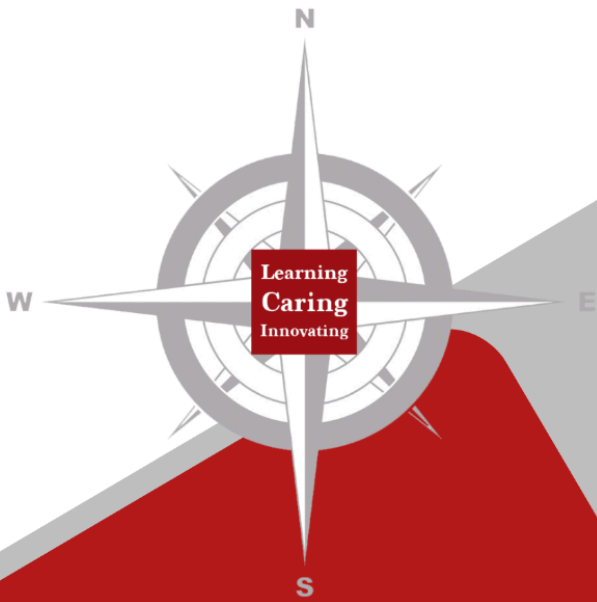




Wellesley Public Schools



2023-24

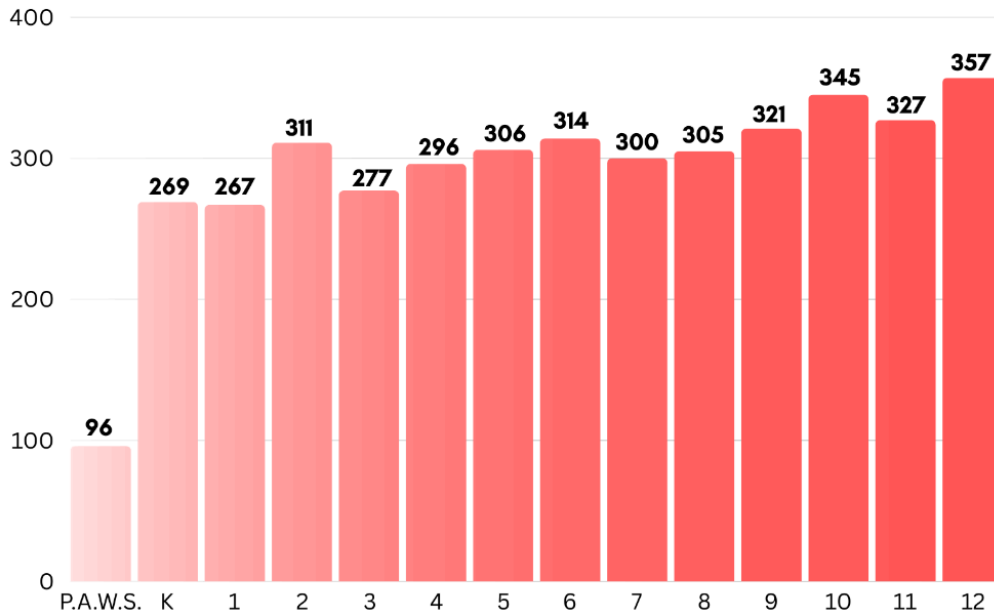
PROGRESS REPORT

wellesleyps.org

2023-24 School Year At A Glance

Enrollment

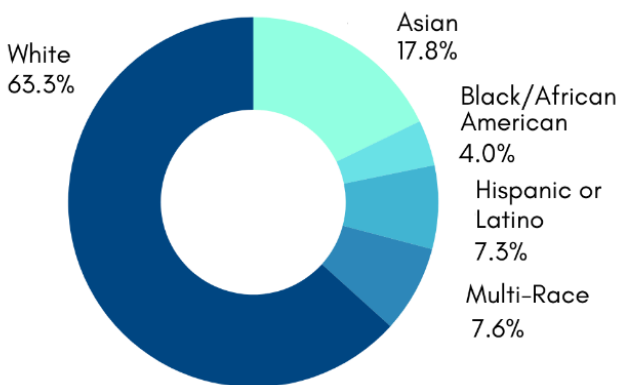
4,091 students PreK-12



P.A.W.S. (PreK)	96
Bates	253
Fiske	316
Hardy	225
Hunnewell	200
Schofield	298
Sprague	293
Upham	141
Wellesley Middle School	919
Wellesley High School	1,350

