

Wellesley Public Schools Strategic Plan

Vision

The Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) aspires to be a world-class school system that prepares all of its students to be college-ready and successful in whatever path they choose. From PreK through grade 12, WPS will develop the heads, hearts, and hands of its students to be the critical thinkers, problem-solvers, artists and innovators who will make contributions to their communities, our nation, and the world.

Core Values

Academic Excellence
Commitment to Community
Respect for Human Differences
Cooperative and Caring Relationships

Strategic Objectives

Strategy 1: Focus on every child, in every classroom, every day

Rationale

Each year, our students come to school with a range of talents, challenges, and interests that make a one-size-fits-all curriculum problematic in offering the appropriate supports and challenges to meet their diverse needs. While we continue to make great strides in aligning district efforts with student needs, more must be done as evidenced by the persistent achievement gaps that exist across content areas. In order to ensure that we maintain high standards and expectation for all students, WPS will complement its core curriculum efforts with a personalized education approach intended to meet students wherever they are developmentally to support their physical, cognitive, and emotional growth.

Key Initiatives

1. Focus on closing achievement gaps among students.
2. Expand professional development on differentiated instruction
3. Develop an assessment strategy and system that include a combination of formative, interim, and summative assessments to inform student interventions and support, as well as training for staff

4. Investigate tuition-based, town wide PreK model to ensure a common, high quality education foundation for all students as well as a full-day Kindergarten model
5. Shift to House model at WHS.
6. Greater support for transition years (ES to MS / MS to HS)
7. Develop more advanced level learning options for students from PreK-12

Strategy 2: Invest in our Educators

Rationale

Fundamental to the success of the Wellesley Public Schools is the ability of the District to recruit, develop, and retain high quality teachers and administrators. This begins with the targeted recruitment of both new and veteran educators who bring a diversity of backgrounds and expertise into the school district. Perhaps most important, all educators must be supported by a learning organization committed to their ongoing development and growth. Finally, WPS must continue to offer a total-compensation package that allows the district to compete successfully in the marketplace of talent for high quality educators.

Key Initiatives

1. Maximize opportunities for professional collaboration within schools and across the District through the development and support of professional learning communities.
2. Develop a formal recruiting, mentoring and induction program for new teachers and administrators.
3. Continue to develop a new educator appraisal system to provide targeted feedback and support for teachers and administrators.
4. Develop a leadership development program that allows WPS to grow its own teacher-leaders and administrators.
5. Maintain competitive salary levels that fall within the top half of comparable districts.

Strategy 3: Provide broad-based learning opportunities as part of a world class public school system

Rationale

As the world continues to change rapidly, so too are expectations for what students should know and be able to do. Whether through alignment with the new Common Core standards or meeting the requirements for college and the workforce, the content and skills taught in all classes must prepare WPS students to be successful after their PreK-12 education. Building on its strengths, WPS will calibrate its curriculum to meet

these new expectations by not only striving for content alignment but also ensuring that critical skill development is present within and across content and grade levels.

Key Initiatives

1. Integrate key curricular inputs:
 - a. Wellesley Common Core alignment (*what*)
 - b. Integrate 21st Century Skills (*how*)
 - c. Adopt an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum mapping that spirals key competencies across content areas and grade levels
2. Strengthen and expand district STEM offerings
3. Develop and implement a preK-12 world language program
4. Expand opportunities for experiential learning at every grade level including internships and community service
5. Establish external partnerships with organizations to provide further content enrichment opportunities for students and staff

Strategy 4: Align resources with educational needs

Rationale

Currently, there are significant disparities in how resources are allocated throughout the Wellesley Public Schools. Proposition 2 ½, a struggling economy, unstable state and federal funding, and the addition of many unfunded mandates have put increasing financial pressure on the Wellesley School budget. The WPS has had to decrease some services and look to alternative funding to educate its students. Over time, an increasing burden has been placed on community organizations, PTOs, and individual parents to fund core activities for the school district. The WPS operating budget is moving further away from representing the true costs of education in Wellesley. The result has created reductions and inequities in resource allocations across the system. In addition, the need to ask parents to fund fees for services (extra curriculars, busing, classroom materials) has resulted in individual students having varied access to opportunities within the WPS. In addition, the funding challenge has also resulted in disparities in the condition of the district facilities.

Wellesley has experienced enrollment growth over the past 20 years and is at its peak total enrollment. Elementary school enrollment peaked in FY09 and is beginning to see an overall decline. However, due to our small district zones, some individual schools have seen enrollment increases while others have seen more significant declines. This has caused highly variable class sizes throughout the District. In

addition, despite the total enrollment decrease, the number of sections and therefore funding required remains relatively constant.

WPS will review and redesign its resource allocation process to provide funding for the vision outlined in this strategic plan. In particular, the District will examine options for redistricting as well as grade configurations that best match the path outlined in this plan. Partnerships will still play a vital role in establishing programmatic assistance and diversified revenue streams.

Key Initiatives

1. Establish 15-year Facilities Master Plan responsive to the following inputs
 - a. Long-term student enrollment analysis
 - b. Equalizing class sizes
 - c. Stable attendance zones
 - d. Grade configuration aligned to education programs
 - e. SMMA Conditions Assessment
2. Establish an "Innovation Fund" at each school to support staff-driven, creative programs