

Tracking COVID-19 Costs to Schools

The pandemic has upended lives – at home and at school – and the true costs of COVID-19 will not be known for a long time. The costs of a fast pivot to remote learning in the spring of 2020 and reopening schools in remote, hybrid or full in-person models (and frequent switching between learning models) are beginning to be seen and felt by school districts as we look to a new budget season. To better aid advocacy efforts in our region, business officials and superintendents from 48% of WPSBA districts participated in a survey to look at the costs to date – and some of the hoped-for program expenses in the upcoming school year. The cost survey focuses on spending to date and proposed spending in the coming school year to aid students in recovering from pandemic restrictions and learning loss.

What have school districts spent so far?

Our data on the last 12 months of spending combines the ONE-TIME and RECURRING costs of operating in a pandemic from March 2020 through February 2021. One-time costs included technology and devices for students; webcams and microphones for teachers; and sanitizing equipment, ventilation and filtration upgrades, and physical dividers for school buildings. Recurring costs included PPE; cleaning supplies; increased staffing of custodians, aides, teacher, and substitutes; additional bus runs; and replacement air filters.



What would it cost to increase in-person education this year?

Many districts are considering the logistics of returning additional students to school buildings for increased in-person instruction for the last three months of the school year. The costs to INCREASE IN-PERSON instruction for the final three months of the school year are estimated by again considering one-time costs (additional dividers, air filtration units, outdoor tents, etc.) and recurring costs (incremental PPE, wipes, disinfectant, air filters and some staffing).

IN-PERSON LEARNING DATA

**Estimated cost for WPSBA districts
to return more students to in-person
learning for the final 3 months of
the 2020-21 school year:**

\$16.7 Million

Returning costs

\$19.4 Million

Returning costs with CDC-recommended
10% weekly COVID surveillance testing
(assumes NYS provides tests at no cost
to school districts)

