

UNFUNDED AND PARTIALLY FUNDED MANDATES

One of the phrases that historically come up during budget time each year is “unfunded mandates.” **Unfunded mandates** are the programs, processes and procedures that **must** be implemented in all public school districts, by law, yet do not bring any additional dollars to the communities in which these mandates are required. In short, the Weston taxpayer must cover these costs.

While many people have heard of this term, few can specifically identify even a few examples of what unfunded mandates are. To give you proper perspective on what the Weston Public Schools must implement (and pay for) due to unfunded mandates, we have included the full list for this year. It may be surprising to you.

PARTIALLY UNFUNDED MANDATES

Adult Education/Continuing Ed

CAPT Testing, Gr. 10

CMT Testing - Prep. for Science testing, Gr. 5, 8

English Language Learners -- ELL

Special Education -- 10% paid of 40% required by law

The school district must test students that either the parent or the school district suspects has a disability that is eligible for services under IDEA or 504.

The school district must identify Talented and Gifted (TAG) students. However, they do not have to provide a program.

NCLB mandates that all students, including those identified for Special Education Services, must achieve goals on standardized tests.

The State Department of Education requires districts to staff the following positions: Nurse, Guidance, Psychologist, and if needed to provide the services of Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist and Speech and Language Clinician.

Excess Cost and Agency Placement Fees

Administrator and Teacher Evaluation

Unified Accounting System

TEAM Program (new teacher mentor program)

FULLY UNFUNDED MANDATES

ADA Accommodations (transportation/signs/elevator)

Alternate Education for Expelled Students

Air Quality

Asbestos Training for Building/Grounds staff

Background checks and fingerprinting

Benefit Costs as a result of CT Civil Union Legislation

BEST Program

Blood Borne Pathogen Training

Bullying Policy (investigation/record keeping/follow-up)

Certified staff – Tracking and Reporting

Child Abuse Reporting

Benefits costs as result of CT New Civil Union Legislation

C.G.S. 10-145: Administrators and Teachers must have appropriate certification

C.G.S. 10-153: Administrators, Teachers and Classified employees collective bargaining rights.

Salary & benefits determined by this process, number of staff determined by BOE

Professional Development Requirements – Replaces Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

CPR/First Aid and Heimlich Training

Hepatitis B Screening

Drug Education

ED-001: End of Year School Report

ED-003: Administrator Negotiations

ED-006S: Public School Information

ED-014: Minimum Expenditure Compliance Check

School Building Projects:

ED-042: Request for Review of Final Plans

ED-042CO: Notice of Change Order

ED-045: Notice of Debt Service

ED-046: Request for School Construction Progress Payment

ED-049: Grant App. for School Building Project

ED-050: School Facilities Survey

ED-053: Site Analysis

ED-099: Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs

ED-103: Reimbursement Claim/Nat'l School Lunch Program

ED-111: Cash Management Report

ED-114: Pre-payment Grant Budget Request

ED-141: Statement of Expenditures Fed/State Projects

ED-156: Fall Hiring Survey

ED-162: Non-Certified Staff

ED-163: CT School Data Report

ED-166: Discipline Offense Report

ED-165: Data Reporting - Technology

ED-172: Request 90 Day Certification

ED-1723: Request Temporary Authorization for Minor Assignments

ED-175: Special Waiver for Substitute

ED-177: Request Durational Shortage Area Permit

ED-186: Application - Temp./Emergency coaching Permits

ED-236: Immigrant Student Survey Report

ED-238: Emergency Immigrant Ed Progress Report
 ED-452: Debt Services Claim Form
 ED-540: Graduation Class Report
 ED-612: Language Assessment Data Collection (4 weeks)
 Family & Medical Leave Act
 Freedom of Information (FOI) Training
 Internet Protection Act for Children
 Health Education (staff)
 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA)
 Internet Protection Act for Children
 No Child Left Behind Act, NCLB

- Report results
- HOUSSE Plan

 Pesticide Application Policy
 Promotion/Graduation Requirements
 Restraint Training for Special Ed and Support Staff
 Safety and Security Analysis and Mitigation Plan
 School Records and Retention
 School Medical Advisor
 School Transportation/Safety Reporting
 SEDAC (Special Ed Information System)
 Sexual Harassment Training
 Smarter Balance Assessments-Math & ELA (Gr. 3-8, 11)
 Special Education Due Process (proactive)
 Special Education Coverage at PPTs
 Strategic School Profiles (SSP) data collection/reporting
 Student Physicals/Immunizations (Gr. K, 7, 10)

- Vision Screenings
- Hearing Screenings
- Scoliosis Screenings
- School Medical Advisor
- Related Medical Equipment

 Summer School or other supplemental services for intervention
 Teacher/Administrator Evaluations
 Five Year Technology Plan
 CAPT Readiness Computer Certification
 Transportation to Regional VOAG/Technical schools
 Truancy Reporting (10 per year)
 Youth Suicide Prevention
 504 Accommodations
 RTI – Response to Intervention
 Wellness Committee
 Wellness Policy

Workers' Compensation

Unemployment

Family and Medical Leave Act (FLMA)

