

CYNTHIA D. MAHR  
DIRECTOR OF  
FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

TO: Cheryl Maloney  
Weston School Committee

FROM: Cynthia D. Mahr

DATE: October 18, 2010

RE: 2010-2011 Enrollment Report and Projections

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The school year 2010-2011 enrollment report is divided into three sections. The first section provides the October 1 enrollment data in terms of historical information as well as actual versus projections. The second section provides class size data for the middle and high schools. The third section provides historical Weston birth data and census data on which enrollment projections for future years are based.

### **Section I: Enrollment and October 1 Data**

#### **Table A: K-12 Enrollment Report**

Overall, we are 8 students above our projection and 17 students below the October 1, 2009 count. The significant variances in the projection figures are apparent in Grades K-3.

#### **Table B: K-12 Enrollment Report Distribution by Residency**

#### **Table C: Trend in Enrollment Distribution by Residency**

The majority of the students attending Weston schools are residents, 90.9%. In addition, there are 174 METCO students (7.5%) and 37 children of faculty and staff (1.6%). Over the last 10 years, Weston's enrollment has increased by 100 students.

#### **Table D: October 1 Fluctuations from Projected Enrollments**

Accurate enrollment projections are challenging. The projection method used by Weston is a commonly used method of calculating the ratio of births to Kindergarten enrollments and grade-to-grade ratios over a period of time. The birth data source is the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Table D summarizes the October 1 fluctuations to the projected enrollments. As previous tables have shown, the current year enrollment was higher than projected by 8 students. The significant variances in the projection figures are apparent in Grades K -3. Kindergarten was under-projected by 13 students and Grade 2 was under-projected by 16 students while Grade 3 was over-projected by 13 students.

#### **Table E: Percentage of Weston Resident Children in Private School**

In the past, private schools would provide the district with a report listing all town residents in attendance at the school. Districts were then required to file an annual report with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in January. In January 2008, the DESE eliminated the local educating authority from the process; simply requiring private

schools to report directly to DESE. Therefore, our private school enrollment information is based on the town census data with verification calls to the local private schools with the largest historical enrollment of Weston residents (i.e. Dexter, Rivers, Meadowbrook). This information is used to complete the annual School Attending Report in March. With a later submittal date, the entry of the census data is more complete, and therefore, we have more reliable information.

Historically, Weston's school-aged children enrolled in private schools range between 14.5% and 18.6% of total enrollments. These numbers do not reflect the special education students in residential placements. In school year 2009-2010, 18.37% of Weston resident children were enrolled in private school.

## **Section II: Middle and High School Class Size Review**

### **Table F: Course Sections Above 25 and Under 12 Students**

Based on a review of the Middle and High Schools course selection list as of September 22, 2010, a number of courses have enrollments in excess of 25 students and a few courses have less than 12 students.

At the High School, there are no core courses with enrollment in excess of 25 students. Similar to past years' data, many of the music sections, such as concert band and chorus, are by the nature of the discipline, larger than the twenty-five student guideline cap. The High School has 4 core courses and 2 electives with an enrollment under 12 students.

The Middle School courses in excess of 25 students cross many disciplines (music, health/physical education and math). There are 2 core courses and 17 electives with an enrollment exceeding 25 students. The Middle School has 6 core courses and 7 electives with an enrollment of 12 students or less as indicated in Table F.

A column has been added to Table F to reflect the time of year the course is running:

All: Year round course

S1 or S2: Semester 1 or Semester 2

Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4: Quarter 1, Quarter 2, Quarter 3, or Quarter 4

Due to the nature of smaller classes in special education and topic courses, these courses were not included in the analysis.

### **Table G: High School Section Size Distribution**

### **Table H: Middle School Section Size Distribution**

Tables G and H analyze the class size of the core subject areas in the High and Middle Schools.

Table G analyzes the section size distribution for the High School. English, Social Studies, Math and Science have similar ranges in both the number of sections and size of sections. These range from 11 to 25 students per section.

Table H analyzes the section size distribution for the Middle School. The Middle School distribution is similar to the High School. The Middle School courses range from 10 to 27 students per section.

The mean and median calculations are shown on both Table G and H. Table I provides a historical view of these calculations.

