

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 24, 2021
MINUTES

This meeting was held via Zoom online meeting services and was available for the public to view, listen and participate via videoconference and dial-in options. This meeting in its entirety, as well as all the budget discussed, are available to view by visiting the East Lyme Town Hall and East Lyme Board of Education webpages.

PRESENT: Mark Nickerson, Kevin Seery, Marc Salerno, Rose Ann Hardy, Paul Dagle and Dan Cunningham
ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Anna Johnson, Superintendent Jeffrey Newton, Finance Director Maryanna Stevens, Dr. Tim Hagen, Amy Drowne, Kim Davis Director of Student Services, Cate Steel

Mr. Nickerson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Board of Education Budget Presentation

The discussion was led off by Dr. Tim Hagen who reported a positive and productive couple months of budget workshops, and a budget that they feel good about. He stated that there are a couple of items that were needed in last year's budget but that were put on the back burner, and that there was some savings in the final health insurance numbers.

Mr. Nickerson welcomed the Board of Education members in attendance and thanked all the members and the members of the Board of Finance for their roles thus far in this process, and for the hard work to come. He stated that the Board of Selectmen do not have the authority by charter to make any changes to the Board of Education budget; they will hear a presentation and will discuss it and have comments, but it now moves on to the Board of Finance along with the General Government budget.

Mr. Newton introduced everyone in attendance from the Board of Ed, and reviewed his presentation, attached hereto as Exhibit 1. He explained that this information, and more, can be found on the eastlymeschools.org webpage. He stated that they held their first workshop on the budget on December 14, 2020, and that the budget was adopted by the Board of Education on February 22nd; and he noted that the workshop style budget discussions have worked very well for this process. Mr. Newton outlined the three problems that they identified that affect this budget, and he provided solutions and the outcomes for each problem they addressed. He thanked the Board of Education and the Town for their support. He noted District achievements as successful school reopening and management of the hybrid model, development and implementation of a K-4 Virtual Viking program, and ongoing district cohort work with over 760 cohort changes to date, which Ms. Davis noted that she had received and processed 37 change requests today alone. Additional achievements are the creation and implementation of a distance learning help desk and a successful extended school year implementation last summer. Mr. Newton communicated a problem statement for the 2021-2022 school year stating that ELPS students will have endured a disrupted school experience for over a year which has created concerns such as student achievement gaps, needed student support staff, and ensure that adult to student ratios is appropriate in every classroom going into the 21-22 school year. He stated that this will require a collaborative effort between the Board of Education, administration, staff, parents, and students at every grade level and for every child. He explained that their priority will be to focus on achievement gaps, SEL support, blended learning, class size and the 21-22 base line of the impact from the 2020-2021 instructional model; they will be administering testing early on. The major budgetary requests/needs are for (1.0) FTE HS Social Worker, (1.0) FTE Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA), (2.0) FTE Elementary Math Coaches, (1.0) FTE Middle School Math Coach, (6.0) FTE Paraprofessionals, (2.0) FTE additional Grad K Teachers and (2.0) additional Grade 2 Teachers, both based on enrollment.

FILED

March 12 2021 AT 3:40 AM (PM)
[Signature]
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

BOS Special Budget Meeting
February 24, 2021

Ms. Davis spoke in support of the additional high school social worker, which would provide access to counseling for a greater number of students to help decrease the mental health challenges faced after a year of school disruption. It was reported that since September 1, 2020 through January 6, 2021, there were 35 crisis incidents at ELHS and 24 crisis incidents at ELMS and having an additional social worker on staff would help school guidance and psychologists to work on their routine cases and not always have to react to a crisis. Adding an additional COTA will ensure that the students receive a consistent level of service and make appropriate progress on their occupational therapy goals and objectives. She noted that her current caseload includes 101 students, and that the ideal caseload numbers should be between 40-50 students.

Ms. Drowne spoke in support of adding elementary and middle school math coaches to help increase the percentage of math growth target achieved by elementary and middle school students as set by the Connecticut State Department of Education. She stated that grades 4-8 need help, and only having one coach between all three elementary schools has been challenging; she noted that the middle school does not have a mathematics coach at all. Regarding the additional six paraprofessionals, Ms. Drowne explained that students with disabilities need to be staffed appropriately and that in the case of the more intensive students they require 1:1 support and that the paraprofessionals transition with the child. In addition, there are new incoming students who are going to require 1:1 support. The goal is to provide stability in staffing for both special education and general education students.

