

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN PAXTON PRINCETON RUTLAND STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #331
FY22 Budget Retreat

Monday, February 8, 2021
5:30 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED REMOTELY, VIA GOOGLE MEET

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Megan Weeks, Chair	Kenneth Mills
Michael Dennis, Vice-chair	Karl Ottmar
Melissa Ayala	Michael Pantos, Jr.
Krista Bennett (5:38 PM)	Christina Smith (5:50 PM)
Scott Brown	Jeffrey Sullivan
Maleah Gustafson	Kelly Williamson
Sherrie Haber	Linda Woodland
Laura Kirshenbaum	Adam Young (5:38 PM)
Linda Long-Bellil	

Committee Members Absent:

Robert Imber	Deidre Shapiro
Matthew Lavoie	Asima Silva
Benjamin Mitchel	

Administration Present:

Darryll McCall, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Berlo, Deputy Superintendent
Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Services
Daniel Deedy, Director of Business and Finance
Brendan Keenan, Director of Social Emotional Learning
Christine Smith, Administrator of Special Education
Randi Jacob, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Student Representatives Present:

Kenichi Gomi	Kathryn Mangus
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I. Call to Order

Chair Weeks called the Budget Retreat to order at 5:32 PM.

Chair Weeks announced the meeting was being conducted remotely, via Google Meet, and was being broadcast live on Channel 194 and holdentv.com. Members of the public could

access the meeting via YouTube. Chair Weeks provided an overview of how the meeting would be conducted and the purpose of the meeting, which is to give members the opportunity to review and discuss the budget, as it is being developed by District administration.

Chair Weeks turned the meeting over to Superintendent McCall, who spoke about the developing budget, stressing that what will be presented at this meeting is in development and is not the final FY22 budget that will be presented to the School Committee for approval on March 15, 2021, and then forwarded to the five Member Towns for approval at the 2021 Annual Town Meetings.

5:38 PM Member Young joined the meeting.

5:38 PM Member Bennett joined the meeting.

Superintendent McCall let the Committee know that other members of the executive staff would be joining in when speaking to specific slides and specific details about information contained in the PowerPoint and helping to explain the draft FY22 budget.

Superintendent McCall projected a PowerPoint, and he spoke in detail about the information on the slides (attachment 1). Superintendent McCall and Deputy Berlo spoke about the five Domains that are a part of the Strategic Plan and how they relate to the budget projections and priorities.

Director Deedy joined in the conversation and provided a review of the slide titled Salaries & Stipends, as well as the Benefits & Insurance information.

5:50 PM Member Smith joined the meeting.

Superintendent McCall continued with the presentation. Director Deedy spoke about the information on the Operations & Maintenance slide.

When the Special Education Tuitions slide was projected, Director Deedy spoke about the almost \$67,000 increase, further explaining the use of offsets. Director Deedy also spoke about use of offsets when addressing the Salary appropriation. Administrator of Special Education Smith added to the review and explanation about the Special Education Tuition appropriation.

Director Deedy explained information contained on the Other Operating Costs slide information, as well as the information on the Transportation slide.

At the conclusion of the presentation specific to the various appropriations, Superintendent McCall reviewed the final slides of the presentation, reviewing Budget Breakdown by Category/Appropriation, showing an increase of 4.61% over FY21, which Superintendent McCall stressed is just the proposed budget as it is being developed and this is not a final FY22 budget that will be brought before the School Committee, and then the Member Towns, for review and approval.

At Superintendent McCall's request, Director Deedy spoke to the Update on State/Local Revenues information included on several slides.

Superintendent McCall concluded the presentation reviewing and speaking to the final slides, explaining steps and process moving forward. He again stated that the preliminary increase is in the 4.6% range, again explaining this is a developing budget and is not a finalized budget.

At Superintendent McCall's suggestion, Chair Weeks asked members to put their questions and priorities in the Chat, and she would read them aloud for discussion and comment.

