

**Ware School District
“Needs Based” Budget
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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Ware School District “Needs Based” Budget FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the “needs based” school budget?

As most of you know, the town has historically funded the education account below 100% of the minimum spending level required by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, primarily due to the handling of retired teacher insurance. This has resulted in less course offerings over the years, and as a result, this has contributed to students seeking attendance at neighboring schools with more offerings. This trend is facilitated under the Massachusetts School Choice laws.

In an effort to address Ware’s continued revenue losses due to these trends (approximately \$4.3 million over the past five years), the Board of Selectman requested the Superintendent to produce a “needs based” budget, as opposed to the limited budgets proposed in the past that were appropriated under given constraints. This new budget is designed to reflect what the school would need to provide in school offerings that would make it more competitive with surrounding schools, thereby making the school more attractive so that students will choose to remain within the district, will choose to come back to the district, or will choose to attend our schools from surrounding districts.

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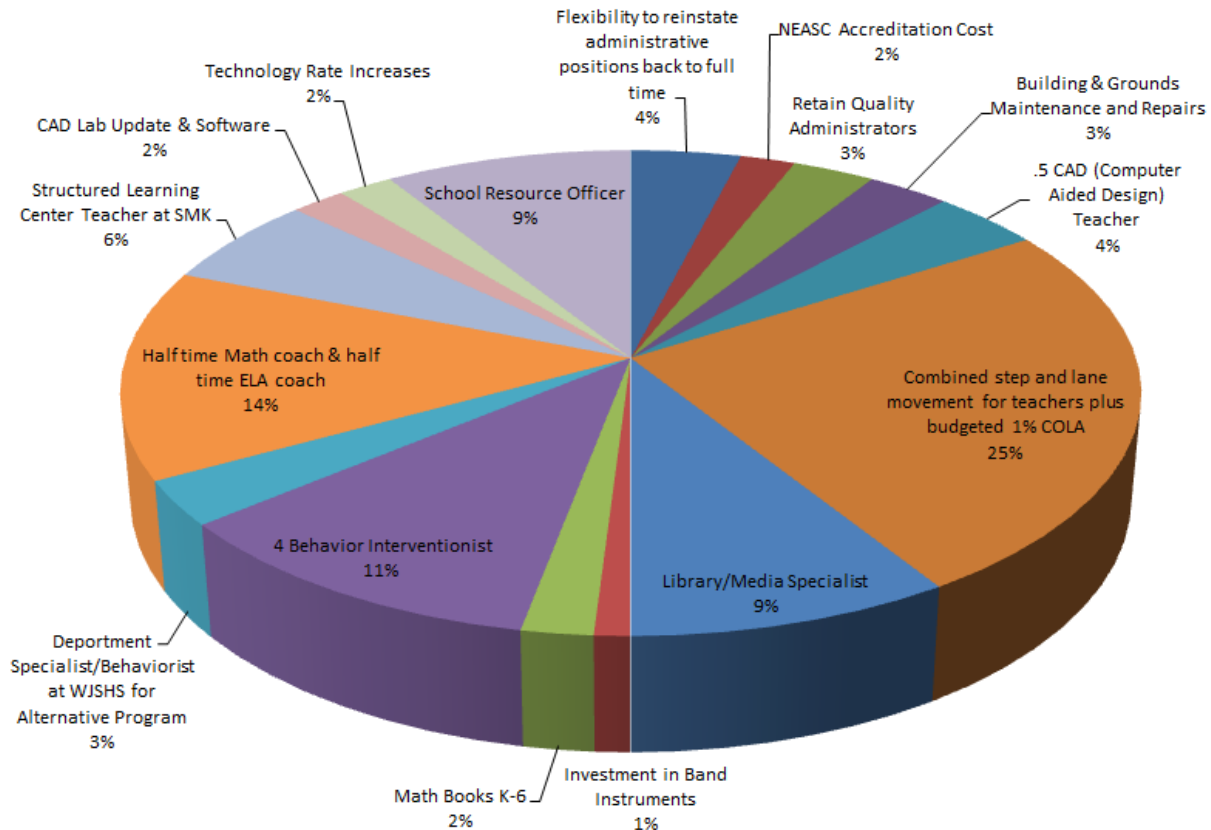
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Q2. What does this new budget bring that wasn't offered before?

