

Whitman-Hanson Regional School District

Budget Questions and Answers

Questions Regarding Assessment Methods

1. When did the Statutory Method become available? **1993, Under the Education Reform Act of 1993.**

<http://www.cmrpc.org/sites/default/files/Documents/LegislativeAffairsCommittee/Massachusetts%20Education%20Act%20of%201993%20May%2019%202017.pdf>

2. How many regional school districts use the statutory methodology? **According to the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools, the majority.**
3. Are both methodologies legal to use? **Yes, both methods are legal to use and both require a majority vote at town meetings.**
4. If a budget cannot be agreed on by the two towns, what methodology is used? **According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) the statutory method is used at a super town meeting. See DESE website, developing a regional budget.**
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/regional/>
5. If we use the Statutory Method, Does Hanson pay for Whitman students? **Hanson and Whitman pay into the district budget. That money is divided to operate the school district. The Minimum Local Contribution (MLC) is subtracted from the foundation budget to determine Chapter 70.**
6. Could Hanson still vote to use the agreement method of assessment? **Yes, but if Whitman doesn't agree to the agreement method, we do not have a budget and we must move to a 1/12th budget under the direction of the DESE Commissioner.**
7. Why don't we pay the same amount for education for Whitman and Hanson? **We do spend the same amount per student. However, DESE and Department of Revenue (DOR) establish the amount of money each town should pay for education.**
8. If a town does not pass the school budget don't agree with the statutory method, does the assessment go back to the long-standing 60 year Agreement method? **No, if we don't have an approved budget the Commissioner will establish a 1/12th budget using the statutory method.**

Questions about the Budget

9. Was this year's budget level services? If not, what was lost? **The fiscal 2020 budget cut 19.2 positions, reduced supplies by \$292,000 and applied \$561,000 from Excess and Deficiency (E&D) as supplemental revenue. 9.2 teachers, 6 paraprofessionals, 3 duty aides, 1 special education chair, 1 central office support, 1 Director of Technology, 1 facilities/building use coordinator. Three new elementary adjustment counselors were hired.**
10. What is the total proposed budget for next year (FY2021) for WHRSD? **The FY2020 final operating budget was \$52,425,738. The FY2021 proposed budget was voted approved by the School Committee 55,320,238.**
11. How much in dollars and what percent of the school budget is funded by the state, and how much is funded by both towns? **For FY2021 Chapter 70 we anticipate receiving \$24,886,620 which is 44.9%. This includes \$4,612,329 in held harmless money.**
12. On average over the last 3 years, how much has the state increased its funding, in dollars annually? **Chapter 70 has seen an increase to \$30 per pupil or an average of \$117,000 per year over the last 3 years.**
13. Were there cost savings from the schools being closed? If so, how did that impact the proposed FY2021 budget? **Yes, there will be some savings as well as expenditures. S.J. Services custodial services were furloughed the week of April 1 and will return to working on July 1. We anticipate a savings of \$150,000 to \$200,000. First Student transportation will realize approximately \$200,000 in savings. Special Education transportation will save roughly \$120,000; High School athletics will save approximately \$65,000 due to no spring season. Expenses total approximately \$335,000 in tuition based programs (Pre-school and Full Day K) that continued to run although tuitions were refunded. Deep cleaning expenses ran \$60,-70,000 prior to school being cancelled. We anticipate receiving reimbursement from the state. Monies we anticipate saving will not be available in E&D until October 1 and will replenish the \$350,000 allocated for FY2021.**
14. What additional services are being added with the proposed FY 2021 budget? **Four teachers and two technology support staff (to replace the Director that was cut in FY2020); a reading Curriculum for grades K-5 (that we haven't had since 2001) which is also online friendly should we have another period of school closure; and special education transportation and tuition increases.**
15. What percent of the budget consists of salary and how does this compare to other districts? **52% of the budget is salary. 48% of the budget covers expenses that other town departments don't need to include as the towns fund their overall operating expenses. Transportation of students, utility payments, Plymouth County Retirement, health insurance, building Insurance, State unfunded and underfunded mandates (Average close to \$5 million dollars). In every South Shore school district and surrounding areas, salaries make up 50% or more of their operating budgets, Abington is higher than Whitman-Hanson and Easton and West Bridgewater are at 80%.**
16. What is the average WHRSD Teacher Salary? How does this compare to other districts? **Please see the DESE website for data collected in FY18. WH \$82,500, Pembroke \$83,803, BR \$85,388, Abington, \$85,917, Boston \$101,811, Braintree \$79,863, Brockton \$96,174, Canton \$83,857, Carver \$72,740, EB \$72,485, Duxbury \$82,702, Hanover \$80,616, Hingham**

