

50



YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Budget Testimony
before the
New York State Legislative
Fiscal and Education Committees

Presented February 3, 2015 by:
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Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education Trustees

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Dr. Michael Yazurlo
Superintendent of Schools

2014-2015

Budget Testimony

Honorable legislators, thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak candidly about the state of education in the **Yonkers City School District**. It is my privilege to advocate for the education of the 27,000 children of Yonkers; an enrollment that is projected for continuous growth through 2020-2021.

Over the past year as Yonkers' Superintendent of Schools, I've had an opportunity to celebrate the District's incremental gains in academics; 3 through 8th grade English Language Arts proficiency improved 2% and Math up by 7%, a graduation rate that is up 4% graduating 76% of our students on-time – only 4 points below the State average with Advanced Designation diplomas increasing by 2%, and a dropout rate that has decreased by 3%. Regents scores increased in all five required subjects are up from 1% in Math to 6% in English with higher percentages testing in all subject areas and there was a 5% gain in those achieving the Aspirational Performance Measure. Student attendance rose by .7% to 92.5% districtwide. **Clearly, Yonkers is progressing in the right direction.**

But, I'd like to ask you to just imagine the significant advances these same students would make if they were provided with Sound Basic Educational Needs.

Who are Yonkers students? Sixty-six point three percent (66.3%) are considered economically disadvantaged, 55.6% Hispanic and 19.9% African American. In addition, 15.1% of our students are classified as Students with Disabilities and 11.5% are Limited English Proficient (LEP). They reside in Westchester County and deserve to have the same educational experiences and opportunities as their peers throughout the county.

The challenge facing the Yonkers City School District in 2015-2016, and beyond, is to meet our lawful responsibility to provide educationally sound instructional programs that addresses the needs of Yonkers students and the community. Inequitable State education funding imbued with fundamental formula flaws for Yonkers coupled with the financial difficulties that have loomed heavily on the City of Yonkers for far too many years, withered staff and debilitated facilities. We must repair the damage done over years of fiscal crises and rebuild to deliver State Education Department (SED) mandates. It is a challenge that *is* embraced by the Board of Education Trustees, myself, Yonkers Mayor and City Council; and, if we are to be successful, it *must* also be embraced and shared by the State.

Too many years have gone by, and too many Yonkers students have not had the benefit of an appropriate public education. The projected deficit for 2015-2016 is currently \$89 million. This gap includes \$28 million Yonkers received this year as a "one-shot" that must be reallocated to annually reoccurring revenue. If this gap were closed it would allow us to staff our schools as they were in 2010, even though we have over 2,000 additional students in the District, and project additional enrollment growth.

This year's budget request does not contain frivolous wants; it only addresses our students' needs. Let me provide examples.

- **Adequate Pupil Support Services** – Currently, the pupil teacher ratio for guidance counselors is 827:1, psychologists is 1,150:1, and social workers 2,405:1. At these levels it is impossible to provide the social and emotional support our students deserve and need. We need to hire 76 additional professionals.
- **Comprehensive Sports Program** – Currently, we do not offer modified and Junior Varsity sports for boys and girls, and can only offer a limited Varsity program. Our physical education pupil teacher ratio is 383:1; which allows for very limited elementary instruction from certified teachers. We need to hire 15 additional teachers to restore elementary instruction and a full interscholastic athletic program.
- **Comprehensive Visual & Performing Arts Program** – Currently, the pupil teacher ratio for art is 645:1 and music 735:1; which only allows for very limited elementary instruction from certified teachers. How can we develop children's passion for the arts or open that magical world of creative expression that crosses language and social barriers? There is no elementary instrumental music; therefore we are unable to build a musical foundation for high school, and beyond. We need to hire 27 professionals.
- **Adequate Library Media Specialists** - Currently, the pupil teacher ratio for is 3,307:1; it is impossible to service 39 schools. We need to hire 15 additional teachers.
- **Adequate Support for Students with Disabilities** – Currently, we service over 4,500 students with disabilities through in-district and out-of-district settings. Our struggle is two-fold; to provide more in-district services and have our programs adequately staffed. Presently, 424 students are in out-of-district programs costing us an estimated \$27.8 million. This puts a significant burden on the local budget. Providing these services in-district for some of the students in out-of-district placements will reduce their daily travel time by keeping them closer to home, and lower our costs. For the 4,000 in-district students with disabilities, we have had to file over 100 variances this year because of limited staff and limited instructional space. We need to hire 46 additional special education teachers and 10 additional teaching assistants, as well as 24 additional aides to support students' Individual Education Plans (IEP).
- **Adequate Support for English Language Learners** – Currently, Yonkers has over 3,000 LEP students with an increasing LEP population of new immigrants. To address the unique academic and social needs of this population, as well as the new unfunded mandates of CR Part 154, we need to hire 16 bilingual teachers.

