

**CONSOLIDATED INITIAL ROUND OF BOE QUESTIONS ON THE ADMINISTRATORS’
RECOMMENDED FY18 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST**

Executive Summary

Introduction:

Page 15 – Please provide a list breaking down the new investments of \$455,736 into categories before the broader discussion that follows.

This breakdown is included in the PowerPoint Budget presentation. But the items include:

Staffing Requests:

Increase the Hurlbutt Assistant Principal to 1.0 FTE	\$55,374
Additional FTE for Math Intervention at WIS	\$11,398
Assistant Varsity Coaches (Cheerleading, Girls Basketball)	\$8,154
Total Staffing Requests:	\$74,926

Technology Requests:

1:1 at Weston Middle School	\$210,705
New Staff Technology and Science Laptops	\$51,000
Visual Arts and Videography Technology	\$8,230
Technology Refresh	\$55,450
Learning Management System	\$20,123
New Software (Tableu, Talent Ed, CABA Meeting Manager)	\$21,750
Total Technology Requests:	\$367,258

Other Requests:

Easton Re-enactment Group, Magnetic Whiteboards, Cafeteria Table at HES, Wooden Art Benches at WHS, Minority Outreach	
Total Other Requests	\$13,552

Total Requests	\$455,736
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Page 15 – Would be helpful to have some context of the Administrative Council discussions leading to the five featured investments as well as what else was considered or deferred, recognizing that the broader framework is part of the Budget Assumptions.

All administration discussions and decisions for investment features aligned with Board and District Goals and Priorities. The initial discussion with the Leadership Team highlighted 3 featured investments (Special Education, Elementary Administrative Support and Digital Learning & Technology). After thoughtful conversations with the Leadership Team, we added the other two featured investments (Healthy Learning Environment and Professional Learning and Growth). While already major elements of the budget, these additional areas were deemed as essential priorities and

resulted in a comprehensive set of five featured investments that would advance Board and District Goals

Digital Learning & Technology:

Pages 16-17 – There are numerous questions on this section and the related Technology budget, many of which may be answered through budget presentations and some of which may require a refresher from the special meeting on technology. The following are preliminary:

- Review of research into the benefits of implementing 1:1 access at the elementary and middle schools. The rationale for implementing 1:1 at WMS instead of a BYOD hybrid; are there other districts using the hybrid and, if so, do they offer group rate purchasing to families or do they specify the models that are acceptable?

In 2012, I co-authored the [Bring Your Own Device \(BYOD\) Guidebook: A Practical Guide to 1 to 1 Success](#). The time for BYOD is now in the past. BYOD was a perfect fit to the education community while school districts were determining the value of the use of technology throughout the curriculum and on a regular basis as well as determine how to fund these initiatives in a cost effective way. Luckily, the cost of technology required to facilitate a One-to-One program has gone down greatly. Formerly a laptop could cost over \$1000 and be difficult to repair as well as heavy for students to carry. Now with the development of mobile devices such as the Chromebook, which can be provided to students for under \$350 (including the device and license), and weighs significantly less, it allows for districts to implement these programs in a better way than the past and, at a time when the education community has developed numerous strategies that show the benefit of devices being available to all students, when they are needed to support instruction.

In 2013, I wrote an article entitled “Is Your School Ready? Necessary Preparations for Online Assessments.” As part of that article I took a look at the comparison of district provided devices vs. BYOD devices. This research, which involved school districts in both Texas and New York, demonstrated one consistent trend: in order to have an orderly administration of online assessments that devices the students used to take the assessments needed to be the same. This allowed for better training of staff, better familiarization for the students, and easier technical support from the I.T. Department. The considerations for BYOD and district provided devices have a number of considerations as articulated by Wallin (2011). Of these considerations, one of them is the opportunity for virtualization of resources and applications thus ensuring the availability of all the tools that are needed to support curriculum.

In Weston’s decision to implement a One-to-One program, these themes were considered. We did not make the decision based on the need to provide testing, but we did make this decision based on the needs for the teachers to have a consistent tool that they could use when needed that would be reliable and manageable for all students.

During my doctoral studies I wrote a paper on Theory vs Practice. As part of this paper I specifically looked at BYOD.

This paper indicated many researchers have shown that the use of technology in the classroom helps to support student learning by promoting student engagement. When students are engaged by class material, they learn faster. The implementation of BYOD, like the implementation of any new technology, is not without its struggles. BYOD changes the classroom model from a teacher-directed classroom to a teacher-guided classroom, which has been referred to in education professional circles as a flipped classroom.

BYOD helps support independent learning and allows for a custom learning environment for each student; however, although this supports student learning, it also introduces new struggles for the teacher, such as being able to provide support and answer questions about many different kinds of technology (Ballagas, 2004). Teachers, like parents, are the people children go to for answers, and this is true for BYOD classrooms as well. Now students who have trouble with their laptops, iPads, netbooks, and Macbooks ask their teachers for help. This puts an additional strain on teachers to learn how to troubleshoot technology and takes away from valuable instruction time.

In my review, to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the area of student used mobile devices, it was necessary to ensure that all students have the same device available to them. This is a One-to-One model. For this or any theory to be put into practice, appropriate professional development needs to be provided to the staff involved to ensure the success of the program and to minimize the interference that any new program will have on teaching and learning (Abbott & Collins, 2004). The research conducted by Abbott and Collins (2004) acknowledges that appropriate support and training are essential for talented individuals to fulfill their potential. In addition, proper technical support and resources need to be in place to ensure that the teachers are successful in their implementation of technology. By using a One-to-One model we have ensured that teachers will be committed to providing quality instruction and the I.T. department will maintain the hardware in a straightforward and cost effective method.

Additional research also supports this method. William Penuel (Penuel, 2006) of SRI International, researched the effects of one-to-one computing initiatives in his paper, *Implementation and Effects of One-to-One Computing Initiatives: A Research Synthesis*. His findings indicate that the studies he reviewed consistently reported positive effects on technology use, technology literacy, and writing skills. He also indicated that the expectation that one-to-one initiatives will improve achievement scores is likely but would require further investigation. As I mentioned earlier, he also points out the importance of appropriate professional development and planning for the teachers.

An international research collaborative also looked at the impacts that one-to-one technology would have on enhancing learning. Chan, et.al. (2006) found that ubiquitous access to mobile, connected, and personal devices, the increased pace of technological development, and the evolution of new innovative uses of these devices will create the potential for a new phase in the evolution of technology-enhanced learning, characterized by “seamless learning spaces.” In my previous presentations we have looked at this concept and referenced them as “anytime anywhere learning.” This is one of our goals for the one-to-one program in Weston. The availability of devices during the school day as well as at home, coupled with the district’s initiative to establish a Learning Management

System, will help to ensure that Weston provides the best possible education for their students and remains an education leader in the State of Connecticut.

Research continues in this area and my hope is that Weston will be able to contribute positively to the body of knowledge that is available regarding education technology. For example recently published articles include:

“The Effects of Combining One-to-One Computing, Interactive Core Curriculum, and Digital Teaching Platform on Learning Math: The case of a Charter School in New York City.” (Weiss, 2016) This research indicated a significant increase in standardized test scores for those students participating in the program by teachers demonstrating significant growth in their effectiveness in differentiated instruction.

“Trends of Mobile Learning in Computing Education from 2006 to 2014: A Systematic Review of Research Publications.” (Anohah, et.al., 2017) This journal focused on the review of literature in three primary areas including recent technological developments, pedagogical approaches applied and practical effects and learner contexts. Their research was designed to provide guidance to educators on the implementations of one-to-one learning programs.

These are just two of numerous examples of research that support the implementation of One-to-One programs in education.

There are no districts actively pursuing a BYOD model. As technology integration has grown over the past years the model for integration has also grown. Because of the reasons identified above the One-to-One approach is the best approach for Weston Public Schools.

We have visited and spoken with a number school districts during our evaluation process. Information regarding other school districts are included in the following question.

Abbott, A., & Collins, D. (2004). Eliminating the dichotomy between theory and practice in talent identification and development: Considering the role of psychology. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 22(5), 385-397. Retrieved from http://go.galegroup.com.rlib.pace.edu/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA117423233&v=2.1&u=nysl_me_pace&it=r&p=GPS&sw=w

Ballagas, R., Rohs, M., Sheridan, J.G., & Borchers, J. (2004). *BYOD: Bring your own device*. (Lancaster University) Retrieved from <http://www.vs.inf.ethz.ch/publ/papers/rohs-byod-2004.pdf>

Tak-Wai Chan, Jeremy Roschelle, Sherry Hsi, Kinshuk Kinshuk, Mike Sharples, et al.. (2006). One-to-one technology-enhanced learning: an opportunity for global research collaboration. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, World Scientific Publishing, 1(1), pp.3-29.

Penuel, William (2006). Implementation and Effects of One-to-one Computing Initiatives: A Research Synthesis. International Society for Technology in Education, 38 (5). Retrieved from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ728908.pdf>

Wallin, L.O. (2011, October 11). Gartner's view on "bring your own" in client computing. Retrieved from <http://my.gartner.com/portal/>

Weiss, Dovi. (2017). The Effect of Combining One-to-One Computing, Interactive Core Curriculum, and Digital Teaching Platform on Learning Math: The Case of a Charter School in New York City. Handbook on Digital Learning for k-12 schools, Springer International Publishing. Doi= 10.1007/978-3-319-33808-8_20.

– Review of what other high performing districts are doing in this area

All districts have begun a process of making computer devices available to students when needed. Our nearby school districts, Ridgefield Public Schools and Greenwich Public Schools, have both successfully implemented a One-to-One program in the middle school. We recently visited Ridgefield Public Schools to be able to learn from their experiences. Both students and staff spoke with us and expressed the positive impact that the devices have had on curriculum and instruction.

– Review of status of implementation of 1:1 at WIS

The implementation of the One-to-One program at WIS has been a terrific enhancement to the school community, but most importantly to the curriculum and classroom experiences that the students are able to have. Technology has always been used in the classroom, previously it was used by "borrowing" a laptop cart from the library. This limited the amount that it could be used, caused problems with conflicting demands for access to technology and did not allow for accountability for each of the devices often causing devices to not be repaired in a timely fashion. All of these items have been removed with the institution of the One-to-One program. Now teachers are able to use technology in their lessons on demand and as needed. This has seen an increase in the use of the technology which in turn shows an increase in the associated 21st century experiences that students have. By providing greater exposure to 21st century skills through the curriculum as recommend by the International Society for Technology and Education (ISTE) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) will ensure that our students meet the goals of technology literacy by the end of 6th grade.

This implementation was supported completely by the WIS staff. They were excited and energized to bring these new tools to their students. The partnership between Jane Sabini, Technology Integrator, and Helen Knudsen, Library Media Specialist, ensured the successful implementation. Ms. Sabini provided direct instruction to each of the classes on digital citizenship before the devices were put into use. Both Ms. Sabini and Ms. Knudsen continue to provide support to the teachers in the classroom through coaching and team teaching to ensure successful implementation.

The program as it is implemented in each school will be a process of refinement. We have learned from this implementation the value of classroom management tools, the need to have easily accessible spares for when the “oops” inevitably happen in the classroom amongst other things. We will use what we have learned at the WIS to help the implementation at WMS. For example, the WMS teachers will be scheduling time to meet with WIS teachers to discuss their rollout as well as understand the expectations that students will have when they enter 6th grade next year.

