

# INTRODUCTION

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## Welcome to Weston

Weston is a beautiful, colonial town of approximately 10,150 people located in Fairfield County, Connecticut. The Weston Public Schools are situated on a 117-acre wooded campus adjacent to the Town Municipal offices and include the Hurlbutt Elementary School, Weston Intermediate School, Weston Middle School and Weston High School. As caretakers of the Weston Public Schools, we are proud that our school system is widely recognized for its excellent educational and co-curricular programs and prudent financial management.

Despite shifts in enrollment by grade level, the configuration of the Weston Public Schools facilitates reasonable student-to-teacher ratios and individualized instruction for the current population of 2,290 students. Weston High School offers a comprehensive selection of courses in English, World Languages, Math, Science, Social Studies, Tech Education, and Fine and Performing Arts. The school also offers specialized programs which enable students to gain work experience and participate in independent studies. In addition to a comprehensive athletic program, which currently includes 62 sports teams, Weston High School provides and encourages students to participate and excel in theater, music and other artistic endeavors. Weston Middle School, Weston Intermediate School and Hurlbutt Elementary School also take pride in their outstanding co-curricular programs, which complement their challenging and nurturing academic programs.

All four schools contribute to a remarkable outcome statistic. Approximately 97 percent of WHS graduates matriculate to four-year colleges. In the Class of 2018, 33% of the students were accepted by the “most competitive” colleges and 61% received acceptances by colleges considered “highly competitive” according to Barron’s Rankings. Equally important, we know that our graduates are completing college at a rate and pace well in excess of national averages. For the Class of 2013, the most recent graduating class with full data, 11% graduated in fewer than four years and 88% graduated within five years. In sum, 99% of the Class of 2013 received their college diplomas within five years, compared to national averages closer to 50%.

In 2018, *US News and World Report* continued to rank Weston High School among the best public secondary schools in the nation. Weston High School ranks in the Gold Metal Award category, which includes the top 500 public high schools in the country.

In November 2018, Weston High School again received major recognition for academic excellence from the College Board. For the second year in a row, the district placed on the College Board’s Annual AP District Honor Roll. Only 447 school districts in the U.S. and Canada earn this recognition. Districts that reach this goal successfully identify motivated, academically prepared students who are ready for AP. Last year, approximately 74% of juniors and seniors took at least one of our AP offerings. The increase in the number of student participants, as well as the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher determine this honor. This past spring, we had 7 national advanced placement (AP) scholars, 67 AP scholars with distinction, 27 AP scholars with honors, and 32 AP scholars.

Weston is an uncommon school district in terms of student success, teaching excellence, robust academic and co-curricular offerings, and special attention to the physical, social and emotional well-being of our students. From their earliest days through graduation, Weston students are challenged and cared for by our faculty and administrators. Current and prospective families can be assured that Weston believes “connections” are essential so student success—we insist that all students are well known by many adults.

Excellence with compassion is at the heart of our professional beliefs and priorities. Intellectual rigor—using ones’ mind well to solve complex problems—is of the utmost importance. At the same time, compassion is paramount; our excellent students will be the keys to a civil, just, caring nation and world. The Board of Education, administration and staff are aligned in the shared goals of guiding Weston to even greater heights in its stated mission of “empowering each student to achieve success and contribute to our global society...and to serve as part of a caring and supportive community.”

### **Who Makes Budget Decisions – Why and When?**

In the United States, public education is a State responsibility. Thus, the State of Connecticut enacted laws that define the scope of public educational services available to children. These laws delegate responsibility for implementing most public educational services to local government.

Chapter 171 of the Connecticut General Statutes states that “each town shall through its Board of Education maintain control of all public schools within its limits and for this purpose shall be a school district and shall have all the powers and duties of the school district, except as far as such powers and duties are inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter.”

Accordingly, Weston’s Charter provides that there shall be an elected Board of Education consisting of seven members, not more than four of whom shall be members of the same political party, each of whose term shall be four years.

