

Committee Members

John L. Foley, Chairman
Hilda Ramirez, Vice-Chairman
Tracy O'Connell Novick

Administrative
Representatives
Brian Allen

OFFICE OF THE
CLERK OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
20 IRVING STREET
WORCESTER, MA 01609

AGENDA #4

The Standing Committee on FINANCE AND OPERATIONS will hold a meeting:

on: Monday, November 16, 2015
at: 5:00 p.m.
in: Room 410, Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #4-198 - Mr. Monfredo/Mr. O'Connell/Miss Biancheria

Annex A (2 pages)

Request that the Administration consider working with the WEDF on a pilot program for placing potential black and white ads on some of the school buses as a way of increasing revenue for our student programs and for teacher initiated programs.

gb #5-172 - Mr. Foley/Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick/Miss Biancheria (June 22, 2015)

Annex A (2 pages)

Annex B (2 pages)

To review the status of the FY16 Budget and make appropriate transfers as required.

Annex C (1 page)

gb #5-176 - Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria (June 23, 2015)

Backup

To formulate a plan for restoration of the pool at South High Community School.

GENERAL BUSINESS

ACTION

gb #5-202 - Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria (August 4, 2015)

Backup

To distribute to the School Committee the Invitation to Bid for repair/replacement of pathways, stairs, and walls on the grounds, and building, of Lake View School.

motion (gb #4-250) - Mr. Foley (September 18, 2014)

Annex A (1 page)

Annex B (2 pages)

Request that the 2016-17 and 2017-18 School Calendars be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

motion (gb #5-93) - Miss Biancheria/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick/Mr. O'Connell/Miss Ramirez/Mayor Petty (March 11, 2015)

Annex A (21 pages)

Request that the Administration forward the Foundation Budget Review Committee's report to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

motion - (gb #5-109.1) - Mr. O'Connell (June 4, 2015)

Request that the Administration provide a report relative to projected Workers Compensation expenditures in the first or second quarterly budget update at the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

motion - (gb #5-109.3) - Ms. Novick (September 3, 2015)

Annex A (1 page)

Request that Annex B be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

- B. Miss Biancheria statement that the Administration provided a specific dollar amount under O. School Safety Equipment for security systems

Dr. Boone indicated that she would provide to the School Committee a report of facilities work that has supported safety and security during this fiscal year and going forward from those dollars.

Ms. Novick requested that the Administration provide a report on how the money is allocated under 500152-92000, B. Building Repair.

The School Committee last addressed the issue on school buses in 2002. The Administration recommended and the School Committee agreed that the risk of student or pedestrian injury around a school bus due to driver distraction was not worth the risk of any potential revenue that could be collected.

In recent years, a number of states and local school districts have considered allowing the placement of advertisements on the exterior of school buses. Only a few school districts have proceeded with such programs. Most states continue to prohibit advertising on school buses.

Economics is the primary reason school districts consider the use of advertising on school buses. There is no question that educational budgets have not kept pace with the cost of providing the same level of service as we provided ten years ago. Finding alternative sources of revenue is a clear priority in order to simply maintain core and enrichment programs.

In Worcester, we have engaged an outside entity to look at the cost of transportation. To date, we have not increased eligibility distances, reduced athletic transportation, and we have not imposed any student fees to provide transportation services.

School buses are intended to transport students safely to school. Their design and construction are strictly regulated on the federal and state levels. Chapter 90: Section 7B of the Massachusetts General Laws lists the safety equipment required on every school bus operated within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Among the safety features are a standard color for the vehicle (National School Bus Yellow), front and rear alternating flashing school bus red signal lamps, a stop arm with alternately flashing red lights to be mounted on the left side of the bus, and an array of mirrors to ensure the driver's vision around the "danger zone" of the school bus.

The side of school buses are seen by some as potential source of revenue to the district if used for advertisement purposes. There has been considerable debate about advertising on school buses. Some believe it is a legitimate and reasonable means for obtaining additional revenue to maintain school bus operations. Others believe it is a mistake to place exterior advertising on school buses, particularly with respect to safety.

The National Motor Vehicle Crash Causation Survey (NMVCCS) investigated 6,949 crashes which occurred between 2005 and 2007. The NMVCCS confirmed that distraction, both external and internal, is a common occurrence while driving, and that many distractions increase the relative risk of crashes and near-crashes. Distractions which result in drivers taking their eyes off the road are potentially more of a safety problem than purely cognitive distractions. The researchers used the data to determine the odds ratio, or increased risk, of engaging in various secondary tasks, over "just driving."

The Table below shows some of the results. A significant odds ratio indicates a reliable increase in risk associated with that activity.

Table on Odds ratio for secondary tasks in the 100-Car Study

Type of Secondary Task	Odds Ratio (Increased Risk)
Reaching for a moving object	8.82
Insect in vehicle	6.37
Looking at external object	3.70
Reading	3.38
Applying makeup	3.13
Dialing hand-held device	2.79
Inserting/retrieving CD	2.25
Eating	1.57

The statistical analyses dealt with driver distraction from all types of sources, including those outside the vehicle, such as other persons, activities, and advertising on signs, buildings, and other motor vehicles. While it is not possible to estimate the risk of motor vehicle crashes attributed solely to drivers being distracted by advertising, it is evident that driver distraction is a definitive causal factor in a percentage of motor vehicle crashes.

Since advertising on the exterior of a school bus is a potential source of driver distraction, it is reasonable to assume that such advertisements will potentially result in accidents that would not have otherwise occurred.

In 2011, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services opposed advertising on the exterior of school buses. The potential increase to motorist distraction, a known cause of motor vehicle crashes, present a safety problem around school buses that they suggested was something that cannot be ignored.

For these reasons, the WPS Administration does not recommend the placement of advertisement of any kind on the side of school buses.

Adequate resources are a challenge for all school districts, the Worcester Public Schools notwithstanding. The WPS Administration is open to exploring creative revenue generating opportunities that will enhance student experiences and is eager to work with the WEDF in exploring these areas.

The final state budget actions will result in the reduction of our FY16 budget by \$603,134, primarily due to a reduction of charter school reimbursement totaling \$546,247. The comparison of FY16 budget revenues between the adopted budget and the final state budget are listed below:

<u>Revenue:</u>	FY16 Adopted Budget	FY16 Final State Budget	Difference
Chapter 70 State Aid & Reimbursement:			
Chapter 70 State Aid (Total)	\$231,438,724	\$231,540,738	\$102,014
Charter School Reimbursement	<u>\$2,671,785</u>	<u>\$2,125,538</u>	<u>(\$546,247)</u>
Total Chapter 70 State Aid & Reimbursement	\$234,110,509	\$233,666,276	(\$444,233)
City Contribution			
Amount towards Required Spending	\$99,745,201	\$99,643,187	(\$102,014)
Amount for Non-Net School Spending Items	\$12,546,372	\$12,546,372	\$0
Total City Contribution	<u>\$112,291,573</u>	<u>\$112,189,559</u>	<u>(\$102,014)</u>
Total General Fund Revenues	\$346,402,082	\$345,855,835	(\$546,247)
Less Tuition Assessments:			
Charter School Tuition Assessment	\$24,819,491	\$24,866,852	\$47,361
School Choice Tuition Assessment	\$2,641,818	\$2,651,386	\$9,568
Special Education Revenue Offset	\$147,660	\$147,618	(\$42)
Total Tuition Assessments	<u>\$27,608,969</u>	<u>\$27,665,856</u>	<u>\$56,887</u>
Total General Fund Revenue:	\$318,793,113	\$318,189,979	(\$603,134)

It will be necessary to reduce the budget to reflect the final state budget at the time the City does the tax recap process in the very near future.

Based on preliminary conversations with the City Manager, it is expected that the reduction of the city's required contribution will not occur and those funds will remain in the WPS to cover the cost of the school safety and security assessment that has been awarded and nearly complete by Good Harbor Techmark, LLC. Therefore, the reduction to the budget will be **\$501,120**. This is the amount that is being used in the First Quarter Budget Status Report for projecting the FY16 budget.

It is also expected that the City will provide an additional \$145,000 for the first year planning costs for the Advanced Academy High School program. Staffing for these positions are underway and the estimated annual cost for this year has been provided to the City. These positions are funded through proceeds derived through the sale of the courthouse building by the City.