II. Discussion of Educational Priorities and Budget Standards for FY22

Member Pantos spoke about the goal being an increase limited to 3%.

Member Gustafson expressed disappointment that the Committee did not receive a Staffing Plan for review in advance of this meeting, which Superintendent McCall acknowledged and said the Committee will be updated as appropriate.

Member Woodland asked if the FY22 salary line projection include the proposed additional positions, which Superintendent McCall explained this budget line item does not include proposed additional positions.

Member Young had a question about Charter School revenue FY21 v FY22, which Director Deedy gave a brief overview about.

Members Gustafson and Ayala had questions about Central Office positions, considering the need in that area.

Member Mills would like details about staffing and positions that were cut, especially decreases that that impact curricular areas.

At Member Long-Bellil's inquiry about special education compensatory services, Director Deedy provided information.

At Member Ottar's questioning through the Chat, Director Deedy gave a more detailed explanation about use of offsets.

Members Dennis and Mills, and others, had questions about remediation strategies to address what has been lost due to schools closing in March 2020 and teaching and instruction being provided remotely and more recently in the hybrid model. Superintendent McCall spoke about special education students as well as Cohort D students, students in need of additional support.

Member Kirshenbaum is in support of adding a Vocational Director, and asked if funding would be increased. Superintendent McCall explained that meetings had been held about implementing such a program, which District administration will continue to look into.

Vice-chair Dennis asked what the calculated appropriation increase would be for the five Member Towns. Director Deedy reported he does have preliminary numbers, but nothing definitive at this time. Member Gustafson asked about the towns using COVID-funds, which she understands from Director Deedy's response to Vice-chair Dennis the numbers are not definitive at this point, and are very preliminary.

Member Haber expressed her concern about the Committee not being provided with updated information about funding. Superintendent McCall said that Central Office administration should be able to pull this information together in short turn around.

Member Smith expressed her concern that elementary guidance is a need that cannot be denied.

Superintendent McCall spoke to Members Pantos' and Sullivan's inquiries, as the newest members, about salary increases FY21 over FY22 and health insurance projections.

As time was running out, Chair Weeks read aloud several comments submitted via Chat, and Superintendent McCall and Director Deedy quickly spoke to the questions and comments.

Director Deedy spoke about ESSER numbers as they relate to four of the five Member Towns being in the \$335,277 range. Vice-chair Dennis re-stated his question, which is what are Member Town projected assessments/appropriation increases by town, without factoring in ESSER grant funds/numbers.

Chair Weeks gave members who had not submitted a comment or priority in Chat the opportunity to ask questions and/or make comments. No members had anything additional to add.

Member Mills had a question about transportation reimbursement.

III. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(A. Young)
(S. Haber)

Roll call vote:

In favor:

Megan Weeks
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Scott Brown
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Linda Long-Bellil

Karl Ottmar
Michael Pantos, Jr.
Christina Smith
Jeffrey Sullivan
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland
Adam Young

Opposed:

Michael Dennis
Kenneth Mills

The motion passed 15 – 2.

The Budget Retreat adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Darryll McCall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

DM:rlp

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – FY22 Budget Retreat presentation

Wachusett Regional School District



FY22 Budget Retreat
February 8, 2021

MISSION STATEMENT

The WRSD seeks to ensure meaningful student growth and promote social emotional well-being in a safe and nurturing environment. We will integrate the talent, experience, and knowledge of all members of our community to develop lifelong learners, equipped to think critically in an ever-changing, global society.

