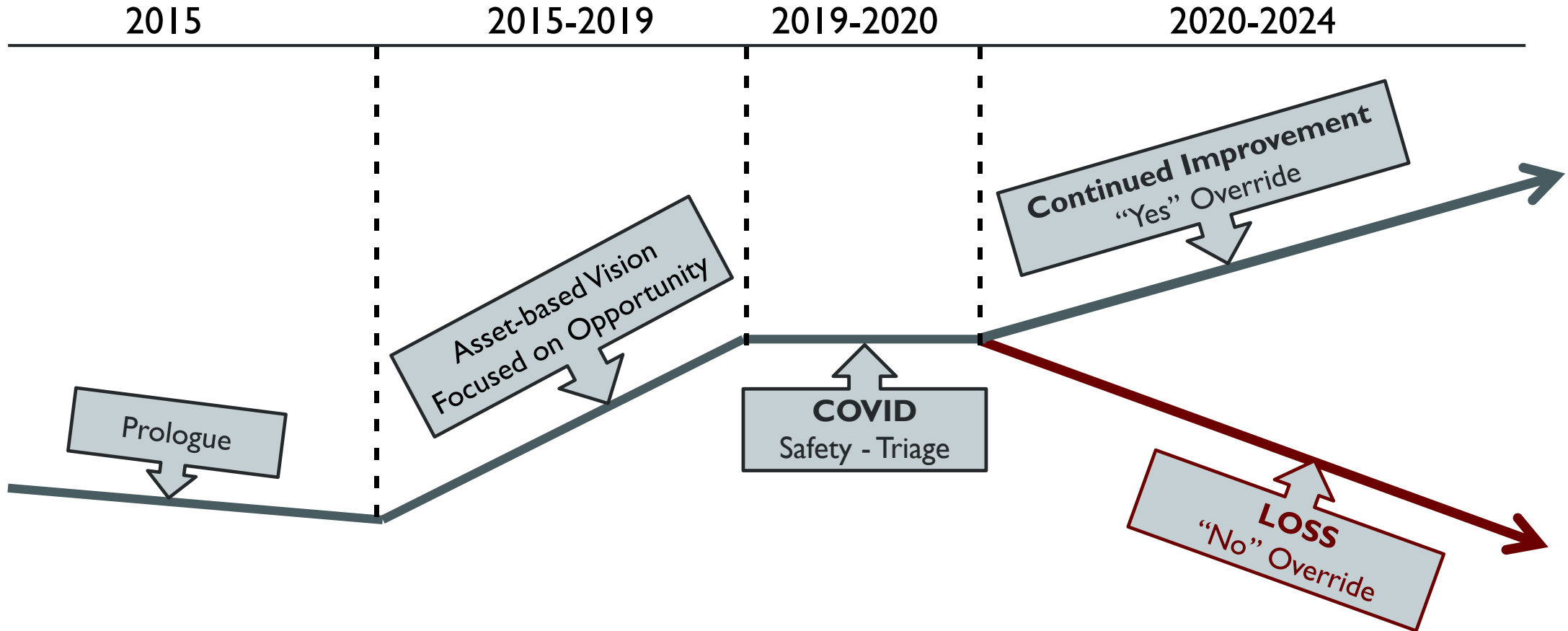


FY22 BUDGET TRAJECTORY

BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 5, 2021

BUDGET TIMELINE



PRE-2015 PROLOGUE

AN ERA OF SHORT-TERM PLANNING...

- High class sizes
- Building space concerns
- Building quality concerns due to deferred maintenance
- Regular reserve fund transfer requests for Special Education
- Annual budget freezes
- “A culture of layoffs”
- Decreasing staffing, despite increasing enrollment
- Short-term/reactive planning in response to short-term funding
- Increasing fees

CHAPTER ONE 2015-2020

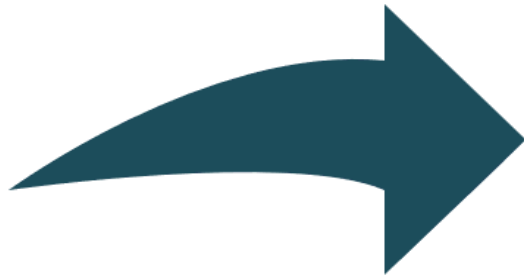
AN ERA OF IMPROVEMENT...



- Successful override in 2015
- Added educators to meet increased enrollment at all levels to decrease K-4 class size
- Began district configuration plan with visioning process
- Developed short-term space plan (modulars at Chenery and Burbank)
- Successful debt exclusion for long-term space needs (7-12 school)
- Expanded course offerings at BHS & CMS: Coding, Robotics, Media Literacy, Wellness, PE, Guidance, Creative Writing
- Decreased “frees” and study halls at BHS & CMS
- Increased support for ELE & Special Education
- Developed a 3-year funding plan for SpEd out-of-district services
- In conjunction with the Town, expanded a 3-year override to benefit 6 budget years

CHAPTER TWO 2020-2021

A PLATEAU: FOCUSING ON SAFETY AND HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC...



- Relied on DESE guidelines to inform decisions
- Used Harvard University's Chan School of Public Health for safety guidelines within hybrid learning models
- Used \$2.7 million of one-time Federal aid to:
 - Support increased staffing in FY21
 - COVID-related expenses such as PPE, air purifiers, technology devices, three Technology Integration Specialists, texts, supplies, materials
 - In an effort to support families, we reduced athletic and transportation fees as well as initiate the process of eliminating the full day Kindergarten fee.
- Our inability to add enrollment FTEs for CMS and BHS in FY21 paused reconfiguration work
- Lack of staffing and funding was revealed in our difficulty responding to needs during the time of COVID

CHAPTER THREE 2021-2024

DIFFICULT CHOICES FOR CHALLENGING FINANCIAL TIMES...

- A “Yes” override will allow us to continue the trajectory of improvement from 2015-2020. Families *can* expect:
 - Continued progress on equity and SEL
 - Continued expansion of course offerings
 - Re-focus on district reconfiguration and visioning work
- A “No” override for the override risks undoing the gains made since 2015. Families *should* expect:
 - Large-scale reduction of educators and staff
 - Higher class size
 - Reduction in course offerings
 - Elimination of programs such as academic course offerings, electives, and enrichment/athletic activities



CHAPTER THREE CONT.

CONTINUING TO GROW CURRENT PROGRAMS AND TEACHING & LEARNING STANDARDS...

The community's decision will either increase or decrease the school district's capacity in the following areas:

1

Address equity, access, and
social-emotional learning (SEL)

2

Incrementally grow into the
new district configuration
(K-3, 4-6, 7-12)

3

Re-focus on district
reconfiguration and
visioning work

CHAPTER THREE CONT.
EQUITY, ACCESS AND
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)



Year One: Addition of (2) Elementary SpEd Chairs, Directory of Diversity & Equity

Year Two: Addition of HS Social Worker, (2) SpEd Chairs (MS, HS)

Year Three: Professional development and training

CHAPTER THREE CONT.

INCREMENTALLY GROW INTO THE NEW DISTRICT CONFIGURATION

2

Year One: Additional (4) FTEs at Chenery to incrementally expand teams from 3 to 4; (2) HS general education positions to decrease class size

Year Two: (3) HS general education positions to decrease class size; (2) Upper Elementary/CMS educators, (2) Elementary Math Specialists

Year Three: (8) FTEs in grades 7 & 8 to complete expansion of 3 teams to 4; BMHS administrator, Upper Elementary curriculum leadership, CMS Administrative Assistant

CHAPTER THREE CONT.

