

SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET REPORT

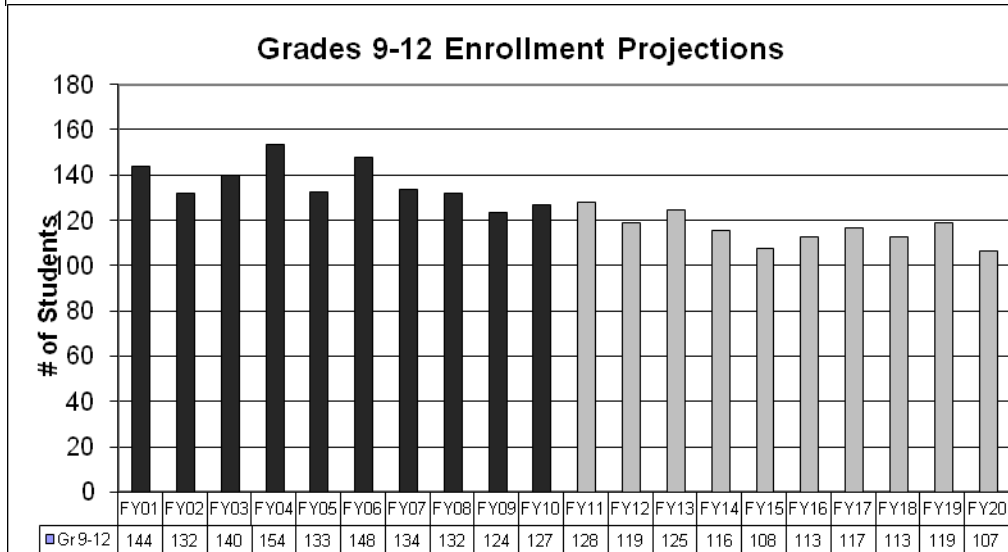
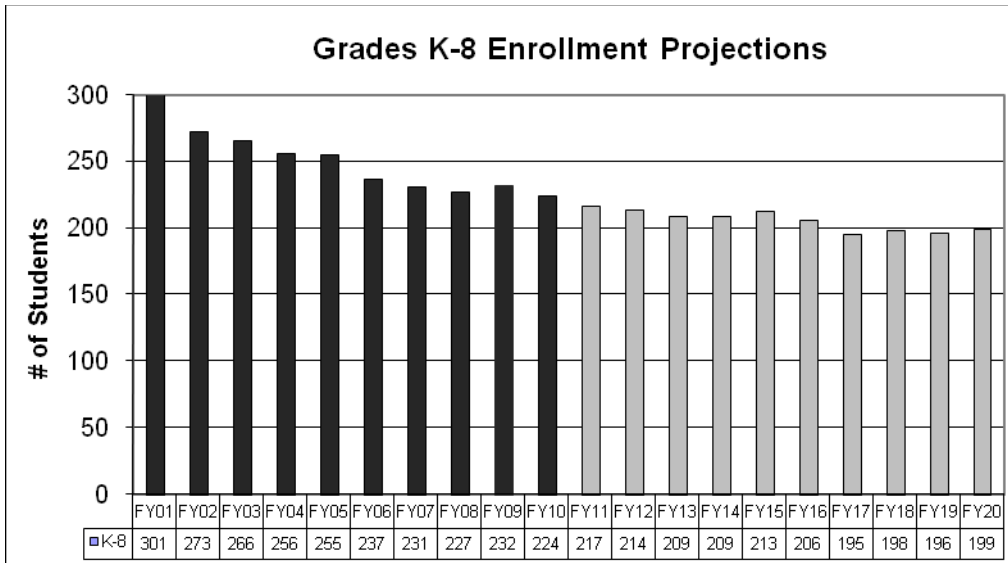
The citizens of Westford continue to support the education of their children in a myriad of ways, including the passage of school budgets. The school board is grateful for the support that is so crucial to the education of the children of our community.