\$87,233, Marshfield \$75,523, Norwell \$84,396, Scituate \$90,248, SL \$84,466, SSVT \$80,261, WB \$77,724. <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/teachersalaries.aspx>

17. What is the per pupil expense for a WHRSD student? How does this compare to the state average and other schools that Whitman and Hanson attend, such as SSVT? **The PPC-**
<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/ppx.aspx>

MA state average is \$15,956.74, **WH \$12,740.36**, SSVT \$21,142.42, Abington \$13,461.03, Cohasset \$16,000.42, Duxbury \$14,926.79, EB \$12,000.13, Easton \$13,279.96, Hanover \$14,005.77, Hingham \$13,215.56, Holbrook \$14,006.99, Marshfield \$13,185.71, Hull \$20,530.02, Norwell \$15,367.54, Pembroke \$13,558.81, Plymouth \$17,114.05, Rockland \$15,568.04, Scituate \$15,020.97, WB \$13,238.60, BR \$12,832.30.

18. If the proposed FY2021 budget doesn't pass, what will be cut? **If a budget is not passed at both town meetings, the Commissioner will establish a 1/12th budget based upon fiscal 2020 figures. This will be a reduction of between 35-40 positions.**
19. If the budget doesn't pass in both towns in their respective town meetings, when would expected cuts occur? **August, prior to the opening of school.**
20. What does a 1/12th budget mean? **If a budget is not set for a regional school district by July 1, the Commissioner of Education will establish a 1/12th budget.**

1/12th Budget

Massachusetts law requires that after an annual budget is adopted by a regional school committee and proposed to its member municipalities, the appropriating authorities of two-thirds of the member municipalities must approve the budget when assessments are calculated under the statutory method and *all* of the member municipalities must approve the budget when assessments are calculated under the alternative (agreement) method. If, after the submission of the regional budget to its member municipalities, the regional school committee budget is not approved by July 1 of the fiscal year, the first level of state intervention is triggered.

In this instance, law and regulations require that the regional school district superintendent notify the Commissioner of the district's failure to secure a budget by July 1. The Commissioner, through the Office of Regional Governance, will request that the district provide information about the regional school committee's proposed budget and assessments for the upcoming fiscal year, the status of the local votes, and the approved budget and assessments for the prior fiscal year. After review of this information, the Department, under the Commissioner's authority, certifies an interim monthly budget sufficient for the operation of the district for the beginning of the new fiscal year. The interim monthly budget shall not be less than one-twelfth of the total budget approved by the region in the most recent fiscal year or such higher amount as the interim monthly "1/12th budget."

Whenever the Commissioner establishes a 1/12th budget for a regional school district, the treasurer of the regional school district must calculate and certify to the member municipalities their respective assessments based on the **statutory assessment method**. In doing so, the treasurer must use the final or most recent state aid amounts, general fund revenues and minimum local contributions for the budget year. Since state aid and the minimum local contributions for member

municipalities may change between the time the initial budget is proposed by the regional school committee and the time a 1/12th budget is established by the Commissioner, the final or most recent minimum local contribution and state aid amounts must be used in calculating assessments under a 1/12th budget. Each member municipality shall then pay its respective assessment to the regional school district in accordance with the payment schedule in the regional district agreement.