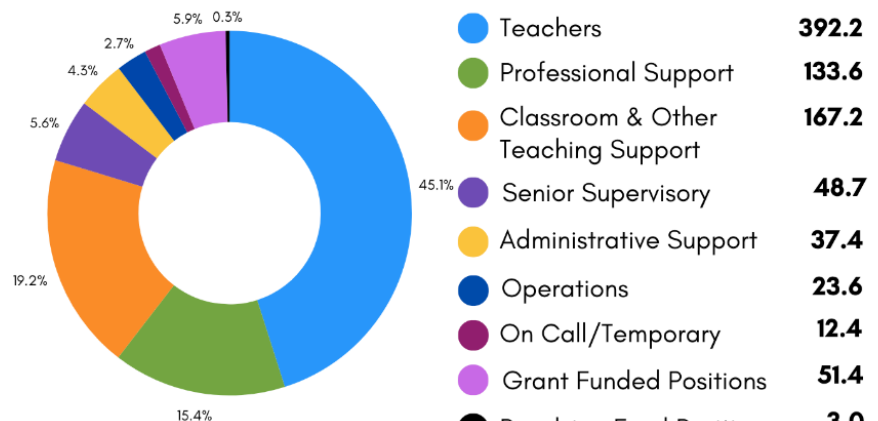
Our Students

Demographics



Source: DESE

Our Staff



Source: FY'24 Adjusted Budget

Special Populations

2.8%	English Language Learners <i>State Avg. 13.1%</i>
8.3%	Economically Disadvantaged <i>State Avg. 42.2%</i>
17.2%	Students with Disabilities <i>State Avg. 20.2%</i>

869.5

Total FTEs

95.3%

Unit A Members With
Advanced Degrees

90.3%

Teacher Retention Rate
State Avg. 85.8%

88.6%

Experienced Teachers
State Avg. 80.8%



Wellesley Public Schools

Learning • Caring • Innovating

School Committee

Linda Chow, Chair
Niki Ofenloch, Vice Chair
Sharon Clarke, Secretary
Christina Horner, M.Ed.
Illana Nissenbaum

Principals

P.A.W.S. Preschool
Kristen Stacy, Director
781-446-6222

Bates Elementary
Toni Jolley
781-446-6260

Fiske Elementary
Rachel McGregor
781-446-6265

Hardy Elementary
Grant Smith
781-446-6270

Hunnewell Elementary
Jeffery Dees
781-446-6275

Schofield Elementary
Elaine Harold, Interim
781-446-6280

Sprague Elementary
Leigh Petrowsky
781-263-1965

Wellesley Middle School
Dr. Mark Ito
781-446-6250

Wellesley High School
Dr. Jamie Chisum
781-446-6290

CENTRAL OFFICE

781-446-6200

Superintendent x5605
Teaching & Learning x5602
Finance & Operations x5611
Student Services x5629

Dear Members of the Wellesley Community,

We are proud to reintroduce to you the district progress report, reflecting the work of the Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) during the 2023-2024 school year. This report reflects District's ongoing effort to communicate our progress to the entire Wellesley community and represents our success in meeting the first year goals of our new 5-year strategic plan.

We are pleased to also highlight notable events from the school year, including our students' academic and extracurricular successes and the opening of the first of two new elementary schools for our students.

As we look ahead to our work in Wellesley in the coming years, there will be no shortage of challenges. These include continuing to meet the academic and social/emotional needs of a diverse student body, calibrating the needed investments in our future progress within the town's financial plan, and maintaining support for a public education at a time when the education landscape continues to shift rapidly.