Review of relevant professional development on 1:1 already completed and plans for FY18 and FY19, noting in particular the degree to which WMS faculty has been trained. Review of extent to which use of 1:1 has been and still needs to be integrated into instruction at WMS and WIS

Professional development for integrating one-to-one devices into the curriculum as well as other curriculum related initiatives are an ongoing process. Teachers are already very familiar with the use of technology, the use of Chromebooks and using them in the classroom. This can be seen by the demanding use for the devices currently available in computer carts. At a basic level the switch to a one-to-one environment ensures that the devices are available when the teachers need to use the devices to support curriculum and instruction. Professional development will begin with the Curriculum Instruction Leaders partnering with the classroom teachers and the learning commons staff to support the further integration of technology into additional lessons. This may also include the reimagining of how lessons are conducted and how homework is provided. The addition of these tools will create new opportunities for teachers and students. As with any initiative, particularly technology in education, there are varying levels of acceptance by different staff members. Early adopters will begin to use the devices faster and earlier. These more comfortable teachers will be the natural peer leaders in their schools. Professional development will be provided to ensure that all teachers are supported at their level and are brought to a high performing level as soon as possible.

Similar to the evaluation of the overall one-to-one program, the evaluation of the effectiveness of professional development will be gauged on observation of instruction and feedback from staff. There is no doubt that the devices being available will increase their use as part of instruction.

- How would use of chrome books be implemented at WMS – which grades(s) in each of the two years; will devices be issued to students or on classroom carts; will students be permitted to take devices home (if so, who is responsible for damage, theft, loss)?

The budget book has been updated to reflect our current thinking which is to implement and rollout the One-to-One program at the WMS in the fall of 2017. All grade levels will receive Chromebooks during the first trimester after appropriate training and coaching is provide.

The school team and central office leadership are still in the process of reviewing how the One-to-One program will be implemented at the various grade levels. We are looking at a number of options including allowing all students to take devices home as well as modifying the 6th grade students ability to take devices home to either not taking them home for the first half of the school year or not taking them all for the entire year. These are still discussion points for the team that will be resolved in a developmentally appropriate way while supporting the curriculum goals of each grade level.

- At what point are computer labs obviated; are there any future savings as a result?

Specialty computer labs such as the Macintosh computer labs for art, music, and videography and higher-end computer labs for Project Lead The Way (PLTW) and Computer Programming will always be standalone computer labs and need to be supported in the future. This is because of the types of programs required to support the curriculum and best prepare students for future college or career plans.

General use computer labs will be phased out throughout the One-to-One rollout. No direct savings will be seen. An indirect savings will be caused by not having to replace the computer labs in the future.

- Is the current infrastructure (or with the proposed items to be purchased or leased in FY18) sufficient to meet the demands of 1:1 usage?

Yes, as part of the I.T. Infrastructure plan we have planned for the implementation of the One-to-One program at Weston Middle School. Each year we will evaluate and enhance the infrastructure to ensure a continued smooth implementation of the technology.

- Is the proposed technology staffing sufficient to meet the demands of 1:1 until the additional 1.0 FTE comes in as proposed in FY20?

Yes, we believe so. But we will reevaluate staffing each year along with our other technology budget focus areas.

- How will the educational impact over time of 1:1 be measured?

In Weston education impact of the One-to-One program will come from three primary areas:

- Observations of technology integrated lessons including quantity and quality
- Feedback from students and staff
- Student assessment on digital literacy

- Financial analysis
 - o Please provide a three-year comparison to the projections on pages 195-196, assuming the continuation of the current leasing model and identifying the key leasing terms.

The below chart shows a 5 year comparison of cash vs. lease purchasing with the assumption of each lease being for \$435,000 over 4 years within an interest rate of 2%. Given that each lease is a rolling 4 years, a financial comparison of 5 years would be more valuable than 3 when comparing one option to the other.

As you can see below, the budgetary impact is a net benefit from FY 18 to FY 22 of \$251,607 for all purchases made from FY 18 through FY 22. The first year shows a greater savings as there is a hybrid approach between cash purchasing and leasing in order to absorb historical liabilities still owed to banks from prior year leases.

Fiscal Year	Cash Purchase	Lease Only	Variance
FY 18	\$332,219*	\$453,696	\$(123,477)
FY 19	\$435,000	\$477,430	\$(42,430)
FY 20	\$435,000	\$467,660	\$(32,660)
FY 21	\$435,000	\$462,520	\$(27,520)
FY 22	\$435,000	\$462,520	\$(27,520)
Total	\$2,072,219	\$2,323,826	\$(251,607)

*Includes lease payment of \$55,450 for partially lease items and cash purchases of \$276,769.

It’s important to note that moving towards cash purchasing also allows the district to take future base budget reductions; prior year lease payments are removed from the operating budget, whereas leasing does not allow for a base budget reduction.

Fiscal Year	Base Budget Reduction
2019	\$91,896
2020	\$125,400
2021	\$166,585

These base budget reductions range from a 0.18% to a 0.33% total reduction on a \$50 million budget. These reductions would allow the district to garner efficiencies without having to make “tough decisions:” they have no impact on implementing technology throughout the district, end payments to private banks, and yield important reductions to limit year to year budget growth.

- Please provide a description of the pros and cons of leasing and cash purchasing (including with respect to warranties, maintenance, costs of disposal, insurance)

The biggest benefit of cash purchasing compared to leasing is there is a long-term financial savings from purchasing technology. As seen in the table above (and repeated below for easy reference), the cost of purchasing technology outright compared to leasing is a lower budget for current and future purchases (this does not take into account existing liabilities from previous years).

Fiscal Year	Cash Purchase	Lease Only	Variance
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Total	\$2,072,219	\$2,323,826	\$(251,607)

Another benefit from cash purchasing is it removes the year to year budget fluctuations one sees in the operating budget. By setting a base budget of \$435,000 and not rolling 4 years' worth of payments into the operating budget, we would create zero budgetary growth annually once existing lease obligations are paid out.

Another benefit is all dollars allocated are used for purchases that impact the district; whereas in leasing technology, a portion of your allocated expense is going towards interest payments to banks. Each lease costs approximately \$28,000 in interest payments over the course of the lease (assuming a loan of \$435,000 over 4 years). This \$28,000 could fully fund various technology items instead of funding interest payments, resulting in a greater impact on implementing technology throughout the district. For example this \$28,000 would fully fund items in the current FY 18 budget request such as WHS Science Laptops, Visual Arts Technology and Videography Technology; instead, these funds are payments to banks. Moving funds from interest payments to actual purchases that can benefit the classroom would be a better use of allocated resources, especially in an environment when resources are scarce.

The other big benefit is budget flexibility. Currently the equipment rental line item cannot be reduced as those are obligations already owed to banks and those obligations are on-going given they are 4 year rolling leases. Under a lease scenario, if and when budgetary cuts are required because of lack of State aid or Town/BOE reductions, we are able to consider as much as one percent of the budget because it is tied up in equipment rental leases. This lack of flexibility is significant, given that 95% of the budget is salary and benefits, special education contracted services and tuition, utilities, leases, transportation, general liability insurance, property insurance and cleaning. This forces more cuts to be focused on personnel.

Another benefit of cash purchasing is avoiding the problem of fluctuating interest rates by lenders. In an environment where interest rates are likely to rise, leasing could become more costly than currently projected. For example a 1% increase in interest rates would cause an additional \$11,000 in interest over 4 years.

The primary drawback for changing to cash purchasing is that there would be a period of 3 years (FY 18 through FY 20) in which you carry a greater expense as you pay off past lease obligations. However, by making this change we will create base budget reductions in the future that will help limit future overall budgetary growth.

- How was the decision made as to which items to continue to run out on the existing leases or to newly lease and those to purchase upfront?

Ideally, we prefer to lease items that have a longer asset life, since these are “borrowed” assets. By leasing access points, servers, and smartboards, we are choosing items that have a longer asset life.

- Would the proposed cash purchase be done through a consortium? If not, why not?

The items purchased would be purchased either through RFP or the state contract list. A consortium would not provide any financial benefits over and above the state contract list.

- How soon would the items purchased need to be refreshed?

The refresh cycle for devices vary by the type of the device, the usage or the location of the installation. Most devices have a life expectancy of 3 to 5 years. We work diligently to stretch the life expectancy to 5 years when possible and the devices still support the curriculum needs of the students and staff.

Windows OS Laptops – 5 years

iPads – 5 years

Macintosh OS computers – 5 years

Chromebooks (Chrome OS) – 5 years

Note: Google does regulate the end of life of Chromebooks.

<https://support.google.com/chrome/a/answer/6220366?hl=en>

- Why is the entire purchase for WMS proposed for FY18?

The entire purchase is proposed during the FY18 funding year because all devices will be purchased and distributed during the 2017-2018 school year. Our original plan was to distribute the 6th grade devices in the beginning of the school year (September) followed by the remaining devices in the spring of 2018 (April/May). We have since refined that approach to take an approach similar to what has been used in successful school districts such as Ridgefield Public Schools. All devices will now be distributed during the first trimester of the 2017-2018 school year. This will provide better support for the curriculum and clear expectations for all students and staff.

Professional Learning & Growth:

Page 17 – Please include some information as to what NGSS is as many readers may be unfamiliar with it.

The Next Generation Science Standards outline the performance expectations in science for all students in all grade levels, K-12. They build upon the National Research Council Frameworks (2012), National Science Education Standards (1996) and local Standards like our previous CT Science Standards (2004). Adopted by the Connecticut State Department of Education in 2015, CT is in year two of a 5-year implementation plan that will culminate in new NGSS-aligned assessments in 2019.

Key shifts include heightened expectations at the elementary level, incorporation of the engineering design process K-12, and renewed emphasis on Earth Science at the secondary level. Rather than learning about science ideas, the vision is for instruction to interweave content, process skills, and cross-cutting concepts as students work to figure out scientific phenomena by doing science.

Healthy Learning Environment:

Page 18 - The BOE has heard some information on the Emotional Intelligence Initiative but, given that this is a featured investment, Emotional Intelligence should be defined and the description should underscore its purpose, value and expected outcomes.

Emotional Intelligence:

The Yale Center of Emotional Intelligence uses the power of emotions to create a more effective and compassionate society (starting with individual communities).

RULER is the acronym used by the Center that stands for:

Recognizing emotions in self and others

Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions

Labeling emotions accurately

Expressing emotions appropriately

Regulating emotions effectively

Phase One: The Anchors of Emotional Intelligence: This phase grounds teachers, staff, students and families in the Anchors of Emotional Intelligence. These fundamental RULER tools enhance individuals' ability to consider and empathize with how others are feeling. The Anchors also foster the kind of healthy emotional climate essential to personal growth.

Phase Two: The Feelings Words Curriculum: The second phase enables teachers to integrate RULER into a wide range of subject areas, ensuring that emotional intelligence is woven into the content of every class and throughout each student's school day. The Feeling Words curriculum that teachers learn to use is tailored to specific grade levels and aligned with the Common Core.

Phase Three: Lasting results. RULER creates a self-perpetuating program by training teachers and other staff to become RULER Trainers who then teach the rest of the school what they've have learned. As teachers are trained, they in turn teach their students, and as new teachers arrive, RULER Trainers teach them.

To ensure lasting success, RULER also supports RULER trainers with ongoing feedback, advanced training, and an online community where participants from around the world compare notes, participate in webinars, watch videos, and stay up to date on the latest program enhancements.

Anchors of Emotional Intelligence are evidence based tools designed to enhance the emotional intelligence of school leader, teachers, staff and students and their families. RULER includes four primary tools: The Charter, Mood Meter, Meta-Moment, and Blueprint. Each is based on scientific research and helps children and adults develop their emotional intelligence.

