

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE
FY 2018 SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET DEVELOPMENT
GUIDELINES AND PRIORITIES
VOTED 9/22/2016**

The Brookline School Committee (BSC) is responsible for approving and overseeing the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) annual budget. In accordance with those responsibilities, the BSC annual process begins with this statement of priorities and guidelines to inform the Superintendent's initial construction of a budget for the next fiscal year.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The budget should serve to accomplish the Public Schools of Brookline **Strategic Plan Goals**:

1. Every Student Achieving
2. Every Student Invested in Learning
3. Every Student Prepared for Change and Challenge
4. Every Educator Growing Professionally

The BSC urges the Administration to follow these **best practice principles** for budget development:

1. Emphasize transparency and accountability in the development, presentation, and management of the annual budget, with expenditures and/or reductions expressed in a format readily understandable by the public and anchored in clear goals, initiatives, and supporting investments for both the district as a whole and for individual program budgets¹.
2. Describe the effect on the teaching and learning experience (i.e. students, families, and staff) of any proposed budget changes that are substantive (increases and decreases).
3. Minimize reliance on one-time revenues for ongoing operating budget needs.
4. Plan adequate contingency funds for uncertainties and fluctuations in known areas of budget pressure such as (but not limited to) enrollment, special education, and State budget commitments.
5. Maintain solvency within Revolving funds (such as school lunches and adult education).
6. Seek savings through efficiencies within existing programming and/or staffing before seeking additional revenue, provided the proposed change(s) achieve both sustainable improvements in teaching and learning as well as operational efficiencies.
7. Continue the sustainable growth budget model urged by the 2007 Override Study Committee (OSC), approved by the BSC in 2008, and affirmed by the 2014 OSC: ... "consistent with our obligations to engage in good faith bargaining pursuant to M.G.L.c. 150E, [the BSC will] incorporate into our approach to bargaining in the coming year the approach recommended in the Override Study Committee Report of January 2008 on managing total personnel costs, so that the combination of salaries, employee health benefits, and staffing levels grow at a sustainable rate."

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT CURRENT CONDITIONS & PRIORITIES

The FY 2018 budget will be the third year of a three-year override budget. It will also be the first year of 5-year financial projections for the Town of Brookline which will likely produce structural deficits for the Town budget requiring additional funding to sustain. The budget should remain consistent with the investment priorities outlined by the PSB for the override voted on May 5, 2015, and in particular **maintain the BSC's ongoing commitments** to:

1. Low student-to-teacher ratios, especially in the early grades;
2. Program Review—a periodic fact-based evaluation and revision of our core programs for students;
3. Student and staff diversity and equity, including but not limited to the METCO program and educator and administrator recruitment;

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4. District-wide capacity to collect, analyze, and use student assessment data to understand both individual student growth and longitudinal trends for the district;
5. Evidence-based student achievement initiatives such as the Literacy Initiative, the Benchmark Assessment System, the Calculus Project, and training for inclusion in collaboration with the Landmark School;
6. K-12 art, music, foreign language, recess, and physical education as part of the school day.

The budget should also reflect the following current conditions and priorities:

1. **Special Education:** The PSB should continue to invest in high quality in-district programming and inclusion classrooms for students with special needs, as well as identify targeted investments and innovations in district-wide programs.
2. **Educational Equity:** In March 2016, the School Committee reviewed a Student Achievement Report that highlighted large and persistent gaps in achievement and inequity of student access to opportunities by race, income, special needs and language. The budget should support and invest in core education program areas that address inequities, and program budget narratives should highlight how resources are being deployed to address inequities.
3. **Collective Bargaining:** The BSC approved one-year collective bargaining agreements with all its unions to cover Fiscal Year 2015, but those contracts have all expired as of September 1, 2015. We are currently in negotiations for a new multi-year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Brookline School Committee and the Brookline Educators Union (BEU). The budget should reflect new contracts consistent with the sustainable growth budget model indicated above.
4. **State Mandates:** The BSC expects the PSB to continue to budget to meet the demands of various mandated initiatives. Mandated initiatives for 2017 will include:
 - a. **Educator Evaluation.** Piloted in 2013-14 with system-wide implementation in 2014-15, the new system requires changes in both training and supervision, with additional implications for personnel hiring and assignment. Commitment to evaluation and development for our teachers and school leaders is a critically important pillar of our educational system.
 - b. **Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL).** Effective, July 1, 2016, all licensed educators are required (teacher and administrators) to earn a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher Endorsement. Most educators earn their RETELL SEI Teacher Endorsement by completing the 45-hour graduate-level Teacher Endorsement course. The impact to the district is that if a student has a non-RETELL endorsed teacher, they cannot have any unendorsed teacher for the rest of their time at the Public Schools of Brookline.
 - c. **Legislative and DESE regulatory changes.** The PSB will review and update policy, guidelines, and services in accordance with new legislative mandates and DESE regulatory changes.
5. **Special Revenue Funds.** Review and analyze the sustainability of reliance on these funds for basic and specialized program needs, including but not limited to reductions to the Kindergarten grant that will be implemented in FY 2017.
6. **Educational Technology:** This includes key investments required for phased implementation of a robust and flexible technology infrastructure:
 - a. Innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and equitable and universal access to advanced technology for all our students in a growing School population
 - b. Financial implications of changes to the Information Technology governance structure between the PSB and the Town of Brookline
 - c. Costs of implementing and supporting a new statewide testing system
7. **Operating Implications of Capital Budget:** Continued enrollment growth has had, and will continue to have both operating and capital implications. The pressing needs of the schools for physical expansion and the operations budgets for those buildings are inextricably linked: limitations and/or expansions in the physical plant can drive decisions about class sizes, the number of courses offered and other

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program choices, and rental space—all of which have implications for the operating budget. The PSB Administration should plan for and highlight those incremental operating costs in the 2018 budget.

Submitted by the Brookline School Committee as voted on September 22, 2016.

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ⁱ High level guidelines for program budget narratives:

1. Program Purpose and Description
2. FY17 Goals and Demonstrated Progress
3. FY18 Goals, Initiatives and Investments, with specific reference to:
 - a. Strategic plan goals this program advances
 - b. Investments to improve educational equity
4. Budget detail