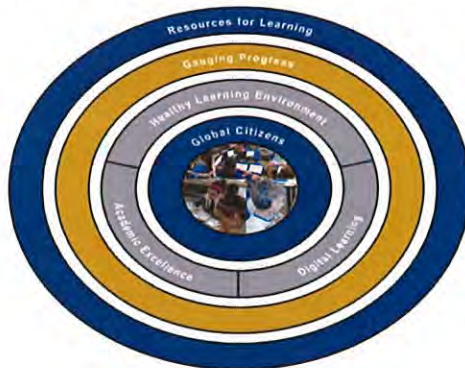
By nearly any measure, Weston is an uncommon school district—in terms of student success, teaching excellence, robust academic and co-curricular offerings, and dedication to the physical, social and emotional well-being of our students. We operate on a pristine, unified four-school campus, ensuring a cohesive learning environment from PreK through 12th grade. Weston students, from their earliest days through graduation, are challenged and cared for by our faculty and administrators. Current and prospective families can be assured that Weston believes “connections” are essential to student success—we insist that all students are known well by many adults. We are confident that the proposed budget will advance Weston to even greater heights in its stated mission of “empowering each student to achieve success and contribute to our global society...and to serve as part of a caring and supportive community.”

This Executive Summary has the following sections:

- Strategic & Goal Driven
- Enrollment Shifts
- Targeted Investments
- School Budget Highlights
- Tough Decisions: Budget Reductions & Denied Requests
- Capital Budget Note
- Conclusion

STRATEGIC & GOAL DRIVEN

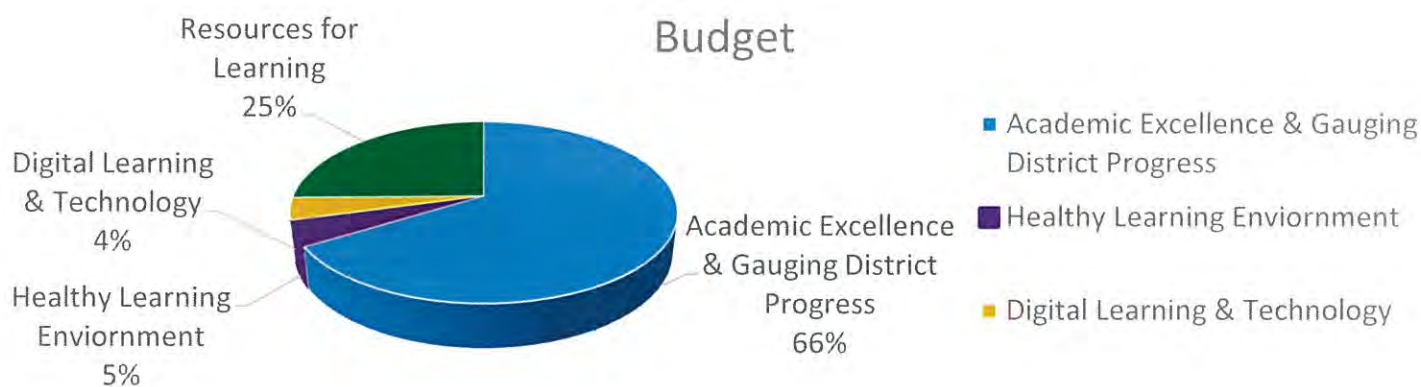
The Recommended FY 20 Operating Budget is framed by the strategic outcome of Developing Global Citizens and the Strategic Goals: Academic Excellence, Healthy Learning Environment, Digital Learning, Gauging District



Progress and Resources for Learning.

The Strategic Outcome and five goals, with associated action steps, are spelled out on the *District's Outcome & Goals Website*: <https://sites.google.com/westonps.org/districtgoals2018-2019/home>.

The budget has been allocated to support the Strategic Goals. As depicted below, the vast majority of funding supports the two goals of Academic Excellence and Gauging District Progress.