The Commissioner's 1/12th budget remains in effect until the annual budget is adopted and approved by the regional school committee and approved by two-thirds of the member municipalities *or* until December 1, whichever comes first.

21. Why does it seem that more potential positions may be cut in one town versus another? What determines class size? **We try to maintain a class size of 20-22 at the elementary level, and 25 in both middle and high school. These numbers can fluctuate because enrollment of grade level changes.**
22. If the budget doesn't pass in both towns by December what happens then?

State Fiscal Oversight

Between the time the 1/12th budget is established and December 1, the Department will remain in contact with the regional school district administration to discuss the regional school committee's progress toward adoption and approval of an annual budget for the fiscal year. Law and regulations detail the requirements related to the reconsidered budget.³ If the regional school committee's proposed budget is not approved by the member municipalities by *December 1* of the fiscal year, the second level of state intervention is triggered. At that time, the Commissioner must assume fiscal oversight of the operations of the district must establish a final district budget for the fiscal year and must assume responsibility for specific fiscal functions.

Prior to the Commissioner's setting of a final budget, the Department will contact the chair of the regional school committee, the superintendent, and the chairs of the City Councils and/or Select Boards of the member municipalities to seek input on the final budget for the remainder of the fiscal year. Following consideration of the input from stakeholders, the Commissioner will set a budget for the remainder of the fiscal year. It is important to note that the final budget *may be more than or less than* the interim 1/12th budget previously set.

Whenever the Commissioner establishes a final budget for a regional school district, the treasurer of the regional school district must calculate and certify to the member municipalities their respective assessments *based on the statutory method*. Every member municipality shall pay its respective assessment in accordance with the payment schedule in the regional district agreement. Note that the appropriation of funds to pay an assessment ordered by the Commissioner shall not be deemed approval by the municipality of the district's budget.

While under fiscal oversight, certain fiscal actions taken by the superintendent, school committee or other officials of the district are subject to the Commissioner's written approval. These include:

- Adoption or reconsideration of the district budget,
- Transfer of budgetary authority between line items,
- Encumbrance or expenditure of funds not included in the general fund budget,
- Borrowing,

- Execution of new or amended collective bargaining agreements,
- Execution of new contracts or amendments to existing contracts with a value of \$25,000 or more, and
- Establishment, increase, or decrease of user fees.

During the period of fiscal oversight, the Commissioner may also impound any unencumbered funds for such period of time as he determines and may undertake any initiatives that he deems necessary to secure the financial stability of the district.

The regulations allow for the Commissioner to designate a person to implement these responsibilities on his behalf. In order to facilitate the Commissioner's fiscal oversight of the district, the superintendent and other officials of the district shall promptly provide the Department with such information and reports as may be requested by the Commissioner or his designee. The Commissioner's fiscal oversight shall continue until the end of the fiscal year or until the member municipalities have approved a budget for the subsequent fiscal year, whichever is later.

23. How does what the towns of Whitman and Hanson pay compare to that of surrounding towns?

Data based on DESE website 2018 per pupil and Chapter 70 allocated in 2018

Town	pupils	per pupil Ex	Chapter 70	Chapter 70/pupil	Actual cost to town
WH	3866	\$12,740	\$24,552,030	\$6,350.00	\$6,390.00
East Bridge	2289	\$12,000	\$10,543,697	\$4,606.00	\$7,394.00
B/R	5350	\$12,832	\$21,132,011	\$3,938.00	\$8,883.00
Pembroke	2891	\$13,558	\$13,434,662	\$4,647.00	\$8,911.00
Rockland	2195	\$15,568	\$13,706,495	\$6,244.00	\$9,324.00
Abington	2035	\$13,461	\$7,637,749	\$3,753.00	\$9,708.00
Hanover	2616	\$14,005	\$6,871,499	\$2,626.00	\$11,379.00
Scituate	2952	\$15,020	\$5,434,351	\$1,840.00	\$13,180.00
Plymouth	7507	\$17,114	\$25,884,957	\$3448.00	\$13,666.00

