

UNFUNDED AND PARTIALLY FUNDED MANDATES

One of the phrases that historically comes up during budget time each year is “unfunded mandates.” **Unfunded mandates** are the programs, processes and procedures that **must** be implemented in all public school districts, by law, yet do not bring any additional dollars to the communities in which these mandates are required. In short, the Weston taxpayer must cover these costs.

While many people have heard of this term, few can specifically identify even a few examples of what unfunded mandates are. To give you proper perspective on what the Weston Public Schools must implement (and pay for) due to unfunded mandates, we have included the full list for this year. It may be surprising to you.

PARTIALLY UNFUNDED MANDATES

Adult Education/Continuing Ed

SBA Testing, Gr. 3-8

CMT Testing - Prep. for Science testing, Gr. 5, 8, 10

English Language Learners -- ELL

Special Education -- 10% paid of 40% required by law

The school district must test students that either the parent or the school district suspects has a disability that is eligible for services under IDEA or 504.

The school district must identify Talented and Gifted (TAG) students. However, they do not have to provide a program.

NCLB mandates that all students, including those identified for Special Education Services, must achieve goals on standardized tests.

The State Department of Education requires districts to staff the following positions: Nurse, Guidance, Psychologist, and if needed to provide the services of Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist and Speech and Language Clinician.

Excess Cost and Agency Placement Fees

Administrator and Teacher Evaluation

Unified Accounting System

TEAM Program (new teacher mentor program)

FULLY UNFUNDED MANDATES

ADA Accommodations (transportation/signs/elevator)

Alternate Education for Expelled Students

Air Quality

Asbestos Training for Building/Grounds staff

Background checks and fingerprinting

Benefit Costs as a result of CT Civil Union Legislation

Blood Borne Pathogen Training
 Bullying Policy (investigation/record keeping/follow-up)
 Certified staff – Tracking and Reporting
 Child Abuse Reporting
 Benefits costs as result of CT New Civil Union Legislation
 C.G.S. 10-145: Administrators and Teachers must have appropriate certification
 C.G.S. 10-153: Administrators, Teachers and Classified employees collective bargaining rights.
 Salary & benefits determined by this process, number of staff determined by BOE
 Professional Development Requirements – Replaces Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
 CPR/First Aid and Heimlich Training
 Hepatitis B Screening
 Drug Education
 ED-001: End of Year School Report
 ED-003: Administrator Negotiations
 ED-006S: Public School Information
 ED-014: Minimum Expenditure Compliance Check

School Building Projects:

ED-042: Request for Review of Final Plans
 ED-042CO: Notice of Change Order
 ED-045: Notice of Debt Service
 ED-046: Request for School Construction Progress Payment
 ED-049: Grant App. for School Building Project
 ED-050: School Facilities Survey
 ED-053: Site Analysis

ED-099: Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs
 ED-103: Reimbursement Claim/Nat'l School Lunch Program
 ED-111: Cash Management Report
 ED-114: Pre-payment Grant Budget Request
 ED-141: Statement of Expenditures Fed/State Projects
 ED-156: Fall Hiring Survey
 ED-162: Non-Certified Staff
 ED-163: CT School Data Report
 ED-166: Discipline Offense Report
 ED-165: Data Reporting - Technology
 ED-172: Request 90 Day Certification
 ED-1723: Request Temporary Authorization for Minor Assignments
 ED-175: Special Waiver for Substitute
 ED-177: Request Durational Shortage Area Permit
 ED-186: Application - Temp./Emergency coaching Permits
 ED-236: Immigrant Student Survey Report
 ED-238: Emergency Immigrant Ed Progress Report

ED-452: Debt Services Claim Form
 ED-540: Graduation Class Report
 ED-612: Language Assessment Data Collection (4 weeks)
 Family & Medical Leave Act
 Freedom of Information (FOI) Training
 Internet Protection Act for Children
 Health Education (staff)
 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA)
 Internet Protection Act for Children
 No Child Left Behind Act, NCLB

- Report results
- HOUSSE Plan

 Pesticide Application Policy
 Promotion/Graduation Requirements
 Restraint Training for Special Ed and Support Staff
 Safety and Security Analysis and Mitigation Plan
 School Records and Retention
 School Medical Advisor
 School Transportation/Safety Reporting
 SEDAC (Special Ed Information System)
 Sexual Harassment Training
 Smarter Balance Assessments-Math & ELA (Gr. 3-8, 11)
 Special Education Due Process (proactive)
 Special Education Coverage at PPTs
 Strategic School Profiles (SSP) data collection/reporting
 Student Physicals/Immunizations (Gr. K, 7, 10)