- **Professional Development for Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) & Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)** - Currently, the implementation of the CCLS is yet another unfunded mandate. Yonkers embraces the need to establish and maintain higher standards for all students. Our struggle is to accomplish this with local funds that are already drained by collective bargaining agreements and other mandated cost increases. The intrinsic connection between CCLS and APPR should not be minimized. We agree with the Governor that there are inherent weaknesses in the current APPR that must be restructured. *But*, the means to that end must not be used as an opportunity to withhold funding, which would directly affect our students. APPR must be a fair, equitable and accountable professional evaluation system that truly will improve teaching and learning. To meaningfully implement CCLS and APPR we need funds for resources and professional development. Most important, we must provide an opportunity to incorporate feedback from practitioners who are ultimately responsible for the implementation.
- And, we cannot ignore **Yonkers significant school facilities needs**. We have an aging school building infrastructure with buildings that have an average age of 74 years and an ever growing need for additional instructional space. A 2015 Educational Facilities Plan will be completed this month outlining a rebuilding program at an estimated cost of \$2 Billion. In 2010, our Building Condition Survey determined that the schools need \$430 to \$450 million in repairs. It is anticipated that the 2015 Building Condition Survey will be \$500 to \$600 million in repairs.

Yonkers' needs may sound very familiar. Not only do they echo the other Big 5 school districts, they have been brought to the attention of State officials for far too many years. You have an opportunity to put in place permanent solutions. The issues of today will continue to be those of the tomorrow. How you choose to address present problems of equitable funding, unfunded mandates and the deteriorating infrastructure of urban districts are all connected to how prepared our children will be to succeed in college, work and beyond.

The new collaboration between the City of Yonkers and the Board of Education through the InterMunicipal Agreement of June 2014 is a significant part of a more permanent financial solution for Yonkers. Our success can serve as a model for large city school districts across the state seeking to realize cost savings and operational efficiencies. Working collaboratively with all stakeholders our goal is to galvanize a school system that is focused on the education of all of its children.

Author Michael Fullan notes, "a high quality public school system is essential, not only for parents who send their children to these schools but also for the public good as a whole." If you agree with this statement as I do, then it is *our* responsibility to create the conditions for high quality public education.

Robert F. Kennedy often posed the question adapted from George Bernard Shaw, "I dream of things that never were and say, why not?" Together, we must ask why not enact long-term educational funding solutions for Yonkers Public School students?

Thank you.

