

A note from the Superintendent...

The 2021 fiscal year has presented the school district with numerous challenges ranging from teaching and learning during a global pandemic, to funding adequate staffing levels for our hybrid learning models, to simply delivering the ongoing instructional experience in the classroom for which we are known. As we look ahead to fiscal year 2022, it is imperative that we first take a look at those years leading up to our present day situation.

Prior to the last successful override for the Town in 2015, budgets were commonly underfunded. We were an organization in need of consistent funding to successfully move us forward. The override afforded us the opportunity to move into a culture of hiring and retention, seeking the best candidates for our needs with a newly invigorated budget. We made capital improvements with the addition of modular classrooms at several of our schools. We focused on long-term needs and began the campaign for the new Belmont Middle and High School, which will open for grades 9-12 in September of 2021.

In 2020, COVID-19 unexpectedly paused the school district, interrupting teaching and learning as we had known it. We continued working toward excellence for students, both in the classroom and remotely during the pandemic year, and will continue to work over the next several years to ensure academic and social and emotional recovery throughout the district. This year, we have utilized \$2.7M in federal funds to provide technical services and safe classrooms, however; we cannot count on the same opportunity for fiscal year 2022.

Now, we must also begin planning for our financial future. Ahead of us lies a fork in the road with the operating override on the April 6th ballot. An unsuccessful override risks undoing the gains made since 2015 resulting in large scale reduction of educators and staff, reduction of course offerings, and elimination of both academic and extracurricular programs. A successful override will allow the district to continue our trajectory of improvement via continued support of equity and social and emotional learning, expanded course offerings, visioning work to support our new district configuration, and addressing enrollment challenges. A successful override reaffirms our effort to move forward, maintaining the standards of excellence for which the Belmont Public Schools are known.

Our goals for the next three years include staffing for increasing enrollment, focus on the district's reconfiguration plan, additional support for equity, access, and social and emotional learning for students, and our vision for teaching and learning within the new district configuration.

We recognize that the proposed override comes with copious amounts of detailed information about the financial future of the school district and the Town of Belmont. We understand the frustration during this difficult and unprecedented year and have shared that experience as well. We are asking families to lift their heads from that cloud of frustration and look down the road towards the benefits of the Town and all of the services it provides, and to an educationally robust environment that will enrich the teaching and learning of all students. We know what we need to accomplish these goals. We simply need the resources to get us there.

Respectfully,

John P. Phelan

- Note: This Executive Summary is supported by the Belmont Public Schools FY22 Draft 1 Budget Presentation document, presented to the School Committee on 02/23/21, found at <http://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Administration/School-Budget>
- Line item detail for the FY22 Budget can be found at <http://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Administration/School-Budget>
- District Configuration Education Plan may be found here: <https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Committee/Public-Documents/Article/2191/February-5-2019-School-Committee-Documents>

FY22 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

- ❖ Continue the district-wide professional development of staff to support the outcomes of culturally responsive teaching practices.
- ❖ Continue the work of the District Configuration Education Plan Committee to organize the district vision for teaching and learning.
- ❖ Commit resources to the service delivery models for Special Education programs and to develop plans to improve in-district capacity to meet a variety of Special Education needs.
- ❖ Continue to enhance the new Technology Plan for technology infrastructure and integration in support of teaching and learning at the new Belmont Middle and High School as well as the district-wide 1:1 device initiative due to COVID.
- ❖ Professional development focus areas pre-K-12: Curriculum and assessment development and review; Technology tools and applications to improve instruction; Teaching English Language Learners, Development of critical thinking skills; Social-emotional learning to improve the district's capacity to engage and support all learners.
- ❖ Commit to learning recovery throughout the next academic year.
- ❖ Review the district's work through the lens of equity and access for all students of the Belmont Public Schools.
- ❖ Ensure sufficient class size for overcrowded middle and high school grades.

FY22 BUDGET OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Align FY22 Budget to the priorities of the initiatives outlined above.
- ❖ Maintain and support the continuous improvement of our staff through professional development and our vision of teaching and learning for the Belmont Public Schools.
- ❖ Continue the transition of grade reconfigurations in conjunction with the 7-12 Belmont Middle and High School Building Project, including: staffing, curriculum and instruction, and operations.
- ❖ Support positions and programs that allow equity and access for all students.
- ❖ Maintain the staffing levels commensurate to the increase in enrollment needed to maintain the existing quality of educational services to our students.
- ❖ Maintain a well-rounded education comprised of rigorous academics, strong performing arts, and high participation in athletics, extra-curricular experiences, and community service.
- ❖ Meet existing contractual commitments.
- ❖ To the extent possible, address increasing class sizes and program offerings.
- ❖ Meet the space challenges presented by continued increased enrollment.
- ❖ Respond to student, staffing and district needs related to COVID requirements and impact on instruction and operations.