Crafting school budgets is a challenging task and particularly so in these economically difficult times in our state and in our nation. We gave the administration the following guidance to follow as they prepared their first draft of the proposed budget and we have followed the guidance in our decision making process:

- Maintain the high level of educational quality presently found in the school district
- Be sensitive to the burden on tax payers
- Support the essential elements of the School Action Plan by analyzing current practices as well as unfunded requirements while adjusting for enrollment
- Preserve the physical plant

The proposed school budget shows an increase in spending of 1.4%. (According to the New England Economic Project, the Consumer Price Index as of mid November was 2.2%.) To put the budget in further perspective, please review the excellent results Westford students achieve on statewide assessments. (They can be found within the Superintendent's Report of the Annual Report.) These results are being achieved even though Westford's education spending per equalized pupil was \$302/pupil less than the statewide average this year. Finally, this budget makes further reductions in staffing based on declining enrollments.

Enrollment: The school districts in Chittenden County are the beneficiaries of enrollment projections done by a county resident, Bill Smith. His projections have served us well as we project staffing and budget needs into the future. The projection for next year shows the K 8 enrollment declining by seven students. The longer term projection shows population continuing to decline until it levels off at about 200 students in FY17. High school enrollment is projected to increase by one student for FY11.



High School Tuition: 80% of the increase in the proposed budget is attributable to the increase in high school tuitions. The increase is driven by an enrollment increase of one high school student and 0.54FTE tech student and an assumed 2.5% increase in high school tuitions.

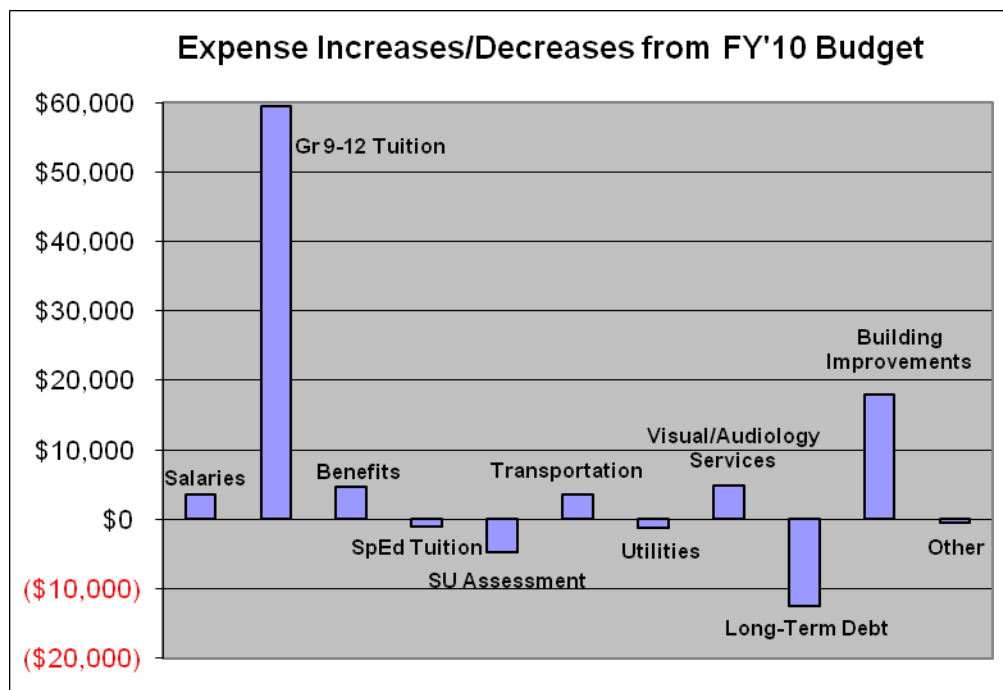
Staffing: The proposed budget reflects a further reduction in staffing at the elementary school. We are budgeting for one less classroom in K 2. Staffing for the grades 5/6 sections will be reduced from three to two classes while staffing for the 3/4 sections will increase from two to three based on projected enrollments. The physical education position will be reduced from full time to a 0.78FTE position. This change has two elements. One is the need to teach one less classroom of students taking physical education (0.07FTE). The other is a change in how the health curriculum is delivered (0.15FTE). The above staffing changes decreased the budget by \$92,558. The budget reflects the addition of an exploratory world language program for the K 4 students. This addition supports the recommendation of the study committee authorized by the school board to examine this issue. Students in grades K 4 will receive instruction in French one day per week. Learning about other languages and cultures is more and more critical in our global economy. Research shows that the critical period for learning languages comes at an early age, that skills transfer from one language to another, that students learning languages at an

early age show greater academic achievement in other areas of study and have a better understanding of their own language. The cost of this program will be \$5,777. The net result of these staffing changes is a decrease in the budget of \$86,781. The budget will also reflect a change in the preschool area from what was budgeted last year. This is, however, no change from how the program is being delivered this year. Since we received the \$30,000 grant to run this program, there was no reduction in the teacher's time this year and no half time aide was hired for this program.

