

BUDGET NEWS 2019-2020

NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION

UNFUNDED MANDATES

Newtown Public Schools (NPS) is faced with many unfunded mandates. Unfunded mandates are requirements imposed on our schools by the State of CT and other governing bodies, which are not supported financially by those same bodies. NPS stays ahead of the curve in these critical areas and sets students up for success by using a proactive approach that focuses on the needs of all stakeholders.

High School Graduation Requirements

Next year's freshman class will be the first who are required to complete 25 credits (as opposed to 23). The requirements include coursework in humanities, STEM, math, and science as well as world language and additional health education. We will continue to monitor and adjust all facets of education to ensure that our students and staff continue to remain prepared for this mandate.

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), is the most current instructional focus related to science. NGSS is also tested at the state level. This mandate has required a great deal of training and professional development, and this will continue as it shifts to a strong focus on phenomena-based learning and cross-cutting concepts. The District has spent additional hours on NGSS, including understanding this as an instructional focus and on new assessments. We will continue to monitor progress so as to ensure students and staff are appropriately prepared.

Social Emotional Learning and SRBI

Social Emotional learning and Scientific Based Research Interventions (SRBI) are unfunded mandates that require district-wide systems and structures to ensure students are being appropriately supported through academic and social/emotional interventions. This requires paraprofessionals, support personnel, and administrative oversight. SRBI requires defined supports in place with required "progress monitoring" of student performance and improvements over time. Collection of data is essential for the integrity of SRBI and therefore a new technology platform (Alpine) was purchased to allow data housing and ease of access. All of this is part of a district vision of SEL (Social Emotional Learning), which is facilitated by a Principal and Counselor through the Safe School Climate Committee. We have just begun to create the infrastructure for this using the CASEL framework and anticipate a great deal of oversight and ongoing evaluation to ensure appropriate and consistent implementation across the entire district.

Teacher Education and Monitoring (TEAM)

TEAM is a mandate that the state stopped funding two years ago. New teachers are responsible for completing five modules centered around Connecticut Common Core of Teaching over a period of two years. Without this program, new teachers would not be able to advance their certifications. This requires the district to fund, train and support mentors, reviewers, and facilitators. All work is reviewed by the TCC committee in the District.

Over the past three years, Newtown has hired an average of fifteen new staff members in need of submitting TEAM modules. The TCC committee will score all modules during our six given meeting dates over the course of the year and receive traditional payment for committee meeting time.

District Vision and Improvement

The responsibilities on central office and building leaders have increased exponentially. With the focus on teaching, learning, and student performance (and high stakes testing) at the core, administrators have increased responsibility to ensure best instructional practices are in place, resources are leveraged to support learning, and information is utilized to make informed decisions regarding improvements.

APRIL 2, 2019

Superintendent's Budget Presentation:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4but8mp>

2019-2020 BOE Adopted Budget:

<https://tinyurl.com/y2nqrbmz>

Upcoming Meetings

Apr. 2 7:30pm—Legislative Council Meeting

Apr. 3 7:30pm—Legislative Council Meeting

Apr. 23 Budget Referendum



SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Dr. Rodriguez is available both by email and phone for any questions or concerns.

Phone:
203-426-7600

Email: rodrigue@newtown.k12.ct.us

You can also follow her on twitter:
[@RodrigueLorrie](https://twitter.com/RodrigueLorrie)

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

April 2nd - Regular Board Meeting in the Reed Intermediate School Library

April 9th - Regular Board Meeting in the Council Chambers

April 23rd - Budget Referendum

STATE FUNDING

Year after year the Board of Education develops its budget with the best information possible in regards to funding from the State. While most of the revenue for the school district comes from local taxation, second biggest source of revenue comes from the state Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant. The ECS, which is estimated next year at approximately \$4.5 million, is paid by the State of Connecticut as its share of the cost of public education. In 1989-90 the ECS grant formula was introduced and has been modified a few times during the years. It is based upon local property taxes (per capita and per student), per capita income, median household income, populations and test scores.

Another grant that the state provides to local districts is the Excess Cost and Agency Placement Grant which was designed to assist with high cost tuition for outplaced students and students placed by a state agency (courts, DCF) over which the local district has no control. The original design of this assistance was to provide reimbursement for local costs that exceeded 4.5 times the district's average cost per student as reimbursement, and 100% of the excess cost per student for the Agency-placed student. While this grant assistance is not reflected in the revenue summary portion of the Board of Education budget because statute allows it to be netted against the appropriate expense line, the effect is that it reduces the appropriated line item by the grant amount. For example, the BOE budget shows a \$3.1 million request for out of district special education tuitions which are the net amount required after accounting for the \$1.1 million expected grant from the state. This means that the actual cost for these facilities will be \$4.2 million. The district has included \$1.5 million for this grant in the upcoming budget. The state has never fully funded this grant program, the average received has consistently been less than 75% of what is required to meet the statute. So, the BOE budget reflects this 75% reality.

There is a lot of uncertainty around how much revenue will actually come from the State from both of these sources (because the State budget is often approved after our local budget), and in recent years there have been discussions about not only a large reduction in funding, but also a shifting of state level obligations to the municipalities. Since a large portion of the money received from the State goes to pay for Special Education programs, which must always continue to operate at the same level, there isn't a way to control how many students need these services. The result is the need to move money from other areas to cover the shortfall.

MORE INFORMATION

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

Check the town meeting calendar: <https://tinyurl.com/yaryej6>

View town board meeting videos: <https://tinyurl.com/y99wats2>

Look over the Superintendent's 2019-2020 Budget Presentation: <https://tinyurl.com/y4but8mp>

Review the Board of Education Adopted Budget for 2019-2020: <https://tinyurl.com/y2nqrbmz>

Access BOE Agenda and Minutes: <https://tinyurl.com/yyzu4t78>

Find BOE Budget Information including the Budget Calendar: <https://tinyurl.com/yamjty8u>

Teaching and Learning Website: <http://tinyurl.com/y4v33fn2>