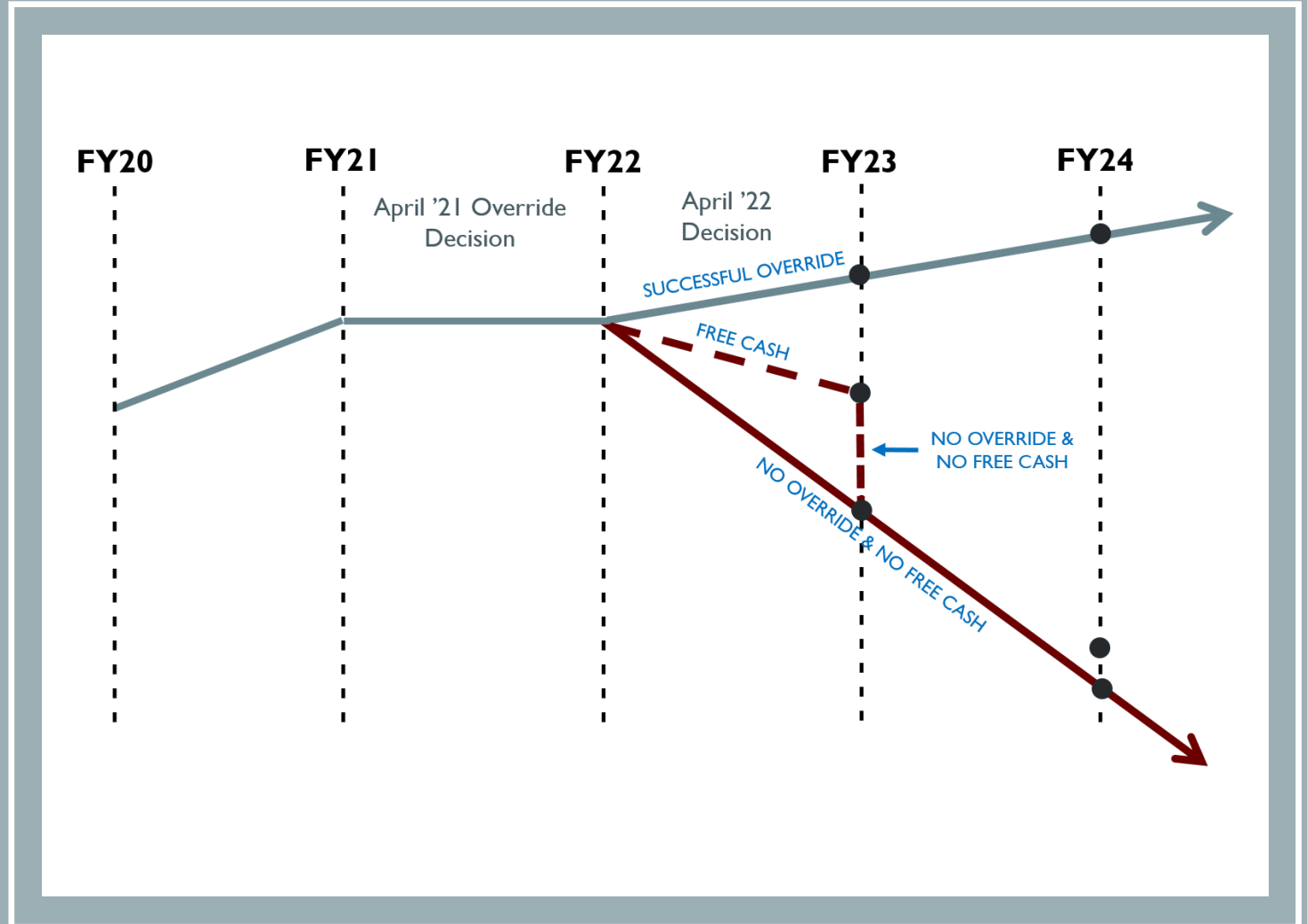
RE-FOCUS ON DISTRICT RECONFIGURATION AND VISIONING WORK

3

- Equity/Access CRT
- Project-based learning with Buck Institute
- Continued work with McLean Hospital
- Move forward with “Community Consult” for vision work
- Enhance the Technology Professional Development for staff and students

FISCAL CLIFF

- A successful override allows us to continue our upward trajectory.
- An unsuccessful override sends us in the wrong direction, requiring an even larger override in the future.
- Even additional “free cash” in FY22, given an unsuccessful override, will result in potential reductions. Use of one-time money does not eliminate the need for a future override; it only leaves us without a safety net in the future.



SUMMARY

“YES” VOTE FAMILIES CAN EXPECT:

Families *can* expect:

District will sustain the current level of staffing, programs, and services

- Director of Diversity & Equity
- Additional FTEs Elem (4)
- Additional FTEs at Middle level (17)
- Additional FTEs at BHS (5)
- Additional FTEs Student Services (5)
- Additional FTEs Leadership (3)

“NO” VOTE (EVEN WITH FREE CASH) FAMILIES *SHOULD* EXPECT:

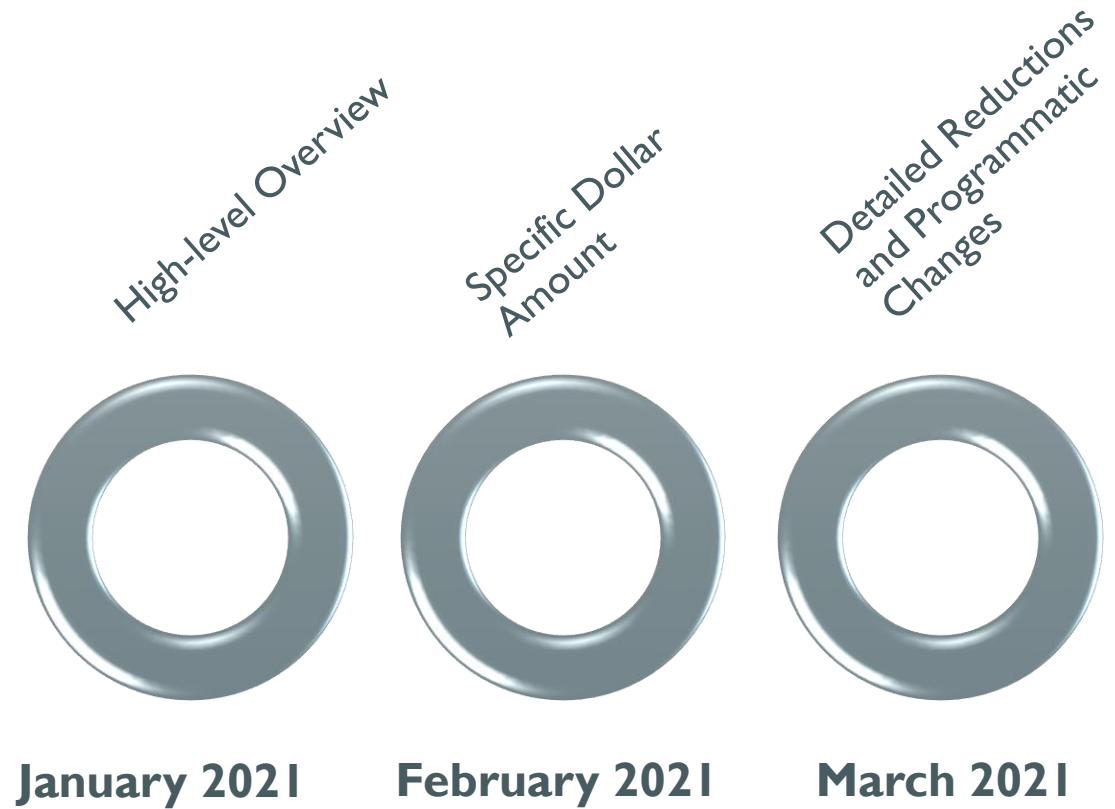
Families *should* expect:

Continuous decline in positions from FY21 into FY23

- Increased class sizes
- Loss of programs
- Reduction in student activities
- Involuntary school reassignment at elementary level

BUDGET MILESTONES

WHAT WILL THE COMMUNITY KNOW
AND WHEN WILL THEY KNOW IT?