Charter: The emotional climate of a school affects the community's well-being and student's ability to learn. The Charter is a collaborative document that helps schools establish supportive and productive learning environments. It is created by members of the community, outlining how they aspire to treat each other. Together, the community describes how they want to feel at school, the behaviors that foster those feelings, and guidelines for preventing and managing unwanted feelings and conflict. By working together to build the

Charter, everyone establishes common goals and holds each other accountable for creating the positive climate they envision.

Mood Meter: Learning to identify and label emotions is a critical step toward cultivating emotional intelligence. Using the Mood Meter, students and educators become more mindful of how their emotions change throughout the day and how their emotions in turn affect their actions. They develop the self-awareness they need to inform their choices. Students learn to expand their vocabulary, replacing basic feeling words with more sophisticated terms. They graduate from using words with more sophisticated terms. They graduate from using words like ‘ok’ or ‘fine’ to using words like “‘tranquil’ and ‘serene’ or ‘alienated’ and ‘hopeless’”. By teaching subtle distinctions between similar feelings, the Mood Meter empowers students and educators to recognize the full scope of their emotional lives and address all feelings more effectively.

Meta-Moment: Emotions can either help or hinder relationships, and we all have moments that can get the best of us. The Meta-Moment helps the students and educators handle strong emotions so that they can make better decisions for themselves and their community. The Meta-Moment is a brief step back from the situation when we pause and think before acting. We ask ourselves, how would my “best self” react in this situation? What strategy can I use so that my actions reflect my best self? Over time and with practice, students and educators replace ineffective responses with productive and empowering responses to challenging situations. They make better choices, build healthier relationships, and experience greater well-being.

Blueprint: How everyone in a school treats each other has a powerful effect on classroom performance and school climate. Conflict between students, especially bullying, gets in the way of learning and success, and it also increases the time teachers spend off task. The Blueprint helps students and educators manage conflict effectively. Using the Blueprint, children and adults consider a disagreement from the other person’s perspective, as well as their own. They develop empathy by considering each other’s feelings and working collaboratively to identify solutions to conflicts. The Blueprint helps repair relationships and build stronger ones, creating safer and more productive schools where student can learn and thrive.

Outcomes of Emotional Intelligence:

Better Academic Performance for all students

Improved School Climate

Increase student’s emotional intelligence and social skills

Reduce anxiety and depression

Reduce Aggression and Anger

Students who practice RULER are less likely to bully each other

Better leadership skills and attention

Improved Teacher relationships with students and administrators, less burn-out, more positive about teaching

Teaching strategies that assist staff and students in regulating emotions

Website for additional information: ei.yale.edu

Special Education:

Page 18 – Where does Darien fall in the DRG comparison (would have expected it to be at the high end of the spectrum)?

Darien falls as the second highest district in the DRG with regard to Special Education funding at 23%. Wilton is the first at 25% and Weston is in the middle at 20% and below the DRG average, which is 21% A graph of this information will be part of the power-point presentation tomorrow night.

Page 18 – Will the new BCBA duplicate or supplement ESS services?

The new BCBA position will work with students at the MS and HS who are identified on the Autism Spectrum or who may have behavior difficulties not necessarily related to Mental Health. Thus, ESS and the BCBA work with different students and there is no duplication of services.

Page 19 - What are the costs of health insurance for the 2 positions (BCBA and clerical)? Should the supervision support cost of \$25,000 for the BCBA be netted against savings?

The cost of insurance for the BCBA is \$19,536 and the cost for the clerical is \$19,536 as well. The supervision support cost would not be netted against the savings as this is not a new contracted services cost to the district. A portion of what is spent with CCCD remains (\$25,000) from within the base budget. The cost of the Clerical is netted against the cost of existing clerical and the cost of the BCBA is netted against the cost of reduced contracted services.

Page 19 - Please provide an update on the SPED audit process and how that has informed the budget. Are changes anticipated in FY18 related to the audit?

We do plan to report out on the CES review at the February BOE meeting. The process has been completed and the final report is being prepared. Based on a verbal review the only area that would affect the 17-18 budget would be Professional Development for staff and that is included in the proposed budget.

Strengthening Elementary Administrative Support for Schools:

Page 19 – There are several questions on the proposed increase of the 0.6 FTE for the Assistant Principal (AP) to 1.0:

- What specific services have been difficult for the AP to provide since the FTE was reduced to 0.6?
- What was the student body size when the “bubble” was in HES?
- Did we have more than one AP when there were more grades in HES?
- What was the enrollment at HES when the FTE was reduced to 0.6 and what was it projected to be at that time for the next 3 years? How has the actual enrollment differed since that time and what is the projected enrollment for the next 3 years?

Answers to the above questions highlighted in yellow will be answered at the next budget workshop.

- If the AP FTE goes back to 1.0, would the same individual continue with the 0.4 CIL responsibilities?

No there would be two separate individuals. One would be the Assistant Principal and there would be a new CIL for PE.

- What do the asterisks in the charts signify? What does the Tools for Schools Liaison do?

The asterisks represents state mandates.

Tools for Schools is a program that helps schools improve their indoor air quality. The legislature's Environment Committee reported favorably a bill requiring school districts to use Tools for Schools or similar programs to address indoor environmental issues.

Cost Center Highlights:

Page 20 – In the HES paragraph, would be helpful to cross-reference the explanation on page 23.

Page 20 – In the WIS paragraph, would be helpful to briefly explain the reason for the added interventions.

Page 21 (also page 101) – In the WHS paragraph, please explain the necessity for reallocating staff to strengthen the main office and clerical support. Please elaborate on the responsibilities and time management of these positions and how they will interface with existing staff.

WHS needs more clerical support. Several years ago, our secretarial staff consisted of 2 full time people. We now have one full time and one half time person. The nature of their responsibilities as well as the administrative team's responsibilities has grown. For example, the administrative team conducts more than 120 mini observations as part of the evaluation and supervision team. There is clerical work associated with this that the administrative team has been handling itself.

Attendance and discipline follow up, tracking and reporting for 800 students

There is a level of personalization that is expected, which is challenging given the current level of support.

In addition, the main office secretary will keep the library open until 4 PM.

The bookkeeper will manage the district school accounts and also handle the budget at the high school, parking fees, be available to answer the phone, and general office management which frees the principal's secretary to better assist the principal in her executive functions.

Page 21 – In the Athletics paragraph, the increase of the Administrative Assistant position to 12 months requires more explanation of this individual's responsibilities over the summer, why the same cannot be accomplished currently and the plan for growing facility rental revenue. What specifically is the cost/benefit analysis? Also, it would be helpful to cross reference page 25, with the explanation of the billing structure change and budgetary impact.

Facility rentals occur during the school year and in the summer months. Without having someone available to manage and book facility rentals throughout the summer, the district will lose all revenue opportunities during the summer months. If responsibilities for this are to be moved to the athletic department, there needs to be a presence available during the summer to perform these tasks. Additionally many scheduling duties that are handled during the year now can be handled during the summer months, which will free up time during the year for that person to deal with "rectrac" and

rentals along with many other duties to assist in bettering the organization of the athletic department. We would also make every effort to have someone in the athletic office throughout the summer to answer any questions from parents and athletes, which is not the case currently. By changing the billing structure for the bookkeeping/clerical piece of facility rentals to the actual cost, the district has the ability to generate \$17,500 for bookkeeping through rentals as opposed to the approximate \$5,000 it currently generates through a flat 10% surcharge. In terms of the cost benefit analysis the cost associated with increasing the FTE of the administrative assistant is \$8,839 and the revenue generated is \$17,500, creating a net budget reduction of \$8,661.

Tough Decisions:

Page 21 – Please explain how the \$1,704,467 relates to the \$1,357,200 budget over budget increase. The total of the amounts in the pie chart is over \$2 million.

The increase of \$1,704,467 relates to increases excluding insurance. The breakdown is as follows:

Contractual increases: \$1,062,764
Enrollment Pressures: \$156,712
Reduction in Government Aid: \$29,255
New Requests: \$455,736
Total: \$1,704,467.

The insurance piece is excluded from this amount as the insurance increases, while a major driver to the budget, are not directly controllable (as are the other areas). With total increases less insurance, the net budget increase is 2.0%. While in FY 17 the insurance account was a main driver to bringing a much lower budgetary increase, FY 18 is significantly different for a few reasons: most notably, spikes in stop-loss insurance and in claims early in FY 17 have caused the trend rate to be much higher than last year, and there is no base budget reduction for the OPEB contribution as there was last year of \$209,000. (This shows the importance of identifying base budget reductions, as is the case with the technology lease).

The \$1,357,200 increase is the total increase including insurance less reductions.

Total Increases Excluding Insurance: \$1,704,467
Insurance: \$510,376
Reductions: \$(857,643)
Total: \$1,357,200

Page 22 – Under insurance impact, there is a reference to a \$1.7 million increase. Again, please clarify how this number relates to the \$1.3 million budget over budget increase and the total pie chart amount of over \$2 million. Also, please indicate what trend was used for the increase in insurance.

The trend rate for insurance is shown on p. 237 of the budget book and is 9.4%. The \$1.7 million increase excludes insurance and budget reductions while the \$1.3 million budget increase is inclusive of all items. The breakdown is shown immediately above.

Page 24 – Is the \$83,206 for the BCBA exclusive of insurance?

That is correct, the \$83,206 is exclusive of insurance. The cost breakdown for this position is as follows:

Salary: \$69,833

FICA: \$5,342

Pension: \$8,031

Total: \$83,206

Insurance: \$19,536

Total: \$102,742

Page 25 – In the chart for changes in non-certified staffing, there is no reference to the Administrative Assistant for Athletics increasing to 12 months. Also, with Chartwells taking on food service accounting, will this decrease the amount for Chartwells to reinvest in equipment for the food service program *at* the end of the year?

