

BOF FY25 Questions

March 5, 2024

1. Confirm that the BOE FY2025 Budget Request is for \$59,598,328, representing a 2.85% increase over the FY2024 adopted budget. [Confirmed](#)
2. Please describe what additional steps were taken during this budget cycle to find ways of reducing expense. Please quantify to the extent known. [The administrative team analyzed the enrollment projections carefully including both low and medium projections and how they impact class size guidelines and open seats per section in grades K-5. Staffing was determined based on these needs. We reviewed student performance data, academic programs and intervention supports to determine appropriate resources and staffing. Our practice is to reallocate staffing based on student performance and needs. Examples include the reallocation from reading intervention to special education \(.5 FTE\) at HES and the new pre-engineering course at WHS that replaces an existing course resulting in no increase in FTE in that program.](#)

[With regards to our academic resources, the Assistant Superintendent and Finance Director designed a plan that phased in resources of new reading and math programs. Assistant Superintendent Henckel applied for and received a \\$60,000 ARPA \(federal\) grant for our reading program which will be used to purchase materials. The WMS new math program has many free electronic resources for staff and students. This is the trend moving forward of not purchasing textbooks as in past years.](#)

[In the area of technology, the team made a decision not to replace laptop carts in the pre-engineering program at WMS as this program is under review. . Every software request was carefully reviewed based on its purpose and current software usage was also analyzed . For the 2025 budget we removed software renewals including LastPass, PowerSchool PD+, PowerSchool PowerPack, and TalentED. We are in the process of transitioning to our own district created curriculum website, which saves over \\$10,000 in external software \(Atlas\).](#)

[Capital projects continue to be studied through short and long term lenses and prioritized. The team discussed what needed to be done in specific buildings to address students' needs, for example, in the areas of safety and security. We are also cognizant of the potential building projects and what absolutely needs to be addressed now.](#)

3. How well is the ARC program performing against expectations for K-2 in its first year? Are there any modifications being made as we roll out grades 3-5 this year?
[We are so excited about the progress that our teachers and students have made in such a short period of time. The first month of adopting the ARC curriculum was in September. During this month, not only did teachers and students adapt to a new reading instructional block but they also engaged in a new universal screener called DIBELS8.](#)

After only six months, we have seen steady progress in students' Fall to Winter achievement and growth scores. I encourage you to review the Mid-Year progress presentation that was provided to the full BOE on February 12th, 2024. [HERE](#) is a link to the agenda and a [direct link to the slide deck](#). We reviewed our progress towards end-of-year goals in K-2 reading beginning on slide 14 and concluding on slide 19.

As we continue to support the reading trajectory across the district, we have already started planning for next year's implementation in grades 3-5. On April 2, all teachers and staff will be trained at WIS on the new DIBELS8 assessment. WIS will begin using this assessment in lieu of NWEA beginning next school year as their universal screener. Over the summer, teacher teams are committed to working in June at our Summer Curriculum Academy to design new units of study in grades 3-5 so all teachers at WIS are ready for August training and are confident as they begin their first year of implementation when the students arrive in August.

Ongoing professional learning will occur both at WIS and HES next year.

4. Is WPS on target for meeting performance 2024 metrics set last year?

As mentioned above, during our February Mid-Year Progress presentation to the full BOE, we outlined in detail the progress the district has made in both achievement and growth in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social-emotional learning, and digital literacy. Our progress included a variety of measures beyond test scores. We tried to highlight learning experiences that students engaged in that were grounded in critical thinking, problem-solving, and the application of the content through experiences such as sustainability, writing portfolios, and technology integration.

We have made significant progress across all content areas, especially in the areas of literacy, math, and science where the data is more quantitative. We are on track to meet all of our achievement and growth goals in the spring. It is important to keep in mind that our mid-year assessments are formative in nature and are used to predict achievement on state assessments such as SBAC, NGSS, and SAT.

Some areas we will zoom in more closely for the second half of the year are in math and literacy in grades 3, 6, and 8. The NWEA assessment shows the largest gaps in the winter to meeting our goals in the Spring based on the Smarter Balanced assessment.

	<u>Winter Achmt(NWEA):</u>	<u>Spring Goal (*SBA):</u>
	Math	Math
Grade 3	64%	77%
Grade 6	60%	75%
	<u>Winter Achvmt(NWEA):</u>	<u>Spring Goal (*SBA):</u>
	Literacy	Literacy
Grade 6	61%	87%
Grade 8	68%	81%

- Are all the contribution levels outlined for employee benefits subject to collective bargaining agreements? I note that the BOE is only contributing 55% of the deductible to the HAS for the WTA in this budget vs. 60% last year. That is correct. It is contractual? The BOE HSA contribution for 2025 is as follows: AFSME 60%, WTA 55%, WAA and unaffiliated at central office 50%,

The staffing request reflects contractual obligations to the three unions as well as a reallocation and reduction of staff to best meet the district goals and mission. Here are the percentages for the second year of the 2023-2026 contracts.