EPILOGUE

A CALL TO REAFFIRM OUR EFFORT...

This vote is an opportunity to determine the trajectory of the Belmont Public Schools for the next 5 years. We can either reaffirm the progress made, or risk undoing it.

- We know that one of the strongest predictors of student outcomes is the quality of instruction and interactions between teachers and students.
- We know that we need more capacity (primarily staffing) to ensure positive outcomes for students and to provide them with 21st century skills.
- We need the resources to get us there.

APPENDIX

Belmont's funding is below comparison districts, and well below what is required.

This conclusion is demonstrated consistently across a wide variety of data.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Students in Belmont schools are served by **less funding** per student than in **almost every other district** in the state.
- Students in Belmont schools are **served by fewer teachers** (per 100 students) than in **almost every other district** in the state.
- Belmont schools have been increasing teacher FTEs at a **slightly higher rate** than student enrollment in order to incrementally **decrease class size**.
- Students in Belmont are in **larger classes** than in **most districts** across the state.

COMPARISON DISTRICTS

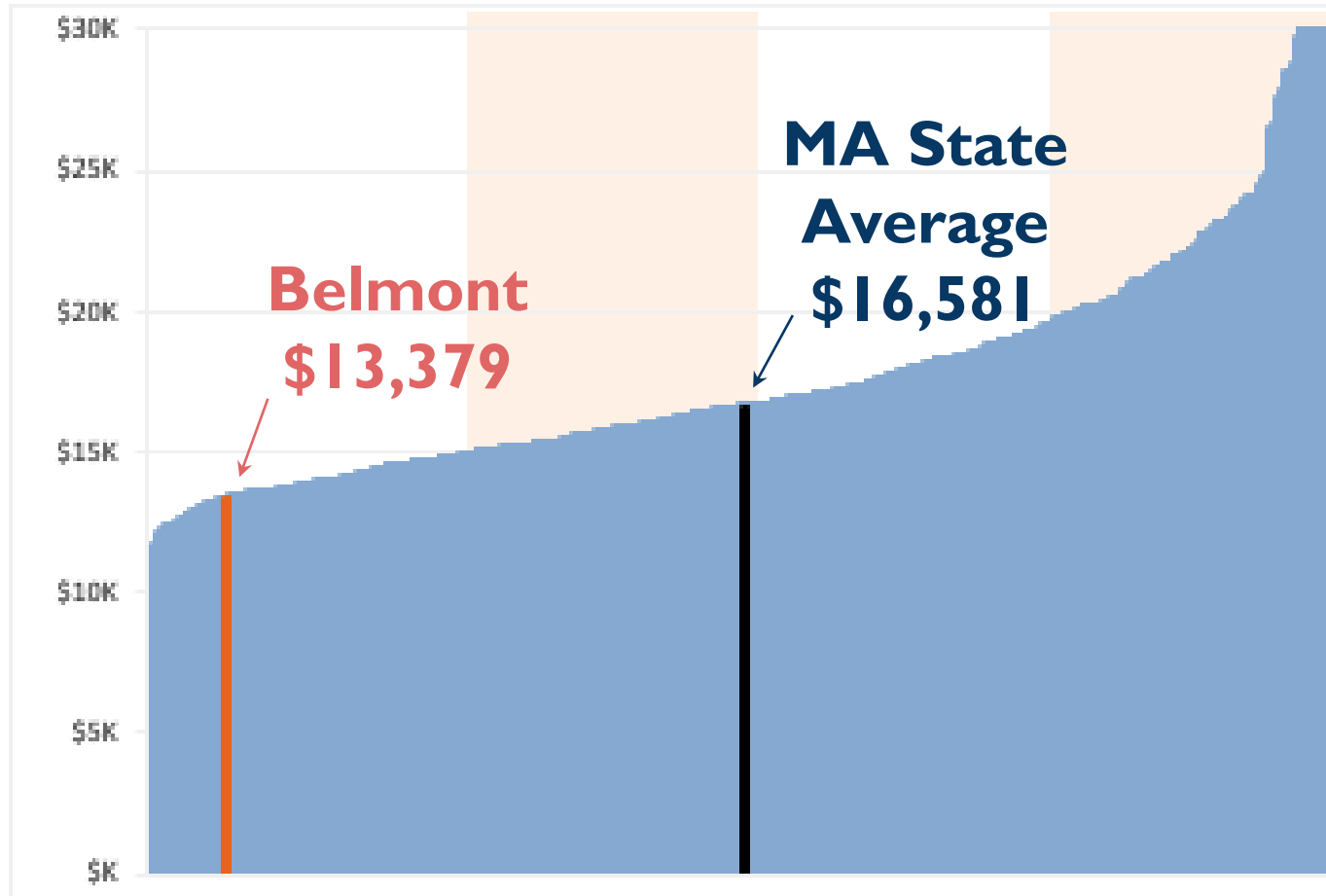
Acton-Boxborough
Arlington
Brookline
Hopkinton
Lexington
Needham
Sharon
Wellesley
Westborough
Winchester

- Selection criteria and considerations:
 - K-12 districts
 - Similar % economically disadvantaged: <15% (Belmont: 7%)
 - Similar enrollment: 2000-8000 students (Belmont: 4700 students)
 - Counties: Middlesex, Norfolk, Worcester
 - Average MCAS achievement (meet/exceed expectations > 70%)
 - Identified as a comparison district by MA DESE RADAR (similar demographics *and/or* similar wealth)
 - Increasing enrollment
 - Community-based comparisons

PER PUPIL SPENDING

WHAT IS BELMONT'S PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE?