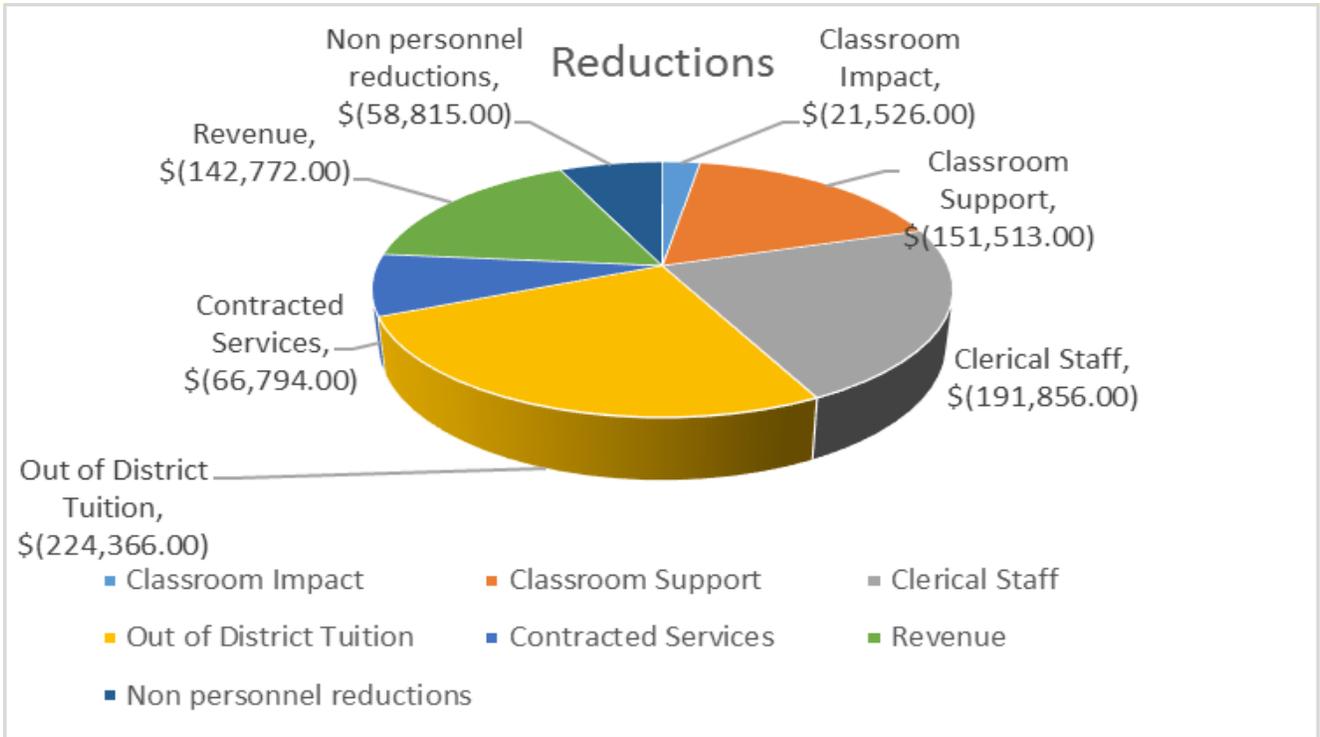
The addition of a Chartwell's provided bookkeeper will not decrease the amount for Chartwell's to reinvest in equipment for the Food Service program. It will actually increase the amount available as we will no longer be expensing a portion of the Staff Accountant salary (which is eliminated) against the revenue from the food service program, which is current and past practice. The cost of the Chartwell's bookkeeper is over \$15,000 less than the current cost structure in place now. That savings of \$15,000 can either be used to offset the cost of leaving the National School Lunch Program (a decision pending with the BOE) or be used for reinvestment in equipment.

Not Page Specific:

- Have opportunities been considered for sharing of administrative responsibilities or other potential leveraging of the geographical proximity of our schools that might decrease costs of administration?

Yes, within this budget we made a strategic decision to leverage the proximity of our schools to more efficiently provide clerical support for special education. This was done not only to become more efficient but also to improve quality control. This budget also entails modifications in how personnel are assigned and tasked across the four schools in Library Media Services and Digital Learning. The new approach to providing support for teachers and administrators with digital learning is possible because of our campus structure. Ongoing from past years: we continue as a district to share FTE across schools in areas such as PE, Art, Music, and World Language—an allocation of staff that would be difficult if our schools were not in close proximity.

- Is it possible to create a chart that would quantify outside versus inside the classroom costs/savings to help illustrate the emphasis on maximizing classroom learning and reducing non-classroom costs?



Revenue Opportunities:

Page 25 - When discussing the revenue from Open Choice students, what is the magnitude of potential non-personnel costs and how are those taken into account? Page 14 states that students would not be admitted if additional teachers are required, but are the 3-5 year projections reviewed to take into account that a space may be available in the first year, but if the projections play out an additional section may be required in a future year?

Yes, we used the current multiyear NESDEC projections to see if future years would be affected given current class size restrictions. Based on these projections no additional sections would be needed on a net K-5 basis.

Enrollment with Open Choice Additions						
	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
K	147	134	146	138	138	139
1 st	139	159	146	159	150	150
2 nd	150	146	167	153	167	157
3 rd	155	160	156	178	163	178
4 th	168	159	165	160	183	168
5 th	176	171	162	168	163	186

Class Size with Open Choice						
	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
K	18.38	19.14	18.25	19.71	19.71	19.86
1 st	19.86	19.88	18.25	19.88	18.75	18.75
2 nd	21.43	20.86	20.88	21.86	23.86	22.43
3 rd	22.14	22.86	22.29	22.25	23.29	22.25
4 th	21.00	22.71	20.63	22.86	22.88	21.00
5 th	22.00	21.38	20.25	21.00	20.38	23.25

Page 25 – It would be helpful to re-evaluate the non-resident tuition rates along with gauging the Board’s interest in increasing attendance by non-residents, to determine whether there are more opportunities for increasing revenue.

Marketing Weston as an option for tuition-based students would allow the district to generate additional revenue. It could also serve as a stepping stone to market Weston as a community for immigration as parents who pay tuition might feel compelled to eventually move to Weston should they be pleased with the school system. For those nonresident students (who are not staff member children), the tuition is currently \$17,904. As a point of reference, if the district added 5 nonresident students in the K-5 level instead of open choice students, we would generate a revenue of \$89,520. If this were the strategy of the board and the 5 additional open choice students were replaced with 5 nonresident tuition paying students, the budget would show a 2.63% increase instead of 2.79%

Summary by Object and Cost Center:

Page 26 - Is the significant Equipment line increase due primarily to the purchase of tech equipment?

Yes, of the \$281,187 increase in equipment, \$276,769 (or 98.5%) is related to technology equipment. The other increase is the art benches at the HS.

Page 29, line 3308 - Police/Fire \$90K request – what is the breakdown of costs for mile of safety, etc.?

Police/Fire request of \$90,059 includes:

\$80,789 for Mile of Safety

\$5,150 for Police for Athletic Games

\$4,120 for Fire Duty coverage, police at graduation, police at back to school nights/socials

Budget Data & Information

Page 30, Lines 4302 and 4400 – Why are the amounts in the columns so far in excess of the amounts that are reflected in these lines under the Facilities tab on page 209? What is included?

Objects 4302 and 4400 are not simply Facility related accounts. Included in these accounts are the payments to banks for the technology leases from the past (object 4400) and equipment repair for technology items and the schools. A breakdown is as follows:

Object 4302:

HES: \$1,590 (Art and Library Equipment)

WIS: \$1,695 (Library Equipment, Paper Cutter)

WMS: \$6,220 (Fitness Equipment, Library Laminator)

WHS: \$9,305 (Microscope Repair, Piano Tuning, Paper Cutter, Kiln Replacement)

Athletics: \$20,000 (Equipment Repair, Uniform Reconditioning)

SPED: \$1,250 (Special Education Equipment Repairs)

PPS: \$1,075 (Repairs to Nurse Audiometers)

Technology: \$21,300 (Projector bulbs, laptop repairs, iPad repairs)

District Admin: \$750 (Payroll Printer Maintenance for W2's and paystubs)

Facilities: \$65,728 (Facility and Ground Repairs)

Transportation: \$25,000 (Repairs to SUV's, inspections).

Total: \$153,913

Object 4400

WHS \$3,590 (Graduation Gowns)

SPED \$1,250 (Assistive Technology Repairs)

Technology: \$383,881 (Payments to banks for technology leases)

Facilities: \$21,110 (Concrete grinder, maintenance trucks leased)

Copy Center: \$116,812 (copier lease)

Total: \$526,643

Page 30, Line 4530 – How is the payment to Parks and Rec of \$63,806 (which includes an increase of \$7,668) determined? Per page 210, it is for pool maintenance? Do they outsource? What are we paying for exactly?

The payments made to the Parks and Rec department in object 4530 include reimbursement for the BOE share of the Pool Director, Pool Technicians, Lifeguards, Equipment repair, cleaning services, exterminator services, fire extinguishers, chemicals, filters, chlorine, and supplies and materials such as first aid supplies, lighting.

Page 31, Line 4702 - Why did the Locks and Keys line increase by 41.67%? (Did we need to re-key a lot?)

While the budget for locks is increasing \$2,500 from the current year it is less than the 2015/2016 expenditures. Through December of the current fiscal year we have spent \$7,285. The \$6,000 current year budget is inadequate for the district's needs and as result transfers have been made into this account in the current year. The budget for FY 18 looks to set a realistic target but for actual needs.

Page 32 - What does the \$23,390 increase in communications reflect?

This increase is shown on p.189. \$19,255 is due to the reduction of ERATE funding the BOE will receive. This funding has been phased out completely. The remaining increase of \$4,135 are contractual increases for our telephone system.

Pages 32 and 33 – Is there any flexibility to further control the increase in supplies and materials?

Supplies and Materials (objects 6110 through 6132) are increasing 1% compared to FY 17 or \$8,342. This increase is less than CPI.

Page 33, Line 7000 – Is the equipment amount primarily for the purchase of the items under the Technology budget?

Yes, of the \$281,187 increase in equipment \$276,769 (or 98.5%) is related to technology equipment. The other increase is the art benches at the HS.

Page 34 – How was the \$17,500 Facility Rental Fee determined?

There are approximately 700 hours of rental time each year. This figure is based on historical rentals of our facilities from outside groups such as the WBA, Weston Youth Sports, Kiwanis, Town Election, Senior Center, and Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts. At a bookkeeper salary of \$25 per hour, that is \$17,500 of revenue. Additional rentals could grow this number, but given our current rental time the estimate used was for 700 hours of time.

Page 34 – Is the \$23,551 in Unallocated now “allocated” and, if so, to what?

When the BOE adopted cuts to specific items to reconcile its ECS reduction last year, those items totaled more than what the ECS cut was and as a result remained in the unallocated account until they could be allocated elsewhere. These funds were approved to be earmarked for the facility master plan study in FY 17. But given that our recommended FY 18 budget has all dollars allocated, this account is zero in FY 18.

DRG A Comparison

Page 90 - Why are we so high on PPS and Plant (just pool and Xenon?) relative to the rest of the DRG?

These expenditures are based on the ED001 report submitted to the state. Given that expenses and their categorization are not uniform across districts, there are fluctuations in how expenses are coded within the ED001. Uncommon expenses for Weston under “Plant” include the Zenon Plant, the Pool, Mile of Safety, and Security (which is higher in Weston on a per capita basis).

Pages 93 and 94 – Is this older data important to the context?

The older data is there to show historical trends. There have not been significant changes between the rankings of the district over time. For example, in Plant we have been ranked 1 or 2 each year.

Revenue

Page 96 - Why did the participation fees for athletics spike in 2015-16 and then drop back closer to the 2014-15 level? Is this due to a change in the number of athletes year to year? Please also explain the difference between the \$64,282 on this page and the \$82,398 on page 156.

The credit you see in object 8900 of (\$21,000) during the year gets re-allocated to the participation fee once all fees are collected and all special revenue is collected. The \$82,398 reflects actuals which

includes the re-allocation from object 8900. The budget in FY 17 does not have that re-allocation done as participation revenue has not been collected for the year. As such you will still see the credit of \$21,000 in 8900 there as well.

Page 96 – Where do we account for WMS afterschool sports fees, WMS club participation fees and WIS, WMS and WHS production specific admission receipts, costume fees, and assorted costs?

The fees collected for WMS afterschool sports and participation fee are deposited in the student activity accounts and those funds are used to pay for buses, replacement of equipment and to pay for officials. This allows the program to be self-sufficient and not impact the operating budget.

The WHS production receipts are also deposited in student activity accounts and are used to pay for the costs associated with those productions to allow for no budgetary impact on the operating budget.

Page 96 - Why is the Regular Ed tuition “0” - do we no longer have any paying students or cannot anticipate whether current or new tuition students will be in-district next year?