Submit Federal and State Withholding/FICA/Medicare Taxes by pay period

File Quarterly 941 tax report with the Federal Government

File Quarterly and Annually the Connecticut Withholding Tax Report

Maintain I-9s and W-4s and keep current

Issue W-2s, 1099Rs and 1099s

Comply with federal laws regarding 403(b) and 457 deferred compensation plans

State Municipal Employee Retirement Plan Monthly Reporting

State Teachers Retirement Monthly Reporting

Fund GASB 43 & 45

Annual OSHA Update Training: Asbestos Awareness, B.B.P. Ladder Safety, Lock-out tag-out, etc.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

	Description
AASA	American Association of School Administrators
ADA	Americans with Disabilities
ADM	Average Daily Membership
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
AIM	Academic Innovation and Measurement
AP	Advanced Placement
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
ASBO	Association of School Business Officials
ASCD	Association of Supervision and Curriculum
ASO	Administrative Services Only
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst
CABE	Connecticut Association of School Boards
CAPSS	Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
CAPT	Connecticut Academic Performance Test
CASBO	Connecticut Association of School Business Officials
CASE	Center for Academic Support and Enhancement
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CES	Cooperative Educational Services
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CIAC	Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference
CIL	Curriculum Instructional Leader
CMT	Connecticut Mastery Test
COBRA	Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act
COSTA	Connecticut School Transportation Association
CPSS	Commission for Public Secondary Schools
CREC	Capitol Region Educational Council
DRG	Demographic Reference Group
ECS	Educational Cost Sharing (grant)
ELA	English/Language Arts
ELL	English Language Learner
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
F & CS	Family and Consumer Science
FICA	Federal Insurance Contribution Act
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GASB	Government Accounting Standards Board
GTB	Guaranteed Tax Base
HSA	Health Savings Account
HES	Hurlbutt Elementary School
IBNR	Incurred But Not Reported
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Description

IMC	Information Media Center
LA	Language Arts
LRC	Library Resource Center
MERS	Municipals Employee Retirement Services
NCEP	Net Current Expenditures
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NESDEC	New England School Development Council
NH	North House (HES)
OPEB	Other Post-Retirement Benefits
OT	Occupational Therapy
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
PD	Professional Development
PE	Physical Education
PLTW	Project Lead the Way
PPO	Preferred Provider Option
PPS	Pupil Personnel Services
PPT	Planning and Placement Team
PSIS	Public School Information System
PT	Physical Therapy
PTO	Parent Teacher Organization
RTI	Response to Intervention
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SFCSA	Southern Fairfield County Superintendents' Association
SH	South House (HES)
SPED	Special Education
SRBI	Scientific Research Based Intervention
SSP	Strategic School Profile
STRB	State Teachers' Retirement Board
TBD	To Be Determined
TRB	Teachers' Retirement Board
WAA	Weston Administrators' Association
WHS	Weston High School
WIS	Weston Intermediate School
WMS	Weston Middle School
WTA	Weston Teachers' Association




WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS


Noteworthy Achievements and Accomplishments 2013 – 2014

Weston High School - WHS Weston Intermediate School - WIS
Weston Middle School - WMS Hurlbutt Elementary School - HES


ACADEMIC KUDOS


 WHS was awarded the *National Blue Ribbon Award* by the U.S. Department of Education for its outstanding programs and student achievement




 The Class of 2014 had 15 AP Scholars, 19 AP Scholars with Honors, 37 AP Scholars with Distinction, and 7 National AP Scholars


 *US News and World Report* ranked WHS as #1 in Fairfield County, #3 in Connecticut, and #182 nationally


 The Connecticut State Department of Education named Weston High School as a *School of Distinction* for high overall performance


 93% of the 532 AP exams taken in the spring of 2014 scored 3 or better on a 5-point scale


 WHS placed second in the *State Mock Trial* competition; the WMS 8th grade mock trial team won 2nd place in the competition


 WMS students who participated in the Fairfield County *Junior Math League* competitions this year placed 4th overall


 The WMS *Moth Counts* team placed 14th in this year's competition at the southwest chapter competition and one student advanced to the state competition


 An 8th grade student participated in the statewide *National Geography Bee*


 WMS grade 7 students took first place and second place at the *National History Day* state competition and represented the State of Connecticut at the national finals


 Three 6th grade students' writing pieces were published on kidzramag.com


 An 8th grade student's personal narrative received a 2nd place writing award at the *Trumbull Arts Festival* for the non-fiction middle-school category


 The WMS *Science Olympiad* team participated at the State tournament in Farmington

 WIS had 2 winners in the *Trumbull Arts Literary Competition*: first place in *Poetry* and first place in *Non-Fiction*


 Ten students from the 4th grade *Math Olympiad* team and 25 students from the 5th grade team ranked in the top 50%; 9 students from the 5th grade team ranked in the top 40%


 The 5th grade *Math Olympiad* team was named to the National Math Olympiad Honor Roll


 A 5th grade student won \$500 in the CHET *Dream Big* competition


 A 5th grade student won an honorable mention in the Connecticut *Student Writer's* contest through UCONN


SERVICE TO OTHERS


 The WHS Wind Ensemble, WHS Symphonic Band, WHS Concert Choir, and Westport Community Band performed a concert honoring Veterans that raised in excess of \$3,500 to support Purple Heart Homes