Also, during the summer, we received the actual FY16 federal grant awards, representing an increase of approximately \$2.0 million above the adopted budget amount. The increase was primarily in Title 1, but the summary of the awards are as follows:

Grant Name	Budgeted Amount	Award Amount	Difference	Total Increase (Less City Indirect 2.5%)
Title I	\$10,484,297	\$12,313,168	\$1,828,871	\$1,783,149
IDEA	\$7,297,200	\$7,357,103	\$59,903	\$58,405
Title III	\$1,300,005	\$1,395,841	\$95,836	\$93,440
Title IIA	\$1,839,530	\$1,859,767	\$20,237	\$19,731
Perkins	<u>\$485,765</u>	<u>\$503,656</u>	<u>\$17,891</u>	<u>\$17,444</u>
Total	\$21,406,797	\$23,429,535	\$2,022,738	\$1,972,170

A majority of the Title 1 funds (\$1.4 million) has been used to restore Pre-K teachers and Instructional Assistants and related health insurance to the grant that was moved to the general fund based on the assumption that the funding was to be level funded. The balance of the funds (\$411,000) must be used for supplemental services for the district and school redesign costs (Level 4 for Elm Park).

The IDEA increase was used to purchase classroom furniture for the expanded special education classrooms added this year, Title III increase is being used to expand afterschool/summer services for ELL students, Title IIA increase is used to cover health insurance costs for employees funded by the grant, and the Perkins increase was for additional equipment purchases.

From the available funds, the Administration placed four elementary teachers and three tutors to address class size issues at the start of the year, as well as an additional 14 so-called one-fifth teachers at secondary schools to also address class size and contractual limits. (A one-fifth compensates a teachers that voluntarily gives up a preparation period in exchange for an additional instructional section). It was also necessary to purchase additional textbooks for several Advanced Placement courses and the Dual Language programs. Other uses of the funds are described in the following account summaries.

**FY16
 BUDGET STATUS
 First Quarter Report**

Given these budget adjustments, the status of all Salary and Ordinary Maintenance accounts as of September 30, 2015 is shown on Annex B. Presented for each account is the amount budgeted for the current fiscal year, the amount expended and committed as of September 30th, and the projected balance at the closing on June 30, 2016. Salary and Ordinary Maintenance Account totals are:

<u>Budget Title</u>	<u>Budget Amount</u>	<u>Expended 09/30/15</u>	<u>Projected Balance 06/30/16</u>
Salaries	\$209,481,930	\$22,070,680	\$2,046,519
Ordinary Maintenance	<u>\$109,311,185</u>	<u>\$8,917,908</u>	<u>-\$1,601,323</u>
Total General Fund	\$318,793,113	\$30,988,588	\$445,196
Charter School Adjustment			-\$501,120
Total General Fund	\$318,793,113	\$30,988,588	-\$55,924

At this point in the fiscal year, a total of \$30,988,588 (10%) has been expended or committed. A description of the projected balances is as follows:

Budget Impacts:

Personal Services (-\$716,232): The special education department is continuing with the restructure of specialized services for our special education students in order to increase internal capacity. During the last fiscal year, the district consolidated the use of third party vendors to provide better instructional support to our students. Based on the information available through the first quarter, these expenses continue to be projected higher than the approved FY16 budget (\$400,000). This account includes an increase to the non-district tuition line item specifically for the new Recovery High School (\$53,500), as well as an increase to the district's legal consultation (\$50,000) and translation service line items (\$100,000). The budget also assumes costs associated with a consultant and other charges for the Superintendent search (\$50,000).

Custodial Overtime (-\$322,947): The projected deficit represents contractual manpower (overtime to cover certain absences), as well as additional costs associated with ongoing MSBA projects. Nine custodians have been collecting workers compensation benefits through the end of September.

Workers Compensation (-\$322,608): This account represents trends in weekly workers compensation salary payments, medical fees, as well as several recently approved settlement payments for the FY16 fiscal year. Please note the past three fiscal years of expenditures: \$1.7 million FY15 ▪ \$1.5 million FY14 ▪ \$1.5 million FY13.

Nurses (-\$292,360): The projected deficit reflects year to date and projected usage in the number of substitutes used to cover absences and locations during the school year. This projected deficit also includes contractual retirement benefits in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.

Transportation (-\$218,641): Due to the current condition of several vehicles in the district’s fleet, the district needed to add three special education routes using third party services. These additional routes are anticipated through the end of the December. This account also represents an increase for the vehicles utilized for the special education Transitions program.

Miscellaneous Ordinary Maintenance (-\$84,281): The projected deficit is due to the school safety and assessment review currently in progress within the district.

Accounts with Projected Balances to Offset Deficit Accounts:

Teachers (\$1,662,578): Due to the increase of FY16 grant awards, the district was able to increase four classroom teachers and approximately fourteen additional secondary sections to address class sizes at the start of the school year. The district is currently working to fill several current vacancies and those salaries have been included in the projected balance.

Instructional Assistants (\$805,539): The instructional assistant projected balance reflects the increase of FY16 grant awards, as well as vacant special education ABA positions. Replacement positions and salaries are included in these projected balances. Due to demand of services, some of these positions have been filled as contracted services as needed for the beginning of the year. These amounts would be included within the Personal Services account.

Maintenance Services (\$187,941): This account represents several vacant positions, most due to workers compensation benefits. Three positions have been collecting workers compensation benefits through the end of September.

Health Insurance (\$109,162): The projected savings in the account is due to vacant positions through the first quarter, as well as employee migration to less expensive plans available through the City.

Administration (\$108,868): Vacancies and attrition within this account creates an anticipated ending balance as stated. Replacement positions, salaries and contractual payments are included in these projected balances.

The Administration recommends the following transfers to balance deficit accounts through the First Quarter of the fiscal year.

<u>Amount</u>	<u>From Account</u>	<u>From Title</u>	<u>To Account</u>	<u>To Title</u>
\$700,000	500-91119	Instructional Assistant Salaries	500130-92000	Personal Services
\$188,000	500-91120	Maintenance Salaries	540103-92000	Transportation OM
\$322,000	500-91111	Teacher Salaries	500129-96000	Workers Compensation
\$185,000	500-91111	Teacher Salaries	500137-96000	Unemployment Compensation

**WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 2015-2016 BUDGET
 ACCOUNT SUMMARY
 FIRST QUARTER REPORT**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Adopted</u>		<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Balance</u>
		<u>Budget</u>	<u>Transfers</u>		<u>09/30/15</u>	<u>06/30/16</u>
500-91110	Administration Salaries	\$11,847,977		\$11,847,977	\$2,932,835	\$108,868
500-91111	Teacher Salaries	\$157,271,088		\$157,271,088	\$12,063,574	\$1,662,578
500-91112	School Committee Salaries	\$87,000		\$87,000	\$18,125	\$14,500
500-91114	Day by Day Substitutes Salaries	\$871,200		\$871,200	\$60,674	-\$86,552
500-91115	Instructional Assistants Salaries	\$10,399,903		\$10,399,903	\$1,189,847	\$805,539
500-91116	Coach Salaries	\$524,362		\$524,362	\$2,606	\$0
540-91117	Transportation Salaries	\$2,675,672		\$2,675,672	\$497,442	-\$3,778
500-91118	Supplemental Program Salaries	\$1,379,683		\$1,379,683	\$496,282	-\$61,341
500-91119	Custodial Salaries	\$6,664,307		\$6,664,307	\$1,473,632	\$152,445
500-91120	Maintenance Service Salaries	\$2,060,151		\$2,060,151	\$383,557	\$187,941
500-91121	Administrative Clerical Salaries	\$3,158,078		\$3,158,078	\$762,308	-\$58,569
500-91122	School Clerical Salaries	\$2,090,585		\$2,090,585	\$411,209	\$0
500-91123	Non Instructional Salaries	\$1,853,047		\$1,853,047	\$548,323	\$67,072
540-91124	Crossing Guard Salaries	\$543,346		\$543,346	\$47,515	\$5,711
500-91133	School Nurse Salaries	\$3,752,868		\$3,752,868	\$320,528	-\$292,360
500-91134	Educational Support Salaries	\$2,562,428		\$2,562,428	\$315,354	\$47,700
540-97201	Transportation Overtime Salaries	\$473,736		\$473,736	\$60,939	-\$82,475
500-97203	Custodial Overtime Salaries	\$1,046,865		\$1,046,865	\$409,457	-\$322,947
500-97204	Maintenance Overtime Salaries	\$150,797		\$150,797	\$43,358	-\$43,498
500-97205	Support Overtime Salaries	\$68,837		\$68,837	\$33,116	-\$54,315
	Salary Total	\$209,481,930	\$0	\$209,481,930	\$22,070,680	\$2,046,519
500101-96000	Retirement	\$15,848,677		\$15,848,677	\$409,274	\$0
540103-92000	Transportation	\$13,807,942		\$13,807,942	\$112,689	-\$218,641
500105-92000	Out-of-State Travel	\$5,000		\$5,000	\$0	\$0
500122-92000	Athletic Ordinary Maintenance	\$92,434		\$92,434	\$64,257	\$0
500123-96000	Health Insurance	\$42,517,179		\$42,517,179	\$0	\$109,162
500125-92000	Other Insurance Programs	\$53,538		\$53,538	\$16,820	\$0
500129-96000	Workers Compensation	\$1,352,305		\$1,352,305	\$344,032	-\$322,608
500130-92000	Personal Services	\$2,842,008		\$2,842,008	\$512,846	-\$716,232
500132-92000	Special Education Tuition	\$15,695,619		\$15,695,619	\$2,077,457	-\$148,925
500133-92000	Printing & Postage	\$207,531		\$207,531	\$145,866	\$0
500-92204	Instructional Materials	\$3,248,386		\$3,248,386	\$1,646,713	-\$4,123
500136-92000	Miscellaneous Educational OM	\$3,675,765		\$3,675,765	\$853,341	-\$84,281
500137-96000	Unemployment Compensation	\$186,058		\$186,058	\$87,186	-\$185,000
500138-92000	In-State Travel	\$62,500		\$62,500	\$2,085	-\$18,552
500141-92000	Vehicle Maintenance	\$548,952		\$548,952	\$239,872	\$0
500146-92000	Building Utilities	\$6,497,166		\$6,497,166	\$924,852	-\$12,123
500152-92000	Facilities Ordinary Maintenance	\$2,670,125		\$2,670,125	\$1,480,619	\$0
	Non Salary Total	\$109,311,185	\$0	\$109,311,185	\$8,917,907	-\$1,601,323
	Total General Fund Budget	\$318,793,113	\$0	\$318,793,113	\$30,988,588	\$445,196
	Charter School Adjustment					-\$501,120
	Total General Fund Budget					-\$55,924

