

Wachusett Regional School District
Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

January 22, 2016

To: *Wachusett Regional School District Committee*

Lance Harris, Chair	Lauren Maldonado
Robert Imber, Vice-chair	Robert McCarthy
Scott Brown	Kenneth Mills
Thomas Curran	Jon Edward Novak
Michael Dennis	Steve Porter
Matthew Ehrenworth	Barbara Renzoni
Harriet Fradellos	Asima Silva
Susan Hitchcock	Christina Smith
Stacey Jackson	Megan Weeks
Sarah LaMountain	Charles Witkes
Linda Long-Bellil	Adam Young

From: Darryll McCall, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: Annual School Committee Retreat

In preparation for Monday evening's Annual School Committee Retreat, attached please find a memo answering some budgeting questions asked and also addressing priorities listed by School Committee members who responded to the survey I sent out mid-December, seeking School Committee input on what should be considered top priorities as we develop the FY17 budget (attachment 1). This memo, as well as the budget PowerPoint presentation which we will make Monday evening, should serve as vehicles for our budget discussions at Monday's meeting.

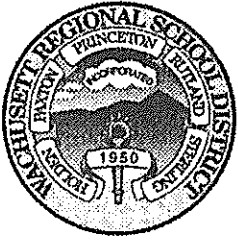
DRAFT 2016-2017 School Calendar

You will see on the agenda for Monday's meeting approval of the 2016-2017 school calendar. Aside from FY17 budget deliberations, approval of the calendar for the coming school year will be the only Committee action taken on Monday evening. Attached is a copy of the draft calendar for your review in advance of Monday (attachment 2).

Also attached are the meeting agenda and the updated posting (attachments 3 & 4).

Should you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

cc: Executive Staff
DM:rlp



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From: Darryll McCall, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools 

RE: Educational Priorities and Budget Standards for FY17

In advance of the School Committee Annual Retreat Monday evening (January 25th), I want to share with the Committee some background information and to answer questions posed by members over the past several weeks.

Some of the figures in this document are estimates, but I did my best to get as close to a true dollar amount as possible for budgeting purposes. An important reminder for all of us as we enter this process is that we have been told that our health insurance increase for FY17 will most likely be up to 15%. This, along with negotiated employee contract obligations, will result in an overall budget increase of several percentage points before any consideration of increases for other line items.

Based on School Committee responses to a survey asking members to share their budget priorities, below we have addressed those areas considered top priorities by School Committee members who responded to the survey.

TECHNOLOGY

Given the importance of technology in our District, we are committed to increasing our technology footprint in all buildings. This year, with the increase in our technology budget, over 150 computers with 17 inch monitors have been purchased and are being distributed throughout

the District. By the end of this school year, when Mountview goes online, we will have replaced all CRT monitors with energy-saving flat panel LCD monitors in the District and will have upgraded many of our outdated computers.

Barry Sclar, Supervisor of Information Services, stressed the importance of providing adequate support personnel and training for teachers in order to effectively infuse technology into daily instruction. At one time in the not so distant past, our District had a Technology Specialist in each building and two Model Tech teachers who worked District-wide. Since that time, our overall technology staff has been reduced from 18 FTE's to 10 FTE's.

When looking at other technology needs in the District, replacing outdated computers at the high school should be a high priority. We are evaluating the potential cost savings of replacing some of the high school Mac labs with PC labs as the programs used by students are increasingly web-based and platform independent. This may allow us to begin moving toward a hybrid model of having PC and Mac computers at the high school over the next several years.

Potential Technology needs to properly administer MCAS 2.0 in 2019

This is unclear at this time for the following reasons:

- State DESE officials have not even begun to develop an online test
- We have no information about test compatibility with any specific devices
- We do not know how the testing windows will be structured
 - This is important because it would help us estimate the number of simultaneous student testers we will need to accommodate

However, if we use the technical requirements for the online version of PARCC along with the current MCAS testing schedule as a basis for planning, a reasonable estimate would be as follows:

- One Chromebook cart for every 50 students in each grade subject to testing
 - Approximately 68 carts at \$8,200 each - \$557,600 total
- 100% Increase in Internet bandwidth at each site
 - Approximately \$30,000 per year after eRate discount

General Technology Needs

1. Desktop Computers

- Desktop computers continue to be our top priority because they represent the largest share of our overall device count and we remain years behind an effective replacement cycle
- Technology funding in the FY16 budget allowed us to begin catching up
- A significant number of District computers still run Windows XP which is no longer updated by Microsoft and, therefore, vulnerable to new types of malware

2. Staff Laptops at WRHS

- A large number of staff laptops are well overdue for replacement
- Many are not fully operational, requiring an external keyboard or mouse in order to function

