

# **Weston Board of Education Workshop**

Thursday, January 13, 2022 9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting, 24 School Road, Weston, CT 06883-1623

**I. CALL TO ORDER, VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**

**II. BOARD WORKSHOP ON FY23 BUDGET REQUEST**

A. Responses to BOE 2023 budget questions

**III. ADJOURNMENT**



**Weston Board of Education**  
Weston, Connecticut 06883

**Meeting Date:** 01/13/2022

**Information Only**

**Action Requested**

**Agenda Item Subject:** Responses to BOE 2023 Budget Questions

**Submitted by:** Lisa Wolak

**Document Summary/Purpose and or Recommended Action:**

Attached are responses to BOE 2023 budget questions.

## Responses to BOE 2023 Budget Questions

### ESSER

1. Can you reconcile the Grant amounts for each year and the cost of the expected Grant FTE. For each year in the multi-year budget. ([see grants revenue 2023-2026](#))
2. Can we ensure that any purchases, or FTEs put in place under these grants can be sunsetted at the end of Year 3, without a lingering dependence (and budget increase).

[The district plan is to decrease its level of interventions in math and reading so that these FTEs do not impact the 2024 budget. \(See non recurring grants ESSER chart\)](#)

3. Pg. 254, 255. What is the total FTE head count additions from ESSER alone? Is it 4.1 FTE?

[Teachers is 2.1 Support staff is 2.0. The district plans to remove these positions in 2024 budget. \(see non recurring grants ESSER chart\)](#)

4. Once we have a reconciliation to item (1), can we add a few lines onto the multiyear budget that represents the net difference between grant funding and grant FTE. This will be the expected impact to operating budget in the out years to the extent that there is any mismatch expected between the grant funding and grant FTE.

[See attached chart \(Multi Year Proforma\)](#)

5. It would also be helpful to track on a multi-year trajectory where our ESSER grant money is spent and what happens to those expenditures as the ESSER money disappears and whether and how those expenditures disappear or are absorbed into the operating budget

[See non-recurring grants ESSER chart](#)

6. What are we permitted to spend ESSER money on besides staffing? Did we consider anything for creating safer and healthier facilities? It seems we exceed our eligible ESSER funding by  $(\$345,434 + \$101,860 + \$97,248 - \$500K =)$  \$44,542. Is that going to be a problem for sustainability?

ESSER funds may be used for the following: (1) Learning loss; (2) coordination of preparedness and response to COVID-19; (3) training to minimize disease spread; (4) supplies to sanitize and clean and PPE; (5) long-term closure activities; (6) educational technology; (7) mental health services; (8) summer learning; (9) facility repairs/improvement to minimize disease spread; (10) improve air quality; and, (11) health and safety of students, staff and educators,

The primary use of ESSER funds by the district was for learning loss and mental health services.

The district plan is to stay within our allotted ARP ESSER funding of \$532,000, and it will sunset these funds appropriately. (See non-recurring grants ESSER chart) It should be noted that Weston's ESSER funds are significantly less than other DRG A districts. Therefore improvements in facilities were not possible given the amount. (DRG A ESSER Allocations- preliminary- Wilton: \$833,645, Westport \$1,553,658, New Canaan \$1,061,284, Darien \$1,025,185, Ridgefield \$982,772, Redding \$305,486, Easton \$277,002) (Other Examples ESSER Allocations- Greenwich \$9,585,423, Fairfield \$2,879,294, Stamford \$32,671,864, Norwalk \$24,811,666, Hartford \$98,520,464)

7. Can you explain the District's use of the ESSER II funds. According to Pg. 255, WPS spent \$78,000 (on SPED esy salaries, para educator, prof services, trans), where is the delta  $(\$200K - \$78K =)$  \$122K?

In FY 22, ESSER II funds in the amount of \$232,437 were used to provide additional intervention services and for summer learning.

In the FY 23 budget document on page 255, there is a separate grant allocation for SPED ESSER grants totaling in the amount of 175,248.

8. Can you confirm that the amount of our budget offset by ESSER funds (and for that matter, any other grant money) will not be factored into future years minimum budget requirement (MBR) ?

Yes. (see document Shipman and Goodman re: MBR)

## SPED/PPS

9. Please show the details around how the budgeted numbers for out of district tuition and settlements. Perhaps show the number of total outplacements in 18/19, 19/20, 20/21, 21/22 and expected in 22/23.

Here are the out-of-district tuition numbers for the last few years:

2018-2019: 13

2019-2020: 13

2020-2021: 17

2021-2022: 19

2022-2023: 21

It is important to note that the number of outplacements changes year to year and also within the year. We do have students transitioning in and out of placements at various times.

It is also important to remember that the 2021-2022 school year was the first time the district, along with every other district in Connecticut, needed to budget for an additional year of eligibility. Some students are now eligible to receive services until age 22, rather than age 21.

We are also seeing the impact of increased social-emotional concerns, which is partly due to the pandemic, and sometimes results in the need for more intensive supports and services through an out of district placement.

10. Please show the details around how the budgeted amounts were arrived at for SPED out of district transportation (i.e. historical number of rides vs what is expected in 22/23).

The anticipated number of out-of-district routes will be ten for FY 22-23 compared to eleven for FY 21-22. While there are fewer routes, there is at least one run that will not be a ride-share based on the specific needs of students. We also anticipate an increase in the number of students who will need extended school year transportation.

11. As a reference to a discussion of where further cuts would come from if required and the impact of any potential further cuts to the budget, please create a list of how you would approach reducing the budget a further \$350,000 (without any change to how we are addressing the cost of dental).
12. What potential functions could we share with the Town of Weston to reduce the overall cost of the function for the tax payer? Would be good items to discuss with BOS when we present the budget in February.