Election of all Town Officers, including members of the Board of Education, takes place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in the odd numbered years, and biennially thereafter. All elective terms of office commence on the Tuesday following the date of election in each case.

Once elected, the Board of Education has the responsibility for maintaining good public elementary and secondary schools and providing such educational activities as in its judgment best serve the interests of the Town in accordance with its by-laws and policies. More specifically, the Board of Education is responsible for studying the need for school facilities; for maintaining and operating school facilities, land and equipment; for hiring and dismissing administrators, teachers and support staff; and for procuring requisite operational services and supplies. In order to successfully accomplish these responsibilities, the Board of Education must develop a budget request that

enables it to operate the public schools and report capital needs to the Town's Boards of Selectmen and Finance. The current members of the Board of Education are as follows:

Gina Albert, Chairperson  
20 Church Lane

E-mail: [ginaalbert@westonps.org](mailto:ginaalbert@westonps.org)

Ellen H. Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson  
180 Davis Hill Road

E-mail: [ellenuzenoff@westonps.org](mailto:ellenuzenoff@westonps.org)

Sara Spaulding, Secretary/Treasurer  
116 Old Hyde Road

E-mail: [saraspaulding@westonps.org](mailto:saraspaulding@westonps.org)

Jacqueline Blechinger  
3 Whippoorwill Lane

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Dan McNeill  
9 Steep Hill Road

E-mail: [danielmcneill@westonps.org](mailto:danielmcneill@westonps.org)

Ruby Hedge  
24 Martin Road

E-mail: [rubyhedge@westonps.org](mailto:rubyhedge@westonps.org)

Anthony Pesco  
30 Tall Pines Drive

E-mail: [anthonypesco@westonps.org](mailto:anthonypesco@westonps.org)

State statute requires Boards of Education to hire a Superintendent of Schools to administer the Board's policies and regulations and to ensure that the school district complies with all federal and state laws as they relate to public education. The Superintendent's office is located on the school campus at 24 School Road, Weston, Connecticut 06883. The main telephone number for this office is 203-221-6580, and the district's website can be found at [www.westonps.org](http://www.westonps.org). The Superintendent is responsible for developing the district's operating and capital budget estimates for the Board's consideration. He delegates management responsibility for the business services and budgetary functions of the district to the Director of Finance and Operations. The Director's office is also located at 24 School Road, Weston, Connecticut 06883, and the telephone number for his office is 203-221-6559.

Weston Public Schools employs a participatory budget building process to determine the future needs of the school district and develop the annual budget. While presented annually, the budget is

based on analysis of multiyear educational priorities and plans, personnel and non-personnel contracts and obligations, enrollment and demographic data and information, and various legal and policy considerations. School principals and their assistants from the four buildings join district level administrators to closely examine current practices and determine future needs. During the process, we consider alternative approaches where needed and advisable to improve effectiveness and efficiency. At each step, we are careful to consider how a reallocation of existing funding, instead of simply adding new dollars, will lead to an optimization of Weston and district resources.

The schools and departments compiled their budgets into the following 16 program/cost centers:

Hurlbutt Elementary School  
Weston Intermediate School  
Weston Middle School  
Weston High School  
Theater  
Athletics  
Special Education  
Pupil Personnel Services  
Curriculum and Instructional Improvement  
Digital Learning & Technology  
District Administrative Services  
Facilities Services  
Security  
Transportation  
Copy Center  
District-Wide Services

All program budgets are presented by object code detailing 2016-2017 expended, 2017-2018 expended, 2018-2019 budget and the 2019-2020 requested budget. The district's Director of Finance and Operations disseminates budget guidelines, which include the information discussed above, in the fall to the Leadership Team. The packet includes instructions for inputting data into the district's financial software program. The Director of Finance and Operations also provides administrators with historical financial data by object and cost information for services, supplies and equipment.

The Director of Human Resources works with administrators to develop the staffing plans for each program. These plans conform to Board guidelines and support the district's programs. The Director of Finance and Operations uses the staffing plan prepared by the Director of Human Resources and the Administrators and applies the rates reflected in the various employment contracts to calculate the budget for salary accounts.