STANDING COMMITTEE: **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, November 16, 2015

ITEM: Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria (June 23, 2015)

To formulate a plan for restoration of the pool at South High Community School.

PRIOR ACTION:

7-23-15 - Referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations. Councilor Palmieri spoke in favor of the restoration of the pool at South High Community School. Miss Biancheria requested that the previous research on the pool at South High Community School be provided as backup for the item. Miss Novick stated that the most pertinent piece of information relative to the pool is that the school's electrical plant remains under the pool so restoration of it is not possible. Dr. Boone requested that the School Committee allow the study for a full plan for South High Community School to continue realizing that there were some estimates which were well over \$200,000 to replace and relocate the electrical plant. The amount of money didn't include the repair of the pool itself. She further stated that the pool is under consideration for the design plan for a renovation or replacement of South High Community School.

BACKUP:

The Administration recommends that this item be referred to the South High Community School Building Committee.

ITEM: gb #5-202

STANDING COMMITTEE: **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, November 16, 2015

ITEM: Mr. O'Connell/Mr. Monfredo/Miss Biancheria (August 4, 2015)

To distribute to the School Committee the Invitation to Bid for repair/replacement of pathways, stairs, and walls on the grounds, and building, of Lake View School.

PRIOR ACTION:

8-20-15 - Referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations.

BACKUP:

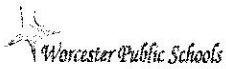
The Administration recommends that this item be referred to the Administration to be provided in a Friday Letter when the bid is available.

The proposed calendars were forwarded to principals in March 2015 so that they could discuss the proposed changes at their next Site Council, Instructional Leadership Team and PTO/PTG meetings. A summary of the input is as follows:

- 34 Schools were in favor of the change
- 11 Schools were opposed or had mixed reactions to the change.

There were several schools who gave additional feedback with their response. Their comments are bulleted below:

- There was also a desire expressed to eliminate February vacation.
- School Council would like the administration/school committee to look at the possibility of shortening February vacation in order to get out earlier in June and to accommodate for snow days. Another possibility is shortening April vacation, possibly including a couple of ½ days. They also suggested adding ½ day on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and would like to see a break in March (at least ½ day) when Easter is late.
- The Instructional Leadership Team thought that the change to the beginning of the school year makes sense. The consensus was that change to the beginning of the school year makes sense. The consensus was that February vacation should be adjusted due to snow days. The committee felt that a long weekend in February would be sufficient.
- The site council members did not have any concerns regarding eliminating the February and April vacation weeks and having one week in March. The Instructional Leadership Team members had no concerns in regard to eliminating the February and April vacation weeks and having one week in March.
- The Instructional Leadership Team expressed concerns about a plan for snow days. Reducing February break was presented as an option.
- Eliminate Good Friday/Veteran's day and remove February vacation.
- Change vacation weeks either shorten February and April, or eliminate both and have one in March.
- Parents and teachers on SSC and liked the idea of a long weekend in February instead of a whole week and keeping April vacation. They also liked a March vacation during the first week in March, which would replace both February and April vacation.
- Do we really need two vacations (February and April)? Could we blend them into one vacation in March instead?)
- Would like to see earlier end date, discussed not having a February break and a short break in March
- Would like to start after Labor Day.
- Some said that we might want to combine the February and April vacation and have one week in March.
- Instructional Leadership Team suggested we consider a March break instead of February and April.



Worcester Public Schools Calendar 2016 – 2017

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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SEPTEMBER						
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OCTOBER						
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30	31					

NOVEMBER						
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27	28	29	30			

DECEMBER						
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JANUARY						
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29	30	31				

FEBRUARY						
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26	27	28				

MARCH						
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APRIL						
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30						

Monday, August 29, 2016: First Day of School for Grades 1-12
 Tuesday, September 6, 2016: First Day of School for Prek-Kindergarten
 Monday, June 12, 2017*: Last Day of School.
 Last day of school for seniors: May 24, 2017*

*This date may change in response to the number of snow days used during the school year.

End of marking quarters:

1. November 4, 2016
2. January 20, 2017
3. April 7, 2017
4. June 12, 2017 or last day

= DAYS WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION FOR STUDENTS

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

2016
August 25 – Teacher/Staff Reporting Day
August 26 – Staff Development
August 31 – First Day of School
September 5 – Labor Day
October 7 – Staff Development
October 10 – Columbus Day
November 11 – Veterans’ Day
November 23-25 – Thanksgiving
December 26-30, January 2 Holiday Vacation

2017
January 1 – New Years Day
January 16 – Martin Luther King
February 20 – Presidents’ Day
February 21-24 – Winter Vacation
April 14 – Non-School Day
April 17 – Patriots’ Day
April 18-21 – Spring Vacation
May 29 – Memorial Day
June 12 – Last Day of School

JULY						
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***Please see reverse side for WPS Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Statement**

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Worcester Public Schools Calendar 2017 – 2018

AUGUST						
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Monday, August 28, 2017: First Day of School for Grades 1-12
 Tuesday, September 5, 2018: First Day of School for PreK-Kindergarten

Monday, June 11, 2018*: Last Day of School.
 Last day of school for seniors: May 23, 2018*

*This date may change in response to the number of snow days used during the school year.

End of marking quarters:

1. November 3, 2017
2. January 19, 2018
3. April 6, 2018
4. June 11, 2018 or last day

= DAYS WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION FOR STUDENTS

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2017
August 24 – Teacher/Staff Reporting Day
August 25 – Staff Development
August 28 – First Day of School
September 4 – Labor Day
October 6 – Staff Development
October 9 – Columbus Day
November 10 – Veterans’ Day
November 22-24 – Thanksgiving
December 25-29 – Holiday Vacation

2018
January 1 – New Years Day
January 15 – Martin Luther King
February 19 – Presidents’ Day
February 20-23 – Winter Vacation
March 30 – Non-School Day
April 16 – Patriots’ Day
April 17-20 – Spring Vacation
May 28 – Memorial Day
June 11 – Last Day of School

JULY						
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Foundation Budget Review Commission

Final Report

October 30, 2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Foundation Budget Review Commission is grateful to the many individuals and organizations that contributed to the completion of its study.

First and foremost, the Commission gratefully acknowledges the exceptional work and support provided by David Bunker, who was hired by the Commission in September to manage the Commission's remaining work and complete an analysis of the topics identified by the Commission in its preliminary report. The Commission benefited enormously from David's extensive expertise and research, and his work was invaluable to the final production of the Commission's report.