- Vision Screenings
- Hearing Screenings
- Scoliosis Screenings
- School Medical Advisor
- Related Medical Equipment

 Summer School or other supplemental services for intervention
 Teacher/Administrator Evaluations
 Five Year Technology Plan
 CAPT Readiness Computer Certification
 Transportation to Regional VOAG/Technical schools
 Truancy Reporting (10 per year)
 Youth Suicide Prevention
 504 Accommodations
 RTI – Response to Intervention
 Wellness Committee
 Wellness Policy
 Workers' Compensation

Unemployment

Family and Medical Leave Act (FLMA)

Submit Federal and State Withholding/FICA/Medicare Taxes by pay period

File Quarterly 941 tax report with the Federal Government

File Quarterly and Annually the Connecticut Withholding Tax Report

Maintain I-9s and W-4s and keep current

Issue W-2s, 1099Rs and 1099s

Comply with federal laws regarding 403(b) and 457 deferred compensation plans

State Municipal Employee Retirement Plan Monthly Reporting

State Teachers Retirement Monthly Reporting

Fund GASB 43 & 45

Annual OSHA Update Training: Asbestos Awareness, B.B.P. Ladder Safety, Lock-out, tag-out, etc.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Description

AASA	American Association of School Administrators
ADA	Americans with Disabilities
ADM	Average Daily Membership
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
AIM	Academic Innovation and Measurement
AP	Advanced Placement
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
ASBO	Association of School Business Officials
ASCD	Association of Supervision and Curriculum
ASO	Administrative Services Only
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst
CABE	Connecticut Association of School Boards
CAPSS	Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
CAPT	Connecticut Academic Performance Test
CASBO	Connecticut Association of School Business Officials
CASE	Center for Academic Support and Enhancement
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CES	Cooperative Educational Services
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CIAC	Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference
CIL	Curriculum Instructional Leader
CMT	Connecticut Mastery Test
COBRA	Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act
COSTA	Connecticut School Transportation Association
CPSS	Commission for Public Secondary Schools
CREC	Capitol Region Educational Council
DRG	Demographic Reference Group
ECS	Educational Cost Sharing (grant)
ELA	English/Language Arts
ELL	English Language Learner
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
F & CS	Family and Consumer Science
FICA	Federal Insurance Contribution Act
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GASB	Government Accounting Standards Board
GTB	Guaranteed Tax Base
HSA	Health Savings Account
HES	Hurlbutt Elementary School
IBNR	Incurred But Not Reported
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Description

IMC	Information Media Center
LA	Language Arts
LRC	Library Resource Center
MERS	Municipals Employee Retirement Services
NCEP	Net Current Expenditures
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NESDEC	New England School Development Council
NH	North House (HES)
OPEB	Other Post-Employment Benefits
OT	Occupational Therapy
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
PD	Professional Development
PE	Physical Education
PLTW	Project Lead the Way
PPO	Preferred Provider Option
PPS	Pupil Personnel Services
PPT	Planning and Placement Team
PSIS	Public School Information System
PT	Physical Therapy
PTO	Parent Teacher Organization
RTI	Response to Intervention
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SFCSA	Southern Fairfield County Superintendents' Association
SH	South House (HES)
SPED	Special Education
SRBI	Scientific Research Based Intervention
SSP	Strategic School Profile
STRB	State Teachers' Retirement Board
TBD	To Be Determined
TRB	Teachers' Retirement Board
WAA	Weston Administrators' Association
WHS	Weston High School
WIS	Weston Intermediate School
WMS	Weston Middle School
WTA	Weston Teachers' Association

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How does the 2016-2017 budget request compare to last year's budget?

A. *The Weston Public School Administrators have requested a 1.68% budget increase, which is \$813,706 more than the 2015-2016 adopted operating budget of \$48,503,782 for a total request of \$49,317,488*

Q. Has the school district been able to save money, avoid costs, and work more efficiently to preserve the educational program in the budget request?