Salaries and Benefits: We are in the process of negotiating a teacher's contract for the present school year. The salary levels reflected in this budget are projections based on where we think we might settle for the FY11 school year. The increase in the benefits area is due to a 3% increase in the cost of health insurance.

Preserving the Physical Plant: The long term debt on the roof was paid off in FY07, making available about \$20,000 per year for major projects or requirements. No major projects were funded in the FY10 budget. In addition, the long term debt on our bond for the addition to the school drops by \$12,500 in FY11. This budget proposal funds two major maintenance projects. One is to repair the existing sidewalk and to extend the sidewalk around the driveway end of the school. The only issue the school is cited for during safety audits is the hazard created by having school bus drop off occurring in the same place where cars are travelling to drop off students. By paving the end of the building, we believe bus drop off can occur at the gravel parking lot and parents driving students to school can drop them off in the oval in front of the school. The cost of this project is \$15,000. We also have two culverts that are collapsing and a catch basin that needs to be repaired to properly drain water. There is \$8,000 in the budget to accomplish these repairs.

Graphical Illustration of Budget Increases and Decreases: The following graph illustrates the increases and decreases in spending in the proposed budget.



Projected Tax Impact: Several factors will affect the proposed budget's affect on projected tax rates. Our non property tax revenues are projected to decline by \$15,794. The number of "equalized pupils" is declining by five. Finally, the base education amount, which historically has increased every year, is at the same level as last year. The following chart shows the calculation to reach the "district spending adjustment," the amount that directly affects tax rates.

Description	FY10	FY11	Incr/(Decr)	
Total Expense Budget	\$5,194,034	\$5,268,238	\$74,204	1.43%
- Non-Property Tax Revenue	\$831,774	\$815,980	(\$15,794)	-1.90%
= Education Spending	\$4,362,260	\$4,452,258	\$89,998	2.06%
÷ Equalized Pupil Count	371.82	366.82	(5.00)	-1.34%
= Education Spending per Pupil	\$11,732	\$12,137	\$405	3.45%
÷ Base Education Amount	\$8,544	\$8,544	\$0	0.00%
= District Spending Adjustment	137.315%	142.058%	4.743%	3.45%

Projected rates for those who pay based on income: For those tax payers who pay education taxes for their house and two acres based on their household incomes (generally those with household incomes less than \$90,000) the proposed budget is expected to increase their taxes by \$45 per \$50,000 of income. The following charts show the calculation and the historical rates.

FY10 % of Income		2.47%
FY11 Base Rate	1.80%	
× District Spending Adj	1.420581	
= FY11 % of Income		2.56%
Change		0.09%
Impact: \$50,000 Income		\$45.00

The historical rate chart shows that the household income rate is lower than it was in FY06.

Historical Rates	FY'06	FY'07	FY'08	FY'09	FY'10	FY'11
Income Sensitivity	2.61%	2.64%	2.62%	2.47%	2.47%	2.56%

Equalized tax rate for those who pay based on property: Two factors are affecting the equalized homestead tax rate for those who pay education taxes based on the value of their property. One is, of course, the budget. The other is a statewide increase of 2.2 cents in the base rate. The following chart shows the calculation prior to the CLA adjustment.

FY10 Rate		\$1.181
FY11 Base Rate	\$0.882	
× District Spending Adj	1.420581	
= FY11 Equalized Rate		\$1.253
\$ Change		\$0.072
% Change		6.09%

CLA adjustment: Last year our properties were reappraised. The resulting common level of appraisal was 104.72%. For FY11, Westford’s common level is 100.95%. This drop in CLA, means the state views our properties as more valuable than last year and will adjust our tax rates accordingly. The following chart shows the projected tax rates for those who pay based on property will increase by \$113 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

FY10 Rate		\$1.128
FY11 Equalized Rate	\$1.253	
÷ CLA	100.95%	
= FY11 Actual Rate		\$1.241
\$ Change		\$0.113
% Change		10.02%
Impact per \$100,000		\$113.00

The tax impacts of the proposed budget certainly give the school board pause. The fact that our local spending per equalized pupil is \$302 less than the statewide average means our tax rates to support schools are less than those in well over half the school districts in the state. The fact that those whose incomes have changed dramatically during the national recession can pay taxes based on their income also factored into our thinking. Finally, the fact that 80% of the increase in the budget is in an area over which we have no control, high school tuition, is an important factor we considered. We hope you will support the proposed school budget to maintain the high quality of education that Westford students receive and we truly appreciate your past support.

