

Please find our responses below to the questions we received from members of the School Committee regarding the FY21 Budget.

Can you provide us with the Opportunity Index (OI) allocations for schools for this year compared to last year? (Mr. O’Neill)

The Opportunity Index (OI) is a pioneering tool designed and developed by the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Area Research Initiative (BARI) to measure and quantify schools that serve the highest concentrations of students in need. It incorporates a range of data representing factors that are outside of the schools’ control but are also predictive of students’ academic outcomes. More information about the OI can be found on our website or by [clicking this link](#).

To respond to Mr. O’Neill’s request, we have created [this document](#), which lists each BPS School and their Opportunity Index score for FY20 and FY21.

Please provide a list of schools that have had cuts 2 or more times in the past 4 years. Where are they located and what are their demographics? Which schools have experienced 0-1 cut in the past 4 years. (Ms. Robinson)

There are various reasons why a simple comparison of year over year funding provides limited insight into the challenges facing some of our schools. In some cases, schools may see a budget increase year to year, but are experiencing decreasing purchasing power; that is: their costs are rising faster than their budget allocation. To respond to this request, we looked at each school’s year over year change in weighted student enrollment. While still simplified, we felt this was the closest approximation of schools facing budget challenges each year. For an overview of Weighted Student Funding, [see our presentation to the School Committee on February 13th](#), starting at slide 9. To see an individual school’s WSF allocation [click here](#), for their full allocation [click here](#) or go to <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/7496> and follow the links in the March 18, 2020 section.

It’s worth noting that 83 of 113 schools funded through WSF have weighted enrollments higher than 4 years ago.

The table provides the number of schools in each category of year over year weighted enrollment change:

Years of Weighted Enrollment Reduction	# of Schools
0	21
1	33
2	45
3	13
4	1



NOTE: Starting in the FY19 budget, schools with a decrease in weighted enrollment received a soft landing (1% in FY19, 2% in FY20,FY21). This is not included in the data below, but does offset some of the reductions.

NOTE: This data is only reflective of Weighted Student Funding. Investments outside of weighted student funding, like school nurses and the new transformation positions are not included in this analysis

Individual schools can be viewed in [this document](#).

Which schools enhance their budgets through fund-raising? How are these funds factored into the school's overall budgets? (Ms. Robinson)

Currently, BPS does not collect and report on fundraising for our individual schools. Both outside fundraising and efforts to secure competitive grants are not factors directly included in our budget process. We want to note that part of the motivation for creating the Opportunity Index (see above) was to level the playing field for school communities that may have the ability to fundraise and those that may not.

Why is base spending per student different? What is included? (Ms. Robinson)

Base spending per student variation is driven by school size because each school receives an equal foundation budget of \$210,151 that is then divided by the number of pupils. This means that the foundation budget per student at the Clap (128 students, \$1,642 per student) is significantly higher than the foundation budget per student at the Russell (383 students, \$549 per student).

Can you provide us with some diversity data for high schools, specifically: schools with over 13% white students or 9% Asian students (Ms. Robinson)

- There are seven schools with more than 9% of 9-12 grade students who are Asian: Boston Latin School, Boston Latin Academy, Carter School, Charlestown High, Excel High, O'Bryant, Quincy Upper
- There are five schools with more than 13% of 9-12 grade students who are White: Boston Latin School, Boston Latin Academy, Carter School, Horace Mann, Lyon Upper.

Does the FY21 proposed budget include an increased allocation for the arts? (Dr. Lorna Rivera)

We are investing in specialists in the STEAM/PE¹ in our Transformation schools. This has lead to a \$1.8M increase in budget for Arts, \$0.5M for Music, \$1.1M for PE

Is there an allocation for ethnic studies in the FY21 budget proposal? (Dr. Lorna Rivera)

Ethnic Studies is currently included in the social studies budget in the Academics Division. Our intention is to support ethnic students with a budget of approximately \$350K in FY21.

¹ STEAM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. PE refers to Physical Education. For more information about our investment in Transformation Schools, see our presentations to the School Committee on February 5th and 13th.



Can you describe a bit more about how the district determined to allocate funding through the foundation for quality? (Dr. Lorna Rivera)

The Foundation for Quality originated with feedback from school communities that we need to ensure that all schools have a baseline amount of funding above compliance for resources that can be more flexibly tailored to the needs of that community.. Each school's baseline amount varies by enrollment and need, with higher need schools having a higher per pupil baseline amount. Slides 26-28 of [our presentation to the School Committee](#) at the February 12th Budget Hearing give a more detailed explanation of how the calculations work.

Has funding for the OELL office changed in the FY21 budget? (Dr. Lorna Rivera)

The budget for the Office of English Learners (OEL) represents level service costs for existing programs for FY21. We are also investing through the OEL office to support dual language initiatives in the district.

