



Finance Office
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To: District/School Leadership
From: Derek Pinto, Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Date: January 16, 2025
Subject: Finance Updates

Budget Process

The budget process has begun in earnest and in keeping with the School Committee approved Budget Calendar. Recent developments include but are not limited to the following:

- **Cabinet review:** The Superintendent's Cabinet has begun their review and approval of various components of the school funding formula, and agreed to the following:
 - **Guardrails:** minimum staffing levels as calculated by enrollment per school.
 - **Weights:** weighting of student categories. This is done either as a per pupil dollar amount or as ratio, both of which translate to a total dollar amount per school.
 - **Transitions:** parameters to minimize variances in budget amounts in transitioning from one budget year to the next.
 - **Workbooks:** for schools and departments. These workbooks will be shared with SSCs and Community members for review and approval. These remain largely unchanged from FY26and
- **Principal-Cabinet budget briefs** are being created. This is a 1-page snapshot of relevant budget changes to be shared with Cabinet members for discussion approval.
- **School Site Council (SSC) and Community Budget Basics information** has been shared via a video recorded slide show that has been distributed to all school sites. This is to be shared with SSCs and Community members to inform them and to allow them to better participate in the budget process.
- **Budget Book:** A line-by-line review and update is underway of the draft budget that will be presented to School Committee for review and approval. Historical spending records and trends are considered in determining budget line amounts.

Community Participation

These opportunities have been created to afford the community an opportunity to be more informed about how to participate in the budget process. These opportunities have been publicized through the **LPS Leader** to school site leaders which goes out weekly. It has been sent out through **LPS Connect** messaging to all LPS staff and families and posted on the **LPS website**. It has been posted on **Facebook** and on **Inside Lowell's** Facebook page. It will be reposted on FB again on Monday, January 19th, and a reminder about the survey the following Tuesday, January 20th. The survey will be in the **LPS Connector** which will be sent out on Wednesday, January 28th.

- **Community Input Meetings:** have been scheduled to one morning session (Jan 20, 10 am) and one late afternoon session (January 21st, 5 pm) have been scheduled to allow options for willing participants. Meetings are remote for convenience and to maximize participation
- **Community Survey:** has been released and will remain open through January 30, 2026.

Information Technology: A "strike team" of IT personnel has been assembled and is meeting weekly to formulate a refresh plan for our 1:1 devices, to determine the district standard model, life cycle and whether lease or buying devices is the best option.

Payroll: Midpoint pay increases of 1% for employees as per negotiated contractual agreements and for some eligible affiliated staff is in process, starting on the 1/22 paychecks.