

FY2017 Budget Commentary from FHS

We have had more than 300 new registrations so far this year, many of whom are ESL students. In fact, 17 of the last 20 new registrants are ESL students. We have 161 students currently enrolled in ESL mathematics classes, but only one licensed ESL math teacher. Most classes are over 25 students, which is nearly double the recommended size for ESL students. One class has 35 students in it. As more ESL students enter FHS, these numbers will only rise. Furthermore, we do not have an existing program for SLIFE students even though this population is rapidly rising.

All of our programs have reached their maximum, including Phoenix, Thayer and ESL. Since we are required to provide these services to our students, we simply exceed our capacity which diminishes the quality of the services we are actually able to provide our students.

There are currently 2051 students enrolled at Framingham High School. We have 2.5 social workers to meet the emotional needs of our mainstream students. We have 9 counselors, including the department head. Each counselor has a caseload of nearly 250 students. Our two school psychologists spend all of their time testing students for IEP meetings and therefore do not provide therapeutic services to students. This puts a strain on all support staff.

Lastly, all of the high profile incidents involving significant safety concerns at the high school in recent years have involved students who have been at FHS for less than three months. Without a newcomers program, we are unable to adequately assess students and get to know them before they enter the school. Since the school is so large, they are easily lost in the crowd.