Supplemental Information

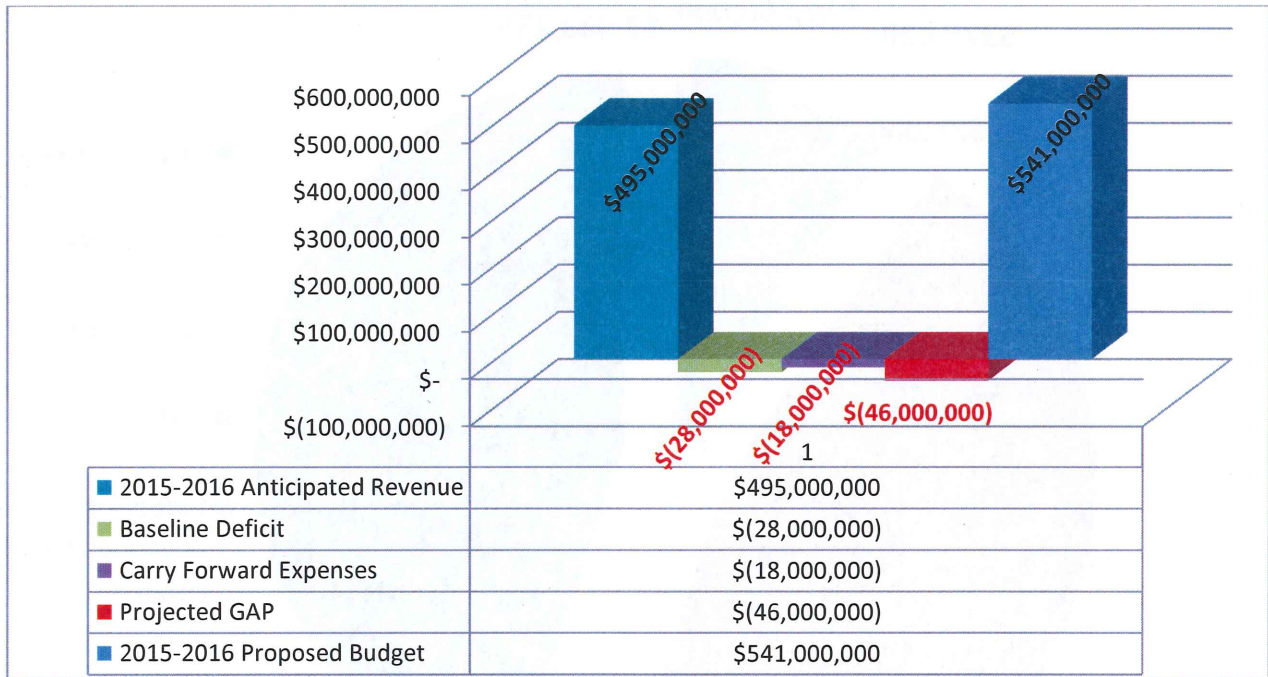
Proposed Budget

EQUITABLE FUNDING

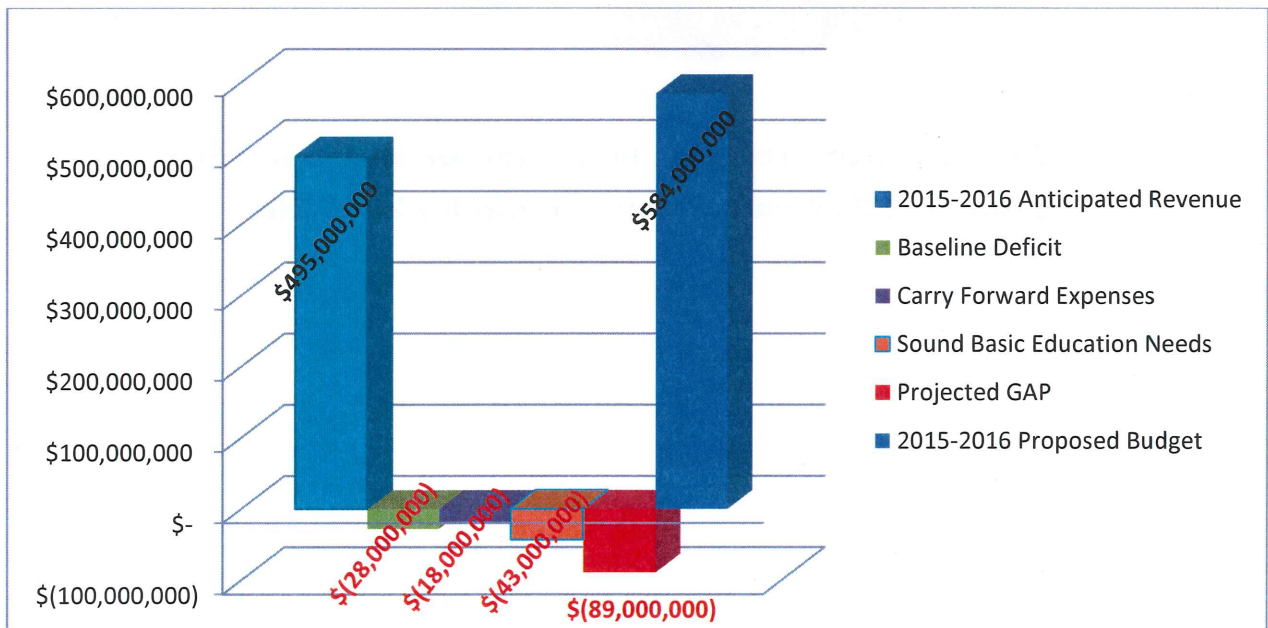
Implement Sound Basic Education
Address Unfunded Mandates