A. *Yes, here is a list of the savings/reductions in 2015-2016:*

<i>Health Insurance contribution to the Internal Services Fund</i>	<i>311,394</i>
<i>Tuition for Outplacements</i>	<i>95,263</i>
<i>Energy</i>	<i>37,259</i>
<i>Copier Contract</i>	<i>8,455</i>
<i>Consultants for Curriculum</i>	<i>4,185</i>
<i>Zenon plant</i>	<i>3,359</i>
<i>Diesel Fuel for Buses</i>	<i>2,321</i>
TOTAL	\$462,236

Q. What would the budget increase be if we did not have these savings?

A. *The 2016-2017 budget request would have been .95% higher or reflect a 2.63% increase.*

Q. What is the Projected Enrollment for the 2015-2016 School Year?

A. *We based our budget on an enrollment of 2,374 students. This projection is 52 students less than 2015-2016 for Pre-K-12, which is spread over twelve grade levels and pre-school.*

Q. What data and needs drive the budget development process?

A. *Prior to the budget preparation process, the Board of Education develops budget assumptions, which guide how the budget is developed. These assumptions are outlined in the "Introduction" section of the budget document on pages 9 through 11. The school district's budget provides resources to support Board of Education policies, and federal and state mandates. A few examples include providing an educational program for our students with special needs, allocating resources for requirements in the No Child Left Behind legislation, revised state frameworks, and maintaining a home-to-school transportation system for our students. Employee and vendor contracts are used to calculate budget requests wherever possible. For needs that require estimates, the school district uses historical data and researches current costs to provide the best possible budget projections. The following is a list of the 2016-2017 budget drivers:*

- *Grade by grade enrollment projections*
- *Allocate staffing based on enrollment and Board of Education class size guidelines*
- *Allocate special education staffing based on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), which identify mandated services*
- *Allocate funds for out-of-district education expenses for students with special needs*
- *Provide funding for components of the district's strategic plan*
- *Reorganize and improve productivity*
- *Account for all state and federal mandates, including cost associated with the new administrator and teacher evaluation plans and Smarter Balanced Assessment*
- *Allocate funds for instructional materials (enrollment, program needs, examine 3-5 year spending patterns)*
- *Allocate funds for technology both educational technology and information technology*
- *Allocate funds for basic maintenance and grounds care (prioritize and examine 3-5 year spending patterns)*
- *Allocate funds for contracted services (transportation, energy, cleaning)*
- *Allocate for equipment and technology needs (age, condition, priorities)*
- *Prioritize instructional improvement and maintenance projects*
- *Assess the need for all stipend positions*
- *Research outsourcing and insourcing opportunities where it is cost effective*
- *Partner with the Town of Weston for joint arrangements*
- *Engage in competitive bidding (materials, services, energy)*
- *Restructure services (energy conservation program with CL&P)*
- *Revisions in collective bargaining contracts (health benefits, cost sharing)*
- *Spend wisely---Maximize every dollar!*

Q. What will the lower Elementary School program look like next year for students?

- A. *With a projected enrollment of 404 students in 2016-17, a decrease of seventeen students, the budget reflects a reduction in the number of class sections. Our most significant shift will take place in kindergarten. With a projected enrollment of 116, we will reduce one section for a total of six, with an average class size of 19.3. There are 136 students projected for first grade. The number of sections will be reduced by one for a total of seven with an average class size of 19.4. Second grade, with a projected enrollment of 152 students, will continue to have seven sections with an average class size of 21.7. This configuration maintains the Board of Education's class size guidelines while also resulting in a cost savings from the reduction of two class sections.*

Technology is embedded in learning activities in purposeful, supportive ways, providing students with multiple pathways to success. The library resource center (LRC) budget supports classroom instruction by continuing to provide a high-quality circulating collection and a wide range of resources to our students. The requested amount reflects one shelf-ready book per student for our pre-k through grade two students and includes e-books and various online accesses to support informational literacy. This rapidly evolving field enables even our youngest learners to access primary sources online and to access interactive online sites that support the district's Academic Innovation and

Measurement initiative across the curriculum. Many of these resources can be accessed by our students remotely thereby strengthening our home-school partnership.

A complete description of the Hurlbutt Elementary School's budget request can be found on pages 55 through 61 of the Budget Book.

