

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE
OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE



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TO: Linus J. Guillory Jr., Superintendent
FROM: School Committee
DATE: October 25, 2024
RE: *FY26-30* Budget Guidelines

The School Committee is responsible for approving and overseeing the District's annual budget (educational plan). In accordance with our responsibilities, we present our suggested multi-year guidelines to (1) inform construction of the budget for the upcoming and future fiscal years, (2) allow us to review all spending proposals through a shared lens, (3) guide us as we make difficult, important choices, and (4) enable us to maintain a relentless focus on our priorities.

Since last year's guidelines, the *FY24-27* strategic plan has been finalized, which will drive the vast majority of the upcoming budget decisions. With this shared understanding of the importance of the strategic plan in guiding the budget, the **primary guideline for *FY26-30*** continues to be that all activities described in the strategic plan (and future iterations thereof) will have clearly identifiable funding in the budget and will be described as part of the work of the relevant unit(s) in their budget narrative.

Conversely and to the extent possible, activities that are clearly not aligned with the strategic plan will be identified and a strategy (multi-year and/or starting in later years as needed) for exiting, aligning or deprioritizing these activities will be described. This is important for the additional focus on our priorities and to support long-term budget sustainability.

Further, the School Committee affirms its commitment to full funding for the district's literacy initiative, including curriculum materials and professional development aligned with the Science of Reading.

Above and beyond this emphasis on the budget as the strategic plan, specific guidelines include:

1. **STAFFING/ENROLLMENT:**

a. For *FY26*: Ensure class sizes at the high school remain closer to recent historical trends. Leverage K-12 enrollment forecasts to identify where positions can be shifted. Maintain K-8 class sizes within guidelines.

b. In *FY28*: Return World Language as a robust option in lower elementary grades. Will require planning in *FY27*. This time frame is to allow for intensive focus on literacy roll-out through *FY26*.

c. Upon the availability of federal and/or state subsidies: Establish universal pre-Kindergarten.

2. **EDUCATIONAL EQUITY:**

a. For FY26: Continue to fund Extended School Year (ESY) programming that increases access to ESY by providing coordinated wraparound opportunities, including but not limited to socioemotional learning, therapeutic recreational activities and enrichment.

b. For funding no later than the year following any adoption: Should a policy on life of the school be adopted that requires funding to implement policy, identify said funding.

c. By FY26: Fund an educational equity strategy, to be articulated by the Office of Educational Equity and approved by School Committee, that right-sizes the resources directed towards educational equity, whether they are centralized or decentralized.

d. By FY29: Fund robust summer programming that meets a variety of student needs – for example, expanding summer offerings for high school students to provide enrichment and so that those on IEPs may access summer electives. We encourage partial/full implementation to begin in earlier fiscal years, as resources allow.

3. **BUDGET:**

a. For FY26: align SIP process as part of budget cycle. Ensure that the PSB budget reflects each school's priorities and goals as described in their SIP, such as improving student outcomes, enhancing teacher development, or expanding extracurricular programs. All spending should support the broader mission of the school, be tracked against goals, and regularly measured/reported.

b. Continuing in FY26: Return to prior practice of holding reserve funds for a limited number of staff. This can be done over multiple years to lessen the impact of any one year.

c. By FY26: Because of the importance of the strategic plan in driving all decisions, dashboards should be developed that will allow stakeholders to track the plan's progress.