The addition of two kindergarten teachers and two second grade teachers is based on a high influx of incoming kindergarten students; Mr. Newton stated that there were quite a few families that did not enroll their child last year as anticipated, so they expect that those students will also be enter this year. For grade two, it was noted that current class sizes are already high and staffing needs to be increased to fall in line with the number of incoming students.

Mr. Salerno thanked them for the presentation and the great information, and he inquired about the IT coach. Ms. Drowne confirmed that this would be a permanent, in-house position and will support the teachers and students in all five buildings with instructional help with the online learning model. Mr. Newton stated that unless the State requires it, he does not plan to offer Virtual Viking or any type of online learning in the upcoming school year. Mr. Salerno asked if the kindergarten teachers would be hired right away or will they wait to see what the actual enrollment numbers are, and Mr. Newton stated that they will be waiting until they have the enrollment numbers before, they will go out to hire additional staff for this grade. For the math support, this support will take place during the students' math instructional block and will not take away from their lunch, physical education, or any other class time, and is also not planned as an after-school instruction. Regarding collaborating to save money, Mr. Salerno inquired as to if there are any opportunities to collaborate with Parks and Recreation and Public Works on grounds maintenance, and Mr. Lund stated that we do currently collaborate on groundskeeping whenever possible and that he has a great relationship with both departments, and they are working well together. Mr. Salerno stated that he would like the Town and the Board of Education to keep the discussion open as to the possibility of sharing and IT person.

Mr. Cunningham stated that he was happy to hear that Ms. Deb Roselli Kelly was named the permanent principal of East Lyme High School and congratulated all involved. Mr. Cunningham inquired as to the reason for the large increase in Instructional Assistants. Ms. Stevens explained that she has re-worked how she is applying grant money, so that in turn increased line 126 but decreased line 129 at the same time. The additional increase is due to two years of salary increases being held in contingency until the union contract was finalized. It was explained that instruction assistants are non-certified staff; examples of certified staff are teachers, math coaches, etc.

Mr. Dagle stated that the Board of Education has done a great job navigating through this pandemic and he is grateful for their hard work and dedication in taking care of our students, and he stated that he fully supports the increase in social workers and thanked them for including this addition in their budget request. He asked if the cost per pupil has changed since last year, and Mr. Newton stated that it is roughly the same and it is approximately \$18,000; there are approximately 2,700 students in the district.

Mr. Nickerson stated that he has great respect for all that Mr. Newton and his staff and teachers do, especially over the past year. Mr. Nickerson inquired as to how the summer program will be funded and Mr. Newton responded that it will be funded by the ESSER grant (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief), which is a two year grant and which they are on round two. He advised that the funds will cover this year and possible next year if needed. Mr. Nickerson asked what other things that the ESSER funds could be used for, and Mr. Newton responded that the funds may be used for any general student support, such as intervention support, technology, staff development, school safety, etc. Any savings because of COVID? Mr. Newton stated that there has been some savings in the areas of transportation services and substitute teachers over the past year. Mr. Lund reported that instead of sending his staff home because of the pandemic, he used the time to catch up on approximately five years' worth of projects that have been put on the back burner due to lack of time; so, although there were no savings this was a very productive time for the building and grounds crew. Ms. Stevens reported that they turned over approximately \$500,000 from last year's budget that was there due to the pandemic. Mr. Nickerson asked for a breakdown of increases for all their different unions, and Ms. Stevens stated that she would compile a spreadsheet and get it to Mr. Nickerson.

Mr. Nickerson stated that they presented a good budget and presented the documentation to back it up the needs. Although we have great schools and people move here and stay here because of our school system, he feels that this budget represents a substantial increase in services in an uncertain time. Mr. Nickerson stated that he would like to see the world to get back to normal a little before making increases that are not mandated, but he again stated that he understands the needs and he understands the need to reach a balance, but he wanted to make sure he expressed that he wishes some of these additions could wait. He inquired if there is any additional programming, and Mr. Newton stated that there is a focus on equity and inclusion and diversity across the school system, not necessarily at a cost but a new program that will be included. Mr. Nickerson asked if any Capital items can be put off a year or two, and Mr. Newton stated that they will be reviewing those items at their upcoming meeting with the Board of Finance.