ENROLLMENT SHIFTS

The proposed FY 20 Operating Budget is developed with close attention to the enrollment projections and analysis provided to the BOE and administration by Milone & MacBroom. The most recent enrollment report was presented to the BOE at its November 19, 2018 Meeting. The full report may be accessed at this link: [Milone & MacBroom WPS 2018 Enrollment Report 11.19.18 \(Agenda Item VIII.B\)](#)

Enrollment declines are the overall trend, but at relatively modest rate of 2.14 percent over five years. Total enrollment is projected to drop from 2290 to 2241 students between 2019-20 and 2023-24. As the below chart

depicts, the declines will be most notable at WMS and WHS. Overall, however, a decrease of only 49 students over five years would not warrant reductions in staffing, programs or facilities.

5 Year Enrollment Projection



TARGETED INVESTMENTS

The administration has identified three investment areas for the new school year. Resources for these investments are drawn from repurposed or redirected funding. Investments in a flat or cutback budget may not actually receive significant new funding; rather, they should be considered features or highlights, underscoring their strategic importance for advancing the excellent education and robust services we provide Weston students.

Academic Excellence is the lead investment. The proposed budget gives priority support to our faculty, curriculum and instruction. By securing funding for the backbone of our educational program, we can improve services for all students. The budget ensures that:

- **Academic and co-curricular programs** continue with the same rigorous offerings;
- **Competitive class-sizes and adult: student ratios** enable vital educational connections between professionals and students;,,
- **Professional development** is strengthened for all faculty, serving as an investment in the capacity of the largest single share of the operating budget.

A modest increase in the teaching staff (0.40 FTE) is recommended to support the addition of a **District English Language Learner (ELL) teacher** for 2019-20. Now numbering nearly 20, we have a growing number of students who require focused instruction to become facile with the English language. These are students whose first and home language is not English. We are required by state law to provide additional support services to students who qualify as English Language Learners.

Securing Academic Excellence as an investment priority in an era of fiscal austerity allows Weston to continue to be one of the remarkable school system not only in Connecticut but nationally. Investment in our academic program will secure recent achievements such as the following, which few schools in any educational sector can match:

- 97 percent of WHS graduates matriculate to four-year colleges;
- Of the Class of 2018, 33% of the students were accepted by the “most competitive” colleges and 61% received acceptances by colleges considered “highly competitive” according to Barron’s Rankings;
- 99% of the Class of 2013 received their college diplomas within five years, compared to national averages closer to 50%;
- For the second year in a row, the district placed on the College Board’s Annual AP District Honor Roll;
- This past spring, we had 7 national advanced placement (AP) scholars, 67 AP scholars with distinction, 27 AP scholars with honors, and 32 AP scholars.

PPS/Special Education is the second targeted investment. The proposed FY 20 Operating budget builds on the major investments made in PPS/Special Education in FY 19. To review, the Weston Public Schools have had a significant budgetary overrun in out-placement tuition for special education students for nearly a decade. In 2017-18 (FY 18), the tuition cost overrun hit crisis proportions at \$1.6 million. In collaboration with the Board of Education, we took the budget problem seriously and comprehensively examined how to mitigate the issue going forward. In analyzing the roots of the problem, we determined that a series of modifications were necessary to management, service offerings and staff capacity. In shorthand, four modifications were proposed, ultimately adopted and now implemented:

1. Enhancing Administrative Oversight & Attention for PPS and SPED – With the retirement of the Director of PPS, the position was changed to Assistant Superintendent of PPS, speaking to the complex district-wide responsibilities of the position and enabling Weston to land the best available candidate in the tristate region. We also added an Assistant Director for PPS, giving us one to work with the lower schools (HES and WIS) and a second to work with the upper schools (WMS and WHS). The two Assistant Directors would assume many of the school and student administration duties that have distracted the Director of PPS from district-wide management.
2. Increasing Staff Capacity for Student Needs – Recognizing that student behavioral and emotional issues were a large factor in the number of out-placements, we increased the school-level capacity to work with the full range of student needs by adding an additional Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), giving us one per school, and adding a school social worker at WMS so that both the middle school and high school would have a full-time social worker.
3. Maximizing Effective School Solutions (ESS) – We decided to continue with ESS for a third year at WHS, and work with the agency on ways to expand their services to WMS and even the elementary schools (at least through professional development for WPS staff). While a costly program, ESS demonstrated its ability to keep students in district. We gain important professional expertise from ESS in the form of Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW), and management oversight that would be far more expensive for us to provide on our own. ESS also represents Weston's first effort to provide an alternative SPED program within district as a way to mitigate out-placed students.
4. Expanding College & Career Counseling – We added a new, dedicated College & Career Counselor at WHS in response to the increasing demands of the college timetable, the competitive process and the resulting growth in family requests for guidance, coupled with the demands of managing effectively our numerous support programs. These demands necessitated an adjustment to guidance staffing to best serve our students. Our college graduation and success rates are superb, but we had to modify our support for students and families if we are to continue achieving exceptional college and career outcomes.