 Inspired by the *One School, One Book* read, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park, WMS raised \$9,160 to fund a new sand dam and shallow well building project in Kenya, Africa


 WHS Class of 2015 sponsored a school supply drive for pre-school classes at Ben Franklin School in Norwalk


 A class of 2nd grade students sang for Weston seniors at the senior center in December


 The WHS *Art with a Heart* club adopted an elephant in Kenya and raised over \$250 this year


 HES students participated in a hat and mitten drive to donate to area children in need


 HES students made small gifts for patients at *Norwalk Hospital* as part of a PBIS activity, including puzzles, notepads, and vases with paper flowers


 The HES book fair penny drive raised over \$1,000 to purchase books that were donated to local hospitals – Scholastic matched the dollar amount and purchased books for their charity


 WIS students raised \$500 to purchase a dairy cow to help provide milk for the children at the STEM Orphanage outside Arusha, Tanzania

 WIS students raised almost \$500 for the *World Wildlife Fund*; \$650 was also raised for the *Red Cross* to send necessary resources to those in need


 WMS collected thousands of non-perishable food donations through a Student Government Association-sponsored food drive to benefit the *Community Food Pantry*


 Over 400 toys were delivered by WMS students to the K-8 school Columbus Annex in Bridgeport through a holiday toy drive

 The WMS student government donated holiday toys, gift cards, and monetary donations totaling over \$1,000 to *Weston Social Services* for families in need

 WMS and WHS raised more than \$150,000 for the *American Cancer Society* during *Relay for Life*




THE ARTS






 The 8th grade band and chorus worked with a professional composer and lyricist to compose an original piece that was performed at the WMS Band concert in May

 WIS music teachers collaborated on a Beginning Improvisation unit that was implemented in 5th grade band and 5th grade general music





-  Two teachers presented a workshop on Beginning Improvisation at the *Connecticut Music Educators* conference in Cromwell that highlighted this work
-  The WPS' music department was recognized as one of the 2014 Best Communities for Music Education by the *National Association of Music Merchants*
-  At the *Music in the Parks Adjudication Festival*, the WMS Jazz Band, Chamber Orchestra, and Chamber Singers received 1st place honors in their division with a *superior* or *excellent* rating; the WMS Jazz Lab Band received a 2nd place honor and *excellent* rating; WMS Chamber Singers won for *Best Overall Middle School Choir*
-  One WHS band student was selected to participate in the *Connecticut All-State Festival*
-  Eight WMS choral students and five WMS band students were selected to participate in the *Western Regional Middle School Concert Festival*
-  Four WIS and four WMS students were selected to participate in the *Connecticut All-State Elementary Honors Chorus*
-  WHS theater group Company staged *Twelfth Night* and *Carousel*, using the talents of student artists, musicians, actors, designers, and technical theater personnel
-  WHS theater group Short Wharf staged *Seussical, Jr.* using the talents of student artists, musicians, actors, designers, and technical theater personnel
-  The WIS theater group Show Stoppers staged *The Best Little Theater in Town*
-  Over 300 students in grades 4 – 12 performed at the all-district choir festival *ChoirFest*
-  Over 300 WHS and WMS students performed in the band Spectrum Concert
-  The 8th grade orchestra participated in the *Music for Youth Orchestra Exchange* with the *Haven String Quartet* and students from High Horizons and Multi-Cultural Magnet schools in Bridgeport
-  A WHS senior received an honorable mention award at the *Connecticut Scholastic Art Awards* – three students had work accepted into this juried exhibition
-  38 WHS art students exhibited work in the joint Weston High School – Staples High School art show at *Silvermine Art Center* and one student was awarded an Honorable Mention for her watercolor painting
-  A WHS student was the recipient of the *CAS Visual Arts Award* this year
-  Five WHS students showed art work at the *NCC Art Gallery Regional High School Art Invitational*
-  A WHS art teacher's painting was accepted into the art show *Poetry and the art of Eating* at *Gallery North* on Long Island
-  The WMS Chamber Orchestra was selected to perform at the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Conference

ATHLETICS








-  WHS was the site of the 2014 Western Connecticut Time Trials for *Special Olympics*, with *Team Weston* competing for the third straight year in track and field and aquatics
-  Four state championships: *Girls Swim and Dive, Boys Ski, Boys Swim and Dive, Boys Tennis*
-  Five SWC championships: *Girls Swim and Dive, Girls Indoor Track and Field, Boys Ski, Girls Outdoor Track and Field, Boys Tennis*

-  WHS had 37 *All-State* athletes, 5 *All-New England* athletes and one *All-American* athlete
-  686 athletes, out of a possible 853 or 80%, earned academic awards while participating with a GPA of at least a 3.0
-  Of the 22 teams eligible: 20 recognized for *sportsmanship* by the SWC
-  WHS was honored with the *Michael's Achievement Cup* by the CIAC as the *most exemplary, outstanding athletic department in the state of Connecticut* for all schools (the 2nd time in the last five years) – the last time this prestigious award will be presented by the state
-  WHS was honored with another *Michael's Achievement Cup* by the CIAC as the *most exemplary, outstanding athletic department in the state of Connecticut for medium-sized schools* for the 8th year in a row

