

From: "Jeffrey Szymaniak <jeffrey.szymaniak@whrsd.org>" <jeffrey.szymaniak@whrsd.org>
To: Ottina.Kathleen
Cc: beth.stafford@whrsd.org
Bcc: beth.stafford@whrsd.org
Date: 2024-03-19 10:15
Subject: Re: Fy 25 School Budget

Hi Kathy,

Thank you for your email and I know of your advocacy and it's appreciated. I just need to clarify 1 item as I made a mistake on the class size number in 6th grade at HMS. They actually have 5 sections and will only have 5 sections on 24/25. Grade 8 is scheduled to have 6. I have differing opinions on busing but I do acknowledge your viewpoint. I just wanted to clarify for you my error in the presentation.

Thanks,

Jeff

On Tue, Mar 19, 2024 at 9:58 AM Ottina.Kathleen <KOttina@whitman-ma.gov> wrote:

March 19, 2024

School Committee Chair Stafford and
Superintendent Szymaniak:

It pains me to write this letter. I consider myself to be an advocate for education. But I am having a very hard time generating any enthusiasm for the school's FY25 budget as presented at the budget hearing.

As a Finance Committee member, I know the details of the requests submitted by each Department. I also spend hours poring over the details of the School Budget to assure myself that the budget has been carefully prepared. I have some serious concerns with the following requests for FY25:

1. **Transportation**. I continue to oppose funding non-mandated busing. Eliminating those costs would reduce Whitman's costs by \$181,780 and Hanson's by \$47,875, a total of **\$230,000**. While not part of the operating assessment, it is a savings that reduces the impact on the levy. Also, the assertion that non-mandated busing addresses the issue of school children crossing busy state highways flies in the face of reality. There are many Whitman Middle School children who cross rte. 18 and rte. 27 on a daily basis as they live within 0.5 miles of the school and are not entitled to a bus.
2. **Declining enrollment and Class sizes** – I took a look at the class size projections for FY25. What immediately leaps off the page **Class Size Projections 24/25** is the following:
Hanson Middle School
Grade 6 101/6 = 16.8 average class size
Grade 8 110/6 = 18.3 average class size