

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WESTON, MASSACHUSETTS

SCHOOL BUDGET

July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011



PUBLIC HEARING

7:30 P.M. MONDAY, MAY 3
TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

TOWN MEETING

7:30 P.M. MONDAY, MAY 10
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

ADDITIONAL SESSIONS, IF NEEDED:

7:30 P.M. WEDNESDAY, MAY 12
7:30 P.M. MONDAY, MAY 17
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS VISION STATEMENT

The Weston Public Schools is committed to excellence in learning for further education and work, for civic responsibility, and for the love of learning.

The Weston Public Schools will achieve excellence in learning through collaboration among community, parents, administration, faculty, and students. Recognizing that learning is a lifelong process, all partners in the school community will use imagination, reflection, invention, rational inquiry and judgment to anticipate the demands of the future and to support the learning of others.

The curriculum will include both subject-based and interdisciplinary instruction for grades K-12. A Weston education will provide students with a broad knowledge base, integrating the arts, technology, communications and core academic areas. Graduates will be able to write and speak effectively, and will develop the problem solving and critical thinking skills necessary to participate productively in a constantly changing, culturally diverse and complex world.

The learning environment in Weston will stimulate and support all students in their intellectual, social, and personal growth to prepare them to become good citizens and to enable them to achieve whatever personal or career goals they pursue. Students will be encouraged to take risks and assume responsibilities; they will respect themselves and others, and be committed to serving the wider community with honesty and integrity.

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We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions regarding this publication.

Details concerning the budget summarized herein may be requested from the

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WESTON

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To the Townspeople of Weston

The Weston Public Schools budget proposal for fiscal year 2011 is set forth in this booklet. The School Committee has undertaken to prepare a budget that we believe will maintain our tradition of excellence while at the same time recognizing current financial realities. Our budget proposal has been constructed to fit within the Selectmen's stated goal of a Town-wide budget for fiscal year 2011 that can be balanced without a Proposition 2 ½ override. The proposal before you for fiscal year 2011 of \$32,452,490 is \$616,349 or 1.94% more than the fiscal year 2010 budget of \$31,836,141.

Our budget proposal for fiscal year 2011 provides the necessary spending level to continue to provide high quality education for the Town's children. Approximately 99% of the increase in the proposed budget is driven by three principal areas:

- Contractual Increases (Steps and Lanes)
- High School Accreditation
- Special Education and Mandated services

Program improvements account for only 0.04% (\$14,007) of the increase over the budget for fiscal year 2010. This improvement includes planned updating of existing academic offerings in the High School program.

The Weston community has historically supported the schools because it recognizes the value of quality public education. The School Committee unanimously recommends this budget as a fiscally responsible plan to meet the educational needs of the Town's children. Your questions, suggestions and participation are welcome as we work together to prepare our children to become productive contributors to our society. More information about the operations and performance of the Weston Schools is available in our 2009 Annual Report which is on our website at <http://www.westonschools.org/index.cfm?pid=19883>

We respectfully ask for your support.

WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Edward Heller, Chairman
Richard A. Manley, Jr.
Court Chilton
Maryanne Rogers
Sanjay Saini

2010-2011 Budget Guidelines

We are fortunate to live in a town that both demands and supports an excellent school system. The School Administration has identified system needs to ensure continued excellence. These needs are summarized in a comprehensive Long Range Plan approved by the School Committee. The following general guidelines are meant to assist the School Administration in preparing the budget for fiscal year 2011. These guidelines reflect the Town's desire to maintain the overall strength of the school system by supporting the implementation of the Long Range Plan while recognizing continuing local and general economic challenges.

Preserve Excellence in Curriculum and Instruction

Execution of the Long Range Plan requires that we provide adequate resources and funding for major initiatives: In Fiscal Year 2011 this includes continued support for implementation of Differentiated Instruction and the Global Initiative. 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, in addition to achieving adequate yearly progress toward 2014 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) performance goals.

Maintain a Safe and Secure Environment and Infrastructure

The budget should continue to support safe, secure and educationally sound school environments, while seeking energy conservation and appropriate efficiencies to reduce costs. We should continue to collaborate with the Town to achieve economies of scale in the maintenance and operation of our facilities. We should continue routine maintenance of our facilities, regular building reviews and the multi-year capital project plan. Technology planning should assess the needs of all networking and other infrastructure as it relates to system security and optimization.

