



## The Public Schools of Brookline

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TO: Linus J. Guillory Jr., Superintendent  
FROM: School Committee  
DATE: September 25, 2024  
RE: *FY26-30 Budget Guidelines (first draft)*

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Alternative intro: The following is general guidance meant to assist the administration of the Public Schools of Brookline in preparing the budget for the 2026-2030 fiscal years. The School Committee would like to see a budget that reflects the mission and vision of the Public Schools of Brookline and articulated in our six goals (Joy in Learning; Excellence in Teaching; Culture of Collaboration; Celebration of Difference; Commitment to Equity; and Ethic of Wellness)."

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 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.

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** 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. Because of the importance of the strategic plan in driving all decisions, we want to reiterate the need for dashboards that will allow stakeholders 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).

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, with fewer larger classes, and broader availability of science classes for more students. Leverage K-12 enrollment forecasts to identify where positions can be shifted.
- b. **For FYXX:** Return World Language as a K-12 program.

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 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 to ensure SIP activities are identifiable and funded in the budget.
- 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.

Alternative suggestion for fewer priorities:

- Maintaining class sizes that fall as far as possible below class size guidelines;

- Supporting educational equity initiatives that meaningfully address disparities in educational experiences across demographic groups, including age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, learning differences, linguistic ability, national origin, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status; and
- Developing policies and procedures that continue to rationalize PSB budget processes, including aligning the SIPs with the budget cycle and returning to the prior practice of holding reserve funds for a limited number of staff.