The proposed FY 20 Budget is designed to bolster the FY 19 modifications and deepen their impact. While just four-five months into the school year, we see evidence that the FY 19 modifications are making a difference. Specifically, the increased administrative oversight has provided the district the ability to review its special education procedures and practices to develop greater consistency in grades Pre-K through 12. The addition of the BCBA and Social Worker has enabled our programs to more thoroughly address the behavioral and mental health needs of students in the school setting. Effective School Solutions has collaborated with the district beyond their high school program to offer professional development to our staff and to assist families in identifying more intensive community based resources. Finally, the role of the College & Career Counselor has allowed the district to provide students and families enhanced support in the college application process in both individual and larger group formats.

Given this early progress, we are emphasizing three major areas of work in the coming school year (2019-20):

1. Professional Development – The increase to the funding in this area will be used to provide support to our school psychologists in the assessment process, support for our school teams in developing Individualized Education Programs, and allow our staff to participate in discipline-specific growth opportunities in which

they will learn emerging best practices.

2. BCBA Clinical Supervision – Our Board Certified Behavior Analysts are involved with our most complex learners. By providing clinical supervision to these staff members, we will build their professional capacity, along with that of the multi-disciplinary teams in which they work. This work will also benefit our paraprofessional staff and potentially families of these students.
3. Tuition/Legal Fees – The tuition for students placed out of district and the fees associated with representing the district in these matters have been carefully analyzed and planned for in this budget to meet the needs of our students and the district. This calculation reflects current and anticipated needs in these areas.

The continuation of PPS/Special Education as a targeted investment is critical to ensuring that the social, emotional and physical well-being of all students is bolstered by adequate staffing and support systems, and that educational programs are designed to meet the needs of Special Education students and afford them the opportunity of meaningful progress. The priority work for FY 20 should achieve three process outcomes, each vital to stronger programming and outcomes for students.

1. Increase the effectiveness of our internal systems for program management.
2. Foster greater capacity in our building-based teams to develop and implement student programs.
3. Improve parent partnerships by increasing transparency and providing information regarding the special education process.

Facilities is the third and final targeted investment area. We want to be sure that the campus and buildings remain as attributes compared to other towns and districts.

The Maintenance Department consists of five employees, who help maintain nearly 600,000 square feet of buildings. Over the past year, the team has had to make significant repairs to boilers, roofs and plumbing. Not visible to our staff and students, these structural elements, when they fail, undermine teaching and learning, if not make it impossible to open schools for extended periods of time. For unfortunate reference, we only have to look to our sister districts in Westport, Stamford and Greenwich to see how failed roofs and plumbing have undercut academics, performing arts and athletics.

The proposed FY 20 budget provides funds to address priority preventative maintenance of our facilities. Every year the district has in excess of 2,500 work orders. Additional funding is required to effectively manage the number and range of preventative maintenance projects. However, given the tight budget, we only are requesting a small portion of the new funding needed to adequately maintain our facilities. We are prioritizing the following work for FY 20.

