



Programs & Services and Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

School Budget Meeting

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

Programs & Services Committee Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Leary, Auchincloss, Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo and Schwartz,

Programs & Services Committee Absent: Councilors Baker and Kalis

Finance Committee Present: Councilors Fuller (Acting Chair), Norton, Brousal-Glaser, Rice, Blazar, and Lappin

Finance Committee Absent: Councilors Ciccone; and Gentile

Also present: Ald. Albright, Cote, and Harney

City officials present: Maureen Lemieux (Chief of Staff/Chief Finance Officer), David Fleishman (Superintendent of Schools), Sandra Guryan (Deputy Superintendent / Chief Administrative Officer of Schools), Sue Dzikowski (Director of Finance; School Department), Julie Kirrane (Long-Range Planning Manager), Diana Fisher Gomberg (School Committee Member), Matt Hills (School Committee Member), Margie Ross Decter (School Committee Member), Angela Pitter Wright (School Committee Member), Margaret Albright (School Committee Member), and Ruth Goldman (School Committee Member)

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET

Superintendent of Schools David Fleishman provided the attached presentation on the budget. The presentation began with a summary of the School Department's pillars of the school budget, which include the breadth of program, class sizes, management and operation of school buildings, student services and the education infrastructure. The school administration adhered to School Committee guidelines related to incorporating system goals and student performance data, collaborating with building and program leaders to evaluate resource needs, staffing and structure needs for student essentials, and communication with the city administration throughout the budget development process.

Dr. Fleishman shared the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 system-wide goals with the Committees. The School Department will continue to promote excellence and equity in educational outcome, provide effective social and mental health supports, sustain and improve professional learning and continue to improve school facilities. The budget proposal for FY 17 is \$211,177,825, which is an increase of 3.7% over last year's budget.

The school population is projected to grow by 70 students. Larger classes are headed to the middle and high schools. Although the elementary school level will not see an increase in enrollment this upcoming year, the new elementary schools will help relieve the pressure of recent past enrollment increases on elementary school space, especially when the Zervas and Cabot Elementary Schools are complete.

There are a small number of changes to teaching personnel. One new reserve teacher position will be added to the elementary schools. . There will simultaneously be reductions of three classrooms/teachers and specialists based on the actual enrollment numbers for the upcoming year. The average class size at the elementary school level will be 20.7 students with 279 classrooms. There is an anticipated increase of 20 students at the middle school level and the School Department is planning to hire an additional reserve teacher at the middle school level. The average team size at the middle schools for Fiscal Year 2017 is 87 students. The high schools will increase by 50 students and will add one reserve teacher. There is a 1.5 reduction in the number of teachers because of a contractual change to the English cap. The average class size at the high school level in the upcoming school year is 21.8 students.

The teaching and learning goals of the School Administration are to provide excellent instructional programs that promote social and emotional learning and to close the achievement gap. The School Department is moving students to higher-level courses through programs like the Calculus Project. The program is designed to narrow the achievement gap in mathematics by promoting collaboration between students and encouraging a mindset that success equals hard work and resilience. The School Administration is also providing coaching in the areas of literacy, math and instructional technology.

The School Department will continue with its excellent student support programs. The School Department has been able to keep more middle school students in district because of programs like SPARK. SPARK is being extended to Grade 8 at Brown Middle School next year. There will be an addition of a part-time teacher to the High School Stabilization Program, a full time counselor and a part-time social worker to provide further support of student services. There are cost increases in the student services area due to escalating out-of-district tuitions, special education transportation costs, and the need for additional aide and aide specialists for compliance with individualized education programs.

The Superintendent informed the Committees that the proposed budget would fund upgrades to student and teacher computers and devices. The Schools are moving towards a new student information system, which is a major organizational change. The School Department is restructuring its Technology leadership and will be making an announcement regarding that in the next few weeks. The School Department has a strong technology team.

The Superintendent concluded his presentation with information on building operations. The largest change is the move of the pre-school program to the Aquinas facility in

the fall of 2016. There is an increase of two full-time employees in Custodial Support for the pre-school at the Aquinas building. The School Department is continuing to reduce electricity usage and will be adding credits for the new solar projects at the schools.

The proposed School Department budget for Fiscal Year 2017 is \$211,177,825, which is an increase of \$7.5 million over the Fiscal Year 2016 budget. Salaries and benefits for School Department employees total 86% of the budget and the other 14% of the budget is dedicated to expenses. The Superintendent added that he believes the proposed budget is a good budget that moves the department's initiatives forward.