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

-  WMS established a Digital Warriors after-school enrichment program, enrolling over 25 students
-  Over 40 WMS students participated in the *Hour of Code*
-  Two WHS videography students placed third in the second annual *Student Voices Video Contest* sponsored by the *Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents* and *The Connecticut Association of Schools*
-  Two students earned *honorable mention* in the *CSPAN StudentCam Documentary* competition

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

-  WHS hosted its first student delegation of nine students and four teachers from *Chinese Sister School, Qingdao No. 17 High School*
-  The first student delegation from Bhutan, a small Asian country in the Himalayas, visited WHS last winter
-  Two WHS physics teachers received the *David Trigoux Award* from the *Weston Education Foundation* for their work with the Interlace Project – a partnership with Tufts University
-  A WMS teacher received the *David Trigoux Award* from the *Weston Education Foundation* for her work partnering with *ArtLink*, bringing curricular connections with artist Dalton Ghetti and the Buddhist Tibetan Ms. Dhondup
-  A 6th grade teacher presented *Diving Headfirst Into Digital Literacy: Reinventing yourself as a 21st century English teacher* at the *National Council of Teachers of English*
-  Over 130 8th grade students volunteered for our *career mentorship* experience
-  More than 150 WHS students participated in the *senior internship*
-  HES students read for 2,810 minutes during *Read Across America* week
-  For the fourth year, *Weston Service Center* applied for and received a \$500 grant for HES through the *ExxonMobil Educational Alliance Program*, which is used to enhance math and science programs

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Colleen A. Palmer, Ph.D. — Superintendent of Schools

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How does the 2015-2016 budget request compare to last year's budget?

A. The Weston Public School Administrators have requested a 3.17% budget increase, which is \$1,499,616 more than the 2014-2015 adopted operating budget of \$47,364,856 for a total request of \$48,864,472.

Q. Has the school district been able to save money, avoid costs, and work more efficiently to preserve the educational program in the budget request?

A. Yes, here is a list of the savings/reductions in 2015-2016:

<i>Contributions to the Other Post Retirement Benefits Fund</i>	<i>41,000</i>
<i>Technology Lease</i>	<i>27,273</i>
<i>Diesel Fuel for Buses</i>	<i>25,365</i>
<i>Tuition for Outplaced Students</i>	<i>19,544</i>
<i>Classroom Furniture</i>	<i>21,608</i>
<i>Adult Education Services</i>	<i>12,000</i>
<i>Legal Fees for Negotiations</i>	<i>11,500</i>
<i>Instructional Materials</i>	<i>10,715</i>
<i>Contributions to the Pension Program</i>	<i>9,460</i>
<i>Consultants for Curriculum & Instruction</i>	<i>6,390</i>
<i>Training</i>	<i>5,788</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>\$190,643</i>

Q. What would the budget increase be if we did not have these savings?

A. The 2015-2016 budget request would have been .40% higher or reflect a 3.57% increase.

Q. What is the Projected Enrollment for the 2015-2016 School Year?

A. We based our budget on an enrollment of 2,404 students. This projection is 18 students less than 2014-2015 for Pre-K-12, which is spread over thirteen grade levels and pre-school.

Q. What data and needs drive the budget development process?

A. Prior to the budget preparation process, the Board of Education develops budget assumptions, which guide how the budget is developed. These assumptions are outlined in the "Introduction" section of the budget document on pages 9 through 11. The school district's budget provides resources to support Board of Education policies, and federal and state mandates. A few examples include providing an educational program for our students with special needs, allocating resources for requirements in the No Child Left Behind legislation, revised state frameworks, and maintaining a home-to-school transportation system for our students. Employee and vendor contracts are used to

calculate budget requests wherever possible. For needs that require estimates, the school district uses historical data and researches current costs to provide the best possible budget projections. The following is a list of the 2015-2016 budget drivers:

- Grade by grade enrollment projections
- Allocate staffing based on enrollment and Board of Education class size guidelines
- Allocate special education staffing based on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), which identify mandated services
- Allocate funds for out-of-district education expenses for students with special needs
- Provide funding for components of the district's strategic plan
- Reorganize and improve productivity
- Account for all state and federal mandates, including cost associated with the new administrator and teacher evaluation plans and Smarter Balanced Assessment
- Allocate funds for common core
- Allocate funds for instructional materials (enrollment, program needs, examine 3-5 year spending patterns)
- Allocate funds for digital learning and innovation
- Allocate funds for basic maintenance and grounds care (prioritize and examine 3-5 year spending patterns)
- Allocate funds for contracted services (transportation, energy, cleaning)
- Allocate for equipment and technology needs (age, condition, priorities)
- Prioritize instructional improvement and maintenance projects
- Assess the need for all stipend positions
- Research outsourcing and insourcing opportunities where it is cost effective
- Partner with the Town of Weston for joint arrangements
- Engage in competitive bidding (materials, services, energy)
- Restructure services (energy conservation program with CL&P)
- Revisions in collective bargaining contracts (health benefits, cost sharing)
- Spend wisely---Maximize every dollar!