1. The BOE engaged Silver/Petrucelli & Associates to comprehensively assess all aspects of the campus and physical plant. The resulting report (*Weston Schools Facilities Feasibility Study*, November 2017) outlined numerous facility maintenance projects. The proposed FY 20 Operating and Capital Budgets will continue to address some of these items, including Replacement of Chiller at Hurlbutt and Corridor Ventilation, Removal of Oil Tanks at WMS and WHS, Replacement of Fire Alarm Equipment, Student Locker Replacement at WMS, Replacement of Water Heaters at HES and WHS, Roof Repairs at WIS and WHS, and Gym Floor Refurbishment at HES. Each of these recommended items is within the proposed FY 20 Capital Budget.
2. Our Zenon Plant provider, Veolia, has conducted a five-year evaluation of our plant. The proposed FY 20 Operating and Capital Budgets allocate funds to address the most essential work flagged by Veolia, including Replacement of PLC and SACDA Equipment Replacement and Replacement of pumps, blowers and motors. Each of these recommended items is within the proposed FY 20 Capital Budget.
3. The largest increase in the FY 20 facilities budget is for a new cleaning contract for our buildings. In November 2018, we issued an RFP to solicit proposals to upgrade our cleaning. The current contract with

Shamrock expires on June 30, 2019. The RFP process will use the CIMS (Cleaning Industry Management Standards) model and analysis of labor deployment and efficiency to identify the firm most likely to upgrade the cleanliness of our buildings. The BOE is tentatively due to review the recommendations of the Custodian Services Bid Review Committee at the February 2019 BOE Meeting and select a cleaning firm, whose multi-year contract would be effective July 1, 2019.

SCHOOL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The proposed FY 20 Operating Budget is organized into major cost centers, with each introduced by a narrative. Several aspects of the narratives for our four schools warrant highlighting.

Hurlbutt Elementary School — Weston students begin their journey of learning at Hurlbutt Elementary School, in the Early Learning Center, kindergarten, first and second grades. Through the combined efforts of administration, staff and parents, Hurlbutt is committed to creating a learning environment where every child can pursue and achieve personal excellence.

The FY 20 budget will allow Hurlbutt to feature the following priorities:

- Continue as a nurturing, safe and engaging educational setting
- Maintain a challenging and developmentally appropriate academic program, including an updated science curriculum to reflect cutting-edge national science standards
- Extend positive school climate supported by the Responsive Classroom strategies, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and the Emotional Intelligence RULER approach (with Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence)
- Blend digital resources and technology to support personalized instruction on a selective basis, enhanced by Chromebooks in classrooms (replacing old desktops), On-Demand iPads in second grade, and updated iPads in kindergarten and first grade.

Weston Intermediate School — WIS takes pride in fostering a caring, responsive community of learners that encourages an appreciation of individual differences and each student's developing abilities. We strive to build the essence of community each day in every classroom, and provide learning experiences that challenge each student to pursue personal excellence in all aspects of their lives. We focus on enhancing students' ability to think critically and creatively, and to be innovative problem solvers and proficient communicators; helping our students speak and write effectively and clearly across all subject areas.

The FY 20 budget proposal supports WIS's highest priority needs, several of which echo work at HES, speaking to the coherence between our two lower schools:

- Continuing as a caring community of learners
- Providing challenging and differentiated learning experiences that enhance students' ability to think critically and creatively, and to be innovative problem solvers and proficient communicators
- Implementing school-wide an updated science curriculum based on cutting-edge national science standards
- Sustaining a positive, healthy learning environment supported by the Emotional Learning RULER approach (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence), Responsive Classroom strategies, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Blending digital resources and technology, enhanced though On-Demand Chromebooks in all classrooms and Library Learning Commons Maker Space and Maker Masters

Weston Middle School — WMS is committed to the goal of providing students with an exemplary middle level education. Our dedicated teachers are critical resources in helping our students develop the essential capacities and content knowledge to achieve at high levels. Our faculty and staff believe that these middle school years are key to the academic growth and social-emotional development of our students and they strive to nurture their growth throughout the school day and through a rich variety of co-curricular programs. We constantly evaluate our co-curricular programs to assure that we continue to meet the needs and interests of our students.

The proposed FY 20 budget will allow WMS to maintain its high quality programs, with only slight modifications.