Questions and Comments

School Expenses Included in the Municipal Budget

There is \$27.2 million included in the municipal budget for school related expenses: school project debt service, pension funding and retiree health care for school employees that participate in the Retirement system, and costs for crossing guards, property insurance and school nurses. The municipal budget also includes all water and sewer charges for school buildings. It would seem some of these items could be included in the School Budget. Chief of Staff Maureen Lemieux stated that Comptroller David Wilkinson would better answer the question of shifting line items into the School Budget. The Administration has stayed with almost the same budget structure as previous administrations in terms of how things are charged to the school and municipal portions of the budget. The Administration did shift the water and sewer charges from the School Department to the Public Buildings Department.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Sandy Guryan pointed out that some of the major charges like the debt service, and school nurse and retiree benefits are required to be reported to the State with a calculated allocation of city administrative services, which is an effort to compare apples to apples the true cost of providing public education from community to community. Ms. Lemieux reminded the Councilors that the crossing guards and school nurses are employees of the City not the School Department. Ms. Lemieux added that the way this Administration has done budgeting it really does not matter which budget some of these costs are placed in because the goal is to create a budget for the city and schools that addresses the needs of both entities.

It may make sense to add an additional page to the School Budget that provides the amount and what municipal funds are allocated to in the School Budget. It is important to the City Councilors to know that the School Administration is aware that municipal funds are an additional 13% of the School Budget.

State Aid

It appears that the Fiscal Year 2017 Local Aid Estimates based on the House Ways and Means Budget have increased by \$55 per pupil, which would mean an additional \$700,000 in State aid. Maureen Lemieux responded that she has not seen any notification related to the increase. The amount provided by the State on the Cherry Sheet is \$20,480,000 and that is what the Administration used to put the budget together. The \$20,480,000 reflects about a \$250,000 increase in state aid this year. The City had seen increases of between \$700,000 and \$750,000 per year in the past. With the growing enrollment in Newton Schools, it would be beneficial to see an additional increase in State aid.

How does the School Department prepare for reduced Chapter 70 funding?

The School Administration is conservative when estimating aid.

Energy Efficiency

The hallways and stairways at Newton North High School are lit up all night long. All of the other lights in the building are on timers. Is there a way to conserve some of that energy and save money by turning those lights off at night?

Director of Operations Mike Cronin reported to the School Committee that there is a project underway to put the corridor lighting at Newton North on sensors. Hopefully, the only lights on late at night at the high school will be where the custodians are cleaning.

The School Department should consider powering its scoreboards with solar energy instead of electricity. Often times the scoreboards at the high schools are on overnight, which is wasteful.

Operations

During the last School Committee meeting, the School Administration had an opportunity to welcome key new leaders. After eighteen years of terrific service from Sandy Guryan, she is retiring. It is very important to have trust and confidence in the School Department's financial and administrative leadership. There is a very skilled person coming onboard, who will have an opportunity to work with Sandy Guryan before she retires at the end of the school year. One of Sandy Guryan's lasting contributions to the Newton Schools is that she has built a terrific team. In addition, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services is retiring at the end of the year. The School Department is fortunate to have hired the Deputy Superintendent of Student Services in Brookline. There are a number of principal positions that have been filled for the upcoming school year including the principal position at Newton North High School.

Charter Maintenance

How is charter maintenance doing and how does its funding compare in this budget to the last budget?

Ms. Guryan responded that the School Department is doing well with Charter Maintenance. It is level funded from Fiscal Year 2016 to Fiscal Year 2017 at just about \$3 million. The School Department is seeing the benefits of the investments over recent years from the capital improvement projects, preventative maintenance and upgrades to boilers, roofs and windows. The School Department hired an Environmental Systems Manager, who is capable of programming all of the complex systems at the schools and Ed Center. There have been many improvements that make the \$3 million go further and as the Superintendent mentioned, this budget was about maintaining the excellent things that are happening in the School Department.

The School Department will be using some charter maintenance funding to prepare the Aquinas building for the students. The School Department is collaborating with the Public Buildings Department on charter maintenance projects and expects to get all it possibly can out of the \$3 million. The School Department believes that it can manage with a level funded Charter Maintenance Account. The money goes to repair and renovation projects during the summer, HVAC work, and to maintenance and repairs that are entered into the project management software system, School Dude, on a regular basis.

A councilor pointed out that charter maintenance is actually less than last year because the budget is increasing. The School Department is also adding a building. The School Department has spent more on charter maintenance in the past.