Q. What will the Intermediate School program look like for students next year?

- A. In 2016-2017, our overall enrollment is projected to be 522 students. Enrollment in the fifth grade will increase by 8 to 192 students, while there is a projected decrease of approximately 24 students in the fourth grade. The third-grade students will see a projected increase of 7 students and will be organized in seven sections. In order to meet district class size guidelines, the total number of sections will remain unchanged for third, will be decreased by one section in fourth grade for 2016-2017 and increased by one section for fifth grade.*

The budget proposal supports our highest priority needs, which include ongoing implementation of the revised math curriculum; utilization of student data to provide individualized instruction; and the implementation of a social-emotional curriculum through the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports initiative. We will also continue to support 21st century skills by embedding the district's Academic Innovation and Measurement (AIM) initiative within and across the curriculum.

In order to prepare our students for the more advanced reading in all content areas that they will encounter, it is essential that we provide them with the foundational skills and strategies in order to become competent and confident readers and thinkers. Advanced literacy training in reader's and writer's workshop for all grade-level and special education teachers will also continue. Administrators, Curriculum Instructional Leaders, and the certified reading teachers will provide teachers and support staff with focused and ongoing training and feedback to support professional growth for improved student learning. This budget also supports intervention services in mathematics to meet the varied needs of our learners, as well as additional enrichment opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom.

A complete description of the Weston Intermediate School's budget request can be found on pages 62 through 68 of the Budget Book.

Q. What will the Middle School program look like for students next year?

- A. The proposed budget supports our district initiatives and aligns with our mission and commitment to the middle school teaming philosophy that supports smaller learning communities within the school. We have a projected enrollment for the 2016-17 school year of 587 students, which represents an increase of 5 students from the October 1st enrollment. Our teachers have received a great deal of professional growth and development from highly-trained experts to ensure Weston continues to provide exemplary instruction to our students in alignment with our strategic plan. In addition,*

there is embedded structured time for our teachers within the school day to allow collaboration and focus on curriculum development, review our students' success, ensure the middle-level years of our students are developmentally appropriate, in addition to providing time to meet with parents to support our students' growth. Monitoring the enrollment trends, the middle school continues to implement an educational design to maximize the opportunities for our students to deepen their understanding while maintaining a highly-qualified teaching staff.

A complete description of the Weston Middle School's budget request can be found on pages 69 through 79 of the Budget Book.

Q. What will the High School program look like for students next year?

- A. The projected enrollment for Weston High School is 808 students, which represents a decrease of 32 students. Specific projected enrollment differences by grade are as follows: a decrease of 31 in ninth grade, an increase of 8 in tenth grade, a decrease of 2 in eleventh grade, and, in twelfth grade a decrease of 7 students. The high school budget reflects a decrease of 0.07 FTE certified staffing.*

Our program goals align with district initiatives. In order to continue the rigorous course schedule and based on projected enrollment we are projecting a 0.20 FTE reduction in both English and Math but a 0.20 FTE increase in World Languages and Technology Education. Other changes include a 0.10 FTE increase in social studies and a 0.17 decrease in Health & Physical Education.

This budget also reflects requests to replace workbench stations in the Art Rooms as well as furniture for the Science wing.

A complete description of the Weston High School's budget request can be found on pages 80 through 92 of the Budget Book.

Q. Why is it important to maintain Interscholastic Sports Program and Co-Curricular programs?

- A. The co-curricular program is a critical component to our student's experience. Weston Public Schools have a wide array of programs including interscholastic sports, clubs, student government, intramurals and theater in which our students participate. The stipends paid to coaches and advisors for these programs are set by the Weston Teachers' Association contract.*

It is through these programs that students develop independence, confidence, and a sense of responsibility. They learn to work collaboratively and involve themselves in community service projects. Their participation serves them well as they prepare for life beyond Weston.

Regarding the Interscholastic Sports program, a total of sixty-seven coaching positions are necessary to operate the sixty-two teams. This budget does include a new girl's freshman basketball team. These paid coaching positions are necessary for us to continue to provide a safe, educationally sound environment for our student-athletes.

A complete description of the Interscholastic Sports program budget request can be found on pages 93 through 98 of the Budget Book.

