

2015-2016 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 2016. 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 2016 this includes continued support for our curriculum, as well as, meeting 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. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test will be administered in Grades 3-8 in lieu of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). The MCAS will continue to be administered in Grades 5, 8 and 10 for Science, as well as the MCAS Alternate.

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, sustainability 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 and grounds. 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 adequate network capacity, reliability and system security. We will continue to work closely with the Weston Police and Fire Departments regarding safety and security.

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. 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. Variations from the minimum class size policy will require the approval of the Superintendent and notice to the School Committee. The School Administration has given primary consideration to supporting program enhancements with offsetting budget reductions particularly in the current economic climate. 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.

Approved by the School Committee (10/14/14)