Increase Foundation Aid
Address Infrastructure

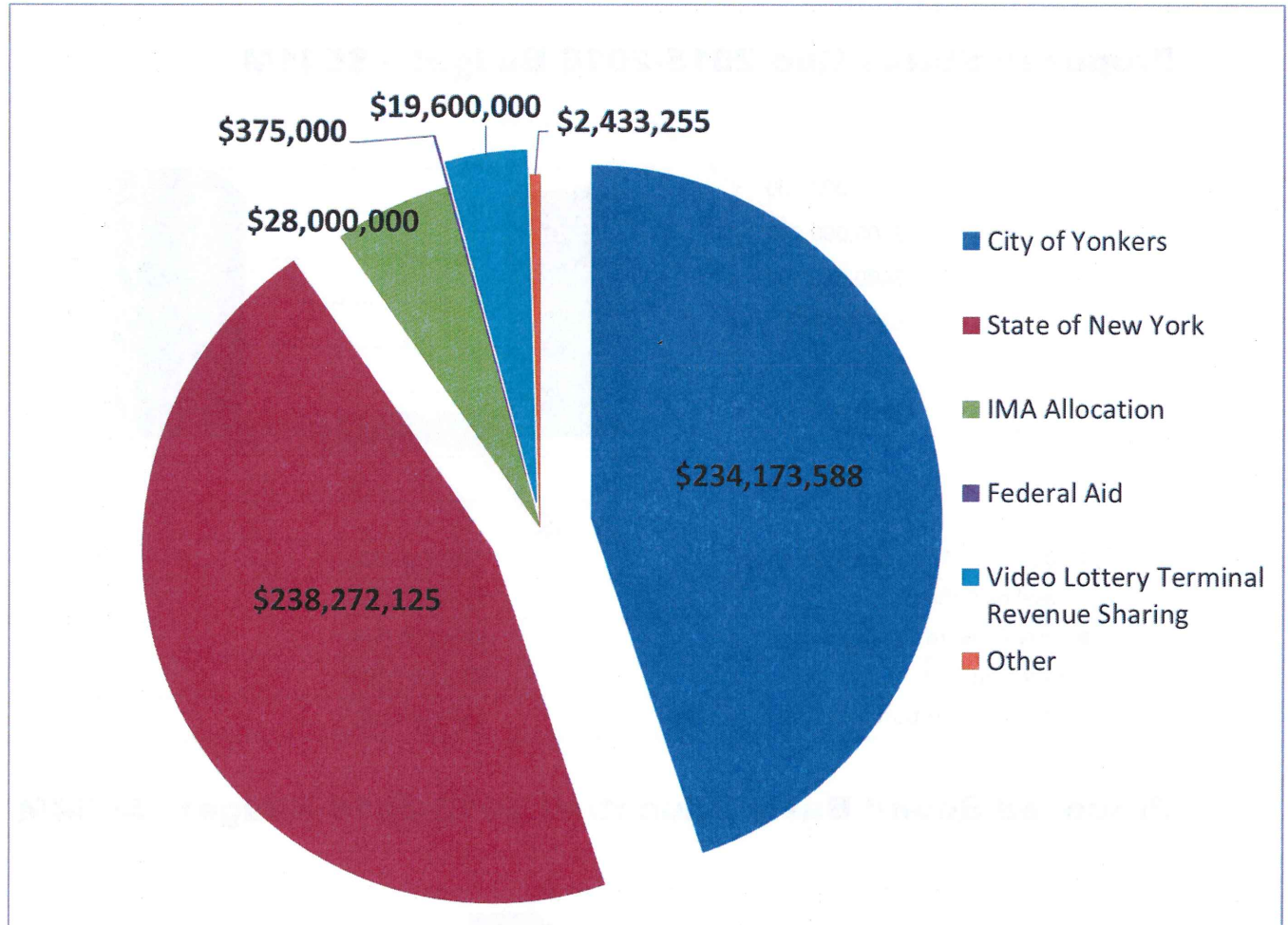
Proposed Status Quo 2015-2016 Budget – \$541M



Proposed Sound Basic Education 2015-2016 Budget - \$584M



2014-2015 Consolidated Budget Revenue



At the current revenue levels the District will have a projected \$89 million budget gap for 2015-2016.

Who We Are! Demographics

2014-2015 Student Subgroup (accountability subgroups are marked with an asterisk (*))	BEDS DAY ENROLLMENT		
	Total (PreK-12, UGE, UGS)	Pre- Kindergarten	Kindergarten
		Half-day	Full-day
*All Students	<u>26,459</u>	<u>1,254</u>	<u>2,025</u>
Female	<u>12,808</u>	<u>618</u>	<u>938</u>
Male	<u>13,651</u>	<u>636</u>	<u>1,087</u>
*American Indian/Alaska Native	<u>77</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
*Black	<u>5,267</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>385</u>
*Hispanic	<u>14,706</u>	<u>690</u>	<u>1,103</u>
*Asian/Pacific Islander	<u>1,439</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>114</u>
*White	<u>4,636</u>	<u>312</u>	<u>382</u>
*Multiracial	<u>334</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>37</u>
General Education Students	<u>22,474</u>	<u>1,158</u>	<u>1,779</u>
*Students with Disabilities	<u>3,985</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>246</u>
Former Students with Disabilities	<u>190</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>
Not Limited English Proficient	<u>23,429</u>	<u>1,254</u>	<u>1,693</u>
*Limited English Proficient	<u>3,030</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>332</u>
Formerly Limited English Proficient	<u>465</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
*Economically Disadvantaged	<u>17,552</u>	<u>644</u>	<u>1,081</u>
Not Economically Disadvantaged	<u>8,907</u>	<u>610</u>	<u>944</u>
Not Migrant	<u>26,459</u>	<u>1,254</u>	<u>2,025</u>