Martha Heath

Nate Lavallee

Marilyn McConnell

Andre Roy

Jennifer Townsend

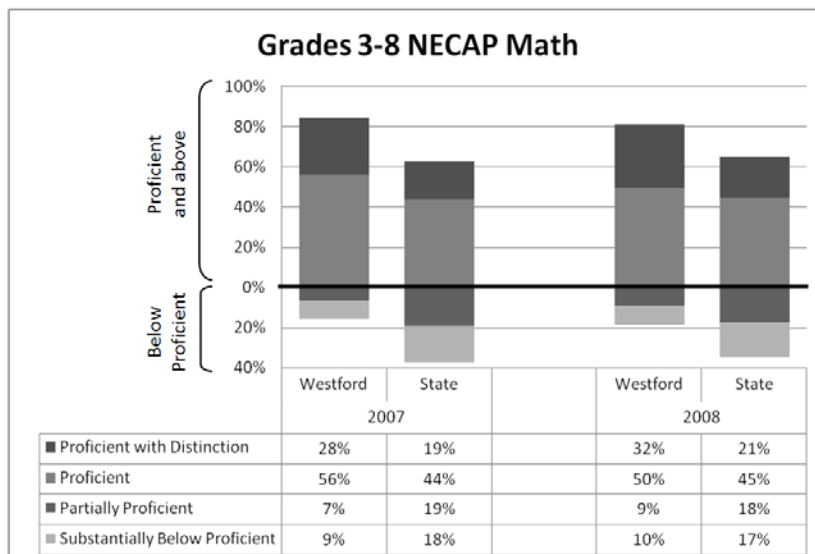
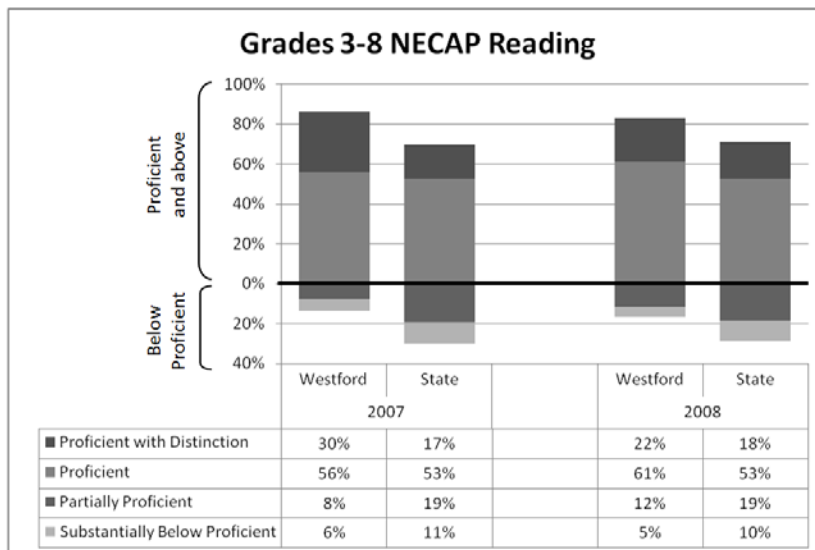
SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