Maintain the Rate of Budget Growth 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. Our efforts this year should reflect the progress we have made, with the support of the community, in right-sizing our operations over the past several budgets. Staffing levels should be regularly assessed to be sure that they reflect changes in enrollment levels. Attention must be focused on minimum class size policy, especially for course offerings that are not part of the graduation requirements. Variations from the minimum class size policy will require the approval of the Superintendent and notice to the School Committee. Primary consideration should be given to offsetting budget reductions in support of program enhancements, as we anticipate continued Town-wide budgetary pressures in fiscal year 2011.

Factors Affecting FY'11 Educational Costs

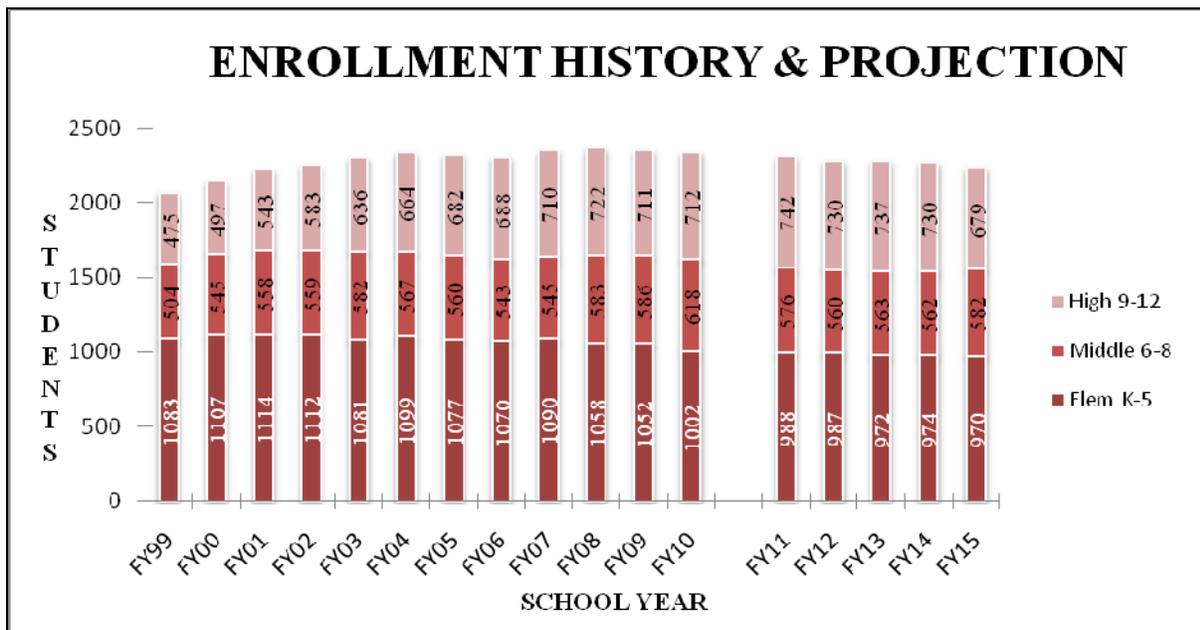
Contractual increases in employee step and lane compensation, rising special education costs, and the anticipated level of state aid funding presented a challenge for preparing the school budget. The School Committee worked closely with the school administration to develop a budget that preserves the quality of our core services and incorporates necessary but minimal program improvements.

The School Committee proposes a total budget of \$32,452,490 that is \$616,349 or a 1.94% increase over the FY'10 budget. This budget allows us to maintain current programs, meet the class size policy standards, address our mandates in Special Education and No Child Left Behind, and support the planned continuation of the Mandarin program to Grade 11.

The factors that have a direct impact on the quality of education in Weston and on the FY'11 Proposed Budget are summarized in the following sections.

Staffing and Enrollment

Our staff is our most important asset and we believe the compensation packages negotiated with each of our bargaining units serve to attract and retain highly qualified professional staff in a very competitive market. However, since staff wages and salaries account for more than 86% of the school budget these compensation packages have a significant impact on our overall budget.



Overall enrollment will decline slightly at the lower Elementary levels. Middle and High Schools will experience a shift of students from Middle to High School as a population bulge moves through. We carefully monitor class sizes throughout the system, and the FY'11 budget includes personnel adjustments in response to individual grade fluctuations. This close management of our staffing patterns enables us to educate Weston students as effectively and efficiently as possible and to project our personnel costs. The graph shows the twelve-year school enrollment history and a projection for the next five years. Tables showing our professional staffing are provided on page 8.