3. Chromebook Carts in All Schools

- Two new Chromebook carts in each school would cost approximately \$200,000
- Chromebooks have proven to be highly effective devices for our students
- They are inexpensive, easy to use, and easy to manage
- Adding Chromebook carts would be the most affordable and effective way to increase student access to technology in our district
- The mobile cart model alleviates the need to invest in large WiFi installations since a wireless access point travels with each cart

4. School Server Upgrades

- The servers located in most schools are now over seven years old and well beyond any warranty coverage

Current eRate Funding Information

The District receives eRate reimbursement funds for Internet access and phone services. Our reimbursement amounts for the 2015-16 school year are as follows:

- Internet Access - \$64,235
 - The District receives a 50% discount on eligible Internet costs
 - This rate is fixed and the funds are guaranteed
- Phone service - Approximately \$10,000 (based on monthly phone bill estimates)
 - Phone reimbursement is being phased out by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)
 - This year, the District will receive 30% reimbursement of eligible phone costs
 - Next year (FY17) the District's phone reimbursement will fall to 10%
 - In FY18, the District will no longer receive eRate funds for phone service

Additional eRate Opportunities

The eRate system has been recently modified to provide more funding for internal network equipment. In the past, because the District does not rank among the most needy, our only guaranteed eRate funds were limited to Internet and phone reimbursements. Under the new rules, however, the District may qualify for 50% reimbursement on network switches, WiFi network equipment, and associated installation costs. We could, therefore, apply for this additional funding as long as we could commit to 50% of the project costs.

At this time, there are two significant factors preventing this course of action:

- Internal network equipment is not among the District's top technology priorities because it is not currently one of the areas of greatest need
 - We would, for instance, prefer to invest in greater Internet bandwidth, which is already eRate eligible
 - Network switches have been replaced and upgraded as needed over the years from the existing technology budget
 - We also continue to face greater needs in replacing outdated computer equipment which is not eligible for eRate

- eRate applications must be submitted several months prior to the start of the fiscal year in which the funds will be awarded
 - This means we would need to commit to funding a project months before the District's budget is even approved

CLASS SIZE

When looking at class size, it is important to remember that the student population in the WRSD continues to fluctuate. After seeing a flat line of our pupil population, we have recently seen a slight increase in a few schools.

I have met with all 13 principals over the past two weeks in order to discuss budget issues, including class size. In the past, the School Committee has requested that I quantify the number of teachers we would need to increase in order to meet the School Committee policy on recommended class size. In k-8, we would have to hire at least 19 FTE's to comply with the policy. At the middle and high school levels, schedules would have to be revamped completely in order to define areas of need associated with class size. A rough estimate could be that at least 20 additional FTE's would need to be added to District staff.

There are classes at the elementary level that would benefit from smaller class sizes as their numbers are not aligned with those of other comparable grade levels in the District. Both Dawson and Glenwood would each benefit from an additional classroom teacher to offset large class sizes at specific grade levels, while Davis Hill could reduce a teacher because of reduced enrollment.

TEXTBOOK/INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

In FY16 we committed to a budget of \$150,000 for textbooks, which we will maintain for the FY17 budget. With the purchase of textbooks at the high school last year, we made a small dent in the overall textbook needs for grades 9-12. We are continuing to work with Department Heads at WRHS to define areas of need associated with aging texts.

We are also committed to our on-going investment in Eureka Math which is a cost of approximately \$100,000 per year.

As the Instructional Support line was decreased in years past, so has the amount of money spent per pupil. In FY16, the Instructional Support budget was doubled to \$150,000 and we will continue to maintain that dollar amount for FY17.

BUILDING SAFETY AND SECURITY

With the increased communication between the District and our local safety officials, we have forged a strong relationship around student and staff safety and security. We meet monthly to review safety and security protocols, do building walk-throughs, and review safety concerns from the building level. These meetings have been highly beneficial and the relationship between our public safety officers and District administration has never been stronger.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I have worked closely with the WREA and administrative team this year on refining how our professional development program needs to be modified moving forward. With the late addition of Robert Berlo as the Deputy Superintendent, much of Mr. Berlo's focus over the next several months will be to help define a professional development program that supports teachers' educational growth and licensure requirements. We have increased the professional development line to support a program that will provide a professional development structure that will allow for teachers to gain the necessary professional development required for relicensure.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

With the passage of the FY16 budget, we had the opportunity to add three Middle School Counselor positions. Because the budget approval and the subsequent hiring occurred late in the year, we will assess the social/emotional program in its entirety during the FY17 school year and will make recommendations accordingly.

