

## **Weston Public Schools 2021-2022 Budget Guidelines**

We are fortunate to live in a town that both demands and supports an excellent school system. The School Administration and the School Committee are dedicated to providing the best possible academic, social and emotional education for our students in a fiscally responsible manner. Uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the 2021-2022 school year make the budget development process especially difficult, and the budget must maintain flexibility to address a number of possible scenarios. The following general guidelines are meant to assist the School Administration in preparing the budget for fiscal year 2022. These guidelines reflect the Town's desire to maintain the overall strength of the school system by supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan while recognizing continuing local and general economic challenges.

### **Preserve Excellence in Curriculum and Instruction**

Execution of the Strategic Plan requires that we provide adequate resources and funding for major initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased both the cost and complexity of delivering instruction. Planning for Fiscal Year 2022 must consider the likely on-going impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and at the same time provide continued support for our curriculum as well as the need to meet state and federal mandates for student support. At the core of our efforts will be preserving the quality of our programs and services that enable all students to reach high standards and expectations, as measured through data driven assessments, in addition to meeting the state and federal benchmarks established for standardized test scores for all students. This goal must be achieved regardless of the status of the pandemic.

### **Maintain a Safe and Secure Environment and Infrastructure**

The budget should continue to support safe, secure and educationally sound school environments, with the emphasis on addressing the expected disruption and additional requirements of delivering safe instruction during a pandemic. We should continue to collaborate with the Town to achieve economies of scale in the maintenance and operation of our facilities and grounds, as well as in addressing health and safety protocols. We should continue routine maintenance of our facilities, regular building reviews and the multi-year capital project plan. Technology efforts should continue to focus on innovation, adequate network capacity, reliability and system security, particularly if remote learning is expected to remain a significant component of curriculum delivery. We will continue to work closely with the Weston Police and Fire Departments and the Board of Health regarding safety and security.

### **Maintain the Rate of Budget Change at a Responsible Level**

The School Administration must continue its sensitivity to the Town's short and long-term financial constraints, including the tax burden of budgetary decisions and the uncertainty of state and federal funds. Staffing levels should be regularly assessed to be sure that they reflect changes in enrollment levels. Budget planning must also consider class size constraints that may be caused by a continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Variations from the minimum class size policy will require the approval of the Superintendent and the School Committee. The School Administration has given primary consideration to supporting program enhancements with offsetting budget reductions. While the School Committee continues to stress the importance of fiscal responsibility, the primary consideration should be given to providing students with the tools and resources they need to succeed at a high level, even in a pandemic.

Approved by the School Committee on: October 5, 2020