

## **Significant Changes in the FY21 Preliminary Budget:**

### 1420 - Compensation Reserve:

There are 4 contracts to be negotiated by FY21 (Unit A teachers, Unit B Curriculum Coordinators, Unit C Nurses, Unit E Math & Reading Interventionists), affecting 492 staff members. Also included in the Compensation Reserve account are cost-of-living increases for exempt and non-union employees.

### 1450 – Information Management/Technology

The Director of Student Information position will be reconfigured to a Data Specialist/Registrar with salary cost savings.

### 2110 –Curriculum Directors (Special Education & Digital Learning offices)

Contractual salary increases account for the \$13,661 increase.

### 2210 – School Leadership/Buildings (Principals and building admin staff)

The \$64,200 increase in this area accounts for the contractual salary increases for school administrative assistants and brings the principal aides up to \$14/hour. The middle school facility admin will be reduced; the duties will be transferred to the Facilities Department.

In order to better serve our students, we propose to restructure the Assistant Principal and Student Support Leader positions. Currently there are 3 Assistant Principals and 3 Student Support Leaders (Special Education) in our 6 elementary schools. The proposal is to combine the two roles into one position, allowing a full-time Assistant Principal/Student Support Leader in each of the six schools. The current student population, programs, and services would benefit from a greater level of administrative oversight to ensure the building operations, academics, and support services for students are delivered.

### 2305 – Classroom Teachers

Student enrollment has decreased, particularly in the elementary schools. The reduction in classroom & specialist teachers is a direct result of lower enrollment. 11 teaching positions will be reduced due to enrollment:

- 6 elementary classroom teachers
- 1 elementary PE/Wellness teacher
- 0.4 elementary Music teacher
- 2 middle school teachers (1 mini-team) at Blanchard
- 1 middle school foreign language teacher
- 0.6 high school English teacher
- 0.6 high school PE teacher

Teacher retirements that are already known are reflected in the FY21 budget. There are on average about 7 teacher retirements a year.

We will continue to transition Digital Learning Specialist functionality to the school staff. The 2 Digital Learning Specialists in the middle schools will retire next year and the positions will not be filled. One of the two Digital Learning Specialists at Westford Academy will be reduced.

Due to the decreased enrollment at the Stony Brook School, one world language teacher can be reduced, shifting from five language teachers down to four. This mirrors the staffing in the World Language department

at Blanchard Middle School. Based on student interest, it has been determined that the Latin program will be eliminated from the middle schools, allowing for each middle school to have two Spanish teachers to provide more seats for that language, as it is most high in demand. The Latin teachers at the high school will remain at the high school level in order to accommodate the high school students who are currently underway on the Latin track.

#### 2320 – Medical/Therapeutic Services

Due to student need, funding for special education contracted services has been increased. The speech, occupational and behavioral therapists split their time among all schools to properly address student need. As a result of the remaining preschool classrooms moving from Millennium School to the K-2 schools (4 Pre-K classrooms moved to Miller in FY20), the preschool nurse will no longer be funded.

#### 2330 – Instructional Assistants

The 5.2% change for teaching assistants from FY20 budget to FY21 reflects two years of negotiated increases, as the contract was settled after the FY20 budget was finalized. FY20 actual expenses will reflect the Year 1 increases in the Teaching Assistants' contract.

#### 2340 – Library/Media Center

The change in this area reflects a retirement. There may be some cost savings with the replacement hire.

#### 2357-2453 - Professional Development, Instructional Materials and Services

Each year the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction evaluates all materials and services to best reach learning and teaching goals. Student supplies expenses were reduced due to lower enrollment.

#### 2455 – Instructional Software

With over \$200,000 in new instructional software requests, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction recommends the \$105,790 increase in the area, with cuts in other instructional material accounts to allow for this increase. The primary driver for this software costs are some multi-year software subscriptions due for renewal in FY21

#### 3100 – Parent Liaison Services

With almost 100 English Language Learners, the need for translation services to communicate with families has increased.

#### 3300 – Transportation

There are three significant transportation categories:

1. Regular Bus Transportation
2. In-house Special Education Van Transportation
3. Contracted Special Education Transportation

##### 1. Regular Bus Transportation

We currently utilize 35 buses for regular school transportation. FY21 will be the second year of our current bus contract with DEE Bus. The current contract stipulates a rate increase from \$362.50 for 1 bus per day to \$387.00 per bus per day in FY21. Student bus fees are collected in the Transportation Revolving account and this offsets our bus costs by \$600,000. It should be noted that the bus fee covers less than 50% of the

bus cost. Additionally, these transportation expenses include the Kindergarten buses and after-school activities buses.

## 2. In-House Special Education Van Transportation

We currently operate 18 Special Education vans, including 3 wheelchair vans to transport special education students needing transportation to their in-district and out-of-district placements. The district's transportation coordinator optimizes the routes to get our students to their appropriate schools/placements safely and efficiently.