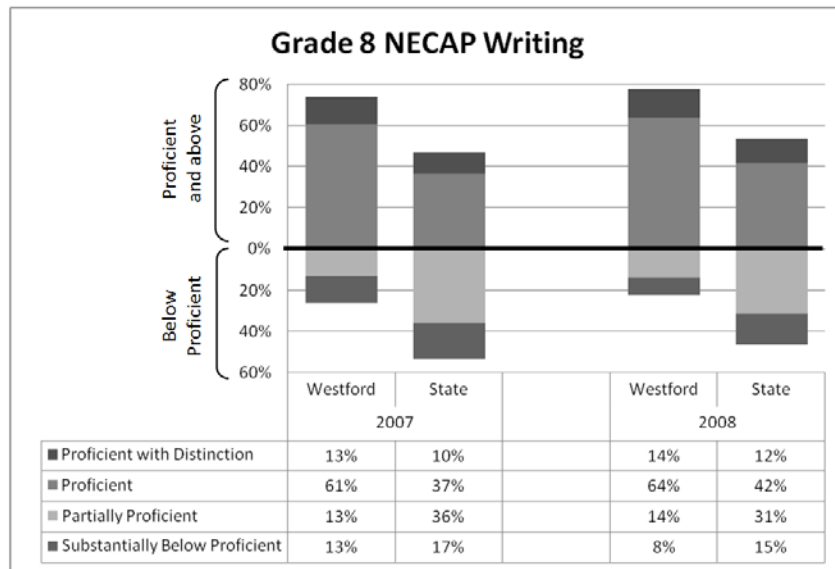
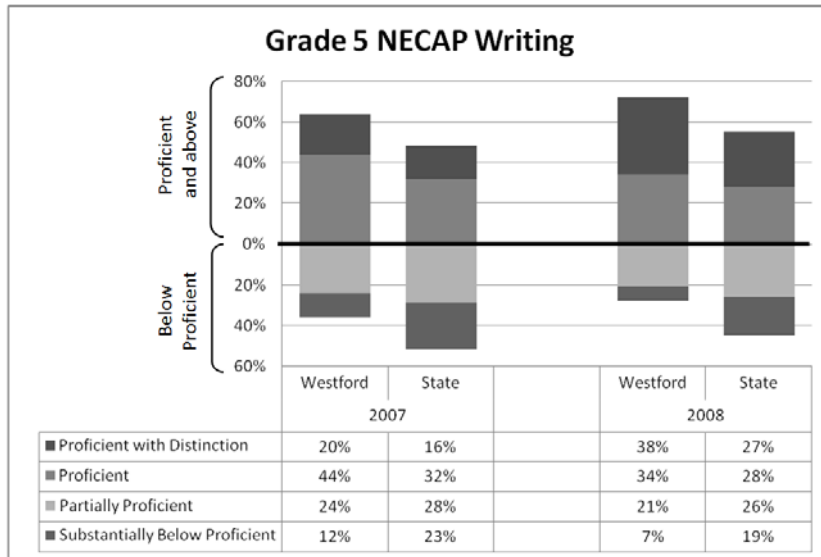
This annual report provides information regarding student assessment results and notifies the community of our compliance with federal “Highly Qualified Teacher” status reporting and required school report data.

Student Assessment

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) requires each state to assess students every year in each of grades 3-8, and one grade at high school. The Vermont Department of Education’s state testing program is designed to measure students’ proficiency on reading, math, and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). The NECAP, a series of custom-designed tests, was developed in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Education, the New Hampshire Department of Education, and the Vermont Department of Education.

In October 2008, students in grades 3 through 8 were tested in reading and mathematics using the state testing program. Additionally, students in grades 5 and 8 were tested in writing. The results of these tests appear in the graphs below. The October, 2009 results are not available for this report.