Our strategic plan provides both a roadmap for our work in the days ahead and, perhaps equally important, a compass grounded in our core values to help navigate these challenging times. Through the strategic plan we identified four priorities that continue to calibrate our work:

- **Priority 1:** Ensuring High Expectations Teaching and Learning for all Students
- **Priority 2:** Supporting and Strengthening our Workforce/High Quality Professional Learning
- **Priority 3:** Building Community Partnerships and Enhancing Engagement
- **Priority 4:** Improving Facilities and Optimizing Resources

In the report that follows, we elaborate on our progress in the first year of the strategic plan. We hope this report reinforces confidence in our collective work and engenders excitement in the direction of our District on behalf of all students.

We remain grateful for the strong support of the Wellesley community, which is a key aspect of our District's success.

Best regards,

Dr. David Lussier
Superintendent of Schools

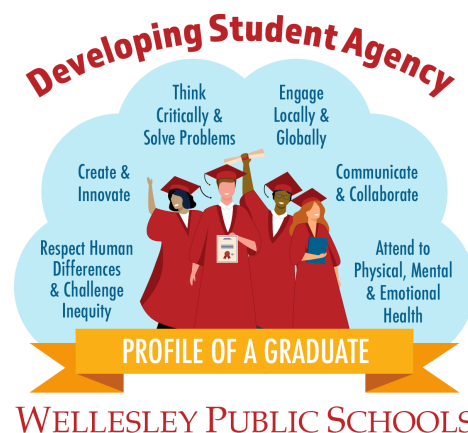
Linda H. Chow
Chair, School Committee

WPS Profile of a Graduate

During the 2017-18 school year, the Wellesley Public Schools set out to consider the question: *What is most important for our students to know and be able to do?* In Spring 2018, a task force of more than 50 members of the WPS community developed a corresponding, “Profile of a Graduate.”

The competencies outlined in the Profile of a Graduate, along with the **Wellesley Public Schools core values**, are foundational to the long-term strategic vision for the district.

The competencies in the Profile of a Graduate range from cognitive (critical thinking, creativity/innovation), to interpersonal (communications, collaboration, engaging locally and globally) to personal (attending to physical, mental and emotional health). WPS has also **incorporated the concept of “student agency”** into the POG. An environment that develops student agency is one that encourages self-advocacy and creates opportunities for student voice and choice.



WPS Five Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028)

Building on its pre-pandemic efforts and after an additional, yearlong, community-wide process, the School Committee and WPS administration **finalized the district’s five-year Strategic Plan in Fall 2023**. Central to the strategic plan is the theme of *Educational Equity & Excellence*, which speaks not only to ensuring every child has the resources and opportunities needed to achieve their highest potential, but also to disrupting the historically predictable educational outcomes in our system.

The **ongoing strategic priorities** identified in the strategic plan are: 1) Ensuring High Expectations Teaching and Learning for all Students, 2) Supporting and Strengthening Our Workforce/High Quality Professional Learning, 3) Building Community Partnerships and Enhancing Engagement, and 4) Improving Facilities and Optimizing Resources.

Core Values

The strategic plan also included an update to the district’s core values and expanded them to five:

- Academic Excellence
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Commitment to Community
- Value and Respect for Human Differences
- Caring and Cooperative Relationships

Priority 1:

Ensuring High Expectations Teaching and Learning for All Students

- PreK-12 essential standards were selected/written for each grade and content area, in order to articulate and support curricular/instructional vertical alignment/coherence, and link to the district's Profile of a Graduate. K-5 curriculum maps and PK-5 report cards were aligned to the essential standards.
- A new, state-required, Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Plan was developed and aligned with the WPS Strategic Plan.
- A Literacy Steering Committee was created to steward the study of high quality, literacy instruction materials endorsed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- The District was awarded the DESE Investigating History Grant to learn and pilot the DESE grade 5 Social Studies curriculum. The K-5 Social Studies curriculum was comprehensively analyzed and strengthened.
- A new Wellesley Middle School schedule was launched to foster coordinated and timely instructional support and instructional extensions.
- At Wellesley High School, several new courses were approved for the 2024-25 School Year, including Advanced Topics in Computer Science; the AP Research companion to the AP Seminar course; AP Language and Composition; and a Science of Happiness and Well-Being course.
- Summer school programming and supports were greatly expanded, including an in-person summer reading program for incoming Grade 6 METCO program students; an in-person summer school language program for elementary multilingual learner students; and an in-person summer school reading for elementary Title I students.
- Numerous Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) efforts were implemented, including the expansion of Second Step skill-building curriculum from PK-5 to PK-8, and K-5 Bullying Prevention Units to all elementary schools.
- Analyzing student performance and attendance through district data teams and strategizing student supports

