



The Public Schools of Brookline

Town Hall

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TO: Linus J. Guillory Jr., Superintendent
FROM: School Committee
DATE: September 18, 2024
RE: *FY26-30 Budget Guidelines* (first draft)

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 inform construction of the budget for the upcoming and future fiscal years. The intent is that the guidelines will enable us to review all spending proposals through a shared lens and will guide us as we make difficult, important choices. Adhering to these guidelines will 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. These guidelines are not intended to supplement (not supplant) the strategic plan through its conclusion, and to guide planning in the years beyond FY27. The strategic plan should serve as the center of gravity for the district's decision-making - independent of any changes in staff leadership or School Committee membership. This will maximize district stability and long-term planning capacity, subject to funding availability. ~~Importantly, this document is being drafted in parallel with the strategic plan/educational plan that you and your team are finalizing. In the absence of a final strategic plan, it is imperative that the leadership team ensure alignment with the plan as it stands in January when the preliminary budget is presented.~~

~~The proposed guidelines continue to take a multi-year approach, which will continue to serve us well as we develop coherence between the budget and the strategic plan that is currently in final revisions.~~ ¶

With this shared understanding of the importance of the strategic plan in *guiding the budget*, and the budget as the annual education plan, the **primary guideline for FY26-30** ~~25-29~~ is 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. *We appreciate the initial work that was presented by Drs. Fortuna and Givens in August 2024 to identify activities which will need funding to be identified, and look forward to the final results of this work.* ¶

Conversely and to the extent possible, activities that are clearly not aligned with the strategic plan will be identified and defunded or a strategy (multi-year and/or starting in later years as needed) for exiting these activities will be described. This is doubly important, not only for the additional time/focus this gives us on our priorities, but also to support long-term budget sustainability. This primary guideline has not changed from last year's guidance. ¶

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Because of the importance of the strategic plan in driving all decisions, we want to reiterate the need for ~~To the extent that~~ dashboards that will allow stakeholders ~~or other tools for staff~~ to track the plan's progress. Funding must be included for the development of these or equivalent data analytics tools in FY26 if they are not complete by the end of calendar year 2024 (i.e. the end of Q2 2025). ~~If those are not complete by the end of FY24, resources should be directed so these are developed in FY25.~~

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Above and beyond this ~~emphasis~~ **specific activities described in** on the budget as the strategic plan, specific guidelines include:

1. **STAFFING/ENROLLMENT:**

- a. ~~For FY265: Ensure~~**Address** class sizes at the high school ~~remain to ensure class sizes are~~ closer to recent historical trends, with fewer larger classes, and broader availability of science classes for more students. Leverage ~~new K-12~~ enrollment forecasts to identify where positions can be shifted.
- b. ~~For FY25: Provide resources (for staffing and space adaptation) to transition to a full-day model, and return BEEP classrooms from Clark Road to the elementary schools and/or high school.~~ ¶

2. **EDUCATIONAL EQUITY:**

- a. ~~For FY265: Continue to f~~**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 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 FY25:~~ To the extent possible, provide funds for approved School Improvement Plan activities to be expended at the building level.¶
- b. ~~Starting in~~ **For FY26:** align SIP process as part of budget cycle to ensure SIP activities are identifiable and funded in the budget. ~~SIPs for FY26 will need to be adopted in late spring FY24 to allow for incorporation of the SIP into the FY26 budget which is created in FY25.~~
- c. **Continuing** ~~Starting in FY265:~~ 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.