The Board of Ed Chair and Superintendent met with the First Selectwoman and Town Administrator to initiate this discussion in the Fall. One possibility that was presented was possible collaboration with FOIA support. Currently the district utilizes existing support personnel, central office administrators, and legal counsel service to respond to these requests. The district continues to collaborate with the town on the capital budget.

13. Could you explain the decrease in homebound tutors? (p. 156)

The decrease in homebound tutoring is based on the trends for actual expenditures over the last several years.

14. Could you describe how you are measuring the progress of the transition to Alternative Pathways?

We are closely monitoring students' grades, attendance in Pathways counseling, individual attendance in their academic classes, and engagement in group and individual social-emotional supports. At the end of the school year another evidence indicator will be credits earned toward graduation.

15. Pgs. 24. Could you please explain why there is a 12.5% decrease for bus aides? Is this a budgetary decision or capacity decision?

The decrease in bus aides is based on the trends for actual expenditures over the last several years.

## LEGAL FEES

16. Is there any way you can provide a more detailed breakdown the cost of non-SPED legal into specific categories (i.e. HR, FOIA, student related legal cases, etc..)?

[See attached chart Legal Fees \(FOIA legal fees to date \\$21,131\)](#)

17. Understanding the inordinate amount of FOIA requests that our district is currently receiving, does it make sense to look to see if we are properly staffed in the central office administration to address these requests and if so, what would the cost be? If we were to hire a part time support staff position (per diem no benefits) to assist with this, the cost would be approximately \$30,000

## CAPITAL BUDGET

18. Please provide a list of WMS capital expenditures that are priority items for 22/23 that are not in the capital budget presented on 1/7. Pg. 257.

19. Please consider including WMS in the estimates for items 3, 9, and 12

[See attached chart Capital Budget](#)

## STAFFING

20. 5.85% increase in administration staffing costs over 2022 – p.23 – Is this all HR Manager? (\$168k)

[No. This includes GWI. The HR Manager salary is \\$107,000.  
Interim roles](#)

21. I heard on Friday that you would be adding a section to Kindergarten but on page 94 I'm not seeing that change (am I missing it?). Number of sections is unchanged from previous year.

[The number of K sections is unchanged from this year to next year.](#)

22. Why is the additional social worker needed specifically at the Middle School? (Or is this just where it appears on the budget – p.132.)

[The chart needs to be edited. The social worker position is being added to Hurlbutt Elementary School, not Weston Middle School. This is part of the](#)

proposal to move away from a two psychologist model at HES to a psychologist/social worker model to better address the social-emotional needs of all students.

23. Remind me what the additional .5 FTE in the CIL is for? (\$73K, page 148)

The additional .5 FTE is for the new HES math CIL. The total \$73K increase is due to this position combined with the contractual increase in salaries for the other CIL positions.

24. Referring to page 32 in the budget book, please provide the details around the \$220,932 increase in HES budgeted salaries for 22/23.

In FY2022 the FTE for HES was increased by 1.73 FTE. The actual cost for the increase exceeded the budget placeholder by \$61,944. This additional expenditure will increase the FY2023 budget. The remaining increase (\$158,988) is attributed to contracted step advancement as outlined in the WTA contract.

25. It would be helpful to see a chart similar to the one on page 254 that shows the FTE changes by building/cost center and whether those positions are paid out of operating budget or ESSER grant money.

26. Pg. 92. Could you explain the need for increased lunch supervision at HES and WIS?

There isn't an increase for lunch supervision at WIS, it's listed as the same as last year. However, if we reduce a para position we may need to look at the possibility of adding more lunch/recess support.

Slight increase at HES is due to the supervision needs of 4-7 year olds. To provide a safe and positive learning environment, including social and emotional needs, we need to keep recess and lunch groups a reasonable size. For the past three school years, our students have had interrupted social and emotional development and disruptive school experiences, resulting in more adult support during these unstructured times. We have had to add additional lunch and recess duties to our instructional paras which reduces the classroom support time for the students in the classroom. Administrators are currently covering lunch and recess duties almost on a daily basis which limits their ability to support students and staff in other ways.

27. Pg. 94. The enrollment projection for next year's kindergarten classes varies by 16 (130 for SLAM) and (114 for NESDEC), could you explain why we opted for the SLAM projection instead of NESDEC or an average?

We chose to use the SLAM numbers instead of NESDEC because of the volatility of the number for Kindergarten. Using the lowest number could put the district in the position of asking for a separate appropriation for another teacher. The district is also looking closely at third grade, which is on the verge of exceeding class guidelines. By putting in this Kindergarten section as part of the operating budget, the district will be able to use it for either grade if warranted. As mentioned above, the district has gone to the town for another teacher, which happened this year. We do not want to be in a position to need 2 additional teachers. It should be noted that the district bases the number of sections on what the district needs that particular year. . If there is not a need for this section or another section in another grade level we will decrease where appropriate.

28. Pgs. 23, 110, 138. Why is there a 44.86% reduction for the gifted and talented program? What factors were considered into shifting PC for WMS to the library media specialist?

The reduction noted in the budget document is the result of a different staffing model. The program remains unchanged with the exception that the WMS library media specialist will teach the Project Challenge classes. We use similar models at HES and WIS where the library media specialists teach special area classes thus maximizing staffing resources. Considering that the WMS media center has a dedicated paraprofessional to support its operation, there is flexibility for the WMS library media specialist to teach these classes.

29. Last year we ended up watching a section closely (I believe it was third grade), and we ended up increasing the FTE for a section of that grade in order to stay within guidelines. This year, what are the section sizes for that grade and was the additional increase necessary to stay within guidelines?