Priority 2:

Supporting and Strengthening Our Workforce/ High Quality Professional Learning

Key Activities:

- Strengthening and supporting a positive working relationship with the WEA
- Coordinating recruitment, support, and retention across the district
- Developing an educator pipeline for staff in all school district roles by partnering with higher education and regional professional networks
- Refining the mentoring program and support for new hires
- Expanding professional learning opportunities for all staff

Priority 3:

Building Community Partnerships and Enhancing Engagement

The district:

- Strengthened strategic engagement with the Boston resident community, including adding a non-voting seat on the School Committee and activating a Boston Parent Advisory Council.
- Continued to implement staff, student and family surveys to assess school climate, including areas of rigor, engagement, safety, and belongingness.
- Supported the elementary community through school construction and consolidation with a detailed communications plan that was updated throughout the school year.
- Launched a “WPS Budget Academy” to educate members of the Advisory Committee on the school budget and budget process.

Priority 4:

Improving Facilities and Optimizing Resources

- Finalizing a project that had taken more than 10 years to accomplish, the district successfully opened the Hunnewell School (February 2024), marked the closure of the the Upham School (June 2024), and prepared for the Hardy School opening (August 2024)
- The district developed an action plan for the transition of the SKILLS program for students on the autism spectrum, as it prepared to move from the Upham School to Hardy School in 2024-25
- The final redistricting plan was approved by the School Committee on January 30 with changes to help balance enrollment districtwide.
- A working group was convened to develop a proposal for long-term planning for P.A.W.S. (Preschool At Wellesley Schools).
- WMS made strides in its lunchtime composting program in the cafeteria, focusing on creating good habits with sixth and seventh graders using an entertaining advertising and signage campaign.



2023-24 Academic Highlights

- **358 students graduated WHS with the Class of 2024.** 93 percent of the Class of 2024 planned to attend a four-year college, 0.3 percent planned to attend a 2-year college, 1 percent planned other post-secondary school, and 3.1 percent planned to work, take a gap year, or join the military.
- All WPS schools met or exceeded the MCAS achievement targets set by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. **Four schools were among 66 designated as Schools of Recognition by DESE** based on the meeting or exceeding of targets: Bates, Sprague Elementary, Wellesley Middle School, and Wellesley High School.
- Six members of the WHS Class of 2024 were National Merit Finalists, and three were named **National Merit Scholars**. 27 students were named “Commended” scholars.
- The WHS Academic Decathlon team won its **fourth straight Henry J. Lukas state championship** award and qualified to compete in the National Championships, where **two students won Gold Medals in Math**.
- A WHS senior served as the **sole voting student on the state Board of Education**. The Board of Ed’s April Meeting was held at WHS.
- Two WHS students won Gold Key awards in the **state writing awards**, in the Personal Essay Critical Essay categories.
- In the WHS courtyard, **Governor Maura Healey and Health and Human Services Sec. Kate Walsh announced \$13 million in funding for a new initiative supporting mental health, using the WHS Bridge program as a model** for new programs to be funded around the state. Bridge is an in-school program that provides additional academic, social, and emotional support for students who have fallen behind academically or are returning from treatment due to emotional or medical reasons.