The new budget increases our schools ability to compete with surrounding school districts by increasing course offerings with the intention of drawing back students and families that may have previously decided to attend neighboring schools because of offerings that were not available in our schools before. The budget will provide an enhanced curriculum for students with the supports needed to assure success for all. The funding will keep strong leadership in the district, may add a School Resource Officer, and enable our schools to conduct needed repairs for a few jobs that have been put on hold due to the decrease in funding over the years.

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Needs Based by Request v2



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Q3. How can the town afford this budget increase?

The new, needs based budget has been proposed for the first time and represents an increase of approximately \$691,297 over the current FY15 level. However, the town has lost approximately \$800,000 to \$900,000 each year since 2006 to other school districts because of the School Choice law. This loss is in the form of state aid being directed away from the town of Ware to the funding of the receiving schools, and the current 2015 projection is expected to exceed \$1million. This information is available to the public online on the Department of Education website.

To reiterate, the town has already “expended,” in the form of lost revenue, well over the current needs based budget each year since at least 2006. The fact of the matter is this annual amount is approximately \$800,000-\$900,000 every year since at least 2006 as documented in the Department of Education website. The fact of the matter is the town has not, in any way whatsoever, benefited from those annual “expenses.” In fact these large, annual “expenses” work against the town and are severely impeding the town’s ability to meet its budgetary goals and maintain its financial viability.

In contrast, the new, needs based school budget, as an investment, is intended to both lower and eliminate these losses over time, is intended to bring in additional revenue over and above the amount invested, and, over time, could potentially recover what has been lost over the years. It is intended to assist the town and the budget get back on track with deliberation and intention.

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Q4. How does the needs based budget serve as a potential investment that “pays back?”

1. Each resident student that returns to Ware because of the new offerings provided in the needs based budget will have a total state aid value of approximately \$10,267 per year. When a student who is also a resident of Ware attends our schools from kindergarten through 12th grade, approximately \$123,204 (\$10,267 each year x 12 years) in total state aid will be received from the state to support that student over the 12 years. Ten students would yield a payback of \$102,670 each year and approximately \$1.23 million over 12 years.
2. If students and families that reside outside the district choose to attend our schools due to the attractiveness of the new offerings, \$5000-\$7000 of state aid will be provided to Ware each year for each student, which would amount to approximately \$60,000-\$84,000 total aid from the state School Choice program per student attending from kindergarten through 12th grade. Ten students would yield a payback of approximately \$50,000-\$70,000 each year and approximately \$600,000-\$840,000 over 12 years.
3. The new budget will provide realized and perceived gains that will contribute to the increase in property values in Ware. Many studies are available on the internet that can substantiate this claim, and the national real estate industry, in addition to your local real estate professionals and organizations in Ware, can attest to this phenomenon.
4. It stabilizes the budget in the long term because it is designed to contribute to the revenue’s bottom line. The new budget has the potential to:
 - a. Stabilize current and future budgeted line items
 - b. Increase the chances that new budget items can be proposed
 - c. Increase the chances that previously cut budget items can be re-instated
5. For our school graduates, the new budget provides more effective instruction that increases the chances for them to possess an education that will enhance their long term income potential.

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Q5. Will the new school budget raise property taxes?

Property taxes can only be raised by decision by the town assessor or through an approved town override vote at both the Town Meeting and the ballot box. As you know, property taxes have increased in Ware over time, however as noted above, this new needs based school budget has never been proposed before. Additionally, the school budget to date has continued to be funded below 100% of the minimum spending level required by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The school budget by itself does not impact property taxes; rather, the town must produce an overall budget and determine whether or not the overall budget should be funded by any appropriate increase in property taxes. Also note it is hypothetically possible to approve the new school budget with no anticipated increases in taxes by simply adjusting other line items in the budget, however this may or may not be feasible. Regardless, this adjustment mechanism can be done for any other line item, be it for equipment, town vehicles, etc., and it, or any impact to property taxes, are not unique nor specific to the school budget. [Back to top](#)

Q6. Will the new school budget require a “Proposition 2.5 override?”

Up to 2.5% of a property tax increase can be levied by the town assessor without a town vote. However, a property tax increase greater than 2.5% would require a town vote, and this is referred to as the Proposition 2.5% override. As described above, both kinds of tax increases are determined by the town assessor and the school budget is not the definitive or sole trigger for any tax increase, and certainly not the definitive or sole trigger for the need for a Proposition 2.5 override. [Back to top](#)

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