Last year it was third grade that we were watching closely. When we started the year we had 145 students enrolled so adding the 7th section was needed to maintain BOE guidelines. Since September we had 3 new third grade students enroll, which would have brought us to 148 students, however we've had 6 students move out of the district which brings our current enrollment to 142.

30. What are the current actual class sizes for Grades K-5 presently?

See Current Enrollment and Sections attachment.

31. Pgs. 90, 102. Will the 2.0 FTE teacher reduction at WHS result in any present courses not being offered in FY 23?

Current courses that we can reasonably predict will not run in FY 23 include: Introduction to Sociology, Advanced Contemporary Media Design, AP Music Theory, and AP Computer Science. Both AP courses are scheduled on an every-other-year rotation, and FY 23 represents an off year for each; we anticipate both courses will run again in FY 24. Advanced CMD is a media arts course that we have chosen to sunset. An alternative sequence is being presented via the newly approved Digital Illustration and Animation course. We are predicting Introduction to Sociology will not run in FY 23 due to low requests. Current enrollment in the course is 5 students. Should the actual course requests for FY 23 reflect away from this trend, we will look to consider an alternative staffing allocation.

The proposed staffing reduction at the high school level totals 2.0 FTE, with 1.0 of that total reflected as TBD (page 102). We chose to reflect a portion of the reduction in this manner because it is possible that it will result in the elimination of additional courses. Due to the potential impact of such a decision, full knowledge of actual student course requests is needed in order to determine whether and to what extent elimination of courses may be necessary. We are prepared to exhaust alternatives, including rethinking how certain courses are delivered, before making the decision to eliminate course offerings, but we cannot schedule a course that does not have sufficient requests.

32. Pg. 96. At WMS, even with the ESSER grant FTE increase in academic support (.9), it still seems like an overall decrease in FTE (1.7->.9). Classroom teacher level decreases based on enrollment projections are understandable, but should academic supports be distinguishable? The district goals emphasize academic progress post covid.

We will continue to provide academic support in a variety of ways next year. Math SRBI remains the same, with Reading SRBI seeing a decrease of .2 FTE.

This year we were able to pilot OST support (Organization and Study Skills Time) provided by our grade level counselors and will continue that practice next year. In addition, longer class periods in addition to our workshop period will provide students the opportunity to engage in additional reading and writing conferences as well as providing students time to seek out extra help during the day.

33. Pg.108. Social emotional support is also a district goal. Could you please explain why there is no FTE increase in this area (PPS) and a decrease in school psychologists of 1.0 FTE at HES?

One of the two HES school psychologist positions will be re-assigned to a districtwide school psychologist position, and that staff member will focus on supporting the completion of evaluations in all four buildings. We are proposing that the second school psychologist position at HES be replaced with a full-time social worker to more effectively meet the social-emotional needs of all students.

34. Pg. 136. What is an academic assistant? Could you please explain why this position is being reduced at WMS?

Academic Assistant is a general term in the budget document referring to intervention positions. The reduction in this line is due to some of the changes in how we propose to provide academic support next year as highlighted in question 13 above.

35. Could you document the overburden of clerical work? Are there ways to address this using local community resources, for example, the senior center, while maintaining privacy

The district cannot use volunteers to do union work. Support staff was cut over the past few years- guidance/sped clerical at WHS/WMS/WIS/HES resulting in an overburdening of main office staff. Sped teachers do their own filing. Administrators do clerical work in the main office as needed.

36. Are we satisfied with the State Partnership Plan? How have we evaluated its cost effectiveness?

To date, we have not had any complaints from staff members. Each year we review the plan with our insurance consultant (Brown and Brown) to evaluate the cost effectiveness of the plan. It is important to note that any

change to the current health insurance plan requires negotiations with each bargaining group. The current contracts for all groups will expire on June 30, 2023. We anticipate that negotiations will commence in the spring of 2022. In December of 2021, we received a letter from the Comptroller's office that stated:

*December 21, 2021*

*Dear Partnership Plan Administrators,*

*I am happy to inform you that my office, in collaboration with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), has secured federal reimbursement for health care costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic incurred by the state health plans, including nearly \$40 million for the Connecticut Partnership Plan.*

*A total of \$39,971,522 from the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund has been moved into the Partnership 2.0 fund, significantly increasing its balance. This reimbursement will reduce the required premium adjustment for next fiscal year, lowering health care costs for all Partnership members.*

*In addition, the Partnership 2.0 fund balance now exceeds the reserve amount recommended by the state's actuaries. Those reserves add to the financial stability of the program and guard against claim fluctuations and any incurred, but not reported claims, commonly known as run-out.*

*I thank you for your participation in the plan and your commitment to the health of your employees.*

*Sincerely,  
Kevin Lembo  
State Comptroller*

37. Pg. 145. Are stipends a common practice among DRG A schools? Are these amounts collectively bargained?

*Yes. They are common practice and they are negotiated.*

38. What number of district employees are at 100% FTE vs. part-time? For those working part-time, what is the breakdown by percentage of time worked?

All positions except those listed below are full-time.

Certified Staff - There are 6 certified staff who have part-time assignments.

- WMS/WHS French .9 FTE
- WMS Music .8 FTE
- WMS Social Studies .8 FTE
- WHS Mandarin .8 FTE
- WMS Reading Intervention .7 FTE
- WHS Biology .5 FTE

Non-Certified Staff - There are 7 paraprofessionals who are part-time employees.