Sandy Guryan stated that spending in charter maintenance has leveled off due to the new buildings and new equipment. The Chair of the School Committee recently asked Director of Operations Mike Cronin about any repair needs and Mr. Cronin responded that needs are addressed. The School Department and Public Buildings Department are on top of repair and maintenance requests. There was a request that the School Administration provide a report on what repair and maintenance requests are outstanding. Ms. Guryan agreed to provide a recent report to the Council.

Dual Immersion Education

There was a Boston Globe article with the title "Massachusetts lags in teaching foreign languages." The article pointed out that other states have foreign language dual immersion programs at the elementary school level. There were a number of benefits of associated with the programs including bi-lingual students could more quickly recall information and solve problems helping their cognitive development. It also helps with closing the achievement gap

between native English speakers and immigrant students. Is dual immersion education something that the School Administration is looking at or thinking about?

Superintendent Fleishman responded that it is important to define what we mean about elementary school foreign learning. There are a couple of districts in Massachusetts where the students are learning with students who speak a second language. They spend half the day speaking in the second language and the other half of the day speaking in English. The research supports that this approach is how students learn best. The majority of language learning programs dedicate 15 minutes of the school day to learning a second language, which is not the optimum way to learn a language. The Superintendent would love to pilot an immersion program sometime down the road. It is very challenging to find qualified teachers for dual immersion programs.

Full Day Kindergarten

Is there any interest in pursuing a full day kindergarten program?

There is always strong interest in a full day kindergarten program. The School Administration supports full day kindergarten. The School Department has the teachers but not the aides to support a full day kindergarten. There is not enough flexibility in the upcoming budget to hire aides for a full day kindergarten. If the School Department had an additional \$1.2 million, it would invest in full day kindergarten.

It was pointed out that the \$1.2 million cost would cover the costs of the aides for the full day. The School Department could consider only hiring aides for the afternoon. The Superintendent responded that it is very important that the kindergarten classes have skilled aides. It is very difficult to find and it would be even more difficult to find aides that would just work in the afternoon.

SPED Costs

The budget shows that the Special Education (SPED) costs currently represent 28.8% of the School Budget. In 2007, the costs were 24.6% of the budget. They have gone from \$35.4 million to \$58.7 million this year, which is an increase of \$23.3 million or 65.8%. The total school budget increase is 41.6% over the same timeframe. The SPED growth looks to have consumed about 39% of the overall growth in the school budget, which is not sustainable. What is the thinking around SPED costs going forward?

If anyone were to look at any school budget of Newton's peer districts, the narrative is the same in terms of those increases. There are multiple reasons for it. First, Newton is getting children coming to school with more complex needs. The pre-school classes have grown in terms of students with serious physical and emotional needs. The SPED budget increases

whenever there is an increase in the number of students with significant special needs. Newton has more students with mental health needs. Rate increases and tuitions are higher than the budget increase. The number of students with significant needs drives the cost because the need for aide support. The School Department is currently looking at elementary inclusion in order to serve students in the most effective and efficient manner. Newton has very good services it is proud of but at the same time, the School Administration has to look at the future.

There have been great efforts to keep more students in district. It is possible that the costs could have been even higher if more students were out of district. It is challenging to create a budget when there is a somewhat fixed allocation and many other competing needs. The School Department must provide these services to students, which makes it even more challenging.

Art and Music

Is there been any thought to increasing art and music classes in the elementary schools?

Currently, students get ½ hour of music and 45 minutes of art each week. The Superintendent pointed out that 5th Graders have an hour of art a week, which is more than any other district offers.

Standardized Test Costs

How much do the standardized tests cost including teacher time?

The School Department does not buy the standardized tests. PARCC and Smarter Balance are both on contracts with consortiums that receive federal money to pay for the tests. It is hard to know what the costs are in terms of time because it is hard to equate the opportunity costs like implementing technology for testing and other educational programs. There is also preparation costs associated with testing.

Start time for High Schools

The School Administration is evaluating later start times for high school. The Administration will look at how it would affect the budget. The School Department should also consider the impact to the later start time for athletic practices and games. Many of the City's fields do not have lights. The Superintendent explained that it is important to get the process right and include other City departments in decisions like field use.

STEM

What are the thoughts of continuing the level of excellence in the STEM Program?

The School Department is currently in the process of hiring a new science department head at Newton North High School. Strong leadership makes a huge difference in terms of science and math programs. Newton Schools has strong leadership in those areas, which must continue. In terms of changes, coding and engineering are being brought into the curriculum and will be expanded.