District level administrators also provide technical support in other areas of the budget. For example, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction provides guidance in the areas of curriculum and instruction. The Assistant Superintendent of PPS projects student needs in these areas of the budget. The Director of Facilities & Security confers with building principals to

establish specific requests for buildings and grounds. Finally, the Director of Digital Learning and Technology compiles technology needs with administrators and teachers.

Administrators have approximately one month to prepare and submit their budget estimates. They submit their requests electronically to the Director of Finance and Operations, who summarizes the data for review by the Cabinet, Director of Facilities & Security and principals. This team meets several times in November and December to collaboratively review budget requests by individual cost centers. The entire Leadership Team also is consulted periodically during budget development. This process helps to clarify requests, and provides useful information about how the requests connect to the district and school mission statements, goals and objectives, assumptions, policies and enrollment projections.

The budget development schedule includes time for administrators to reflect upon the various budget requests in the context of values, organizational capacity and community support. Adjustments are made during this process, which ultimately results in an operational budget request that each member of the Leadership Team can support. With the assistance of central office staff, the Director of Finance and Operations prepares the Administrators' Requested Budget in December. The administration disseminates the FY 20 Operating & Capital Budget to the Board of Education on January 4, 2019 (as detailed in the approved budget calendar). The district will hold a budget workshop with the Board of Education on January 9, 2019 to review the Superintendent's proposed budget. The Superintendent formally presents the FY 20 Operating & Capital Budgets to the Board of Education on January 17, 2019. An additional question and answer session is held on January 22, 2019 if needed.

During its review of the Administrators' Requested Budget, the Board of Education may or may not alter the request. After the Board votes on potential modifications to the Administrators' Requested Budget, the budget officially becomes the Board of Education's Budget Request. The district's budget is approved in accordance with timetables specified in statutes and the Town charter.

***Board of Education Policies***

The Superintendent also relies on Board policies to develop budget requests. Since Board policies are comprehensive, it is not possible to present them in this section. A complete set of policies is on file at the Board's administrative office and on the district's website. The policies are categorized as follows:

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| 0000 - Philosophy – Goals – General Objectives   | 4000 - Personnel                           |
| 1000 - Community Relations                       | 5000 - Students                            |
| 2000 - Administration                            | 6000 - Instruction                         |
| 3000 - Business and Non-Instructional Operations | 7000 - Construction of Physical Facilities |

**How are the District's Finances Structured, Controlled and Reported?**

According to its annual financial statement, the Town of Weston, Connecticut (the "Town") operates under the provisions of its charter and the general statutes of the State of Connecticut. The

Town operates under a Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance form of government and provides a full range of services including public safety, roads, sanitation, health, social services, culture and recreation, *education*, planning, zoning, and general administrative services to its residents.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the reporting entity include (1) the primary government, *which includes the public schools*, (2) organizations for which the primary government is financially accountable and (3) other organizations for which the nature and significance of their relationship with the primary government are such that exclusion would cause the reporting entity's financial statements to be misleading or incomplete. The criteria provided in Government Accounting Standards Board Statement Codification Section 2100 have been considered and there are no agencies or entities that should be, but are not, combined in the financial statements of the Town.

The Town reports the following major governmental funds.

The *General Fund* is the Town's primary operating fund. It accounts for all financial resources of the general government, except those required to be accounted for in another fund. This is the fund that accounts for the Board of Education's operating budget.

The *Capital Improvement Fund* accounts for expenditures relating to the acquisition and construction of capital facilities. This is the fund that accounts for the Board of Education's capital budget requests.

The *Special Revenue Fund* accounts for programs:

- (a) that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises – where the intent of the governing body is that the cost (expenses, including depreciation) of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges. This is the fund that accounts for the Board of Education's School Lunch Program.
- (b) that are funded by entitlement or competitive grants. This is the fund that accounts for the Board of Education's IDEA and Pre-School Grants for special education programs, Title II and III Grants for professional development programs and Title I to support our most at risk students.