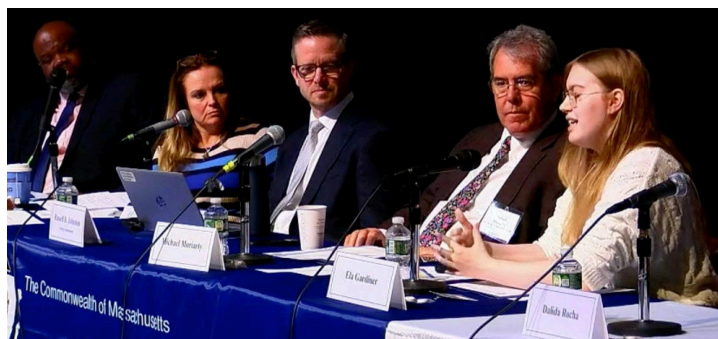
Class of 2024 Graduation



Class of 2024 National Merit Finalists



Gov. Maura Healey announces mental health initiative at WHS



WHS's Ela Gardiner (right) as student Board of Ed rep

Athletics Highlights

- During the school year, **1,906 high school and middle school students** filled roster spots on 93 athletic teams.
- **81 percent of the Class of 2024** participated in a sport during their WHS career.
- WHS had 160 three-sport athletes.
- The WHS teams had great overall success during the regular season, winning the **school's fifth *Boston Globe* Holmes Scholastic Award for the highest winning percentage in the state.**
- As it has been for many years, the WHS athletics participation rate was among the highest in the state.
- **Four WHS teams won Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) State Championships** - Girls Swim and Dive, Girls Indoor Track, Girls Outdoor Track and Girls Tennis. Five WHS Teams were State Runners-Up - Girls Cross Country, Boys Indoor Track, Boys Outdoor Track, Girls Golf, and Girls Lacrosse.
- Girls Track and Field coach John Griffith was inducted into the **Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association Hall of Fame.**



WHS is presented with the *Globe's* Holmes Award for 2023-24



Raider girls state champion swim (above), tennis (left) and indoor track teams (below)



Performing & Visual Arts

- 39 WHS Ensemble Students were selected for the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Senior District Ensembles and 11 were selected for the All-State Ensembles. 19 WHS and WMS students were selected for Junior District Ensembles.
- WHS presented "*Mean Girls*," "*Men on Boats*" and "*12 Angry Jurors*" and the middle school presented "*Anastasia*" and "*Newsies, Jr.*" WHS students performed "*The Insanity of Mary Girard*" as their entry into the annual Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild State Drama Festival, with students receiving awards for acting and costuming.
- The **WHS Jazz Combo and Rice Street Singers received Gold Medals** at the Massachusetts Association of Jazz Educators Combo/Choir Festival.
- The **WHS Honors Chamber Orchestra received a Gold Medal** at the Massachusetts Instrumental Choral and Conductors Association Festival.



- For the second year in a row, Dr. Kevin McDonald, WHS Director of Choral Programs, was named one of **25 semi finalists nationwide for the Grammy Music Educators Award**.

- The WPS Art Department placed fifth in the state by number of awards received by a Massachusetts public school district.
- Six WHS students won a total of six Gold Keys at the state level in Jewelry, Ceramics, Portfolio, and Photography categories.