- WMS will continue its strong core academic program, as well as our practical and fine arts programs, which include general music, band, chorus, orchestra, art, physical education, health and wellness, technology and engineering and world language.
- WMS is proposing the same staffing levels for next year as are currently in place, with slight adjustments based on enrollment in specific programs.
- WMS is proposing an additional trimester of art for students in seventh and eighth grades. This replaces science discovery workshop and passion project during the practical and fine arts (PFA) block. WMS will continue to offer science discovery workshop and passion project as enrichment opportunities during the extension block.

Weston High School —WHS empowers students to become innovative thinkers, creative problem solvers, effective communicators and inspired learners prepared to thrive in an ever changing global society. Now celebrating its 50th year, WHS has a well formed set of beliefs for teachers and students that serve as a foundation for teaching and learning. (These beliefs are listed in the WHS budget section.) A series of independent recognitions underscore WHS's exceptional impact on student learning and growth. As noted in the WHS budget section, the College Board recently named WHS to its AP Honor Roll for the second year running, and we now know that the Class of 2012 and 2013 had 99 and 100 percent of their members, respectively, graduate from college within five years (a rate nearly double the national average of 50 percent).

The proposed FY 20 budget supports WHS's top curriculum and co-curriculum priorities. Due to financial constraints, the only budget changes from last year are focused on slight staffing adjustments. WHS staffing will remain flat as compared to last year, with the exception of a 0.3 FTE increase to address the impact of a state-mandated change in graduation requirements for health. The state has raised the health graduation requirement from 0.5 to 1.0 credits for each student beginning with the Class of 2023.

A set of staffing modifications are necessary to expand WHS's rigorous academic program to meet student needs and interests, but all of it is accomplished through redirecting existing staff assignments and roles. The modifications include:

- AP Government would be extended from a semester to year-long course (which is the standard timeframe for this AP course)
- AP Computer Principles would be offered to coding students who have completed Coding I
- AP Music Theory would be offered, albeit in alternating years, for advanced music students
- The Writing Workshop would be extended to juniors who do not meet the required goal on the Sophomore Writing Portfolio
- Project Lead the Way (PLTW) enrollment continues to increase which requires additional faculty.

TOUGH DECISIONS: BUDGET REDUCTIONS & DENIED REQUESTS

The administration knows that the 4.32 percent increase proposed with the FY 20 Operating Budget exceeds the annual increases typically provided to the Weston Public Schools. Looking back 10 years, we know the facts:

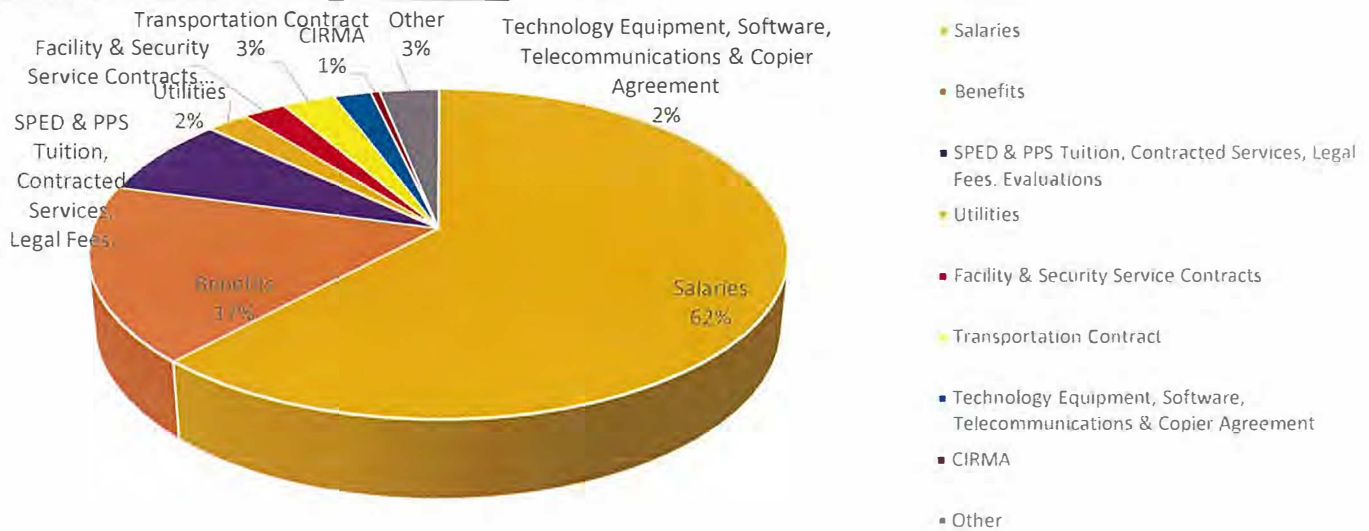
- Average Increase Over Last Nine Years 1.76%
- Average Increase Over Last Five Years 2.46%
- Average Increase Over Last Three Years 1.99%