Q. What will the Elementary School program look like next year for students?

- A. *With a projected enrollment of 426 students in 2015-16, a decrease of ten students (- 2.3%), the budget reflects a reduction in the number of class sections. Our most significant shift will take place in kindergarten. With a projected enrollment of 113, we will reduce two sections for a total of six, with an average class size of 18.8. There are 151 students projected for first grade. The number of sections will remain at eight with an average class size of 18.9. Second grade, with a projected enrollment of 162 students, will continue to have seven sections with an average class size of 23.1. This configuration maintains the Board of Education's class size guidelines while also resulting in a cost savings from the reduction of two class sections.*

Technology is embedded in learning activities in purposeful, supportive ways, providing students with multiple pathways to success. The library resource center (LRC) budget supports classroom instruction by continuing to provide a high-quality circulating collection and a wide range of resources to our students. The requested amount reflects

one shelf-ready book per student for our pre-k through grade two students and includes e-books and various online accesses to support informational literacy. This rapidly evolving field enables even our youngest learners to access primary sources online and to access interactive online sites that support the district's Academic Innovation and Measurement initiative across the curriculum. Many of these resources can be accessed by our students remotely thereby strengthening our home-school partnership.

A complete description of the Hurlbutt Elementary School's budget request can be found on pages 52 through 58 of the Budget Book.

Q. What will the Intermediate School program look like for students next year?

- A. *In 2015-2016, our overall enrollment will be 524 students. Enrollment in the fifth grade will remain relatively unchanged at 183 students, while there is a projected increase of approximately 11 students in the fourth grade. The third-grade students will be organized in seven sections with a projected decrease of 32 students; this represents the most significant change in our enrollment. In order to meet district class size guidelines, the total number of sections will remain unchanged for fourth and fifth grade, and will be decreased by one section in third grade for 2015-2016.*

The budget proposal supports our highest priority needs, which include the continued implementation of a revised writing curriculum aligned with the Common Core standards; ongoing implementation of the revised math curriculum; utilization of student data to provide individualized instruction; and the implementation of a social-emotional curriculum through the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports initiative. We will also continue to support 21st century skills by embedding the district's Academic Innovation and Measurement (AIM) initiative within and across the curriculum.

In addition, this proposal supports the reallocation of staff to reflect one additional certified teacher to provide research-based literacy interventions for students who need additional support. During this developmental time, students are moving from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." In order to prepare our students for the more advanced reading in all content areas that they will encounter, it is essential that we provide them with the foundational skills and strategies in order to become competent and confident readers and thinkers. Advanced literacy training in reader's and writer's workshop for all grade-level and special education teachers will also continue. Administrators, Curriculum Instructional Leaders, and the certified reading teachers will provide teachers and support staff with focused and ongoing training and feedback to support professional growth for improved student learning. This budget also supports intervention services in mathematics to meet the varied needs of our learners, as well as additional enrichment opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom.

A complete description of the Weston Intermediate School's budget request can be found on pages 59 through 65 of the Budget Book.

Q. What will the Middle School program look like for students next year?

- A. The proposed budget supports our district initiatives and aligns with our mission and commitment to the middle school teaming philosophy that supports smaller learning communities within the school. We have a projected enrollment for the 2015-16 school year of 584 students, which represents a decrease of 19 students from the current budget. For the FY 2016 budget, we propose 9 sections for students in all grades. We have structured certified teachers to provide support to students across grades to maximize staffing for an overall cost savings of 1.3 FTE (full-time equivalency). Our teachers have received a great deal of professional growth and development from highly-trained experts to ensure Weston continues to provide exemplary instruction to our students in alignment with our strategic plan. In addition, the teaming model mentioned above embeds structured time for our teachers within the school day to allow collaboration and focus on curriculum development, review our students' success, ensure the middle-level years of our students are developmentally appropriate, in addition to providing time to meet with parents to support our students' growth. Monitoring the enrollment trends, the middle school continues to implement an educational design to maximize the opportunities for our students to deepen their understanding while maintaining a highly-qualified teaching staff.*

A complete description of the Weston Middle School's budget request can be found on pages 66 through 75 of the Budget Book.

Q. What will the High School program look like for students next year?

- A. The projected enrollment for Weston High School is 815 students, which represents an increase of 34 students. Specific projected enrollment differences by grade are as follows: an increase of 8 in ninth grade, a decrease of 7 in tenth grade a decrease of 3 in eleventh grade, and, in twelfth grade an increase of 36 students. The high school budget reflects an increase in 2.73 certified staffing which can be divided into two categories. To accomplish program goals, 1.33 FTE (full time equivalency) is necessary. An additional 1.4 FTE is required to meet the needs of our increased enrollment.*

Our program goals (1.33 FTE) align with district initiatives. In the area of STEM, an additional .1 FTE for computer coding provides the opportunity for our students to study at the advanced level. With an increase of .23 FTE, all freshmen will study biology in lieu of geophysical science next year. Currently, freshmen study geophysical science or honors biology. This change in program gives every student access to a greater array of advanced science courses during his or her junior and senior years. In social studies, AP Micro Economics, with .1 FTE, will complete the sequence of our advanced economics courses.

The .9 FTE request for a full time writing center will promote excellence in writing across the disciplines. The writing advisor, a certified teacher, will work in concert with the faculty to support instruction as well as the completion of writing portfolios required

of all tenth graders. At the center, students will engage in one-on-one conferences, receive specific feedback, create goals, and reflect on their work. The writing advisor will also coordinate workshops and presentations on various aspects of the writing process aimed to enhance teaching and learning.