Mean Girls at Wellesley High School



WHS Jazz Combo, Gold Medalists at MAJE



'Jude 22' By Evelyn Harrison, Scholastic Gold Key Winner

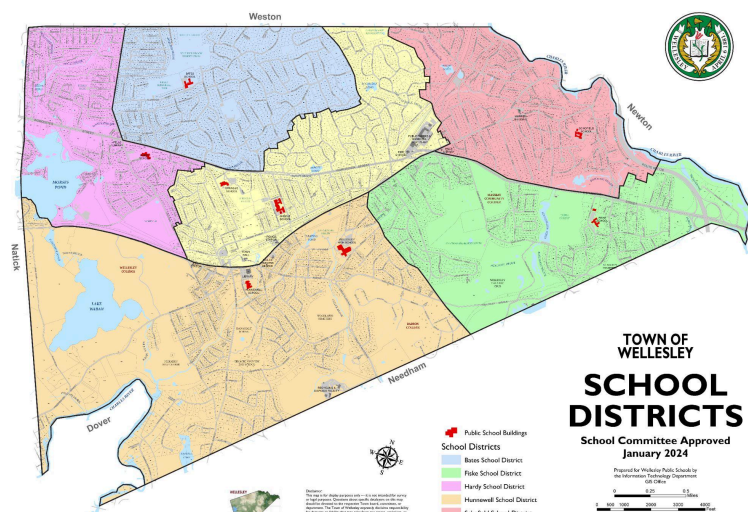
Facilities

The district celebrated the opening of the new Hunnewell School in February 2024 after approximately 18 months of construction. The new, two-story Hunnewell was funded entirely by the Town and includes 18 classrooms with a capacity of 365 students, and includes purpose-built spaces for the district's Therapeutic Learning Center program. Because the new Hunnewell was built on the footprint of the 1938 building, its students were displaced for all of the 2022-23 and part of the 2023-24 school years. The "internal swing space" plan developed by the district arranged for Hunnewell students and teachers to relocate to available classrooms at Bates, Upham, Sprague, and Hardy. Internal swing space concluded before the February break, with the students and staff moving into their new school on the Monday following the break.



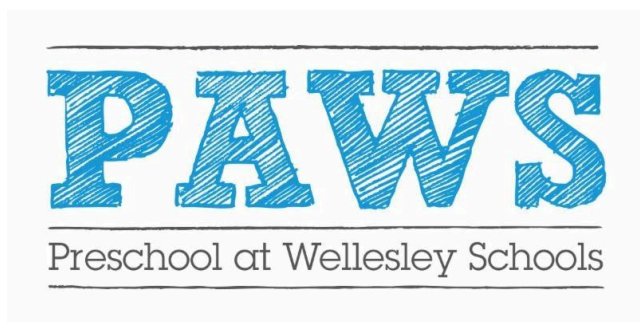
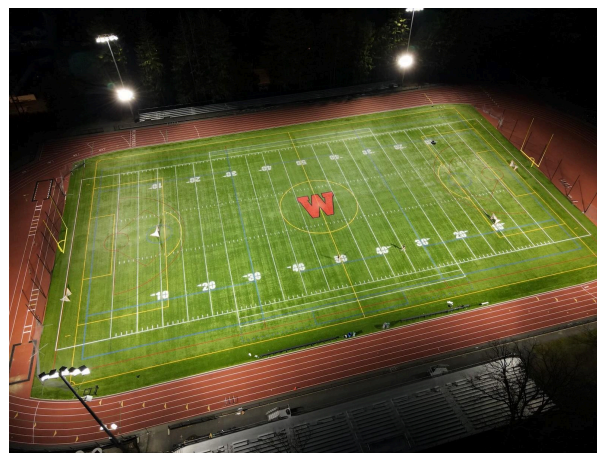
Construction continued on the new Hardy School, which was funded in part by a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The two-story Hardy building also includes 18 classrooms with a capacity of 365 students, and includes purpose-built spaces for the district-wide SKILLS program for students on the autism spectrum. Hardy students were able to remain in place for the construction process and **celebrated the 100th anniversary of the 1923 building in November 2023.** The new school was located toward the rear of the Hardy site, and a new entrance off Route 9 was established. Both the new Hunnewell and Hardy schools were approved overwhelmingly by Town Meeting and Wellesley voters in the Fall of 2021.

The School Committee revisited its **six-school redistricting plan** by reviewing the households of current students in an effort to balance enrollment districtwide. The Committee made targeted adjustments to the map that was approved in February 2020. After hosting in-person and virtual community forums, the Committee approved the changes in January 2024. At the same time, many students due to be redistricted were able to remain at their current schools through adjustments to the Elementary Transfer Option process.