This year's increase is driven entirely by contractual obligations. In order to limit the increase, we reduced in every area possible and did not advance a large number of important new requests. At the start of the budgeting process, the growth figure was expected to be north of 6.0 percent. Our willingness to make tough decisions about reductions and to deny any new requests is rooted in our sensitivity to being careful stewards of the resources Weston tax payers provide the school system. Weston as a town is generous to its schools, helping with each tax dollar to establish a district that deserves its regional and national recognition.

Words cannot be minced at this point—the stakes are too high. The proposed FY 20 Operating Budget presents growth requirements which must be met. Without the requested funding, the school system Weston considers a “jewel in its crown” will begin to diminish. The reason that many move to Weston—the schools—will become at risk for continuing as a comparative advantage to other districts in the region. Weston’s attractiveness to families will be challenged.

The administration offers this sober assessment only after carefully considering all options, and looking at our recent record of budget reductions and efficiencies. We considered four interrelated factors in concluding that the 4.32 percent increase is the minimal level feasible for the FY 20 Budget.

Factor One: Limited Budget Flexibility



As the above chart portrays, the district’s \$53 million dollar budget request provides limited flexibility for redirecting existing resources to new demands or needs. We hear frequently, “you must be able to find funding in your multi-million dollar budget...” The fact, however, is that our budget is largely allocated to items that are non-negotiable. The top three categories—Salaries, Benefits, PPS/SPED requirements—account for 87 percent of the budget, and the remaining categories all are essential and budgeted tightly.

- Salaries, Benefits, PPS/SPED 87%
- Transportation Contract 3%
- Facility & Security Service Contracts 2%
- Utilities 2%
- Technology 2%
- CIRMA 1%
- Other 3%

Simply put, it is a budgetary fallacy to believe that we have flexibility or discretion in our budget such that we can absorb significant unanticipated expenses or major cutbacks.

Factor Two: A History of Cutbacks & Finding Efficiencies

Any budget flexibility or discretion that may have existed in the past several years is now gone. We have a history of making budget cutbacks and finding efficiencies, such that we no longer have the capacity to use existing resources to manage shortfalls.

For at least the past several years, we have been rigorous in making reductions to personnel, programs and services—when we were confident the change would not undermine the mission, goals and quality of the Weston Public Schools. Over the past four years, we have done the following:

- Reduction to the Copy Center staffing & established a new copier lease agreement
- Reduction in Security Specialists
- Reduction in Groundskeepers
- Elimination of Technology Integrators
- Reduction of School Psychologist
- Reduction in school-based Special Education Clerical Staff
- Reduction in Middle School After School Sports (transferred programming to the Town)
- Reduction in SPED Transition Coordinator (FY 20)
- Reduction in Library Learning Commons Technology Specialist (FY 20)
- Reduction to Middle School Science Para (FY 20)
- Insurance Buyout Incentive (FY 20)
- WTA Early Retirement Incentive Program (FY 20)

We also have been managing all contracts to find efficiencies. Most notable in the past several years is the current contract with the WTA, which is the largest single financial obligation for the district and town. Through negotiations and good coordination with the Weston Teachers Association (WTA), the BOE and WTA agreed to a two-year contract settlement (effective July 1, 2018) with an average salary increase inclusive of step of 2.35%. This settlement was the lowest in Fairfield County and under the FY 19 average DRG A teacher settlement of 3.00%. This also represents one of the lowest settlements for Weston in recent years.

