



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

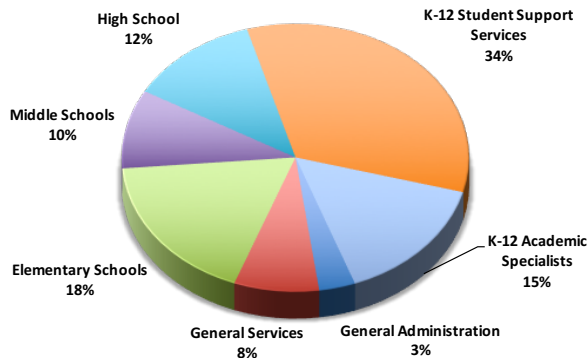
December 10, 2019

To: Needham School Committee
From: Daniel E. Gutekanst, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Re: FY21 Budget Proposal

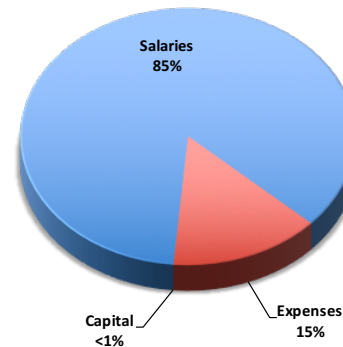
Enclosed, please find the proposed FY 2020/21 operating budget for the Needham Public Schools. The proposed plan totals \$80,943,823 and represents a \$4.9 million, 6.5% increase over the current budget year.

FY21 Budget Summary

FY 20/21
Superintendent's Recommended Operating Budget
Expenditures by Program Area
\$80,943,823



FY 2020/21
Superintendent's Recommended Operating Budget
Expenditures by Line Item Category
\$80,943,823



This request provides the resources required to address existing staff contractual obligations, enrollment growth, special education needs, and the District's Portrait of a Needham Graduate Five-Year Strategic Plan.

The two key components of the budget plan include **Level Service Requests** and **Program Improvement Requests**.

- **Level Service Requests**

Level service requests represent the resources required to bring existing and necessary programs, contracts, and staffing levels into the new fiscal year. In order to maintain class sizes at acceptable levels, additional classroom, administrative, and special education resources are required and included as part of level service.

- *Contractual Salary Increases.* Negotiated contracts for all existing employees account for \$2.9 million, about 60% 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 64 pupils in FY21, with 75% of this increase occurring at the elementary level and 25% occurring at the secondary school level. A total of 2.4 classroom Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) are proposed for Pollard, and 1.5 classroom FTE are proposed for the high school. A total of .77 FTE for elementary classroom teaching and math intervention support also is included. Assistant principal positions at High Rock, Mitchell, Sunita L. Williams, and Eliot are proposed to increase by a total of .8 FTE.

- *Special Education and Student Support Service Costs.* Increases in the number of special education students being served, special education tuition, and other mandated service costs amount to \$1.3 million of the new funds requested, and include 8.1 FTE new special education, counseling, and English Language Learner (ELL) teachers and 2.09 FTE teacher assistants and administrative support. The need to provide additional resources for professional services, which includes consultation, testing, counseling, and home services, is significantly increased and rising tuition costs for students requiring services outside of the district are also reflected in this budget plan. The most significant component of the plan, however, is to address inequities in the number of students served within our schools and adjust and balance the caseloads of special educators to ensure they are able to meet student needs and build program capacity within each school.

- **Program Improvement**

Program Improvement requests are meant to create, enhance, improve, or expand programs to serve student and school needs. Due to the necessity of funding Level Service needs, it was not feasible to include much of the over \$790,000 in program improvement initiatives sought by principals and program leaders. However, funds totaling \$100,633 for key teacher leader stipends, high school textbooks, and technology infrastructure are proposed as part of this budget plan.

I recognize that we have developed a plan that seeks more funding than the Town's projections for revenue initially support. 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 and address our strategic priorities. Additional details about the budget plan follow.

FY21 Budget Development Process and Priorities

The FY21 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 Portrait of a Needham Graduate Strategic Priorities
- 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 FY21

The FY21 capital budget request totals \$1,991,143 and includes \$788,743 in technology and equipment replacement requests, and \$1,202,400 in facility-related requests. The facility requests include: \$392,400 to create new classrooms at the Broadmeadow and Eliot Schools, \$650,000 in feasibility study funds to implement the priority project recommended by the ongoing School Master Plan study, and \$160,000 in other funds to study recommend improvements to the school auditorium spaces and the potential use of the Hillside School as swing space for future school projects.

The technology and equipment replacement requests include:

- \$586,575 for school technology;
- \$35,000 for school furniture;
- \$62,420 for copier replacement; and
- \$104,748 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.