

EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING OF MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

MINUTES

PRESENT: Denise Hall, Chairperson; John Birmingham, Vice Chairperson; Richard Steel, Peter DeRosa, Paul Maxfield and Lauren McNamara

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Anna Johnson and Board of Education representatives; Superintendent Jeff Newton, Assistant Superintendent Annaliese Spaziano, BOE Chairperson Eric Bauman, BOE Finance Director Maryanna Stevens, Director of Student Services Kim Davis and Director of Facilities Chris Lund

Ms. Hall called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Delegations

There were none.

IV. Budget Review – Board Of Education #999

The full Board of Education budget can be found on their webpage or by clicking this link: [Budget Information - East Lyme Public Schools \(eastlymeschools.org\)](http://eastlymeschools.org).

Mr. Eric Bauman, Chairperson of the Board of Education, led off the discussion and stated that the Board of Education is still operating under Covid recovery although the pandemic does appear to be winding down. A positive that has come from the pandemic is that every student is now equipped with the technology that she or he will require for their classes to complete the one-to-one learning; this equipment will be continued to be used outside of the hybrid learning model. He thanked the members of the Board of Finance for their attendance at the budget workshops that were held and stated that the Board of Education is supportive of this budget and feels that it fairly addresses the fiscal challenges while still striving to continue to move the district forward. Some of tough decisions revolved around the increase in inflation surrounding energy costs, higher minimum wage, and an increase in cost and utilization of special education. Mr. Bauman reported that they successfully negotiated two new three-year contracts with the negotiated 2.5% salary increases for the teachers and paraprofessionals.

Mr. Jeff Newton, Superintendent, took the podium and reviewed his presentation, which is attached hereto as Exhibit #1. He stated that overall, the Board of Education has many goals and focus for the future, but that in this budget they will be concentrating on recovery and opportunities. Mr. Newton stated that there are many issues brought on by the pandemic that they now need to deal with; including student behavioral and emotional issues, ongoing achievement gaps, additional student support services, and making sure that teacher to student ratios remain appropriate in every classroom going into the 22/23 school year. He reported that feedback from parents is that the teacher to student ratio is very important to

FILED

March 28 2022 AT 3:10 AM/PM

(Denise Hall)

EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

them, as well as including forging a strong path to careers that don't include a four-year university. Mr. Newton reported that they have utilized approximately \$1.3 million in grant money to implement additional staff during the pandemic; some positions have been worked into the budget, some positions are temporary and will expire at the end of their contract, and some have been funded through next year with the hopes of adding them to the budget. He noted that getting technology in the hands of every student in the district has been a positive as they were beginning to notice that students were getting to middle school, and they were not prepared for the jump to a more technological based learning. Mr. Newton explained that 92.90% of the increase in this budget is due to contractual salaries and benefits, contracted services and utilities, and noted that 96.96% of the expenses are fixed. He stated that they budgeted for the insurance at five percent, but that this number could be lower. This years budget came in at a 4.59% increase and was adopted by the Board of Education at a meeting on February 28, 2022.

Ms. Annaliese Spaziano, Assistant Superintendent, addressed the Board and went into more detail regarding the implementation of the coaching model and reported that they are seeing a huge success so far; one hundred percent of the students identified as needing a coach and then who received said coaching have met and/or exceeded their growth targets. She noted that identifying and correcting issues before and upon entering middle school has eliminated the need and use of special education services.

Ms. Kim Davis, Director of Student Services, addressed the Board and explained that the need for increased student services continues and will continue for the present and near future. She reported that there are twenty-three new students with disabilities, six of which require a one-on-one paraprofessional. The need to maintain one social worker at the elementary level, and two at the middle school and high school each, remains and will continue through the next school year. Ms. Davis stated that although East Lyme is above average in its special education services, there are still eleven students that must be placed out of district; our goal is to be able to accommodate all students and not have to send anyone out of district.

Mr. Newton gave kudos to the teachers and staff, stating that East Lyme has a very low percentage of students that require additional, out of district support. He reported that due to decreased enrollment at both the middle school and the high school, staff has been decreased by three full time teachers in the middle school and 1.4 at the high school. It was noted that an entire kiva has been eliminated, and five positions were eliminated; two people were reallocated and three were let go.

Mr. Chris Lund, Director of Facilities, addressed the Board and outlined the items on the Board of Education Capital Improvement Plan. He stated that they will continue to seek out alternative funding resources, including ARP funds and infrastructure, to cover items listed under capital improvement.

Ms. Hall stated that the Board of Selectmen prepared a list of questions/comments on the BOE budget that were submitted as part of tonight's meeting; attached hereto as Exhibit #2. Some of the items are non-negotiable due to contractual increases and some are set by regulations, etc. It was noted that there could be a reduction in printing costs through more digitization, but by nature of teaching and learning, some things will be required to be printed and in color. The

Board of Education is aware of the increase in staffing through the use of ARP funds, and the proposed plan of what to do with these positions is tentatively outlined in the presentation. It was confirmed that the Board of Education does work with the Public Works Director to procure fuels in the same manner as the Town, and this has worked well for the town as a whole in saving money on fuels and such. Regarding budgeted salaries, sometimes a reduction may be reflected simply because of attrition; if someone leaves a position that they have been in for a long time the replacement will not have as high a salary as the person. Ms. Hall noted that there are many times that you see a bus with little to no children on board. Mr. Newton explained that they are required to provide transportation for every student regardless of if they get driven in or not. He noted that the elementary and middle schools busses are generally full, but at the high school level they must still provide transportation, but the students don't require that service as much. Salem provides transportation for those students that are bussed to East Lyme to attend the high school.

There was discussion around using electronic copies instead of hard copy textbooks, and Mr. Newton stated that there is really no savings for using the online learning as there are still associated costs, and ultimately there will still need to be hard copies. Regarding the drastic increase in utilities, which is something that could not be properly planned for as there was such a dramatic increase; the estimated costs were reasonable and on target.

It was explained that the coaches are different than the teachers in that the teachers are tied to the classroom and the curriculum, whereas the coaches are tied to the curriculum and the student. Ms. Spaziano reported that the coaching model is a success so far, and it is only being utilized in math because this is where the greatest need is at the moment.

The Board of Education promised to review tonight's discussion and return a report with any items that they promised additional information on.

V. Public Discussion

There was no public discussion.

VI. Board Comments

There were no Board comments.