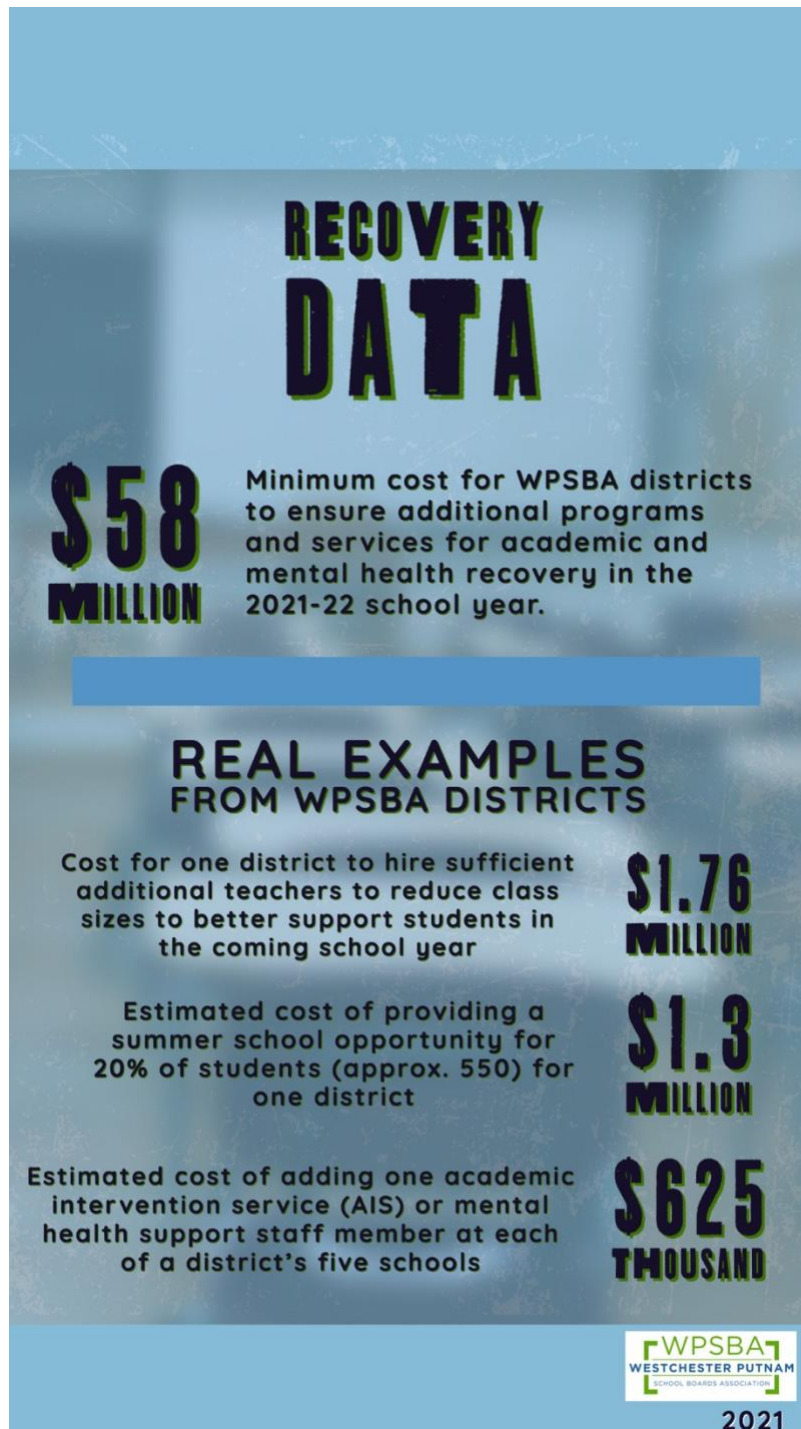


2021

WPSBA
WESTCHESTER PUTNAM
SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

What is needed to help students recover academically and emotionally from the pandemic?

As we look to help students recover from the pandemic, school districts are already considering ADDITIONAL RESOURCES and programs to aid students in the coming school year. Budget items under consideration focus primarily on social-emotional support through the addition of staff (psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors) and on learning loss with the use of summer school, after school programs, and hiring of new staff in the program areas of Academic Intervention Services (AIS), special education and English Language Learners (ELL) or teacher additions to reduce class sizes in the coming year.



Where do we go from here?

Advocacy for public ed funding is critical – not only in this year, but in upcoming years, as districts work to provide additional supports to students in the areas of academics and mental health. The federal government has passed pandemic relief bills with funding targeted at New York State schools, include the CARES Act of March 2020 (\$1.2 billion) and the CRSSA Act of December 2020 (\$3.8 billion) that, due to state funding adjustments, have provided almost no additional funding for WPSBA districts to cover COVID-19 expenses. The Executive Budget provides for zero increase in Foundation Aid for the second year in a row, and reduces expected payments in other aid categories (“combined services” aid, prior year aid claims, and special education residential placements).

Based on the data above, the \$100 million already spent by WPSBA districts for direct COVID expenses is likely to be dwarfed by the anticipated resources needed in the coming years to ensure our students are provided with the mental health and academic supports they will need during the pandemic recovery process. Our data is a quick snapshot of what can be done when school districts are assured of the funding required to maintain current programs and services and additional money is granted to add services that ensure the mental health and academic success of students who have lived through an extraordinary time.

