

WESTON

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: Alan Oliff
Weston School Committee

From: Cindy D. Mahr

Date: January 10, 2007

Re: FY'08 Recommended Budget Narrative

Please find attached the FY'08 Recommended Budget for your review. This budget has been developed through a collaborative process involving the school leadership. The Administration used the School Committee's Budget Guidelines and the Superintendent's Long Range Plan to make decisions about what to bring forward in this budget, mindful of the fiscal constraints of the Town. The FY'08 Recommended Budget is \$28,824,605 or a 5.95% increase over FY'07.

Budget Document:

The budget document contains information by Cost Center and Category of Expense. The Cost Center provides a summary page and line item detail for each school and district-wide function. Within each school or function the budget detail is presented by program area. The Category of Expense groups the line items by major expense categories such as Salaries and Other Compensation, Utilities, etc. Within each major category, individual "object codes" or sub-categories such as Substitute Salaries, Electricity, etc. further break down the budget.

Continuing past practice, the FY'07 Adjusted Budget is used as the basis for calculating the dollar and percentage changes in FY'08. The Adjusted Budget reflects the updated projected costs for FY'07 as of September for major categories such as Salaries or major program areas such as Special Education.

The Appendices section of the FY'08 Recommended Budget book includes the following schedules and additional information supporting the budget:

- Equipment and Furniture Schedule
- Deferred Equipment
- Capital Budget Request
- Proposed Reconfiguration of a Town/School Facility Department
- Breakout of Supplies, Services, and Other Expenses
- District Enrollment Projections

Budget Overview:

The FY'08 Recommended Budget continues support for core services to students, addresses facility maintenance, enrollment needs based on class size policies, and introduces program improvements that are priorities for the district. The following is a brief explanation of the budget changes by school or function.

Central Office:

Personnel:

Savings: (\$31,198)

There are two personnel reductions in the Central Office. These include the decrease of 5 hours/week in the Payroll Office and the elimination of the Library/Information Technology secretarial position. The Payroll Office currently provides support to the Human Resource Office. This assistance is no longer necessary with the advancing technology. The Town Administrator's Office and the School Business Office have worked closely over the past few months to identify ways to streamline operations and eliminate paper. Through this effort, we can reduce the Payroll Office hours without negatively affecting the office functions.

Country School:

Personnel:

Cost: \$13,320

The current 5 sections of Kindergarten will move into 1st Grade. Therefore, we have reduced a teacher and an instructional aide position in the Kindergarten and added a teacher to Grade 1. With this shift to Grade 1, we have added time in Art, Music, World Language and Physical Education. Based on a request by the Country and Woodland Principals, we have also added 10 hours/week to the Auxiliary Reading Program (ARP) tutor at both Country and Woodland Schools. This position will work with students who are currently not meeting either the state or local standards for proficiency in the reading by the end of third grade. Often these students were not originally identified as needing ARP or have moved into the district after Grade 2.

Non-Personnel:

Cost \$4,000

With the additional Grade 1 classroom, the budget includes \$4K for classroom and teaching supplies.

Woodland School:

Personnel:

Savings: (\$51,134)

Based on the projected enrollment of 155 students in Grade 2, we anticipate reducing the number of sections by one at Woodland School. With this reduction, we have reduced time in Art, Music, World Language, and Physical Education. Based on a request by the Country and Woodland Principals, we have also added 10 hours/week to the Auxiliary Reading Program (ARP) tutor at both Country and Woodland Schools. This position will work with students who are currently not meeting either the state or local standards for proficiency in the reading by the end of third grade. Often these students were not originally identified as needing ARP or have moved into the district after Grade 2.

Field School:

Personnel:

Savings: (\$61,567)

Due to changing enrollments, the budget includes adding one Grade 4 section and reducing two Grade 5 sections. With this overall reduction, we have reduced time in Art, Music, World Language, and Physical Education.

Equipment:

Cost: \$3,750

The budget includes funding to replace 25 student desks and 25 student chairs. This will equip one classroom.