## 3. Contracted Special Education Transportation

Due to increased student need and current FY20 trends, the Special Education contracted transportation services expense has been increased by \$40,000 to \$450,000. The district currently uses 4 different vendors in order to satisfy all the transportation requirements.

### 3400 – Food Service

All food service personnel and expense costs are covered by the Food Service Revolving Account. The \$500 in the General Fund budget is to cover unpaid balances that per regulation the revolving account may not pay. The district's Food Service staff works diligently to collect all outstanding meal payments.

### 3510 – Athletics

The majority of the athletic coaching stipends (as outlined in the Unit A contract; may be updated with new contract) are paid through the general fund budget. A portion of coaching stipends, as well as all transportation, officials, event and training supplies and expenses are paid through the Athletic Revolving Account.

### 3520 – Student Activities

The club and activity advisor stipends (as outlined in the Unit A contract; may be updated with new contract) are paid through this account.

### 4120-4130 – Building Heat and Utilities

A three-year average of utility usage is taken and multiplied by the FY21 Town recommended heating and electricity rate. We still benefit from solar credits, though there is little consistency in when the utility providers apply the credits. Sometimes credits from one fiscal year are not applied until the following fiscal year. The Facilities Department is conducting an internal utilities audit in hope to realize additional efficiencies and cost savings.

### 4210-4230 – Maintenance of Grounds, Building, Equipment

With the new Facilities Department, there will new processes to evaluate maintenance needs and services. We anticipate realizing cost savings in this department, while beginning to fund the building needs at an appropriate level. One (1) maintenance staff will be reduced to 0.5 FTE.

9000s – Out of District Tuitions

<b>SPECIAL ED TUITIONS:</b>	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY2019</u>	<u>FY20 Budget</u>	<u>FY21 Budget</u>
Budgeted Special Ed Tuitions:				
to be funded by General Fund	2,845,470	2,760,443	2,760,443	3,820,317
to be funded by Circuit Breaker	1,737,930	1,711,043	1,998,309	1,028,868
to be funded by Valley Collaborative Credit	-	-	200,000	60,000
Total tuition projection	4,583,400	4,471,486	4,958,752	4,909,185
Total tuition expense incurred for the year:			Estimate	Estimate
Pre-paid in the prior year	285,399	138,500	-	-
Charged to the general fund in the current year	2,244,922	2,857,598	2,760,443	3,820,317
Charged to Valley Collaborative credit	185,589	230,960	60,000	60,000
Charged to Circuit Breaker	1,809,923	1,494,585	2,547,715	1,028,868
Total actual tuition expense	4,525,833	4,721,643	5,368,158	4,909,185
Variance - Budget Projection to Actual	57,567	(250,157)	(409,406)	-

The increased out of district tuition expenses in FY20 will greatly affect the FY21 budget. Currently we anticipate that the FY20 actual to FY20 budget will come in \$409,400 over budget. In the FY20 budget development, it was already planned to use \$723,899 in FY20 circuit breaker funds, as well as \$1,274,410 in FY19 circuit breaker funds. Fortunately, we were able to close out FY19 without using FY19 current year circuit breaker funds, thus saving the full FY19 circuit breaker allocation, \$1,728,467, for FY20. Even with the full FY19 circuit breaker amount, we anticipate having to supplement the FY20 out of district tuition budget line with \$745,248 in FY20 circuit breaker funds. This leaves \$1,028,868 in FY20 circuit breaker funds for FY21. The Valley Collaborative credits that we can use against tuition were also decreased from \$200,000 to \$60,000.

Through the meticulous tracking by the Special Education Department, we currently anticipate \$4,909,185 in out of district tuitions in FY21. These costs will be offset by the remaining \$1,028,868 FY20 circuit breaker funds. In FY21, the district will need \$3,820,317 from the general fund budget allocation for out of district tuitions, an increase of \$1,059,874. It is our recommendation that we do not plan to use FY21 circuit breaker funds at this time, in order to return to the best practice of using prior year circuit breaker funds.

Offsets

In addition to the regular revolving account offsets for fee-based programs/services (full-day kindergarten, 3-5 instrumental music, parking, bus, facility use), we will continue to offset \$195,000 in teacher salaries from School Choice. In order to meet the FY21 general fund allocation, we recommend that we use an additional \$110,805 in School Choice funds. We anticipate using these supplemental School Choice funds only in FY21.

Fees

In light of the necessity to further supplement the budget by \$250,000, we had reevaluated our current fees and recommend the we adjust fees for the following programs:

Program	Current fee	Proposed fee
Regular Ed Transportation	\$275/\$750 cap	\$325/\$850
WA Parking	\$50	\$200
Gr. 6-8 Activity Fee	\$60	\$80
Gr. 3-5 Instrumental Music	\$260	\$290
Early Arrival Option	\$250	\$500
Athletics	\$275 WA/\$240 MS	\$325 WA/\$275 MS

This is the preliminary FY21 school budget proposal. We will continue to provide detail and background information as we continue the budget process. We welcome your input.