The School Department is more flexible in grouping for classes, which exposes student to higher levels in different topics. There is an inter-disciplinary program initiative at Newton South High School that focuses on science, technology, the arts, and engineering. There are students studying all of those topics in an interdisciplinary way.

Student Fees

There was a request that the School Administration provide a report showing how many students participated in programs before fees were implemented and the number of students participating in each program since the fee implementation for each year that fees have been in place.

Co-Taught Classrooms

Many of the elementary schools have co-taught classrooms in Grades 3, 4, and 5. The students in these classes have special needs at the moderate to more significant level. They are in classes with two teachers, an aide and an intern. These classes are considered a cohort and when there is not a cohort of students, those classes do not continue.

Contracts

The contract negotiations were very protracted and challenging and it was not an easy thing to address the needs and the challenge of maintaining a fiscally maintainable settlement. A significant amount of effort went in during negotiations examining the impacts on the budget over multiple years. Everybody involved in negotiations takes pride in the agreement that was finally reached. The budget works in terms of the School Department contracts and salary growth.

Sandy Guryan and Maureen Lemieux worked together on the benefits line item for the School Budget. There is an increase of 5% in the budget line item for benefits, which is enough to fund the benefit increases for the next fiscal year. There is only a 1% difference between this fiscal year's salary and benefits number and next fiscal year's salary and benefits.

The contracts are sustainable and there should be zero expectation that there will be any problems funding the increases that are part of the contracts.

Capital Improvement Plan

Progress continues on the ongoing school building projects at the Zervas and Cabot Elementary Schools. The School Department recently submitted the statement of interest for the Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School to the Massachusetts Building Authority. In the upcoming year, the School Department will work on providing information to both the Cabot and Lincoln-Eliot communities on the plans for both schools. It will be important to understand how the plan for the Lincoln-Eliot School fits into the upcoming Capital Improvement Plans.

There have been no significant changes to the School Department's capital improvement projects. In terms of need, the Ward Elementary School continues to be the next school that needs to be addressed.

Committee Actions

Councilor Schwartz and Councilor Brousal Glaser moved approval in Programs & Services and Finance Committees respectively and both motions carried unanimously. Councilor Hess-Mahan moved approval of the School Department's budget in Programs & Services and Councilor Lappin moved approval of the School Budget in the Finance Committee. The Committee voted unanimously to support the motions for approval.

The Committees adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruthanne Fuller, Acting Chair
Finance Committee

John Rice, Chair
Programs & Services Committee

NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NEWTON, MA

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE
APPROVED**

FY17 BUDGET

APRIL 13, 2016

PILLARS OF A SCHOOL BUDGET

1. Breadth of program
2. Class sizes
3. Facilities management and operations
4. Student services programming
5. Educational infrastructure:
(professional development, curriculum,
technology, administrative support)

FY17 BUDGET PROCESS

Adhere to School Committee Guidelines

- Incorporate system goals and student performance data
- Collaborate with building and program leaders to assess resource needs
- Review staffing and structures needed for current student essentials
- Communicate often between school and city administrations