Middle School:

Personnel:

Cost: \$95,103

Based on the anticipated enrollments at the Middle School, the budget includes adding two Grade 6 sections and reducing one Grade 8 section. Art, Music, Health, Physical Education, Drama, and World Language have been adjusted accordingly.

The FY'07 budget introduced Mandarin I in Grade 7. In FY'08, we anticipate offering Mandarin I in Grade 7 and Mandarin II in Grade 8. The progression of Mandarin to Grade 8 was an approved Program of Studies change and will require one additional section.

Non-Personnel:

Cost: \$5,950

The addition of Mandarin II will necessitate the addition of \$2,650 for teaching supplies and associated costs. In addition, the budget includes \$3K to replace the copier in the Principal's Office.

Capital (not in budget):

Cost: \$49,500

The Science Department lab furniture is in need of replacement. These were not replaced as part of the building project. The protective lab table surface has worn off and therefore the tables are no longer non-porous and are absorbing chemicals. In addition, the Amy Potter Center chairs will be replaced through these funds.

High School:

Personnel:

Cost: \$40,950

The two approved Program of Studies changes for school year 2007-2008 are included in the budget. This includes one additional section of Chamber Orchestra and the implementation of Grade 10 Health. Over the past four years, the Chamber Orchestra enrollment has grown to 60 students. Based on the results of a pilot program, and a suggestion by the Principal's Advisory Council, the Health and Fitness Coordinator has requested creating a wellness course for Grade 10. This course would be offered to all Grade 10 students for one semester. In addition, the Athletic budget includes two new freshman sports: Freshman Boys Soccer and Freshman Boys Lacrosse. In the FY'07 budget, two new girls sports were added (Junior Varsity and Varsity Volleyball and Ice Hockey). With the addition of these two new freshman boys' sports, the Athletic department will offer 23 boys and 24 girl's sports. The cost of the two additional coaches is included in the budget.

Non-Personnel:

Cost: \$36,238

There are a number of expenses related to the Program of Studies changes that have been funded. These include \$250 for additional Chamber Orchestra materials, \$1,300 for additional Grade 10 Health materials, and \$1,900 for materials for a new Physics course. Textbook replacements are budgeted in Social Studies for AP textbooks and Mathematics for Pre-Calculus textbooks. With the implementation of Freshman Boys Soccer and Freshman Boys Lacrosse, the Athletic budget includes \$9,600 for transportation and supplies.

Capital (not in budget):

Cost: \$335,000

The bleachers and press box at the High School football field are in need of replacement. The requested capital funds would cover the estimated costs of an architect, demolition of the current structure, new storage sheds, and replacement of the bleachers and press box.

Facilities Department:

Utilities:

Cost: \$48,156

The utilities are budgeted within the Facilities Department accounts by location. In FY'08, our electric and natural gas contracts will expire. In working with the Town, we estimate both contracts to increase 5%. Contracts for gasoline and oil continue throughout the next fiscal year. The requested amount represents approximately 3% increase overall. The District has implemented an energy conservation program that we anticipate will reduce our energy costs in fiscal year 2008.

Non-Personnel:

Cost: \$15,000

The budget proposes to increase the cleaning supplies and paper goods by \$1,500 each per school for a total of \$15K district-wide. For school year 2007-2008, the Facilities Department will be putting together a bid for cleaning supplies and paper goods. This bid process should help defray the costs that have historically exceeded the \$1,500 increase requested in this budget.

The contract for trash removal will expire at the end of this fiscal year. The budget includes \$1,600 for anticipated increases. Although the contract will include provisions/incentives for recycling, we anticipate a slight price increase.

Equipment:

Cost: \$15,085

The equipment requests include 8 vacuums (wet/dry and backpack), leaf blower, large mower, grooming machine, entry mats and a mig welder. Each school will benefit from the new equipment proposed by the Facilities Department. The total cost of the Smithco grooming machine is \$15K. This machine will be used to groom the skinned infield of the new softball field. It can also be used for similar maintenance on other fields. The requested amount is for \$5K with the balance being funded by WEEFC and Boosters.