We would like to thank Melissa King and Roger Hatch from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of School Finance, who have contributed an extraordinary amount of time and expertise to the work of the Commission. The cooperation of Melissa and Roger in providing data and running projections has been instrumental to the Commission throughout the course of its deliberations, and we wish to express our gratitude for their efforts and support.

We would also like to acknowledge the members of the Advisory Committee who contributed valuable knowledge, experience, and perspectives throughout the Commission's work.

Finally, the Commission is grateful to the many groups and individuals who provided policy expertise and insight through presentations at various Commission meetings, including Dr. Karla Baehr, Dr. Paul Dakin, the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, and the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center.

Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz
Co-Chairs

Representative Alice H. Peisch

Foundation Budget Review Commission Membership

Commission Chairs

Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz, *Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Education*
Representative Alice H. Peisch, *House Chair of the Joint Committee on Education*

Commission Members

Tom Moreau, *Secretary of Education Designee*
Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester, *Department of Elementary & Secondary Education*
Commissioner Tom Weber, *Department of Early Education & Care*
Representative Michael Moran, *Speaker of the House Designee*
Senator Patricia Jehlen, *Senate President Designee*
Representative Kimberly Ferguson, *House Minority Leader Designee*
Edward Moscovitch, *Senate Minority Leader Designee*
Paul Reville, *Governor Designee*
Evan Ross, *House Ways & Means Chair Designee*
Senator Sal DiDomenico, *Senate Ways & Means Chair Designee*
Mayor Kevin Dumas, *Massachusetts Municipal Association Appointee*
Joe Esposito, *Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education Appointee*
Patrick Francomano, *Massachusetts Association of School Committees Appointee*
Mary Bourque, *Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Appointee*
Barbara Madeloni, *Massachusetts Teachers Association Appointee*
John Coleman Walsh, *American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts Appointee*
John Lafleche, *Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators Appointee*
Michael Wood, *Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools Appointee*
David Verdolino, *Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials Appointee*

Advisory Members (non-voting)

Mary Frantz, *League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Appointee*
Luc Schuster, *Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center Appointee*
JD Chesloff, *Massachusetts Business Roundtable Appointee*
Jennifer Francioso, *Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association Appointee*
Carolyn Ryan, *Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation Appointee*
Jason Williams, *Stand for Children Massachusetts Appointee*
Chris Martes, *Strategies for Children Appointee*

Commission Staff

Jennie Williamson, *Research Director of the Joint Committee on Education*
Nathanael Shea, *Chief of Staff in the Office of Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz*
David Bunker, *Staff consultant to the Commission*

Overview

Mission

Sections 124 and 278 of the FY15 State Budget established the Foundation Budget Review Commission (Commission) to “determine the educational programs and services necessary to achieve the commonwealth’s educational goals” and to “review the way foundation budgets are calculated and to make recommendations for potential changes in those calculations as the commission deems appropriate.” In conducting such review, the Commission was charged with determining “the educational programs and services necessary to achieve the commonwealth’s educational goals and to prepare students to achieve passing scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System examinations.” The statute also directed the Commission to “determine and recommend measures to promote the adoption of ways in which resources can be most effectively utilized and consider various models of efficient and effective resource allocation.” In the FY16 State Budget, the Commission was granted an extension until November 1, 2015 to finish its work, and issue a final report.

The members of the Commission approached their work in the spirit of those who originally proposed the Education Reform Act of 1993, and the many from the educational, business, philanthropic, governmental, and civic communities who have advanced its work in a bipartisan and collaborative way since then. We are convinced that providing a high quality education to every student within the Commonwealth regardless of wealth, income, educational background, or zip code is not only a matter of constitutional obligation but of generational responsibility. It is not only the means by which our children grow into active participants in our democracy and productive members of our economy, but by which they are given the tools of self-reflection and personal growth that ensure happy, successful, and fulfilled lives that fully unlock their potential, utilize their skills, and realize their dreams. Massachusetts has made great strides since 1993 in realizing this kind of high quality public education. Indeed, on many metrics, the Commonwealth is the envy of many other states and industrialized countries. But reports from the field and the research community alike in recent years have suggested that the system is fiscally strained by the failure to substantively reconsider the adequacy of the foundation budget since 1993, and that the formula may need re-tooling to meet the needs of the 21st Century. Moreover, 22 years after the advent of education reform, the challenge we have not yet achieved desired results on is to deliver quality consistently to all geographies and all demographic groups across our state.

To meet these challenges, the Commission focused not only on identifying areas where the foundation budget and district spending might be poorly aligned or out-of-date, but asked questions about best practice, efficiency, and productivity, to ensure that gaps between foundation budget assumptions and actual spending were not simply filled because they existed, but were filled because exhaustive analysis showed that either maximum efficiencies had been sought, or that even maximizing efficiencies would not have allowed districts to fully close such gaps. The Commission also undertook its task recognizing that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has, in recent years, consistent with both the original Education Reform Act, and subsequent amendments to the law, including the Achievement Gap Act of 2010, been ramping up efforts to hold districts and schools accountable for results, and to ensure that every effort is being made to identify, reduce, and eliminate remaining achievement gaps. It was a special moral and fiscal focus of the Commission’s, then, to make sure that the schools and districts most likely to be held accountable for bringing high-need students to proficiency, also had sufficient resources to meet those standards, and educate their high-needs populations to the same standards as other students by reviewing the adequacy and efficacy of the ELL and low-income rates in the formula.

Legislative Charge

SECTION 124. Chapter 70 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section 4, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

Section 4. Upon action of the general court, there shall periodically be a foundation budget review commission to review the way foundation budgets are calculated and to make recommendations for potential changes in those calculations as the commission deems appropriate. In conducting such review, the commission shall seek to determine the educational programs and services necessary to achieve the commonwealth's educational goals and to prepare students to achieve passing scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System examinations. The review shall include, but not be limited to, those components of the foundation budget created pursuant to section 3 of chapter 70 and subsequent changes made to the foundation budget by law. In addition, the commission shall seek to determine and recommend measures to promote the adoption of ways in which resources can be most effectively utilized and consider various models of efficient and effective resource allocation. In carrying out the review, the commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall provide to the commission any data and information the commissioner considers relevant to the commission's charge.

The commission shall include the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on education, who shall serve as co-chairs, the secretary of education, the commissioner of elementary and secondary education, the commissioner of early education and care, the speaker of the house of representatives or a designee, the president of the senate or a designee, the minority leader of the house of representatives or a designee, the minority leader of the senate or a designee, the governor or a designee, the chair of the house committee on ways and means or a designee, the chair of the senate committee on ways and means or a designee and 1 member to be appointed by each of the following organizations: the Massachusetts Municipal Association, Inc., the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, Inc., the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc., the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Inc., the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, Inc., the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools, Inc. and the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials. Members shall not receive compensation for their services but may receive reimbursement for the reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their responsibilities as members of the commission. The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall furnish reasonable staff and other support for the work of the commission. Prior to issuing its recommendations, the commission shall conduct not fewer than 4 public hearings across regions of the commonwealth. It shall not constitute a violation of chapter 268A for a person employed by a school district to serve on the commission or to participate in commission deliberations that may have a financial impact on the district employing that person or on the rate at which that person may be compensated. The commission may establish procedures to ensure that no such person participates in commission deliberations that may directly affect the school districts employing those persons or that may directly affect the rate at which those persons are compensated.

SECTION 278. (a) The foundation budget review commission established in section 4 of chapter 70 of the General Laws shall file its report on or before June 30, 2015. A copy of the report and recommendations shall be made publicly available on the website of the department of elementary and secondary education and submitted to the joint committee on education.

(b) In addition to the membership listed in section 4 of chapter 70 of the General Laws and for the purposes of this review, there shall be 1 advisory nonvoting member of the foundation budget review commission from each the following organizations: the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, Stand for Children and Strategies for Children. Advisory members shall be informed in advance of any public hearings or meetings scheduled by the commission and may be provided with written or electronic materials deemed appropriate by the commission's co-chairs. Before finalizing its recommendations, the foundation budget commission established in said section 4 of said chapter 70 shall solicit input from advisory members who may offer comments or further recommendations for the commission's consideration.

Process and Method

To inform its deliberations, the Commission conducted six public hearings across the Commonwealth to solicit testimony from members of the public (*refer to Appendix A for a summary of public hearing comments*). The Commission also held seven meetings between October 2014 and June 2015, during which members examined relevant research and considered information and data presented by various stakeholders (*refer to Appendix B for a summary of the Commission meetings and a list of documents reviewed at each meeting*). At the end of this period, recommendations were made and accepted relative to the foundation budget assumptions regarding health insurance and special education.