VII. Adjourn

MOTION (1)

Mr. Maxfield MOVED to adjourn the March 21, 2022, special budget meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 9:02 p.m.
Seconded by Ms. Hall. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted By:



Sandra Anderson

Recording Secretary

Exhibit #1

EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTED BUDGET FOR FY 2022-2023 PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE

Presented by:

Eric Bauman, BOE Chairman
Jeffrey Newton, Superintendent of Schools
Annaliese Spaziano, Assistant Superintendent
Kimberly Davis, Director of Student Services
Christian Lund, Director of Facilities
Maryanna Stevens, Director of Finance

March 21, 2022, at 7:00 PM



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

Budget Workshops 2021-2022

Budget Workshop # 1: November 18, 2021

Budget Workshop #2: December 20, 2021

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

Board of Education Goals and Focus

- Goal 1: Recovery

Support and monitor the recovery of the district from the pandemic. Monitor and assess utilization of relief fund support

- Goal 2: Opportunities

Four areas of opportunities are under development in part due to our response to the pandemic (Blended Learning, SEL, DEI, Communication and Engagement)

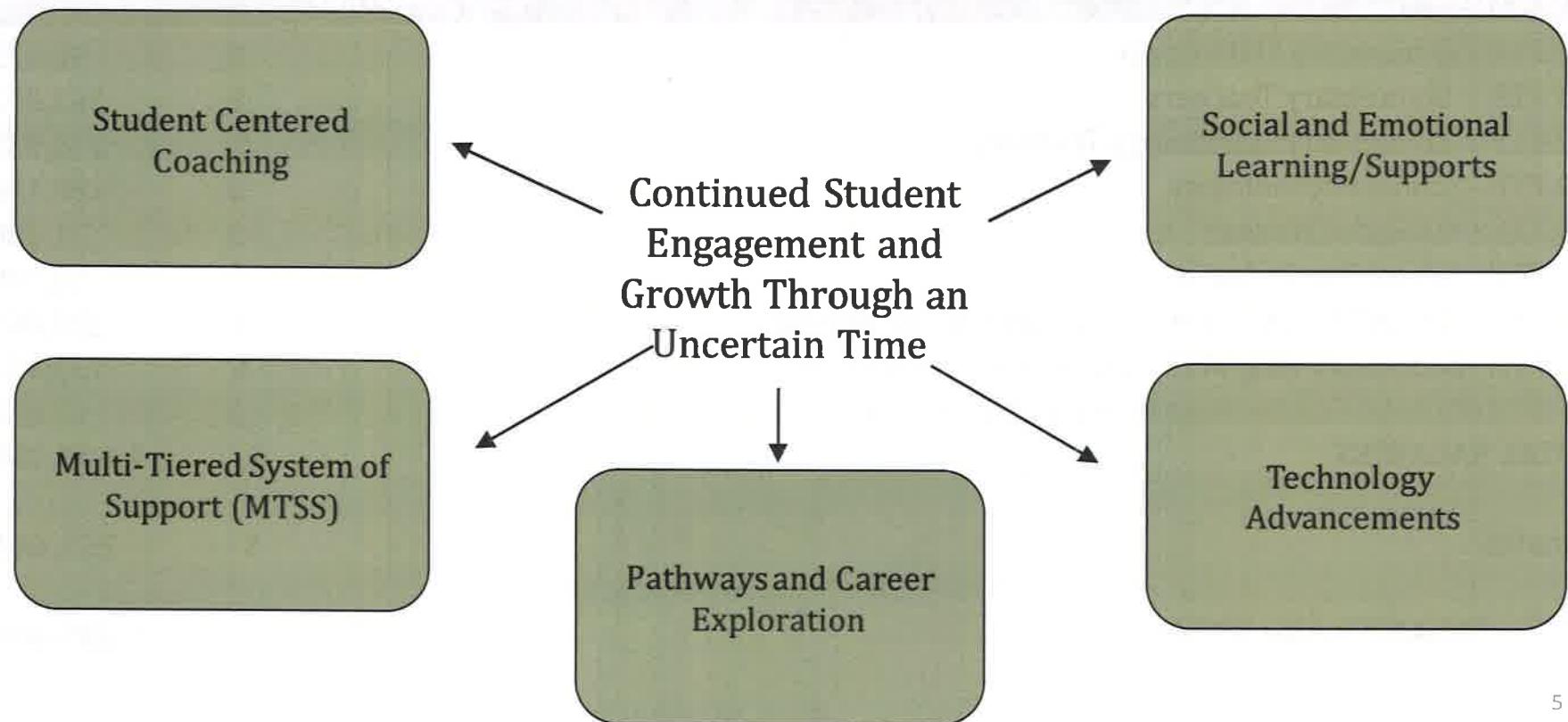
Needs Statement: 2022-2023 School Year

ELPS Students continue to require support due to pandemic disruption. The following concerns remain at the forefront:

- *Student behavioral and emotional issues*
- *Ongoing achievement gaps*
- *Needed student support services*
- *Ensuring adult to student ratios remain appropriate in every classroom going into the 22-23 school year*

Continued collaborative efforts between the Board of Education, the town, administration, staff, and parents will be required to meet the needs of students both academically and emotionally across our schools.

Reimagining Foundational Work of 2021-2022



2021-2022 Grant Funded Positions

Supporting our Students

POSITION	AMOUNT
1.0 FTE - Elementary Math Coach	\$ 90,875
4.0 FTE - Elementary Teachers	\$ 262,393
3.0 FTE - Elementary Technology Teachers	\$ 244,933
1.0 FTE - School Psychologist	\$ 80,136
1.0 FTE - MS Social Worker	\$ 71,000
.20 FTE - School Psychologist	\$ 16,700
2.0 FTE - HS - MTSS Intervention Teachers-Math/English	\$ 138,663
1.0 FTE - Secondary 504/MTSS/Pathways Coordinator	\$ 133,002
.50 FTE - Coastal Connections Program Administrator	\$ 67,663
TOTAL SALARIES	\$ 1,105,365
Benefits	\$ 253,644
TOTAL SALARIES AND BENEFITS	\$ 1,359,009

2022-2023 Preliminary Grant Funded Positions Supporting our Students

POSITION	AMOUNT
4.0 FTE - Elementary Teachers	\$ 274,992
3.0 FTE - Elementary Technology Teacher	\$ 317,089
1.0 FTE – Elementary School Psychologist	\$ 85,380
TOTAL SALARIES	\$ 677,461
Benefits	\$ 163,034
TOTALS	\$ 840,495

