

**FY 2020 Budget Questions**  
**January 16, 2019**

**Background:**

The Weston Board of Education (BOE) submitted questions to the administration on January 10, 2019 regarding the Recommended FY 20 Operating & Capital Budgets. Per the pre-approved Budget Calendar by the BOE, responses to the questions are due back to the full BOE on January 16, 2019.

The questions followed the four-hour Budget Workshop with the administration on January 9, 2019. The submitted questions are ones requiring written responses and additional analysis--beyond what could be provided on January 9 in a workshop setting.

The administration organized the submitted questions into a set of categories. The questions are listed as submitted, with only slight editing for the purposes of clarity.

**Enrollment:**

1. Should we consider using actual enrollment data (January 2019) for Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade given the projections show 123 students in 1<sup>st</sup> grade yet actual Kindergarten headcount is 107?

**Answer:**

The District utilizes the services of professional demographers (Milone & MacBroom) to project enrollment. While Kindergarten enrollment is always difficult to predict, these projections are our best tool for planning for staffing at each grade level. Using current year Kindergarten enrollment to staff for 1st grade the following year would be very unreliable, and it would not take into account real estate factors that may affect move-ins and historical trends that show increases between Kindergarten and 1st grade (see charts below).

2. Please provide the 5 year trend for actual vs. projected enrollment for grades Kindergarten through 1<sup>st</sup>. For each cohort, please show end of year Kindergarten enrollment vs. opening enrollment for 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

**Answer:**

School Year 13-14			
Grade	10/1 Enrollment	Projected Enrollment	Year End Enrollment
K	136	116	139

1st	135	117	136
2nd	175	166	176
3rd	174	166	176
4th	183	184	181
5th	194	190	195

School Year 14-15			
Grade	10/1 Enrollment	Projected Enrollment	Year End Enrollment
K	140	138	142
1st	150	142	153
2nd	146	146	149
3rd	185	182	184
4th	177	179	178
5th	186	188	185

School Year 15-16			
Grade	10/1 Enrollment	Projected Enrollment	Year End Enrollment
K	124	113	130
1st	141	151	142
2nd	156	162	155
3rd	161	153	161
4th	186	188	188
5th	184	183	183

School Year 16-17			
Grade	10/1 Enrollment	Projected Enrollment	Year End Enrollment
K	128	116	131
1st	143	136	142
2nd	145	152	144
3rd	163	168	164
4th	173	162	173
5th	185	192	186

School Year 17-18			
Grade	10/1 Enrollment	Projected Enrollment	Year End Enrollment
K	113	142	115
1st	142	139	145
2nd	147	150	149
3rd	153	155	154
4th	174	168	176
5th	180	176	182

3. To the extent possible, please provide enrollment trend data for other districts in DRG A.

Answer:

The information from Milone and MacBroom in the table below lists the enrollment changes for all DRG-A districts since the 2001/2002 school year. Overall, Weston’s enrollment has decreased 1% during that period - placing it 5th out of the 7 DRG-A districts. Darien, Westport, and New Canaan have experienced an increase in enrollment during this period, and Weston, Ridgefield and Easton/Redding have declined. Wilton’s enrollment has been flat over this period.

Milone and MacBroom determined that since the 2006-2009 period, Ridgefield, Redding/Easton, and Weston have experienced decreases between 10%-20%. Wilton and

Westport experienced decreases of less than 10%, and New Canaan and Darien experienced increases of roughly 5%.



# DRG-A Enrollment PreK-12

School Districts	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Darien School District	3,944	4,116	4,263	4,367	4,475	4,614	4,662	4,732	4,791	4,855	4,833	4,880	4,929	4,932	4,884	4,828	4,818
New Canaan School District	3,886	3,929	3,986	4,081	4,140	4,139	4,130	4,104	4,091	4,143	4,173	4,223	4,192	4,213	4,227	4,260	4,237
Ridgefield School District	5,088	5,385	5,483	5,560	5,612	5,575	5,560	5,551	5,456	5,437	5,379	5,296	5,293	5,178	5,052	4,984	4,929
<b>Weston School District</b>	<b>2,367</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>2,451</b>	<b>2,533</b>	<b>2,569</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>2,552</b>	<b>2,585</b>	<b>2,552</b>	<b>2,521</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>2,418</b>	<b>2,408</b>	<b>2,397</b>	<b>2,408</b>	<b>2,362</b>	<b>2,328</b>
Westport School District	5,007	5,126	5,224	5,280	5,448	5,570	5,700	5,782	5,738	5,800	5,757	5,818	5,786	5,772	5,714	5,623	5,598
Wilton School District	4,030	4,091	4,227	4,312	4,353	4,371	4,384	4,396	4,358	4,340	4,336	4,312	4,299	4,272	4,173	4,078	4,050
Redding/Easton/RSD9	3,099	3,249	3,339	3,419	3,417	3,398	3,468	3,429	3,356	3,334	3,291	3,184	3,104	3,002	2,904	2,789	2,729
Total DRG-A	27,421	28,292	28,973	29,552	30,014	30,277	30,456	30,579	30,342	30,430	30,248	30,131	30,011	29,766	29,362	28,924	28,689