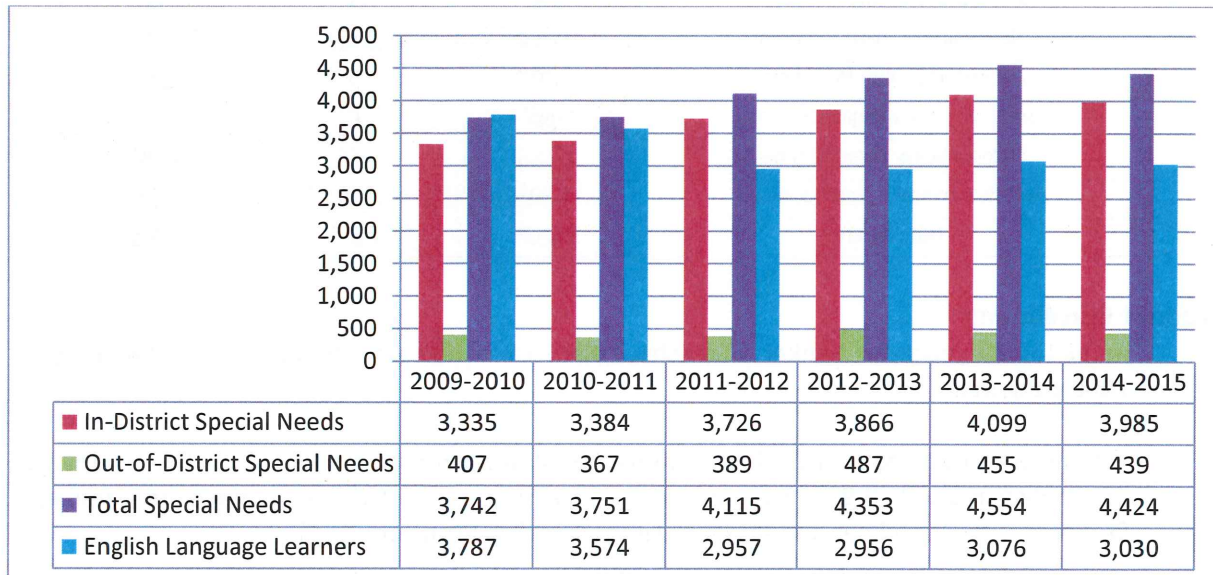
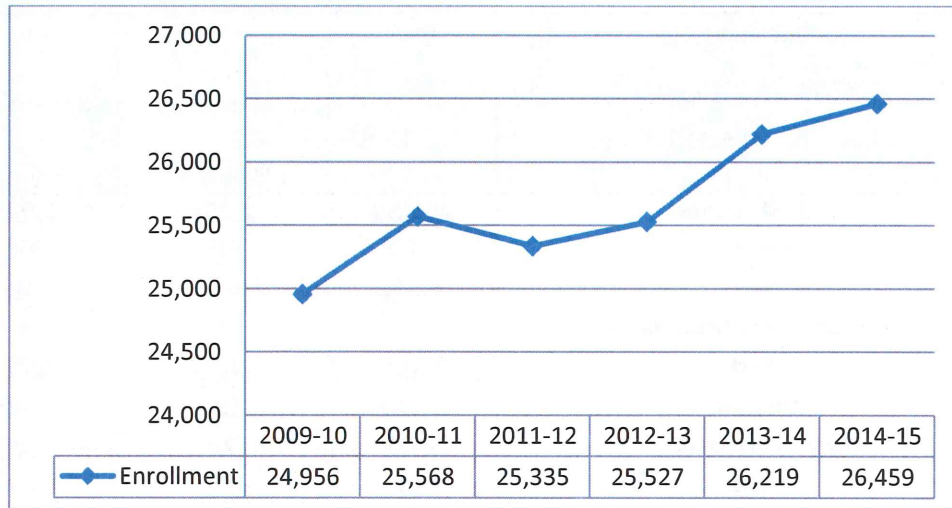
Student Enrollment

In the last six years, the Yonkers City School District has increased its student enrollment by 2000 students.

We currently educate over 26,459 students, 66.3% are considered economically disadvantaged, 55.6% Hispanic and 19.9% African American. In addition, 15.1% of our students are classified as Students with Disabilities and 11.5% as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

These obstacles have not prevented Yonkers students from succeeding. The 2014 data demonstrate a graduation rate of 76% and student achievement on State English Language Arts and Math assessments that continues to outperform the Big 4 city school districts.

BEDS Enrollment 2009-2010 through 2014-2015



Educational Goals

- Full-day Prekindergarten
- Adequate Pupil Support Services
- Comprehensive Sports Program
- Comprehensive Visual & Performing Arts Program
- Professional Development for Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) & Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)