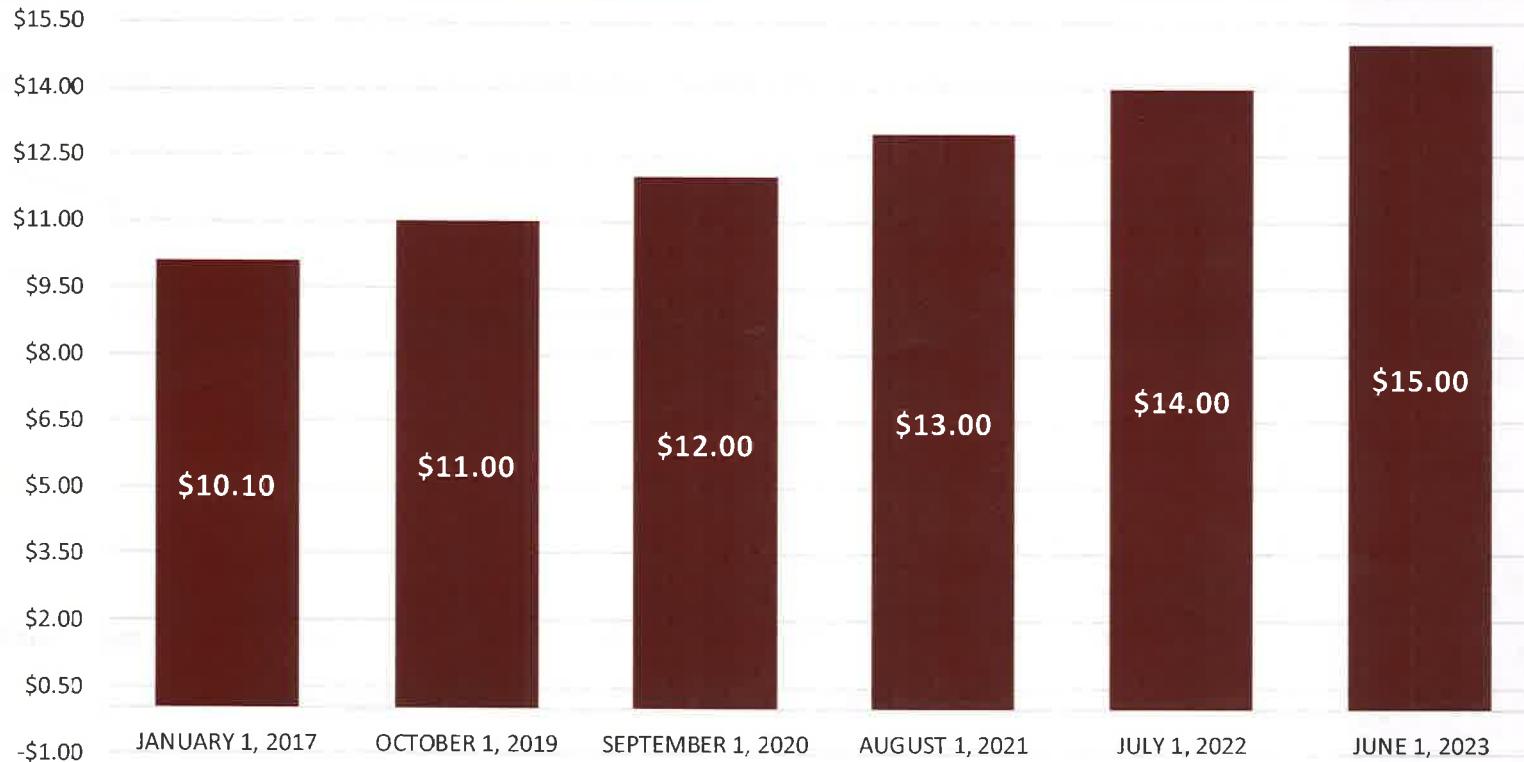
2022-2023 Major Budget Drivers

The major budget drivers listed below make up 92.90% or \$2,228,829 of the budget increase of \$2,399,014

Salaries	Benefits	Contracted Services	Utilities
48.51% or \$1,163,769 of Budget Increase <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The increase in salaries is due to contractual increases and the increase in minimum wage• Contractual increases averaged 2.50%• Some staff budgeted using ARP grants in 21-22 are included in the 22-23 operating budget due to continued student needs	17.48% or \$419,412 of Budget Increase <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The increase in benefits is primarily due to the increase in health insurance and payroll taxes• The increase in health insurance has been budgeted at 5%.• Payroll taxes increase is a direct result of the increase in salaries.	15.31% or \$367,383 of Budget Increase <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The increase in contracted services is mainly due to the increase in the Technology contract and the Nursing contract.• A portion of the technology contract was funded through the ARP grant in 21/22.• The nursing contract increased due to the addition of a Nurse at the MS and a Health Aid at LBH to accommodate student needs.	11.60% or \$278,265 of Budget Increase <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in Utilities is due to the market increases in the electric, natural gas and fuel industries• The district electric contract for supply ends November 2022. A 20% rate increase is estimated.

The 2022-23 proposed budget includes inflationary increases for non-contractual items such as supplies, transportation and insurance of 4%-5%; the CPI-U index for January reflects an annual inflationary increase of 7.5%.

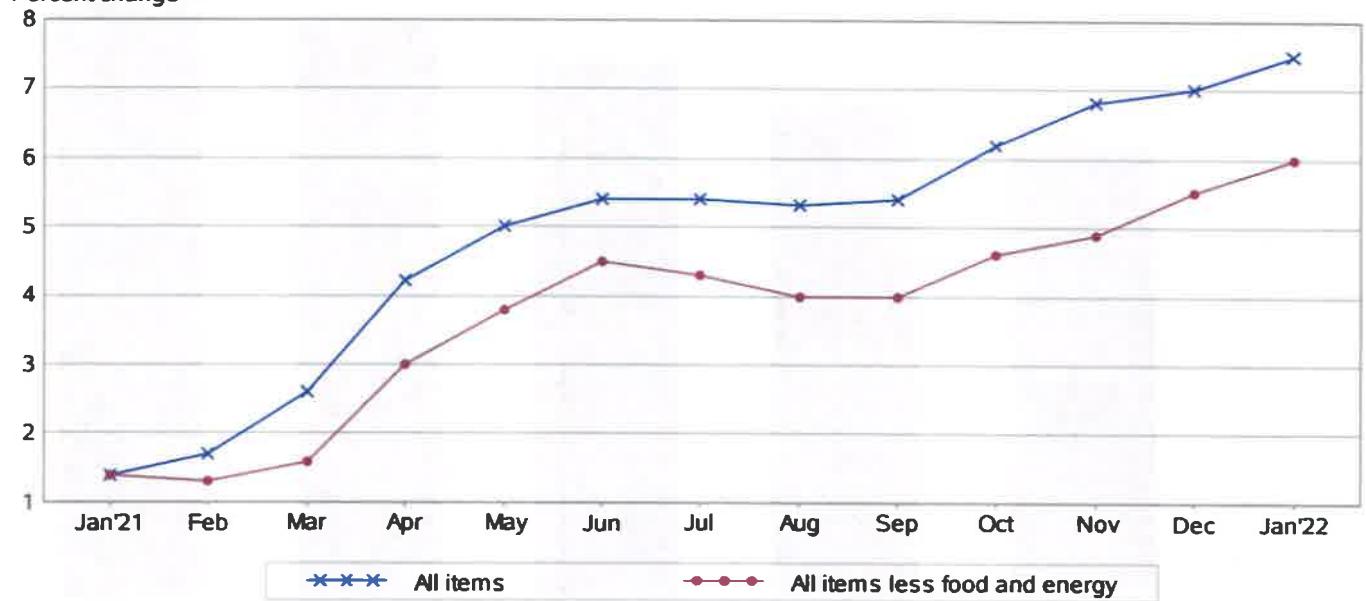
CT Minimum Wage



The aggregate percentage increase in the minimum wage from January 1, 2017 through June 1, 2023 will be 48.50%