In September, the commission was able to hire a researcher and staff person, and instructed that the focus of remaining work be on identifying ways to reduce the achievement gap among low income students and English language learners by examining whether the existing additional amounts required by the formula are sufficient to meet the needs of those districts as defined by 2015 pedagogical standards and best practice. Multiple sources of evidence were considered in this phase of the work, including a review of national literature and research, as well as other state funding formulas, to determine whether our ELL and low income weightings in MA were adequate or in a reasonable national range, and interviews with superintendents, business managers, and teachers in MA districts that have found success in turning around schools and reducing or eliminating the achievement gap for high needs students. Given that insufficient time remained for either a professional judgment panel or a successful schools study, the commission's hope was that the principles underlying both models could be respected by seeking the advice, counsel, and professional judgment of those who had achieved some initial success at meeting the educational needs of ELL and low income students. The multiple sources of evidence gathered in this way are reflected in the additional recommendations made in this report relative to low income and ELL increments.

Finally, a number of areas remained in which the Commission either did not have time to carry out the due diligence needed to make an informed recommendation, or believes that current efforts and pilot programs must be continued and their results reviewed before any final inclusion of related costs in the Chapter 70 funding formula.

Findings & Recommendations

– PART A –

Foundation Budget Changes

The Education Reform Act of 1993 established the foundation budget to ensure adequate funding for all students in Massachusetts. Since then, some of the assumptions contained in the formula for calculating the foundation budget have become outdated. In particular, the actual costs of health insurance and special education have far surpassed the assumptions built into the formula for calculating the foundation budget.¹ As a result, those costs have significantly reduced the resources available to support other key investments. In addition, the added amounts intended to provide services to ELL and low-income students are less than needed to fully provide the level of intervention and support needed to ensure the academic and social-emotional success of these populations, or to allow the school districts serving them to fund the best practices that have been found successful.

I. Health Insurance

Findings

Actual spending on employee health insurance far exceeds the current foundation budget allotment for such costs, as noted in several recent studies.² Statewide, district spending on “Employee Benefits & Fixed Charges” exceeds the foundation budget allotment by more than 140%.³ This is primarily due to the dramatic growth in health insurance costs nationwide and the fact that such costs have increased at a significantly higher rate than the rate of inflation used to adjust the foundation budget. In addition, the “Employee Benefits & Fixed Charges” component of the foundation budget does not include retiree health insurance, even though districts or communities incur such costs.

In developing the below recommendations, the Commission leveraged the collective expertise of its members to engage in discussions about how to address the discrepancy between the foundation budget and actual spending on health insurance. To inform such discussions, the Commission reviewed the factors encompassed in the “Employee Benefits & Fixed Charges” component of the formula, examined data on municipal health insurance trends, and reviewed information regarding the participation of school district employees in the state’s Group Insurance Commission (GIC) health plans.

Recommendations

1. Adjust the employee health insurance rate captured in the “Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges” component of the formula to reflect the average⁴ Group Insurance Commission (GIC) rate*;

¹ Recent studies have estimated the gap between foundation and actual spending in these categories to be as high as \$2.1 billion combined (*Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center, “Cutting Class: Underfunding the Foundation Budget’s Core Education Program,” 2011; Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, “School Funding Reality: A Bargain Not Kept,” 2010; Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, “Report on the Status of the Public Education Financing System in Massachusetts,” 2013*).

² *Ibid.*

³ Melissa King & Roger Hatch, DESE. “Massachusetts Foundation Budget: Focus on Special Education and Health Insurance.” March 2015. Powerpoint presentation.

⁴ While the Commission recommends using the average rate, it acknowledges that there may be other benchmarks that the Legislature may find more appropriate.

*The increment representing the other parts of the “Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges” component would remain the same.

2. Add a new category for “Retired Employee Health Insurance” to the foundation budget; and
3. Establish a separate health care cost inflation adjustor for the employee health insurance portion of the “Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges” component of the formula, based on the change in the GIC rates.

II. Special Education

Findings

Foundation enrollment accounts for the additional costs of providing special education services through an assumed rate of district enrollment, rather than an actual count of students. A district’s foundation enrollment is multiplied by 3.75% to add additional special education resources to the foundation budget. This translates to an assumption that 15% of students receive in-district special education services 25% of the time.⁵ In actuality, around 16% of students receive some level of in-district special education services statewide⁶, which suggests that the foundation budget understates the number of in-district special education students. Out-of-district special education enrollment is assumed at 1% of foundation enrollment, which mirrors the rate of out-of-district special education placements statewide. However, districts spend far more on special education tuition for out-of-district placements than what is allocated through the foundation budget. In FY13, actual costs were 59% higher than the foundation budget rate of \$25,454.⁷ To address the fact that the foundation budget understates the number of in-district special education students and the cost of out-of-district special education, the Commission has developed the below recommendations.

Recommendations

1. Increase the assumed in-district special education enrollment rate from 3.75% to 4.00% (for non-vocational students) and 4.75% to 5.00% (for vocational students)
 - *Current assumption (3.75%) = 15% of students receiving SPED services 25% of the time*
 - *Proposed change (4.00%) = 16% of students receiving SPED services 25% of the time*
2. Increase the out-of-district special education cost rate to capture the total costs that districts bear before circuit breaker reimbursement is triggered. One example of how this might be done is to increase the out-of-district special education cost rate by an amount equal to the following:

$$[4 \times \text{statewide foundation budget per-pupil amount}] - [\text{statewide foundation budget per-pupil amount}^{**} + \text{out-of-district special education cost rate}]^{***}$$

⁵ 15% x 25% = 3.75%

⁶ Melissa King & Roger Hatch, DESE. “Massachusetts Foundation Budget: Focus on Special Education and Health Insurance.” March 2015. Powerpoint presentation.

⁷ Melissa King & Roger Hatch, DESE. “Massachusetts Foundation Budget: Focus on Special Education and Health Insurance.” March 2015. Powerpoint presentation.

** Not including assumed SPED costs.

*** This would be a one-time adjustment, with the resulting rate increased by inflation each year thereafter.

III. Budget Impact Summary: Health Insurance and Special Education Changes

Statewide Summary	GAA	25% Phase in	Difference	100%	Difference
	FY16	FY16		FY16	
Enrollment	942,120	942,120	0	942,120	0
Foundation budget	10,090,177,272	10,340,927,612	250,750,340	10,912,226,442	822,049,170
Required district contribution	5,943,909,031	6,002,726,108	58,817,077	6,080,502,587	136,593,556
Chapter 70 aid	4,511,521,973	4,607,300,066	95,778,093	4,943,298,626	431,776,654
Required net school spending (NSS)	10,455,431,004	10,610,026,174	154,595,170	11,023,801,213	568,370,210

The chart above illustrates the estimated impact of the Commission's recommended adjustments to the foundation budget categories for health insurance and special education, expressed both as a one year cost and based on a four year phase-in. Note that because of the structural changes recommended to both the ELL and low income rates below, further work would be needed to ensure that the Chapter 70 spreadsheets accurately reflected those changes. Those recommendations would also entail an increase in the amount of Chapter 70 aid, not reflected in this chart. In addition, if the legislature chose to incorporate any of the issues raised in Part C of this report as being worthy of further study and consideration, the final cost to the state would increase further.

IV. English Language Learners

Findings

A review of national literature showed that the weights for states with funding formulas that made adjustments for ELL students had weightings of between 9.6% and 99%. Although Massachusetts uses rates rather than weightings, those rates contain an implied weighting of between 7% and 34%. In general, then, MA weightings for ELL are well within the national range, with the exception of the high school rates of 7% and 40% respectively.

Although the origin of the high school rate differential is based in legitimately different class size assumptions in a historic iteration of the formula, it presents a challenge to the effective provision of services to the ELL population. A consistent point made by the superintendents and educators with whom we spoke was the sharp rise in students with interrupted education (SIFE) and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), often children from war torn regions, or refugees, who have serious social and emotional needs, and arrive at school with little to no formal education for school districts to build upon. This challenge is exacerbated at the high school level, where such gaps in learning must be made up in an extremely short time frame, often with highly staff-intensive interventions involving class size of 10 or less per teacher, and support staff as well. Next, vocational schools which serve significant numbers of ELL students have frequently pointed out to the Commission that they receive no additional support in meeting their students' needs through the formula, because the ELL student amount is calculated as a base rate per student rather than as an added

increment. Therefore, no ELL increment is applied to the vocational foundation budget, despite the significant needs some vocational districts face in educating this population. Finally, smaller districts and their advocates urged that funding and flexibility remain in the formula in recognition of the fact that they too often have ELL learners, but, due to low incidence, may meet those needs in creative and cost-sharing ways with other districts.