Staff cuts and program elimination

24. What is a Curriculum Director at the High School, and how would cutting 5 of those positions affect High School instruction? **The Curriculum Chairs evaluate the teachers in the five core areas, Math, Science, English, Social Studies and Foreign Language. Cutting them will leave all evaluations in the high school to the Assistant Principal and Principal. They supervise the curriculum that is taught in the middle and high school, they hold department meetings, prepare and deliver professional development and ensure the proper delivery of content material in their core areas.**
25. What kind of Administrative positions could be lost with \$350,000? **Central office and/or building level administrators.**
26. There are 18 teachers listed as possibly being cut, how many sports coaches are being cut? **Freshman athletics are being cut for 2020-2021, approximately 11 coaches.**
27. If we lose 4 Library Paraprofessionals, will the Library be closed at Indian Head, Conley and Duval schools? What about WMS and HMS librarians? **Whitman Middle, Hanson Middle and the High School will not have any library support.**
28. If a budget doesn't pass and we had to cut 8 reading specialists, what grades and schools would these be cut from? Who would provide the remedial reading services for students in need if we don't have specialists? **The reading specialists who service the elementary schools and Hanson Middle will be cut. Classroom teachers will provide the assistance to students who need help.**
29. There are 2 proposed facilities positions cut if we don't approve a budget; I thought we use SJ Services for custodians. What does the facilities department do and how many employees does this leave? **S.J. Services cleans the buildings. The Facilities Department performs all maintenance, repair work, maintains buildings and grounds, and provides other operations services. Five staff positions and a Director of Facilities remain.**
30. What does it mean by the "after school program" at the high school, cutting \$65,000? **The High School has maintained an after school and summer program for students who are at risk of not passing. In 2010 the District had a dropout rate of 3.7%, it is now down to 0.9% This is the coordinator position for the program.**
31. School Year 2020 class size numbers and potential numbers without a budget.

	School	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Current Class Sizes:	Conley	23	19	23	22	24
Proposed with Cuts:	Conley	28	25	31	29	33

		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Current Class Sizes:	Duval	24	26	26	26	21
Proposed with Cuts:	Duval	25	26	27	26	23

		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Current Class Sizes:	Indian Head	20	20	20	26
Proposed with Cuts:	Indian Head	24	24	25	26

		Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Current Class Sizes:	HMS	22	28	19	20
Proposed with Cuts:	HMS	27	28	28	30

			Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Current Class Sizes:	WMS		26	25	25
Proposed with Cuts:	WMS		24	25	25

High School-

The Physical Education Department

With the loss of 2.5 teachers, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School will no longer offer Physical Education as a class. This will put us out of compliance (in the spirit of) with State requirements. It also has a serious impact on our ability to schedule students into classes. Physical Education classes are already at 50-60 students. The loss of these classes presents a logistical problem. Additionally, the mental, social emotional and physical benefits of physical education are backed by research. Failure to provide these classes in the current structure of school will have a detrimental effect on students' ability to learn.

World Language Department

*The loss of a teacher in the World Language department would fundamentally change the department, reduce student options, and further increase class sizes. The World Language Department would become a Spanish Department. It would lose the ability to offer more than one language and class sizes would reach 30 or more depending on the level. Students would have limited scheduling options and be forced to choose between a language (**required for graduation and college acceptance**) and other courses based on availability.*

Social Studies Department

The loss of a teacher in the Social Studies Department would result in fewer scheduling options for students, larger class sizes across the department, and the need to train a new Advanced Placement teacher or discontinue that specific offering.

School Counseling

The loss of a School Counselor will result in increased caseloads for the remaining counselors. The result of this will be fewer personalized student meetings, classroom visits, and additional programming. These are all designed to assist students with the new Panther Pathways program that offers guidance toward a successful post-secondary plan to students. Individual School Counselor caseloads will grow to approximately 320 students each. The Director of Counseling will also carry a caseload in the area of 280 students.