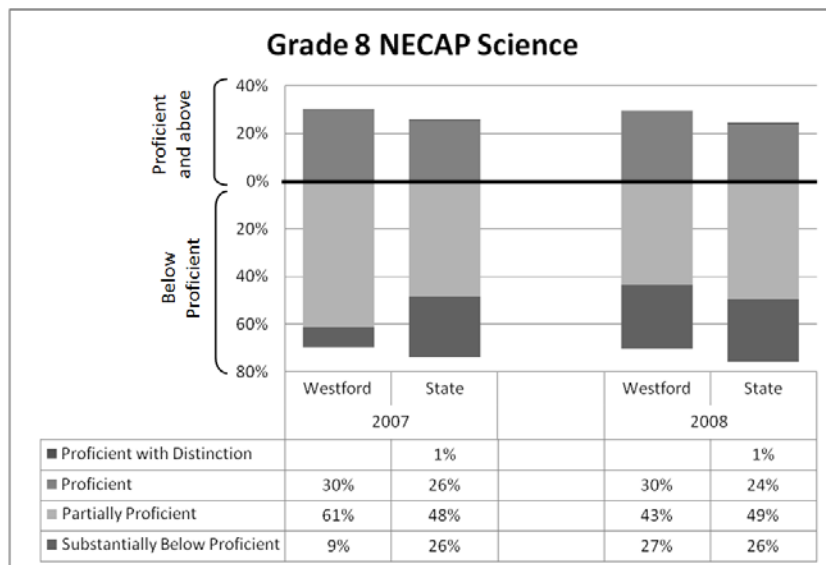
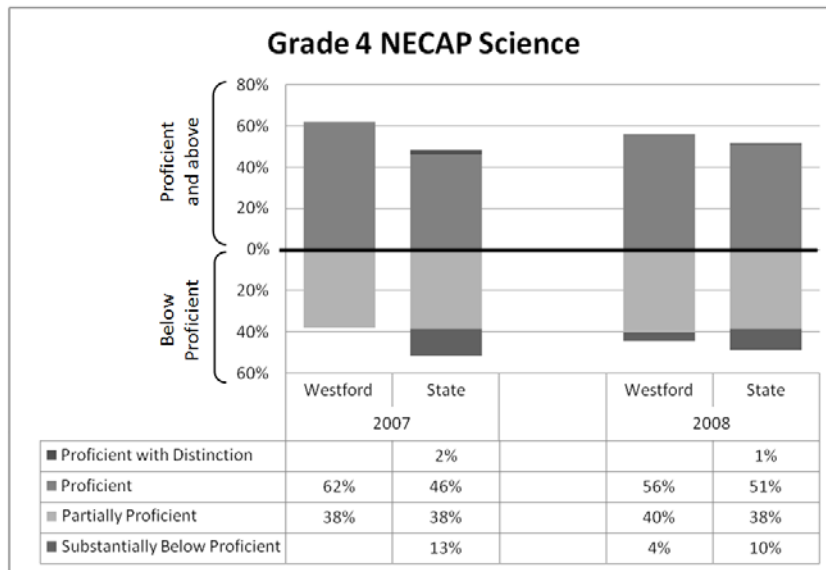




In reviewing Westford’s achievement results, it is important to note that Vermont no longer uses the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) as its measure of early reading achievement. Although the DRA had been administered to all students in May of 2nd grade, the reading NECAP administered to students in October of grade 3 replaces this measurement of grade 2 reading performance. The October grade 3 NECAP reading assessment measures proficiency in Grade 2 reading expectations.

In the area of reading, 83 percent of students in Grades 3-8 scored within the “proficient” and the “proficient with distinction range.” In math, 81 percent of students in grades 3-8 scored within these ranges. In Writing, 72 percent of fifth grade students and 78 percent eighth grade students scored proficient or above. These results are commendable, and indicate improvement in the area of writing.

For the second year, fourth and eighth graders took the Science NECAP in May. This test, given in grades 4, 8, and 11, measures student proficiency in 4 areas: inquiry, physical science, earth and space science, and life Science. In grade 4, 56 percent of students scored within the “proficient” and the “proficient with distinction range.” In grade 8, 30 percent of students scored within that same achievement range. Westford Elementary School is taking actions to improve student performance in science. The results appear in the graph below.



These results are shown to measure each schools Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) towards meeting annual goals of proficiency. Essentially, AYP is the amount of yearly progress students in each school must demonstrate if the school is to be on target to have all students meet standards (an index score of 500) by the year 2014. It is important to note that the assessment results in the content areas of Reading, Writing, and Math are included in measuring AYP.

The State Summary of 2009 Accountability Decisions determined Westford made AYP in all of the required areas:

- All reading and math requirements
- The academic indicators
- All participation requirements

Presently, all Westford students have a choice regarding which high school to attend throughout the state. A majority of those students do end up attending Essex High School (EHS). In fact, we are projecting 75.8 percent of Westford high school students will attend EHS next school year (2010-2011). Tuition information for area high schools is available in the Westford Town Annual Report, available online at westfordvt.us/townReports.php. Additionally, the Vermont Department of Education's web-site provides great resources to learn more about assessment data and other school

reports. Visit education.vermont.gov/new/html/maindata.html to learn about schools throughout the state.

One of the main indicators of success at EHS is the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) results used by students for admission to college. You will note that these EHS-wide SAT sub-scores are substantially higher than either state or national averages.

