

Board of Education

Ellington, Connecticut

January 7, 2017

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Saturday, January 7, 2017 in the School Administration Building.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Mr. Keune, Chairperson.

Mr. Keune confirmed that Dr. Young, who was present in a virtual platform, could hear all Board members and that all Board members could hear Dr. Young.

Present were: Messrs. Keune, McNamar, Young, Purcaro, and Blanchette; Mesdames Hayes, Kiff-Judson, Picard-Wambolt, Foster, and Socha; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations; Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology; Mr. Robert Butler, Director of Facilities; and Student Representative Grace Hinckley.

Also attending were: Mrs. Trudie Luck-Roberts, Principal, Center School; Mr. Michael Larkin, Principal, Crystal Lake School; Mr. David Welch, Principal, Windermere School; Mrs. Jennifer Bordieri, Assistant Principal, Windermere School; Mr. David Pearson, Principal, Ellington Middle School; Mr. Neil Rinaldi, Principal, Ellington High School; Mr. Mark Wursthorn, Assistant Principal, Ellington High School; Mr. Mark Mahler, Ellington Education Association; Mrs. Cate Hatt, Windermere School; Ms. Kara Hennessey, Administrative Intern; Mr. John Rachek, Board of Finance (BOF) Chair; Mr. Michael Varney, BOF Liaison; Mr. Aaron Foster, Board of Selectmen Member; and Mr. David Olender, BOF Member.

Chairperson Keune first noted some minor changes to the Agenda to hasten the meeting due to the anticipated snow forecast. He then welcomed all of the attendees and thanked them for their interest and support of Ellington students. Dr. Nicol thanked all of the administrators and support staff for their hard work and cooperation in the budget development process. He thanked the members of the business office for all of their efforts in preparing documentation.

All Board members had a binder which included the detailed Superintendent's Proposed Budget 2017-2018 document. The budget document is also available online to the public.

Dr. Nicol stated that he would provide a brief overview of the 2017-2018 proposed budget. At the close of the overview, there would be an opportunity for questions and answers. After each school principal presents his or her aspect of the budget, there

would be additional time for questions and answers.

The budget document included:

- Agenda for January 7, 2017 Budget Workshop
- Board of Education Budget Guidelines
- Superintendent’s Letter to the BOE
- Object Summary
- Enrollment/Class Size Data
- Crosswalks and Question & Answer
- Staffing Requests
- Requests Not Included
- Equipment
- 2015-2016 Per Pupil Expenditures

Dr. Nicol described the budget development process that began in September and thanked all who contributed to the preparation of these documents. He noted that the initial requests by administrators reflect their understanding of the economic climate as well as the needs of their students, the demands of quality educational programming, reductions in many accounts during previous budget cycles, and the unique needs of a number of our students.

Dr. Nicol used a PowerPoint presentation to review the proposed 2017-2018 budget.

As a result of the budget review process, the Superintendent’s Proposed Budget for 2017-2018 is \$37,248,410, which represents a proposed increase of 3.18% or \$1,148,661 over the current fiscal year. To put this into context, the BOE Budget increase for 2016-2017 was 3.99% or \$1,397,377. Due to unique savings opportunities and fund leverages last year, that budget was reduced to 2.99%, of which 98% of this amount were in salaries and benefits. This year, salaries and benefits only comprise 68% of the increase, thus affecting one of the major budget drivers.

The major drivers of the proposed budget are:

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|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|
| • Salaries and Benefits | \$774,852 | 68% |
| • Technology and Operations | \$209,468 | 18% |
| • Outside Tuition | \$115,652 | 10% |
| • Instructional Budgets | \$ 48,689 | 4% |

Dr. Nicol discussed his strategy that to transform a well-run school district and take it to another level consists of reinvestment of resources and realignment to areas of focus.

	Increase	% Impact
• Maintenance of Effort (MOE)	\$ 762,624	2.11%
• EHS Arts & Academics	<u>\$ 386,037</u>	<u>1.07%</u>
Total	\$1,148,661	3.18%

Dr. Nicol went through detailed breakdowns of the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Summary, which included finalization of the K-6 transition, realignment of elementary staffing, and increased spending per pupil (\$10,248), which is equitable across all schools. He provided elementary class size projections, a breakdown of new grant investments, and the recent additional new courses at Ellington High School.

Dr. Nicol went through detailed breakdowns of EHS Arts and Academics reinvestments and realignments to enhance students’ opportunities. This included the Transition/Expulsion Program, 1:1 Chromebooks, and new staff.

Regarding Notable Accounts, Dr. Nicol discussed in detail the Operations accounts, which included Transportation, the Transition/Expulsion Program, Property and Workman’s Compensation Insurance, Maintenance Projects and Electricity. He broke down the accounts of Salaries and Benefits, Health Insurance, Social Security, and Outside Tuition and provided past and current year comparisons.

Dr. Nicol discussed the Summary of Items not included in the budget, which included staff, equipment, supplies and maintenance projects. He followed this discussion with enrollment breakdowns for each school.