- WMS Paraprofessional (1) .8 FTE
- HES Pre-School / Kindergarten Paraprofessionals (9) .7 FTE each

### SPED/PPS

39. The change to a new IEP recording system is an unfunded mandate with associated costs. Do we expect to have savings in future years from this change? If so, can that be included in the multi-year pro-forma?

Yes, after the 2022-2023 school year we will no longer need the line item for IEP Direct (\$13,843 for FY23). The new IEP system will cost approximately \$2,000 to link to our data systems (i.e. PowerSchool). We will also see a small cost for our Medicaid billing system when we use the system embedded in CT-SEDS (the new IEP framework).

40. Pg. 184. Could you please explain the cut from SPED consulting services? What did those services provide?

We are using grant funds to support these consulting services in the proposed budget.

41. Pg. 210. How have we been able to stabilize our SPED transportation costs? How confident are we in these budget estimates?

Several factors determine the transportation cost for our out of district students:

- The number of students that require transportation
- School location
- The need for an aide

- The ability to ride-share with another district
- Student specific concerns that may prohibit them from riding with other students attending the same school

Based on the anticipated routes (ten), we are confident in the budgeted cost. However, the possibility exists, as in the past, that additional routes or changes to existing routes may require additional routes to be added.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

42. What percentage of teachers are actively using the smart boards? Do we survey our staff to make sure items in our technology budget are being utilized?

Every classroom that has a SmartBoard/Smart Display/Interactive Projector is used extensively. Teachers use them daily.

We currently have multiple generations of SmartBoards in the district. They vary from the original SmartBoard type (Board and Projector), Interactive Projector, and the latest technology, interactive televisions. The purchase of the 30 interactive televisions (known as Smart Displays) are to replace the aging original SmartBoards we have in the district. These boards are close to a decade old, and it has become nearly impossible to find replacement bulbs for the projectors, or parts for the Boards themselves. The ultimate goal is to replace all original SmartBoards and interactive projectors with the Smart Displays, as these displays have a 25,000 hour lifespan with replacement parts needed like bulbs.

Each year, we look at usage of the software that we purchase/subscribe to in order to determine its cost benefit analysis. Some software has admin controls that allow us to pull usage reports; others we discuss with the CILs and Media Specialists to determine their useability.

## **ATHLETICS**

43. Pg. 25. Could you please explain the 47.5% increase for athletic facilities repairs?

The sprinkler repairs object code- (\$9,500) was combined with the athletics repairs account. The prior year adjustment was incorrectly made to the contracted service object code. A revision will be issued.

44. Pg. 257. Is the \$225K track replacement necessary or mandatory from a safety or other regional athletic conference standards perspective?

The track replacement is necessary and will save us money in the long run. With all of the cracks that need to be repaired the track is quickly becoming a safety hazard and the cost to constantly repair the cracks on the surface will add up very quickly making it more cost effective to start from the ground up and repair the cracks in the subsurface and then resurface the track with a more sound base.

After further discussions with Parks & Rec, we have decided to move this project to the 2023-24 school year.

45. Pg. 35. What are we charging our hockey families for participating in hockey? How many kids currently play hockey?

We do not charge our Ice Hockey families a participation fee as the BOE does not contribute towards the cost of their program. They all pay the program to participate and this year that expense was approxim

46. Why the 5.78% (\$23k) increase in coach/athletics stipends? I understand modest increases year over year, but is this higher than most? (p.144)

The coaches received a 1% salary increase over this year per the contract and many coaches move up a step (years of experience) as well which accounts for more than 2% of the increase. The rest of the increase is due to the three new coaches in this budget that were cut during last year's budget process. Those three coaches are the Esports head coach, an assistant coach for boys and girls cross country, and an assistant girls golf coach. Those stipends are estimated at approximately \$13,000

## PreK

47. Pg. 219. Have we considered expanding our Pre-K program, especially in light of potential space availability in HES? Do we have any idea of demand for such a service? Slot availability at competing Pre-K centers? Would a head start in participating in the district promotion plan attract more participants? Do we run a waiting list?

There has been discussion around this topic prior to this year. It should be noted that any change in program will also impact the work of the town's facilities optimization committee. The challenge with expanding the pre-K program is that it will cost the district. The current tuition is \$7000 per student. The projected revenue for pre-school and the IDEA Pre-K grant (\$9459 for 2023) does not cover the cost of the staffing required for this program. (preschool revenue p. 87 in the budget) Historically there are very few students on a waiting list. Expanding preschool classes would have an impact on the community programs and should be discussed.

### **Additional Questions**

If we consider a WPS education as a product in the marketplace, who are our chief competitors (i.e. when parents take tours of our district, what other districts are they considering?).

Weston is generally compared to the schools in the DRG A reference group. Class size, particularly at the elementary level, is an important consideration when families are shopping for schools. It should be noted that this is most evident when our HES administrators meet with parents of preschoolers who do not currently live in Weston. The question of class size is of utmost importance.

Additional considerations include the extensive course offerings at WHS and the personalized support in the college process. We are very proud of our comprehensive programs and services at the high school, including our wide variety of AP and Honors classes, as well as the fact that we have a college and career counselor whose sole responsibility is to work collaboratively with students and families in tandem with their school counselor.

Last year, what were the percentage budget increases for those competitor districts?

**We will have this for you next week**

What quantifiable metrics are we using to measure where our students fall academically as compared with non-pandemic years so that we can gauge whether resources spent have been effectively used?

**See Benchmark Assessments**

If you were forced to cut 1% from the budget, where would you look?