Mr. Nickerson explained that he understands completely that our taxpayers expect a certain level of service to be provided to them, but we need to work hard to try to find the balance. He noted that the services that the residents expect come at a cost. Ms. Hardy asked if all students are still receiving free lunch, and Mr. Newton stated that this federal program continues, and he does not anticipate there to be a shortfall. Ms. Stevens stated that the food services director has done a great job since coming on board and managed to save a good deal of money in the last couple of years so there was extra money in the account going into the pandemic to absorb the deficit. Mrs. Hardy stated that this program continuing at no cost to families has been invaluable to our students and families. Curbside meal pickup continues Wednesday and Friday at the Middle school for families, and this will continue through the end of the school. Ms. Hardy inquired if the summer food program will take place, and Mr. Newton stated that as of right now the free program is scheduled to end on June 30th.

MOTION (1)

Mr. Seery MOVED to adjourn the February 24, 2021, special meeting of the East Lyme Board of Selectmen at 7:22 p.m.

Seconded by Mr. Salerno. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted By:



Sandra Anderson
Recording Secretary

East Lyme Public Schools Board of Education Adopted Budget for FY 2021-2022 to the Board of Selectmen



"East Lyme Public Schools will inspire, engage and educate each student to become a contributing citizen and a responsible, independent, and critical thinker."

Presented by:
Superintendent Jeffrey Newton
February 24, 2021

Exhibit 1

Budget Workshops

Budget Workshop # 1: December 14, 2020

Board of Education Meeting/Workshop #2: January 11, 2021

*"Coming together is a beginning;
Keeping together is progress;
Working together is success."*

Henry Ford

Problem, Solution, Outcome #1

Problem: COVID Protocols Required Adjustments to In-School Instruction.

Solution: To Establish a New Infrastructure (For Both Hybrid/Virtual Viking) to Meet the Needs of All Students with High-Speed Internet Working Both at Home and at School.

Outcome: Completed Instructional Infrastructure Across Schools:

- *High speed internet in and out of buildings*
- *Access to mobile devices for students - Deployment of 2,500 student devices, 550 teacher and paraprofessional devices, 300 document cameras and 250 pairs of headphones by December 15, 2020*
- *Instructional programs continued despite COVID impacts*

Current Fiscal Year: Identified Problems

1. COVID Protocols Required Adjustments to In-School Instruction.

2. Instructional Technology Assistance was Required to Implement and Support a Digital Infrastructure.

3. To Best Enhance Student Learning, Existing Classroom Protocols Needed to be Modified to Enhance On-Line Instruction.

Problem, Solution, Outcome #2

Problem: Instructional Technology Assistance was Required to Implement and Support a Digital Infrastructure.

Solution: To Hire an Instructional Technology Coach to Help Implement/Monitor District-Wide Software, Usage, and Efficacy of Instructional Supports. Additionally, To Establish a Distance Learning Help Desk.

Outcome: Administration and Instructional Technology Coach Now Monitoring Effectiveness of Implemented Supports and Tickets to Help Desk Usage (i.e. Total distance learning help desk tickets to date: 252)

Problem, Solution, Outcome #3

Problem: To Best Enhance Student Learning, Existing Classroom Protocols Needed to be Modified to Enhance On-Line Instruction.

Solution: Develop a Job Embedded Instructional Technology Coaching Model at the Building Level to Support Staff and Students.

Outcome: Ongoing Support and Engagement in New Teacher Practices Utilizing Online Tools and Software (ie. As of February 2020, teachers were utilizing 31 online tools/software. As of February 2021, teachers are utilizing 63 online tools/software.)

Current Fiscal Year 20-21

We want to thank the Board of Education and Town for all their support in allowing us to have the funding to be successful in these ventures!