2019 Expenditure Per In-district Pupil



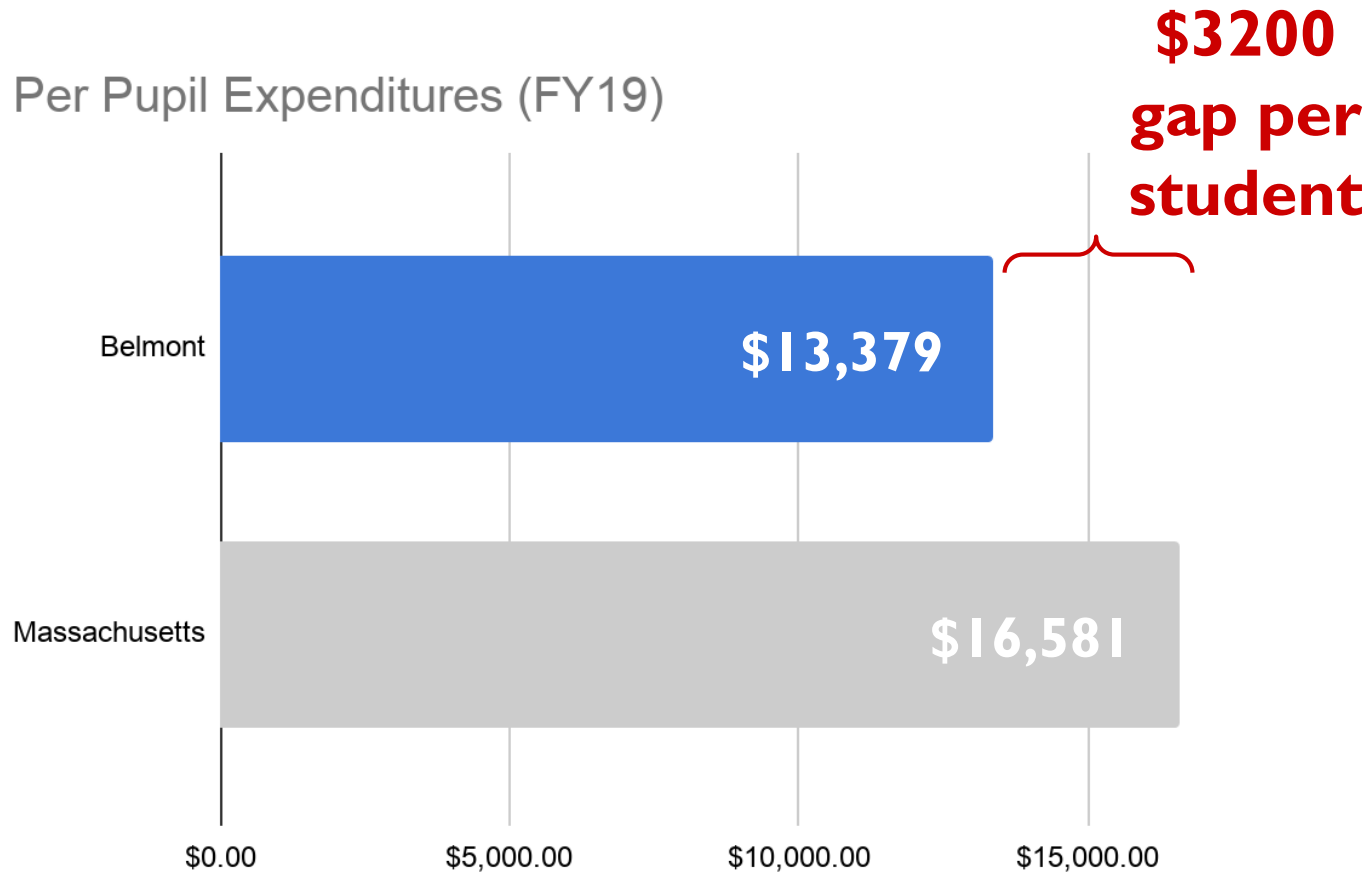
Belmont is in the **bottom 6%** in the state of Massachusetts in per pupil expenditures.

What this means:

Students in Belmont schools are served by **less funding** per student than in **almost every other district** in the state.

WHAT IS THE COST OF BPS' LOWER PPE?

Per Pupil Expenditures (FY19)

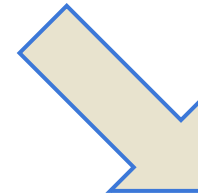
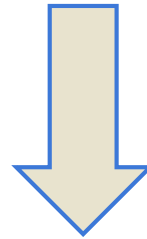
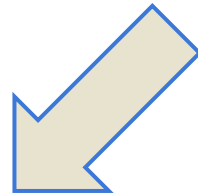


Belmont's per pupil expenditures were **\$3200 per student lower** than the Massachusetts state average.

Across all 4,628 students in Belmont Public Schools in 2019, this represented a **\$14.8M funding shortfall**.

WHAT IS THE COST OF BPS' LOWER PPE?

\$14.8M



150+ teachers*

(↓ class size;

↑ course offerings)

* based on BPS average salary

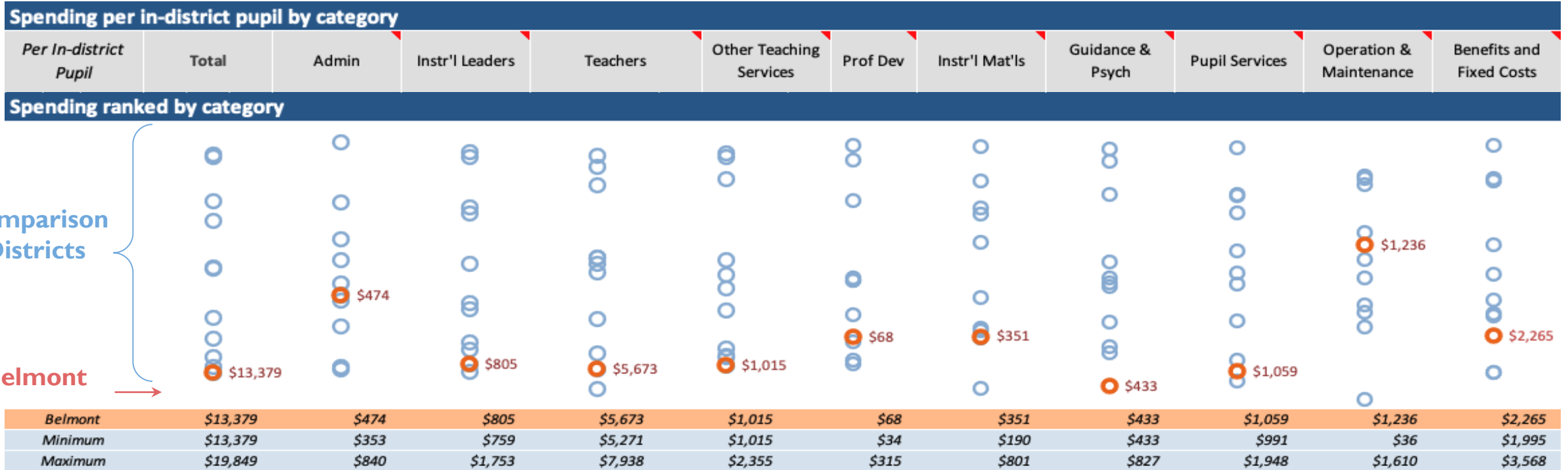


Technology and
instructional
materials



Student support
professionals &
services

HOW IS BELMONT'S PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE USED?



In **almost every per pupil expenditure category** disaggregated by DESE, Belmont **spends less** than most comparison districts.

IS BPS' LOWER PPE BASED ON STUDENT SUBGROUPS?

Economically
Disadvantaged

Students with
Disabilities

English Learners

Student Mobility

Statewide, **student subgroup differences** account for **only 13%** of the **variation** in per pupil expenditures (PPE) across districts.