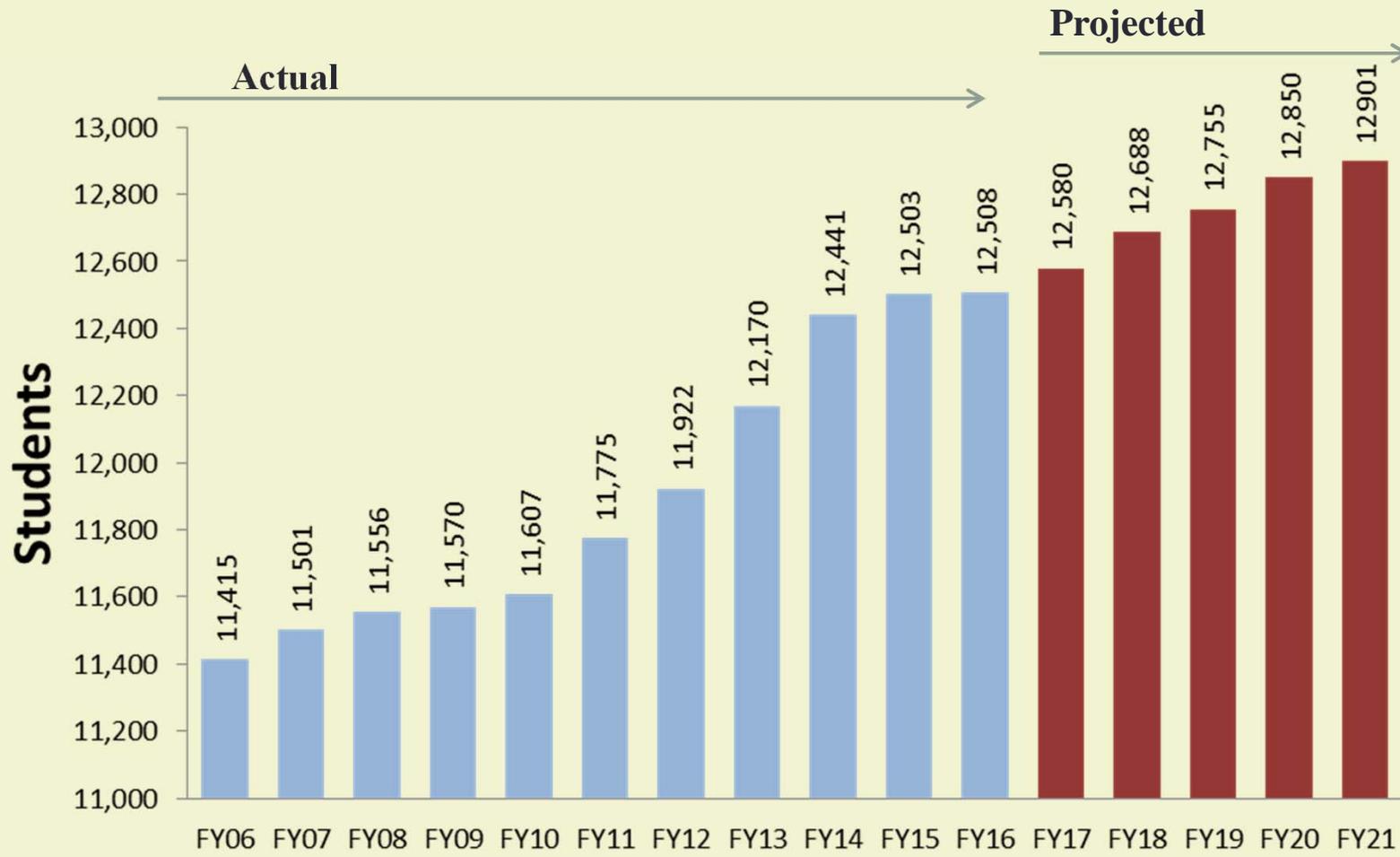
SYSTEMWIDE GOALS

- Promoting excellence and equity in educational outcomes
- Providing effective social and emotional learning and mental health supports
- Sustaining and improving professional learning and collaboration at all levels
- Improving and expanding facilities