WRSD Strategic Plan

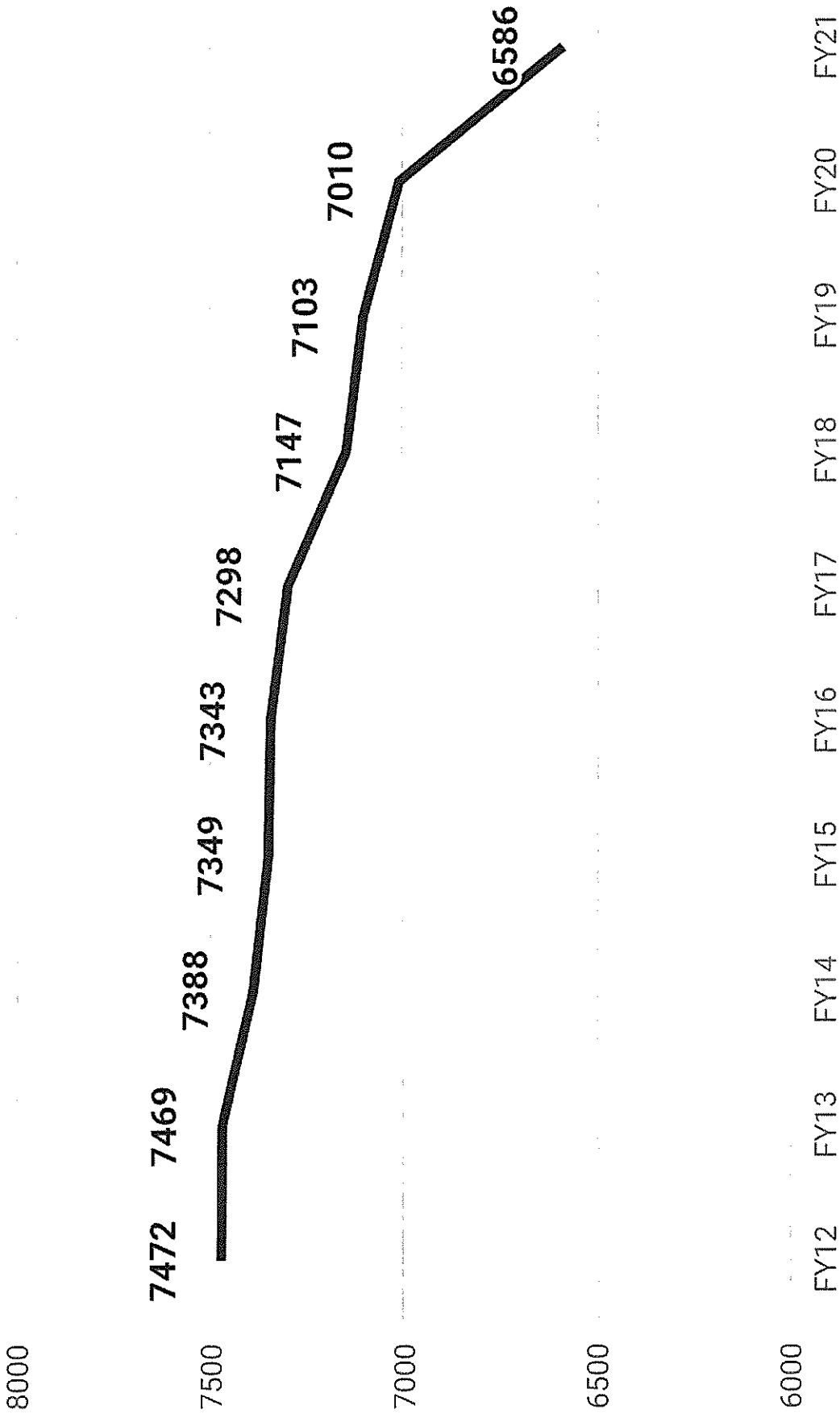
- **Domain 1:** Leadership, Governance, and Communication
- **Domain 2:** Aligned Curriculum
- **Domain 3:** Effective Instruction
- **Domain 4:** Professional Development & Structures for Collaboration
- **Domain 5:** Students' Social, Emotional, and Health Needs

AGENDA

- Enrollment
- FY22 Salaries & Benefits
- FY22 Instruction & Operations
- FY22 Fixed Costs
- FY22 Total Budget
- FY22 Revenues
- Budget Calendar