School Districts	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Darien School District	N/A	4.4%	3.6%	2.4%	2.5%	3.1%	1.0%	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%	-0.5%	1.0%	1.0%	0.1%	-1.0%	-1.1%	-0.2%
New Canaan School District	N/A	1.1%	1.5%	2.4%	1.4%	0.0%	-0.2%	-0.6%	-0.3%	1.3%	0.7%	1.2%	-0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%	-0.5%
Ridgefield School District	N/A	5.8%	1.8%	1.4%	0.9%	-0.7%	-0.3%	-0.2%	-1.7%	-0.3%	-1.1%	-1.5%	-0.1%	-2.2%	-2.4%	-1.3%	-1.1%
Weston School District	N/A	1.2%	2.3%	3.3%	1.4%	1.6%	-2.2%	1.3%	-1.3%	-1.2%	-1.7%	-2.5%	-0.4%	-0.5%	0.5%	-1.9%	-1.4%
Westport School District	N/A	2.4%	1.9%	1.1%	3.2%	2.2%	2.3%	1.4%	-0.8%	1.1%	-0.7%	1.1%	-0.6%	-0.2%	-1.0%	-1.6%	-0.4%
Wilton School District	N/A	1.5%	3.3%	2.0%	1.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	-0.9%	-0.4%	-0.1%	-0.6%	-0.3%	-0.6%	-2.3%	-2.3%	-0.7%
Redding/Easton/RSD9	N/A	4.8%	2.8%	2.4%	-0.1%	-0.6%	2.1%	-1.1%	-2.1%	-0.7%	-1.3%	-3.3%	-2.5%	-3.3%	-3.3%	-4.0%	-2.2%
Total DRG-A	N/A	3.2%	2.4%	2.0%	1.6%	0.9%	0.6%	0.4%	-0.8%	0.3%	-0.6%	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.8%	-1.4%	-1.5%	-0.8%

\* Source: CEDar for years 2001-02 to 2006-07. EdSight for years 2007-08 to 2017-18

\* Source for Weston Schools data: State Department of Education – Public School Information System, Summary Report for 2001-02 to 2016-17; Weston Public Schools 2017-18

- The upper data shows *school enrollment* PreK – 12 for all DRG-A Districts
- Easton and Redding have been combined because of their Regional High School, District 9
- The lower data shows *annual percent change* in enrollment PreK – 12 for all DRG Districts

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This table is an excerpt from a multi-page statement from Milone & MacBroom. Please see the attachment for the full statement.

We also queried area districts regarding their projections for next year. Here is a statement on the results.

**Enrollment Summary for Sample of Area School Districts  
Basic Narrative Statements on Projections  
January 16, 2019  
Weston Public Schools**

*Prompt Question: Please provide a simple statement on your enrollment projections for the next several years. (Prompt question was sent to selected superintendents as supplement to quantitative analysis provided to the Weston Public Schools by Milone & MacBroom.)*

<b>School District</b>	<b>Narrative Statement on Projection</b>
<i>Fairfield</i>	<i>Fairfield is in a slight decline: 2% decline over the next five years. Elementary enrollment is in a trough and will go back up over the next five years.</i>
<i>Greenwich</i>	<i>Greenwich is holding steady at 9,000 students, with slight drop at elementary level and up at the secondary level.</i>
<i>Norwalk</i>	<i>Norwalk is growing. Up 5% in last three years. Our 20 school are at 107% capacity, with two new K-8 schools under construction to address shortage of 900 seats. Another 3% gain is projected for next three years. Major drivers: birth rate, immigration and construction of apartments with “work force” units. Latino enrollment growth is significant, and now is at 50%. Other populations have declined or remain flat: Caucasian 27%, African American 18%, and Asian and Other combined at 7%.</i>
<i>Weston</i>	<i>Weston is projected to decline by 2% over five years.</i>
<i>Westport</i>	<i>Westport is project to decline by 4.6% over ten years.</i>
<i>Wilton</i>	<i>Wilton is projected to decline 3% over five years and 5% over ten years.</i>