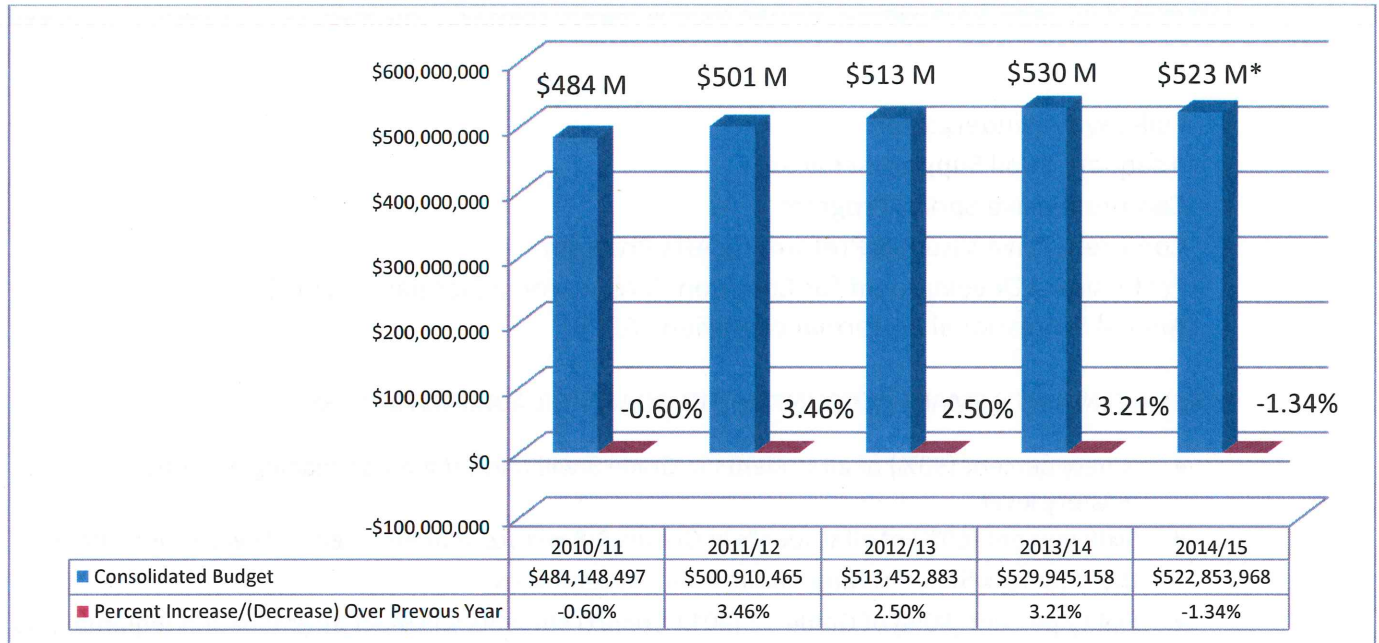
SUPERINTENDENT’S SMART ACCOUNTABILITY GOALS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

- Ninety percent (90%) of all students in Grade 3 will finish the grade reading at proficiency or mastery level
- Sixty percent (60%) of all students in Grades 3-8 will score at Proficiency (Level 3) or higher on the New York State ELA and Mathematics assessments
- Eighty percent (80%) of Grade 12 (2011 Cohort) students will meet all graduation requirements and apply to a post-secondary institution
- Develop and implement a plan to specifically address the academic and social needs of Students with Disabilities (SWD)
- Develop and implement a plan to specifically address the academic and social needs of English Language Learners (ELL)
- Full implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) using the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process to gather evidence
- Institute a positive, supportive, and respectful school and central office culture mindful of all stakeholders

Challenges

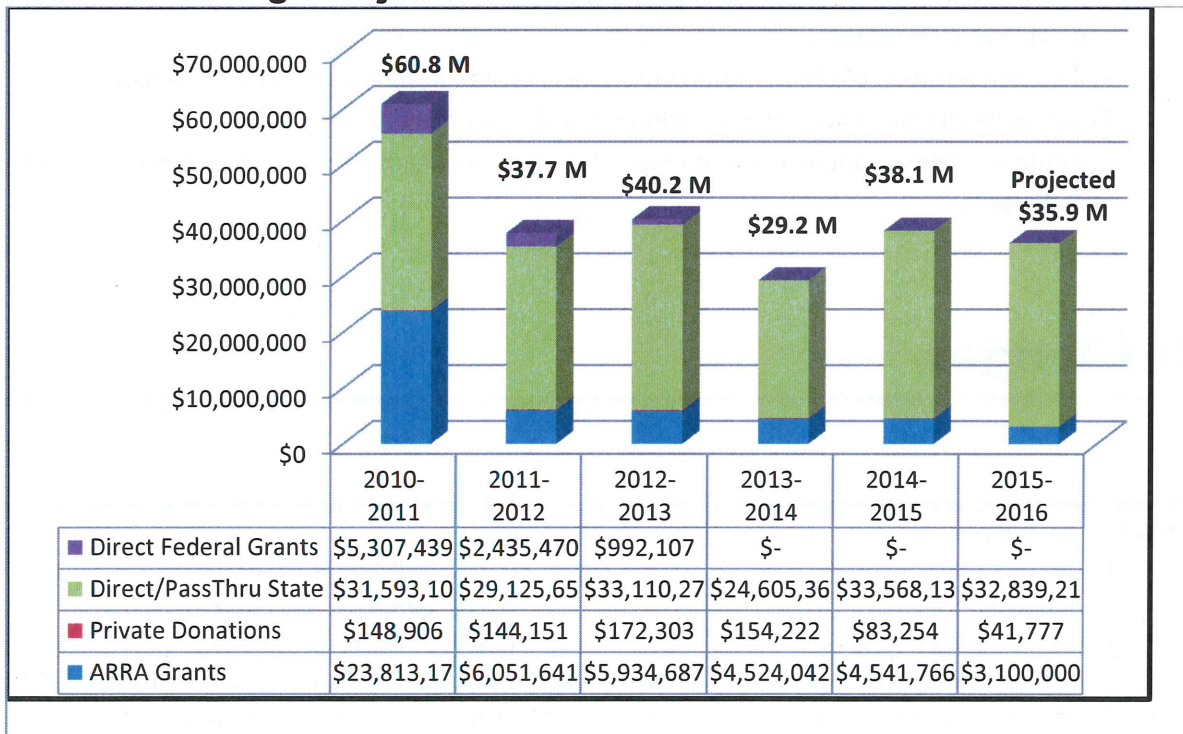
Legislative Mandates	Yonkers Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common Core Standards• CR Part 154• Career Pathways• Special Education Compliance• College and Career Readiness• APPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aging School Building Infrastructure<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Aging schools – average age 74 years○ Need for Instructional space• Lack of instructional, pupil support and custodial staff• Lack of certified Special Education and Bilingual teachers• In-district capacity for Special Needs Students