A central element of the new contract with the WTA was the shift from Aetna to the State Partnership Plan 2.0 for employee health insurance. By moving to the State Partnership Plan, the district saved almost \$2.9 million over the course of two fiscal years (FY 19 and FY 20). However the annual budget increase under the State Partnership Plan for FY 20 is \$831,539 versus \$559,422 from an HDHP plan. This difference of \$272,117 in growth represents an extra 0.53%, which is a factor in on our FY 20 budget increase of 4.32%. Nevertheless, it is critical to remember that, while the budget is increasing at a higher rate, the district saved almost \$2.9 million by making this transition—a change that was mutually agreed to through collective bargaining and required extra commitment and trust by all WPS employees.

For several years, we have issued Request for Proposals (RFPs) in order to find more favorable terms for non-personnel contracts across the district. In the past year, we issued the six RFPs listed below, accruing savings of over \$100,000 for the FY 20 Operating Budget.

	Budgetary Savings
Life and Disability Insurance	\$44,500
Trash Removal	\$23,225
Zenon Plant Maintenance	\$10,814
Propane	\$1,000
Fire Alarm System	\$5,000
Benefit Advisory Services	\$17,000
Total	\$101,539

All told, we have thoroughly reviewed our human, financial and programmatic resources, and all our contractual obligations. They now are as efficient as they can be relative to the fundamental need to advance the Weston Public Schools as a preeminent school district, which is attractive to current and new residents.

Factor Three: Denied Requests

Every year, needs arise that are central to the ongoing excellence of Weston’s curricular and co-curricular programs. Needs also arise annually that are important to maintaining the district’s operations and facilities. In building the proposed budget, we balance the new needs against what is affordable for the Town of Weston. Every year, we

have to deny requests for inclusion in the budget.

This year, we have decided to share a detailed list of the top priorities we were forced to not include in the proposed FY 20 Operating Budget. Our intent is to underscore that the proposed FY 20 budget, even with the 4.32 percent increase, is a frugal budget, even when they are a top priority for programming or operations. In other words, as administrators we were severe in our decisions to deny new budget requests.

	Requested Item	Amount
1	Additional Buses for School Start/End Times	\$130,000
2	Contracted Services for Facilities (Plumbing & Electrical	\$100,00
3	Preventive Maintenance for Buildings (Heating, Gym Equipment, Air Conditioning, Science Labs)	\$98,000
4	Facilities Maintenance Projects (Locks, Flooring, Additional Fob Doors, Exterior Doors, Sink Upgrades)	\$85,000
5	Technology Equipment (Laptops, Interactive Classrooms, Switches, Servers)	\$84,735
7	Increased Staffing (0.70 FTE) for Middle School World Language	\$75,519
8	Increased Staffing (0.60 FTE) for the WHS Writing Center	\$66,474
9	New Software (Newsela, Renzulli Learning, Abelson Live, Visual Classrooms)	\$51,678
10	Additional Support in the Copy Center	\$21,717
11	Overtime for facilities to catchup on work orders (300 hours)	\$15,670
12	Classroom Furniture/Storage Cabinets	\$14,268
13	Consultants for Superintendent Initiatives	\$12,500
14	Increased Staffing (0.10 FTE) for Math Intervention at the WIS	\$11,796
15	SLP (Speech Language Pathologists) Supervision	\$10,000
16	Additional professional development for Special Education	\$5,000
17	PSAT Pilot for 9 th Grade	\$3,200
	TOTAL	\$787,557

Factor Four: What Would We Cut?

We asked ourselves repeatedly in developing the proposed FY 20 budget, “What else can we cut to reduce the growth percentage?” We expect that the Board of Education will ask us the same question once they begin reviewing the budget recommendations. Depending on the Board of Education’s final decision, we anticipate that the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and residents of Weston also will ask, “What else can you cut?”