**Digital Learning & Technology:**

4. Please provide a breakdown of the Chromebook cost of \$404 per unit.

Answer:

<i>Lenovo Chromebook</i>	<i>\$329</i>
<i>Chromebook OS Management Service</i>	<i>\$ 25</i>
<i>Warranty</i>	<i>\$ 40</i>
<i><u>Assumed 2% price increase by purchase</u></i>	<i><u>\$ 8</u></i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>\$404</i>

5. Please provide summary of overall usage of “on demand devices” across the district.

Answer:

The Chromebooks are used to support curriculum and instruction in many ways. Brief focus groups were completed with 6th and 8th graders at the middle school last week and the following highlights demonstrate well the views of Weston’s students.

- \* Students use chromebooks daily both in school and at home for a variety of academic tasks.
- \* Extensive use of chromebooks in English classes for editing, revising and grammar instruction (No Red Ink).
- \* Chromebooks allow students to access online version of textbooks both at school and at home.
- \* Specific programs and Apps on the chromebooks allows students and teachers to personalize content-specific learning in a variety of ways. For example, SmartMusic allows instrumental music students to get immediate feedback on their playing; and, world language students can replay video and audio segments as needed.
- \* Chromebooks are used extensively in science classrooms during Amplify units. They are used as a compliment to the traditional science instruction, not as a replacement.
- \* Chromebooks increase efficiency for students, teachers and administration. For example, administration of NWEA Map and SBA testing no longer requires moving chromebook carts around the building to accommodate testing windows.
- \* Students use chromebooks to access databases and other online resources for research.
- \* Google classroom and Google calendar help teachers and students organize and manage their work.

The Chromebooks are used at the middle school both during the school day and at home to complete various tasks that were not available previously to all students in a uniform way. A few examples provided by our teachers include the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Listening dictation for world language classes</li><li>● National Spanish exam and practice exam</li><li>● Quia – Spanish and French Grammar</li><li>● Personalized learning</li><li>● Game development</li><li>● Code.org</li><li>● Scratch programming</li><li>● Python programming</li><li>● Primary Resources</li><li>● Podcasts</li><li>● Renzulli Learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Presentations</li><li>● Video editing</li><li>● Image searching for painting in Art and perspective drawing</li><li>● Product creation</li><li>● Research using online databases</li><li>● Bibliographic citations using NoodleTools</li><li>● Coding/programming</li><li>● Reading and writing with G-suite</li><li>● Annotating notes</li><li>● Newsela</li><li>● No Red Ink – Grammar App</li><li>● Keyboarding</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Video exemplars for Mock Trial</li> <li>● Peer and teacher feedback</li> <li>● Collaborative work</li> <li>● Research</li> <li>● Letter writing</li> <li>● Plotting charts and graphs</li> <li>● Science seekers – Simulation App</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writing emails and letters as part of the Guardians of the Water Galaxy Science unit</li> <li>● Booktalks with G-suite’s presentation app</li> </ul>
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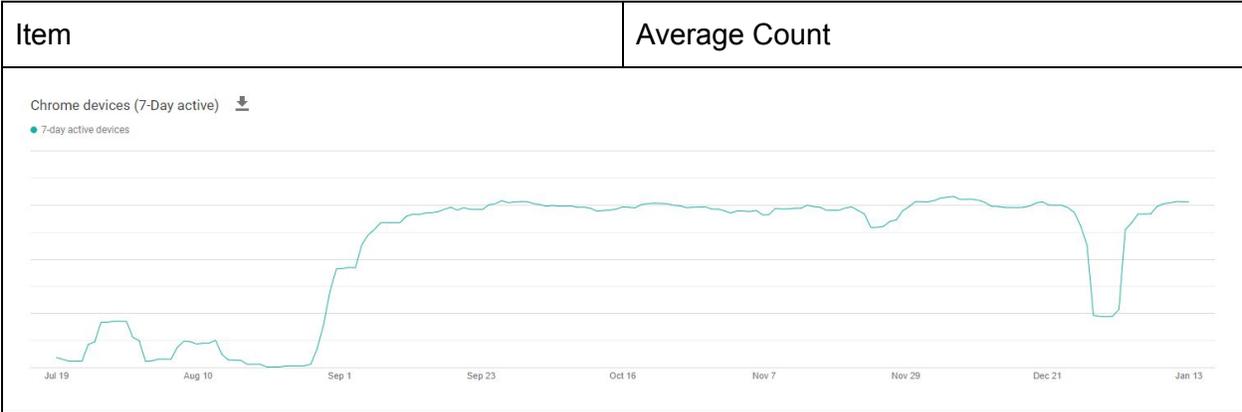
The Chromebooks are used daily in the Intermediate School. These devices do not circulate, but are used as part of the classroom instruction. Teachers representing all grade levels at WIS summarized usage as follows:

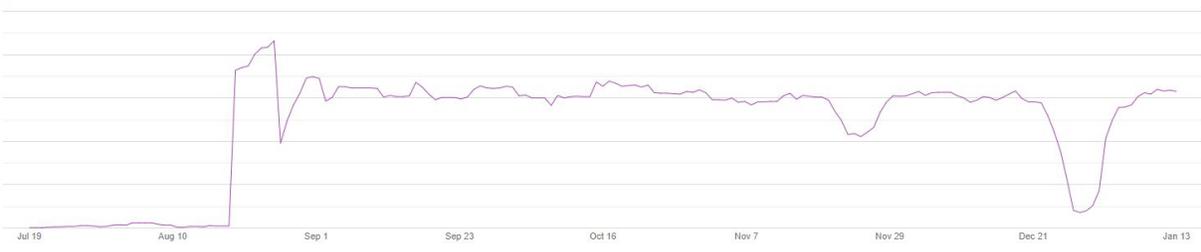
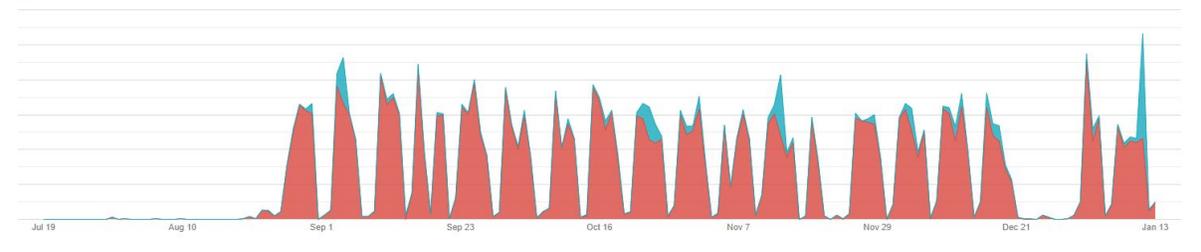
*Students use their Chromebooks throughout the day to reinforce, enhance and personalize their learning. By fifth grade, Chromebooks are completely integrated into a student’s education--students use them daily to consume and produce knowledge. For example, students access content (Google Classroom, Amplify, Scholastic Flix), read (ebooks), write (Google docs), practice math skills (Dreambox, Xtra Math, Khan Academy, Google Sheets), conduct science simulations (Amplify), develop keyboarding skills (Typing Club), share thinking (Flipgrid), create (ChatterPix, iMovie, Tinkercad), and collaborate.*

WIS teachers also shared the value of having an interactive classroom and its support of instruction:

*Third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers reported using smart boards everyday to present “everything”. They noted that smart boards allow teachers to access engaging, multimedia content on educational websites like Brainpop, Scholastic Flix, Amplify, and others. Teachers also collaborate to create content presentations in Google Slides that are housed in Google Classrooms and become accessible resources for students.*

Final evidence of chromebook usage is provided via statistics from Google Admin Console:



Active Devices in a normal 7 day period	1420
Active Devices over the winter break	470
<p>Active classes </p> <p>● 14-day active classes</p> 	
Active Google Classrooms in a normal 14 day period	306
<p>Posts created </p> <p>● By teachers ● By students</p> 	
Average posts to Google Classrooms in a normal month	97

6. After years of bringing services of many kinds in-house to save money, we are now looking to use contract services instead of full time employees to support the network infrastructure. Will it show savings?