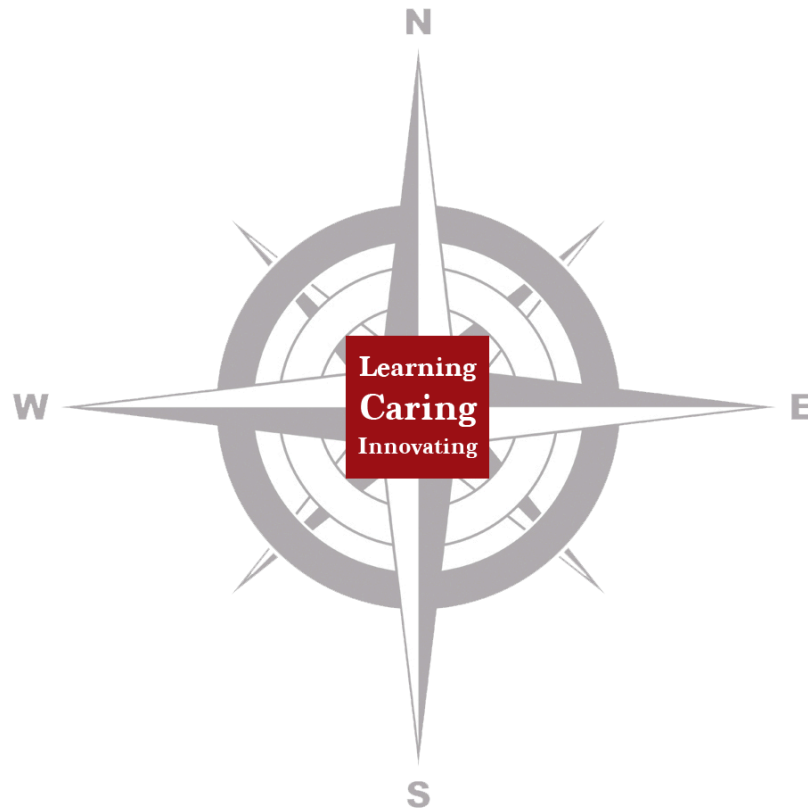


In June 2024, **community celebrations were held at the Upham School**, which closed to students permanently at the end of the school year. A **“lights out” event was held at the old Hardy School**, with demolition beginning in late June. The opening of the new Hardy and consolidation into six schools went into effect at the start of the 2024-25 school year.

Installation of **field lighting and a new sound system at the Hunnewell Track & Field** began in June 2024. These additions are part of Phase II of a long-term field improvements project to benefit WPS varsity teams and the community. The field lighting was set to debut in Fall 2024 with night games for football, field hockey, and boys and girls soccer, with night games for lacrosse to be played the following spring.



A task force charged with **considering the future of preschool in Wellesley** began meeting in Fall 2023. The group is reviewing the current preschool needs in Wellesley as well as gathering information about a variety of preschool models and facilities in other cities and towns. The group plans recommendations to the School Committee in Spring 2025.