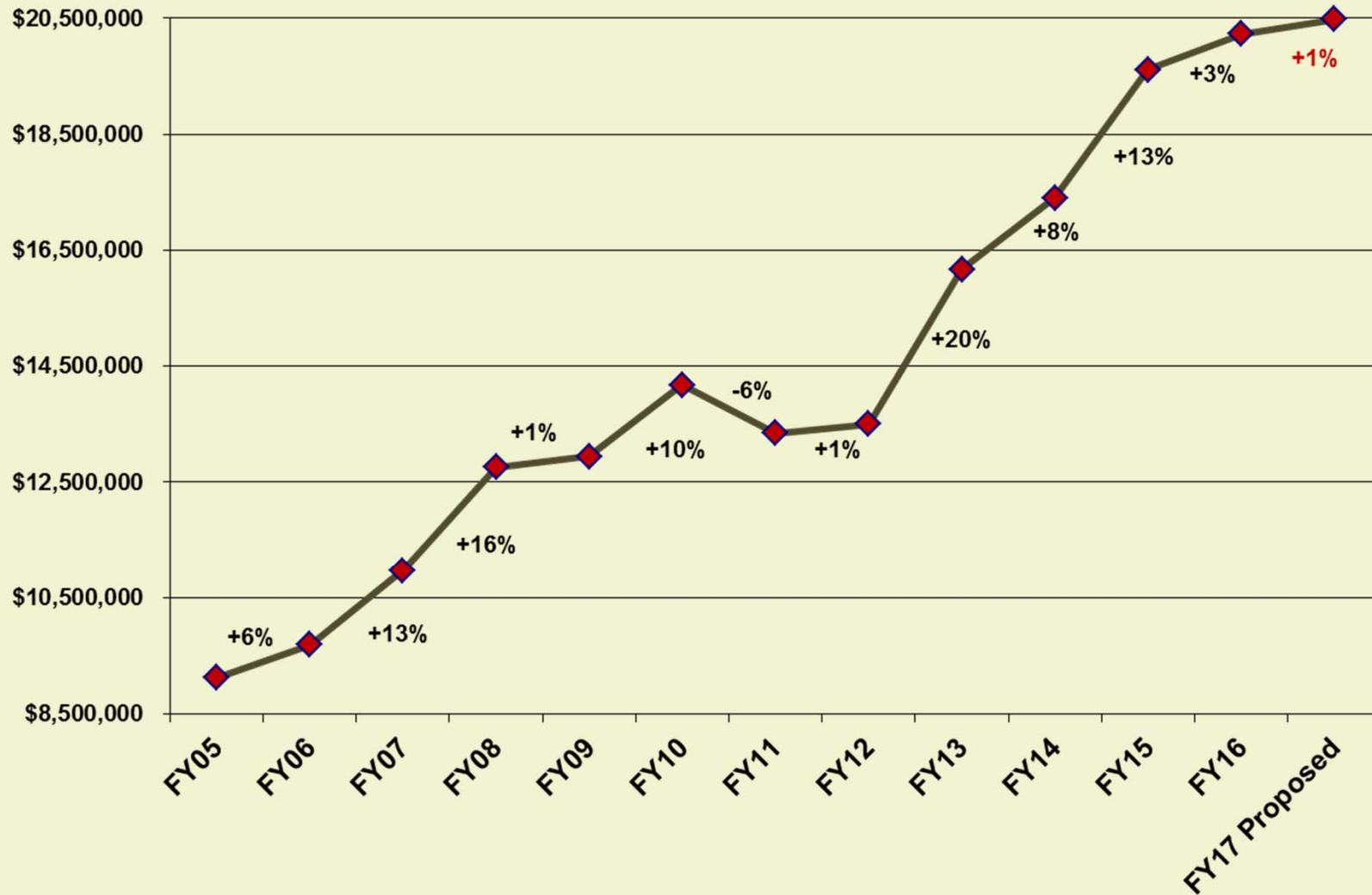
FY17 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Salaries and Benefits	\$181,204,575	86%
Expenses	\$29,973,250	14%
Total Request	\$211,177,825	100%
FY17 Increase	\$7,466,913	
Increase	3.7%	

ENROLLMENT TRENDS



MASSACHUSETTS C.70 EDUCATION AID FOR NEWTON



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Stable enrollment
- Add instructional support staff for coverage
- Add 1.0 FTE reserve teacher
- Reduce 3.0 classrooms/teachers based on enrollment, with corresponding specialist reduction

279 classrooms, average class size of 20.7 students

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- Projected increase of 20 students
- Add 0.5 FTE reserve teacher
- Balance team sizes based on enrollment

Maintain average team size of 87 students

HIGH SCHOOLS

- Projected increase of 50 students
- Add 0.5 FTE reserve teacher
- Reduce 1.5 FTE teachers due to:
 - Contractual change to English cap
 - Match staff to enrollment

Average class size of 21.8 students

TEACHING & LEARNING

Continue excellent instructional programs

- Social and emotional learning
- Achievement Gap
 - Enrollment in higher level courses
 - Year 4 of the Calculus Project summer program
- Coaching
 - Literacy
 - Math Coaches
 - Instructional Technology
- Curriculum alignment and coherence
- Data informed instruction and intervention

STUDENT SERVICES

Continue excellent student support programs

- Extend citywide SPARK program to Grade 8 at Brown
- Add 0.5 FTE teachers to High School Stabilization program
- Add 1.0 FTE Counselor and 0.5 FTE Social Worker
- Reduce elementary co-taught classrooms based on student needs

Cost Increases:

- Out-of-district tuition
- Special education transportation
- Aides and aide specialists for compliance with Individualized Education Programs

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Upgrade student and teacher computers and devices
- Reduce 0.5 FTE for restructuring organizational change
- Reduce/review instructional software and software subscriptions
- Support and maintain technology infrastructure
- Continue implementation of the Student Data System

OPERATIONS

Operations

- Add 2.0 FTE custodial support for Aquinas
- Increase use of school buildings revenue

Utilities

- Add credits for new solar projects
- Reduce electricity usage for citywide efficiency projects

Systemwide

- Increase contractual yellow bus rate
- Reduce advertising, districtwide equipment and furniture