WPSBA COVID Cost Survey Responses

Commonly purchased items for COVID management in the past year*

**Time period is March 2020 – February 2021*

One-time COVID expenses	Recurring COVID expenses
<p>One-time annual costs (26 districts reporting): Estimated WPSBA Total: \$57.12M Per pupil*: \$362 % of Budget*: 1.15%</p> <p><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$50,000 - \$6,000,000 Median: \$283,924</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*Does not include BOCES & SASDs</i></p>	<p>Expenses per month (26 districts reporting): Estimated WPSBA Total: \$3.85M Per pupil*: \$24 % of Budget*: 0.92% (annualized)</p> <p><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$1,500 - \$214,500 Median: \$35,000</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*Does not include BOCES & SASDs</i></p>
<p>Total Annual COVID Costs (26 districts reporting): Estimated WPSBA Total: \$103.4M Per pupil*: \$652 % of Budget*: 2.07%</p> <p><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$110,000 - \$7,800,000 Median: \$953,795</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*Does not include BOCES & SASDs</i></p>	
<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chromebooks, devices, student technology • Webcams • Microphones for classrooms • Whiteboards • WiFi hotspots • VPN accounts 	<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting software • Remote learning software
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development for teachers • Assistance with administering COVID tests 	<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodial staff • Custodial overtime • Contract cleaners • Teacher aides for split classrooms • Additional teachers & teacher aides • Leave replacement teachers for FFCRA & COVID related leaves • Substitutes to cover quarantines • Additional buses for private school transportation • Additional bus runs • Additional nursing staff

<p>Physical Plant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom and office dividers/barriers • Additional sinks for hand washing • Temperature scanners • COVID tests • HVAC upgrades • Air conditioners • Fans • Air filters (MERV 13) • Air purifiers/scrubbers • Duct cleaning • Signage • Outdoor tents • Base requirement for PPE • Nursing office furnishings for additional offices 	<p>Physical Plant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE: masks, N95s, face shields, gloves • Heating cost increases due to increased ventilation • HEPA filters
<p>Cleaning equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrostatic sprayers • Equipment to produce cleaning solution 	<p>Cleaning equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning supplies • Antimicrobial agents • Hand sanitizer • Sanitizing wipes • Disinfectant sprays

Costs school districts will incur to increase in-person learning in this school year

One-time expenses	Recurring expenses
<p>One-time costs (19 districts reporting): Estimated WPSBA Total: \$7.92M</p> <p><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$10,000 - \$455,000 Median: \$40,000</p>	<p>Monthly recurring costs (19 districts reporting): Estimated WPSBA Total: \$2.94M</p> <p><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$533 - \$191,667 Median: \$10,494</p> <p>Weekly COVID Testing* (21 districts reporting): Estimated WPSBA Total: \$219.5K</p> <p><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$330 - \$21,000 Median: \$1,500</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*Assumes State purchases COVID tests</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Total cost additional in-person instruction (next 3 months)*: Estimated WPSBA Total: \$19.4M</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$12,400 - \$805,500 Median: \$192,060</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*Including cost of weekly surveillance testing of 10% of school population, with tests paid for by NYS.</i></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Barriers/Dividers • Desks • Additional temperature check devices • Instructional support • Outdoor tents • Bio-protect application or bipolar ionization • Signage • Additional cleaning staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional PPE, sanitizers, paper towels • Additional cleaning supplies • Additional air filtration • Additional staffing: teachers, aides, monitors, cleaners • COVID tests • Utilities cost increase
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Additional programs and resources districts are considering for 2021-22

Academic Support	Social-Emotional Support
<p>Estimated Cost of Additional Resources (13 districts reporting): Estimated WPSBA Total: \$58.5M</p> <p><u>Cost per district:</u> Range: \$75,000 - \$2,730,000 Median: \$625,000</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensatory special education services • New Assessment Tools • Smaller class sizes (additional teaching staff) • Additional Academic Intervention Services (AIS) teacher(s) • Summer math and reading recovery programs • After School recovery programs • Additional special education staff • Additional Reading Specialist • Student learning support services • Additional English Language Learner (ELL) staff • Cost of retaining students for another year due to compensatory special education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Social Worker(s) • Additional School Psychologist(s) • Additional School Counselor(s) • Student emotional health programs/services

Instead of listing desired additional support programs for students, one district wrote:

“We need to preserve the District’s existing programs and services.”