Q. Do you have money in the budget to improve the educational program?

- A. Several multi-year initiatives serve as priorities for the 2016-17 budget development process, including a continuation of preK-12 math and writing goals. The overall focus in math is for students to develop a deep understanding of math concepts and strong procedural fluency to be effective problem solvers. In writing, the district continues with its goal to improve writing achievement and further align writing instruction across the district. At the elementary level, there has been an emphasis on improving writing stamina and volume with our young writers through the writers' workshop model, while at the secondary level, teachers in English and social studies are involved in the development and implementation of a writing portfolio process in grades eight and ten. Additionally there are funds set aside in curriculum and instructional improvement for AP Computer Science, AP Psychology, Creative Computer Applications, Environmental Science, Music Theory, Statistics, 6-12 Science, K-5 Social Studies and K-12 World Languages.*

In addition, the district has begun a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) initiative to enhance programs for students in these fields. The initial examination of our STEM program has resulted in three recent improvements to curricular offerings in the areas of robotics, computer programming, and high school science course sequencing. Through a grant made possible by the Weston Education Foundation, Weston Intermediate School and Weston Middle School have started after-school robotics programs that would be sustained with requests in this budget proposal. Further, the Board has recently approved an expansion of computer programming offerings based on strong student interest. Beginning in 2015-16, all students are taking biology as they enter Weston High School, which will increase elective options for students that were not possible when they took a course sequence beginning with geophysical science. The proposed budget includes resources to support these immediate enhancements to our STEM programming.

The curriculum and instruction cost center includes staffing for curriculum coaching and technology integration that is essential to an exemplary professional development program. As in previous budgets, a cadre of curriculum instructional leaders (CIL) has been included in the staffing plan. The primary responsibilities of a CIL are to provide coaching to teachers, supporting their growth, working with them to plan curriculum, and facilitating small and large group professional development activities. Similarly, technology integrators serve a vital role in the ongoing professional development of teachers in helping them incorporate educational technology into instruction. In sum, this staffing model continues to effectively advance the district's instructional initiatives by providing the necessary professional coaching support to our faculty.

A complete description of the budget request that supports educational improvements can be found on pages 109 through 117 of the Budget Book.

Q. Why is the budget organized by program into Cost Centers?

A. The program budgets or “Cost Centers” mirror the school district’s organizational structure. This structure is a reflection of how the school district allocates its resources and controls its expenditures. There are no duplications between program budgets. Therefore, budgeted expenditures in one program budget will not appear in another program budget. There are six “Academic and Student Activities Program Budgets” and there are seven “Service Program Budgets that Support the Academic & Student Activities Programs.”

- *Academic & Student Activities Program Budgets:*
 - *Hurlbutt Elementary School (does not include Pre-K)*
 - *Weston Intermediate School*
 - *Weston Middle School*
 - *Weston High School*
 - *Athletics*
 - *Special Education (includes Pre-K and out-placed students)*

Include the following:

- *Art Instruction (schools)*
- *Classroom Instruction (HES/WIS only: Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies)*
- *Center for Academic Support and Enhancement – CASE (WHS only)*
- *Computer Instruction (HES, WIS, WMS only: direct instruction to students)*
- *English (WMS/WHS only)*
- *Interscholastic Sports (Athletics only)*
- *Library Media Services (schools)*
- *Math (WMS/WHS only: Classroom instruction)*
- *Math Enrichment (in addition to classroom instruction)*
- *Music Instruction (schools)*
- *Out Placements (SPED only)*
- *Physical & Health Education Instruction (schools)*
- *Pre-School (SPED only)*
- *Reading Support (in addition to classroom instruction)*
- *Administration*
- *School/Program Wide Expenses (postage, printing, paper, etc.)*
- *Science (WMS/WHS only)*
- *Special Education (SPED only)*
- *Speech & Hearing (SPED only)*
- *Student Activities (schools)*
- *Project Challenge (SPED only)*

- *Technology Education (WMS/WHIS only)*
 - *World Language (schools)*
- *Service Program Budgets that Support the Academic & Student Activities Programs:*
 - *Pupil Personnel Services*
 - *Guidance & Counseling Services*
 - *Psychological Services*
 - *English for Non-English Speakers Services*
 - *Occupational & Physical Therapy Services*
 - *Health/Nursing Services*
 - *Curriculum & Instructional Improvement*
 - *K – 12 Curriculum & Instruction Articulation*
 - *Content Area Leadership*
 - *Professional Development*
 - *New Teacher Orientation*
 - *Citizenship Courses*
 - *Technology Integrators*
 - *Data Administration*
 - *Technology Services (Student & Administrative: All but direct instructional program)*
 - *Network Administrative Services*
 - *Software Acquisition and Maintenance Services*
 - *Hardware Acquisition Maintenance Services*
 - *Communication Services*
 - *Record Retention and Archiving*
 - *District Administrative Services*
 - *Superintendent of Schools*
 - *Human Resource Services*
 - *Business Services*
 - *Payroll & Employee Benefits*
 - *Purchasing & Accounts Payables*
 - *Building Use Management & Accounts Receivables*
 - *Food Services*
 - *Facilities Services*
 - *Operations & Custodial Services*
 - *Maintenance Services*
 - *Safety & Security Services*
 - *District-Wide Services*