East Lyme Public Schools Board of Education/Town Collaboration

Administrative

- Accounting (MUNIS)
- RecDesk

Health Insurance

- Broker

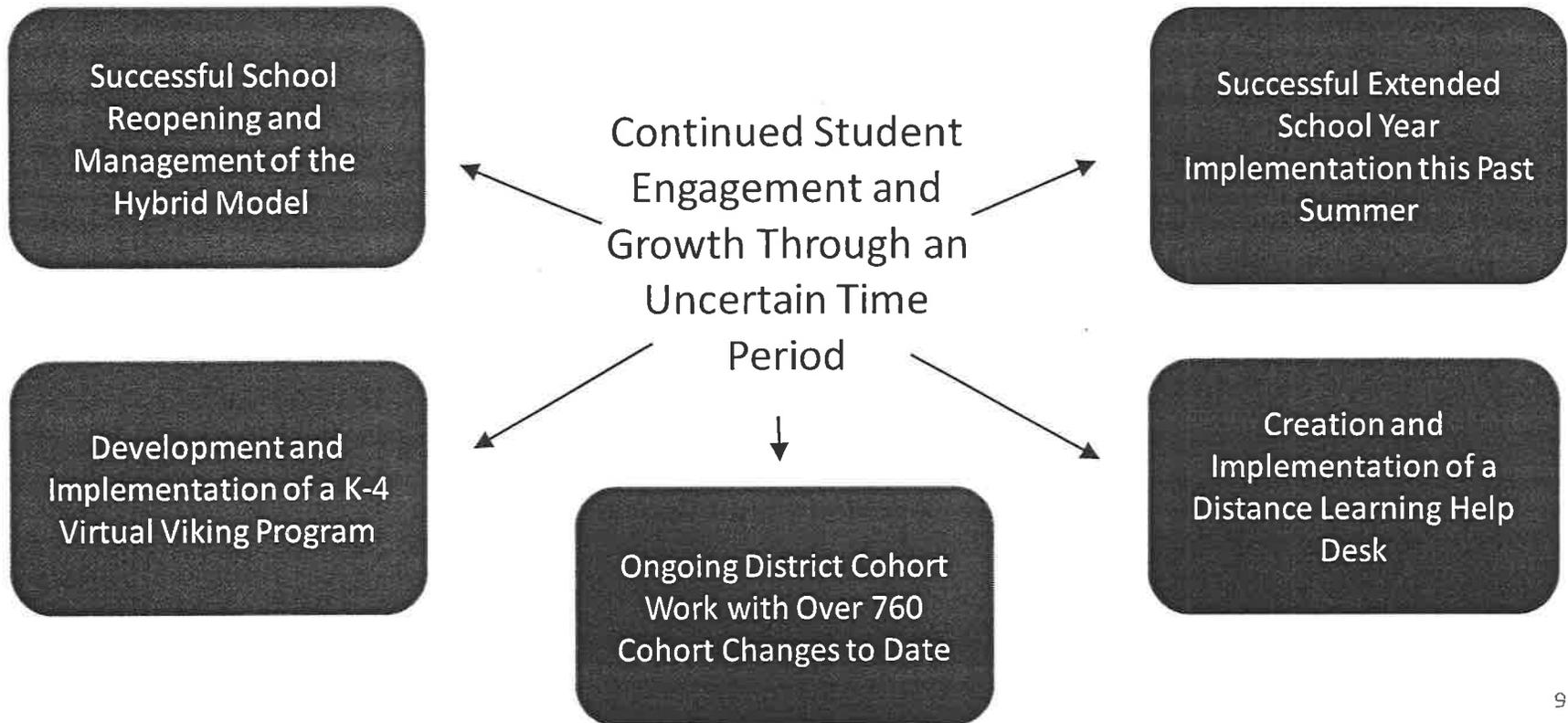
General Operations

- Fuel
- Plowing
- Mail Service
- Town Garage Services

Other Items Under Discussion

- Electricity
- Copiers

Current Fiscal Year: District Achievements To Date



Problem Statement: 2021-2022 School Year

Problem: ELPS Students will have endured a disrupted school experience for over a year. This significant disruption has brought forth major concerns regarding the following:

- *Student achievement gaps*
- *Needed student support services*
- *Ensuring adult to student ratios are appropriate in every classroom going into the 21-22 school year*

Solution: A collaborative effort between the Board of Education, administration, staff, parents, and students will be required to ensure gaps in learning and achievement across our district are quickly and effectively closed at every grade level and for every child impacted.

