

CHRISTOPHER CHEW, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

COURTNEY L. MORAN, M.Ed.  
Assistant Superintendent  
Instruction



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Director of Special Education and SEL

MAGALY RODRIGUEZ RONAN, M.Ed.  
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Director of School Finance

**Westford Public Schools  
Administrative Offices**

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To: Westford School Committee  
From: WPS Administration  
Re: FY25 Budget  
Date: December 18th, 2023

The Town of Westford established the Budget Task Force (BTF) in Spring 2023, and the BTF worked for several months reviewing budget challenges, updating revenue opportunities, benchmarking with comparable towns and school districts, exploring potential efficiencies, and making recommendations for the town and Westford public school district. Westford Public Schools have developed two different budget scenarios for FY25 based on the results and recommendations from the town's BTF.

- The first scenario reflects the need to maintain level services with a 7% increase from FY24's budget, which will require a community override in order to increase the tax levy. This override is necessary to maintain the high-quality programming and services that WPS is known for and contributes to the reputation of the community.
  - The second scenario reflects reductions necessary to meet a budget within the Proposition 2 ½ constraints, with a 2% increase from FY24's budget. This scenario will articulate the difficult decisions and reductions that will be necessary if the override is not passed, and our budget must be balanced within Proposition 2 ½ constraints.
1. The first budget scenario for override: the crafted FY25 budget totals \$70,505,124, which is a 7% increase over the FY24 allocation of \$65,889,564. The major changes this budget reflects are summarized as follows:
- As part of our regular process, we have reviewed our projected enrollment for FY25 and have made recommendations for certain adjustments that allow us to still support the School Committee guidelines for class sizes:
    - Reduction of 4.0 FTE at the elementary school level maintains a class size average under 23.
    - Reduction of 2.0 FTE at the middle school level maintains a class size average under 25.
    - Reduction of 2.2 FTE at the high school level maintains a class size average under 25.
  - Eliminate the Data Specialist position at the central office level by merging central office responsibilities.
  - Eliminate in-district special education van fleet, resulting in outsourcing all special education transportation services.

- Implementation of a new post-graduate program at Westford Academy to provide special education services to students aged 18-22. This addition could lead to significant long-term budget savings for the district by reducing out-of-district placement costs. This initiative will create one special education teaching position, add two job coaches, and 0.4 for administrative positions to run the post-graduate program.
- Include an increase in School Choice offsets from \$440K to \$460K by transferring the special education tuition payment for one school choice student from the General Fund to the school choice account based on the fact that school choice revenue averages \$470,000 in the past five fiscal years.
- Include an additional \$45,000 offset in the Bus Fee Revolving Account to cover the estimated increase in transportation costs.
- Include an additional \$25,000 offset from activity fees to support increasing needs for activity stipends.
- Include an additional \$15,000 offset from the music fee revolving account to support music teachers' salaries.
- Include additional \$4,000 offset from Food Services revenue to support Business office salaries.
- Adjustment in software subscriptions cost resulted in a decrease in projection by \$120,828.
- Add one ESL teaching position due to a new need that arose mid-year in FY24.

The budget challenges for FY25 have been communicated through the work of the Budget Task Force. There are major challenges Westford Public Schools that must be funded in the FY25 budget: the first is the statewide 14% increase in Special Education Tuitions; the second is ensuring competitive pay for our staff in a market where many of our contracts have not kept pace with our comparable districts; the third is the anticipated increase in transportation costs as our surrounding districts have seen a significant increase in transportation costs. These combined needs have been supported in this first budget scenario for FY25, and this includes efficiencies based on adjustments made for enrollment as well as reconsidering how some services and supports are provided.

A categorical breakdown of the proposed FY25 first budget scenario is listed as follows:

	<u><b>FY25 Budget</b></u>	<u><b>FY24 Budget</b></u>
<u><b>1110 SCHOOL COMMITTEE</b></u>	\$ 10,675	\$ 8,225
<u><b>1210 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS</b></u>	\$ 298,028	\$ 291,550
<u><b>1220 ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT</b></u>	\$ 244,562	\$ 244,453
<u><b>1410 BUSINESS OFFICE</b></u>	\$ 491,961	\$ 492,510
<u><b>1420 HUMAN RESOURCES &amp; BENEFITS</b></u>	\$ 1,260,770	\$ 1,444,179
<u><b>1430 LEGAL SERVICES</b></u>	\$ 82,000	\$ 82,000
<u><b>1450 INFORMATION MGT/TECHNOLOGY</b></u>	\$ 261,841	\$ 228,269
<u><b>2110 CURRICULUM DIRECTORS</b></u>	\$ 518,552	\$ 499,130
<u><b>2210 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP - BUILDING</b></u>	\$ 3,606,714	\$ 3,552,280
<u><b>2250 NON-INSTR BUILDING TECHNOLOGY</b></u>	\$ -	\$ -
<u><b>2305 CLASSROOM TEACHERS</b></u>	\$ 27,135,704	\$ 26,582,212
<u><b>2310 TEACHER SPECIALISTS</b></u>	\$ 7,430,258	\$ 6,820,668
<u><b>2315 INSTRUCTIONL COORD/TEAM LEADERS</b></u>	\$ 397,859	\$ 295,007
<u><b>2320 MEDICAL/THERAPEUTIC SERVICES</b></u>	\$ 1,728,005	\$ 1,631,433
<u><b>2325 TEACHER SUBSTITUTES</b></u>	\$ 513,279	\$ 511,875
<u><b>2330 INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS</b></u>	\$ 4,812,628	\$ 3,974,968

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<u>2340 LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER SALARIES</u>	\$ 925,334	\$ 842,997
<u>2355 SUBSTITUTES FOR PROF DEVELOPMENT</u>	\$ 17,844	\$ 17,844
<u>2357 PROFESSIONAL DEVELPMT EXPENSES</u>	\$ 604,882	\$ 578,578
<u>2410 TEXTBOOKS &amp; RELATED MEDIA</u>	\$ 63,500	\$ 62,500
<u>2415 LIBRARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL</u>	\$ 32,000	\$ 31,500
<u>2420 INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT</u>	\$ 23,500	\$ 22,000
<u>2430 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES</u>	\$ 462,840	\$ 457,279
<u>2440 OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES</u>	\$ 50,700	\$ 60,700
<u>2451 CLASSROOM INSTRUCT TECH</u>	\$ 42,800	\$ 44,800
<u>2453 LIBRARY INSTRUCTIONAL HARDWARE</u>	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400
<u>2455 INSTRUCTIONAL SOFTWARE</u>	\$ 349,546	\$ 328,601
<u>2710 GUIDANCE &amp; ADJUSTMT COUNSELORS</u>	\$ 2,914,357	\$ 2,717,193
<u>2720 TESTING &amp; ASSESSMENT</u>	\$ 24,900	\$ 26,475
<u>2800 PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES</u>	\$ 501,823	\$ 447,176
<u>3100 PARENT LIAISON SERVICES</u>	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
<u>3200 MEDICAL/HEALTH SERVICES</u>	\$ 989,713	\$ 917,380
<u>3300 TRANSPORTATION SERVICES</u>	\$ 4,403,420	\$ 3,699,000
<u>3400 FOOD SERVICES</u>	\$ -	\$ -
<u>3510 ATHLETICS</u>	\$ 509,560	\$ 442,417
<u>3520 OTHER STUDENT ACTIVITIES</u>	\$ 79,639	\$ 104,642
<u>3600 SCHOOL SECURITY</u>	\$ 81,900	\$ 74,000
<u>4110 CUSTODIAL SERVICES</u>	\$ 2,243,644	\$ 2,111,216
<u>4120 HEATING OF BUILDINGS</u>	\$ 809,612	\$ 611,500
<u>4130 UTILITY SERVICES</u>	\$ 1,107,434	\$ 1,013,307
<u>4210 MAINTENANCE OF GROUNDS</u>	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000
<u>4220 MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS</u>	\$ 1,106,199	\$ 1,045,708
<u>4225 BUILDING SECURITY</u>	\$ 107,750	\$ 107,750
<u>4230 MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT</u>	\$ 51,463	\$ 26,702
<u>4400 NETWORKING &amp; TELECOM</u>	\$ 664,159	\$ 695,222
<u>4450 TECHNOLOGY MAINTENANCE</u>	\$ 56,300	\$ 56,300
<u>5100 EMPLOYER RETIREMENT CONTRIB</u>	\$ -	\$ -
<u>5150 EMPLOYEE SEPARATION COSTS</u>	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
<u>5260 NON-EMPLOYEE INSURANCE</u>	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
<u>5300 RENTAL/LEASE OF EQUIPMENT</u>	\$ 144,500	\$ 144,500
<u>6200 CIVIC ACTIVITIES</u>	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
<u>7200-7500 FIXED ASSETS</u>	\$ -	\$ -