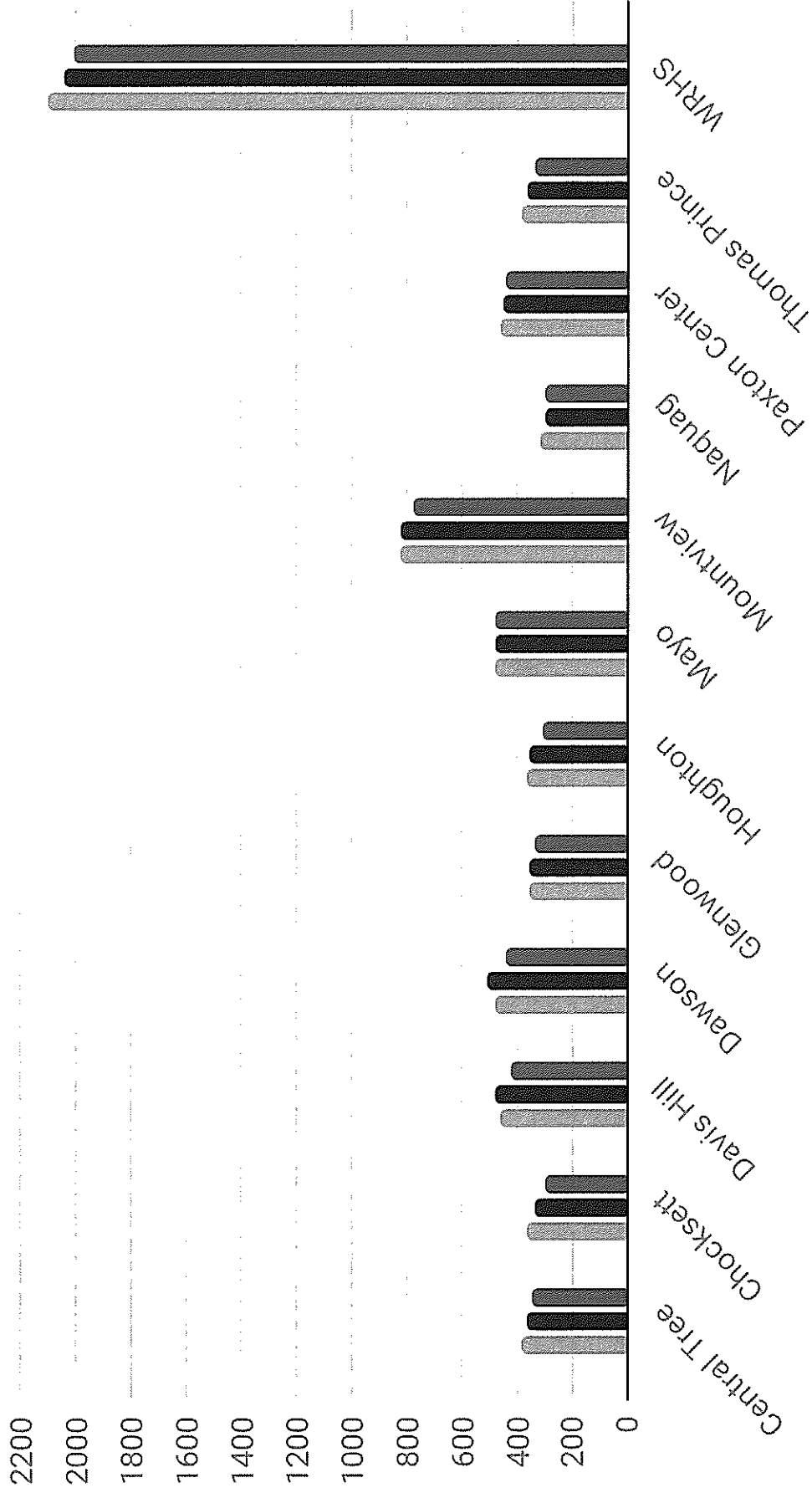
Enrollment

HISTORICAL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT



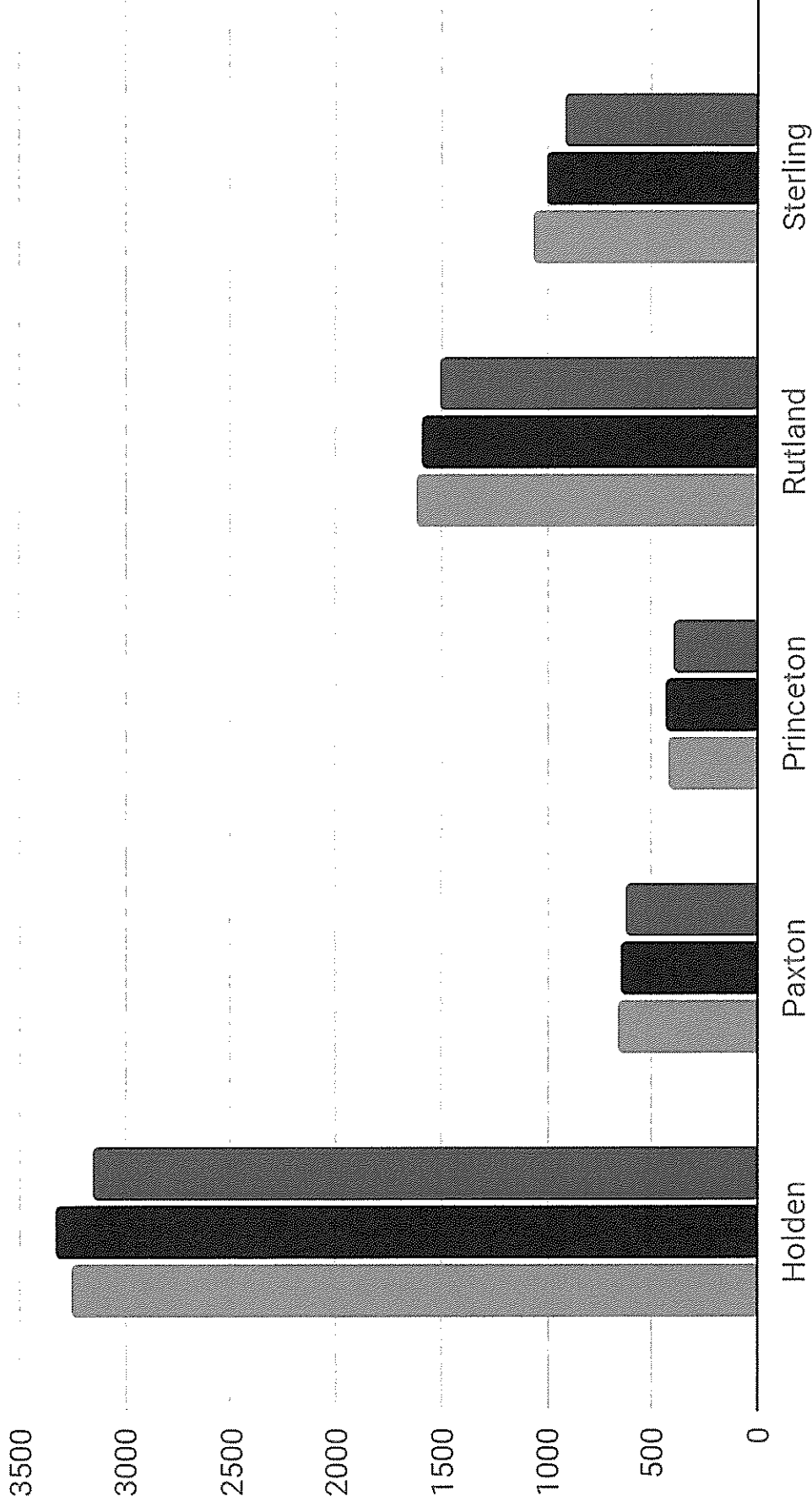
ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL

FY19 FY20 FY21



ENROLLMENT BY TOWN

FY19
 FY20
 FY21



DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SHARE

Overall District	FY 2021		FY 2022		Enrollment Change	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Town						
Holden	3,335	47.62%	3,153	47.87%	-182	-5.46%
Paxton	646	9.22%	621	9.43%	-25	-3.87%
Princeton	428	6.11%	399	6.06%	-29	-6.78%
Rutland	1,589	22.69%	1,505	22.85%	-84	-5.29%
Sterling	1,005	14.35%	908	13.79%	-97	-9.65%
Total	7,003	100.00%	6,586	100.00%	-417	-5.95%

HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT SHARE

High School Town	FY 2021		FY 2022		Enrollment Change	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Holden	920	44.66%	935	45.99%	15	1.63%
Paxton	201	9.76%	196	9.64%	-5	-2.49%
Princeton	130	6.31%	114	5.61%	-16	-12.31%
Rutland	497	24.13%	481	23.66%	-16	-3.22%
Sterling	312	15.15%	277	13.63%	-35	-11.22%
Total	2,060	100.00%	2,033	100.00%	-27	-1.31%

FY22 Administrative Budget

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET PRIORITIES

- **Domain 1**
 - Continued budget transparency via line-item budget
- **Domain 2**
 - Literacy Program Adoption - Grades 3 and 4
 - Math and Science Textbook Renewals
- **Domain 3**
 - Technology (Support of 6-12 1:1 Chromebooks, Elementary carts, staff training)
 - Textbook/Program Adoption - Years 3 and 4
- **Domain 4**
 - Continued staff training on using technology to support student learning, SEL support, and using data to better support and monitor student learning
- **Domain 5**
 - Continued support of INTERFACE referral service for students and community members all five towns
 - Panorama Education Student Success and SEL Survey tools

- Because of the uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the FY22 Budget was created to support In-person, Hybrid and/or Remote learning models in the next school year.
- This includes funds dedicated towards:
 - PPE
 - Technology to support in-person and remote learning
 - Applications that support remote student learning
 - Building Substitutes
 - Continued training of staff

BUDGET BREAKDOWN BY APPROPRIATION

Appropriation	FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff +/-(-)	% Diff
Salaries & Stipends	\$65,182,485	\$66,643,524	\$1,461,039	2.24%
Benefits & Insurance	\$16,047,813	\$18,537,275	\$2,489,462	15.51%
Instructional Support	\$3,489,855	\$3,574,986	\$85,131	2.44%
Operations & Maintenance	\$3,738,231	\$3,932,121	\$193,890	5.19%
Pupil Services	\$52,758	\$52,758	\$0	0.00%
Special Ed Tuitions	\$2,770,000	\$2,836,780	\$66,780	2.41%
Other Operating Costs	\$1,176,810	\$1,732,282	\$555,472	47.20%
Transportation	\$7,241,701	\$7,215,504	(\$26,197)	-0.36%
Debt Service	\$2,415,731	\$2,301,900	(\$113,831)	-4.71%
Total General Fund	\$102,115,384	\$106,827,130	\$4,711,746	4.61%

FY22 Salaries & Benefits

SALARIES & STIPENDS

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$65,182,485	\$66,643,524	\$1,461,039	2.24%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect contractual obligations and negotiations • Possible New Positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FY21 New Hires <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SPED, Nurse, Elementary Guidance, Tech Integration, Building Subs, Naquag A.P., Custodial ○ FY21 Not Hired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Additional Mountview Teachers ○ FY21 Tiered Reductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Curric. Supervisor, Classroom Teachers, Clerical ○ FY22 Staffing Plan - to be updated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dir. Vocation, ESL Teacher, Assist. Bus Director, Classroom Teachers to reduce class sizes 			