Special Education and Other Mandates

School districts are required by federal and state laws to provide a range of special education services beginning at age 3 and ending at age 22. Special Education poses many challenges for school districts, both fiscally and programmatically, especially as the number of students identified with special needs and the severity of those needs are increasing. Services are provided within the classroom in the district whenever possible, or in specialized out-of-district placements for students whose disabilities preclude them from being able to make progress or function in the typical classroom setting.

Total special education spending in FY'11, net of State reimbursements ("circuit breaker"), grant funds and pre-school tuitions, is projected to be \$216,725 or 3.69% over the FY'10 budget. The FY'11 increase is attributable to changes in staffing for our inclusion programs, a reduction to the state reimbursement "Circuit Breaker" program, and an increase in out-of-district placements. These changes are designed to meet the needs of our increasing student population who qualify for special education. Despite the uncertainty of state aid, the quantity and severity of individual cases, and the lack of control over private placement tuition costs, cost analyses and comparison demonstrate that Weston provides effective and efficient special education services for its special needs population, through both our integrated pre-school and our K-12 programs.

Program Support

The School Committee and the Administration have developed a Long Range Plan for the Weston Public Schools. This strategic plan is the basis of annual budget planning and the FY'11 Proposed Budget reflects its priorities. The budget document can be found on the district web site at: <http://www.westonschools.org/index.cfm?pid=20205>

The High School Program of Studies includes several program changes. These program changes include restructuring Creative Writing, adding Applied Discrete Math Concepts and the continuation of the Mandarin.

The Middle School Program of Studies includes the addition of an Applied Algebra course. Middle School population shifts have resulted in a reduction of a Grade 6 section, an addition of a Grade 7 section and the reduction of a Grade 8 section. Course offerings have been modified in response to this shift in enrollment.

Enrollment at the elementary level is declining resulting in a reduction of a Kindergarten section at Woodland School and a reduction of a Grade 3 section at Country School. A move to increase kindergarten to a full day program was implemented in the 2008-2009 school year. A Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) grant offsets a majority of the costs associated with the additional instructional time. The FY '11 budget includes full day kindergarten, with the expectation of continued support from the state.

Overall, these important educational program improvements amount to 0.04% of the total FY'11 Proposed Budget increase.

Revenue Offsets

The School Committee has actively sought to offset increasing costs in the School Department budget by identifying and leveraging new revenue sources. While grants and the State “circuit breaker” reimbursement are very important, they are also uncertain. Other revenues that the School Committee has been able to generate include fees for use of school facilities by outside groups, tuition payments from non-resident and foreign students, and tuition payments for eligible pre-school students. Like the grants and other State aid, however, these revenues can also fluctuate from year to year.

The schools also benefit from the efforts of such parent groups as The Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee, Weston Boosters, and the Weston Parent Teacher Organization, which provide substantial support for projects that enrich our students’ educational experience. None of these individual or organized contributions are reflected in the budget, but their impact on students’ educational experience is significant, especially in this economic climate.

Looking Ahead

The School Committee and School Administration are continuously engaged in planning for the future. NCLB requirements and special education costs pose significant pressures on current and future school budgets, beyond the usual factors of enrollment changes, collective bargaining requirements, utility costs and the like. More significant for the coming year are the effects of the general economic situation on the State’s ability to fund mandated and legislated programs, and the Town’s willingness and ability to support its schools through property taxes.

Although federal economic stimulus funds have been provided to cover a wide range of educational initiatives, Weston only qualifies for special education (I.D.E.A.) funds through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Special Education Pre-School funds through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Final confirmation has not been received from DESE and EEC, but we anticipate the continuation of approximately \$405,000 that will be provided to the Town over the next year. There are restrictions tied to these funds that require the district to spend the funds on new and innovative special education programs, and may not be used to supplant existing expenditures. Each school district must write a grant to obtain these funds and report on how the funds are spent. In FY’10, Weston utilized these funds to launch The Enrichment Center (TEC) at the High School; provide staffing to the High School Special Education department; train a Reading Recovery teacher at Field School; initiate a district Response to Intervention (RTI) program; and purchase equipment for the district.