We have potential reductions that total approximately \$350,000. (See attached chart) One percent is equal to \$569,862 which is an additional \$219,862. This would be extremely challenging. Over the years the district has cut security positions, secretarial positions (guidance/sped at HES/WIS/WMS) as well as staff from grounds/maintenance/custodial. It should be noted that one teacher with benefits is equivalent to \$108,000 and one paraprofessional with benefits is approximately \$65,155. We will continue to analyze the budget as to how any additional cuts could be made. The concern is that these reductions adversely impact the instructional core which is the very heart of our district.

Grant Revenue and FTE

Grant	Projected Revenue				
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
Open Choice	81,000	81,000	81,000	81,000	81,000
Adult Education	121	121	121	121	121
TEAM	1,721	1,721	1,721	1,721	1,721
	<b>82,842</b>	<b>82,842</b>	<b>82,842</b>	<b>82,842</b>	<b>82,842</b>
Title 1	62,194	64,060	65,982	67,961	67,961
Title 2	30,220	30,220	30,220	30,220	30,220
Title 3	-	-	-	-	-
Title 4	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
IDEA	489,402	504,084	519,207	534,783	534,783
IDEA Carryover -Year 2	60,550	-	-	-	-
IDEA Pre-School	9,459	9,743	10,035	10,336	10,336
	<b>661,825</b>	<b>618,107</b>	<b>635,443</b>	<b>653,300</b>	<b>653,300</b>
ESSER	-	-	-	-	-
ESSER 11	-	-	-	-	-
ARP ESSER	345,434	-	-	-	-
ARP ESSER-SPED	175,248	-	-	-	-
	<b>520,682</b>	-	-	-	-
Total Grants	<b>1,265,349</b>	<b>700,949</b>	<b>718,285</b>	<b>736,142</b>	<b>736,142</b>

Grant FTE	Grant Description	Projected Revenue			
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	<u>Recurring Grants</u>				
	<u>IDEA</u>				
9.5	SPED Para Educator (Districtwide)	333,705	337,475.00	342,818	355,307
1.0	Speech & Hearing	101,691	111,685	120,531	122,640
0.5	Pre-School Teacher	54,006	54,924	55,858	56,835
	<u>IDEA Pre-School</u>				

0.3	SPED Para Educator	9,459	9,743	10,035	10,336
11.2	<b>Total IDEA</b>	<b>498,861</b>	<b>513,827</b>	<b>529,242</b>	<b>545,119</b>
	<u>Title 1</u>				
0.5	WIS Reading Specialist	62,194	64,060	65,982	67,961
	<u>Open Choice</u>				
1.0	HES-Classroom Teacher	81,000	81,000	81,000	81,000
12.7	<b>Grand Total Recurring</b>	<b>642,055</b>	<b>658,887</b>	<b>676,223</b>	<b>694,080</b>
	<b>Non-Recurring Grants</b>				
	ARP ESSER				
0.4	HES Math Intervention	48,874	-	-	-
0.8	WIS Math Intervention	93,228	-	-	-
0.4	MS Math Intervention	43,205	-	-	-
0.5	WMS reading intervention	58,268	-	-	-
1.0	SPED Secretary	65,000	-	-	-
1.0	SPED Para Educator	36,860	-	-	-
4.1	<b>Total ARP ESSER</b>	<b>345,434</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	ARP ESSER-SPED				
1.0	SPED Para Educator	35,000	-	-	-
	ESY Salaries	23,000	-	-	-
1.0	<b>Total ARP ESSER-SPED</b>	<b>58,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<u>IDEA Carryover (Anticipated)</u>				
1.7	SPED Para Educator	60,550	-	-	-
6.8	<b>Grand Total Non-Recurring</b>	<b>463,984</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Operating Budget: WIS Reading Specialist 1.5 Total:2.0

This appears in the revenue offset line

Operating Budget: .4 Math Intervention Total 1.0

Operating Budget: WIS Math Intervention . 2 Total 1.0

Operating Budget: WMS Math Intervention .6 Total 1.0

Operating Budget: WMS Reading Intervention 1 Total 1.5

One year position for implementation of new SPED software

This is used to support cost of ESY p.156 of budget

		2023 Operating Budget and ESSER	2024 Operating Budget no ESSER
	<u>Non-Recurring Grants</u>		
	ARP ESSER		
0.4	HES Math Intervention	48,874	HES Math Intervention .6 (budget neutral)
0.8	WIS Math Intervention	93,228	WIS Math Intervention .6 (budget increase.4)
0.4	MS Math Intervention	43,205	WMS Math Intervention .6 (Budget neutral)
0.5	WMS reading intervention	58,268	WMS Reading intervention 1.0 (Budget decrease .4)
1.0	SPED Secretary	65,000	Elimination of position
1.0	SPED Para Educator	36,860	
4.1	Total ARP ESSER	345,434	
	ARP ESSER-SPED		
1.0	SPED Para Educator	35,000	
	ESY Salaries	23,000	ESY projected to decrease (2022-2023 off years)
1.0	Total ARP ESSER-SPED	58,000	
	IDEA Carryover (Anticipated)		
1.7	SPED Para Educator	60,550	
6.8	Grand Total Non-Recurring	463,984	