Answer:

Contracting-out network support is in line with IT’s long-term management plan. We have established within-district technicians to provide school level support, but not for network maintenance. We have one position which currently supports both the Town and BOE in this area, far fewer than neighboring communities. Contracting-out network support would allow the BOE and Town to use the same vendor for network maintenance and management. The net cost to the district in FY 20 is \$7,151. It is part of a bundle to restructure staff, eliminate tier 3 support, and service agreements. It is also possible to yield future year budgetary savings as staffing arrangements are re-evaluated after the launch of this service.

7. What year are we in with retirement of our big technology lease payments?

Answer:

We have two lease payments expiring off the budget in FY 20. That is shown on pg. 185 under equipment rental. This saves the district \$177,870. We will have another lease payment fall off the budget in FY 21 for \$104,480, which will provide a budget reduction in FY 21.

8. Please provide a schedule outlining the refresh cycle for chromebooks and iPads.

Answer:

	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25
Total Chromebooks	168	288	288	592	207	192

Apple does not provide a recommended replacement cycle or have an iPad obsolescence cycle.

9. We allowed the Class of 2022 to take their chromebooks into WHS. Are those chromebooks available to be re-allocated? Is the full refresh allocation needed this year?

Answer:

There are currently no Chromebooks available to be reallocated for this purpose. The Chromebooks that were offered to the Class of 2022, but not taken, were used to replace computers that were broken, unusable, new instructional initiatives or used for parts to repair new Chromebooks. This usage prevented an unbudgeted emergency purchase of Chromebooks for the WIS as well as provided the necessary Chromebooks to offer replacements to students while their device is being repaired. We have approximately 40 Chromebooks out for repair at any given time.

Usage of Chromebooks	Quantity
Replacing four WIS 4th grade carts	96
HES Chromebook lab	24
Spares for WMS LLC	64

WHS SPED	12
WHS CASE	12
Replacing two WIS 5th grade carts	48

**Revenue:**

10. Please provide an athletic participation fee comparison.

Answer:

District	Participation Fee	Family Cap
Bethel	\$100	\$300
Brookfield	\$0	\$0
Joel Barlow	\$65	\$260
Monroe	\$250	\$1,000
New Fairfield	\$100	X
New Milford	\$75	\$300
Newtown*	\$80 or \$160	\$450
New Canaan	\$0	X
Darien**	**	X
Ridgefield	\$225	X
Westport	\$0	X
Wilton	\$125	X

\*Two Tier Fee based on officials and cost of sport.

\*\*\$1000 for Ice Hockey, \$330 for Squash, \$365 for Skiing, \$375 for Sailing, \$0 for all other sports

11. What would an increase in the parking fee to \$200 mean to the budget?

Answer:

Currently the district is reimbursed \$30,000 for Parking Fees from the High School. This amount is shown on page 130 of the Budget. If the district increased this fee to \$200 per spot, we would collect \$40,000 instead of \$30,000, resulting in an additional \$10,000 of revenue to the budget. However, when this fee was established a certain level of financial hardship/fee waiver was included in the \$30,000. Based on actual collections, we could raise the amount to \$33,750, which represents \$150 per spot at 225 spots, while still leaving room for hardship waivers. If raised to \$200 per spot, this would be \$45,000. This would raise \$15,000 in revenue to the budget.

12. Should we consider charging a participation fee for Theater and/or raising ticket prices?

Answer:

To our knowledge, the only District in Fairfield County charging a Theater Participation Fee is Trumbull at \$100 per student. If we were to charge \$100 per student for HS Theater per show, we would generate approximately \$7,650. This figure takes into account hardship waivers similar to those provided for Athletics.

**Theater Program:**

13. Why is there a need for a Technical Director at the Middle School and High School. Is this causing the Theater budget to increase?

Answer:

It is important to provide background on the transition over the past year in the staffing and management of the Theater Program.

In the FY 19 budget, release time (0.2 FTE) for coordinating the grades 3-8 theater programs was eliminated. Theater coordination had to be converted from release time to a stipend position, otherwise the teacher would be in jeopardy of losing retirement benefits. Release time for managing after school programs does not qualify for credit under the Teacher Retirement Board (TRB) guidelines. The only option was to convert the position to a stipend position.

Consequently, the FY 19 budget included a \$6,000 placeholder for a theater coordinator stipend pending negotiations with the WTA. The WTA agreed to this level of compensation for the theater coordinator position. The administration posted the position last spring both internally and externally. We had one qualified (internal) candidate express interest in the position, but the individual ultimately decided not to accept the position. No other internal candidate applied for the position.