<u>9100-9400 TUITIONS</u>	\$ 3,209,569	\$ 2,413,119
	\$ 70,502,124	\$ 65,889,564
<b>Percentage Increase</b>	7.00%	
<b>FY25 vs FY24 Difference</b>	\$ 4,612,560	

2. The second budget scenario for no-override: the crafted FY25 budget totals \$67,207,356, representing a 2% increase over the FY24 allocation of \$65,889,564. The difference between the override budget and the no-override budget is \$3,297,768. The second budget scenario articulates that if the override is not passed, we will still need to address FY25's combined challenges and needs. It outlines the difficult decisions and reductions that will be necessary to balance our budget within Proposition 2 ½ constraints. The major changes for the second budget scenario are summarized as follows:

- Additional reductions for each school level:
  - Additional reduction of 4.0 FTE elementary teaching positions.
  - Eliminate 2.0 FTE reading teachers at middle school, which means removal of the general education reading elective at both middle schools levels.
  - Eliminate 3.0 FTE Literacy Specialists from 6.0 to 3.0 FTE.
  - Reduce 11.4 FTE at Westford Academy, including reductions in Math, ELA, world languages, science, history and social science, visual and performing art teachers, and school counselor. These reductions would increase both class sizes in honors and AP level courses and reduce elective offerings.
- Reduce district-wide 3.0 FTE for administration to restructure instructional support leadership:
  - Eliminate Director of Equity, Curriculum & instruction position.
  - Restructure K-5 Curriculum Coordinators for STEM and Humanities.
- Adjust intervention model: eliminate 30.0 FTE Reading Interventionists and Math Interventionists at elementary & middle school levels and add 6.0 FTE Academic Coaches at each elementary school.
- Additional reduction \$1,032,317 in compensation reserve needed to meet identified targets for keeping the pace with competitive pays of comparable school districts.
- Include additional \$50,000 offset from Integrated Preschool revolving account to offset more teachers and educational support professional salaries.
- Eliminate funding contingency for 2.0 FTE Education Support Professional staff.

A categorical breakdown of the proposed FY25 second budget scenario is listed as follows:

	<u><b>FY25 Budget</b></u>	<u><b>FY24 Budget</b></u>
<u>1110 SCHOOL COMMITTEE</u>	\$ 10,675	\$ 8,225
<u>1210 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS</u>	\$ 298,028	\$ 291,550
<u>1220 ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT</u>	\$ 244,562	\$ 244,453
<u>1410 BUSINESS OFFICE</u>	\$ 491,961	\$ 492,510
<u>1420 HUMAN RESOURCES &amp; BENEFITS</u>	\$ 298,406	\$ 1,444,179
<u>1430 LEGAL SERVICES</u>	\$ 82,000	\$ 82,000
<u>1450 INFORMATION MGT/TECHNOLOGY</u>	\$ 261,841	\$ 228,269
<u>2110 CURRICULUM DIRECTORS</u>	\$ 393,092	\$ 499,130
<u>2210 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP - BUILDING</u>	\$ 3,606,714	\$ 3,552,280

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<u>2320 MEDICAL/THERAPEUTIC SERVICES</u>	\$ 1,728,005	\$ 1,631,433
<u>2325 TEACHER SUBSTITUTES</u>	\$ 513,279	\$ 511,875
<u>2330 INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS</u>	\$ 4,244,924	\$ 3,974,968
<u>2340 LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER SALARIES</u>	\$ 858,437	\$ 842,997
<u>2355 SUBSTITUTES FOR PROF DEVELOPMENT</u>	\$ 17,844	\$ 17,844
<u>2357 PROFESSIONAL DEVELPMT EXPENSES</u>	\$ 380,342	\$ 578,578
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	<b>\$ 67,207,356</b>	<b>\$ 65,889,564</b>
<i>Percentage Increase</i>	2.00%	
<i>FY25 vs FY24 Difference</i>	<b>\$ 1,317,792</b>	