Budget Trends 2010-2011 through 2014-2015



*2014/2015 expenses of \$9.1M were assumed by the City of Yonkers through the Inter-Municipal Agreement

Summary of Yonkers Public Schools Grants 2010-2011 through Projected 2015-2016



In the last six years, the District has experienced a \$25 M reduction in grant funding. As a result, there are less direct services to our most needed students.

Additional Staff, Professional Development and Instructional Requirements for a Sound Basic Education Needs	FTE	Estimated Cost (Salary and Benefits)
Guidance Counselors	28.00	\$3,222,912
School Psychologists	20.00	\$2,302,080
Social Workers	28.00	\$3,222,912
Public Safety Officers	21.00	\$1,310,883
Special Education Teachers	46.00	\$5,070,718
Special Education Teaching Asst.	10.00	\$556,190
Special Education Clerical Staff	6.00	\$391,986
Special Education School Aides	24.00	\$787,392
Special Education Other Than Personal Services		\$633,540
Reading Teachers	26.00	\$2,866,058
Bilingual Teachers	16.00	\$1,763,728
Art Teachers	15.00	\$1,653,495
Music Teachers	12.00	\$1,322,796
Library Teachers	15.00	\$1,653,495
Physical Education Teachers	15.00	\$1,653,495
School Administrators	11.00	\$1,598,333
Secondary Schools	31.00	\$3,229,390
Transportation Costs	-	\$420,000
Technology Department	5.00	\$381,687
Division of Teaching and Learning	6.75	\$1,009,769
Division of Teaching and Learning Other Than Personal Services		\$835,000
Career and Technical Education	5.00	\$606,063
Student Information System	7.00	\$833,272
Junior Varsity Sports		\$3,387,124
Facilities	33.00	\$ 2,727,830
	380.75	\$43,440,148

Why Yonkers Needs!

Staff Reductions from 2008 to 2015 - 535 Less Positions

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Positions Lost 2014/15 vs 2008/09	2015/16 Additional Request	Proposed 2015/16
Civil Service	1,651.00	1,600.00	1,441.00	1,431.00	1,433.00	1,450.00	1,407.25	(243.75)	83.00	1,490.25
Teamsters	24.00	23.00	21.00	20.00	20.00	18.00	16.00	(8.00)	7.00	23.00
Teachers	2,068.00	2,057.00	1,913.00	1,686.00	1,697.00	1,795.50	1,802.00	(266.00)	264.00	2,066.00
Building Administrators	102.00	105.00	95.00	95.00	97.00	110.00	109.00	7.00	11.00	120.00
Central Office Admin	61.00	60.00	49.00	46.00	51.00	48.00	36.14	(24.86)	15.75	51.89
Total	3,906.00	3,845.00	3,519.00	3,278.00	3,298.00	3,421.50	3,370.39	(535.61)	380.75	3,751.14