Inflation Statistics

Chart 2. 12-month percent change in CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), not seasonally adjusted, Jan. 2021 - Jan. 2022
Percent change



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

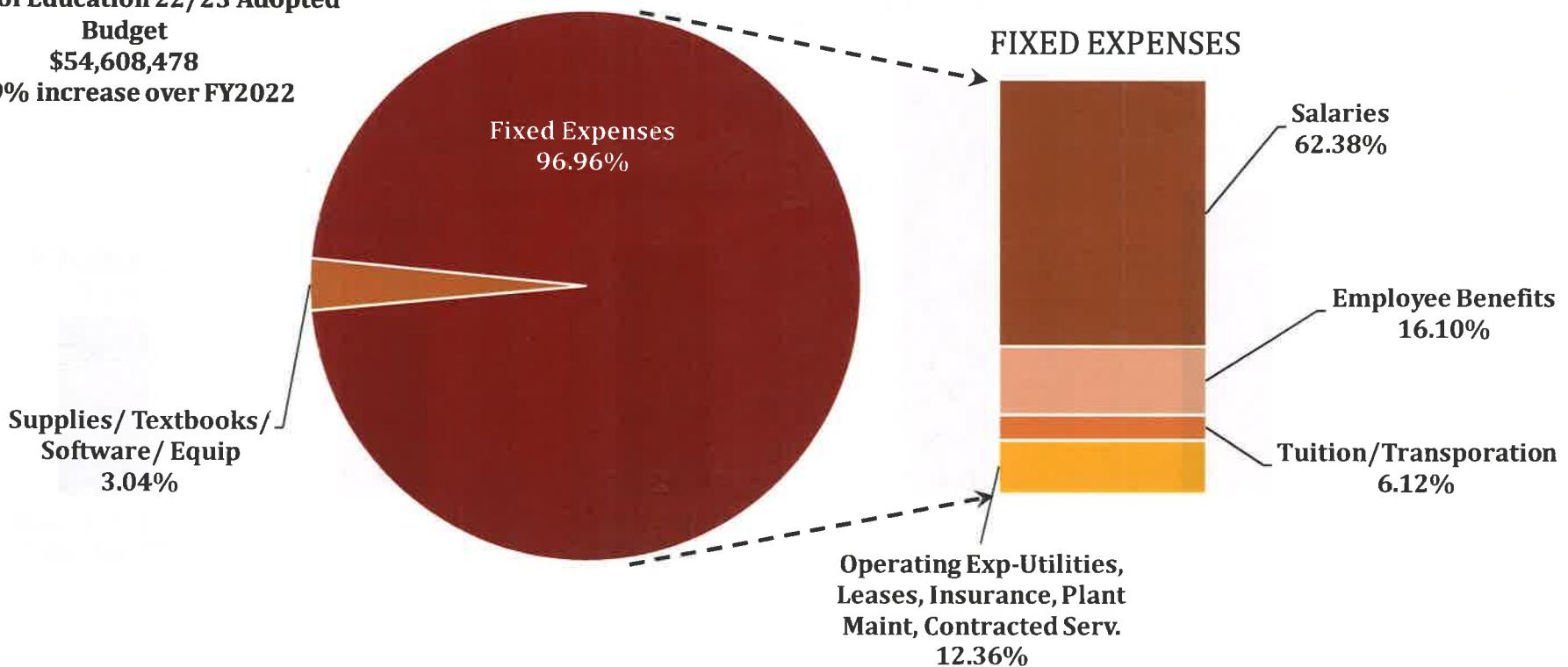
East Lyme Public Schools 2022-2023 Fixed Expenses