- *Transportation Services*
- *Employee Benefits*
- *Liability Insurances*
- *Duplication/Mail Center*
- *Salary Allowances/Turnover Savings*

Q. Who develops the budget?

- A. *The Administrator responsible for the Program/Cost Center Budget collaborates with the staff within their schools or cost centers, curriculum and instructional leaders, administrators for the other schools and the district level. After careful review and evaluation of the program needs, the Administrator prepares a budget request for review by the entire Administrative Team.*

Q. How does the Administrative Team determine what to present to the Board of Education?

- A. *The administrators meet in the months of November and December to share and justify their budget requests with their peers. The team functions as a collaborative group of critical friends. They share best practices, ask probing questions, and ultimately develop a well thought out financial plan that supports the educational program that the community expects. The fundamental goal in this process is to maximize every dollar.*

Q. We often hear that our budget is driven by salaries and employee benefits. This is true. What are the general wage and step increases for employee contracts?

- A. *Weston Administrators' Association (3rd year of 3-year contract): GWI of 2.00%*
Weston Teachers' Association: (2nd year of 2-year contract): GWI of 1.07% plus step.
Non-Certified Staff – AFSCME: (pending negotiations)

Q. What are the changes in staffing?

- A. *The following list provides changes in staffing based on projected increases and decreases in enrollment by school:*

<i>Changes in Enrollment:</i>	<i>FTE</i>	<i>\$\$\$</i>
<i>Hurlbutt Elementary School</i>	<i>-2.19</i>	<i>-138,309</i>
<i>Weston Intermediate School</i>	<i>-0.29</i>	<i>-18,315</i>
<i>Weston Middle School</i>	<i>-0.50</i>	<i>-31,577</i>
<i>Weston High School</i>	<i><u>-0.07</u></i>	<i><u>-4,421</u></i>
	<i>-3.05</i>	<i>-192,622</i>

A. Can the Board of Education require all employees to change to a high deductible plan HSA/HRA or pay the additional cost for more expensive plans to save the school district and local taxpayers' money?

- A. *Yes, during negotiations between the Board of Education and the WAA and WTA, the parties agreed that the HSA/HRA would be the only options available to employees. The current contract with AFSCME establishes the HSA/HRA health benefits program as the standard plan for all staff. Should a staff member prefer to remain on the PPO, they must pay the additional cost.*

Q. How does the pension system work? How much does the district contribute?

- A. *The school district does not fund any portion of the pension for employees that qualify for the State Teachers' Retirement Benefit (STRB). All teachers and most administrators qualify for this benefit. Teachers contribute 7.25% of their salary for this benefit, with the State of Connecticut funding the balance. The district's non-certified employees are covered by the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS), which is administered by the State of Connecticut. Contributions to this fund are based on gross salaries, with the employees contributing 2.25% and the school district funding 11.38% for 2015-2016.*

GASB 43/45 addresses the financial obligations and associated planning for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). Based on actuarial valuations of this obligation, the district has elected to fund \$209,000 from its existing fund balance in the Internal Services Fund to pay for this obligation.

Q. Are there major increases or decreases in other areas of the budget & why?

- A. *Yes, here is a list of the major increases and decreases in 2016-2017:*

Salaries & Wages	1,055,913
Benefits	-460,780
Technology	97,409
Special Education	122,025
Facilities	9,057
Security	5,601
Curriculum	-16,557
Transportation	32,223
District Administration	-9,325
School level increases	-13,747
Copy Center	-10,275
Other	2,164
Total	813,707