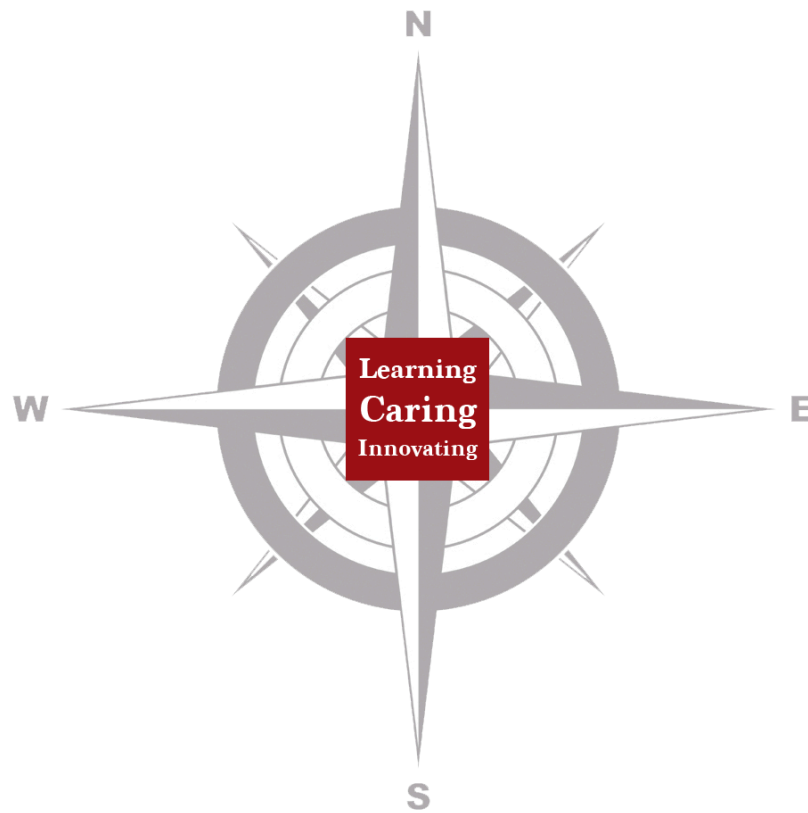


PEER DISTRICT COMPARISONS

SOURCE: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

	Total Expenditures Per Pupil 2022-23	Avg. Teacher Compensation 2020-21 <i>(latest available)</i>	Student to Teacher Ratio 2023-24	Graduation Rate 2023	Attendance Rate 2023-24	Composite Average SAT 2023-24	% AP Courses: Score of 3+ 2023-24
DISTRICT	AMOUNT	AMOUNT	RATIO	RATE	RATE	SCORE	SCORE
Belmont	\$19,411	\$101,061	15.0 to 1	95.4	95.1	1280	95
Brookline	\$26,528	\$101,158	12.1 to 1	95.9	94.8	1321	93
Concord*	\$26,176	\$108,511	10.6 to 1	-	95.4	-	-
Concord-Carlisle	\$26,663	\$117,960	11.7 to 1	97.4	94.8	1327	95
Dover-Sherborn	\$24,361	\$104,766	10.7 to 1	97.5	95.5	1305	96
Lexington	\$25,167	\$94,513	10.5 to 1	97.6	95.6	1340	93
Lincoln*	\$31,772	\$92,894	8.7 to 1	-	93.9	-	-
Lincoln-Sudbury	\$26,241	\$113,571	11.4 to 1	95.9	96.1	1275	97
Medfield	\$19,960	\$99,271	12.0 to 1	98.4	95.7	1248	85
Natick	\$20,475	\$84,410	11.6 to 1	95.9	94.8	1215	90
Needham	\$23,407	\$98,388	12.3 to 1	98.7	94.8	1293	94
Newton	\$25,276	\$93,031	11.1 to 1	96.1	94.1	1295	89
Sudbury*	\$21,202	\$100,892	11.1 to 1	-	95.7	-	-
Wayland	\$22,420	\$105,651	11.4 to 1	99.5	93.0	1291	95
Wellesley	\$27,591	\$100,778	10.5 to 1	96.7	95.3	1302	90
Weston	\$31,012	\$110,901	11.7 to 1	95.0	96.5	1332	92
Winchester	\$19,015	\$89,442	12.6 to 1	94.1	95.2	1288	88
State Average	\$21,885	\$86,118	11.8 to 1	89.2	93.0	1127	70.2

*indicates K-8 district



PEER DISTRICT COMPARISONS: MCAS

SOURCE: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

	Grades 3–8: % Meet or Exceed Expectations MCAS ELA 2024	Grades 3–8: % Meet or Exceed Expectations MCAS Math 2024	Grades 5–8: % Meet or Exceed Expectations MCAS Science 2024	Grade 10: % Meet or Exceed Expectations MCAS ELA 2024	Grade 10: % Meet or Exceed Expectations MCAS Math 2024	Grade 10: % Meet or Exceed Expectations MCAS Science 2024
DISTRICT	PERCENT	PERCENT	PERCENT	PERCENT	PERCENT	PERCENT
Belmont	69	75	80	87	87	86
Brookline	67	71	70	78	79	78
Concord	70	70	76	-	-	-
Concord-Carlisle	-	-	-	85	85	83
Dover-Sherborn	68	70	78	86	88	88
Lexington	73	79	76	89	90	90
Lincoln	54	57	57	-	-	-
Lincoln-Sudbury	-	-	-	83	85	83
Medfield	65	68	69	76	79	89
Natick	61	64	65	72	67	75
Needham	68	72	68	84	85	77
Newton	64	67	65	83	78	83
Sudbury	65	70	72	-	-	-
Wayland	71	75	76	82	81	84
Wellesley	72	76	78	84	81	82
Weston	74	76	76	86	87	79
Winchester	66	74	80	85	85	81
State Average	39	41	42	57	48	49