The administration and WTA agreed to post the stipend position at a higher level (\$8,000) to attract a qualified candidate. We were successful in securing an internal candidate familiar with

our theater arts program at this higher compensation rate. Once again, that candidate was the only qualified applicant.

We need technical directors for these productions because, prior to the new coordinator position, it was part of the person's responsibilities and that person had the technical knowledge necessary. It is a safety issue. The current coordinator's responsibilities do not include these responsibilities.

**Special Education:**

14. What factors resulted in the Special Education Legal Representation (Fees) budget of \$150,000?

Answer:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides parents certain rights, including the right to commence a due process proceeding when they are in disagreement with decisions regarding the identification of their child, their child's program, or their child's placement. In those instances, the school district must be able to respond comprehensively based on a thorough analysis of the issues involved. In addition, recent legislation in the area of Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs) requires that when parents disagree with an evaluation obtained by the district and requests an IEE from the district, the district has only two choices: grant the IEE request at district expense or commence a due process proceeding to defend the district's evaluation. The need to provide the district proper legal representation in these situations is the basis for the increased funding requested in this budget line.

15. Do we have the opportunity with our facilities investigations and investment in our services for our neediest students to establish a school-within-a-school, or is that not practical nor valuable to discuss? Would we gain anything, or find any opportunity to find economy of scale, or investment in excellence for our students?

Answer:

The FY20 budget does capitalize on the school-within-a-school type of model with the Effective School Solutions program at our high school, which provides a higher level of clinical support for students and their families as well as a smaller setting for the student for a portion of the student's day. Now in its third year in Weston, ESS has been successfully addressing the needs of students with complex emotional needs.

Moving forward, as the facilities study narrows its focus, there is increased opportunity to discuss how various programs for special education students may be provided within district, and not through out-placements. Some of our sister districts are having the same explorations, and a few have launched programs. Our most complex learners in

the district may benefit from slightly larger cohorts, facilities that are flexible and suitable for instruction in activities of daily living, and which allow for a convergence of specialized support services.

16. Is it possible that, although well intended, this is not the year for the additional clinical supervision of the BCBAs? Could we get by without this supervision?

Answer:

We currently do not provide clinical supervision for our Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs). The proposed investment in clinical supervision for our BCBAs is calculated and pinpointed to address the needs of our most complex students, to enhance the functioning of the multi-disciplinary team on which a BCBA participates, to reach and support all students (not just those receiving BCBA support as part of an IEP) in need of behavior support, and to support our paraprofessionals so that they can effectively work with students.

**Facilities:**

17. If the lightning protection is approved, will all four schools have lightning protection?

Answer:

If approved, all 4 schools would have fully functional lightning protection. The request for \$18,000 for lightning protection is at the High School. The WIS had its lightning protection repaired this summer during the knee wall construction.

18. Please provide a listing of other long-term facility project needs outside of what is shown on the 3 year capital budget submission.

Answer:

Yes, please see Document B in the attachment to this Q&A.

19. Please remind the BOE of the out-year savings from the Virtual Net Metering (VNM). The \$78,000 listed on p. 197 of the Budget is over what time frame?

Answer:

The \$78,000 is anticipated savings from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. We have saved to date (through mid December 2018) \$51,522, with the schedule shown on pg 273.

20. In the scope of the capital projects (p. 25 of the Budget), is this really the year to be spending money on lights for School Road? It seems it might be a project for a more flush year.

Answer:

This was discussed in Facilities Committee. The Town approached us about doing a joint BOE/Town capital request to convert the street lights to LED's. We agreed to put it forward as a joint project, providing the Town takes the lead during discussions and implementation. There would be an estimated payback period of 8 years when factoring in utility cost savings.

21. What work would be covered by the \$65,000 in the Capital Budget for roof leaks?

Answer:

This amount represents the \$43,000 request for roof repairs at the WIS and WHS that was turned down by the BOF in fall 2018. The additional funds represent a general estimate from Silkton Roofing for repairs to the concrete overhang at the entrance of the High School. A more specific investigation and estimate will be required by a mason; these inspections cannot take place until the Spring.

**District Administration:**

22. How do we eliminate mileage for our administrators? This is the contract issue where by the dollar figure was folded into the salary, correct?