This is used to support cost of ESY p.156 of budget

**Multi Year  
Pro-Forma Statement**

	<u>FY 23- 24</u>	<u>FY 24-25</u>	<u>FY 25-26</u>
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>2,202</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>2,207</b>
<b>Previous Year Base Budget</b>	\$ 56,986,217	\$ 58,784,190	\$ 60,542,686
<b><u>YoY Change</u></b>			
Salaries Pending Negotiations	\$ 857,130	\$ 850,498.8	\$ 825,377.3 *
SPED Paras From Expired Grant Funding	\$ 132,410		\$ - *
<b>Total Wage Increases</b>	<b>\$ 989,540</b>	<b>\$ 850,499</b>	<b>\$ 825,377</b>
	1.74%	1.45%	1.36%
Health & Dental Estimated Increase	\$ 333,260	\$ 437,445	\$ 611,034 *
Payroll Taxes	\$ 31,712	\$ 23,383	\$ 23,334
Pension Increase	\$ 38,434	\$ 32,138	\$ 4,276
ERIP Reduction	\$ (130,080)	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 273,325</b>	<b>\$ 492,966</b>	<b>\$ 638,644</b>
	0.48%	0.84%	1.05%
<b>Contractual Facility and Security Increases</b>			
Estimated Increase in Contracted Cleaning Contract	\$ 63,558	\$ 66,100	\$ 68,744
Contractual Increase in Zenon Plant	\$ 4,192	\$ 4,359	\$ 4,359
Increase in Mile of Safety Allocation due to Supplemental	\$ 2,862	\$ 2,862	\$ 2,862
<b>Total Facility and Security Increases</b>	<b>\$ 70,612</b>	<b>\$ 73,322</b>	<b>\$ 75,966</b>
	0.12%	0.12%	0.13%
<b>Other Increases</b>			
Estimated CIRMA Increases	\$ 18,507	\$ 19,247	\$ 19,247
Contractual First Student Increase	\$ 118,514	\$ 126,217	\$ 126,217
Technology Equipment Replacement Plan	\$ 87,227	\$ 96,245	\$ 85,974
Other Increases	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
<b><u>Increases From Expired Grant Funding:</u></b>			
Professional Services	\$ 35,000		
Transporation	\$ 35,000		
Tuition	\$ 47,248		
ESY Salaries	\$ 23,000		
<b>Total Increases</b>	<b>\$ 464,496</b>	<b>\$ 341,709</b>	<b>\$ 331,438</b>
	0.82%	0.58%	0.55%
<b>Total Potential Increase:</b>	<b>\$ 1,797,973</b>	<b>\$ 1,758,496</b>	<b>\$ 1,871,425</b>
<b>Pro Forma Budget</b>	<b>\$ 58,784,190</b>	<b>\$ 60,542,686</b>	<b>\$ 62,414,111</b>
<b>% Increase</b>	<b>3.16%</b>	<b>2.99%</b>	<b>3.09%</b>

\*Note:

*Exclusion of GWI if applicable upon negotiations significantly distorts out year projections.*

*Predetermining, or appearing to predetermine, future negotiated increases would constitute a prohibited labor practice under State of Connecticut law. Likewise, using assumptions for future increases may violate these legal requirements.*

*The current contract period for all three bargaining units is 7/1/20-6/30/23*

*Assumptions;*

- 1) No change to staffing based on enrollment
- 2) CMERs rate -18.02%, 17.53%, 17.53% respectively
- 3) Health Insurance:
  - 0.5% premium increase each year.
  - 1% employee cost share increase each year.
- 4) All other cost remains unchanged

**Expiring Contracts**

*The current contract period for all three bargaining units is 7/1/20-6/30/23*

*Zenon Plant maintenance contract ends 6/30/23*

*First Student ends 6/30/2024*

*Cleaning service contract ends 6/30/2024*



**SHIPMAN & GOODWIN** LLP™

COUNSELORS AT LAW

RE: Analysis Regarding the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)

LAST UPDATED: April 27, 2020

You requested a memorandum describing the statutory provisions regarding the minimum budget requirement (MBR), *i.e.*, the minimum level of funding that must be appropriated by a town or municipality to a local board of education for educational purposes. I am providing the information below in response to your request. ***Please note that the information in this memorandum is current as of April 27, 2020. Please let me know if you would like me to update this memorandum through June 16, 2021.***

Analysis of how the MBR provisions may apply to the Weston Board of Education (the “Board”) and the Town of Weston (together, “Weston”) would require further information from the Board. For example, Weston may have experienced a reduction in its Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant; a net reduction in its resident student count in the past five fiscal years; and/or “new and documentable savings” through increased district efficiencies approved by the Commissioner of Education, such as through a cooperative agreement relating to the performance of administrative and central office functions. If you have specific questions regarding application of the MBR provisions to Weston, please let me know and we can discuss what additional information I would need to conduct such analysis.

**MBR Requirements**

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-262j establishes that, as a general rule, **a town or municipality’s budgeted appropriation for education for each fiscal year must be no less than the budgeted appropriation for education during the prior fiscal year.** In general, to meet the MBR, the town or municipality must appropriate local funds for education for the current fiscal year in an amount that is at least the same as the total local appropriation **(including the initial appropriation and any supplementary appropriations)** during the prior fiscal year. Notably, the statutory MBR concerns appropriations, not expenditures. While the Connecticut General Statutes previously had required that local expenditures for education stay at least flat from one year to the next, the relevant statutes now focus solely on appropriations. Thus, should a board of education receive a “flat” appropriation from one fiscal year to the next, the MBR has been complied with, even if the board does not expend the entire appropriation during the second fiscal year in question.<sup>1</sup>

The relevant statute also prohibits a town or municipality receiving an increase in its ECS grant from using such increase to supplant local spending on education. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-262i(c). To comply with the MBR requirement, a town or municipality receiving an increase in its ECS grant must not spend on education less than the amount appropriated for education for the prior year *plus* the amount of any increase in ECS grant funds (*i.e.*, the MBR = the total appropriation during the prior fiscal year + the increase in ECS grant funding received by the town). See Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-262i(c).