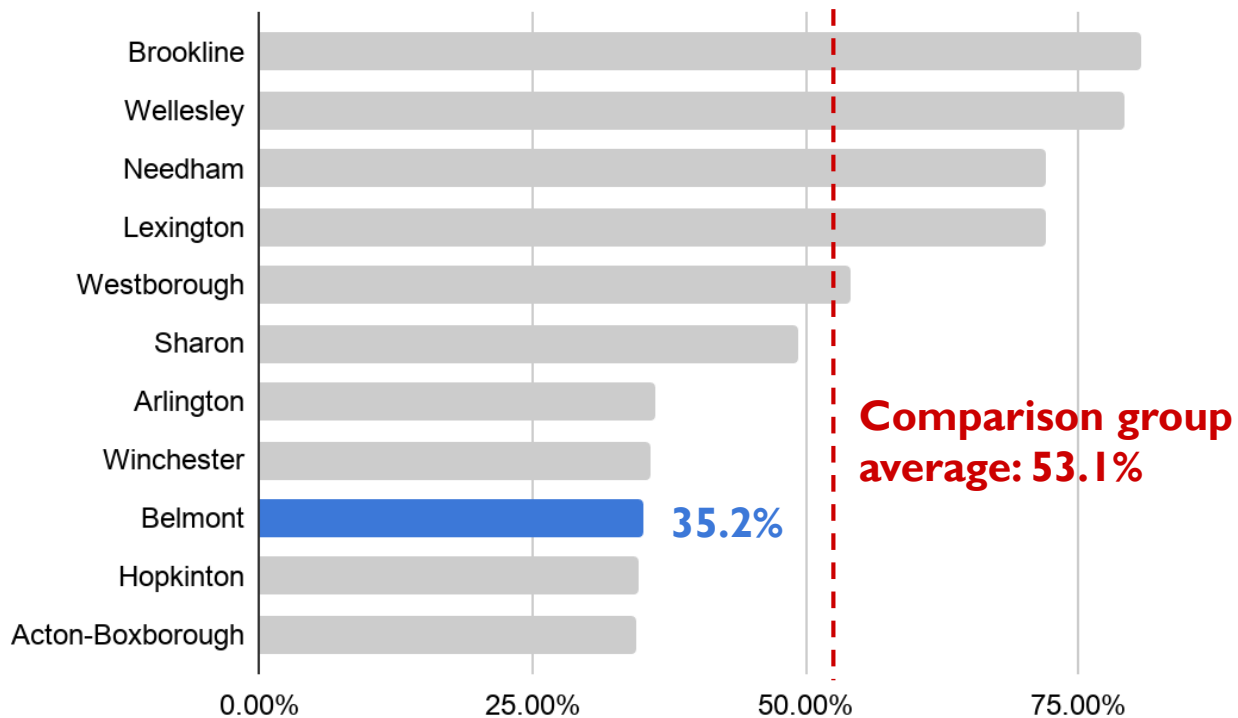
Within comparison districts, **student subgroup differences** account for **only 39%** of the **variation** in PPE across districts.

What this means:

Belmont's **lower PPE** funding is **not due** mainly to its low percentages of certain student **subgroups**.

HOW DOES BELMONT'S ACTUAL SPENDING COMPARE TO ITS REQUIRED SPENDING?

Percent Above Required Net School Spending (FY20)



Like almost every other district, Belmont spends more than is required by the state of Massachusetts. However, Belmont spends **at a lower percentage** above its required amount.

What this means:

On average, **comparison districts fund** their schools **at higher levels** above the state required minimum.

THE STATE AVERAGE PPE WOULD ADD \$10M TO THE BUDGET. WHAT WOULD BELMONT DO WITH THAT?

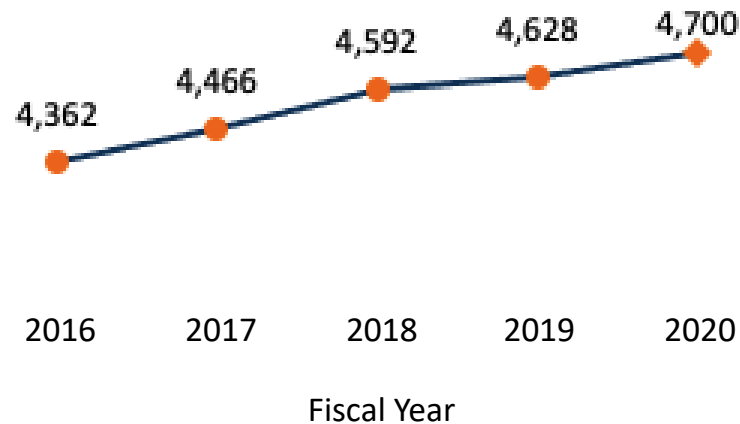
1. Maintain what we already have
2. Fund override request
3. Add items that other districts have that Belmont usually doesn't even consider
 - K-8 World Language
 - K-8 Science, Robotics, Coding, (STEM)
 - K-8 Math coaches
 - K-4 Librarian/Media Center
 - 6-12 Interdisciplinary Course Programs
 - K-12 Project-based Independent Learning Opportunities
 - K-12 Mental Health Support
 - K-12 Technology Integration Specialists
 - K-12 Elimination of music fees
 - Lowering user fees for athletics, clubs, extracurricular activities, and transportation

ENROLLMENT

HOW HAS BELMONT'S ENROLLMENT BEEN CHANGING?

2016 - 2020

All students enrollment



Change

District

+8%

State

-0%

From 2016-2020, Belmont's enrollment **increased by 8% (338 students)** while statewide enrollment remained unchanged.

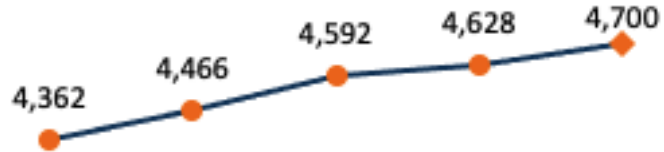
From 2010-2020, Belmont's enrollment **increased by 21% (823 students)**.

What this means:

Belmont schools have a strong history of **increasing enrollment** that is projected to continue over the coming years.

2016 - 2020

All students enrollment



% economically disadvantaged



% students with disabilities



% English learners



Change

District

+8%

State

-0%

HOW HAS BELMONT'S ENROLLMENT BEEN CHANGING IN TERMS OF SUBGROUPS?

What this means:

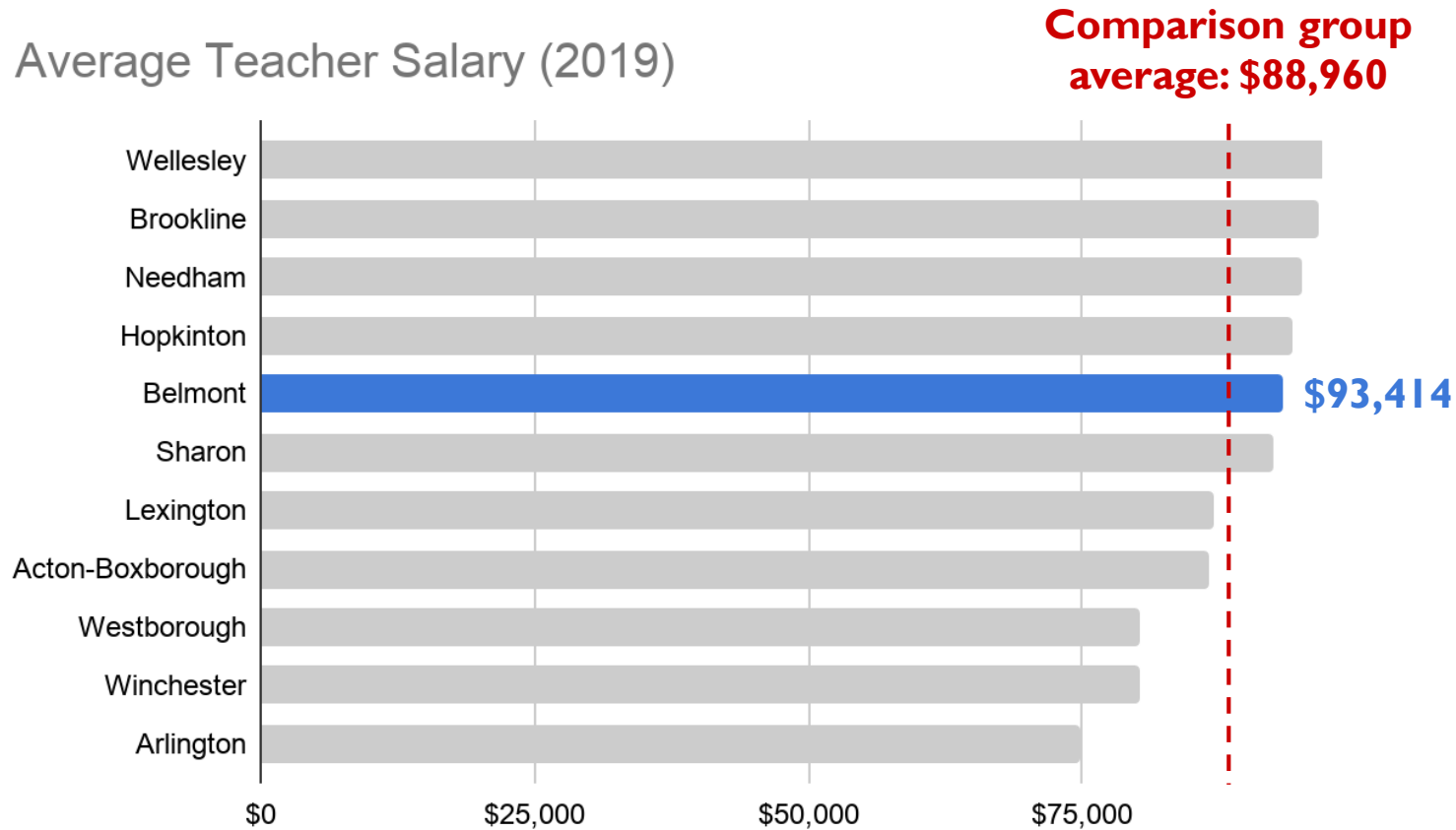
Enrollment of students with disabilities and enrollment of English learners are **increasing faster** than Belmont's overall enrollment.

Enrollment	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	District	State
Econ Disadv	322	325	355	328	335	+4%	-19%
SWD	444	458	486	498	513	+16%	+7%
EL	257	279	336	361	385	+50%	+20%

COMPENSATION

WHAT IS BELMONT'S AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY?

Average Teacher Salary (2019)



Belmont's average teacher salary is **similar** to comparison districts. Belmont's salary schedule is **comparable** to comparison districts.

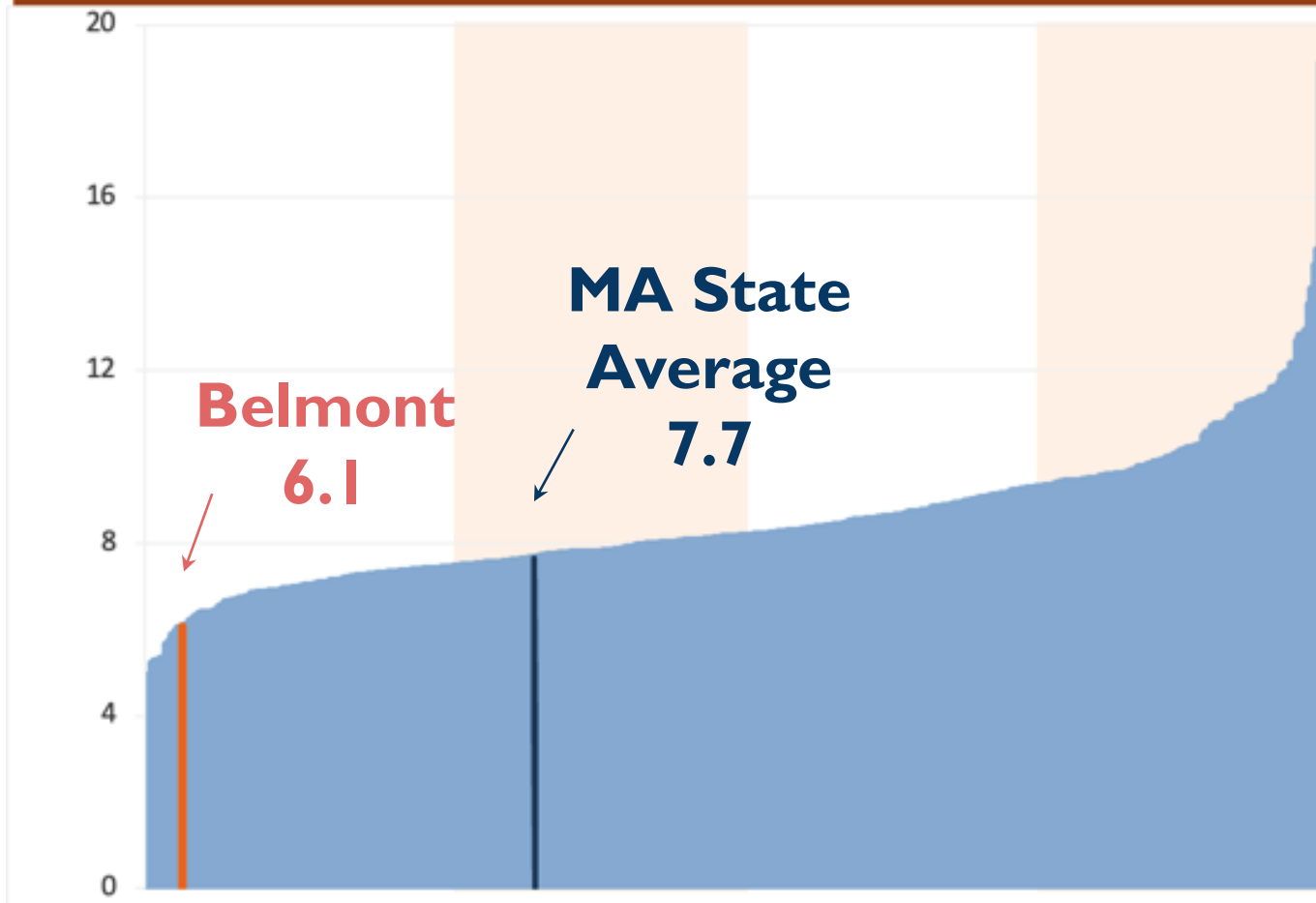
What this means:

Belmont's **average teacher salary** is driven by large percentages of **highly experienced teachers**.

FTE & CLASS SIZE

WHAT IS BELMONT'S TEACHER-TO-STUDENT RATIO?