Board of Education 22/23 Adopted

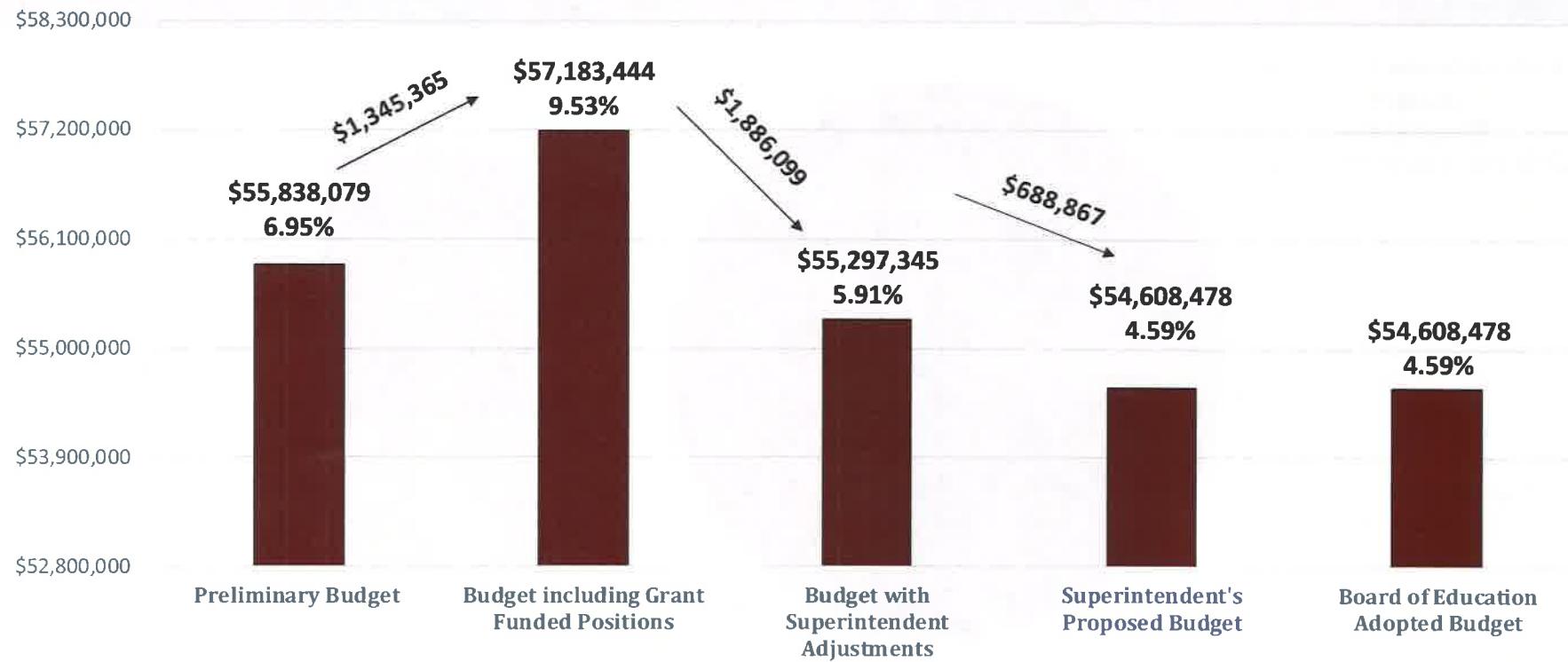
Budget

\$54,608,478

4.59% increase over FY2022



2022-2023 BOE District Budget Overview



Per Pupil Expenditures

DISTRICT NAME	PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE	RANKED HIGHEST TO LOWEST
OLD SAYBROOK	24,275	23
MADISON	22,980	32
DISTRICT NO. 18	22,937	33
CLINTON	21,220	62
WATERFORD	20,208	75
NORWICH	20,105	77
GUILFORD	20,069	78
EAST LYME	19,761	85
NORTH STONINGTON	18,980	104
MONTVILLE	18,587	119
SALEM	18,580	120
NEW LONDON	18,347	121
GROTON	17,693	131
GRISWOLD	17,099	140
LEDYARD	15,739	160

Source: State of Connecticut – Department of Education

2021-2022 Impacts, Outcomes & Benefits



***Imperative to continue to support these focus areas moving into the 2022-2023 school year**

Coaching Model Outcomes (To Date)