LATE BUSES AT WRHS

According to AA Transportation, the addition of late buses at WRHS (two runs per school day to each town) would cost \$190,000. One run per day for each town would cost \$95,000.

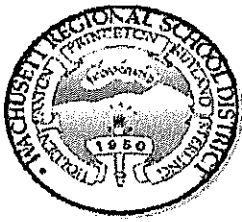
STAFFING OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES

The cost to reinstate Library Paraprofessionals to all of our buildings, with the exception of the ECC and WRHS (the high school has a certified library specialist on staff) would be approximately \$275,000. This includes a projection that 8 of the 11 positions would enroll in the district health insurance system.

The cost to add 11 certified Library/Media Specialists would be approximately \$700,000.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES AT WRHS

We have heard a great deal this year about overcrowded or cancelled AP courses at the high school. The good news is that with the addition of the new teachers at WRHS this year, Principal Beando is confident that moving forward these additional positions will help alleviate most of the issues associated with AP courses next school year. If our budget had passed last spring, the AP issues would not have been a problem as we would have added sections of specific AP classes. We will be looking at the high school schedules as we move forward and will make recommendations accordingly.



WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT School Calendar 2016-2017

Attachment 2

DRAFT 1/22/2016

JULY

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

AUGUST

M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

DECEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

JANUARY

M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

FEBRUARY

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28			

MARCH

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

APRIL

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

MAY

M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

JUNE

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

<u>First and Last Days of School</u>	
First Day of School	Aug 30
Half-Day 180th Day of School	Jun 13
Half-Day 185th Day of School	Jun 20
<p>*The District is required to provide a school calendar with 185 days of school scheduled. The last day of school will be a half-day whenever it falls.</p>	

<u>Holidays & Vacations</u>	
Labor Day	Sep 5
Columbus Day	Oct 10
Veterans' Day	Nov 11
Thanksgiving Recess	Nov 23-25
Winter Recess	Dec 26-Jan 2
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Jan 16
February Recess	Feb 20-24
April Recess	Apr 17-21
Memorial Day	May 29

<u>Teacher Training</u>	
Year 1 Teacher Training	
Year 2 Teacher Training	
Staff Orientation	Aug 29

<u>Professional Development Days/Half Days</u>	
Full Day (PreK-2 Parent/Teacher Conferences)	Nov 8
Full Day	May 8
Half-Day	Sep 22
Half-Day	Oct 20
Half-Day	Jan 26
Half-Day	Mar 9
Half-Day	Apr 6
Half-Day	May 25
Half-Day	Last day of school

- Half Days
- School not in Session
- First day of school

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Agenda

Special Meeting #313
Annual School Committee Retreat

Monday, January 25, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Hearing
- III. Approval of 2016-2017 School Year Calendar
- IV. Discussion of Educational Priorities and Budget Standards for FY17
- V. Adjournment

If you cannot attend the January 25th Wachusett Regional School District Committee meeting, please contact Rebecca Petersen at (508) 829-1670 Ext. 230.

Education Subcommittee

Monday, January 25, 2016
6:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

AGENDA:

- I Call to Order
- II Approval of Minutes
- III Policy 6438 *Policy Relating to Pupil Services Anti-bullying*
- IV Policy 3510 *Policy Relating to Education Class Size*
- V Policy 3510 *Policy Relating to Pupil Services Athletic Concussion Policy*
- VI WRSD School Calendar
- VII Old Business
- VIII New Business
- IX Adjournment

The above agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Monday, January 25, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

*Special Meeting
Annual School Committee Retreat*

AGENDA:

- I Call to Order
- II Public Hearing
- III Approval of 2016-2017 School Calendar
- IV Discussion of Educational Priorities and Budget Standards for FY17
- V Adjournment

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Special Education Parent Advisory Council Officers' Meeting

Tuesday, January 26, 2015
6:30 p.m.

"Staff Kitchen"
District Central Office
1745 Main Street, Jefferson

Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement

Wednesday, February 3, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Superintendent's Conference Room
District Central Office
1745 Main Street, Jefferson

Legal Affairs Subcommittee

Thursday, February 11, 2016
6:30 p.m.

Superintendent's Conference Room
District Central Office
1745 Main Street, Jefferson

Business/Finance Subcommittee

Thursday, February 11, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Curriculum Center
District Central Office
1745 Main Street, Jefferson

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Special Meeting

Monday, February 22, 2016
7:00 p.m.

ANNUAL BUDGET HEARING

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Monday, February 22, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

Regularly Scheduled, Monthly School Committee Meeting

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Monday, March 14, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

Regularly Scheduled, Monthly School Committee Meeting

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Monday, March 28, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

Regularly Scheduled, Monthly School Committee Meeting