By State law we are required to return regular ed tuition back to the Town unless the fiscal authority of the town (Board of Finance) authorizes us to retain those funds. Currently we have collected \$14,714.73 and anticipate this to increase to approximately \$35,000. However until the Board of Education requests that the Board of Finance allow us to retain those funds, that revenue will be returned to the town, leaving a balance of revenue of \$0.

Page 96 - Why is our Title 1 grant anticipated to go down \$5,000?

The allocation of Title 1 funds from the Federal government have been reduced due to a reduction in free and reduced lunch students.

Page 96 – Please clarify whether there is any carryover of IDEA monies from last year.

Yes, there is carryover funds of \$71,892 from last year, however the IDEA grant is a two year grant and those funds must be expended by June 30, 2017.

Page 96 (and page 162) – If pre-school enrollment is projected to increase by 3 students, should this line reflect an increase for next year?

No, not all Pre-K students pay tuition. The program is a mixture of special education pre-k students and non-special education pre-k students. Only the non-special education pre-k students pay tuition and this number is typically kept between 15 and 16 students to ensure as close to an equal balance of students as possible.

Staffing Summary

HES:

Page 105 – Please look at the statement on this page in Staffing on the decrease in the Assistant Principal FTE being in anticipation of the second grade move to WIS and the statement on page 19

about the reduction happening because of enrollment decline. A move to WIS may have been discussed but was not imminent when this was being considered in 2012.

The .4 Assistant Principal position reduction was in anticipation of declining enrollment and was frequently discussed as a savings in anticipation of the 2nd grade moving to WIS. In the 2015 memo to the Board of Education, it was stated that “the intent was that over time, the smaller projected cohorts entering Hurlbutt Elementary School would permit the total exit of the school from North House as the second grade migrated to the Weston Intermediate School.” It also states that “pre-2012, the Town had enthusiastically engaged in discussions with the district to relocate the Senior Center to the North House.” The enrollment assumptions stated that there would be 15 classrooms in 14-15 at Hurlbutt and by 17-18 there would be only 11 classrooms due to declining enrollment. Incoming Kindergarten cohorts were projected to reach a low of 90 students. In fact, the 17-18 revised projection for Kindergarten is 142 students and total regular education classrooms at 22. With the enrollment projected at over 450 students instead of the 342 students for the 17-18 school year, the restoration of the assistant principal position to full time is warranted.

Page 105 – In Staffing, please revise the sentence regarding another 1st grade teacher being added if enrollment exceeds projections by two students. If that occurs, the BOE would determine whether to hire another teacher – i.e., it is not automatic that it would occur.

Sentence revised.

Page 105 – Please clarify the number of para educators for Kindergarten. The Teaching and Learning paragraph notes 3.0 but on page 106, 4.0 is listed. The increase, if applicable, to 4.0 should be explained.

Page 105 should reflect the 4 paras for kindergarten. The number of para educators for the 16-17 school year was not increased proportionally for the increase in enrollment. Paras were reassigned from other duties to support kindergarten instruction when we added another section of kindergarten in August. Over the past five years, practice has been to share one para has been shared across two classrooms giving us 3 paras for 6 kindergarten classrooms. These paras provide recess and lunch duty coverage as well as the remaining 1.75 hours of classroom support. With the projected increase of another kindergarten section, giving HES a total of 8 kindergarten sections, para support would need to increase. This would give each of the 8 sections, lunch and recess coverage as well as 1.75 hours of classroom support. This would not result in an increase in service but would maintain the current level of classroom support without impacting our other programs.

Page 105 – In Teaching and Learning, it would be helpful to reiterate the rationale for going back to two team leaders per grade, especially when the number of teachers has not increased dramatically.

This is not an increase in number of team leaders. We have historically had two team leaders per grade level. The proposal to have one team leader was made when the number of teachers per grade level was anticipated to decline. However, the number of teachers per grade level has remained stable or has increased due to enrollment.

Page 105 – This page would benefit from a reiteration of the need for the increase in staff this year and the impact it has had on the increase in the proposed budget.

Two additional classroom teachers were added to Hurlbutt for the 2016-17 school year as a result of increased enrollment. These two teachers were not reflected in the 2016-17 budget as the enrollment increases were not anticipated and occurred after the budget was adopted. The 2017-18 budget reflects these two teachers causing the majority of the budget increase reflected in this document.

Page 107, Line 3309 – Please clarify why there would be a cost for DVCC at HES.

This line is for payment to the DVCC for an anger management puppet show that supports the health curriculum. This program teaches our students anger management as well as problem solving strategies, an integral part of our health curriculum and our positive school climate. This is an annual recurring budget item and is not a new budget line.

Pages 108 and 110, Line 7300 – Why \$300 for chairs? Might there be other places in the district that have extra chairs in decent shape? Is this a potential ask of the PTO?

Hurlbutt does not have any extra chairs that meet the needs of the guidance department. Should this budget line be eliminated, other resources will be explored. The PTO does not typically purchase replacement furniture.

WIS:

Page 113 – Same comment as for HES re explaining the need for the increase to two team leaders per grade if the number of teachers has not significantly increased.

This is not an increase in number of team leaders. We have historically had two team leaders per grade level. The proposal to have one team leader was made when then the number of teachers per grade level was anticipated to decline. However, the number of teachers per grade level has remained stable or has increased due to enrollment.

Page 115 - The anticipated enrollment for grade 4 is 168 and we have 8 sections planned. At 168, 7 sections would be 24 per class. There are currently only 163 students in that cohort. It would be helpful to include a reminder of how enrollment is monitored over the course of the year, when final determinations are made regarding the number of class sections and the process followed if additional teachers are required.

As of today, we currently have 164 students in third grade (new student started today). With 164 already in the grade that gives us only 4 spots for new students without going over the Board of Ed guidelines of 24 per class. Historically we have had many more than 4 students enroll over the years. Last year we had 23 new students enroll in fourth grade, and the years before we had 14 and 10 respectively. We of course will monitor enrollment carefully, and make any changes necessary to adhere to the district guidelines.

Page 115 – With the additional FTE for a math specialist, will this enable math enrichment to return to a full year program?

The math enrichment classes are not provided by the math department, but by our Project Challenge teacher, so unfortunately, this increase will not increase the math enrichment offerings to year-round.

Page 116, Line 4302 – Kiln update is included in the description column. Is the portion of the \$1,695 that is attributable to this in addition to the \$1,000 that the PTO approved for a kiln upgrade?

Of the \$1,695 in line 4302, only \$150 relates to the kiln update. The two largest expenditures are \$720 for piano tuning and \$475 for the laminator service contract in the library.

Page 117 – Where did the staff turnover savings in FY17 come from?

WIS was the primary area of cost savings from the WTA early retirement incentive that took place in FY 17. This credit of \$223,762 is a reduction to the budget based on retired teachers who were replaced with less expensive teachers in the current fiscal year.

WMS:

Page 122 – A renewal of the discussion on whether the “teaming model” should continue would be helpful not just for this budget cycle but as we look ahead. When and how should this be examined, what would be the financial impact with a different model and what would the consequences be, both pro and con, of changing to a different model?

We are committed to continuing the teaming model and the middle school philosophy that recognizes the importance of having an interdisciplinary team of teachers who share the same group of students. We have been studying scheduling options that will allow us maintain the teaming model in ways that are budget neutral. The challenge is determining how to employ staff in the most efficient way possible in order to meet the educational needs of our students.

Page 124 – How much certainty is there that Math 3 in 6th grade will have only 1 section next year? At what point is it necessary to create 2 sections of Algebra 2 in 7th grade? What is the trend of students moving up or down across the three levels of math from year to year? What is math advantage in 8th grade?

The numbers in the budget book represent the “best guess” at the time the staffing and enrollment projections were developed. These projections were based primarily on current enrollment and historical trends. In that sense, some of these numbers are placeholders. 7th and 8th grade Algebra are identical courses. Janine Russo and I have had conversations about combining 7th and 8th grades students in the same course, while continuing to sort students by team. Placement decisions will not be made until the spring but early indications are that we may need more algebra sections (and fewer pre-algebra sections) than we anticipated when relying on historical trends. The shift in our math curriculum and student performance data from the first trimester is very encouraging.

Page 125 – Please comment on the educational impact of 6th grade French and 6th grade Spanish having 25 students per section.

From an educational perspective, larger class size can pose challenges in terms of meeting the individual learning needs of our students. Teachers do use strategies, such as pairing and grouping students so that each student has time to practice language skills. The larger class size puts an additional burden on the teacher in terms of assessing student skills. While technology can provide some solutions, most educators would agree that in general, smaller class size is better. We currently have a 6th grade French class of 25 students. The teacher reports that the pacing of the course is somewhat slower when the class size is larger. The numbers listed are projections based on historical trends. It is difficult to project with certainty which students will continue in Spanish and which students will switch to French. It is definitely something that we will want to monitor closely.

Page 125 – Please explain why Intro to both Spanish and French are being eliminated. What is the plan for matriculation of current 7th grade students in these classes?

Intro to Spanish and French were piloted this year in response to an identified need. We had a significant number of students in 7th and 8th grade students (22 total) who had either never taken Spanish or French or had limited exposure and had not met the requisite skills to be successful in 7th or 8th grade Spanish or French. We were able to work within the budgeted sections to provide this course. It did require us to increase the numbers in 6th grade Spanish and 7th grade French to the high end of the BOE guidelines (24) and in the case of 6th grade French to exceed the guideline by one or two students. Because the 6th grade class represents .1 FTE, it was a more effective to run the two sections with higher class averages and schedule and introductory course to fully utilize the allotted FTE.

7th grade students will move up to the 8th grade class. They have had the intro class every day, as opposed to the 6th grade language class that meets every other day.

Page 126 – Why is there a drop off in Project Challenge enrollment in 8th Grade? With an expected enrollment of only 15 students in 8th Grade, why are two sections of Project Challenge necessary? Is it a scheduling issue?

This cohort has remained steady at 15 students since they entered the middle school. We typically run Project Challenge classes with enrollments of 10-12. Fifteen students would be quite large for this course.

Page 129 – We understand that you evaluate club membership each year. Are all of the programs listed currently substantially subscribed to and expected to continue as such? What is the current participation fee per session for each activity and has there been any discussion about increasing those fees?

School of Rock is a club that has not attracted a lot of students over the past few years. There has been interest in a French club so the School of Rock funds may be diverted to allow for a new French Club or to expand the Spanish Club. This year we did not run the Doodle Expression Club but we

would like to be able to run it again next year. The only participation fee that we charge is for the after school sports and fitness program. Students pay \$25 per season to participate in the program. This fee was set at least 15 years ago and has not changed. There has not been any discussion about increasing this fee. Funds raised from this fee are used to provide sports and fitness equipment as well as transportation to athletic competitions.

Page 131 - What was the student/staff feedback on the Easton Re-enactment to justify \$3,500 enrichment for Colonial Day versus funding an alternative enrichment experience?

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Each student wrote a letter reflecting on the day, detailing what they learned from the experience and what they enjoyed about the day. Students loved interacting with the reenactors and the various sessions that they attended. Students mentioned how they learned more by “experiencing” the revolution than they could have from reading about it, listening to a lecture, or watching a YouTube video. Many mentioned the tavern debate between patriots and loyalists and the drill (with the firing of muskets and cannon) as highlights of the day that really got them excited about the American Revolution. Constructive feedback that students gave largely mirrored what the staff and reenactors themselves felt could be improved. The most common criticism from adults and students was that the day felt rushed and that the students would have liked more time in each of the stations. We are grateful that the PTO funded the program this year. The PTO, like the WEF, are happy to fund new programs that enrich our student’s educational experience. Based on the positive experience that our students had this year, we believe that this should be part of the educational experience of our students in 8th grade and that is why we included it in the budget.