	EHS Verbal	EHS Math	VT Verbal	VT Math	National Verbal	National Math
1999-2000	540	549	513	508	505	514
2000-2001	536	539	511	506	506	514
2001-2002	540	547	512	510	504	516
2002-2003	540	546	515	512	507	519
2003-2004	544	540	516	512	508	518
2004-2005	545	550	521	517	508	520
2005-2006	544	551	513	519	503	518
2006-2007	549	556	516	518	502	515
2007-2008	550	557	519	523	502	515
2008-2009	538	539	518	518	501	515

As community members, you may be interested in viewing more information about student performance and our community’s education profile in comparison to other Vermont communities. This information can be found on the Vermont Department of Education’s website at education.vermont.gov.

It continues to be a source of pride to report on the progress of Westford students. The performance of our Pre-K-12/Tech students continues to affirm what an asset our young people are to this community and its future. These results reflect the work of persevering students, a highly qualified and committed staff, consistent parental involvement, a dedicated school board, and unwavering community support. During difficult and uncertain economic times, we are challenged with striking the balance between advancing the 21st Century educational needs of our children and the sensitivity to the burden on the tax payers. Community dialogue is essential as we investigate current practices and shift resources to meet 21st Century educational needs. I welcome the opportunity to engage as a community on Westford’s educational interests in our children.

On behalf of Superintendent Michael Deweese, Principal David Wells, and my colleagues at Chittenden Central Supervisory Union, it is a genuine pleasure to provide leadership and connections to the Westford Town School District.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith DeNova
Associate Superintendent
January 19, 2010

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Below, please find two federal and state required notifications:

Federal “Highly Qualified Teacher” Status

Under the federal NCLBA Act, all public school teachers are required to meet the “Highly Qualified Teachers” (HQT) criteria, as educators must be properly licensed and endorsed. As you review the

following data, please keep in mind teachers may not be classified as HQT if they are teaching under a temporary emergency license or teaching a grade level/subject area outside the parameters of the current license. If a class is being taught by an educator not classified as HQT, administration is responsible for ensuring quality instruction. Westford School continues to maintain a high standard in employing a highly qualified staff committed to continuous improvement for all students.

STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Title I (1111)(h) of NCLB requires LEAs to publicly report the percentage of core academic classes* NOT taught by highly qualified teachers, the percentage of teachers teaching on emergency credentials by LEA and school, and the professional qualifications of their teachers. The following is the percentage of core academic classes NOT taught by highly qualified teachers and the percentage of teachers teaching on emergency credentials for your LEA as a whole and for all schools in your LEA for the 2008-2009 school year. LEAs are responsible for determining a measure for the professional qualifications of their teachers.

LEA	SCHOOL NAME	Classes taught by NOT HQ teacher/total classes	Percentage of core academic classes NOT taught by highly qualified teachers
Westford		0 / 36	0.00%
	Westford Elementary School	0 / 36	0.00%

LEA	SCHOOL NAME	# of Emergency credentialed teachers/total teachers	Percentage of teachers teaching with emergency credentials
Westford		0 / 22	0.00%
	Westford Elementary School	0 / 22	0.00%

2009-10 Professional Qualifications of Teachers

Professional Qualifications of Teachers	Westford
Percentage who hold a master's degree or higher	76%
Percentage who hold a level II Professional Educator License in the area taught	76%
Percentage who hold additional licensing endorsements	40%
Average in-district teaching experience	13.4

*Core academic subjects are: English language arts (including ESL), math, science, social studies, reading, foreign languages, art, music, and the generalist endorsement areas of elementary education and early childhood education (grades K-3 only). In addition, alternative program and special education primary instruction assignments in math, science, social studies and/or ELA/reading are also considered "core" areas.

Required School Report Data

The Legislature has required the Department of Education to provide this information per the following statute:

"16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(2) The school, at least annually, reports student performance results to community members in a format selected by the school board...The school report shall include: data provided by the commissioner which enable a comparison with other schools, or school districts if school level data are not available, for cost-effectiveness. The commissioner shall establish which data are to be included pursuant to this subdivision and, notwithstanding that the other elements of the report are to be presented in a format selected by the school board, shall develop a common format to be used by each school in presenting the data to community members. The commissioner shall provide the most recent data available to each school no later than October 1 of each year. Data to be

presented may include student-to-teacher ratio, administrator-to-student ratio, administrator-to-teacher ratio, and cost per pupil.”