**Table I: Section Size Statistics for Certain Departments (Middle and High School)**

Table I provides the statistical data referred to in Tables G and H. The table provides historical class size ranges and mean and median calculations for the Middle and High Schools from school year 2001-2002 through the present. As the table indicates, the historical data has been consistent. Median values range from 19 to 21 over the past two years. The mean values range from 18.22 to 20.85 over the same time period.

**Section III: Enrollment Projections**

**Table J: Census and Birth Data**

Table J examines the various attributes contributing to the enrollment projection. The first chart is titled Census of Residents Age 0 – 5 as of January 1. This information is provided by the Town Clerk’s Office on an annual basis. Based on the census figures, the overall population of pre-Kindergarten aged children in Weston has generally declined over the past nine years (slight increase in 2008 and 2010).

The second table provides historical data on the total number of births by Weston residents from 1988 to the present as reported by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH).

**Table K: K-12 Enrollment History and Projections as of October 1, 2010**

Table K details the enrollment projection methodology. This spreadsheet calculates the ratio of Weston birth data to actual kindergarten enrollments from school year 1993-1994 through the present. The birth data is provided by an annual report published by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). Three ratios are then developed: 10-year, 5-year and 3-year for all grades based on average grade retention ratios. Below is a summary of the ratios:

| Grade | 10-Year Average Enrollment Ratio | 5-Year Average Enrollment Ratio | 3-Year Average Enrollment Ratio |
|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| K     | 1.48                             | 1.54                            | 1.71                            |
| 1     | 1.09                             | 1.08                            | 1.10                            |
| 2     | 1.06                             | 1.07                            | 1.11                            |
| 3     | 1.02                             | 1.05                            | 0.97                            |
| 4     | 1.02                             | 1.04                            | 1.08                            |
| 5     | 1.00                             | 1.01                            | 1.00                            |
| 6     | 1.01                             | 1.02                            | 1.04                            |
| 7     | 1.01                             | 1.01                            | 1.07                            |
| 8     | 0.99                             | 0.99                            | 0.98                            |
| 9     | 0.95                             | 0.97                            | 0.96                            |
| 10    | 0.97                             | 0.95                            | 0.94                            |
| 11    | 0.97                             | 1.01                            | 1.01                            |
| 12    | 0.95                             | 0.99                            | 0.97                            |

Based on the quality of education provided by the Weston Public Schools, families are apt to move into town when their children reach school age. The 2011-2012 enrollment projections are based on the 3-year average ratio. With the current state of the economy, I believe the 3-year average would more reflect what we should expect to see for enrollments over the next few years.

Table K reflects an overall enrollment projection of 2,292 or a decrease of 23 students.

As discussed in the introduction, there are other attributes that impact enrollments. Additional information about this topic will be discussed below.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Table L: Actual SY'10-11 Resident Enrollment versus NESDEC Projections**

As part of the Field School Feasibility, we contracted with the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) to conduct a long-range demographic and enrollment projection. NESDEC provided the District with an enrollment projection for residents only. In September 2009, NESDEC provided Weston with an updated projection.

Table L provides a review of the actual resident data versus the revised NESDEC projection. As this table indicates, the NESDEC projection was lower than the actual enrollment of residents as of October 1, 2010 by 170 students.

#### **Table M: Building Permits and Age of Residents**

Table M shows the year of birth and age of the current residents in Weston. There are currently 1,744 residents aged 67 and older. There are 3,822 or 33%, individuals between the age of 27 and 56. This age range represents the most likely age to parent a school-aged child.

Building permits is another indicator of enrollment changes. Table M provides a historical view of the permits for the past 15 years.

### **Summary**

In summary, the school year 2010-2011 enrollments reflect an overall decrease in the number of students attending Weston Public Schools of 17 students.

The school year 2011-2012 enrollment projection is 2,292 students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. This represents a decrease of 23 students from the October 1, 2010 count. The Kindergarten projection is 130 students. This represents a decrease of 8 students from the current enrollment of 138 students.

I look forward to discussing this with you and providing additional information as needed. Thank you.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** That the Weston School Committee receive the 2010-2011 Enrollment Report and vote to adopt Table K: K-12 Enrollment History and Projection for the Fiscal Year 2012 budgeting purposes.

Attachments

Cc: Amber Bock, Asst. Superintendent