An additional 1.5 FTE is needed across several academic disciplines because of our enrollment in senior year. The projected number of advanced Spanish students in levels 5 and 6 necessitates a .4 FTE increase in world language. Similarly, the enrollment in Honors Algebra II, Honors Pre-Calculus, Applied Calculus, and AP Statistics requires a .9 FTE increase. It is interesting to note that 57% of the students in AP Statistics this year are enrolled in a second math course. Physical Education/Health will warrant a .2 FTE increase to accommodate 34 additional seniors. Social studies will need a .1 increase for American Government which is a graduation requirement taken junior or senior year. Business education anticipates a .1 decrease in personal finance bringing the total request to 1.4 FTE.

This budget also reflects textbook requests. New books for our AP US History Course are needed because the College Board revised the curriculum. AP Latin and Latin 3 will be offered with no additional staffing. However, new textbooks are essential for this change in program. Additional biology texts will accommodate the increased number of freshmen taking this course. There is a modest equipment request for musical instruments and art tables.

A complete description of the Weston High School's budget request can be found on pages 76 through 89 of the Budget Book.

Q. Why is it important to maintain Interscholastic Sports Program and Co-Curricular programs?

- A. The co-curricular program is a critical component to our student's experience. Weston Public Schools have a wide array of programs including interscholastic sports, clubs, student government, intramurals and theater in which our students participate. The stipends paid to coaches and advisors for these programs are set by the Weston Teachers' Association contract.*

It is through these programs that students develop independence, confidence, and a sense of responsibility. They learn to work collaboratively and involve themselves in community service projects. Their participation serves them well as they prepare for life beyond Weston.

Regarding the Interscholastic Sports program, a total of sixty-three and one-half coaching positions are necessary to operate the sixty-one teams. This budget does not include the addition of any new assistant varsity coaching positions to provide additional supervision during practices and events. These assistant varsity coaching positions have been a discussion point in the previous eight years of athletic budgets and 3 of the 16

needed were added three years ago. These paid coaching positions are necessary for us to continue to provide a safe, educationally sound environment for our student-athletes.

A complete description of the Interscholastic Sports program budget request can be found on pages 90 through 95 of the Budget Book.

Q. Do you have money in the budget to improve the educational program?

- A. *Several multi-year initiatives serve as priorities for the 2015-16 budget development process, including a continuation of preK-12 math and writing goals. The overall focus in math is for students to develop a deep understanding of math concepts and strong procedural fluency to be effective problem solvers. There are allocations in this budget for math textbooks and teacher training for making the desired shifts in instruction. In writing, the district continues with its goal to improve writing achievement and further align writing instruction across the district. At the elementary level, there has been an emphasis on improving writing stamina and volume with our young writers through the writers' workshop model, while at the secondary level, teachers in English and social studies are involved in the development and implementation of a writing portfolio process in grades eight and ten.*

In addition, the district has begun a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) initiative to enhance programs for students in these fields. The initial examination of our STEM program has resulted in three recent improvements to curricular offerings in the areas of robotics, computer programming, and high school science course sequencing. Through a grant made possible by the Weston Education Foundation, Weston Intermediate School and Weston Middle School have started after-school robotics programs that would be sustained with requests in this budget proposal. Further, the Board has recently approved an expansion of computer programming offerings based on strong student interest. Beginning in 2015-16, all students will take biology as they enter Weston High School, which will increase elective options for students that were not possible when they took a course sequence beginning with geophysical science. The proposed budget includes resources to support these immediate enhancements to our STEM programming.

The curriculum and instruction cost center includes staffing for curriculum coaching and technology integration that is essential to an exemplary professional development program. As in previous budgets, a cadre of curriculum instructional leaders (CIL) has been included in the staffing plan. The primary responsibilities of a CIL are to provide coaching to teachers, supporting their growth, working with them to plan curriculum, and facilitating small and large group professional development activities. Similarly, technology integrators serve a vital role in the ongoing professional development of teachers in helping them incorporate educational technology into instruction. Also included in the curriculum and instruction cost center is a new position for a Director of Digital Learning and Innovation, whose role is to propel the district forward in the use of cutting-edge technology. In sum, this staffing model continues to effectively advance the district's instructional initiatives by providing the necessary professional coaching support to our faculty.

A complete description of the budget request that supports educational improvements can be found on pages 108 through 118 of the Budget Book.

Q. Why is the budget organized by program into Cost Centers?

A. The program budgets or "Cost Centers" mirror the school district's organizational structure. This structure is a reflection of how the school district allocates its resources and controls its expenditures. There are no duplications between program budgets. Therefore, budgeted expenditures in one program budget will not appear in another program budget. There are six "Academic and Student Activities Program Budgets" and there are six "Service Program Budgets that Support the Academic & Student Activities Programs."