2020 Teachers per 100 Students



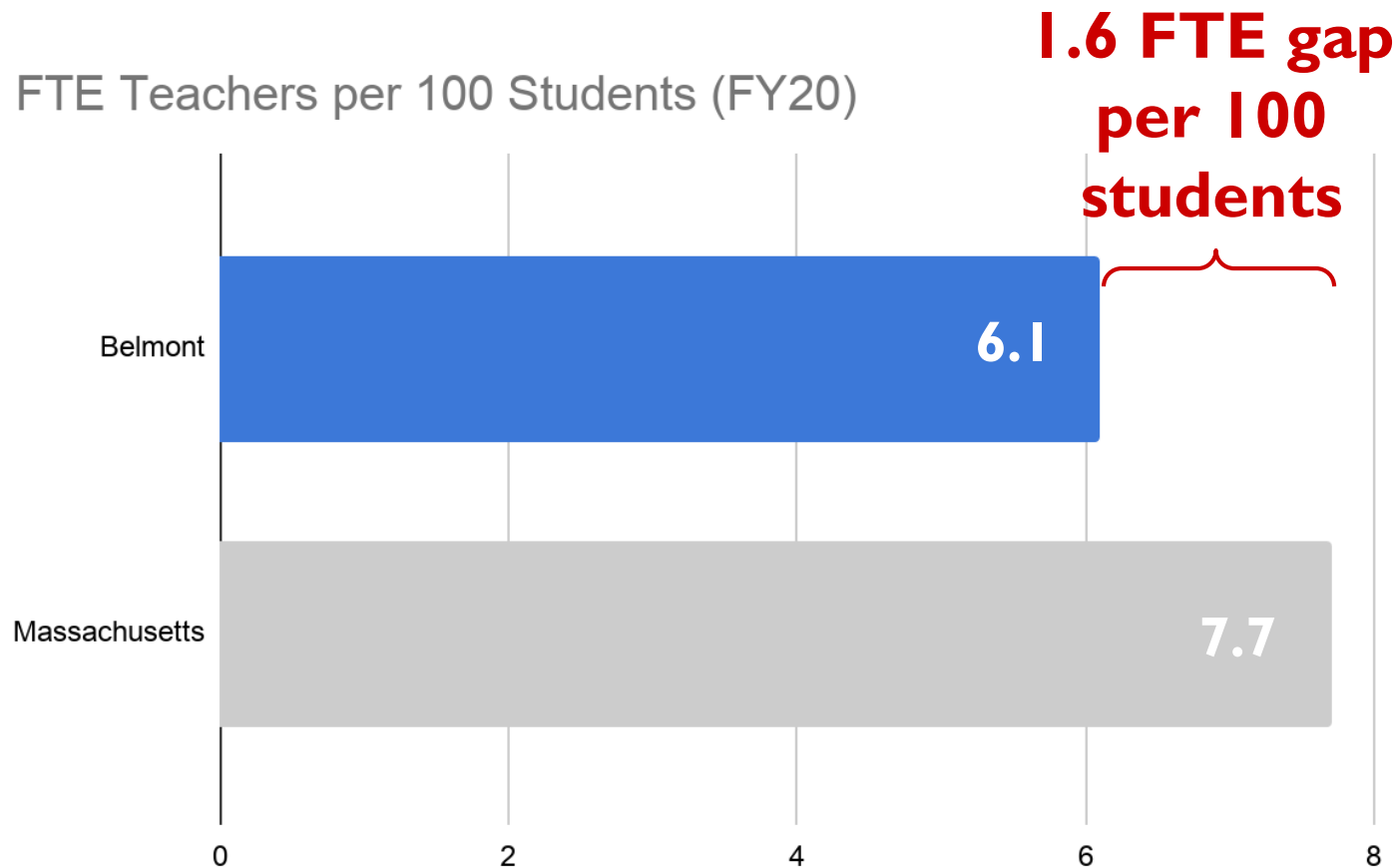
Belmont is in the **bottom 3%** in the state of Massachusetts in FTE teachers per 100 students.

What this means:

Students in Belmont schools are **served by fewer teachers** (per 100 students) than in **almost every other district** in the state.

WHAT IS BELMONT'S TEACHER-TO-STUDENT RATIO?

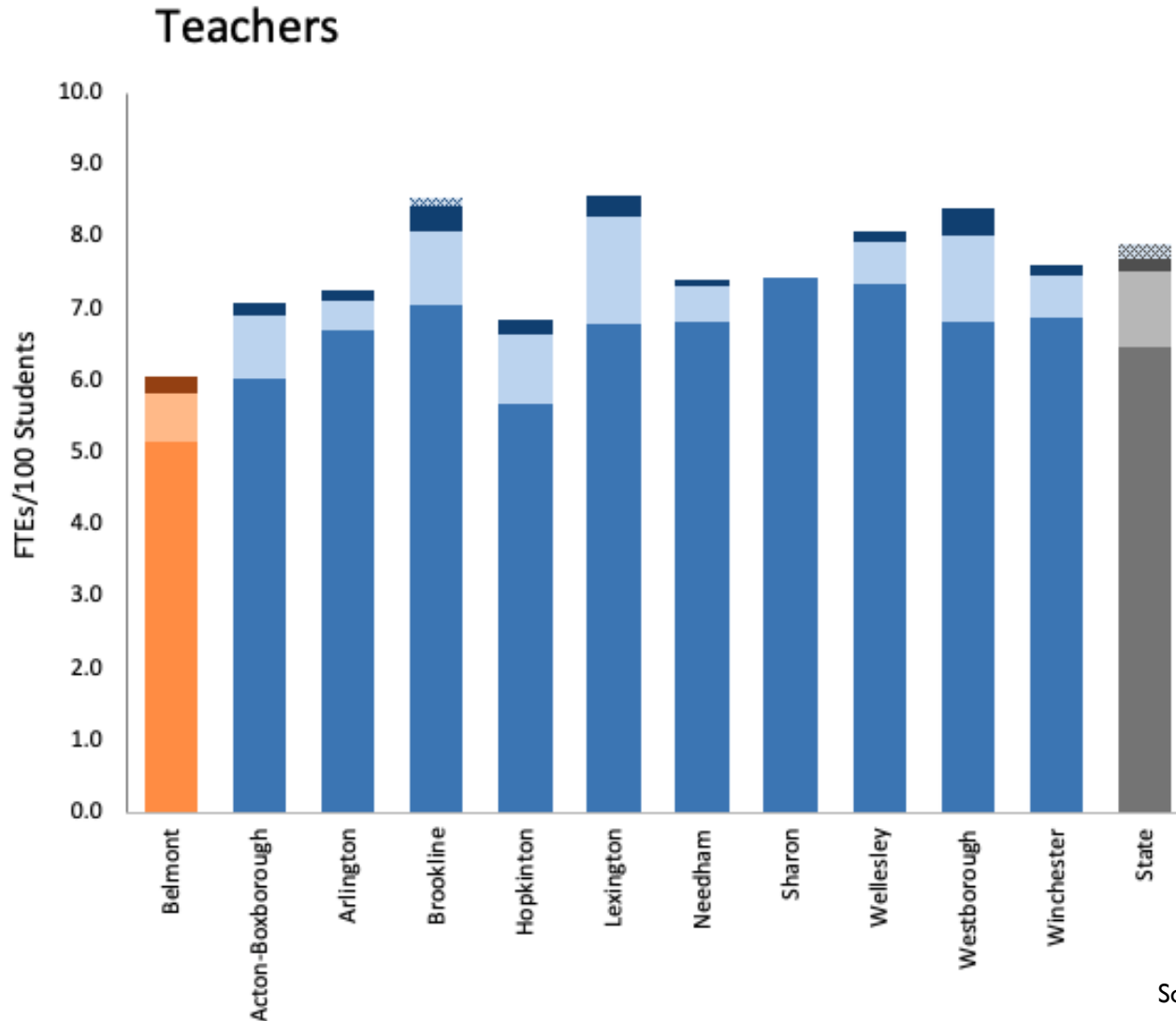
FTE Teachers per 100 Students (FY20)



Belmont's teachers-per-100-students ratio is **1.6 teachers lower** than the Massachusetts state average.