### **Permissible Reductions to the MBR**

The Connecticut General Statutes set forth several circumstances in which a town or municipality may be permitted to reduce its appropriation for education below the MBR baseline level. Under certain circumstances, the MBR may be reduced if:

- The town or municipality experiences a reduction in its ECS grant, as described in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-262i(d). The town or municipality may reduce its appropriation for education in an amount equal to the aid reduction.
- The district experienced a net reduction in its resident student count during any of the five fiscal years immediately prior to the fiscal year for which the budgeted appropriation for education is calculated, provided that the town or municipality can use each year-to-year decline as the basis for a reduction in its educational appropriations only once. The amount of the available reduction is the product of the number of such net reduction and fifty percent of the net current expenditures per resident student of such district.
- The district does not maintain a high school, pays tuition for resident students to attend high school in another district, and has experienced its high school enrollment decline. The amount of the available reduction is the product of the total enrollment decline and the per-student tuition amount.
- The district has realized “new and documentable savings” through (1) regional collaboration or cooperative arrangements pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-158a or (2) increased district efficiencies approved by the Commissioner of Education including, but not limited to:

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<sup>1</sup> Note, however, that the Connecticut State Department of Education has advised that agreements between the town or municipality and the local board of education to spend less than the appropriated amount may constitute violations of the MBR statutes.

- reductions in costs associated with transportation services, school district administration or contracts that are not the result of collective bargaining, or other labor agreements;
- an agreement among municipalities and/or boards of education pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-464b to provide medical or health care benefits for their employees as a single entity;
- a cooperative agreement relating to the performance of administrative and central office functions, such as business manager functions, for the municipality and the school district pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-241b;
- reductions in costs associated with the purchasing or joint purchasing of property insurance, casualty insurance, and workers' compensation insurance, following the consultation with the legislative body of the municipality of such district pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-241c;
- reductions in costs associated with the purchasing of payroll processing or accounts payable software systems, following the consultation with the legislative body of the municipality of such district to determine whether such systems may be purchased or shared on a regional basis pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-241e;
- consolidation of information technology services; and
- reductions in costs associated with the care and maintenance of athletic fields.

The amount of the available reduction is half of the total cost savings, up to a cap of one half of one percent of the total educational appropriation.

- The Commissioner of Education may permit a town or municipality to reduce its budgeted appropriation for education in an amount determined by the commissioner if the district has closed one or more schools in the school district due to declining enrollment at such closed school or schools during the fiscal years ending June 30, 2013 to June 30, 2020, inclusive.

### **Exceptions**

There are three important exceptions to the MBR rules outlined above:

- A town designated as an "alliance district," as defined in section Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-262u, is prohibited from making any reductions to its budgeted appropriation for education.
- Any district that is in the top ten percent of school districts based on the accountability index, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-223e, is exempt entirely from the MBR.
- Any district that has (1) elected to act as a self-insurer, (2) experienced a loss incurred as a result of one or more catastrophic events during the

prior fiscal year, and (3) increased its budgeted appropriation for education during said prior fiscal year as a result of such loss, is not required to include the amount of such increase in the calculation of the district's MBR for the subsequent fiscal year.

We note that Section 250 of Public Act 19-117, effective July 1, 2019, requires the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to compile an MBR calculation worksheet for each board of education specifying any permissible reductions. The Board's worksheet for FY 2020 is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Grants-Management/ECSMBR/201920MBR/201920MBRREPORT161.PDF?la=en>.

### **Accounting Principles**

We have been advised by CSDE officials that, when determining whether appropriations comply with the MBR, the following principles should be applied:

- Appropriations are those that have come from local revenues only, which may include state grants such as ECS and transportation grants that are paid to the town and are not subject to pass through to the board of education.
- Accounting-related adjustments must be consistent between fiscal years. For example, if an item included in the town's or municipality's FY 2020 budget is reassigned to the board of education in FY 2021, the cost of such item must be added to the appropriation from the FY 2020 data prior to determining compliance with the MBR. Such adjustments may go in either direction, appropriately increasing or decreasing a board of education's MBR.
- Appropriations related to land, buildings, capital, and debt service generally should not be included in MBR calculations, except where such items were approved through the district's filing of a "Debt Service Claim Form" (ED452).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These principles may have changed since our conversation with CSDE officials.

## **Penalties for Non-Compliance and Related Considerations**

If a town or municipality does not meet its MBR by the end of the fiscal year, the town or municipality is subject to a statutory penalty. The penalty is a deduction in “an amount equal to two times the amount of the shortfall” from the town’s or municipality’s ECS grant during the second fiscal year following the failure to meet the MBR. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-262i(e). Though waivers of this penalty might be possible for “good cause shown,” the procedures for obtaining a penalty waiver, and the standard by which the Connecticut State Board of Education would grant such a waiver, are not clearly defined. Moreover, State officials have counseled that waivers are highly unlikely to be granted.

In addition, boards of education facing potential budget reductions should be mindful of other restrictions on cutting certain costs. Most notable among these restrictions is the requirement in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (the “IDEA”) that a board of education’s aggregate budgeted expenditures (from both state and local funds) and/or per pupil expenditure for students with disabilities remain at least consistent from year to year. See 34 C.F.R. 300.203(c)(1). In other words, as a general rule, boards of education must at least maintain their level of spending on special education, in the aggregate or on a per-pupil level, from year to year. Should both the aggregate and per-pupil expenditures decrease from one fiscal year to the next, a board of education will be cited for violating the maintenance of effort (“MOE”) requirement of the IDEA. Some narrow exceptions apply to this general rule. The MOE rules also prohibit boards of education from using federal special education grant funding to supplant state or local special education spending. If found to be in violation of these rules, a board of education would be required to return to the federal government an amount equal to the shortfall or the amount of the board’s IDEA Part B subgrant during the fiscal year in question, whichever is lower. 34 CFR 300.203(d).