PRIMARY COST DRIVERS

- **Department Initiative- Based Cost Drivers**

- ❖ Student enrollment has increased each year for the past decade and is expected to continually increase through the next several years.
- ❖ Consistently increasing enrollment for multiple years has resulted in the need for:
 - Addition of professional and support staff.
 - Increase in supports for services for mandated costs (Special Education and English Language Learners).
 - Maintain level of purchases texts/materials/supplies, technology, equipment, furniture.
- ❖ The increasing utilization of technology in all instructional models.
- ❖ Supports and services for students and staff related to COVID.

- **External Cost Drivers**

- ❖ Health insurance premiums increasing by 3% for FY22.
- ❖ Special Education:
 - Restore \$2M in Special Education tuitions, reduced in the FY21 Budget. Tuitions will continue to be supported by State Circuit Breaker funds and IDEA Grant funds.
 - Special Education transportation is budgeted at the FTF2 index factor of 7% over the FY21 Budget.
 - Special Education contract services are indexed at 5% for FY22 based on a review of current spending trends.
- ❖ COVID-related demands for health and safety protocols, PPE, busing, instructional models, virtual school models, and academic recovery services.

UNKNOWN VARIABLES

- A successful override.
- Further increases in student enrollment, and the cost of the corresponding additional student supports needed, especially in the areas of EL, Special Education and spatial needs.
- Increases or decreases in State and Federal Grants (METCO, Circuit Breaker Reimbursement, IDEA, Title I, Title IIA, etc.) have not yet been determined for FY22.
- Impact of overall decrease in Out-of-District (OOD) funding available.
- Ch. 70 process & dollar amount.
- COVID-related demands for health and safety protocols, PPE, busing, instructional models, virtual school models, and academic recovery services.

TECHNICAL BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

- School General Fund Budget for FY22 is \$68,275,558.
- The FY22 Budget reflects rolling forward all existing positions and adding \$689,000 in positions, in year one of a three-year plan. The budget and the additional positions identified are contingent upon a successful override for the Town of Belmont.
- Health insurance premiums are budgeted to increase by 3% over FY21 rates (Town-wide).
- Federal grants budgeted in FY22 as level funded from FY21 plus contractual increases for staff allocated to grants.
- User fees will remain the same for FY22.
- State Circuit Breaker and IDEA allocations will be used strategically, in accordance with the School Department's Multi-Year Out-of-District Funding Plan.
- COVID-related demands for health and safety protocols, PPE, busing, instructional models, virtual school models, and academic recovery services will be funded by federal grants in FY22, to the extent possible – subject to federal funding.