Recommendations

1. Convert the ELL increase from a base rate to an increment on the base rate.
2. Apply the increment to vocational school ELL students as well.
3. Increase the increment for all grade levels, including high school, to the current effective middle school increment of \$2,361. This would increase the range of ELL-only weightings and expand available funds for staff-intensive high school age interventions.

V. Low-Income Students

Findings

Recommended weightings for low income students in the national literature range from an (admittedly conservative) 40% more than the base per student rate to 100% more. The low income increments in MA range from 32% at the high school level to 50% at the junior high/ middle school level, with low income ELL running between 30% and 84%. In our effort to determine where in the broader range of weightings MA should fall, the Commission reviewed the testimony made at public hearings and undertook focused interviews with successful educators in the fall. Among districts which had successfully carried out turnaround efforts, either district wide, or at select schools within the district identified as Level Four schools, many common themes and best practices emerged as worthy of replication in the effort to better meet the needs of ELL and low income learners, and reduce remaining achievement gaps, a few of which follow:

1. Extending the school day or year: This was among the top of the strategies identified as having been successful in the schools where it is tried. It is often extended to allow both more learning time for students, and common planning time for teachers and staff. More time is frequently viewed as essential to overcome existing deficits in learning and achievement.
2. Social and Emotional Needs/ Mental and Physical (including Oral) Health: Although educators are quick to stress that social and emotional needs are different and distinct from mental health, almost everyone interviewed stressed that the growth of need in this area has been staggering. Many asserted that they could not have accurately predicted in 1993, or even ten years ago, how much more effort and cost would be needed to ensure an adequate supply of social workers, guidance and adjustment counselors, wraparound coordinators, and other staff to ensure that the needs of their students are met, and that students arrive school stable and ready to learn.
3. Instructional Improvement: Improving instruction is usually key to any successful school turnaround, and several strategies emerge as valuable here: increased and improved professional development, common planning time for teachers and staff, and the use of instructional teams and instructional coaches.
4. Targeted Class Size Reductions for the Highest Need Populations: Although the formula's assumptions for K-3 class size, and for high needs students, are fairly low, several educators stressed that, for certain of the highest need populations, such as the SIFE/SLIFE ELL students mentioned above, or other high

school students with significant gaps to redress in a short time, or students with significant social-emotional needs, or who are at high risk of dropping out, or have a high history of truancy, who need intensive staff attention to help keep them in school and on task, class sizes lower than 10 to 1 were often necessary to increase achievement rapidly.

5. Early Education: Full Day Kindergarten and Full Day Pre-K. Many of the educators indicated both that bringing full day K into their districts had significantly impacted and improved school readiness, and that high on their wish list was the extension of full day pre-K and other early learning services in their districts.

For some of these strategies, the Commission was presented with solid and detailed estimates for what these implementations cost. MA 2020 presented evidence that extended learning time (or ELT) costs approximately \$1300-1500 per student. The Mass Budget and Policy Center (MBPC) presented a costing out of comprehensive wraparound services that was estimated at \$1300 per student. Worcester school officials presented evidence that their successful efforts at turning around Level 4 school cost about \$2000 more per student than other schools in the district received. Other strategies proved more elusive to cost out, although the range of weightings found in literature ranged from a conservative 40% in the Education Trust review, to 50% in the work of the Education Reform Review Commission of 2002, to almost 100% in Maryland. It was also clear from our interviews and emerging practices in other states that districts with the highest concentrations of poverty had a correspondingly high need for funding. The fact of concentration of challenging populations itself caused a change in the asset mix available to, and the expenditures required of, districts. They especially needed the educational and pedagogical synergies created by making more than one reform happen at a time.

The other challenge faced by the Commission was this: No one strategy or group of strategies is used consistently in every school district, but no model district limited so itself to one strategy only. Successful districts, and successful school turnarounds, require multiple concurrent, overlapping and reinforcing strategies, the exact details of which will vary from district to district. The question before the Commission was: How shall we account for the varying costs of diverse strategic educational choices through a standardized formula without simply summing the costs of every possible strategy, or limiting districts to one strategy at a time? The recommendations below attempt to find a way through that question by recommending that the low income increment be increased based on concentration of poverty, and that the poorest districts be provided enough per student to ensure that two to three reforms might be carried out simultaneously.

Recommendations

1. Increase the increment for districts with high concentrations of low income students. The Legislature will need to determine specific increments based on further review of data and debate, but based on its review of national literature, practices in other states, and model districts within our own state, the Commission offers the guidance that that weighting should fall within the range of 50%-100% and that multiple concurrent interventions are necessary to effectively close achievement gaps. The final decision should provide high poverty school districts with enough funding to pursue several turnaround strategies at once.
2. Ensure that any new definition of economically disadvantaged (necessitated by districts' shift away from collection of free and reduced school lunch eligibility data) properly and accurately count all economically needful students.
3. Leave the exact calculation of each increment to legislative action.
4. Require each district to post a plan online, on a highly accessible and visible state website as well as their district site, about how it will use the funds calculated in the ELL and low income allotments to serve the

intended populations, what outcome metrics they will use to measure the success of the programs so funded, performance against those metrics, and, subsequently, the results of the funding on improving student achievement. The plan will be public, but not subject to approval by DESE. The plan, which can be part of required school improvement plans, should detail how funds are being used to improve instructional quality, and/or ensure that services are provided that allow every student to arrive at school physically and mentally healthy, with their social and emotional needs met, and ready to learn.

5. Consistent with testimony provided to the Commission, the interviews conducted by Commission staff, and a national literature review to identify best practices, we anticipate that districts will use funding flexibility for one or more of the following best practices: a) expanded learning time, in the form of a longer day and/or year, and inclusive, where appropriate, of common planning time for teachers, b) wraparound services that improve and maintain the health of our students, including social and emotional health and skills, mental health and oral health, c) hiring staff at levels that support improved student performance and the development of the whole child, d) increased or improved professional development rooted in pedagogical research, and focused on instructional improvement, including evidence-based practices such as hiring instructional coaches, e) purchase of up-to-date curriculum materials and equipment, including instructional technology, and f) expanding kindergarten, pre-school, and early education options within the district.

– PART B –

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE RESOURCE ALLOCATION

In the course of deliberations, Commission members often found themselves desiring even more detailed information than that immediately available. In addition, in approving foundation budget increases, they wanted to ensure the funding was used effectively and accountably to meet the educational needs of our most vulnerable children and high needs students. The first part of the recommendations below represents specific recommendations relative to the low income and ELL increment increases proposed in Part A of this report, and about school-based budgeting, the second part is the recommendation of a data working group that made recommendations to the Commission in September, and the third section contains the recommendations of the Commission relative to early education.

Data Collection Recommendations

1. Establish a data collection and reporting system that tracks funding allocated for ELL and Low Income students to ensure that spending is targeted to the intended populations, and to provide a better data source to future Foundation Budget Review Commissions about the accuracy and adequacy of the low income and ELL increments.
2. Establish a data collection and reporting system that allows for greater access to school-level expenditures and data across all districts to increase the understanding of state level policy makes about effective school-level interventions and investments, and which connects that data to student achievement data so more informed decisions can be made about the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of state expenditures.

Stakeholder Data Advisory Group Recommendations

1. *Establish Stakeholder Data Advisory Committee*

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in collaboration with the Executive Office of Education (EOE), should convene a Stakeholder Data Advisory Committee to promote effective resource allocation decisions at the local level

2. *Purpose of Data Advisory Committee*

The Data Advisory Committee will assist DESE to identify, implement and assess cost-effective ways to achieve three goals:

- a) Streamline financial reporting, eliminate duplicate reporting requirements, and improve data quality
- b) Strengthen DESE capacity to analyze and report staffing, scheduling and financial data in ways that support strategic resource allocation decisions at the district and school level
- c) Strengthen district capacity to use data to make strategic resource allocation decisions

3. *Reports to the Board and Joint Education Committee*

The Data Advisory Committee will report its progress to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to the Co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Education at least semi-annually, and will make such recommendations for new funding as are necessary for DESE to achieve the goals.

