



Daniel E. Gutekanst, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

December 11, 2017

To: Needham School Committee 
From: Daniel E. Gutekanst, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Re: FY19 Budget Proposal

Introduction

Enclosed, please find the proposed FY 2018/19 operating budget for the Needham Public Schools. The proposed plan totals \$71,485,377 and represents a \$3,135,294 (4.59%) increase over the current budget year.

This budget proposal outlines the resources the schools need to support an excellent educational program for our students, one that is consistent with the District's core values of Scholarship, Citizenship, Community, and Personal Growth.

The FY19 budget plan was developed to address contracted salary increases, growing special education costs, expanded student enrollment, and targeted program improvements.

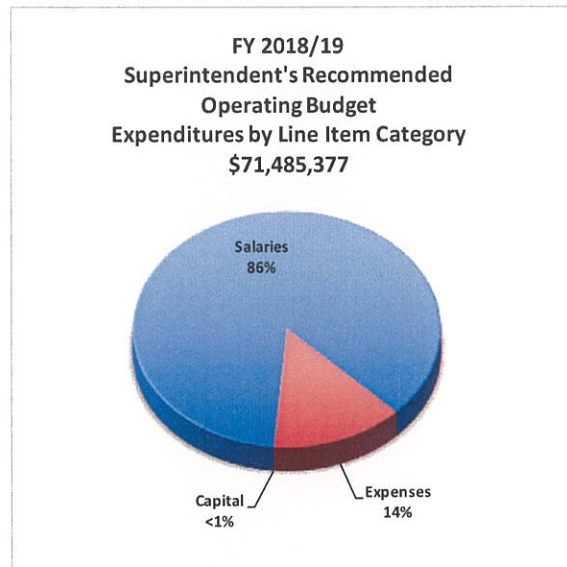
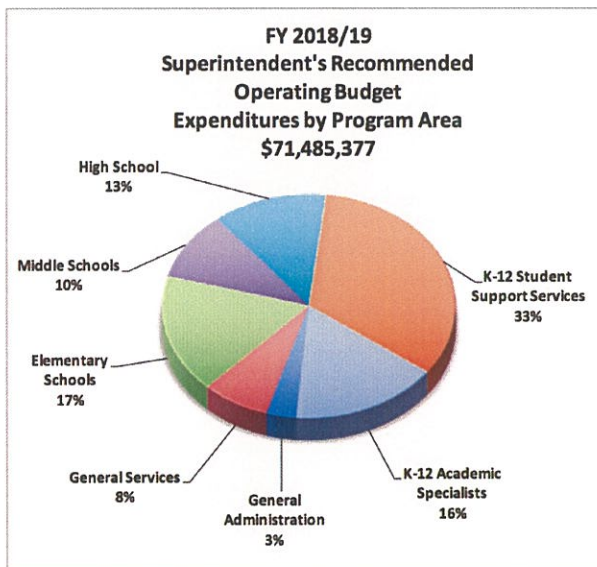
Several key budget "drivers" are impacting the proposed FY19 budget plan. Among them:

- **Contractual Salary Increases.** Negotiated contracts for all existing employees account for \$1.8 million, over half of the total requested increase. In order to recruit, support, and retain a talented faculty and staff, we must provide reasonable yet competitive salaries for our staff, teachers, and school leaders.
- **Enrollment, Class Size, Program support.** While overall enrollment is projected to increase only slightly next year, there remains a need to ensure that class sizes stay within acceptable School Committee policy guidelines. I propose a net increase of 8.75 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers at the elementary and secondary levels to keep class sizes steady and provide for special education programming and support. I also propose 2.37 net new FTE paraprofessionals and administrative support staff to ensure student needs are addressed and to provide ongoing support and training for the professional staff.
- **Increased Special Education and Student Support Service Costs.** Increases in the number of special education students being served, special education tuition, and other mandated costs amount to \$414,820 of the new funds requested.

- **Targeted Program Improvements.** The FY19 budget plan includes \$516,517 for targeted program improvements. Most of these funds - \$350,000 - are proposed to be held in reserve toward Full-Day Kindergarten, to be implemented in the 2019/20 School Year. Other improvements include: \$40,533 to provide expanded math coaching services at the elementary schools; \$21,600 to create building-based permanent substitutes to help fill teacher absences; \$6,780 for a beginning band music teacher at High Rock School; and \$65,700 to add an additional bus to reduce the number of students on the wait list for transportation and help with overcrowding on the buses.

I recognize that we have developed a plan that seeks more funding than the Town's projections for new revenue initially support. At this early date, we also are uncertain what possible adjustments to state funding may mean to the Town and School budgets. But we also are obligated to share with the School Committee and the community what resources are minimally required to meet student needs. This preliminary budget plan has been carefully considered and reflects the School Committee and community's high expectations for its young people. Additional details about the budget plan follow.

FY19 Budget Summary



FY19 Budget Development Process and Priorities

The FY19 budget development process began earlier in the school year, when the School Committee identified budget priorities to guide the administration in the budget planning process. These included:

- The District's values and goals
- The need for highly qualified staff, teaching within established student/teacher ratio guidelines.
- The ongoing refinement of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices; and
- The need to develop and maintain educational resources and a technology infrastructure that supports student learning and meets District goals.

Administrators developed budget requests in the Fall and submitted them for consideration and discussion in November. The Central Office Administration then met with principals and program directors to review and discuss budget requests in light of the School Committee's identified priorities and district goals. Finally, the Superintendent consulted with the Town Manager and the School Committee and Finance Committee budget liaisons to understand Town and School needs as they relate to the overall budget planning process.

Capital Priorities for FY19

The FY19 capital budget request totals \$774,862 and includes \$639,862 in technology and equipment replacement requests, and \$135,000 in facility-related requests. The facility requests include \$70,000 to 'refresh' the feasibility study conducted in 2013 of Emery Grover School Administration Building renovation options, and \$65,000 to study the possibility of phasing improvements to the Pollard Middle School.

The technology and equipment replacement requests include:

- \$340,000 for school technology;
- \$88,000 to replace school phone systems;
- \$60,500 for school furniture;
- \$84,190 for copier replacement; and
- \$67,172 for school vehicle replacement.

Next Steps

The School administration is eager to discuss this preliminary budget request with the School Committee and members of the community. Additional meetings and deadlines include:

- December 11th and subsequent meetings in January: School Committee reviews the Superintendent's budget request
- December 14th: School Committee and Finance Committee liaisons budget workshop

- December and January: Finance Committee liaisons meet with School Committee liaisons and Central Office staff to review and discuss requests.
- January 2nd: Town Manager consults with School Committee about budget plan.
- January 16th: School Committee holds public hearing on the budget plan.
- January 23th: The School Committee votes budget plan and sends budget to Town Manager and Finance Committee.
- January 24th: The Finance Committee reviews the School budget proposal.

I look forward to presenting the budget plan to the School Committee, Finance Committee, and other Town boards and community members in the weeks ahead. We will have thoughtful and sometimes challenging discussions, and I know our focus will be on ensuring a reasonable and appropriate level of funding is available to support the community's greatest assets: Its schools and the young people they serve.