Library

Whitman-Hanson Regional High School will lose its Librarian if the budget does not pass. This will result in the closure of the Library to the students unless they are escorted as part of a class that is using it for an assignment.

5 Curriculum Chairs

The Curriculum Chairs are responsible for ensuring the curriculum and assessment methods for each subject area are up to date and in compliance with the Massachusetts Frameworks. They also evaluate the performance of each teacher. Directors organize, prepare, and oversee the proctoring and student completion of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). They also conduct late start and monthly department meetings which are essential in the areas of communication and professional development.

The After School Program Director at the High School

The after school program is a comprehensive academic assistance program for students who need additional support. This program runs Monday - Thursday from 2:00PM to 3:50PM. Students receive a snack, tutoring, and instruction in other aspects of the Social Emotional Curriculum. This reduction would also result in the loss of some of our current Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies used by the Student Support Team (STAT).

Freshmen Athletics

All freshmen athletics will be cut. This will impact social emotional, cultural, and academic areas of the high school. Athletics is a main way for students to connect to the high school by becoming part of the community and building relationships. Many students use athletics as a way to balance (release) the demands of the regular school day. This cut will also affect school choice. We will not attract as many students and will also lose current students without a program in place. Freshmen athletics is also a key developmental year for students and will result in poorer performance and fewer post high school opportunities.

The Summer Program at the High School

The summer program at the high school is a key component of our transition and remediation process. This program runs for five weeks, Monday through Thursday, and caters to our most at-risk students. It is grant funded, but with the reduction of positions does not have the personnel required to continue a successful program.

Questions relating to School and Finance

32. How many chrome books does each school building currently have? **Most Chromebooks have been purchased by the PTO's; WMS 450, HMS 470, Indian Head 260, Conley 307, Duval 382, and High School 395.**
33. How much funding is in the budget for FY21 to add more chrome books, or replace broken chrome books, for each building? **ZERO**
34. Does the FY21 budget allow for purchase of new textbooks for FY21? **Each school has a line item in their budget for instructional materials. High School \$11,475, Indian Head \$18,075, Conley \$19,600, Duval \$16,075, Whitman Middle \$12,300, Hanson Middle \$11,550.**
35. Are we buying STEM supplies for K-5th grade? **We budget \$45,000 for Know Atom.**
36. Does the District Budget fund a Fine Arts Director to support music, theater and arts? **No. Since my employment with the district, there has not been any funding to add any fine arts programs or course offerings since 2010.**
37. Does the District Budget fund an Athletic Director? **Yes, there is a full time Athletic Director.**
38. Why did the school committee vote to buy an ELA Curriculum- do we already have one? **We have not had a K-5 ELA curriculum since 2001.**

39. How is the composition of the School Committee determined, specifically how many Whitman and Hanson School Committee Members from each town?

Election of School Committee Members

Chapter 71, Section 14E

A regional school district may, by amendment to its regional school district agreement, provide for one of the following options concerning the members of its regional district school committee:

1) Electing committee members by voters in member communities with each community's representation apportioned according to population;

2) Electing members in district-wide elections to be held at the biennial state elections;

3) Electing members with residency requirements in district-wide elections to be held at the biennial state elections;

4) Weighing the votes of committee members according to the population they represent; and

5) Appointing committee members by locally elected officials such as school board members.

Each regional school district shall designate an individual to serve as district clerk.

If a regional school district decides to elect members in district-wide elections to be held at the biennial state elections or if any vacancy is to be so filled, the district clerk shall notify the state secretary by April fifteenth of the year of the biennial state election of that fact and also of his name and mailing address.

COVID-19 School year 2020-2021

40. What other costs are likely to impact the WHRSD due to COVID-19 next year (FY2021) **The District is expected to incur transportation costs, cleaning supplies, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), configuring reduces class size with social distancing mandates, technology equipment for remote learning, and the disposal of used PPE. Given the current speculative guidelines we are looking at \$490.00 per student or roughly \$1,898,750 for additional PPE.**