Staff Reductions from 2008 to 2015 – By Content Area

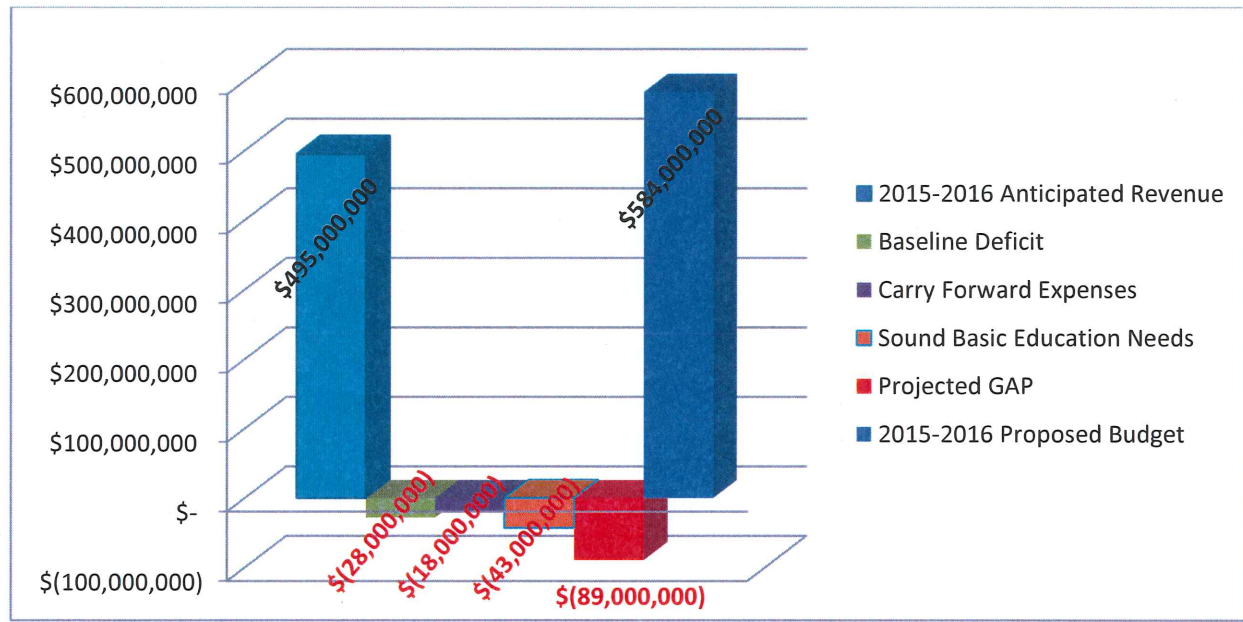
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Positions Lost 2014/15 vs 2008/09	2015/16 Additional Request	Proposed 2015/16
Guidance Counselors	51.00	51.00	39.00	15.00	23.00	32.00	32.00	(19.00)	28.00	60.00
Psychologists	32.00	35.00	22.00	11.00	16.00	23.00	23.00	(9.00)	20.00	43.00
Social Workers	17.00	19.00	14.00	8.00	11.00	11.00	11.00	(6.00)	28.00	39.00
Art Teachers	50.00	50.00	38.00	39.00	40.00	42.00	41.00	(9.00)	15.00	56.00
Music Teachers	51.00	51.00	33.00	34.00	33.00	37.00	36.00	(15.00)	12.00	48.00
Libray Media Specialist	25.00	25.00	15.00	7.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	(17.00)	15.00	23.00
Physical Education Teachers	71.00	71.00	67.00	68.00	68.00	69.00	69.00	(2.00)	15.00	84.00
Public Safety Officers	68.00	68.00	60.00	58.00	57.00	57.00	57.00	(11.00)	21.00	78.00
Total	365.00	370.00	288.00	240.00	255.00	279.00	277.00	(88.00)	154.00	431.00

Pupil / Teacher Ratio from 2008 to 2015 – By Content Area

Pupil to Teacher Ratio (PTR)							
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
PK-12 (BEDS)	24,453	24,956	25,568	25,335	25,527	26,219	26,459
Guidance Counselors	479:1	489:1	656:1	1,689:1	1,110:1	819:1	827:1
Psychologists	764:1	713:1	1162:1	2303:1	1595:1	1,140:1	1,150:1
Social Workers	1,438:1	1,313:1	1,826:1	3,167:1	2,321:1	2,384:1	2,405:1
Art Teachers	489:1	499:1	673:1	650:1	638:1	624:1	645:1
Music Teachers	479:1	489:1	775:1	745:1	774:1	709:1	735:1
Libray Media Specialist	978:1	998:1	1,705:1	3,619:1	3,647:1	3,277:1	3,307:1
Physical Education	344:1	351:1	382:1	373:1	375:1	380:1	383:1
Public Safety Officers	360:1	367:1	426:1	437:1	448:1	460:1	464:1

What Yonkers Needs!

Proposed Sound Basic Education 2015-2016 Budget



2015-2016 Anticipated Revenue - \$495 Million

**2015-2016 Proposed
Sound Basic Education Budget - \$584 Million**

Budget Gap - \$89 Million

