

BUDGET NEWS 2014-2015

NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET WORKSHOPS

The Board of Education held Budget Workshops on Jan. 28 and Jan. 30 to discuss sections of the budget in more detail. Principals from the Middle School and High School were available as well as the Director of Special Education and other department heads to expand on their budget needs and choices made for the 2014-2015 budget.

Principal Tom Einhorn described the plan to manage declining enrollment with the reduction of 4 teachers at the Middle School. To keep classes at approximately 23 students each, one cluster will consist of 2 classes from each grade and the cluster teachers would teach the appropriate curriculum to each grade. Beyond managing staff, this system may allow for new management of accelerated programs.



Principal Chip Dumais discussed the reduction of an art teacher at the High School which stemmed from a retirement coinciding with a reduction in requests for art classes. A list of all classes and enrollments at the high school was provided later in the week for the Board to review. Mr. Dumais explained some of the increases in staff over the past seven years. NEASC recommendations, class enrollments and increased graduation requirements were identified as the primary driving factors.

Pupil Services Director Julie Haggard discussed cost of out-of-district placements and the impact of grant funding of Special Education. All placements are decided by PPT meetings which occur throughout the year so placements can change outside of the planned budget. The cost of the pre-school program was discussed including the new charge for non-special education peers in the program. The state Excess Cost Sharing funding is budgeted at 75% for 2014-2015 which matches the amount realized in the 2012-2013 school year.

FEBRUARY 4TH, 2013

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Upcoming Budget Meetings

- Feb. 4 BOE Budget Workshop- Public Hearing & Discussion
- Feb. 6 BOE Budget Workshop- Adoption of Budget
- Feb. 20 BOF Public Budget Hearing
- TBD BOF Budget review with BOE
- Mar. 5 BOF recommends budget to Legislative Council

BUDGET WORKSHOPS (CONT)

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Linda Gejda presented the budget for curriculum and instruction discussing the cost of training staff in new programs and services to monitor student performance. Updating curriculum and acquainting teachers with the changes requires extra time outside the classroom. Curriculum updates are done on a revision cycle and will help align us with the Common Core State Standards whether the state delays implementation of those standards or keeps to the current schedule.

Half of the 12.25% increase in the technology budget is a return of funding for \$50,000 of contracted services which were covered by donation in the 2013-2014 budget. The majority of the budget is for equipment replacement and the completion of the Voice of IP phone system for the district. Much of the equipment to be replaced is 8 years old and insufficient to properly support the newer computer based assessments.

The operations and maintenance budget includes a reduction of 2 custodians which will be handled by creating a rotating schedule at the elementary schools. No additional maintenance staff have been added since before the opening of Reed School. Custodial staff has helped support this by performing some of the smaller maintenance at each of their schools.

BUDGET DETAILS

Highlights of increases and (decreases) in 2014-2015 proposed budget

Educational Staff

- Certified Salaries (\$111,923)
- Non-Certified Salaries \$129,606
- Employee Benefits \$232,222

Non-Salary

- Professional Services \$10,548
- Prof. Educational Svcs. (\$39,293)
- Building Contracted (\$16,700)
- Building & Site Maint. (\$32,500)
- Contracted Services \$85,305
- Transportation \$159,611
- Insurance \$12,576
- Communications (\$11,066)
- Out of District Tuition \$44,532
- Energy (\$39,425)
- Technology & Equipment \$126,843



DISTRICT EFFICIENCIES

The State rankings for district spending for 2012-2013 have come in placing Newtown at 120 out of nearly 170 school districts. The ranking changed due to decline in enrollment and also because we began receiving aide due to the tragedy. In the period between 2000-2013, Newtown averaged in the bottom 20% of per pupil spending in the state.

The system of self-funding of medical benefits which is shared with the Town of Newtown has provided a savings of \$1,900,000 over the past 3 years. Based on average insurance industry increases, next year's medical benefits savings will be between \$600,000 and \$800,000.

The latest Security Committee recommendation to use specially-trained retired CT Police Officers to replace some Newtown Police Officers in our schools could save the town \$250,000 per year.

SECURITY

The Security Committee was asked to provide an alternative to the current police presence in each school. The current system would be difficult to sustain with the Police Officers' overtime work paid at time and a half. The Committee visited Connecticut towns that have chosen to provide armed security in their school systems through a state-approved program of certifying retired Connecticut Police officers for armed duty in schools.

The Superintendent's proposed budget includes \$324,525 for security services to provide 11 unarmed security personnel throughout the district. Following the plan recommended by the Security Committee requires 6 additional armed security officers at a cost of \$216,037 which has not been included in the budget at this point. The original 3 School Resource Officers that the Newtown Police Department supplies to the High School, Middle School and Reed Intermediate are expected to continue with the same service they have provided in previous years.

Funding for the 6 armed officers and their equipment may be able to be provided through the School Emergency Response to Violence Grant and the Department of Justice Grant that the district has been working with.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Newtown Board of Education by email: newtownboe@newtown.k12.ct.us

Get the latest budget updates on twitter: [@NewtownBOE](https://twitter.com/NewtownBOE)

Check the town meeting calendar: http://www.newtown-ct.gov/Public_Documents/index

View town board meeting videos: http://www.newtown-ct.gov/Public_Documents/NewtownCT_WebDocs/videoarchivent

Look over the Superintendent's 2014-2015 Budget Proposal: <http://goo.gl/gL5Nlc>

Read BOE Budget Season Introduction: <http://goo.gl/cEQvQN>

Review the Newtown Public Schools Coherence Plan: <http://goo.gl/Agr7BK>

Access BOE Agenda and Minutes: <http://goo.gl/FA1Wc0>

Find BOE Budget Information including the [Budget Calendar](#):

<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/DistrictInformation/BoardofEducation/BOEBudgets/tabid/4494/Default.aspx>