BENEFITS & INSURANCE

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$16,047,813	\$18,537,275	\$2,489,462	15.51%

- Health Insurance estimated to increase 14%
- Worcester County Retirement Assessment reflects a 15% increase

TOTAL SALARIES & BENEFITS

Appropriation	FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
Salaries & Stipends	\$65,182,485	\$66,643,524	\$1,461,039	2.24%
Benefits & Insurance	\$16,047,813	\$18,537,275	\$2,489,462	15.51%
Total	\$81,230,298	\$85,180,799	\$3,950,501	4.86%

FY22 Instruction & Operations

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$3,489,855	\$3,574,986	\$85,131	2.44%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Technology<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Continued support of the 1:1 program for grades 6-12○ Increased access to technology in grades 1-5○ Continued support of newly-added software and apps○ Bandwidth increases district-wide● Years 3 and 4 of Textbook Plan and Early Literacy Program			

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$3,738,231	\$3,932,121	\$193,890	5.19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Maintenance: Continue minor and major repairs● Grounds: Town Maintenance Agreements● Utility Services: Electricity, Water, Sewer: 5%			

PUPIL SERVICES

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$52,758	\$52,758	\$0	0.00%

- Funds used to support Health Offices

SPECIAL ED TUITIONS

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$2,770,000	\$2,836,780	\$66,780	2.41%

- Tuition charges for out-of-district placements in specialized programs
- Utilize Special Education Circuit Breaker and Federal Grant funds to reduce costs to General Fund

TOTAL INSTRUCTION & OPERATIONS

Appropriation	FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
Instructional Support	\$3,489,855	\$3,574,986	\$85,131	2.44%
Operations Maintenance	\$3,738,231	\$3,932,121	\$193,890	5.19%
Pupil Services	\$52,758	\$52,758	\$0	0.00%
SPED Tuition	\$2,770,000	\$2,836,780	\$66,780	2.41%
Total	\$10,050,844	\$10,396,645	\$345,801	3.44%

FY22 Fixed Costs

OTHER OPERATING COSTS

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
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\$1,176,810	\$1,732,282	\$555,472	47.20%
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- School Choice and Charter School reflect most recent tuition-out charges per FY22 Cherry Sheet

TRANSPORTATION

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$7,241,701	\$7,215,504	(\$26,197)	-0.36%

- Regular Ed Transportation: FY22 will be the third year of new three-year contract
- Special Ed In-District and Out-of-District Transportation: Projected increase in these lines is 3.0%.

DEBT SERVICE

FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
\$2,415,731	\$2,301,900	(\$113,831)	-4.71%

- This reflects two high school bonds refinanced at a lower rate and also a faster pay-off.

TOTAL FIXED COSTS

Appropriation	FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff vs LY	% Diff
Other Operating Costs	\$1,176,810	\$1,732,282	\$555,472	47.20%
Transportation	\$7,241,701	\$7,215,504	(\$26,197)	-0.36%
Debt Service	\$2,415,731	\$2,301,900	(\$113,831)	-4.71%
Total	\$10,834,242	\$11,249,686	\$415,444	3.83%