WHS:

Page 136 – Please explain the decrease from 3 sections of Intro to Computer Coding for 48 students to 2 sections for 50 students.

This current enrollment dropped slightly, which resulted in 3 smaller sections. We are confident that we are able to staff this course with 2 sections.

Page 137 – Please explain the drop from 170 to 100 students for Chemistry I as well as the drop from 124 to 89 for Chemistry Honors.

This is the chemistry bubble from implementing biology for all freshmen. – The bubble is moving through. This year we have all tenth graders from the bubble taking chemistry and approximately 300 eleventh graders. Next year Chemistry will be solely tenth graders. Therefore, the enrollment is lower.

Page 137 – We continue to carry AP Physics C and AP Chemistry for fewer than 15 students each. AP Euro continues at the 15 student level. In the past, some of these courses haven’t been offered due to low student interest. Please review the rationale for next year.

The AP Physics and AP Chemistry complete a sequence. We are committed to providing the highest level possible to our advanced students. Also in AP Physics, there are at times, 1-2 students who sit in that section for the highest AP Physics level and receive differentiated instruction by the instructor.

We will not run AP Euro if the enrollment drops below 15. This course doesn't complete a sequence. Our staffing is based on student requests.

Page 137 – Please comment on the educational experience in the higher-level world language courses when the class sizes are as high as 28 and 30. Same comment for PLTW Intro to Engineering Design on page 138 with an average class size of 26.7.

There was an error with French 4/4 honors for this year- there are 2 sections.

Regarding the larger enrollment, it is a challenge to predict specifically how the enrollment is going to fall. We look at 30 as the cut off for one section with an understanding that, generally, it is reduced to 28 students by the time the year begins. This can be accommodated in the lab and, with grouping and instructional strategies that focus on maximizing peer to peer dialogue. Higher numbers in advanced classes can work.

Also, when we determine section numbers for the advanced levels, we revise based on the number of requests. For example, we have Spanish VI projected at 30 and Spanish VI Honors at 24. This number could fluctuate between the sections. The same can be said for Spanish V at 2 sections and Spanish V Honors at 2 sections. Some students projected in honors may request standard level. This would result in one less section needed.

PLTW-

This is a concern but given our scheduling and staffing parameters we have recommended three sections.

Page 141, Line 5600 – Has the student in the agriscience program graduated?

That student is set to graduate June 2017 in the current fiscal year.

Page 144 - Why is the copy center clerk being transferred to WHS and what functions will this individual have in the main office? Also why does WHS need a bookkeeper?

WHS needs more clerical support. Several years ago, our secretarial staff consisted of 2 full time people. We now have one full time and one half time person. The nature of their responsibilities as well as the administrative team's responsibilities has grown. For example, the administrative team conducts more than 120 mini observations as part of the evaluation and supervision team. There is clerical work associated with this that the administrative team has been handling itself.

Attendance and discipline follow up, tracking and reporting for 800 students

There is a level of personalization that is expected, which is challenging given the current level of support.

In addition, the main office secretary will keep the library open until 4 PM.

The bookkeeper will manage the district school accounts and also handle the budget at the high school, parking fees, be available to answer the phone, and general office management which frees the principal's secretary to better assist the principal in her executive functions.

Page 146 – What are Student Act materials?

Academic Awards and Plaques.

Page 146 – In the Equipment description, are the 4 art workbenches in addition to the 4 art tables purchased by the PTO?

Yes

Athletics

Please provide a 2016-2017 chart with the information contained on page 155 that we may use for comparison.

Included

Page 151 – What is the status of ice hockey with the co-op being phased out, yet the chart on page 155 refers to 3 athletes and 1 team for both girls and boys, and the total team count includes both?

We will have at least one, most likely 3 girls playing ice hockey next year in a co-op with Notre Dame of Fairfield and Milford. I am still searching for a new home for our boy's ice hockey players and think I have found a solution with Brookfield and Bethel. In both cases the district is not paying any money towards the cost of these programs as that is all covered by the athletes who are participating which is why there are 0's as far as cost but numbers included in teams and athletes.

Page 155 – What flexibility do you have to increase the number of teams (i.e., add a freshman team) if participation numbers increase?

I have always been able to add sub-varsity teams when numbers have warranted those increases. After the budget is passed I am only able to do this if we are still able to stay within our budget for coaching salaries, transportation, officials, etc. I believe there has been only one instance in my tenure where we needed to add a level but didn't have the funds to cover it and had to request money and it was approved. Other than that one instance we have been able to make it work within the confines of the accepted budget.

Page 155 – Football and basketball are markedly more expensive per athlete than the other sports - have we considered offsetting these costs with higher fees for these teams? Are the gate receipts largely attributable to these two sports and, if so, how much do they directly offset the cost of these sports?

These three sports bring in the majority of our gate (we will have two or three early round post season games per school year that helps). I believe increasing the cost of playing these sports will greatly impact the participation, especially in football and girls basketball, which are two sports we have perennially had issues with numbers. The parents in these sports are already paying their participation fee and paying an entrance fee to watch their children play (we only charge for three sports during the regular season, girls and boys basketball and football). Below are the breakdowns of money brought in through gate receipts and the amount earned by these three sports:

2015-16 - \$13,051 with \$11,884 coming from basketball and football
2014-15 - \$19,454 with \$16,871 coming from basketball and football
2013-14 - \$16,812 with \$14,832 coming from basketball and football

Page 155 – The number of coaches for boys and girls tennis, football, boys’ basketball and field hockey has increased by 1 from the current budget but there is no explanation for this.

Field Hockey is an error. That coach is not to be added until next year. We added assistant varsity coaches for volleyball and girls basketball for next year with the hopes of adding for cheerleading and field hockey the following year. The spreadsheet in the budget book is the original one I submitted with all four assistant varsity coaches added for this year but two were deferred, cheer and field hockey (I have attached an updated spreadsheet showing 71 total coaches instead of 73). For tennis it is the addition of JV coaches as our numbers are too big for one coach to manage and we have picked up JV matches to allow our lower level players more opportunities to compete. Football is the addition of a freshman coach as we did run a partial freshman level (actually “froshmore” which is a combination of freshman and sophomore) this year and are expecting to do the same next year.

Page 156 – Please explain the increase in Administration expense from \$197,100 in FY17 to \$214,840 in FY18.

There are three differences:

1. Contractual difference in the salary of the AD = +\$3,395
2. Change of assistant from 11 month to 12 month plus contractual increase = + \$11,005
3. Increase in Travel and Conference line to cover reimbursements for car travel and for national conference which had previously not been covered = + \$3,000

Page 156 – Please explain the 33% increase in insurance.

This was a note left in error from the previous fiscal year regarding liability insurance. This does not apply to FY 18 and is removed on the replacement page.

SPED

Page 158 – The working understanding re: ESS was that the program could accommodate more students than the 10-12 indicated here. That maximum number should be stated in this section. Also, if the current expectation is that we will not reach that maximum number in the second semester of this year, then what is the plan to try to increase it next year?

The maximum number of students that the program can service is 18. It is difficult to say if we will meet that maximum this year, but at this point it looks although we may not. We do intend to start looking at the MS 8th grade students that will be coming up next year to determine if there are students that could be helped by the program. It is important to remember that the main purpose of the program is to provide mental health support to students, while allowing them to stay in district. Also, there is a flow to the program in that students may not stay in the entire time they are at the HS.

Page 158 – Is it possible to quantify, on average, how many students might be outplaced in a given year or just at WHS this year without a program such as ESS? Also, is the provision of ESS services itself what obviates mediation?

It's possible that 2-3 HS students might be outplaced in any given year and sometimes more. With legislation that allows parents to unilaterally place students and then seek reimbursement from the district and places the Burden of Proof on the district, having the ESS program assists with decreasing the costs associated with this process and mediation.

Page 158 - In the last paragraph, would bringing ESS into the lower grades for early intervention potentially offset costs (both educational to the student and financial to the district) for the increased incidence of elementary students exhibiting emotional and behavioral dysregulation?

If we were to bring the ESS program to any other level, WMS would be the priority at this time. I think it potentially could offset costs to the students and the district. I think at the Elementary level, the BCBA support that we have brought into the district has assisted greatly with the younger students, as well as many of the other interventions, like PBIS and Responsive classroom, as well as the Emotional Intelligence initiative. Although we are seeing a rise in students with emotional dysregulation at the younger grades, at this point in time, we can manage those behaviors. While having an ESS program at the Elementary levels is a very good idea and might provide some early intervention, it may not be as cost effective.

Page 158 – Would be helpful to review basic obligation of the district to provide SPED services and how ESS enables the district to perform some of those services, and under what circumstances a family may need to contribute to the payment of services.

The district obligation is to provide a Free, Appropriate, and Public Education to all students (FAPE). If we cannot provide that in district, then we need to look at out of district resources. While the emotional difficulties a student is experiencing might appear to be more of a, parental responsibility, if the student's emotionality interferes in their ability to access their education, then the district must try to address the concerns. This is often a difficult line to sort out and with parents allowed to make a unilateral placement that often occurs ahead of the district agreeing that step is needed. I will add, however, that most of the students in ESS, also have outside therapists and psychiatrists treating them

and that is all funded by parents. Additionally, some have been hospitalized previously or while in the program and that is funded by parents as well. ESS allows us to work cooperatively with the parents in coordinating services.

Page 164 – Please explain what is encompassed by the \$25,000 for supervision support for BCBA programming. Is this expected to be a recurring cost?

We have been utilizing CCCD to provide our behavioral support for many years now and so we will be using that supervision support to ensure a smooth transition to our own BCBA programming as well as a smooth transition for our students and parents. We do not anticipate it will be an ongoing cost.

Page 165 – Is there something different that we need to be considering to increase the number of students in Project Challenge? Is it an interest issue, an identification issue or something else? Why is the projected number “0” for 3rd grade for Project Challenge? Why are there Project Challenge numbers listed for grades 9-12?

The number of students in Project Challenge is based on the identification process we utilize and the numbers will fluctuate from year to year. We have seen some students at the MS level who do drop the program due to some scheduling conflicts, but that is a minimal number. There is no projected number for grade 3, as the assessments do not occur until after the budget process and the number of students identified depends on the identification process. Once a student is identified as Gifted and Talented, that designation remains even though there is no program or they choose to leave the program. That is why there are students listed for grades 9-12. The state does not mandate a program, only that students are identified, so teachers may provide differentiated instruction. Project Challenge is in the renewal process during this school year and all of these areas will be reviewed.

Pupil Personnel Services

Page 167 – Same comment as for Executive Summary above on including more information on Emotional Intelligence.

Page 167 – Isn't there a cost to us for doing the Drug and Alcohol Survey? If so, it does not seem to be reflected anywhere. Also, does the Survey cover usage of powdered caffeine?

The Drug and Alcohol survey will be completed in the current school year and there is no cost to us as it is covered by grants from Positive Directions and Youth Services. It currently does not cover powdered caffeine, but perhaps this could be added before it is administered in February. The only associated costs might be what types of programming we want to add based on the survey results, i.e., Parent, Student workshops, speakers, etc. That funding would come through school budgets, professional development, youth services and positive directions, PTO's or possibly grants.

Page 171 – What is the increase in the number of hours for the Occupational Therapist and what is the total number of hours following that increase?