2021-2022 School District Priorities

Based on COVID-19 Overall School Disruptions, District Priorities Will be Focused on the Following for Next School Year:

Achievement Gaps

- Reduce Overall Achievement Gaps and Identified Achievement Gaps in Math as Measured by State Standardized Assessments Within District, While also Beginning to Focus on High Needs vs. Non-High Needs Students

SEL Support

- Increase Social and Emotional Support, Special Education Support, and Student Support Services for Children Across all Grade Levels, Achieving Goals Set Through Student Support Service Administration and Staff

Blended Learning

- Actively Engage Students in Authentic and Relevant Blended Learning Experiences

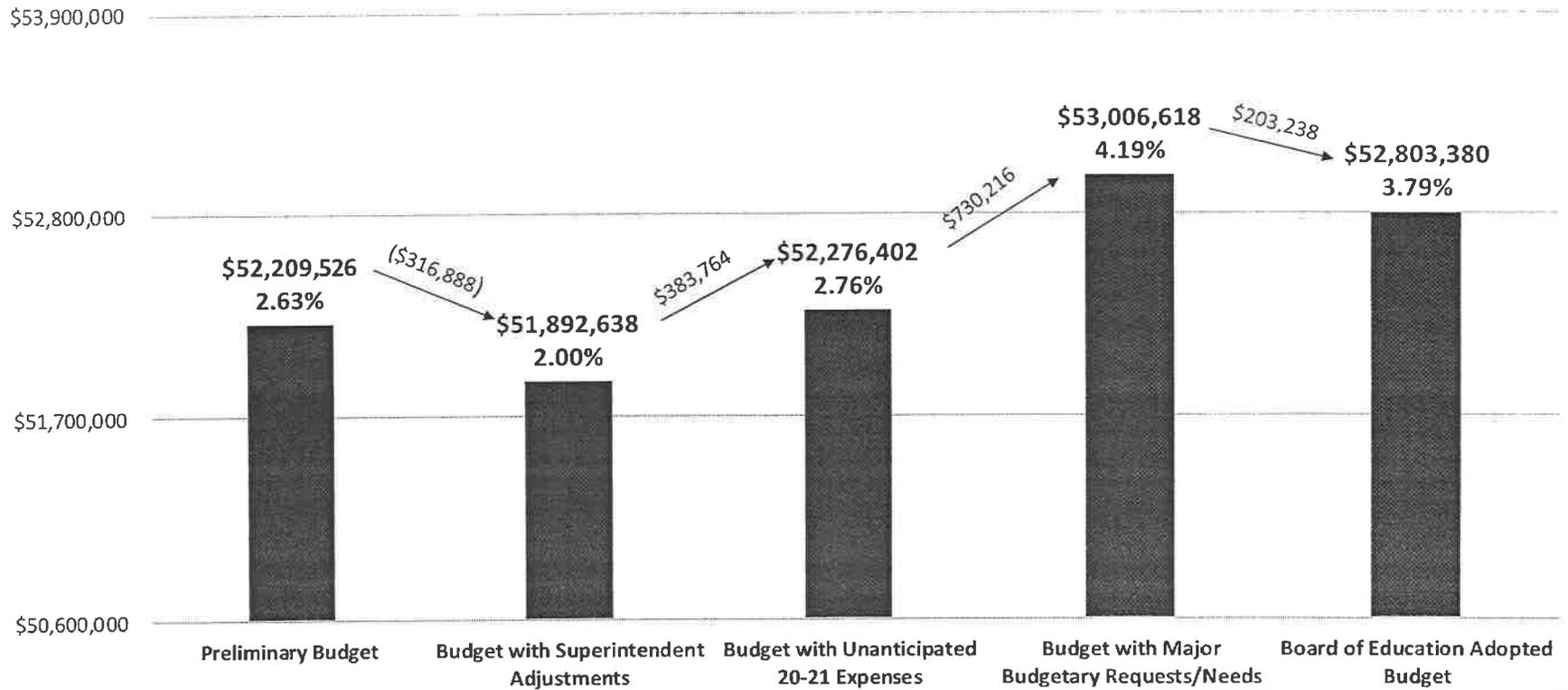
Class Size

- Maintain Class Sizes Within Board Established Guidelines

21-22 Base Line

- Identify a District-Wide Pre-K – 22 Base-Line Regarding the Impact From the 2020-2021 Instructional Model

2021-2022 District Budget Analysis



2021-2022 Major Budgetary Requests/Needs

- 1.0 FTE High School Social Worker
- 1.0 FTE Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)
- 2.0 FTE Elementary Math Coaches
- 1.0 FTE Middle School Math Coach
- 6.0 FTE Paraprofessionals
- 2.0 FTE Additional Grade K Teachers (based on enrollment)
- 2.0 FTE Additional Grade 2 Teachers (based on enrollment)

2021-2022 High School Social Worker

PROBLEM:

A Significant number of high school students require support for mental health challenges. Sharing one social worker between the full student body and the Therapeutic Program results in inadequate service for all. National Association of Social Workers recommends at ratio of 1 Social Worker per 250 students.