The Student-Centered Coaching Model

Centered Around Student Data

Co-Planning

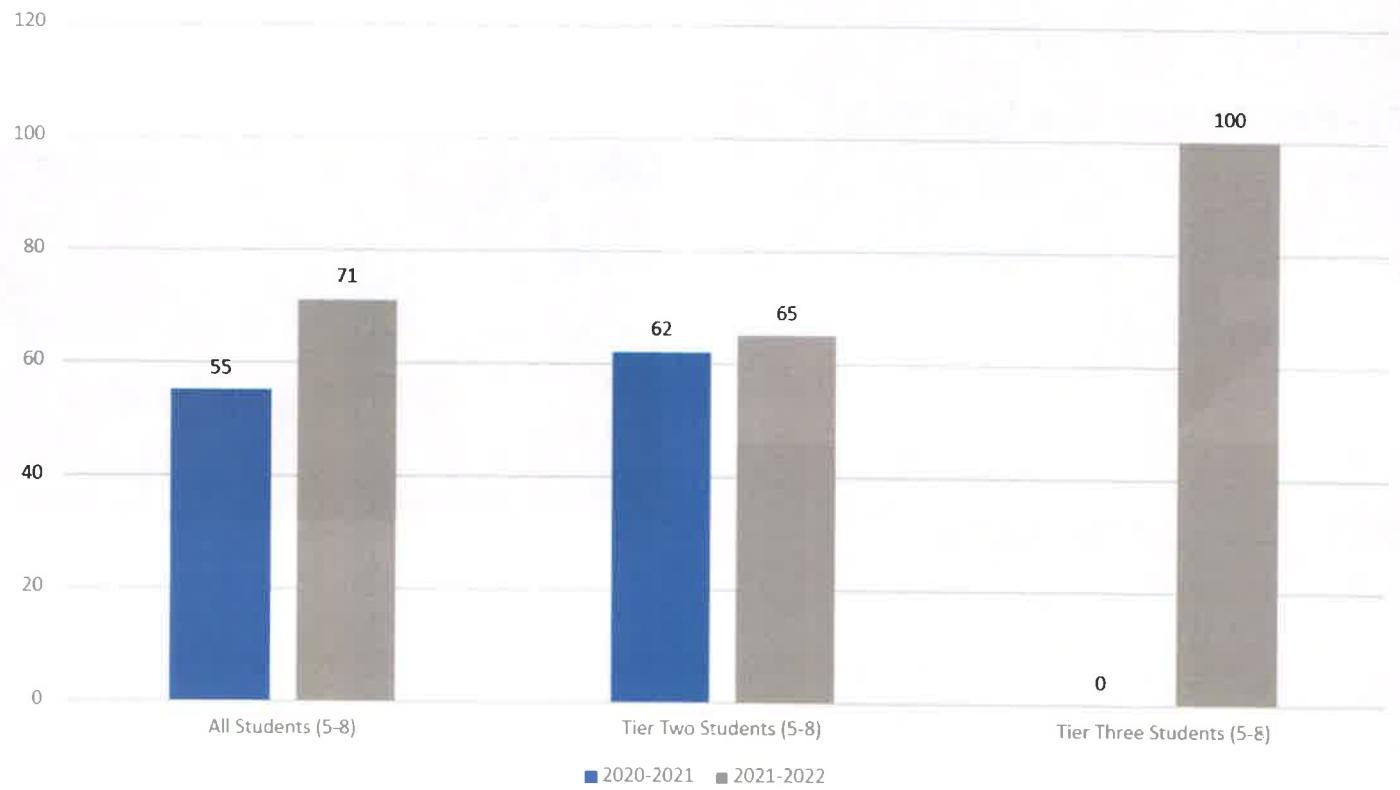
Co-Teaching

Collegiate
Collaboration



Math Coaching Fall to Winter Mid-Year Comparative Analysis

Percentage of Students Demonstrating Growth
Math iReady Assessment



2021-2022 Multi-Tiered Support System Staffing Model

MTSS Teachers at the High School

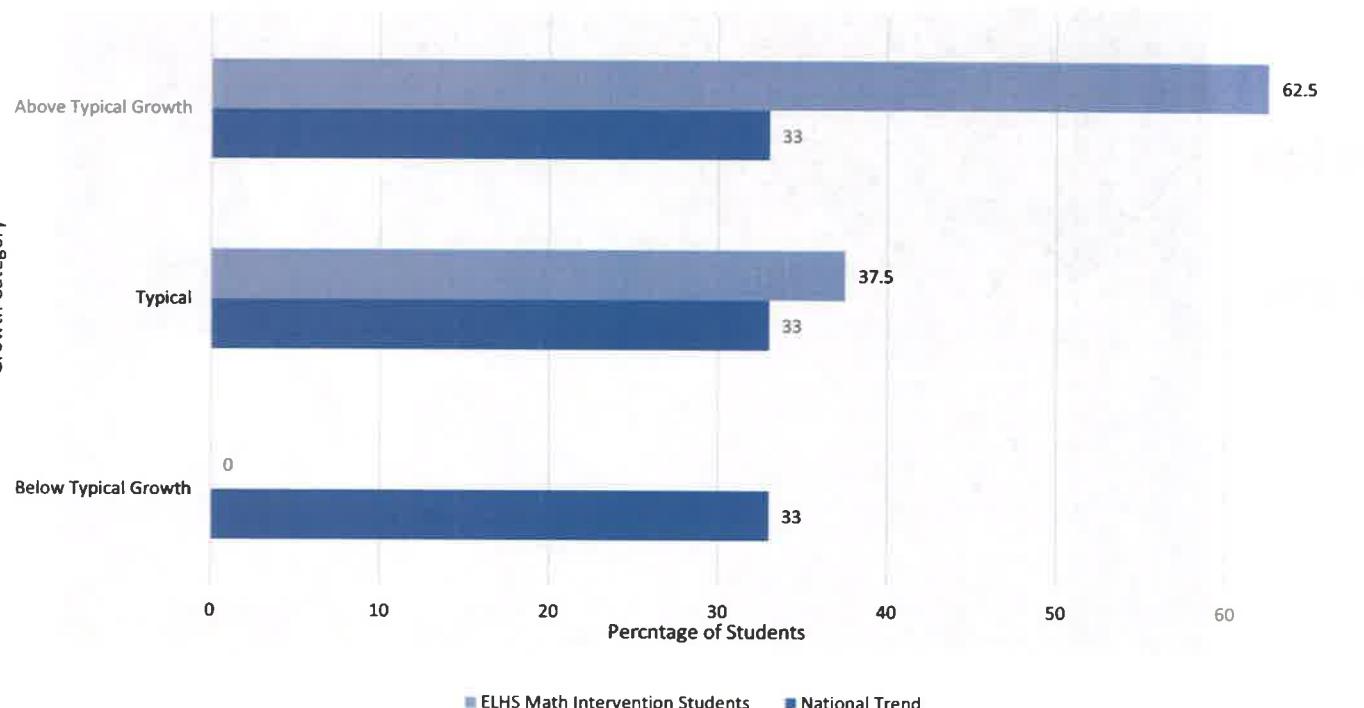
- **ARC (Academic Resource Center)**
 - Math MTSS Teacher
 - ELA MTSS Teacher

Feedback regarding current MTSS/ARC Support Model

- ▶ School counselors are receiving positive reports. "There has been a huge shift. The process is streamlined and much more effective."
- ▶ Parents, during 504 meetings, are conveying positive feedback and greatly appreciate the support.
- ▶ Students report that the support in ARC and MTSS is appreciated.
- ▶ Administrators report that the ARC program is now able to effectively communicate with parents regarding their child's progress.



High School MTSS Math Intervention Cohort Mid-Year Student Growth



- STAR math assessment was administered to all students
- 16 students were identified as in need of ***Urgent Intervention***
- *All* 16 students have *at least* met their *growth targets*. *More than half exceeded* those targets
- This indicates that we are addressing math deficits at an accelerated rate

Student Services: Priorities and Needs



Data & Information	Proposed Support Solutions
23 new students with disabilities/level of need remains high - 6 students in need of paraprofessional/High elementary caseloads	1.0 FTE Elementary Special Education Teacher 0. 5 FTE at LBH & 0.5 FTE at NCS
82 Multi-Language Learners – up from 56 in SY 20/21	1.0 Certified ELL Teacher
Multiple students at ELMS with specific health care needs (non-special education)	Continue Additional Nurse at ELMS – increase in students with significant medical needs
449 students on campus at LBH with one school nurse	Continue Health Aide at LBH – to support all students

Continue to Support Social and Emotional Learning & Mental Health

Maintain 1 Social Worker at the Elementary level, 2 Social Workers at the High School and 2 Social Workers at the Middle School

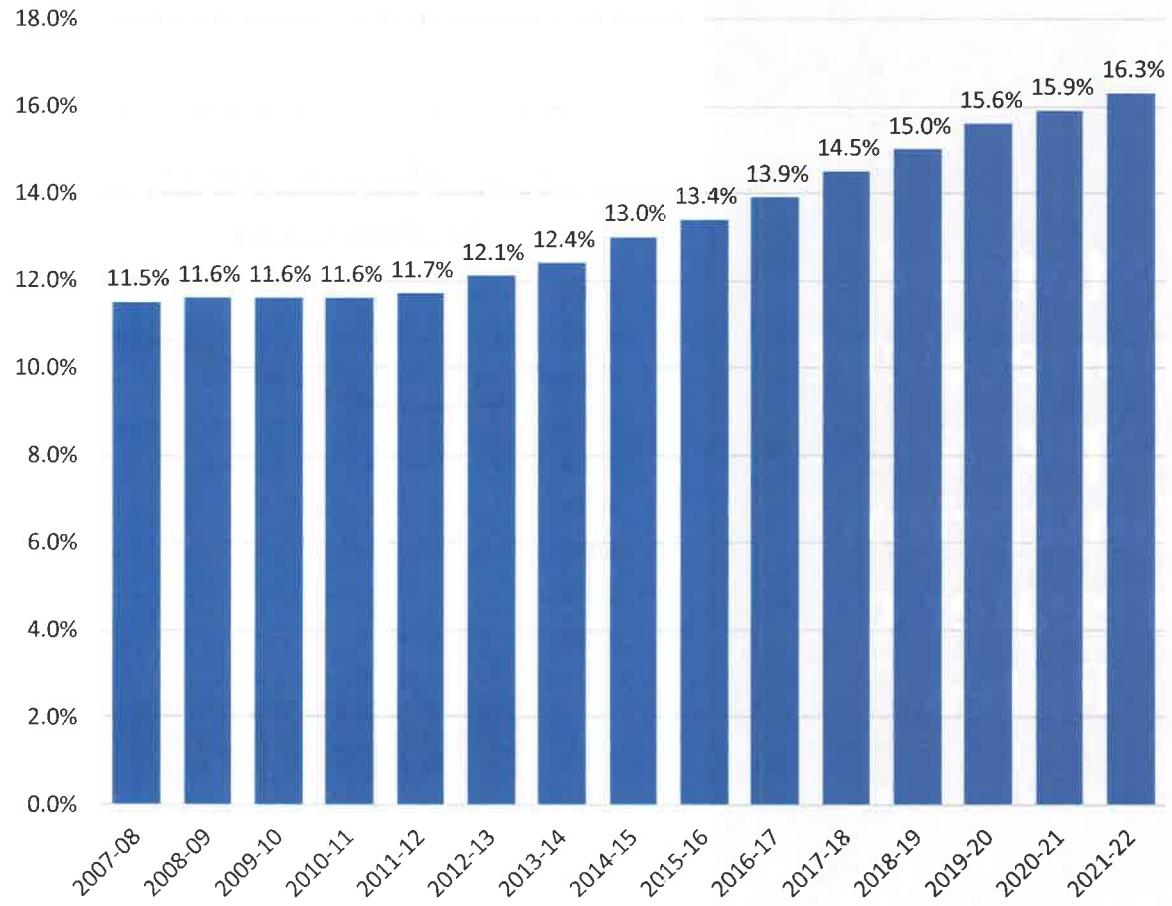
- *MS Crisis Data* – 85 incidents *HS Crisis Data* - 76 incidents