- *Academic & Student Activities Program Budgets:*
 - *Hurlbutt Elementary School (does not include Pre-K)*
 - *Weston Intermediate School*
 - *Weston Middle School*
 - *Weston High School*
 - *Athletics*
 - *Special Education (includes Pre-K and out-placed students)*

Include the following:

- *Art Instruction (schools)*
- *Classroom Instruction (HES/WIS only: Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies)*
- *Center for Academic Support and Enhancement – CASE (WHS only)*
- *Computer Instruction (HES, WIS, WMS only: direct instruction to students)*
- *English (WMS/WHS only)*
- *Family & Consumer Science (WMS)*
- *Interscholastic Sports (Athletics only)*
- *Library & Media Services (schools)*
- *Math (WMS/WHS only: Classroom instruction)*
- *Math Enrichment (in addition to classroom instruction)*
- *Music Instruction (schools)*
- *Out Placements (SPED only)*
- *Physical & Health Education Instruction (schools)*
- *Pre-School (SPED only)*
- *Reading Support (in addition to classroom instruction)*
- *Administration*
- *School/Program Wide Expenses (postage, printing, paper, etc.)*
- *Science (WMS/WHS only)*
- *Special Education (SPED only)*
- *Speech & Hearing (SPED only)*
- *Student Activities (schools)*
- *Project Challenge (SPED only)*
- *Technology Education (WMS/WHS only)*
- *World Language (schools)*

- *Service Program Budgets that Support the Academic & Student Activities Programs:*
 - *Pupil Personnel Services*
 - *Guidance & Counseling Services*
 - *Psychological Services*
 - *English for Non-English Speakers Services*
 - *Occupational & Physical Therapy Services*
 - *Health/Nursing Services*
 - *Curriculum & Instructional Improvement*
 - *K – 12 Curriculum & Instruction Articulation*
 - *Content Area Leadership*
 - *Professional Development*
 - *New Teacher Orientation*
 - *Citizenship Courses*
 - *Technology Integrators*
 - *Data Administration*
 - *Technology Services (Student & Administrative: All but direct instructional program)*
 - *Network Administrative Services*
 - *Software Acquisition and Maintenance Services*
 - *Hardware Acquisition Maintenance Services*
 - *Communication Services*
 - *Record Retention and Archiving*
 - *District Administrative Services*
 - *Superintendent of Schools*
 - *Human Resource Services*
 - *Business Services*
 - *Payroll & Employee Benefits*
 - *Purchasing & Accounts Payables*
 - *Building Use Management & Accounts Receivables*
 - *Food Services*
 - *Facilities Services*
 - *Operations & Custodial Services*
 - *Maintenance Services*
 - *Safety & Security Services*
 - *District-Wide Services*
 - *Transportation Services*
 - *Employee Benefits*
 - *Liability Insurances*

- *Duplication/Mail Center*
- *Salary Allowances/Turnover Savings*

Q. Who develops the budget?

A. The Administrator responsible for the Program/Cost Center Budget collaborates with the staff within their schools or cost centers, curriculum and instructional leaders, administrators for the other schools and the district level. After careful review and evaluation of the program needs, the Administrator prepares a budget request for review by the entire Administrative Team.

Q. How does the Administrative Team determine what to present to the Board of Education?

A. The administrators meet for three or more days in the months of November and December to share and justify their budget requests with their peers. The team functions as a collaborative group of critical friends. They share best practices, ask probing questions, and ultimately develop a well thought out financial plan that supports the educational program that the community expects. The fundamental goal in this process is to maximize every dollar.

Q. We often hear that our budget is driven by salaries and employee benefits. This is true. What are the general wage and step increases for employee contracts?

*A. Weston Administrators' Association (2nd year of 3-year contract): 2.15%
 Weston Teachers' Association: (1st year of 2-year contract): Step & GWI 3.35%
 Non-Certified Staff – AFSCME: (to be negotiated)*

Note that there are salary ranges for most employee groups. Generally, when these employees are hired they are not paid at the top of the range. Therefore, each year these employees move a step closer to the maximum salary, and this is referred to as a step increase. For the largest union, the Weston Teachers' Association, 58% of the 215 teachers are on step.

Q. What are the changes in staffing?

A. The following list provides changes in staffing based on projected increases and decreases in enrollment by school:

Changes in Enrollment:	<u>FTE</u>	<u>\$\$\$</u>
<i>Hurlbutt Elementary School</i>	<i>-2.15</i>	<i>-134,344</i>
<i>Weston Intermediate School</i>	<i>-1.21</i>	<i>-75,607</i>
<i>Weston Middle School</i>	<i>-1.70</i>	<i>-106,225</i>
<i>Weston High School</i>	<u><i>1.50</i></u>	<u><i>93,729</i></u>
	<i>-3.56</i>	<i>-222,447</i>

The following list provides changes in staffing based program by school/cost center:

Changes in Program:	FTE	\$\$\$
<i>Hurlbutt Elementary School</i>	-0.65	-20,330
<i>Weston Intermediate School</i>	-0.75	-27,695
<i>Weston Middle School</i>	0.40	24,994
<i>Weston High School</i>	1.23	76,858
<i>Special Education</i>	-1.00	5,748
<i>Pupil Personnel Services</i>	-1.00	-62,486
<i>Curriculum & Instruction</i>	<u>.70</u>	49,680
<i>Stipends</i>		<u>29,811</u>
<i>Total</i>	-1.07	76,580

A. Can the Board of Education require all employees to change to a high deductible plan HSA/HRA or pay the additional cost for more expensive plans to save the school district and local taxpayers' money?

