



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

December 11, 2018

To: Needham School Committee
From: Daniel E. Gutekanst, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Re: FY20 Budget Proposal

Introduction

Enclosed, please find the proposed FY 2019/20 operating budget for the Needham Public Schools. The proposed plan totals \$76,465,115 and represents a \$5,359,172 (7.5%) increase over the current budget year.

This request includes the additional resources needed to implement Full-Day Kindergarten and to open the new Sunita L. Williams Elementary School in September, 2019. The total resources recommended for Full-Day Kindergarten are \$1,950,540, including 33.8 FTE new staff members, curriculum materials and technology supports. (The total cost also includes \$459,350 in benefit expenses, which are a placeholder expense that will not be appropriated to the School Department but would be included in the FY20 Town budget should the Town Manager decide to do so.) The additional resources needed to open the new Sunita Williams Elementary School total \$97,814 (1.05 FTE.)

The overall budget request, excluding the resources needed for Full-Day Kindergarten and Sunita Williams, is \$3,310,820, a 4.7% increase from the current year to cover the cost of contractual salary increases; enrollment, class size and program support; increased special education and student support service costs; and targeted program improvements.

The proposed budget supports an equitable educational program for our students, one that is consistent with the District's core values of Scholarship, Citizenship, Community, and Personal Growth.

Key components of the budget plan include the following:

- **Level Service**

- *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.* Overall enrollment is projected to increase by 39 pupils in FY20, with nearly all of this increase occurring at the middle school level. Although enrollment at the elementary level is projected to decline by eight pupils overall, two elementary grades are projected to see class sizes of between 24-26 pupils, requiring additional staffing resources. An additional Grade 2 teacher is recommended for Eliot School, to reduce class size from 24 to 18 students. Additionally, a new Grade 5 teacher also is recommended for Hillside, to reduce class sizes from 25/26 to 19/20 students next year. At the High Rock, a 0.6 FTE physical education and a 0.1 FTE Spanish teacher are recommended to address large class sizes in those electives. At NHS, a 0.1 FTE classroom teacher and a 0.1 FTE music teacher also are recommended to address large class sizes. Overall, \$173,297 (2.9 FTE) is allocated to support enrollment and class sizes.

- *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 \$950,493 of the new funds requested, and include 4.25 FTE new staff members.

- **Program Improvement**

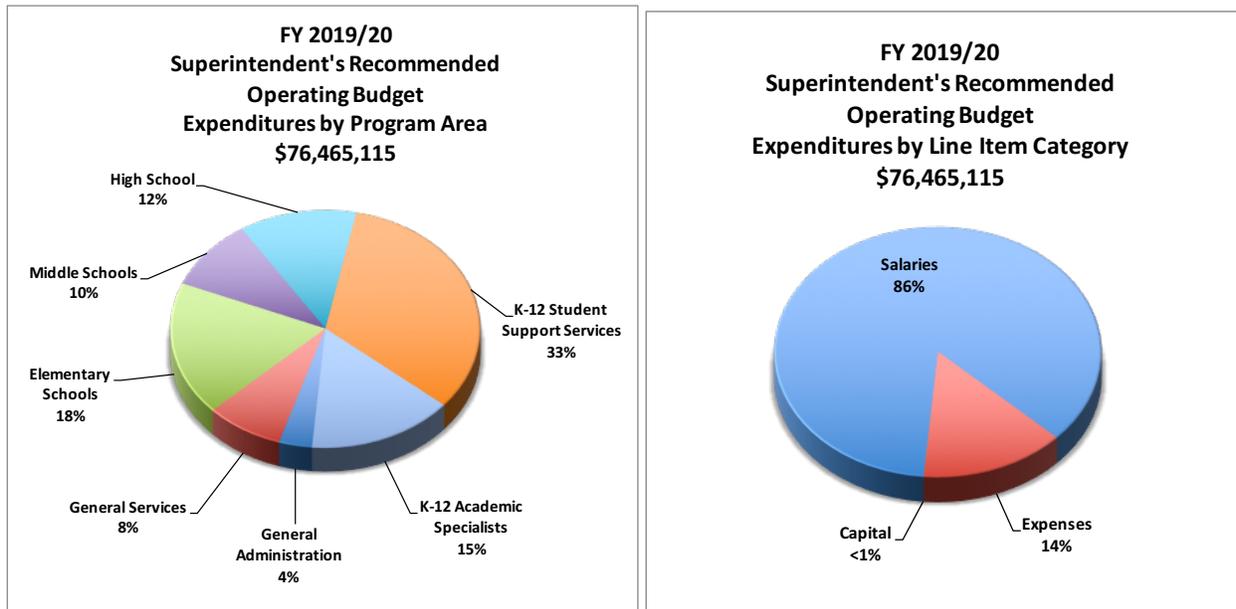
- *Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Costs.* The implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten will require additional classroom teachers (10 FTE), specialist teachers and literacy coaches (1.91 FTE), and support staff (3.89 FTE.) In addition, each classroom will be assigned a Teaching Assistant to implement the new curriculum (18 FTE.) Finally, the budget includes resources for curriculum supplies and teacher training (\$104,150), technology equipment (\$40,000) and benefit expenses (\$459,350.)

- *Sunita L. Williams Implementation Costs.* Although the building project budget covers most of the costs associated with opening the new school, additional instructional resources totaling \$97,814 are required to administer and support the larger school: a 0.2 FTE expanded Assistant Principal, a 0.4 FTE expanded Special Education Coordinator, a 0.2 FTE Guidance Counselor, and a 0.25 FTE expanded Secretary position.

- *Targeted Program Improvements.* The FY20 budget plan includes \$430,183 for targeted improvements in other areas. These include: \$107,618 to support the administrative operational infrastructure, \$40,000 in additional funds to support the operations of NHS Athletics, \$65,356 in equity initiatives, \$81,703 for curricular needs, and approximately \$135,000 for other needs.

I recognize that we have developed a plan that seeks more funding than the Town's projections for new revenue initially support, and which the Town has held in reserve for Full-Day Kindergarten implementation. 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.

FY20 Budget Summary



FY20 Budget Development Process and Priorities

The FY20 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 FY20

The FY20 capital budget request totals \$1,365,787 and includes \$961,587 in technology and equipment replacement requests, and \$404,200 in facility-related requests. The facility requests include: \$125,000 to develop a School Master Plan, \$69,200 to install a custom shade shelter at the Newman Preschool playground; \$50,000 to reconfigure the boys' and girls' lockers at NHS; \$60,000 to conduct a needs assessment of the Pollard, Newman and NHS auditoriums; and \$100,000 to study the feasibility of sustaining the old Hillside School as swing space for future school building projects.

The technology and equipment replacement requests include:

- \$632,350 for school technology;
- \$35,000 for school furniture;
- \$135,520 for copier replacement; and
- \$158,717 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 12th: 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 15th: Town Manager consults with School Committee about budget plan.
- January 15th: School Committee holds public hearing on the budget plan.
- January 16th: The Finance Committee reviews the School budget proposal.
- January 22nd: The School Committee votes budget plan and sends budget to Town Manager and Finance Committee.

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.