

English Department (Grades 6 – 12) FY 2011 Budget Description

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Watertown Middle and High Schools

The English departments at Watertown Middle School and Watertown High School serve every student in grades 6-12; students at the high school must pass the English MCAS and must earn a full year's worth of English credit each year in order to graduate from the Watertown Public Schools. The reading, writing, researching, and critical-thinking proficiency students gain in their English classes remains a critical component of success in college and in the working world.

The department is being renamed English and Communications in order to meet the needs of 21st century learners and to integrate effectively students' studies in elective art and technology with their core English work. We expect this to boost achievement and engagement through more authentic and useful technology integration in the study of English and communication. One example of this is integrating students' study of journalism with the work of students in the Web 2.0 applied-art class in order to publish a newspaper online for the school community.

Middle school staffing includes the equivalent of two full-time general-education English teachers per grade; at the high school, there are 1.75 English teachers per grade. English teachers at the middle school teach four content classes each day and one enrichment/assistance class per day. Teachers at the high school teach five English classes per day. Average class sizes are 23-24 students per class, with the largest classes having 28 and 29 students. In a number of these classes, a third to a half of the students have Individualized Education Plans and therefore require carefully individualized work with the teachers and aides.

The English curriculum focuses on the core English skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and emphasizes the crucial 21st Century skills of information literacy, critical thinking, collaborative skills, and technology-aided research and communication. Students in the 7th and 8th grades experience a cross-disciplinary humanities approach that melds English and social studies. Middle school students also enjoy enrichment classes in film, creative writing, journalistic writing, period-specific literature, and more. Due to scheduling complexities and staffing limitations at the high school, students' lone elective option in English is journalism.

The budget allocations for English for FY 2010 were as follows:

High school (grades 9-12):

English Language Arts:	\$4,000 (includes all book purchases)
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Middle School (grades 6-8):

English Language Arts:	\$2,400
Developmental Reading:	\$1,200

FY 2011 Anticipated English and Communication Needs at the High School

- The high school English department needs one more full-time teacher. This is critical in order to accommodate growing numbers of students and to have the equivalent of two full-time teachers per grade. This need is due to two factors: A) The department lost .4 FTE when the transition to 6-12 coordinators occurred, and B) enrollment is projected to rise by 8 percent by the fall.
- The materials/supplies budget needs to increase to \$4,800 (from FY10 \$4,000) to replace damaged/worn-out books and to accommodate higher numbers of students.

- Every high school English teacher needs enough desks to accommodate each student, and two teachers need their entire set of desks replaced entirely due to wear and poor functionality (1950s-style desks—too small for many students and tiny desktops not appropriate for today’s materials, laptops, etc.).

FY 2011 Anticipated English and Communication Needs at the Middle School

- Maintenance of current program is strongly desired. This would preserve manageable class sizes, common planning time, and academic assistance and enrichment programming.
- Increase the materials and supplies budget by \$1,500 for English for books for sixth and eighth grade.

FY 2011 Anticipated Reading Needs at the Middle School

- Restore 1.0 FTE to reading/English
- Increase the materials and supplies budget

FY 2011 Possible Reductions and/or reallocations

- If reductions occur, larger classes will result. A decrease in course-selection options may also occur.
- At the middle school, the common planning time and cluster arrangements facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practices, both of which are key to increasing student achievement. Reduced resources might make that arrangement untenable.
- Further reductions at the high school (English lost .4 FTE two years ago) would require higher class sizes and less beneficial scheduling for struggling students.
- Reallocating high school teachers’ assigned duties (study halls, lunch duty, etc.) would help mitigate the additional student load in the fall.