AFSCME: 2.75% General Wage Increase (GWI) plus step movement for all employees not at the top step

WTA: 2.5% GWI plus step, and a 2.5% GWI at top step.

WAA: 2.75% GWI

- Has WPS contribution rate for its share of the Municipal Employee Retirement Services program been finalized? FY25 budget request calls for 17.26% vs. 18.26% last year. In a letter dated February 29, 2024, the State Comptroller informed us that the employer CMERS contribution rate for FY 2024-25 will be 16.68%.
- There are minor variations in the staffing levels shown for FY2024 in the current budget proposal vs. the levels that were approved in the budget request binder from last year for FY2024. While the impact is negligible, there are a number of instances throughout the current budget package that shows discrepancies between what was approved last year for FY2024 vs. what is portrayed now as the approved budget. Changes in staffing are a combination of students' needs and programmatic planning for the upcoming year. Staffing is analyzed carefully to determine what is required. Needs change from the approved budget to the actual and adjustments are made accordingly. We strive to meet students' needs in real time when possible through the lens of fiscal responsibility to the TOW.

Classroom Teacher Fluctuations

HES

2024 Budget 22 sections

2024 Actual 22 sections

2025 Budget 21 sections. Grade 2 is reduced by one section

School Year	Projected Grade 2	Sections Option 1	Class Size	Open Seats
2024-25	132	6	22.0	12

WIS

2024 Budget 23 sections

2024 Actual 21 sections, There were 2 extra sections projected in grades 4 and 5 that we did not fill. We reallocated one position to math interventionist split between WMS/WIS

2025 Projected 23 sections For Budget 2025 Grade 5 is increased by 2 sections from 6 to 8 sections. If we increased from 6 to 7 sections there would be only 2 open seats in this grade level. With 8 sections there are approximately 3 open seats per section.

School Year	Projected Grade 5	Sections	Class Size	Open Seats Option 1
2024-25	166	8	20.8	26

Additional Enrollment projections may be found in the document [Board of Education Workshop 2: Questions/Discussions](#) on the budget section of our district website. The document include both low and medium projections

WMS

2024 Budget 24 sections

2024 Actual 24 sections

2025 Budget 24 sections

The teaming model of 2 balanced academic teams is essential to WMS. The documents [WMS Teaming Model Overview](#) and [WMS Academic Workshop](#) on the budget section of our district website provide additional information.

WHS

2024 Budget 33.7 FTE

2024 Actual 33.5 FTE

2025 Budget 33.1 FTE (Decrease to budget .6 FTE/ Decrease to Actual .4 FTE)

Social Studies .2 FTE Decrease and English .2 FTE Decrease reallocated to writing support.

Special Education

2024 Budget 21.4 FTE

2024 Actual 21.4 FTE

2025 Budget 21.9 FTE increase of .5 FTE reallocated from reading/writing support at

HES

Special Subject Classroom Sections

WMS .2 FTE projected French reduction due to enrollment/language choice

Music .1 projected reduction

Project Challenge; A reduction from 1.0 FTE (Budget 2024) to .5 FTE(Budget 2025) at

WIS. (Actual 2024 is .5 FTE- revised staffing as efficiency measure - reallocated to reading intervention)

District Academic Support

Reading/Writing Support

2024 Budget 5.2 FTE + .5 FTE Grant = 5.9 FTE Total

2024 Actual 5.9 FTE + .5 FTE Grant =6.4 FTE Total

The FTE has been reallocated to .5 Special Education based on students' needs. The district reallocated the .5 from Project Challenge (WIS) to Reading Intervention (HES) based on students' needs

2025 Budget 5.4 +.5 Grant= 5.9 FTE Total (change to actual = -.5) Change to 2025 Budget = + .2) .2 FTE increase at WHS

HES Reading 2024 Actual is 2.0. HES 2024 Budget is 1.5

HES reading intervention has been reduced by .5 FTE from 2024 Actual for 2025 Budget.

WIS Reading 2024 Actual is 1.5 FTE +.5 FTE Grant= 2.0 FTE. 2025 Budget is 1.0 FTE + .5 FTE Grant = 1.5 FTE

WIS reading intervention has been reduced by .5 FTE for 2025 Budget for a total of 1.5 FTE.