SOLUTION

Bring forth a 1.0 additional school social worker to support the ongoing and projected trend of increased need for mental health support at East Lyme High School.

OUTCOME:

Provide access to counseling for a greater number of students. Decrease mental health challenges after a year of school disruption.

Priority #2: Increase Social and Emotional Support, Special Education Support, and Student Support Services for Children Across all Grade Levels, Achieving Goals Set Through Student Support Service Administration and Staff.

Priority #5: Identify a District-Wide Pre-K – 22 Base-Line Regarding the Impact from the 2020-2021 Instructional Model.

2021-2022 High School Social Worker

Supporting Data:

- 35 crisis incidents at ELHS (9/1/20 - 1/6/21)
- 24 crisis incidents at ELMS (9/1/20 - 1/6/21)
- 12 Students in Therapeutic Program
- Both MS & HS Social Workers serve students in the AIM Program
- With only one Social Worker at HS, guidance & school psychologists provide large amounts of time per week to crisis intervention

2021-2022 Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant

PROBLEM:

Current caseload for the Occupational Therapist assigned to ELMS & NCS is 101 students. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) recommends 40-50 depending on the needs of students. The current Occupational Therapist is carrying at least twice the recommended number of students.

SOLUTION:

Hire a full-time Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) to work alongside the OT.

OUCOME:

Students will receive a consistent level of service and make appropriate progress on their OT goals and objectives. Ideal caseload numbers should be between 40-50.

Priority #2: Increase Social and Emotional Support, Special Education Support, and Student Support Services for Children Across all Grade Levels, Achieving Goals Set Through Student Support Service Administration and Staff.

Priority #5: Identify a district-wide Pre-K – 22 base-line regarding the impact from the 2020-2021 instructional model

2021-2022 Elementary and MS Math Coaches

PROBLEM:

A percentage of our grade 3-8 students are not meeting their growth target as assessed by Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Currently, one math coach for all three elementary buildings.

Currently, no math coach at the middle school.

SOLUTION:

Increase math-based instructional interventions and coaching at all three elementary buildings and at the middle school by increasing the number of coaches from one to four (+3 addition).

Math coaches will teach teachers research based mathematical instructional practices at the elementary and middle school level to strengthen our tier one instruction.

OUTCOME:

Increase the percentage of math growth target achieved by elementary and MS students as set by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Priority #1: Reduce Overall Achievement Gaps and Identified Achievement Gaps in Math as Measured by State Standardized Assessments Within District, While also Beginning to Focus on High Needs vs. Non-High Needs Students.

Priority #5: Identify a district-wide Pre-K – 22 baseline regarding the impact from the 2020-2021 instructional model.

Smarter Balanced Mathematics Growth Trends Grade 4-8

What is growth? How is it different from achievement?

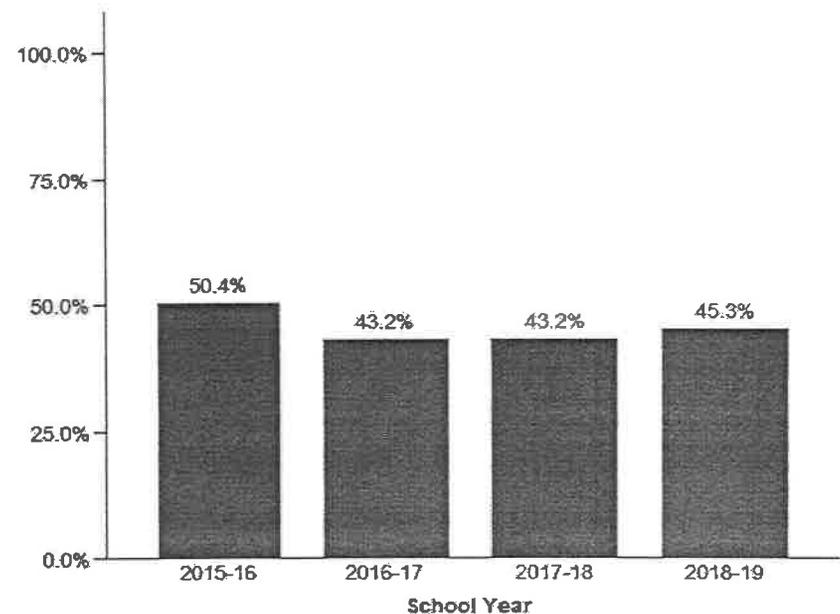
Achievement or Proficiency:

- A one-time snapshot measurement of a student's academic performance

Growth:

- Change in achievement score for the same student between two or more points in time.

Math Growth Rate
Percentage of students who met their growth targets



2021-2022 Additional Paraprofessionals

PROBLEM:

Students with disabilities transition with age between our buildings. Moving staff would leave sending program short.

Additional elementary students who require 1:1 support.

Return of one out of district placed student anticipated.

SOLUTION:

Hire 6 Paraprofessionals to increase support for students with disabilities

OUTCOME:

Provide stability in staffing for both special education and general education students.

Priority #2: Increase Social and Emotional Support, Special Education Support, and Student Support Services for Children Across all Grade Levels, Achieving Goals Set Through Student Support Service Administration and Staff

Priority #3: Actively Engage Students in Authentic and Relevant Blended Learning Experiences.

Priority #5: Identify a district-wide Pre-K – 22 base-line regarding the impact from the 2020-2021 instructional model.

2021-2022 Additional Paraprofessionals

Supporting Data:

- 3 Students at LBH need 1:1 para support. Currently building-based paras are covering, impacting staff available to support Tier 1/Tier 2 students and classrooms at large
- In the last 5 years, ELPS has seen an increase of 15 students eligible for services based on Autism. These students require intensive supports including communication, behavior/adaptative skills, as well as specialized instruction for academics
- 2 students moving from the MS to HS will continue to need support. The MS program continues to need those staff members
- 1 Student projected to return from out of district placement will need 1:1 support. Tuition and transportation will be a savings

2021-2022 Additional Elementary Teachers

PROBLEM:

Concern regarding a high influx of K students at the start of next school year pushing class sizes beyond Board of Education guidelines.

Class sizes in grade two at FL and LBH remain high (at the very top of the guidelines) impeding necessary supports for this cohort of students.

SOLUTION:

Hire the recommended number of additional teachers to ensure proper class size.

OUTCOME:

Students receive the appropriate level of service, instruction, and support with smaller class sizes to meet individual needs at grade two and in Kindergarten given a previously disrupted school year.

Priority #3: Actively Engage Students in Authentic and Relevant Blended Learning Experiences.

Priority#4: Maintain Class Sizes Within Board Established Guidelines.