FY22 BUDGET

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

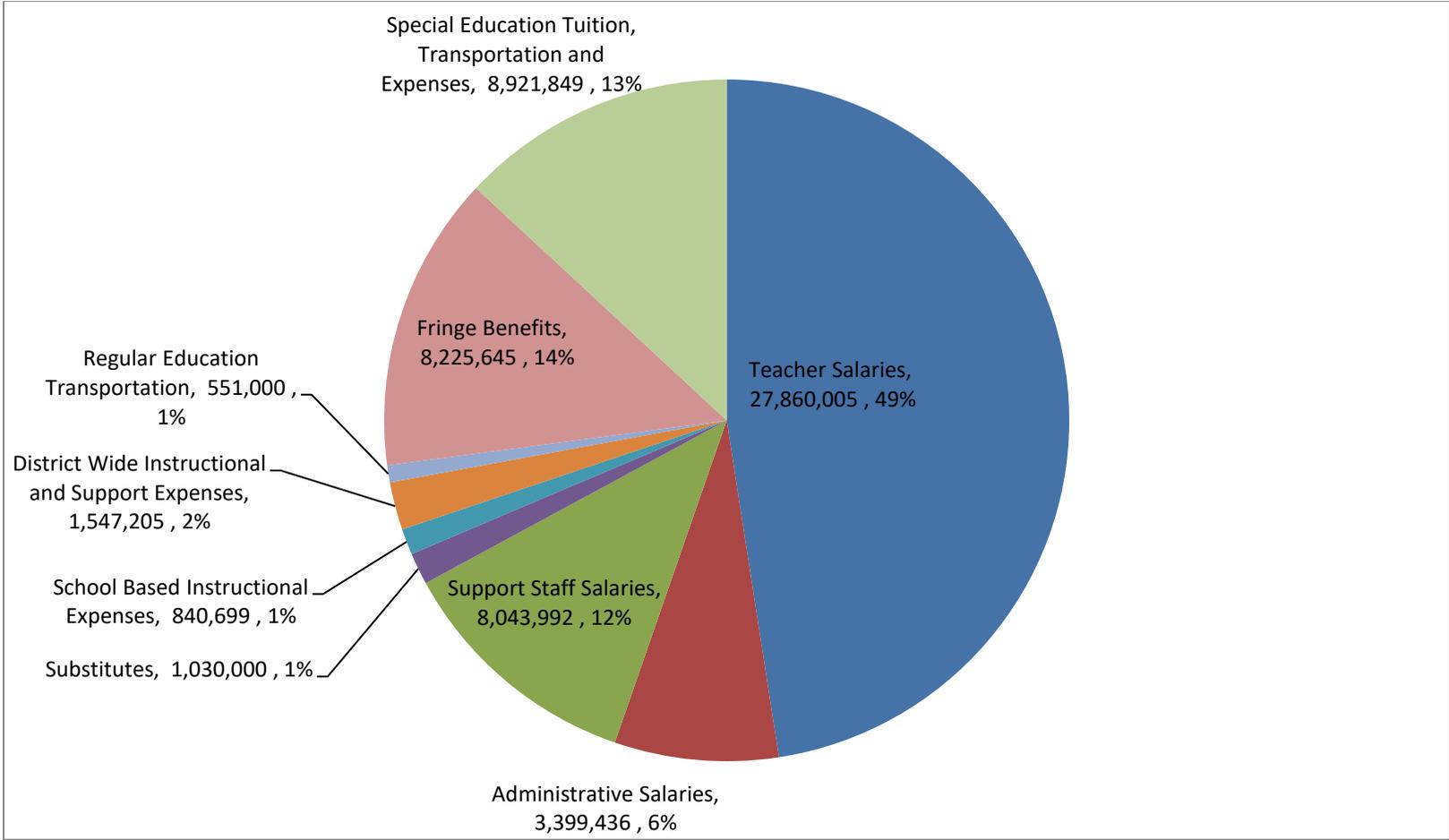
FY22 Total General Fund Budget: Roll-forward amounts plus restorations, plus strategic-plan cost drivers and other cost drivers

Budget Category	FY21 General Fund Budget	FY22 Roll-Forward Budget	Long-Term Structural Changes	Strategic Plan Cost Drivers	External Cost Drivers	Total FY22 General Fund Budget	Change FY21 to FY22	% Change	Notes
Staff	42,939,834	45,008,027	1,129,586	689,000		46,826,613	3,886,779	9.05%	Charging all FDK salaries to GF upon elimination of fee in FY21 - to trigger on-going increase in Ch. 70 state aid; 689K in new positions
Texts, Supplies, Materials, Equipment, Other	2,214,182	2,269,537		118,367		2,387,904	173,722	7.85%	Includes Technology costs to support 1:1 district; legal expenses
Busing	496,473	496,473		54,527		551,000	54,527	10.98%	Contractual increase
Fringe	9,111,308	9,111,308		181,500	295,384	9,588,192	476,884	5.23%	Health insurance for new employees; 3% index for existing staff
Special Education Tuition, Transportation, Contract Services	6,723,844	6,723,844			2,198,005	8,921,849	2,198,005	32.69%	Replenishment of \$1.7M in SPED reduced in FY21 Budget
Total FY20 General Fund Budget	61,485,641	63,609,189	1,129,586	1,043,394	2,493,389	68,275,558	6,789,917	11.04%	
% Change over FY19 Budget		3.45%	1.84%	1.70%	4.06%	11.04%			

FY22 Belmont Public Schools General Fund Budget

Dollar Amount and % of Total by Category

Total FY22 School Department General Fund Budget is \$68,275,558



FY22 New Positions

YEAR	POSITION	FTE	UNIT/GROUP	L	NEED*	SALARY
FY22	TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION SPECIALIST	1.00	A	DW	E, C	\$ 65,000
FY22	SPED ELEM CHAIR	2.00	A	ELEM	E, M	\$ 130,000
FY22	DW EQUITY POSITION	1.00	TBD	DW	V	\$ 65,000
FY22	MS TEACHERS (GR 7, 8)	4.00	A	MS	E, R	\$ 260,000
FY22	HS TEACHERS	2.00	A	HS	E	\$ 130,000
FY22	COMMUNICATIONS POSITION	0.60	TBD	DW	V	\$ 39,000
FY22	TOTAL	10.60				\$ 689,000

*NEED CATEGORIES	
A	ACHIEVEMENT-BASED
C	COVID-DRIVEN
E	ENROLLMENT-BASED
M	MANDATED
R	RECONFIGURATION
S	SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
V	VISION STATEMENT-DRIVEN