



Watertown Public Schools

30 Common Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472-3492
Phone: (617) 926-7700
Fax: (617) 923-1234

Mary C. DeLai
*Assistant Superintendent
Finance & Operations*

Dede Galdston, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Theresa B. McGuinness, Ed.D.
*Assistant Superintendent
Teaching, Learning, & Assessment*

Kathleen Desmarais, M.Ed.
Director of Student Services

Craig Hardimon, M.Ed.
Director of Human Resources
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To: The Watertown School Committee
From: Deanne Galdston, Superintendent
Cc: Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations
Theresa McGuinness, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
RE: FY19 Budget Goals and Overarching Priorities
Date: November 24, 2017

As we begin to consider the Fiscal Year 2019 budget, it is important to recognize that the decisions regarding budget goals and priorities should be grounded in the District's vision, core values, and strategic objectives. Currently, the District's is focused on four short-term strategic objectives for the 2017-2018 school year, with the understanding that the District will embark on the development of a multi-year District Improvement Plan beginning in January, 2018. This short-term improvement strategy is grounded in relevant data including student achievement data, programmatic outcomes, and needs-assessments. The four short-term strategic objectives are:

- **Provide all students with a rigorous, relevant, standards-based curriculum throughout our core instructional program**
- **Increase student engagement, agency, and authorship over their own learning in an inclusive educational community**
- **Ensure effective communication among families, students, staff, and the greater community to increase student learning**
- **Establish effective systems of support and allocate resources to maximize organizational success**

As these strategic objectives are derived from the current context of the District, it is likely they will be present in the District Improvement Plan in some iteration, and as such they should form the basis for the FY19 budget goals.

At the Administrative Council meeting held on November 21, the team discussed the overarching budget goals and began the process of identifying priorities for the development of the budget. The Admin Council consists of the central administration team, the five principals, and the preschool coordinator. Prior to Tuesday's meeting, members of the Admin Council were each asked to identify three district-level priorities based on the short-term strategic objectives. Through this process and an ensuing discussion, it became clear that the team had identified two overarching priorities to support the district strategic objectives and brainstormed potential initiatives for the overarching priorities:

1. Support educators' instructional practice to meet the needs of all students

- Provide ongoing and embedded professional development in the following areas:

- Balanced Literacy
- Math in Focus
- Science
- Strategies, interventions, and accommodations in an inclusive environment
(Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction)
- Strengthen Tier I instruction through the use of mentors, coaches, and peers
- Create fully developed curriculum maps and accompanying units to provide consistency and coherence across grades and buildings

2. Create systems of support to achieve the District’s strategic objectives

- Explore scheduling changes at all levels to enhance learning and maximize resources and efficiency
- Create and train teams to explore relevant data and to provide data in useable formats to educators
- Leverage communication systems to engage parents as partners with our schools
- Streamline existing systems to eliminate redundancy and increase retrieval of and access to information
- Explore the implementation of a comprehensive PK-12 Multi-Tiered System of Support

While there is consensus among the members of the Admin Council about the overarching priorities, finalizing the more specific initiatives are the work of the larger Leadership Team with input from our educators and the school site councils. The purpose of sharing the preliminary thoughts of the Admin Council with the Budget and Finance Subcommittee is to provide insight into the current thinking around priorities for FY19.

The district also recognizes there are several budget drivers that need to be considered when creating the FY19 budget which include the following:

- Maintain appropriate and effective class sizes that are responsive to the fluctuations in enrollment among the three elementary schools as well as the secondary schools
- Continue implementation of ongoing district initiatives for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
 - Foreign Language in Elementary School
 - Later start times
 - Social/Emotional Learning curriculum adoption
 - Universal screening and progress monitoring assessment system
 - Curriculum mapping, K-12
 - Project-Based Learning at the Secondary Level
 - Expanded use of PowerSchool
- Maintain WPS facilities and infrastructure to provide an excellent educational environment

We look forward to discussing the District’s goals, priorities, and budget drivers with the Budget and Finance Subcommittee this Monday.