4. *Work of the DESE*

DESE actions to achieve these three goals may include:

- Work with MTRS to obtain individual teacher salary information

- Develop strategies for securing more school-level financial data, including, where appropriate, developing ways to apportion more district expenditures to schools automatically
- Improve data accuracy by identifying more ways to “automate” the identification of “outlier” data on EPIMS staffing and EOY financial reports from districts to prompt district review
- Strengthen its training for district staff to improve accuracy and consistency of data reporting with special attention to: a) the use of clear and consistent definitions, and b) expected use of “Reports Tab” to explain significant changes and/or “outlier” data
- Eliminate duplication of effort at state and local levels by: a) aligning finance data with staffing (EPIMS) and enrollment (SIMS) data collections, and b) aligning grants management and reporting with EOY financial reporting
- Identify potential models, requirements, impacts, and estimated cost for a new financial reporting system
- Develop more powerful, actionable and publicly-available information and reports that combine and benchmark staffing, scheduling, and district/school-level funding data to support strategic resource allocation decisions at the local level
- Expand research focused on identifying promising practices for efficient and effective district and school resource allocation
- Collaborate closely with MASBO and MASS to develop the on-line (and other) training and support that DESE, education collaboratives, and local district and school staff need to make effective use of the current and new data and research
- Take other actions deemed necessary to achieve the goals

5. *Implications for Future State Funding*

Many of the above actions will require a cost-benefit analysis of a range of options. For some chosen options, new state funding will need to be recommended and secured.

Early Education

High-quality preschool is an effective practice identified by most school districts as one which increases the school readiness of students, especially high need students, and which is therefore worthy of further consideration and action by the legislature as it updates the structure and financing of public education for the 21st Century. While the Commission did not have sufficient time or resources to undertake specific recommendations on early education, it was a practice that was frequently highlighted in both national literature and in feedback from model districts within the Commonwealth—both for closing achievement gaps for disadvantaged students and in reducing special education costs for districts and the state. The state is currently using federal funds from the Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) program, and some supplemental state funds, to examine and explore ways in which early education can be provided and expanded through the existing and robust mixed delivery system of public and private providers. As it considers whether the Chapter 70 funding formula can be adapted appropriately as a funding vehicle for the ongoing provision of pre-school, the Commission encourages the Legislature to incorporate the implementation wisdom gained through the PEG pilot programs and the Commonwealth’s other early education program, quality, and access initiatives as it rolls out any effort to provide these services more widely.

– PART C –

OTHER

The Commission wishes to make the following observations and recognitions, which due to time constraints, and limited resources, it has been unable to address more extensively:

I. IN-DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION

A review at the September meeting of in-district SPED spending data confirms that the average expenditure per pupil exceeds the rate currently included in the foundation budget, and that, even upon adoption of the changes recommended in this report, a gap will remain of approximately \$700M between foundation budget assumptions, and district reported spending, and between foundation budget assumptions about staffing (assuming 4,394 teachers, or 8 special education FTEs to one teacher), and current practice (9,915 special education teachers, or approximately 5 special education FTEs to one teacher). Some evidence and testimony was presented that the central change driving this gap was that the original foundation budget for in-district special education was built on a model of substantially separate instruction, which has changed significantly over time to reflect the growing use of inclusion as the preferred pedagogical model in the Commonwealth. Since that model involves special education students spending most or all of their day in regular education classrooms, with special education (and para-professionals) coming into the classroom to provide extra help for struggling students, the working hypothesis of several Commissioners is that the added staffing needs of that model account for the significant difference in staffing and funding levels between the foundation budget and reported spending. Commissioners also noted the following challenges related to the data as presented: a) actual reported special education costs, including the counting of staff FTEs, don't line up precisely with functional categories in the foundation budget, and b) not all functional categories are collected by program, leaving key data missing for special education. In addition, some Commissioners expressed a desire for a more detailed review of district practice to confirm that inclusion, and its broad adoption at the district level, is the chief reason for any remaining funding shortfall, and to further examine how best to account for reported costs that may be shared between regular and special education. The Commission simply did not have sufficient time or resources to further analyze and review district teaching and funding practices in order to inform more specific recommendations. The gap between the foundation budget in-district SPED rate and actual district-level per pupil costs needs further attention by the legislature, in order to ensure that Chapter 70 supports best practices in creating and maintaining a 21st century special education system.

The Commission further notes that, while any increase made to the foundation budget to reflect special education costs would result in increased Chapter 70 aid for many districts, such additional funding would not need to be spent on special education services solely. Because special education is a legal entitlement, districts must fund individual education plans for all students in special education. Therefore, any gap between the foundation budget categories and actual legal obligations results in funds being diverted from other instructional priorities of the district to fund obligatory special education costs. Any increase in the Chapter 70 assumptions about special education that increases Chapter 70 aid to a district also frees up "other" funds currently being spent on special education services, and allows districts to make a broader set of investments in core instructional services and other supports that benefit the entire learning community of that district, should the district so choose. It is the expectation of the Commission that by more accurately reflecting special education (and health insurance costs) in the Chapter 70 formula, the Legislature will make possible numerous exciting reforms and instructional improvements that are currently beyond the fiscal capacity of the Commonwealth's school districts.

II. INFLATION FACTORS

The Commission also recognizes that, although the Chapter 70 formula contains an inflation adjustment, which has been applied in most years since 1993, in 2010, faced with a sharp downturn in revenues, and the serious budget challenge that resulted, the final budget used a lower inflation number (3.04%) from a different quarter than the quarter required by statute (6.75%). A correction for this “missed” quarter that acknowledges the statutory cap on inflation of 4.5% results in an adjustment of 1.4 % in FY16, and would have required additional Chapter 70 aid of almost \$55 million. A correction that suspended the statutory cap results in an adjustment of 3.6 % in FY16, and would have required additional Chapter 70 aid of almost \$158 million. Note, however, that these estimates were calculated separately from the recommendations made in Part A of this report. Were those changes adopted, there would be no need to make a corrective fix to those elements of the formula, which would lower the estimates above, and allow an inflation adjustment to be made to remaining categories for a lower cost in Chapter 70 aid.

– PART D –

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

As the Commission's work draws to a close, the legislature's work begins. We submit this report to the legislature with full recognition of the continued fiscal challenges of the Commonwealth, and the many competing priorities, and worthwhile goals, that the legislature must balance in crafting the annual state budget. We recognize that recommendations of this scope and size will need to be phased in to be affordable. However, we also note again what was stated at the beginning of this document: that the good work begun by the education reform act of 1993, and the educational progress made since, will be at risk so long as our school systems are fiscally strained by the ongoing failure to substantively reconsider the adequacy of the foundation budget. We therefore urge that the legislature act on these recommendations with a profound sense of the risks and opportunities at stake for our shared prosperity as a state and, as our constitution acknowledges, the critical nature of education to the health of our democracy. We advise a keen sense of the urgency when it comes to addressing the identified funding gaps, and the moral imperative of reducing the remaining achievement gaps.

The Commission also hopes, after passage of any revisions to Chapter 70, that careful and continued attention will be paid to the adequacy of the foundation budget, to the effectiveness of the implementation of any Chapter 70 revisions, and to best practices that emerge over coming years. We encourage the legislature to make the work of the Commission recurring, on some regular interval of years as was originally envisioned by the 1993 Act, since both pedagogical wisdom and relevant changes in our economy and society will always be emerging. We hope that, with the assistance of such a reconvened commission, the legislature will be in a position to act expeditiously on any new fiscal needs or implementation challenges that have arisen in the interim, or new strategies that permit more efficient and effective use of funds. Noting the challenges and frustrations faced by this Commission as the result of a lack of dedicated and funded staff, we strongly recommend that dedicated and timely funding be provided to any future Commission to allow a rigorous review of available data to make decisions that are in best long term interests of the Commonwealth both fiscally and educationally.

Education reform in Massachusetts is now 22 years old, and its strength has derived from a solid bipartisan commitment both to high academic standards and to providing adequate funding to allow districts to meet those standards. As a Commission composed of members from the educational, business, philanthropic, governmental, and civic communities, we hope that our proposals represent another step in that journey towards academic excellence and educational equity, and we look forward to continuing our work together to see these changes enacted and signed into law.