The following comparative data are supplied for your reference:

Comparative Data for Cost-Effectiveness 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(2)(K)

School: Westford Elementary School
S.U.: Chittenden Central S.U.

A list of schools and school districts in each cohort may be found on the DOE website under "School Data and Reports":
<http://www.state.vt.us/educ/>

FY2009 School Level Data

Cohort Description: K - 8, enrollment ≥ 200
(27 schools in cohort)

Cohort Rank by Enrollment (1 is largest)
20 out of 27

School level data		Grades Offered	Enrollment	Total Teachers	Total Administrators	Stu / Tchr Ratio	Stu / Admin Ratio	Tchr / Admin Ratio
Smaller ->	Grand Isle Elementary School	K - 8	219	20.47	1.00	10.70	219.00	20.47
	Fairfield Center School	K - 8	239	21.50	1.00	11.12	239.00	21.50
	Sheldon Elementary School	K - 8	244	22.80	1.00	10.70	244.00	22.80
	Westford Elementary School	PK - 8	248	18.30	1.00	13.55	248.00	18.30
-> Larger	Barstow Memorial School	PK - 8	307	22.47	1.60	13.66	191.88	14.04
	Flood Brook UESD #20	PK - 8	317	27.10	2.00	11.70	158.50	13.55
	Hartland Elementary School	K - 8	323	32.00	1.00	10.09	323.00	32.00
Averaged SCHOOL cohort data			473.48	42.42	2.14	11.16	220.79	19.78

School District: Westford
LEA ID: T232

Special education expenditures vary substantially from district to district and year to year. Therefore, they have been excluded from these figures.

The portion of current expenditures made by supervisory unions on behalf of districts varies greatly. This year's figures include district assessments to SUs. Doing so makes districts more comparable to each other. The consequence is that THESE FIGURES ARE ONLY COMPARABLE TO FIGURES USED IN THE SIMILAR FILE FOR FY2010.

FY2008 School District Data

Cohort Description: K - 8 school district, FY2008 FTE ≥ 200
(30 school districts in cohort)

Grades offered in School District | Student FTE enrolled in school district | Current expenditures per student FTE EXCLUDING special education costs

Cohort Rank by FTE (1 is largest)
24 out of 30

School district data (local, union, or joint district)

Smaller ->	Waits River Valley USD #36	K-8	215.23	\$12,503
	Alburg	K-8	222.80	\$11,610
	Sheldon	K-8	238.11	\$10,559
	Westford	PK-8	242.68	\$10,940
-> Larger	Fairfield	K-8	253.57	\$9,160
	Barstow Joint Contract Dist	PK-8	275.35	\$9,934
	Hartland	K-8	314.32	\$13,118

Current expenditures are an effort to calculate an amount per FTE spent by a district on students enrolled in that district. This figure excludes tuitions and assessments paid to other providers, construction and equipment costs, debt service, adult education, and community service.

Averaged SCHOOL DISTRICT cohort data

519.22 \$10,405

FY2010 School District Data

LEA ID	School District	Grades offered in School District	School district tax rate			Total municipal tax rate, K-12, consisting of prorated member district rates		
			SD Equalized Pupils	SD Education Spending per Equalized Pupil	SD Equalized Homestead Ed tax rate	MUN Equalized Homestead Ed tax rate	MUN Common Level of Appraisal	MUN Actual Homestead Ed tax rate
Smaller ->	T073 Fair Haven	PK-8	330.75	11,353.38	1.1428	1.1475	1.0676	1.0749
	T003 Alburg	K-8	335.27	11,038.24	1.1111	1.1111	0.6079	1.8278
	T227 Weathersfield	K-8	343.91	14,550.88	1.4646	1.4646	0.8583	1.7064
	T232 Westford	PK-8	371.82	11,732.18	1.1809	1.1809	1.0472	1.1277
-> Larger	T072 Fairfield	K-8	386.32	10,916.89	1.0988	1.0988	0.9804	1.1208
	U042 Castleton-Hubbardton USD	PK-8	389.14	12,616.13	1.2699	-	-	-
	T187 Sheldon	K-8	415.48	10,872.94	1.0944	1.0944	1.0252	1.0675

Use these tax rates to compare towns rates.

These tax rates are not comparable due to CLAs.