

John W. Gallagher, Ed. D.,
Superintendent
gallagherj@westportcs.org



Soar With Excellence

Westport Central School District
25 Sisco Street
Westport, NY 12993
(518) 962-8244
(Fax) 518-962-4571

The Impact of Non-resident Students of Westport Central School

At a Board of Education meeting this spring, I was asked to present an analysis of the impact of non-resident students on our school district. This presentation considers both the financial impact those students have and the effect on the school in terms of academics and co-curricular activities.

Financial Impact

First we consider the financial impact. In considering this I have consulted with a local school business official, and with QUESTAR (Albany BOCES) State Aid Service. What follows takes from what these sources have provided to me.

- Westport does not accept non-resident students if there is a cost associated with accepting them. Generally that cost would be based on class size and program. If there is no room in a class or a program, and accepting a student would result in adding staff, students are not accepted. As an example, last year three students were not accepted due to cost restraints.
- A few Aid streams (textbook, software, library, etc.) are offered on a per-pupil basis. So there has always been (and continues to be) a bit of additional Aid associated with additional students. These are very small amounts of aid when considered in the big picture of state aid, but neutralize the additional costs, if any, of additional books.
- Dealing with major State Aid categories, in the State Aid system, which preceded the Foundation Aid model, there was little financial incentive, outside of the value of tuition revenue itself, in accepting non-residents.
- The new foundation aid model is a 'shares' or 'foundation' approach, wherein each student does indeed generate an allocation. The Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit yielded a decision that the State must fund some basic (i.e. foundation) amount for each student. A

useful average is to simply divide Westport's total foundation aid by our total school population, including non-resident students. This will give a very approximate per student aid amount which each additional student (even non-residents) should generate. The average aid per pupil enrolled amounts to about \$5800 per student.

- So when the foundation aid system is operating correctly, there is an appreciable amount of additional aid for each additional student. Foundation aid is currently frozen at 2008-2009 levels, We still receive aid based on base year enrollment which included the non-residents. The non-resident population has not increased in the last two years. I estimated the accrued state aid resulting from the 40 or so non-residents for 2007-2009 to be on the area of \$750,000.00 Whether or not this benefit is realized in the future is completely up to the Governor and Legislature, and will be determined in the future.

Academic Impact

There is much to be said for the oft quoted "a rising tide lifts all ships." The presence of non-resident students at Westport Central School creates a rising tide of academic expectations. Secondary students from outside the district have, historically, been involved in the most challenging courses we offer. Their interaction with our students in those programs assists teachers in creating a more challenging learning environment. The elementary students add the same vigor to our classrooms. We would be offering these programs without non-resident students, but their presence has added significantly to the "critical mass" that triggers meaningful in-class interactions.

When class sizes become too large we do not accept non-residents in those grades or programs.

Co- Curricular Activities

As is the case with our academic program, the non-resident population adds quality to our school. A few more students in the band or in a play, or on a team allows the sponsors of those activities to take on more varied pieces of music and more involved productions. A few more members of a sports team help as well.

Other

The presence of the non-resident students has a major impact on the ability of our cafeteria to be self-sustaining. We do not add any additional transportation runs or change those runs for the non-resident students.

Distribution of Non –Resident Students

There may be a misperception that by eliminating non-resident students we would be able to eliminate teaching positions. Nothing can be more inaccurate. If you examine the distribution of students below, this will be apparent. If we eliminate non-residents from the mix, we still need the grade levels and course offerings for the remaining students. We would lose any revenue that they bring in to the district as well. It is important to note that **17 of these students** are children of families who lived in Westport and moved out of the district. Simply put, **our school expenditures would be the same, with or without these students. What would be lost is any aid / revenue they generate and all the benefits they bring that were outlined above.**

Student Enrollment as of 9/9/10

Grade Level	Students in Building	
	Resident	Nonresident
K	13	2
1 st	11	5
2 nd	17	7
3 rd	12	2
4 th	12	3
5 th	14	2
6 th	15	5
7 th	22	2
8 th	15	3
9 th	16	6
10 th	8	2
11 th	19	1
12 th	22	6
Total	196	46

History

The issue of admission of non-residents has been raised a number of times in the past. As with previous boards, the current board has also chosen to continue to accept non-resident students under the guidelines that the board has adopted as district policy. As long as no cost is borne by the taxpayers, admission of these students has a number of advantages for our school.