Typically, administrators presenting a recommended budget do not immediately list what else can be cut. This year, however, as a way to show that the requested growth of 4.32 percent is essential, we are listing here the eight categories that will be considered for reductions if there is any cut to this proposed budget. Specifics are not provided, because those would have to be addressed with great care, and in many cases will involve personnel, which has to be handled with full respect for anyone affected.

Given that the growth in the FY 20 budget is driven by contractual increases, each of the eight categories involves reducing contractual obligations—in terms of personnel, programs and facility maintenance and support. The eight categories are not listed in any particular order (they are not prioritized nor weighted).

1. Increase class size to reduce number of sections
2. Cut academic program offerings
3. Cut instructional software & devices
4. Cut selected after-school clubs and activities
5. Cut the number and levels of athletic teams
6. Cut the number and range of performing arts offerings
7. Reduce administration oversight and administrative support
8. Reduce facility maintenance and repair.

For now, it has to be understood that the cuts in any of these areas will substantially put at risk the quality of the

Weston Public Schools. The attributes of this excellent, widely applauded, school system will be difficult to maintain, if not eliminated. Larger class sizes and reduced administration oversight and support will undermine the instructional program and limit the strength of connections (teacher to student) that have become a hallmark of Weston. Reductions of academic program offerings will limit the choices and opportunities of our students, which could negatively impact their future educational trajectory. Cutting athletics, performing arts, clubs and activities would diminish the full range of developmental opportunities Weston provides students. Reducing the care and upkeep of our facilities would undermine the quality of our rare campus setting and environment. Stated bluntly, we would be on the path to being a district severely limited in our mission to educate students with robust attention to intellectual, social, emotional and physical development. We would be a school district far closer to the norm of public schools regionally and nationally, instead of being a school system serving as a beacon for what public education can and should be.

CAPITAL BUDGET NOTE

This Executive Summary by design has focused on the Proposed FY 20 Operating Budget. At the close of the Budget Book is a presentation of the Proposed FY 20 Capital Budget, which is dealt with by the Board of Education separately from the Operating Budget. The FY 20 Capital Budget recommendations are divided into three sets: Tier 1 Capital Request (\$868,000), School Security Capital Request (\$321,629), and Joint Town/BOE Capital Request (\$20,000).

The Tier 1 Capital Request addresses eight items that have been deemed as most immediate priority. Several of the items are core to the functioning of the campus and buildings (i.e., Zenon Plant, Chiller Replacement at Hurlbutt, Removal of Oil Tanks, Replacing Water Heaters, Replacement of Fire Alarm Equipment and Fire Code Upgrades); and a couple give first priority to school conditions directly affecting students (Student Locker Replacement at the Middle School, Refurbishment of Gym Floor at HES). One item is for funding to address Roof Leaks and Concrete Repair (at WHS and WIS)—this is the item we had requested of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance in Fall 2018 as a way to make effective use of capital funds saved during the WIS Knee Wall replacement.

The School Security Capital Request per the legally allowed need for confidentially does not list the specific item(s). The details are handled in Executive Session with the Board of Education, and as necessary with the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. The total requested reflects a savings of \$105,340 from an anticipated state grant for security upgrades.

The Joint Town/BOE Capital Request is for the BOE's share of an infrastructure improvement to the lighting along School Road. The Town has asked the BOE to participate in this project. The Town will take the lead in proposing and explaining the lighting project and the necessary funding.

CONCLUSION

The FY 20 Operating & Capital Budgets have been built to advance the District's priority Outcome & Goals and ensure we continue to be known regionally and nationally for intellectual rigor and compassion. Echoing last year's approach, we developed the proposed budget with a bold formula: provide for the required resources to meet the growth driven by contractual obligations, which are essential to maintaining the district's excellence, while simultaneously arriving at net-zero growth for all other cost centers and programs.

As we concluded last year, for a budget that has proved highly effective and cost efficient, the proposed FY 20 budget ensures that Weston's academic and co-curricular programs remain robust; social, emotional and physical well-being is bolstered; competitive class-sizes and adult: student ratios continue; and the campus and facilities are maintained as attributes. Ultimately, we believe the proposed Operating & Capital Budgets for FY 20 will make difference for every student in the Weston Public Schools.