



Worcester Public Schools

Worcester, Massachusetts

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Melinda J. Boone, Ed.D.
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To: Members of the Worcester School Committee

From: Melinda J. Boone, Superintendent

Date: April 16, 2013

Subject: Analysis of House Ways and Means FY14 Budget Recommendation

The House Ways and Means (HWM) Committee released their FY14 budget recommendations on Wednesday, April 10, 2013 and included the following items:

The Chapter 70 amount of \$219,658,550 is, unfortunately as predicted, \$3,559,220 less than the amount included in the Governor's Budget. The HWM budget did not include the foundation budget changes of lifting the pre-school enrollment cap and the additional funds for special education costs in their budget. The Administration cautioned, in each budget presentation made to date, that the FY14 budget was not going to assume these additional funds from the Governor until the House and/or Senate indicated whether they would be included in the legislative versions of the budget. (Although not impacting Worcester, the Governor's budget fully phased-in the high effort reduction for certain communities, whereas the HWM budget provided no funds for phase-in of the effort reduction).

The HWM FY14 budget proposal provides an increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) to the city at an amount higher than the FY13 amount but less than the Governor's proposed amount. Local aid is a factor in determining the city's contribution, and we project that this will lower their requirement by \$164,000.

Also, the charter school and school choice tuition assessment is projected is \$456,000 less than the Governor's estimate, but the charter school reimbursement is \$978,000 less than the Governor's proposal. Charter school reimbursement is funded at 68.6% of full funding in the HWM budget.

Other line items of note in the Governor's budget (with no district level detail known at this point) include:

- Circuit Breaker funding (for certain high cost special education students) is essentially level funded at \$235 million, representing about 70% reimbursement.

- Kindergarten Expansion Grant is level funded at \$23.9 million. We are hopeful that WPS will see an increase in the level of funding based on the new criteria that was announced by the MA DESE for FY14. We will provide an update on our level of funding once the FY14 RFP process is announced and awarded.
- McKinney Vento Transportation (a general fund receipt to the city and not appropriated to the schools in FY13): is funded at the post-FY13 budget reduced amount of \$6.1 million. It is unknown at this point what level of reimbursement this would provide towards the mandate.

The actions of HWM to not adopt the foundation budget proposals of the Governor and the continued underfunding of the charter school reimbursement is most disappointing.

I will be working with the City Manager to determine the WPS FY14 budget based upon the HWM recommendation. We will use this bottom line number as the basis for the FY14 budget recommendations that will be sent to the School Committee in a few weeks.

In the meantime, should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me or Brian Allen.