Appendix A

The Commission held six public hearings across the state to solicit testimony from members of the public. A summary of the main themes and issues that were raised during the public hearings are listed below. *This list reflects the testimony heard at the public hearings only and is not meant to convey the Commission's formal findings or recommendations.*

Public Hearings Summary

- Actual spending on Special Education and Health Insurance far exceeds the foundation budget assumptions. As a result, foundation spending is consumed by these under-funded fixed charges, leaving less funding available to support other educational programs.
- Need to increase funding for at-risk students – especially low income and ELL students.
- The foundation budget does not provide sufficient resources to address the mental health needs of today's students.
- The foundation budget should provide greater support for wraparound services.
- The Commission should examine district allocation practices and efforts to remove barriers to efficient and adaptive uses of funds.
- Technology should be included in the foundation budget as such costs were not envisioned in the original foundation budget.
- The Commission should propose changes to simplify and clarify the foundation budget to make it easier for citizens to understand how funds are spent and whether these are bringing about results.
- Money should follow the student at the school level, to ensure that additional aid is being spent on the students who it is intended to benefit.
- Reconsider the use of October 1st enrollment data to calculate foundation budgets, which is especially problematic for districts that experience significant fluctuations in student enrollment throughout the year.
- The current method of funding charter schools is creating significant and growing financial difficulty for municipalities and school districts.
- The Commission should consider whether there is sufficient funding in the foundation budget for building maintenance.
- The foundation budget formula does not account for the cost of unfunded mandates.
- Need a better enforcement mechanism and/or greater clarity regarding a municipality's obligation to appropriate sufficient funds to meet the required local contribution.
- Transportation should be included and funded in the foundation budget.
- Need to address "equity" issues – the Commission should review and adjust the local contribution and school aid calculation factors in the Chapter 70 formula.
- The Commission should address concerns surrounding vocational education – i.e. how vocational education students are recruited and accepted, how tuition is calculated, and the high cost of student transportation.
- The foundation budget should include funding for school libraries.
- The foundation budget should account for the differences in costs among smaller, rural districts.

Appendix B

Summary of Commission Meetings & Materials

Meeting # 1: October 9, 2014

Commission members reviewed the charges set forth in the authorizing legislation (*Sections 124 & 278 of Chapter 165 of the Acts of 2014*), viewed a presentation on the foundation budget formula entitled “Measuring Adequacy – the Massachusetts Foundation Budget” prepared by Melissa King and Roger Hatch from the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE), and discussed the public hearing schedule. Commission members received the following materials: A copy of the authorizing legislation (*Section 124 & 278 of Chapter 165 of the Acts of 2014*), a summary of the authorizing legislation, and a copy of the power point presentation entitled “Measuring Adequacy – the Massachusetts Foundation Budget”.

Meeting #2: March 10, 2015

Commission members viewed a presentation on special education and health insurance entitled “Massachusetts Foundation Budget: Focus on Special Education and Health Insurance” prepared by Melissa King and Roger Hatch from DESE, viewed a presentation on municipal health insurance trends prepared by Carolyn Ryan from the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, and reviewed the Commission’s meeting schedule and timeline. Commission members received the following materials: a copy of the power point presentation entitled “the Massachusetts Foundation Budget: Focus on Special Education and Health Insurance”, a copy of the power point presentation entitled “Municipal Health Insurance Trends”, and a copy of the Commission’s meeting schedule.

Meeting #3: March 27, 2015

Commission members viewed a presentation on the other foundation budget categories and differences in spending among districts entitled “Further Analysis of the Foundation Budget” prepared by Melissa King from DESE, viewed a presentation on the wage adjustment factor prepared by Melissa King from DESE, and considered information provided by DESE Commissioner Mitchell Chester on the relationship between spending and student outcomes. Commission members received the following materials: a copy of the power point presentation entitled “Further Analysis of the Foundation Budget”, a copy of the power point presentation entitled “Wage Adjustment Factor”, and a list of school districts by wealth and low-income quintile.

Meeting #4: April 14, 2015

Commission members viewed a presentation on evidence-based strategies for improving student outcomes entitled “Building a Foundation for Success” prepared by Chad d’Entremont and Luc Schuster from the Rennie Center and Mass Budget and Policy Center, considered information provided by Dr. Paul Dakin (Superintendent of Revere Public Schools) regarding the various investments and programs that have yielded positive outcomes in Revere, and discussed the process for reviewing and voting on recommendations that would be included in the Commission’s final report. Commission members received the following materials: a copy of the power point presentation entitled “Building a Foundation for Success”, and a handout on Revere Public Schools provided by Dr. Paul Dakin.

Meeting #5: May 5, 2015

Commission members viewed a presentation on effective resource allocation entitled “Effective & Efficient Resource Allocation: A Framework to Consider” prepared by Dr. Karla Baehr, discussed and approved changes to the Commission’s timeline and work plan, and reviewed a draft proposal containing recommendations for

health care and SPED adjustments. Commission members received the following materials: a copy of the power point entitled “Effective & Efficient Resource Allocation: A Framework to Consider”, a copy of the work plan proposed by Senator Chang-Díaz, and a copy of the draft recommendations for health care and SPED adjustments.

Meeting #6: June 9, 2015

Commission members reviewed and approved final recommendations for Health Care and SPED adjustments, considered proposals relative to full-day preschool and accountability, and discussed the other topics to be considered by the Commission during its extended deliberations. Commission members received the following materials: a copy of the final recommendations for health care and SPED adjustments, a document containing draft proposals relative to full-day preschool and accountability, and a copy of the Commission’s updated work plan.

Meeting #7: June 23, 2015

Commission members reviewed and approved edits to the preliminary report, discussed the process and methodology for analyzing the other topics to be considered during the Commission’s extended deliberations, and reviewed information presented by Roger Hatch from DESE on school-based data collection. Commission members received the following materials: a draft of the preliminary report, a document explaining the foundation budget comparison tool developed by Commission member Ed Moscovitch, and a document on school-level finance data.

Meeting #8: September 28, 2015

Commission members were introduced to David Bunker, who was hired by the co-chairs to staff the commission and draft the final report. They also reviewed and commented on his work plan, which was centered around examining the adequacy of the low income and ELL adjustments in the formula. Melissa King of DESE gave a presentation on in-district special education costs, members held a discussion on the “accountability” and “conditions” recommendations, and Dr. Karla Baehr gave a presentation of potential recommendations on data collection, which were unanimously approved by Commission members. Commission members received: a copy of the agenda, a copy of the work proposal prepared by David Bunker, a copy of the Power Point presentation on “In District Special Education Costs” by Melissa King, a document prepared by Dr. Karla Baehr containing recommendations to support effective and efficient allocation of resources, and a document containing a list of the “Accountability” proposals that the Commission has considered to date.

Meeting #9: October 16, 2015

Commission members reviewed the recommendations of David Bunker regarding the low income and ELL adjustments. They also discussed the issue of efficient resource allocation and reporting on spending. Finally, they had a follow-up discussion about in-district special education, and other remaining concerns expressed by Commission members.

The spending on school safety equipment and programs are funded from both the School Safety Account (500136-92000, Line O) and the Facilities Department Ordinary Maintenance (OM) Account (500152-92000). During FY15, \$119,163 was expended from the Facilities Department OM account for school security maintenance, installation, and support. School safety spending represented 5.4% of all Facilities OM spending (less trash removal) last year. In addition, \$49,448 was expended from the School Safety line item. In total, \$168,611 was expended on the support of school safety programs and equipment from these two accounts. Not included is the amount of salaries and overtime associated with Facilities personnel for the work performed in connection with the installation and maintenance of systems and equipment.

The summary of spending by account for FY15 is listed below:

Safety & Security Spending

500152-92000	FY15
Facilities OM Account	Expenditures
Fire Suppression and Sprinkler Systems	\$42,139
Security, Intercom & Access Controls	\$31,133
Grounds Safety & Security	\$22,899
Security, Intercom & Access Controls	\$10,443
Door locks, Camera & Intercom Systems	\$5,686
Fire Alarm Systems	\$2,163
Security Systems (Doherty & Vernon Hill)	\$1,900
Security, Intercom & Access Controls	\$1,720
Fire Suppression and Sprinkler Systems	<u>\$1,080</u>
Total 500152	\$119,163

500136-92000, Line O.	FY15
School Safety Account	Expenditures
Door locks, Camera & Intercom Systems	\$11,118
Purchase of Two-Way Radios	\$9,981
Maintenance of Two-Way Radios	\$9,029
Purchase of Security Camera	\$845
Substance Abuse Prevention	\$4,360
CPI Training	\$964
Police Athletic League	\$4,981
Systemwide Support Activities	\$3,278
School Safety Supplies	<u>\$4,892</u>
Total 500136SS	\$49,448