Dr. Nicol stated that areas of concern are Magnet School Tuition, Special Education, Technology (especially staffing), and Equipment. He noted that per pupil expenditure is \$12,985 with a rank of 165 out of 166 districts, and that there are many variables that go into this figure.

CROSSWALKS

Mrs. Luck-Roberts, Mr. Larkin, and Mr. Welch presented their school budgets in a combined Q & A. Mrs. Luck Roberts began by summarizing the increases for the requests that were made. She stated that now all three schools will be in alignment with the K-6 school model, and they are requesting items that are equitable across all three elementary schools. She also noted that the budget document contains an overview of the work done by the three elementary schools in the District Areas of Focus and Mastery Based Learning. Mrs. Luck-Roberts thanked the Board members for their support in the elementary school requests and the K-6 transition.

Mrs. Luck-Roberts discussed two of the major drivers for the three elementary school budget requests:

- Expansion of music, chorus and band programs.
- Changes to science and social studies curricula to align with Next Generation Science Standards and Connecticut State Social Studies Standards.

Mr. Larkin discussed two other major drivers for the three elementary school budget requests:

- Continued support of the Full-Day Kindergarten Program.
- Support of the Bridges and Kendall Hunt math programs.

Mr. Welch discussed the final two major drivers for the three elementary school budget requests:

- Funding for innovative practices such as Maker Space.
- Materials for faculty study groups to advance the district areas of focus.

Ellington Middle School (EMS) Principal Mr. David Pearson and Ellington High School (EHS) Principal Neil Rinaldi co-presented the 7-12 vision and how that vision aligns with their requests. Mr. Pearson stated that the focus was on Mastery Based Learning and Personalized Learning. Each principal discussed 2017-2018 initiatives for EMS and EHS that have budget implications, accounts that have been decreased, and other drivers of the budget increase.

Dr. Erin McGurk reviewed the Educational Services budget and the various functions such as professional development, curriculum development, and district curriculum initiatives. She noted that specialized training for staff members is part of the budget increase in professional development, as is curriculum development for new courses. Regarding the increase in district curriculum initiatives, Dr. McGurk stated this amount was a placeholder and a direct response to the BOE Brainstorming Session to secure to a funding mechanism for teachers who seek to pursue innovative practices and to fund new ideas.

Mr. John Collins reviewed the Information Technology budget, which is included in the Systemwide budget. Mr. Collins detailed the various line items in the account and the functions that are supported, emphasizing the amount of technology used in classrooms directly related to enhancing district goals such as personalized learning, equitable opportunities, and innovative practices. He explained the requests in the Purchased Services account, the Supplies account and Equipment account. He also discussed the significant budget increase for the 1:1 Chromebook initiatives at EMS and EHS.

Dr. Kristy LaPorte provided a background of the current special needs student population (368 students) and an overview of the various functions supported by the Special Services budget. She reviewed the special education disability subgroups

represented in Ellington. Dr. LaPorte emphasized that, like the entire district, the Special Education Department is proactive and continues to build programs to support these various subgroups. She stressed that the number of students with 504 Plans and IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) are increasing as the number of families moving into district is increasing. Dr. LaPorte also explained the new Transition/Expulsion Program, which is part of the proposed budget request, and the cost savings due to the ability to retain students in special education programs in district rather than using outplacement programs. She stated that there are many state mandates in regards to the special education population/subgroups that will also need to be met going forward.

Mr. Greenleaf reviewed the Salaries and Systemwide crosswalks. He detailed a few major components of the Salaries budget and explained how a portion of the Salaries budget had a carve-out for special education aides. Regarding the System-Wide crosswalk, Mr. Greenleaf noted increases in service contracts for phone systems, plant maintenance, technology and transportation.

Mr. Keune invited Mr. John Rachek, Board of Finance Chair, to comment upon the budget process. He stated that he was impressed and had a great deal of respect for all the administrators and staff for the depth and thought process that went into the budget process. He stated that there will be other departments in the Town requesting money, but he considers education one of the top services that the Town can provide.

Mr. Keune invited Mr. Michael Varney, Board of Finance Liaison, to comment upon the budget process. Mr. Varney thanked all the administrators and staff and praised the ongoing quality of education in Ellington. He noted the good relationship between the BOF and the BOE and the great culture within the Ellington school system. Mr. Varney stated that the BOE was able to look long range to be creative and solve problems to stay cost-effective.

Mr. Keune recessed the meeting at 12:00 p.m. for lunch. Mr. Keune called the meeting to order again at 12:15 p.m.

Mr. Keune invited the members of the Board to discuss any aspects of the budget. He noted that this is currently the Superintendent's Proposed Budget. The Finance Committee agreed to meet on January 17 to discuss the budget prior to the January 18 Board of Education meeting. At the January 18, 2017 meeting, the Board will be expected to adopt a budget, which will then be the Board of Education's Proposed Budget.

Mr. Keune adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

AMH/amd

Ann Marie Hayes, Secretary