In summary, the FY’11 budget reflects our commitment to efficiently meet our strategic plan goals that preserve the quality of education in Weston. We believe that this budget provides the highest quality education to Weston students that our economic environment allows. The achievement of our current students remains outstanding and is reported in the annual Town Report. We are grateful for the support of the taxpayers in this shared goal.

Operating Budget Summary

This table summarizes the school budget as recommended by the School Committee and its estimated impact on the tax rate. Revenue received by the School Committee (line 1), the school-related revenue received by the Town (line 2) and the school costs to the taxpayer (line 3) yield the gross operating budget (line 4). Dividing those gross school costs by the Town's property valuation (line 6) generates an approximation of a school tax rate (line 7).

	Notes	APPROVED BUDGET 2009-10	RECOMMENDED BUDGET 2010-11	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE
Revenue to School Committee	1	\$1,317,314	\$1,278,127	(\$39,187)	(2.97)
Operating Budget Revenue to Town	2	\$2,556,275	\$2,556,275	\$0	0.00
Net Expenses to be Raised by Taxes	3	\$27,962,552	\$28,618,088	\$655,536	2.34
Gross Operating Budget	4	\$31,836,141	\$32,452,490	\$616,349	1.94
Per Pupil Budget	5	\$13,652	\$14,073	\$421	3.09
Property Valuation (in thousands)	6	\$5,172,263	\$5,232,012	\$59,749	1.16
Estimated Tax Rate for School Ops.	7	\$5.41	\$5.47	\$0.06	

NOTES:

- (1) Revenue paid directly to the School Committee includes athletic gate receipts, concert and performance ticket receipts, charges to the Recreation Department, and State funds (\$412,685) for METCO, as well as Pre-School tuitions.
- (2) Chapter 70 state aid payable directly to the Town for school purposes in FY'10 is \$2,556,275 and the same amount is currently estimated for FY'11. Chapter 70 aid includes funds related to the Education Reform Act and its mandates.
- (3) This "net expenses to be raised by taxes" item is an approximate one for school operations only and excludes (a) payments of principal and interest on major capital items appropriated by the Town in previous years; and (b) payments to the Minuteman Regional Vocational School. Note that this "net expenses" rises at a rate different from that of the budget, as a result of applying State aid.
- (4) The Gross Operating Budget is the amount that is the School Department budget.
- (5) The per pupil budget is computed by dividing the gross school budget (line 3) by the enrollment. This excludes amounts appropriated to the Selectmen for school purposes such as insurance, county retirement contributions, debt service, and regional school district membership. This per pupil index differs from that published by the State, which uses a different formula.
- (6) Property valuation for FY'11 has been provided by the Town.

- (7) Actual tax rate determination follows the Assessors' and Selectmen's consideration of all relevant school and municipal finance factors. Since a 1991-92 change in legislation, there is no longer a separate school tax rate.

Program Budget Overview

	APPROVED BUDGET 2009-10	RECOMMENDED BUDGET 2010-11	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	\$7,583,668	\$7,550,843	(\$32,825)	(0.43)
MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$5,100,279	\$5,122,137	\$21,858	0.43
HIGH SCHOOL	\$7,274,466	\$7,446,960	\$172,494	2.37
TECHNOLOGY	\$1,096,970	\$1,123,383	\$26,413	2.41
SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$5,212,632	\$5,476,982	\$264,350	5.07
FACILITIES	\$3,271,373	\$3,297,823	\$26,450	0.81
TRANSPORTATION	\$1,005,953	\$1,001,896	(\$4,057)	(0.40)
DISTRICT-WIDE	\$1,290,800	\$1,432,466	\$141,666	10.98
TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET:	\$31,836,141	\$32,452,490	\$616,349	1.94

The District-Wide account includes 1.3 FTE's for the High School enrollment and 0.5 FTE for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. These FTE's and associated dollars will be moved to the appropriate account once the department/location is determined based on enrollments as of September 2010.

Behind The Budget

Enrollments

The elementary enrollment increase first experienced in 1990-91 has leveled off and is projected to decrease somewhat in the next few years. Enrollment at the Middle and High School grades will fluctuate as the larger cohorts move up through the system. Refer to the chart on page 2.