Capital (not in budget):

Cost: \$35,000

The Facilities Department has requested to replace a 1986 Chevy 1 Ton dump truck with plow. The current vehicle is used to plow the driveways around the various school buildings.

Information Technology:

Personnel:

Cost: \$14,550

In January 2006, the Technology Review Report was submitted. This budget addresses one recommendation related to staffing. The recommendation was, "...that technology staff or some portion of the members, have a longer work year so they can make adjustments before school starts in the fall." One technician position will have an hour a day added to their schedule. The estimated cost is \$8,011. Since a majority of technology upgrades and replacements occur during the summer months, it is important to have sufficient summer staff. Current staffing does not allow us to complete the work prior to the teacher's returning to their classrooms. Therefore, the budget includes \$6,539 for 45 additional staff days during the summer months. As mentioned earlier, the budget also includes the elimination of the department secretary.

Capital (not in budget):

Cost: \$145,000

The capital budget request is for replacement computers for instructional purposes. The funds requested are part of a five-year capital plan (year 4 of 5).

Special Education:

Personnel:

Cost: \$181,408

There are a number of proposed changes to special education staff. Based on the number of children in pre-school with identified needs, the budget funds a number of additional tutors to accommodate the progression of these children to kindergarten. There are no graduating seniors with tutors to offset the incoming students. Based on the FY'07 deficit in special education, it is crucial that we monitor the staffing carefully and often. Additional tutor costs are at the heart of the Weston inclusion model. These tutors often provide the assistance necessary to keep the students in Weston where they can receive a high quality education among their peers.

Below is a table describing the changes in FTE's and dollars by position type and school:

Location/Type	FTE / Hour Change	Amount
Country School		
Skills Tutor	(1 hour/week)	(\$833)
Inclusion Tutor	1.0 FTE	\$25,835
Woodland School		
Inclusion Tutor	0.83 FTE	\$20,835
Occupational Therapist	0.05 FTE	\$2,503
Field School		
Inclusion Tutors	3.00 FTE	\$69,771
Inclusion Teacher	0.20 FTE	\$10,011
Speech and Lang. Teacher	0.10 FTE	\$5,005
Physical Therapist	0.10 FTE	\$5,005
Middle School		
Skills Tutor	5 hours/week	\$4,165
Inclusion Tutor	0.92 FTE	\$22,917

High School		
Inclusion Tutor	1.00 FTE	\$29,156
Other		
Summer Salaries		(\$12,962)
TOTAL		\$181,408

Non-Personnel: Cost: \$21,188

In addition to significant personnel changes, there are a number of contractual service changes. Consultants who provide therapy services are expected to drop by \$2,280 next year.

Outplacements are expected to increase overall next year with a reduction of (\$121K) in public school placements and an increase of \$125K in private school placements. Due to these anticipated fluctuations in outside placements, the transportation budget is expected to increase by \$19K. Below is a summary of the number of outplacements and the associated costs over time.

Fiscal Year	Number of Placements	Total Expended
FY'04	18	\$839,249
FY'05	19	\$917,688
FY'06	22	\$903,215
FY'07 Adjusted Budget	19	\$876,466
FY'08 Recommended	18	\$880,889

Note: The total expended number above does not include transportation costs or Circuit Breaker funding. It only represents the total amount spent in public, private and home based tuition.

Transportation:

Non-Personnel: Savings: (\$22,408)

In fiscal year 2003, two buses were purchased through lease-to-own financing. In fiscal year FY'08, the last of the two payments are due. This results in a \$22K savings.

Equipment: Cost: \$4,500

With the Transportation Study's current recommendation to maintain the fleet in house requires an investment in our fleet and fleet maintenance. Currently, the transportation department has one airlift. Airlifts are used to raise the bus in order to perform maintenance on the undercarriage of the vehicle. Although the department had two airlifts, one failed in 2002 and was not replaced. With the maintenance staying in-house, a second airlift will allow us to raise the entire bus to complete maintenance (brakes, exhaust systems, tires, etc.) in a safe and cost-effective manner.