Answer:

Mileage was rolled into the contracts for unaffiliated administrators. The mileage amount is part of their salary, which is shown under certified/non certified salary account as opposed to the mileage reimbursement account. You will see salaries higher in the certified/non certified salary accounts where there are unaffiliated administrators (listed within cost centers for District Administration, Curriculum and Instruction, Digital Learning & Technology, and Facilities), but a corresponding offset with mileage reimbursement zeroed out.

**Curriculum & Instruction:**

23. Please explain the rationale for K-5 Team Leaders?

Answer:

The K-5 team leaders at HES and WIS serve as each school's leadership team. They assist the principals in implementing the school initiatives with their grade level colleagues. Among their responsibilities, team leaders facilitate the grade level meetings, set agenda for these meetings. They are the liaison between building administrators and the teams. Team leaders organize any grade level activities (e.g. field trips).

24. In a recent Curriculum Committee meeting we discussed modifying our AP Government offering to be a full year course and cited the majority of the other districts in the DRG who had already done so. The Executive Summary references programs that could potentially be impacted by budget cuts (see p. 24). Juxtaposing these two ideas, are there any programs that we offer in Weston that are atypical when compared to other schools in our DRG?

Answer:

There are several programs and services that contribute to Weston’s long-standing reputation for academic excellence. These programs are not required or state-mandated; however, they are highly valued and could be diminished by budget cuts. The following list is in no particular order and provides several examples of the kinds of programs and services that set Weston apart from other districts and attract families to the school system and community. Not all DRG A schools provide resources for these programs.

Kindergarten paraprofessional support	Each of our kindergarten classrooms have paraprofessional support for the literacy and math blocks. Some districts in the DRG provide this additional support.
Grades 3-8 Project Challenge Program	While districts must identify gifted students, we are not required to offer a program to meet their specialized learning needs.
WIS math enrichment program	All students have access to math enrichment from a dedicated teacher who visits their classroom on a regular basis.
Grades K-5 Computer Instruction	Computer instruction is a weekly class at HES. WIS students have a trimester digital learning class.
K-5 Spanish	The district has recently revamped its elementary Spanish program. There is at least one DRG A school that does not offer world language at the elementary level and others that do not offer it in all grades.
K-5 School Counselors	There is only one other DRG A district that provides staffing for elementary counselors like we do. Counseling support at the elementary level supports the social-emotional needs of our students.
Grade 6 Double Block of Language Arts	Sixth graders at WMS take a double block of language arts (period of reading and writing). Most districts in the DRG are unable to schedule two period of Language Arts.
WHS Writing Center	The WHS Writing Center is an essential resource in supporting students in improving their writing, developing college essays, and preparing their 10th grade writing portfolios (graduation requirement). Only one other district in the DRG has a writing portfolio process as a graduation requirement supported by a writing center.
Science Research Program	Several of the top districts in CT have science research programs. Only one other district in Fairfield County has a dedicated science research laboratory so students can conduct their research on site.
Computer Science	The WHS computer science continuum of courses provides interested students with several choices.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW)	The WHS PLTW program is an elective pre-engineering offering.
WIS theater program	Weston highly values its theater art program, which includes a production at WIS. Funding for the program is through the operating budget whereas other districts in the DRG pass this cost along to families.
4th Grade Orchestra	Orchestra was added to our WIS Program of Studies five years ago to more closely align with the DRG. Previously, Weston began its instrumental programs in 5th grade.
WMS Music Lessons	WMS is proud of its award winning band and orchestra ensembles. At least one DRG A district does not provide small group instrumental lessons in conjunction with its ensembles.

25. What has been the trend rate for the cost of books over the past several years? Why is there a large increase at the MS for FY 20? What can we anticipate for future annual increases in book costs?

Answer:

The increase in the WMS book budget is the result of a duplication in a request for seventh grade social studies electronic subscription, which is also found in the curriculum cost center. The \$11,429 request for these resources will be removed from the middle school budget. We are confident that this is the only duplicate request in the entire budget. We apologize for this error.

Answer:

The book account (object 6410) fluctuates based on need and curriculum. Over the past 5 years (FY 15-FY 19), the total book account for the district has decreased by 19%. The 5 year annual average is \$163,407. Here are the totals for the last 5 years:

- FY 19 \$163,126\*(Budget)
- FY 18 \$143,439
- FY 17 \$134,513
- FY 16 \$174,574
- FY 15 \$201,382

Our book request for FY 20 is a \$20,541 increase over the 5 year average. When removing the duplicate \$11,429 our total is \$172,519 which is slightly above the 5 year average. This has to do with online textbook renewals.