Elementary Class Size

In 1972 the School Committee adopted class size standards for grades K-8 with minimum, desirable, and maximum values. In 2005 the School Committee engaged in a year-long process to evaluate the existing policy and to recommend changes if appropriate. The result of that process was the adoption of class size standards beginning in the 2006-2007 school year. These standards provide a class size range as well as a target size for classes at each of the elementary grade levels K-5. A four-year history and next year's projected homeroom size averages are cited below.

Grade	New Policy Standards		Pupils Per Class (Avg.)				
	Range	Target	Actual 2006-07	Actual 2007-08	Actual 2008-09	Actual 2009-10	Projected 2010-11
K	17-21	19	19.0	17.6	19.4	19.5	17.1
1	17-21	19	18.3	20.3	19.5	20.5	20.9
2	18-22	20	20.0	18.9	20.9	20.5	19.9
3	18-22	20	22.2	21.2	20.4	21.8	21.1
4	20-24	22	22.6	22.7	21.0	20.5	20.6
5	20-24	22	21.2	20.9	20.1	21.3	20.4

Student- Professional Staff Ratios

School budgets are determined by two factors more than by any others: the number of staff employed and the amount they are paid. One measure we have used over the years is student-staff ratio. This measure is achieved by dividing the number of students in a unit by the total number of staff assigned to them. "Staff" includes classroom and Special Education inclusion teachers, administrators, counselors, librarians, specialists: all professionals assigned to the group of students in question. A four-year history and a projection for next year are as follows:

	Actual 2006-07	Actual 2007-08	Actual 2008-09	Actual 2009-10	Projected 2010-11
Elementary (K-5)	12.3	12.1	11.9	11.5	11.7
Middle School (6-8)	10.2	10.5	10.2	10.1	9.7
Senior High (9-12)	<u>9.7</u>	<u>9.7</u>	<u>9.3</u>	<u>9.1</u>	<u>9.3</u>
System-wide*	10.6	10.6	10.6	10.3	10.3

*Includes central office administrators, school psychologists, METCO staff but excludes Pre-School.

Professional Staff Changes

	<u>Actual</u> 2009-10	<u>Projected</u> 2010-11		<u>Actual</u> 2009-10	<u>Projected</u> 2010-11
ELEMENTARY			HIGH SCHOOL		
Regular Classroom Teachers	48.60	46.60	Regular Classroom Teachers	62.15	63.70
Spec. Ed. / ESL Teachers ¹	12.10	12.10	Spec. Ed. / ESL Teachers ¹	4.65	4.65
Special Subject Teachers ²	16.90	16.24	Guidance Counselors	4.00	4.00
Guidance Counselors	3.00	3.00	Librarian	1.00	1.00
Librarian	3.00	3.00	Supervisors ³	3.20	3.20
Supervisors ³	0.40	0.40	Technology	1.00	1.00
Administrators	<u>3.00</u>	<u>3.00</u>	Administrators	<u>2.00</u>	<u>2.00</u>
Totals	87.00	84.34	Totals	78.00	79.55
MIDDLE SCHOOL			SYSTEMWIDE		
Regular Classroom Teachers	47.42	45.87	Superintendent's Office,		
Spec. Ed. / ESL Teachers ¹	4.25	4.25	Business and Curriculum	3.00	3.00
Guidance Counselors	3.00	3.00	Spec. Education & Other	11.20	11.75
Librarian	1.00	1.00	State & Federal Grants	<u>11.97</u>	<u>11.97</u>
Supervisors ³	2.45	2.45	Totals	26.17	26.72
Technology	1.00	1.00			
Administrators	<u>2.00</u>	<u>2.00</u>			
Totals	61.12	59.57	GRAND TOTAL	252.30	250.18

NOTES:

- (1) Teachers of students with special needs and ESL
- (2) Teachers of art, music, physical education, reading, world languages, science and math

- (3) Includes supervisory portions of Directors, Department Heads, and House Leaders

Other Professional and Support Staff Changes

	<u>Actual</u> 2009-10	<u>Projected</u> 2010-11
Building & Grounds	31.9	31.9
Human Resources	1.0	1.0
Nurses	4.6	4.6
OT/PT	3.8	3.8
Paraprofessional/Tech Support/Instr. Aides	28.7	27.8
Secretarial Aides	21.7	21.7
Secretaries	18.7	18.7
Transportation	23.0	23.0
Tutors/Literacy Assistants	<u>62.4</u>	<u>64.9</u>
	195.8	197.4

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