Capital (not in budget): Cost: \$300,000

In addition, the replacement of vehicles was delayed pending the outcome of the study. I have worked with Bob Wells over the past few months to put together a long-term fleet replacement schedule. The industry standards recommend replacement of the vehicles at 130K miles or 10 years old. We currently have 9 vehicles that exceed the recommendation for replacement. With the estimated price of \$63K each, replacement of all 9 vehicles in a single year is not fiscally

responsible. Therefore, the capital budget recommendations include the replacement of 5 vehicles through the capital budget. A \$15,000 fund balance will offset the total cost of \$312,500. In FY'00, Keyspan assisted the district in seeking funds to defray the cost of compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. These funds were intended to offset the purchase price. I recommended using these one-time funds in FY'08.

In addition, I have spoken with Mike Manning at Keyspan. Mr. Manning will assist the district in seeking federal and state funding to help offset the cost of the CNG buses. Typically, the cost of CNG buses is double that of a diesel bus. Since we would prefer to purchase environmentally friendly vehicles, we will be working with Keyspan over the next few months to secure as much funding as possible to purchase alternate fuel vehicles.

Offsets:

Circuit Breaker:

Offset: (\$29,235)

The Circuit Breaker funding is based on previous year's special education expenses. The legislation provides reimbursement of 75% above \$33,700 for FY'08. The Circuit Breaker funding is 'subject to appropriation;' therefore, if insufficient funds exist to cover the full reimbursement costs statewide, the reimbursement level will be less than 75%. In FY'07, we will receive significantly less revenue than budgeted. To offset this shortfall, we anticipate fully expending the Circuit Breaker fund balance. Although our special education expenses are high this year, the individual cases do not meet the threshold for reimbursement. Therefore, the budget level funds the offset at this year's reimbursement level.

Pre-School Revolving:

Offset: \$35,000

The Weston Windows program is available to all pre-school children with identified special education needs. In addition, a similar number of typically developing children can attend the program at a reasonable tuition. Over the past few years, the tuition level has increased slightly. In FY'08, Regis Miller has requested, and I recommend, increasing the tuition by \$550 to \$7,300. In addition, she recommends increasing the cost of stay days by \$5/day. Based on these recommended increases, the revenue would increase by \$25K. The FY'08 offset, assumes this revenue increase and \$10K from the current fund balance.

Athletic Revolving:

Offset: \$2,500

The Athletic Department collects gate receipts that are used to offset the cost of the program. These receipts have remained stable over the past few years. The FY'08 recommended offset is increased slightly (\$2,500) over FY'07.

Student Activity:

Offset: (\$100,000)

The FY'07 budget included \$100K in collected student activity fees. Through December 2006, we have collected \$90K in fees with spring activities and sports to come. The current fees of \$30 for Elementary, \$60 for Middle School and \$90 for High School are still significantly lower than other districts. This budget assumes the elimination of the fees.

Textbook:

Offset: (\$10,000)

In FY'07, the budget included an offset of \$10K from the textbook revolving account. This account collects lost book and Advanced Placement textbook funds from students. The fund balance cannot afford to offset the general fund budget. In FY'09, we will look to offset department budgets by the same amount of funds collected in the previous year.

Other Funding Sources:

In addition to State and Local revenue, the School Department receives federal grant funds and Department of Public Health grant funds. The federal funds are primarily for Special Education. The grant funds are not represented in the budget.

WEEFC provides an invaluable resource to the District. WEEFC provides significant funding in support of professional development activities, equipment purchases, and creative arts. The School District is greatly enhanced by the commitment of Weston residents who contribute both financially and through their volunteer hours.

Budget Summary:

The Recommended FY'08 Budget provides for level service and program improvements necessary to sustain the excellent educational system in Weston. I look forward to the budget deliberations. Please let me know if you would like any additional information.

Thank you.