



Ellington Public Schools

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To: Ellington Board of Education
From: Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Alisha Carpino, Director of Finance & Operations
Re: Proposed Budget 2024-2025 Discussion—Board of Education May 31st Special Meeting
Date: May 31, 2024

On Thursday, May 30th Ellington’s Board of Finance met ([live-streamed on EPS YouTube Page](#)) to deliberate on the Town’s 2024-2025 Budget Proposal.

At this meeting, the Board of Finance (BOF) requested the Board of Education (BOE) develop \$75K worth of reductions. Understanding that the BOF also requested the Town departments to recommend \$1.1 million in reductions, we are also communicating the possibility of an additional \$170K worth of reductions—two teaching positions—should they become necessary.

It should be noted that the Board of Education has already reduced its originally proposed budget (3.79% increase) by \$200K.

NEW—Eversource Increase—Electrical Service (additional \$70K loss)

This May 2024, Eversource notified the Town and school district of the following:

“Beginning July 1, you’ll see an approximately 57% increase to rates within the delivery portion of your bill, if approved by PURA. This rate adjustment primarily consists of pass-through costs for state-mandated and approved energy programs, policies, and initiatives.”

This was unanticipated, outside of the current locked electric supply rate, and therefore not currently included in the proposed budget. The impact on next year’s financials leaves an estimated \$70K loss that the BOE must budget for.

POSSIBLE BOARD OF EDUCATION REDUCTIONS

Proposal for Upcoming June 11, 2024 Referendum

| | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------|
| Shift of ParaEducator Salary to Choice Grant | (\$24,000) | |
| Shift of Magnet Tuition to Choice Grant | (\$51,000) | |
| <i>(Magnet tuition reduced 42% of projected total per state statute)</i> | | |
| Shift of Magnet Tuition to Choice Grant—offset Electric Increase | (\$70,000) | |
| Increase to Electric in Operating Budget | \$70,000 | |
| Total Proposed Reductions | (\$75,000) | (.17%) |
| New Proposed FY2025 Budget | \$46,715,160 | 3.62% |

Impact

- Shifting dollars from the operating budget to the Open Choice Grant must be done sparingly to avoid a fiscal cliff. The Open Choice Grant is not a part of local taxpayer dollars, and the fund

amount annually increases or decreases based on Hartford and Ellington student enrollment and other costs budgeted within the fund.

Possible Future Reductions if Needed

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Elimination of Added Hockey Funding | (\$16,868) | |
| Unassigned Elementary Teacher | (\$85,000) | |
| High School English/Drama Teacher | (\$85,000) | |
| Total Proposed Reductions | (\$186,868) | (.41%) |
| New Proposed FY2025 Budget | \$46,528,292 | 3.21% |

Impact

- The unassigned elementary position (*not filled*) is a strategy the Board has frequently utilized to offset late Summer enrollment surges to maintain reasonable class sizes. The position has been used several times in the past decade. The new state law regarding age-five requirements to start kindergarten and the increase in pre-k enrollment may necessitate its use.
- Elimination of the EHS English/Drama teacher (*not refilled—resignation*) will increase English class sizes and limit course electives. It will also impact the Drama Club’s performance output (5 reduced to 3 or 2 shows annually—servicing 50+ students). One English/Drama teacher will remain.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Teachers of Color Residency Program

Ellington has been an early adopter of the state-wide teachers of color recruitment program. The program is funded through the Open Choice Grant in the amount of \$51,000 for fiscal year 2025.

Ellington’s participation supports the functioning of the entire program, which is placing aspiring minority teachers into suburban and rural school districts across the state.

We are proud to support this program currently with two full-time Elementary Residency Program teachers who are a product of the program, with another candidate slated for the 2024-25 school year.

BASES/ECLIPSE/TEC/TEPSEP—The Sixth School

These four programs are located at 89 and 105 West Rd. They are almost completely self-sustaining programs supported by the special revenue fund—which was an account recommended by the Board of Education and unanimously approved by the Board of Finance several years ago. The special revenue account may only be spent on special education and is highly volatile with possible monthly variances exceeding six figures.

To remodel the infrastructure of these leased properties we used ARPA federal funding as a one-time investment to produce programmatic revenue through enrolling students from other districts and charging tuition. This revenue self-funds the four programs and avoids a fiscal cliff typically associated with the use of federal dollars for ongoing expenses instead of investing in building capacity—see [A Failed Budget-What Now?](#)