A. *Yes, during negotiations between the Board of Education and the WAA and WTA, the parties agreed that the HSA/HRA would be the only options available to employees. The current contract with AFSCME establishes the HSA/HRA health benefits program as the standard plan for all staff. Should a staff member prefer to remain on the PPO, they must pay the additional cost.*

Q. How does the pension system work? How much does the district contribute?

A. *The school district does not fund any portion of the pension for employees that qualify for the State Teachers' Retirement Benefit (STRB). All teachers and most administrators qualify for this benefit. Teachers contribute 7.25% of their salary for this benefit, with the State of Connecticut funding the balance. The district's non-certified employees are covered by the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS), which is administered by the State of Connecticut. Contributions to this fund are based on gross salaries, with the employees contributing 2.25% and the school district funding 11.98% for 2014-2015. The State of Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System has decreased the school district's contribution rate for 2015-2016 by 5% to 11.38%.*

GASB 43/45 addresses the financial obligations and associated planning for Other Post Retirement Benefits (OPEB). Based on actuarial valuations of this obligation, the district has included \$209,000 in the Operating Budget. Since 2010, the district's Operating Budget has contributed \$1,500,000 and the Internal Services Fund has transferred \$831,320 for OPEB. During this 6 year period of time when \$2,331,320 was set aside for OPEB, the district's gross increase for the Operating Budget was 7.70%, for an average annual increase of 1.28%.

Q. Are there increases in other areas of the budget increased & why?

A. Yes, here is a list of the increases in 2015-2016:

<i>Energy</i>	<i>90,171</i>
<i>Maintenance Projects</i>	<i>69,804</i>
<i>Software</i>	<i>67,892</i>
<i>Contracts-Operations</i>	<i>53,355</i>
<i>Reduction in e-rate</i>	<i>31,427</i>
<i>Building Repairs</i>	<i>18,874</i>
<i>Books</i>	<i>20,708</i>
<i>Lifeguards</i>	<i>11,500</i>
<i>Facilities Materials</i>	<i>6,479</i>
<i>Equipment Repairs</i>	<i>7,365</i>
<i>Replace maintenance van 1/16</i>	<u><i>3,100</i></u>
	<i>380,675</i>

Q. How has the projected reduction in state aid for Excess Cost impacted your budget?

A. *The Excess Cost grant reduces actual expenditures for students with educational programs that cost more than 4.5 times the regular per pupil expenditure as a direct credit to the Board of Education's operating budget. However, in recent years the State of Connecticut has not fully funded the Excess Cost formula. Accordingly, the FY 2016 budget anticipates receiving 75% of the entitlement. Since there will be a few high cost students aging out of the program, the district anticipates a reduction \$72,488 in this grant.*

Q. What do school administrators do?

A. *Education administrators hold leadership positions with significant responsibility and provide instructional leadership as well as manage the day-to-day activities in each of our schools. Administrators set educational standards and goals and establish procedures to attain them. They supervise and evaluate teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, secretaries, coaches, and others. Administrators develop academic programs; monitor students' educational progress; train and motivate teachers and other staff; manage guidance and other student services including special education; prepare budgets; handle relations with parents, prospective and current students, and the community; and perform many other duties.*

Education administrators set the academic tone and hire, evaluate, and help improve the skills of teachers and other staff. They regularly visit classrooms, observe teaching methods, review instructional practices, and examine learning materials. They actively work with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, and set performance goals.

The ability to make sound decisions and to organize and coordinate work efficiently is essential. Since much of an administrator's job involves interacting with others---such as students, parents, teachers, and the community---a person in such a position must have strong interpersonal skills and be an effective communicator and motivator. Knowledge of leadership principles and practices, gained through work experience and formal education, is important. Research shows that leadership by the school administrator is essential to a school's effectiveness in promoting student learning.

Q. How frequently are the schools used when school is not in session?

A. In addition to the after-hours usage of our school buildings for school related events such as athletic, theatre, driver education, and other educational purposes, the schools are used by many community groups on nights and weekends. For example, the Parks and Recreation Department offers many programs for all age groups that use the gyms in every school such as soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball and basketball. In addition, many community groups use the school facilities including the Boys and Girls' Scouts, Brownies, Cub Scouts, the Weston Woman's League, and Weston Youth Services. There are also many after-school and summer sports camps held in the schools, as well as the PTO Carnival. The Kiwanis Club spaghetti suppers are held here as well. The local public elections are held at the Middle School and the High School is the Community Shelter in the event of an emergency preparedness event. The athletic fields are also in constant use by many outside groups including the Park and Recreation. The school buildings are typically in use Monday through Friday from after-school time until 9:00 pm and sometimes later. On Saturdays, the Intermediate School, Middle School and High Schools are in use and the High School is in use all day and into the late evening every Sunday.

Q. How do the budget increases for Weston compare to those of other DRG A school districts over the past 6 years (FYs 2010 – 2015)?

A. Easton has the lowest compounded increase over the past 6 years at 5.17%. The next closest district is Weston at 7.70%, followed by Redding at 7.77%, Ridgefield at 12.14%, Region 9 (Joel Barlow High School) at 12.55%, Wilton at 14.19%, New Canaan at 17.10%, Westport at 17.30% and Darien at 32.58%.

Q. Where can I find an electronic version of the budget?

A. An electronic version of the budget can be found on our website at www.westonps.org