The *Internal Services Fund* accounts for revenues and expenditures associated with the district's health insurance benefits for its employees. Financial resources in this fund can be reserved for future use for health insurance benefits only as this fund carries a fund balance. This fund represents a cumulative accounting of assets accrued over years.

### **Overview of the Remaining Sections**

The remainder of this document is organized as follows:

*The Budget Calendar:* The budget calendar details the time line of budget development to budget approval, which was approved by the Board of Education at its October Board Meeting.

*The Budget Assumptions:* The budget assumptions detail the assumptions used by the Administrators in development of the budget request. These assumptions include the strategic goals and priorities of the district, investment opportunities to be explored, cost containment areas, enrollment, employee contractual agreements, consumer price index, and the Board of Education's obligation to meet all Federal and State mandates.

*The Executive Summary:* This section of the budget document begins with an overview of the budget request from the Superintendent of Schools and the Administrators. You will read that the district's approach to the FY 2020 budget emphasizes the importance of sustaining Weston's tradition of excellence and our obligation to provide a program that is financially prudent. The organizing framework for the proposed FY 2020 budget is highlighted, with the budget broken down into contractual obligations, non-personnel, non-contractual changes, personal and stipend changes, and RFP savings. The administration was careful to craft a budget, which adds only 0.12% to the budget for items, which are non-contractual but with savings from various RFP's issued this year, is more than offset resulting in a 0.08% reduction. With financial pressures around Special Education, Health Insurance and a new contracted cleaning contract limiting new requests was pivotal in this budget's creation. In order to put forward new investments in Facilities, Special Education and Pupil Services such as added resources for maintenance of our boilers and plumbing within facilities and added contracted BCBA supervision and an ELL Teacher we found corresponding offsets as a means to be fiscally responsible.

*Budget Data & Information:* This section looks at historical enrollment, DRG A Per Pupil Expenditures, Historical Budget Appropriations, Cost Breakdowns by cost center and object series.

*Enrollment:* This section looks at the projection methodology of our demographer, Milone & MacBroom, the enrollment report presented to the Board of Education in November and class size by school.

*DRG A Comparison:* This section looks at how Weston compares to other DRG A districts with their historical budget increases and per pupil expenditures.

*Revenue:* This section looks at the various revenues that the Board of Education receives to support its budgetary request.

*Staffing Summary:* This section examines the various certified and non-certified positions throughout the district and its comparison to the prior year.

*Detailed Budgets:* Each Program Budget center begins with a visual of the school or department, along with the name of the responsible administrator(s), the street address and the phone number. Email addresses can be found on the district's website. Next, a narrative explains the budget request. The introduction is followed by the related staffing plan and the financial budget for the Program/Cost Center. The financial exhibit includes Actual Expenditures for FY 17 and FY 18, FY 19 Budget and the FY 2020 Administrators' Requested Budget. The FY 2020 Administrators'

Requested Budget is compared to the FY 2019 Budget. The pages that follow each financial summary briefly describe the changes from FY 2019 Budget to FY 2020 Administrators' Requested Budget. Note that each Program/Cost Center begins with the staffing plan used to calculate the salary accounts in that budget. The following Programs/Cost Centers are presented:

Hurlbutt Elementary School  
Weston Intermediate School  
Weston Middle School  
Weston High School  
Theater  
Athletics  
Special Education  
Pupil Personnel Services  
Curriculum and Instructional Improvement  
Digital Learning and Technology  
District Administrative Services  
Facilities Services  
Security  
Transportation  
Copy Center  
District-Wide Services

The *Internal Services Fund* for Dental Benefits is used to manage and account for risk financing activities as allowed by GASB Statement No. 10. The Town established this fund in FY 2006 to account for the Board of Education's health plans. The exhibits include Actual Audited Financial Statements, Expected financial results for FY 2019 and Projected for FY 2020.

*Capital Budget:* The district's long-range capital needs are outlined in this section.

*Appendix:* This section of the document includes Frequently Asked Questions, Noteworthy Accomplishments, Unfunded Mandates and the Administrator's Power Point Presentation.