Across all 4,700 students in Belmont Public Schools in 2020, this represents a **staffing shortfall** of **75 teachers**—an additional 5.8 teachers per grade level.

WHAT IS BELMONT'S TEACHER-TO-STUDENT RATIO?



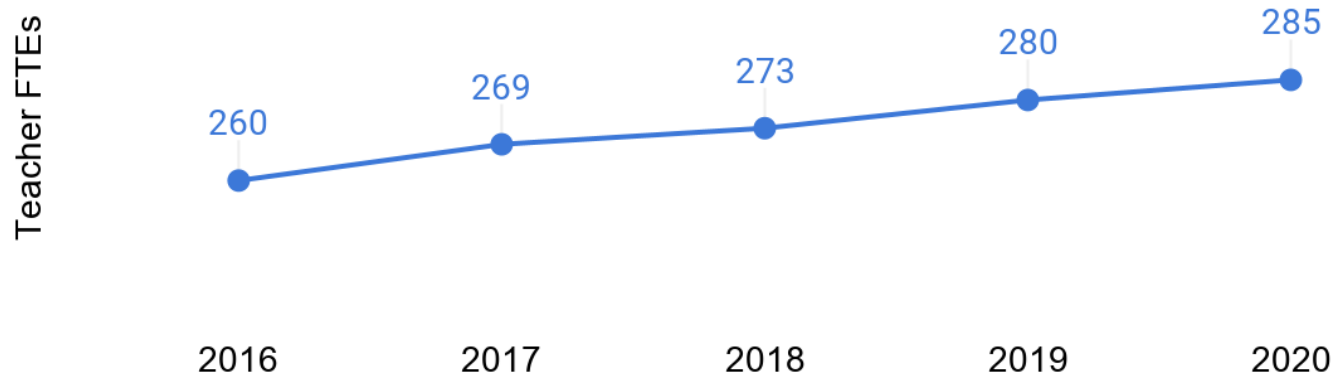
Belmont has notably **fewer FTE teachers** per 100 students than comparison districts.

What this means:

Students in Belmont schools are **served by fewer teachers** (per 100 students) than in comparison districts.

HOW HAVE BELMONT'S FTEs BEEN CHANGING?

Teacher FTEs (FY16-20)



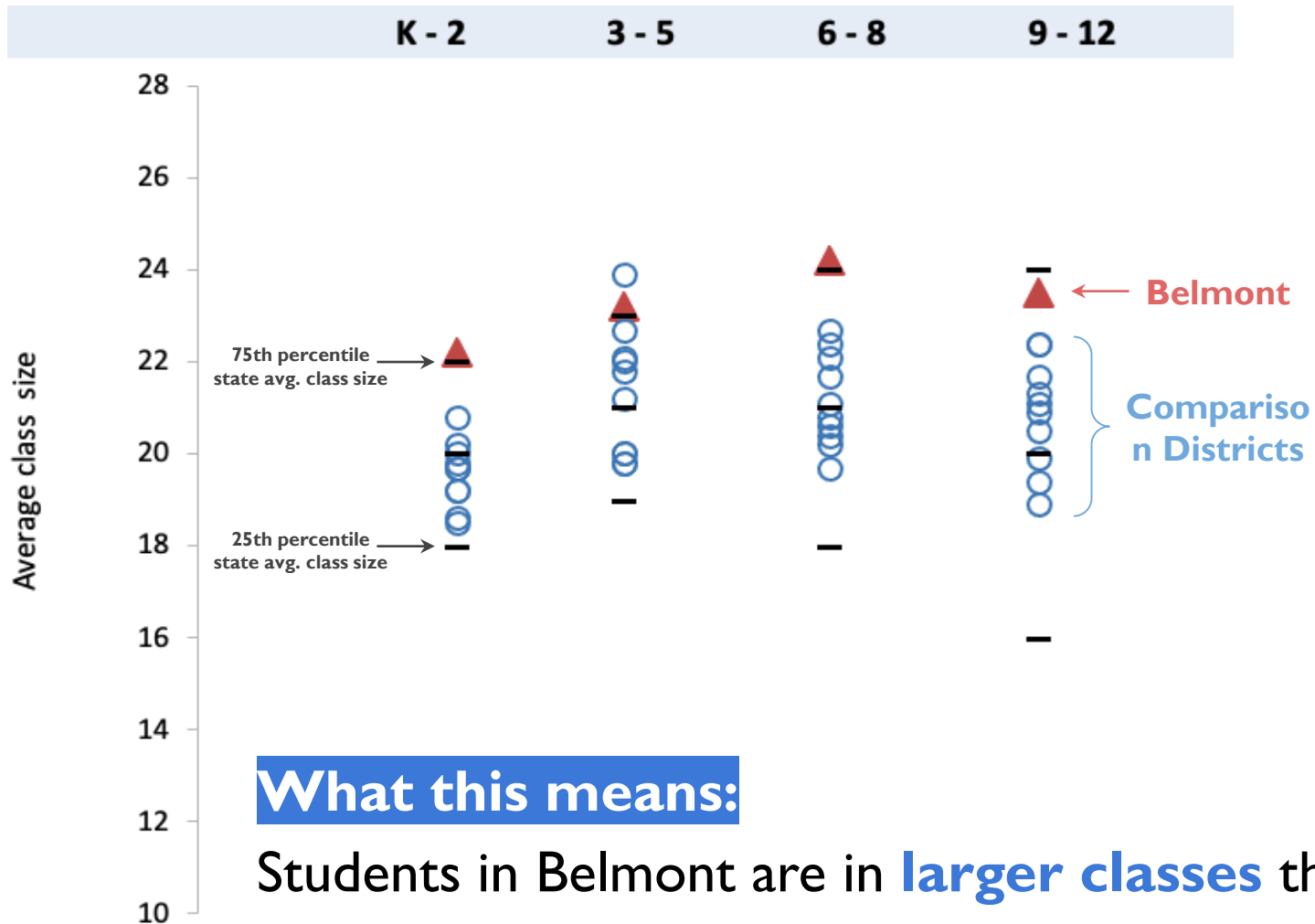
From 2016-2020, Belmont's teacher FTEs **increased by 9.6% (25 FTEs)** while statewide teacher FTEs increased by 11%.

During this same period, Belmont's student enrollment **increased by 8%**.

What this means:

Belmont schools have been increasing teacher FTEs at a **slightly higher rate** than student enrollment in order to incrementally **decrease class size**.

WHAT ARE THE CLASS SIZES IN BELMONT?



What this means:

Students in Belmont are in **larger classes** than in **most districts** across the state.

Belmont has notably **higher class sizes** across K-12 than its comparison districts.

Belmont's class sizes are near or above the **75th percentile in the state**, while comparison districts have class sizes distributed around the 50th percentile.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Students in Belmont schools are served by **less funding** per student than in **almost every other district** in the state.
- Students in Belmont schools are **served by fewer teachers** (per 100 students) than in **almost every other district** in the state.
- Belmont schools have been increasing teacher FTEs at a **slightly higher rate** than student enrollment in order to incrementally **decrease class size**.
- Students in Belmont are in **larger classes** than in **most districts** across the state.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

OUTCOMES

LOOKING AHEAD: OVERRIDE IMPLICATIONS