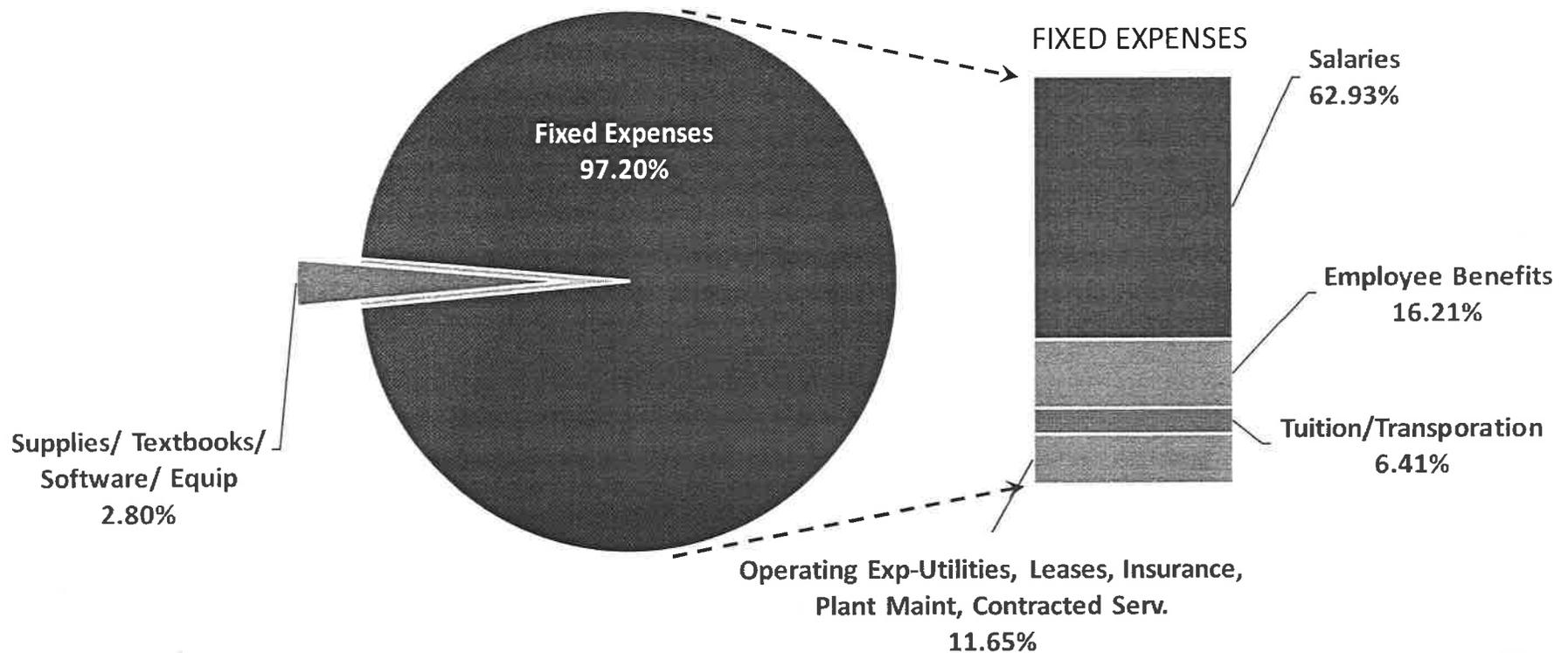
Priority #5: Identify a district-wide Pre-K – 22 base-line regarding the impact from the 2020-2021 instructional model.



GRADE K-4 PROJECTED CLASS SIZE

ELPS Class Size Guidelines	Projected 21-22 Enrollment	Projected 21-22 Enrollment with Homeschool Students Returning	Projected Average Class Size	Total Teacher Count by Grade Level
NCS				
K: 15-18	K TBD		TBD	TBD
Grade 1: 15-18	Grade 1 - 34	35	17.5	2
Grade 2: 18-20	Grade 2 - 45	46	15.3	3
Grade 3: 18-20	Grade 3 - 54	55	18.3	3
Grade 4: 20-22	Grade 4 - 40	42	21.0	2
LBH				
K: 15-18	K TBD		TBD	TBD
Grade 1: 15-18	Grade 1 - 37	39	13.0	3
Grade 2: 18-20	Grade 2 - 56	62	20.7 (Add Teacher: 15.5)	3 or 4 w/add
Grade 3: 18-20	Grade 3 - 69	69	23.0	3
Grade 4: 20-22	Grade 4 - 60	64	21.3	3
FL				
K: 15-18	K TBD		TBD	TBD
Grade 1: 15-18	Grade 1 - 45	47	15.6	3
Grade 2: 18-20	Grade 2 - 56	60	20.0 (Add Teacher: 15.0)	3 or 4 w/add
Grade 3: 18-20	Grade 3 - 51	52	17.3	3
Grade 4: 20-22	Grade 4 - 54	55	18.3	3 22

East Lyme Public Schools Fixed Expenses



Per Pupil Expenditures – State of CT Department of Education

DISTRICT NAME	PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE	RANKED HIGHEST TO LOWEST
DISTRICT NO. 18	22,535	21
MADISON	21,152	37
OLD SAYBROOK	21,082	40
CLINTON	19,295	63
WATERFORD	18,814	74
GUILFORD	18,545	79
EAST LYME	18,024	92
NORWICH	18,018	93
NEW LONDON	17,441	110
NORTH STONINGTON	17,136	117
MONTVILLE	16,895	121
GROTON	16,481	134
SALEM	16,383	138
GRISWOLD	15,694	146
LEDYARD	15,351	154

Thank You For Your Ongoing Support!