The increase in hours is 470 for the year. This increase occurred in FY 17 and is an expenditure carry-over from the current fiscal year 2017 to the recommended budget in FY 18.

C&I Improvement

Page 177 – Please explain what intended with the \$17,800 in consulting services for District Goals.

District Goals: These funds are intended to support the district's goals:

1. For every member of our educational community to be prepared to be successful with the challenges of learning, working, and contributing as a global citizen.
2. To gauge student progress at the classroom level through formative assessment techniques for the purposes of informing and differentiating instruction.

Target Audience: The consulting services will be used to provide training for curriculum instructional leaders and administrators who will in-turn work with teachers to support the above-stated goals.

Content: The CILs will participate in a three-day program to prepare coaches to improve instruction by working with individual teachers to hone their practice, providing just-in-time professional learning opportunities tied to teacher and school goals, and strengthening a collaborative professional culture. In addition, this training will include four 90-minute virtual coaching sessions to support their implementation of the new techniques learned in the program and to support them with feedback.

A subsequent three-day training will prepare CILs to work with teacher teams to use formative assessment to gauge student progress. CILs will learn how to actively infuse formative assessment into daily instruction, analyze results, and take collective, and informed action in response to formative assessment data based on student needs. CILs will participate in several virtual coaching sessions as they implement this new approach with teachers.

Timeline: Training will be conducted by *Research for Better Teaching* beginning over the summer with administrators receiving a one-day initial training during the administrators' retreat in August. CILs will begin their training over the summer and it will continue periodically throughout the school year as they implement the new learning.

Page 177 – Please explain the increase from \$10,000 to \$33,000 in Literacy Training. Also do the reductions in training in various areas signify the completion of that training (or the movement of that training in-house) and, if completed, please share level of satisfaction with the results.

There is actually only a net increase of \$500 for literacy training over the FY 17 budget to supplement in-house professional development efforts. The \$33,000 in consulting fees is for the each of the three lower schools to once again receive five days each of on-site training from the Teachers College Readers and Writers Workshop staff. This would be the third year of this initiative.

After several years of using an international consultant for math, we feel there is enough capacity to provide this training in-house through the curriculum instructional leaders. The same is also true for our ongoing work with performance-based assessments. We have expertise on our faculty for our CILs and teachers to continue to support this work.

Page 177 – Please explain how the consulting services for Emotional Intelligence will be delivered.

The \$12,000 in consulting services requested for Emotional Intelligence Training will be used to send two teams from Weston, one from HES and one from WHS, to the Yale Seedlings Institute for training during the summer months. (WIS and WMS were trained last summer). These teams will turnkey this training with their respective faculties during the 2017-18, school year as the WIS and WMS are currently doing.

Page 178 – Why is Ed Leader 21 being eliminated?

The general consensus among the WPS Leadership Team is the Ed Leader 21 is not an essential membership. We have effectively integrated into core priorities and practices much of what Ed Leader 21 advocates and supports. We have found that the resources offered through the Tri-State Consortium have a great deal of overlap with Ed Leader 21, and we will continue to support all our Board and District Goals through this network.

Page 179 – Do the benefits of NWEA testing still outweigh the \$20,000 cost as well as the non-financial costs of loss of instructional time and student stress?

Currently, the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress is a nationally normed assessment used to ascertain student progress in reading and mathematics. Weston is employing it in grades one through eight. The greatest benefits of this measure is its use as a screening and progress monitoring tool, particularly in mathematics. Results are immediately accessible for analysis unlike the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA).

The way NWEA is structured, it also shows growth, fairly accurately, as the student moves through the years. Since the test is adaptable within a range of several grade levels, it gives real achievement levels below and above grade levels. We do not have another way to show this type of growth. (The growth indications on SBA are not real growth indicators because every year the test topics are different. You can never know if the child learned the things he didn't know last year.)

The test is generally administered twice per year in the fall and the spring. Typically, it takes approximately one hour for students to complete this assessment for each subject. We recognize that instructional time is lost to administer this assessment, however, the time lost due the SBAs has a far greater impact on instruction and the results are only minimally useful, if at all.

We will continue to evaluate the cost/benefits of administering the NWEA. In the absence of another standardized growth measure, we are reluctant to abandon it at this time. It would take time for us to explore and plan for the implementation of another screening and progress monitoring tool.

Page 16 refers to the Curriculum Instructional Leaders being part of the comprehensive staff support with respect to conversion to 1:1 and all other digital learning and technology matters. Will their duties be expanded beyond their current roles and is this part of the overall CIL review process?

CILs will continue to support district goals (such as the 1:1 initiative) through their core responsibilities of instructional coaching, professional development, and curriculum development

efforts. CILs have been adept at supporting the integration of technology in their departments as curriculum is developed and teachers need assistance in selecting technology tools to enhance instruction. We will be conducting a comprehensive review of their role and responsibilities as part of the overall CIL review process.

Technology

As noted above, the proposed 1:1 initiative as well as the change in financial approach to technology need to be reviewed in more detail by the Board.

Page 184 - In the third paragraph, please explain what issues arose from the “reconciliation of past expenditures” and if those issues have been addressed going forward.

Prior to the 2016-2017 budget year acquisition of software was decentralized. Some was purchased by the IT Department; some was purchased by each school primarily through the Library/Media Specialists and CIL’s; purchases for Central Office were made by each department. For the 2016-2017 school year software purchasing has been centralized in the IT Department. We are working toward standardizing terms to increase control over renewals and examining licenses for duplications or overlap.

We are confident that the majority of these purchases are now under the control of the IT Department but we continue to have some work to do in ensuring that we are maximizing our value of each license.

Page 184 – Please explain the significance of implementation of CT PA 16-189.

Connecticut Public Act No. 16-189, An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy, went into effect on October 1, 2016. This has imposed requirements on any operator of a website, online service or mobile application regarding the use and security of Student Data. More importantly for us, it voids any contract which does not comply with all of the provisions of the law.

We are now having to perform additional work to monitor vendor compliance and communicate with parents regarding vendors and contractors. The extent of these efforts is still an unknown. Initially there will be a substantial amount of time invested in establishing a baseline of data, the maintenance of which will require ongoing resources but to a lesser extent. There are also bound to be modifications made to this legislation over time to which we will have to respond.

Currently the State Legislature is reviewing this law and we expect modification to be made that may ease the implementation and ongoing support.

Page 185 – Please walk through the tech staff reorganization and how it will best serve the district.

The reorganization of the technology staff will have a few impacts. It allow for articulation of technology skills instruction between the K-4 grades. The same individual will be the computer teacher in both Hurlbutt Elementary School and the Weston Intermediate School. Additionally it will create a greater partnership with the Learning Commons by partnering the staff into two teams to

support both the technology and library standards. These teams divided by elementary and secondary levels will work closely together to support all programs such as new programs like our one-to-one program and Makerspace as well and equally importantly our current literacy, technology integration and library programs. These programs have been changing over time and have been working together successfully over a number of years as represented by our teams work on developing the Common Elements of Learning. These new teams are represented in the individual school budgets.

Page 186 – What is the rationale for doubling the line for overtime?

The approach the district is taking in advancing the delivery of curriculum is to provide increased technological resources to staff and students when needed and to reduce the downtime experienced by staff preventing them from using the technology as part of the curriculum. Support tickets of an urgent nature or items requiring access to classrooms when students are not present are done after school hours. Overtime is all paid to technicians for the videotaping of the Board of Education meetings. This has been paid in the past but from various accounts. To support transparency we are consolidating this to one account.

Page 186, Lines 3220/3221 – Please review the nature of the consulting services that are received.

In a department of our size it is impossible to have in-house expertise in all of the current hardware and software. The consulting services that we use are primarily for specific projects in areas outside of our abilities or for training to allow us to expand our capabilities in a cost effective and efficient manner. Use of these consultants is frequently a better option, from both a cost and effectiveness perspective.

Pages 186 and 189 – Please review in more detail the three items accounting for the \$30,800 increase in line 3309 “Services”.

CEN Internet Access - \$10,000

This cost is no longer funded by the State of CT and must be added to the BOE budget.

VMware Mgmt and Maintenance - \$15,800

This item had not been included in the budget previously. We believe it may have been paid out of alternate accounts in the past. To support transparency we are adding this to the budget directly.

Printers Mgmt and Maintenance - \$5,000

Represents on going service and maintenance of printers throughout the district.

Page 187, Line 5880 – Please review each of the new Conferences and what the tech staff is anticipated to gain from attending.

These conferences are the same conferences that staff have been historically attending. There are no new additions of conferences. We have now clearly outlined the conferences that staff attend in a separate account to help support transparency.

ISTE – International Society for Technology and Education – This conference is only attended when it is located in the Northeast. It is attended by teacher representatives with a focus on

learning new teaching methods, new technology tools, and provides the ability to collaborate with peers from other parts of the country.

CECA – Connecticut Education Computer Association – This is a Connecticut conference and is attended by the computer teachers, library media specialists, technology integrators and other CIL's as appropriate. The focus of this conference is to support the collaboration and best practices between school districts in Connecticut. This is attended yearly.

COSN – Consortium of School Networks – This is a national conference focused on Chief Information Officers and Directors of Technology. It is attended yearly by the Director of Digital Learning. The goal is to support networking and best practice conversations on the level of technology leadership, instructional leadership and governance.

Page 189 – Why is there a FY17 lease payment overage of \$9,635?

This overage is in part due to higher than projected interest rates from when the budget was adopted. We had assumed interest rates of 1.75%, early indications are that this will be closer to 2.15%. However this could change either for the better or the worse once this is put out to bid. Additionally there funds encumbered but not yet spent for \$22,000 related to the new software privacy policy that was imposed on districts by the state. This is an unanticipated expenditure.

Page 189 – In Professional Technical Services, please explain VMware and whether there are any options to replace the funding that is no longer available from the State for CEN Internet Access.

VMWare was explained above.

There are no other funding options for Internet Access. The State formerly provided Internet access to all public schools at no cost. It no longer does. In future years we could seek to change Internet Service Providers (ISP) to see about reducing the costs as the technology changes.

Page 190 – Please identify any new software with an asterisk along with a brief explanation of what it is.

Learning Management System – A learning management system is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of electronic educational courses or training programs. It also serves to augment the lessons the teacher is giving in a brick and mortar environment, not just replace them. It is the infrastructure that can deliver and manage instructional content, identify and assess individual and group learning or training goals, track the progress towards meeting those goals, and collect and present data for analysis to assist decision making and planning.

CABE Meeting Manager - This is a user-friendly, web-based service specifically designed to assist the Board, Superintendent and Central Office in preparing for and running Board of Education meetings. It eliminates the need to print and distribute board packets in hard copy, provides faster controlled electronic communication to the community, creates minutes during the meeting, and provides searchable archived meeting documents.

TalentEd - This is a comprehensive evaluation system designed to handle all of our employee evaluation needs. It is used in other school districts in Connecticut to support the teacher evaluation program. As a highly customizable program it is a perfect fit to Weston's Teacher Evaluation program to ensure that the workflow meets requirements, supports teacher personal improvement plans while not overly burdening staff with administrative functions that would take them away from their primary focus of teaching and learning for our students. It is online and includes automatic workflow, e-signatures, evaluation processes, surveys, personal improvement plans as well as evaluator reliability monitoring to name a only a few features. It is also compatible with mobile devices. TalentEd has been used successfully in Ridgefield Public Schools for many years.