## **Future MBR Requirements**

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-262j has been amended repeatedly to extend the MBR requirements to succeeding fiscal years. The information in this memorandum is current through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. ***Please let me know if you would like me to update this memorandum.***

\* \* \*

I hope this memorandum is helpful. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of any further assistance. Thank you.

**GENERAL LEGAL FEES SUMMARY FY19-22**

Description	2021/2022 - As of 11/30/21	2020/2021	2019/2020	2018/2019
Student Expulsion	-	-	8,645	5,752
Student Related Matters	-	910	43,267	-
General	32,639	63,815	30,295	38,887
Teacher Separation	-	-	1,085	-
Administrators Negotiations	-	1,112	15,022	1,080
Teachers Negotiations	-	-	24,596	1,995
Teachers Copy Center Issue	-	-	7,719	-
Teachers Misc.	2,035	38,831	9,641	25,146
Business Contracts	-	2,210	6,918	-
Non Certified	-	-	8,571	168
FOIA	21,131	23,382	5,278	-
Model Policies	392	1,070	1,875	1,000
Superintendent Contract	-	2,024	-	1,073
State Court (AR)	-	320	-	488
Administrators General	5,151	2,415		
BOE Administrative Hearing	-	-	5,465	-
AFSCME Negotiations		17,215	7,895	
Non-Certified Misc		1,645		
Estimated for Remainder of FY 22			-	-
<b>Total Legal Fees</b>	<b>\$ 61,348</b>	<b>\$ 154,948</b>	<b>\$ 176,270</b>	<b>\$ 75,587</b>
CIRMA-Lap Deductible	#ERROR!	#ERROR!	10,000	20,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>#ERROR!</b>	<b>#ERROR!</b>	<b>\$ 186,270</b>	<b>\$ 95,587</b>



**Current Enrollment & Current Sections**

Grade	Total Sections												Current Enrollment	
	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	19	19	19	19	01/12/2022
K														128
1														149
2														153
3														141
4														150
5														181

Grade	October 2021 Enrollment	Current vs October 2021 Enrollment
	K	126
1	146	3
2	154	-1
3	140	1
4	150	0
5	179	2

The proposed staffing for FY 2023 will yield the following class sizes K-5:

Budgeted Class Sizes Based on SLAM Projections			
Grade	Projected 22-23 Enrollment	Proposed Number of Sections	Average Number of Students per Section
K	130	7	18.6
1	142	8	17.8
2	159	7	22.7
3	163	7	23.3
4	148	7	21.1
5	153	7	21.9

Board of Education Class Size Guidelines:

Kindergarten and 1st Grade: 18-20 Students

2nd Grade through 12 grade: 20-24 Students

### Benchmark Assessments

What quantifiable metrics are we using to measure where our students fall academically as compared with non-pandemic years so that we can gauge whether resources spent have been effectively used?

Foundational Skill	Measure	Grade Level(s)	When
Reading	Fountas and Pinnell (Reading level)	K-5	Fall, Winter, Spring
	Teachers College Running Record	K-2	Fall, Winter, Spring
	Upper Case & Lower Case Letter ID, Letter Sound ID, Sight Word ID, Phonological Awareness	K	Fall, Winter, Spring
	Fundations (phonics and spelling)	1 & 2	By Unit
	NWEA MAP	2-8	Fall, Winter, Spring
Writing	Pre- & Post- On Demand Assessments for Narrative, Information, Opinion/Argumentative	K-5	By Unit
	Pre- & Post- On Demand Assessments for Narrative, Information, Argument	6-8	By Unit
	Writing Portfolio	8 & 10	Second Semester
Math	NWEA MAP	1-9	Fall, Winter, Spring
	Progress Report Standards	K-5	Each Trimester
	Unit Assessments	K-12	

\$350,000 Reduction

Explanation	Location	Amount
Destiny Resource Manager	District-Wide	\$7,196.00
Gale Opposing Views WHS	WHS	\$2,488.74
Gale Opposing Views WMS	WMS	\$828.60
Padlet/Instructional	WMS	\$2,472.00
Visual Classroom	WHS	\$4,000.00
Kami	District-Wide	\$7,200.00
Technology Lease- iMacs replacement	WHS	\$20,000.00
Technology Equipment Art in WMS Art Budget 26 IPADS digital art	WMS	\$13,260.00
Technology Lease - iPads replacement	HES	\$10,000.00
Screencastify	District-Wide	\$3,600.00
New co-curricular stipends (Weston Identity Alliance & Young Progressives)	WHS	\$1,626.00
Theater materials/supplies	District-Wide	\$6,000
Assistant Girls Golf Coach	WHS	\$3,595.00
Assistant Boys and Girls Cross Country Coach	WHS	\$3,595.00
Head ESports Coach	WHS	\$5,944.00
Repairs and Maintenance	District	\$30,000.00
Conference & Travel	C&I	\$2,500.00
Library collection HES- \$5000/WIS \$6200/WMS \$4500 WHS \$2000	District	\$17,700.00
Technology Repairs and Maintenance	District	\$10,000.00
WMS office supplies	WMS	\$1,000.00
WMS and WHS instructional supplies	WMS/WHS	\$10,000.00
Odyssey of the Mind	WIS	\$3,336.00
Glockenspiel and keyboard amp	WIS	\$750.00
Student Desks	WHS	\$2,200.00
General Education Paraprofessional - Two w. Benefits	HES/WIS	\$130,310.00
Math Interventionist .5 FTE (specific teacher position)	WIS	\$58,267.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$357,868.84</b>
Parking Revenue \$45000 reduce \$15000 = \$30000		