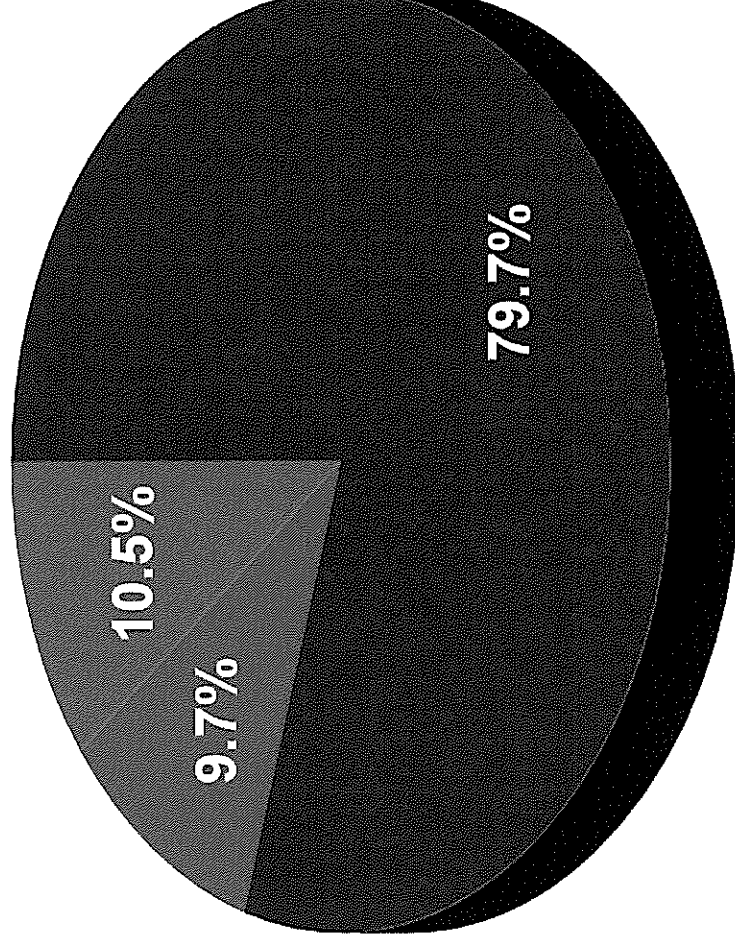
FY22 Total Expenditures

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

Category	FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff +/-(-)	% Diff
Salaries & Benefits	\$81,230,298	\$85,180,799	\$3,950,501	4.86%
Instruction & Operations	\$10,050,844	\$10,396,645	\$345,801	3.44%
Fixed Costs	\$10,834,242	\$11,249,686	\$415,444	3.83%
Total	\$102,115,384	\$106,827,130	\$4,711,746	4.61%

BUDGET BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY

- Salaries & Benefits
- Instruction & Operations
- Fixed Costs



BUDGET BREAKDOWN BY APPROPRIATION

Appropriation	FY21 Budget	FY22 Proposed	\$ Diff +/-(-)	% Diff
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Debt Service	\$2,415,731	\$2,301,900	(\$113,831)	-4.71%
Total General Fund	\$102,115,384	\$106,827,130	\$4,711,746	4.61%

FY22 Revenues

UPDATE ON STATE REVENUES

- Chapter 70: Increase of \$201,840 or 0.68%
- Charter School Reimbursement: Decrease of \$117,409 or (54.75%)
- Regional Transportation: Decrease of \$789,373 or (32.09%)
- School Choice: Level Funded @ \$321,155

- Medicaid: To be determined
- Miscellaneous: To be determined
- Excess and Deficiency: To be determined
 - Certified FY20 E&D may be used to offset assessments to towns

BUDGET CALENDAR

- Governor's Budget - January 2021
- Annual Budget Hearing - March 1, 2021
- Meetings with town officials - February/March, 2021
- School Committee budget approval - March 15, 2021
- Town Meetings:
 - Holden - May 17, 2021
 - Paxton - May 3, 2021
 - Princeton - May 11, 2021
 - Rutland - May 8, 2021
 - Sterling - May 3, 2021

567 of the District's employees live in our member towns

- Holden: 255
- Paxton: 45
- Princeton: 35
- Rutland: 173
- Sterling: 59

The following are areas where the District is seeking input and guidance from the School Committee.

- Use of transportation stabilization
- Use of any Excess and Deficiency
- Carrying forward funds in Circuit Breaker and School Choice
- Additional staffing
- Athletics
- Goal for the % increase for the FY22 budget

Thank You