WMS 2024 Budget reading intervention is 1.0 FTE. WMS Reading Actual is 1.0 FTE.

WMS reading intervention has been increased by .5 FTE for 2025 Budget for a total of 1.5 FTE

WHS writing support/intervention2023 Budget is 1.2 FTE. WHS 2024 actual is 1.4 FTE

WHS writing support/intervention has been increased .2 FTE for 2025 Budget

Math Support

2024 Budget 4.0 FTE

2024 Actual 4.3 FTE

2025 Budget 4.0 FTE .3 decrease from Actual (.5 decrease WMS and .2 increase WHS)

Student Support Services

Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) reduction due to projected needs

English Language Learners (ELL) Teacher .1 increase due to projected needs

8. Consistent with statement above, this year's request indicates that 18 FTEs were approved for Administration while last year's budget request for FY2024 clearly shows that the request was 17 FTEs. The difference is the addition of one Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Service. Why the change?

2024 Budget is 18 FTE

2024 Actual is 18 FTE

2025 Budget is 18 FTE

There are three Assistant Director of Pupil Services requested in the budget beginning in 2023 Budget. There is no additional change for the 2025 Budget.

9. Projected expense FY2024 for contracted SPED services is \$627K, far in excess of the budgeted \$279K. why is WPS confident that the expense will abate? The FY2025 request is set to the FY2024 level of \$279K;
For the 2023-2024 school year, our districtwide BCBA support has been staffed by contracted providers. We are actively interviewing candidates for these positions and anticipate that district staff will cover these roles during the 2024-2025 school year. This is reflected in the proposed budget. The same is true for some related service provider positions covered by contracted staff in the 23-24 school year, which should be supported by district staff in the upcoming school year.

As always, it is important to remember that the special education line items are driven by individual student needs and are highly variable. All aspects of the proposed budget are based on our current information, with no contingencies.

10. Is the 5.64% increase in Cleaning Service contractually set? When does the contract expire? Will there be a RFP? The current contract for cleaning service expires on June 30, 2024. We had preliminary discussions with the current vendor regarding a contract extension. There is a strong possibility that we will issue a request for proposal (RFP) in March.

11. Why is there so much variability for rubbish removal for HES, WIS, and WMS? Is rubbish removal contractual? [There is a base contract for weekly pickup of trash and recycling. The number and size of the containers determine the contracted cost. In addition to the weekly pickup cost, there is an additional cost for bulk or additional pickup](#)
12. Why is there a new line item for "Security" of \$14K under Equipment Repairs? [To more accurately account for increasing repair cost a security repair line was added for the upcoming fiscal year. This will cover repair or service to door access controls, radios, service for cameras and any other security related repairs](#)
13. Like last year, a Repair Allowance of \$150K is requested to cover the schools. Was last year's allowance fully spent? Isn't this a balance sheet item that may have a debit balance that could be carried forward? What is the current balance and is another \$150K contribution really necessary? [For the BoE, the repair allowance account is included in our operating budget and not the balance sheet. Because of this, we cannot carry forward any balance. The only available mechanism to carry forward unexpended operating budget funds to a new year is a non-lapsing account. Please note, this year \(FY 2023-24\) the repair allowance was reduced by \\$50,000.](#)
14. Last year, the FY2024 budget book was approved for \$3,040,812 in Transportation expenditures. This year's budget book shows that the FY2024 budget approved was \$3,004,812. Why is there a difference? [To clarify, the BoE requested transportation budget was \\$3,040,122. There was a \\$35,310 reduction for diesel and gasoline prior to the BoF approval of the budget. The approved request after the reduction is \\$3,004,812.](#)
15. What is driving the negative variance for regular bus services with First Student? Is the daily service rate contractual? [There is no negative variance???](#)
16. Why are you assuming \$1.9M for FY2025 when Current Services are at that very run rate and the contract will expire on 6/30/24? [The 1.9M request for in-district transportation represents a \\$251,364 increase.](#)
17. When does WPS plan on issuing a RFP for a new transportation contract? [Similar to cleaning service, we had preliminary discussions with the current vendor regarding a contract extension. There is a strong possibility that we will issue a request for proposal \(RFP\) in March.](#)
18. What has been the experience of other school districts in soliciting new bus contracts? [In recent years districts that have opted to issue RFPs have had increases from 13% - 14% in the first year and 5%-7% in the following years.](#)
19. The Internal Service Fund page has not been updated for FY2025. It is the exact same page that appeared in last year's budget book. [Because the BoE will fully fund the](#)

Internal Services Fund (ISF) for dental claims and related fees, the balance will remain unchanged at \$434,330.