Tableau - This is a data analytic tool. It was implemented in the current school year (2016-17) to begin the process of forming a usable data warehouse to provide reliable data to Instructional Leaders with verifiable data to support data-driven decision making. This year we are focusing on cleaning and loading data into our data storage location (PowerSchool) while simultaneously beginning to create data visualizations to be shared with staff in Fall, 2017.

Page 190 – As with other aspects of the technology budget, the Learning Management System will require a refresher for the Board.

Page 192 – Is the \$45,000 for Town Shared Services a static number?

This number is impacted by the staff in the I.T. Department. No change has occurred in the staffing since this base number was established. In this year's budget the addition of \$2000 was added to the budget for on-call costs. This has been also added to the Town's technology budget to be reimbursed to the Board of Education. This additional cost is caused by the I.T. staff needing to be available for after-hours support for other town departments and emergency services.

Pages 193-194:

- Are we planning to continue with Smart Boards or is there a new technology on the horizon (before we refresh 20 at \$50,000)?

We are replacing SMART Boards with Epson Interactive Projectors. We have been following that process for the past year. This was reviewed in last year's budget presentation as well as the technology workshops in the Spring and Fall of 2016. Links to the presentations are here:

Presentation 11/2016 -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_32JGQe7YQ7bXJ5bUxuQ2dudzA/view?usp=sharing

Presentation 5/2016 -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_32JGQe7YQ7VG9DTUtyWXA0SHM/view?usp=sharing

Presentation to the Board of Finance and the Board of Education in 2015 covering this area -

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-wD-em-tWGmYWlfcXZrR3c3ZTA/view?usp=sharing>

- How many units are represented by each item on the list on page 194 (that is not already listed) and what are the per unit prices? Please add a per unit price column on page 193 too.

This is now included, however prices are subject to change as these items will not be purchased until the new fiscal year, which was the primary reason this was not included initially.

- What is included in the \$35,000 for new staff technology and why is it needed?

This amount was listed separately to help support the transparency of the budget. The dollar amount includes:

- \$20,000 -- Purchase of new computers for new staff as required including relevant peripherals.
- \$15,000 -- Purchase of new technology for students under 504 plans. These students are not in the special education budget but part of the regular education budget.
- The budget book will be updated to better reflect the categories for the use of these funds.

District Administration

Page 198 – Please expound on the plans to enhance minority outreach and recruitment.

Recruiting minority candidates for teaching positions has proven very difficult for many districts in the area. Traditional recruiting methods such as participation in recruiting fairs, online job posting, and traditional advertising have not increased the numbers of minority applicants in Weston and nationally. We have requested additional funds to purchase a minority recruiting marketing package which includes virtual minority recruiting fairs, specialized advertising, and job postings. It is our hope, that this service will increase Weston’s exposure and attract qualified minority candidates.

Facilities

Page 206 - What is the specific fire violation involving the security desk at HES and what would the fix look like/how will it work within the layout? Why does it cost almost \$10,000 to move?

The violation is due to the existing security desk blocking egress from the building during normal and emergency exiting. The desk is presently located just inside the front foyer in the hallway. The fire and building code requires the hallway to be kept clear of obstructions which could impede the flow of traffic. The exiting width of the doorway must be maintained into the corridor. The security desk area will be relocated into a small unused office area directly behind the existing hallway wall. A viewing/reception window must be cut into the existing concrete wall as well a secondary doorway. To accomplish this the existing hallway fire doors and electronics leading into the south house wing will have to be relocated to accommodate the viewing/reception window.

Page 207 – Is the sound system being donated for the girls’ softball field?

No, the district will have to purchase a system to be installed after final board review and approval.

Page 209 – Please elaborate on the \$128,500 for overtime – who, when, who approves, etc.

The overtime budget is used for the following:

- Parks and recreation fields
- Weather

Schools – Early morning grass cutting.
Electrical Repair
HVAC repair
School Events
Graduation
Traffic control
Capital Projects
Special Maintenance Projects
Plumbing Repairs
Carpentry Repairs
BOE Meetings
Mandatory department training
Contractor escort in buildings after hours
P&R Camp or Event

General overtime is required to accomplish repairs and tasks that cannot be performed during normal hours due to classroom instruction. All overtime is approved by the Facilities Director and assigned in accordance with the union contract requirements.

Grounds overtime is primarily due to outside events scheduled by athletic events for our student and parks and recreation events scheduled by the town. All overtime is approved by the Facilities Director and assigned in accordance with the union contract requirements. The Parks and Recreation overtime is billed back to the town.

Page 209, Line 3304 – Do all the storage tanks require the district to have a license?

Yes, they are all registered with DEP

Page 209, Line 4510 – Where is asbestos abatement work required and are there any other areas which might require such work in the future?

Asbestos abatement is required in any area where there is pre-existing asbestos that has become damaged or pre-existing asbestos that must be removed due to planned renovation/construction.

Page 210, Line 4516 – Is the \$7,206 “oil tank testing” an annual recurring cost (there is no such cost in the FY16 column and it is substantially less than the amount in the FY15 column)? Is it a flat fee per tank?

The oil tank leak testing is done every year for each tank. The \$ 7,206 covers the testing for all tanks. In FY 14-15 we pre-paid the expense for FY 15-16, which is why there is no expense shown for FY15-16.

Page 210, Line 4539 - What is the energy management system at WIS & WHS? Why is it at only these two schools?

The energy management system controls all of our HVAC equipment district wide. However, the control stations are located at WIS and WHS.

Page 211, Line 6510 - Why do we need to buy almost \$400,000 worth of heating oil every year? Isn't gas used to heat? Which cost center has the natural gas cost? Has any locking in of rates been done? Also, with oil consumption lower and available at a lower price, why isn't there more of a reduction in this line of the budget?

The heating oil account includes both oil purchases and natural gas. Yes, we have locked in a rate recently to lower our natural gas price point. Last year we paid \$7.34 MMBTU and have locked in at a lower rate of \$6.62 MMBTU. While this is a reduction in price we have seen consumption increase year over year by approximately 18%. Additionally, last year to reconcile ECS cuts, existing oil in the tanks was burned; this oil needs to be replaced. The increase in consumption plus the additional oil to be purchased has resulted in a 2.53% budget increase.

Page 214, Line 4542 – Please review what is included in the \$22,850 cost for technology and WMS stage lighting? In particular, please note the significance of the lighting for the WMS stage.

The cost of contracted services in account 4542 is broken up into 2 categories. \$20,000 relates to wiring for technology throughout the schools. An additional \$2,850 is for lighting for Band Concerts in addition to operating the 8 stanchions that operate the lights during these concerts.

Page 215 – What is the status of the WIS courtyard drainage issue?

We need to raise the existing catch basin to grade then regrade the surrounding area and pitch everything towards the catch basin. The cost is approximately \$ 3,000.00. This item did not make it into the budget. We are concentrating on safety, code and health related items at this time.

Security

Page 219, Line 3308 – Review what we are receiving for the cost of the Mile of Safety and consider how we may want to address this going forward.

The mile of safety was designed to:

- Provide a safe environment for students, staff, contractors and pedestrian traffic.
- Shorten the time of congestion during arrival and dismissal.
- Compel drivers to obey the posted speed limit of 20 miles per hour on school road.
- Ensure that drivers park in designated parking areas during school hours.
- Reduce potential for car accidents
- Reduce potential for pedestrian accidents.
- Reduce time on campus for cars and buses.
- Provide smoother traffic flow from Lords Highway to Weston Road.
- Deter unwelcomed visitors to campus with a police presence.
- Expedite police response time for an emergency.
- Provide an added layer of security for students, staff and visitors.

Page 219, Line 6132 – Why has the line for security materials almost doubled?

While the budget for security materials has doubled from budget-to-budget, it has not doubled compared to actuals. The budget reflects a reduction to actuals from 2015-2016. The largest driver in the security materials account is \$4,000 for a license renewal for our digital maps of our buildings, materials to print badges for staff ID's, and radio repairs.

Transportation

Page 222 – Is any reduction in the number of bus runs for WMS and WHS possible given the 52% ridership?

We cannot reduce the number of bus runs. The 52% ridership doesn't mean that the buses are 52% full. It means that 52% of the WHS/WMS students are using the buses. Despite the percentage, there are still about 725 WHS/WMS students using the buses. There are about 752 WIS/HES students using the buses at 80%. The larger size of the WHS/WMS students is also a factor. Most importantly, even if the WHS/WMS ridership was to decrease, the same number of buses would still be needed to cover all of the streets in town in the amount of time available between the start and end times of each tier of schools (45 minutes between school bell times). Most significant is that in the PM, WHS/WMS ends at 2:30. The buses depart at 2:38 with the students and need to be back and lined up at HES and WIS for the 3:15 school end, just 37 minutes after they leave WHS/WMS. This could not be done if the current buses were decreased and some or all buses had to cover a larger area of town.

Page 225 – Are the SUVs with the 3.5 and 4.5 daily hour usage for outplaced students?

The SUV's are for outplaced student's transportation to and from their schools. The vehicles are used by our in-town WPS local Special Ed students during the day in between the outplaced runs. Several of the WPS SPED staff have been certified to drive the students in the vehicles during the day as part of their job at no additional cost to WPS.

District Wide

Page 233 – Please indicate the assumption that was used to determine the increase in health insurance and how that assumption was arrived at or cross-reference page 237.

As is the case every year, the projection is provided by our insurance consultant. Factors that are taken into effect include contractual agreements with our various bargaining units, claim experience over the past 18 months, change in covered population, changes in plan type by participants (single, E+1, family). Spikes in claim experience, as was seen in July and August 2016, play a role in driving the costs of insurance as does the growing pool of high claimant individuals. Given that the district self-insures, how the medical claim experience occurs on a month to month basis drives what type of medical trend rate is projected. Higher spikes in medical claims on a month to month basis result in upward pressure on the trend rate within insurance.

Page 234 – May be helpful to cross reference how OPEB will be handled next year in the Description column.

The OPEB contribution is shown on page 239 of the budget book.

Page 234 – The benefits line overall is increasing by over 6%. Please elaborate on how the primary drivers of this increase differ from what occurred in last year’s budget and the extent to which these drivers are within or beyond the district’s control.

The primary driver of the increase in the benefits category of the budget relate to the contribution to the internal services fund, object 2000. This represents \$510,376 of the \$555,286 overall increase in the category. The primary drivers of this include an increase in stop loss insurance of \$115,346 due to a sizeable population within our insured pool who have claims in excess of \$50,000. This premium has increased 89% since 2014. Additionally claims are budgeted to increase \$548,986 (including staff changes). This is a result of a 9.4% trend increase projected, which is based on our insurance consultant’s calculations and is driven by our past experience as well as our population. The overall increase in the benefit category differs from last year in that last year we had a large base budget reduction to the GASB 43/45 account, object 2015. This base budget reduction was taken last year and is no longer a reduction to the overall budget. Additionally last year we saw better claim experience in the first half of the fiscal year compared to the first half of FY 17. The spike in claims in July and August of 2016 contribute to a larger insurance increase than in previous years. Due to Weston’s small population changes in claim activity by a small group of individuals (high claimants) can swing our insurance population from year to year in a larger way then it otherwise would if we had a bigger pool of covered employees.

Internal Services Fund

Page 236 – What is the latest information on the Cadillac Tax, or has further discussion on the Tax been suspended pending the change in administration?

The Cadillac tax is currently scheduled to take effect in 2020 and is a 40% excise tax on employer plans exceeding \$10,200 for individuals and \$27,500 for families. This could potentially be eliminated should the ACA be repealed in part or in its entirety.