**Other:**

26. Please provide a chart breaking down the consulting fees across the district.

**Answer:**

	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Special Education	\$70,000	\$95,000	\$25,000	Professional Development for Staff
Curriculum	\$50,000	\$44,200	\$(5,800)	NGSS Science Training, Emotional Intelligence Training, Literacy Training
Technology	\$25,000	\$123,000	\$98,000	\$45,000 of this represents Town contracted IT Support Services. There is corresponding technology revenue of \$45,000 to offset this expense. This revenue is shown on pg 183. There is also \$78,000 for BOE to engage in similar contracted network support. This is partially offset with the reduction in Tier 3 support services. If this was eliminated, we would need to restore Tier 3 Technical Support and increase funding.
	\$145,000	\$262,200	\$117,200	\$45,000 is offset by revenue in technology budget provided by Town as referenced above.

27. What is the explanation for why salary accounts are increasing while enrollment is decreasing?

Answer:

The district has contractual agreements with its bargaining units (i.e., WTA, WAA and AFSCME), as well as salary obligations for unaffiliated support staff. These groups represent increases of \$854,422, which is an average increase of \$2,360 per employee.

Enrollment is projected to decline by 19 students, spread across the entire district of projected 2,290 students. A decline of 19 students is too small to reduce staff for enrollment reasons. It certainly would not equate to a drop in staffing costs equivalent to the contractual driven salary increase of \$854,422.. This is especially true while we are keeping class size guidelines in tact and programs and services the same. Even with a slight decline in overall enrollment, there is projected growth in 4th grade, which in keeping with Class Size Guidelines results in the proposed addition of one 4th grade teacher (new section).

Overall, enrollment and scheduling changes have resulted in a salary increase of \$109,691. In order to alleviate this increase, we made reductions in certified and non certified staff, including the Library Learning Commons Technology Specialist and Math/Science Paraeducator at the Middle School. These two reductions resulted in salary savings of \$138,056 more than offsetting the enrollment/scheduling changes.

28. Please provide a listing of budget line items summarized from largest increase to largest decrease.

Answer:

Yes, please see Document A in the attachment to this Q&A.

29. Please explain the \$6,750 line item for substitute coverage for the copy center (listed on p. 221).

Answer:

Given the Copy Center is staffed with one person, when that person is absent we need to bring in substitute coverage. Additionally, during certain periods--such as the start of the year, mid-terms, school plays (brochures), and end of year--an increased volume of work requires additional help at the Copy Center to ensure items are produced in a timely manner.

30. Please provide a breakdown/enumeration of the contractual obligations comprising the \$2,221,099 increase (4.32% of budget growth, per pg 15). Please provide date, with whom and amount, so that we can see specific increases within the total.

Answer:

Category	\$ Increase	% Increase	Cumulative Budget Growth
Contractual Wage Increases	\$854,422	1.66%	
Health Insurance	\$635,034	1.23%	2.90%
Payroll Taxes/Pensions	\$94,583	0.18%	3.08%
Special Education Out of District Tuition/Settlements	\$440,422	0.86%	3.94%
Cleaning Contract	\$202,021	0.39%	4.33%
Legal Fees	\$120,000	0.23%	4.56%
Other Contractual Increases*	\$155,463	0.30%	4.86%
Liability Reductions**	\$(236,475)	-0.46%	4.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,265,470</b>	<b>4.40%</b>	
New Personnel Changes	\$(27,349)	-0.05%	4.35%
RFP Savings	\$(101,539)	-0.20%	4.15%
Non Contractual, Non Personnel Changes	\$84,517	0.17	4.32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,221,099</b>	<b>4.32%</b>	<b>4.32%</b>

\*Other Contractual Increases include: First Student Transportation \$35,020, Athletic Transportation \$2,377, General Liability Insurance \$3,932, Workers Compensation \$9,533, Property Insurance \$(9), ESS \$6,320, Contractual Software Increases \$46,961, Facility & Security Service Contracts \$37,838, Cafeteria 125 Plan \$3,000, Sports Officials \$3,400, Police/Fire \$100, Contracted OT/PT Rates \$5,000, Copy Center Lease \$1,700, Faculty Hoods and Robes for Graduation \$227, postage machine \$64.

\*\*Liability Reductions include: Technology Leases \$(177,870), Maintenance Van Lease \$(10,607), WTA ERIP \$(47,998).