Q. How has the projected reduction in state aid for Excess Cost impacted your budget?

- A. *The Excess Cost grant reduces actual expenditures for students with educational programs that cost more than 4.5 times the regular per pupil expenditure as a direct credit to the Board of Education's operating budget. However, in recent years the State of Connecticut has not fully funded the Excess Cost formula. Accordingly, the FY 2017 budget anticipates receiving 75% of the entitlement. Since there will be a few high cost students aging out of the program, the district anticipates a reduction of \$81,859 in this grant.*

Q. What do school administrators do?

- A. *Education administrators hold leadership positions with significant responsibility and provide instructional leadership as well as manage the day-to-day activities in each of our schools. Administrators set educational standards and goals and establish procedures to attain them. They supervise and evaluate teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, secretaries, coaches, and others. Administrators develop academic programs; monitor students' educational progress; train and motivate teachers and other staff; manage guidance and other student services including special education; prepare budgets; handle relations with parents, prospective and current students, and the community; and perform many other duties.*

Education administrators set the academic tone and hire, evaluate, and help improve the skills of teachers and other staff. They regularly visit classrooms, observe teaching methods, review instructional practices, and examine learning materials. They actively work with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, and set performance goals.

The ability to make sound decisions and to organize and coordinate work efficiently is essential. Since much of an administrator's job involves interacting with others---such as students, parents, teachers, and the community---a person in such a position must have strong interpersonal skills and be an effective communicator and motivator. Knowledge of leadership principles and practices, gained through work experience and formal education, is important. Research shows that leadership by the school administrator is essential to a school's effectiveness in promoting student learning.

Q. How frequently are the schools used when school is not in session?

- A. *In addition to the after-hours usage of our school buildings for school related events such as athletic, theatre, driver education, and other educational purposes, the schools are used by many community groups on nights and weekends. For example, the Parks and Recreation Department offers many programs for all age groups that use the gyms in every school such as soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball and basketball. In addition, many community groups use the school facilities including the Boys and Girls' Scouts, Brownies, Cub Scouts, the Weston Woman's League, and Weston Youth Services.*

There are also many after-school and summer sports camps held in the schools, as well as the PTO Carnival. The Kiwanis Club spaghetti suppers are held here as well. The local public elections are held at the Middle School and the High School is the Community Shelter in the event of an emergency preparedness event. The athletic fields are also in constant use by many outside groups including Parks and Recreation. The school buildings are typically in use Monday through Friday from after-school time until 9:00 pm and sometimes later. On Saturdays, the Intermediate School, Middle School and High Schools are in use and the High School is in use all day and into the late evening every Sunday.

Q. How do the budget increases for Weston compare to those of other DRG A school districts over the past 5 years (FYs 2011 – 2016)?

DRG A	Budget 6/30/2011	Budget 6/30/2012	% Increase	Budget 6/30/2013	% Increase	Budget 6/30/2014	% Increase	Budget 6/30/2015	% Increase	Budget 6/30/2016	% Increase
Darien	71,512,041	76,313,805	6.71%	79,984,182	4.81%	83,224,929	4.05%	88,135,967	5.90%	90,722,526	2.93%
Easton	14,681,549	14,962,405	1.91%	15,243,331	1.88%	15,421,810	1.17%	15,403,766	-0.12%	15,581,592	1.15%
New Canaan	71,016,250	73,122,500	2.97%	74,526,753	1.92%	77,323,274	3.75%	80,870,558	4.59%	83,200,121	2.88%
Redding	20,650,227	21,353,543	3.41%	21,635,551	1.32%	21,745,551	0.51%	21,396,502	-1.61%	21,300,000	-0.45%
Region 9	21,211,576	21,699,442	2.30%	22,022,764	1.49%	22,456,612	1.97%	22,696,603	1.07%	23,143,685	1.97%
Ridgefield	77,807,680	79,213,314	1.81%	81,269,473	2.60%	82,871,238	1.97%	85,244,727	2.86%	86,078,365	0.98%
Weston	44,697,024	45,166,338	1.05%	45,587,192	0.93%	45,575,418	-0.03%	47,364,856	3.93%	48,503,782	2.40%
Westport	95,796,003	98,095,120	2.40%	100,226,554	2.17%	104,181,513	3.95%	109,202,984	4.82%	111,171,756	1.80%
Wilton	70,276,022	72,777,608	3.56%	74,051,212	1.75%	76,140,105	2.82%	78,401,125	2.97%	79,956,024	1.98%

Q. Where can I find an electronic version of the budget?

A. *An electronic version of the budget can be found on our website at www.westonps.org*