Maintain 4 Full-Time School Psychologists at the Elementary Level

- 1.0 FTE at each building as well as 1.0 FTE for the Specialty Programs & Integrated Preschool
- 70 referrals to special education to date (90 total for SY 20/21)
- School psychologists participate in evaluating students as well as support social skill development and crisis intervention.

Social Emotional Learning continues to be a priority and is supported by ongoing access to professional learning as well as universal screening 3 times per year for all students.

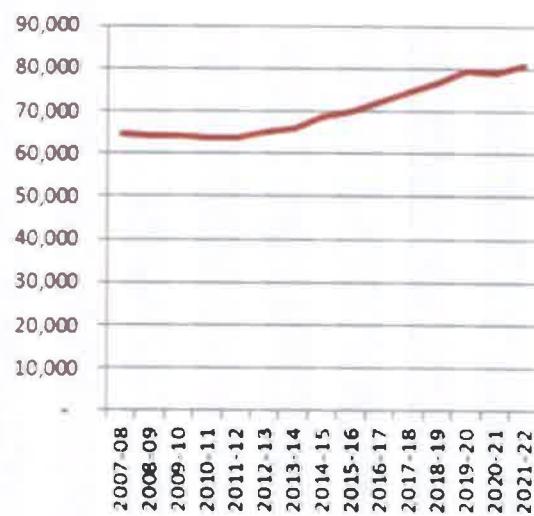
State of Connecticut Special Education Prevalence Rates



Source: CT State Dept of Education Performance Office

State of Connecticut Special Education Prevalence Rates

Special Education K-12 Student Count



All Student K-12 Count



Out of District Costs

Out of District:

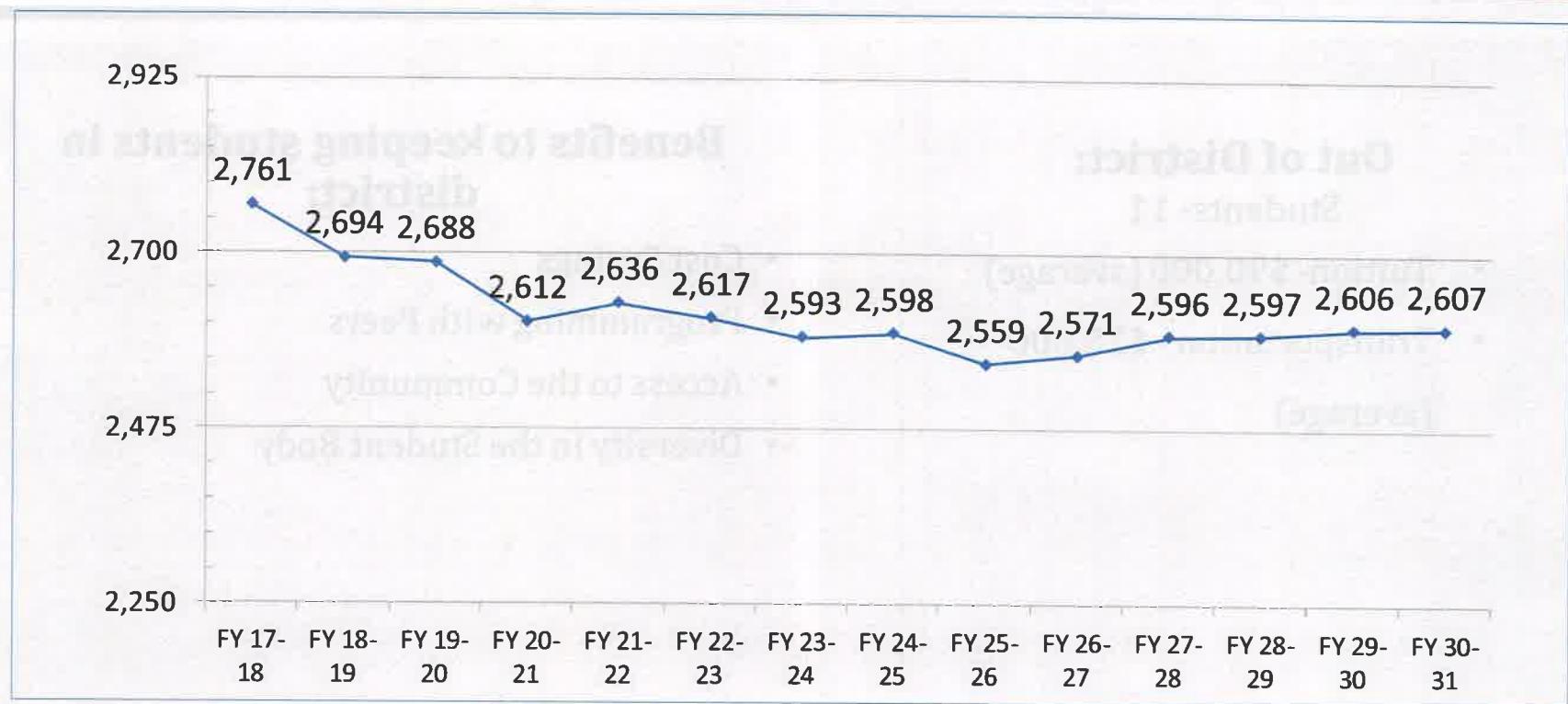
Students- 11

- Tuition- \$90,000 (average)
- Transportation - \$25,000
(average)

Benefits to keeping students in district:

- Cost Savings
- Programming with Peers
- Access to the Community
- Diversity in the Student Body

ELPS District PreK - 12 Historical/Projected Student Enrollment



2022-2023 Preliminary FTE Reductions Due to Decreased Enrollment

Decreased Student Enrollment MS/HS



3.0 FTE Middle School Reductions



1.4 FTE High School Reductions

Proposed 2022-2023 Capital Improvement Program

PROJECT	PROGRAMMED ESTIMATE
Maintenance - New Multi-purpose Tractor	\$60,000
ELHS - HVAC Air Handlers Recapitalization	\$100,000
ELMS - HVAC Air Handlers Recapitalization	\$200,000
ELMS - Roof Life Extension/Restoration	\$350,000
ELMS - Elevator Recapitalization	\$100,000
ELHS - Gym Parapet Wall Painting	\$30,000
ELHS - A-Wing Ext Doors & Windows Replacement	\$100,000
ELHS - Repave Senior Parking Area	\$100,000
ELMS - Building Envelope Repairs/Sealant	\$125,000
ELHS - Auditorium Stage Floor Replacement	\$75,000
TOTAL	\$1,240,000

2022-2023 Operating Budget Final Thoughts

**Thank You For
Working
Collaboratively with
us on Meeting the
Needs of our
Students!**

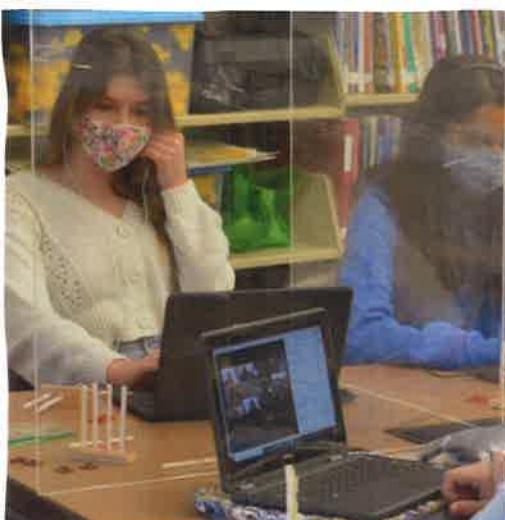


Exhibit #2

Compilation of Board of Selectmen Comments
2022 / 2023 Board of Education Budget
Page 1 of 4

Bill Weber:

General questions

- 1) My primary focus is areas that don't directly touch the students, areas where there seems to be inconsistencies between schools, and efficiencies that would increase focus on the students. We can better understand this budget when compared to student enrollment curves and staffing curves. Can they be provided?
- 2) Paper use, copy & printing costs, as well as paper disposal after use are costs that should be avoided for environmental and financial reasons. Are there currently paper reduction strategies in place.
- 3) There are several increases due to termination of grant funding can we get pre-grant values to understand the growth since that time.

Tab 2 Page 1

- 4) 101-Administration salary growth continue to outpace growth in the overall BOE budget and salary growth for the town budget. Admin salaries grew at two times that of certified teachers, secretaries, and custodians. Efforts should be made to reduce these excessive growths.
- 5) 121- with the decrease in Covid impacts on the community, why are substitute hour expected to go up?
- 6) 125-increase 11.51% with note : increase is a result of contractual increase. Did this group get an 11% raise?
- 7) 126 & 127 Current minimum wage is \$13/hr. July of 2022 it will raise to 14/hr. that's 7.7%. Why did these grow 14.04% & 36.7%?

Tab 2 Page 3

- 8) 431 Why such an increase in Preventive Maintenance?
- 9) 627 does BOE participate in the town wide fuel purchase plan

Tab 3

- 10) Page 1 -126 Why a 17% increase? Was staff added to preschool?
- 11) Comparing 3 grade schools I was wondering why the following differences:
 - a. Overall salaries grew 10.16% at Niantic while LBH grew at 5.84% and Flanders at 4.89%
 - i. For reference, Tab 2 shows total BOE salary growth is 3.54%
 - b. 111 certified grew 10.25% at Niantic while Flanders grew 1.19%.
 - c. 118 other certified grew 6.42% at Niantic while Flanders grew 3.13%
 - d. What is 125 Supplemental. It grew 45.3% at Niantic while Flanders grew 36.24%
 - e. 127 is not a large dollar amount but why did this grow 27.2% at Niantic, 96.21% at LBH, & 26.15% at Flanders
 - f. 431 Niantic has a 46.62% growth in Preventive Maintenance while LBH has 18.25% growth and Flanders has 22.01% growth
 - g. 550 is another small dollar amount, but Flanders has no printing budget while the other two schools have \$500
 - h. 580 Niantic has twice the budget of Flanders for mileage. LBH has no mileage budget.
 - i. 693 Audiovisual is another small dollar amount, but LBH grew 129.4% while Niantic had 0% growth & Flanders doesn't have a line item
 - j. 641,642, & 692 Niantic textbooks grew 8.42% while LBH decreased 16.21%

Compilation of Board of Selectmen Comments
2022 / 2023 Board of Education Budget
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Bill Weber (cont.):

- k. 410 electricity increases 33.91% at LBH, 27.76% at Flanders but only 11.22% at Niantic. What would drive a 34% increase? (Middle school is 13% increase, H.S. is 10.27% increase)
- l. 810 Dues at Niantic decrease 7.28% while they increase 100% at Flanders
- m. Overall, the above items contribute to Niantic budget increasing nearly 10% while the other two grade schools are increasing by about 6%

12) Middle School & High School

- a. Great job on containing salary growth at the Middle School. While grade school salaries above grew 5 – 10%, Middle school salaries grew 1.38% & H.S 2.9%.
- b. 431 Middle School Preventative Maintenance growth is 65.49% which well above all 3 grade schools and the H.S. growth of 22.62%, but the Total Repairs & Maintenance increase of 8.49% is in line with 2 of the 3 grade schools.
- c. 550 – great to see printing is down 20% M.S. & 28.81% H.S. Are there lessons learned that can be shared with Grade Schools?
- d. 514 H.S. \$101,850. 7.17% growth for Athletic transportation. Is this included in the bus contract? Are there opportunities
- e. 641 M.S. textbooks decreased 23.91% while H.S. textbooks increased 6.7%.
- f. 410 Electric increases 13.43% at Middle School and increases 10.27% at the High School. (increases 33.91% at LBH, 27.76% at Flanders and 11.22% at Niantic) Why do they not all have similar growth?

13) District Wide

- a. Many salaries have significant increases:
 - i. 122 66.67% increase in part time
 - ii. 111 25.33% increase in certified salaries
 - iii. 116 24.1% increase in Safety personnel
 - iv. 121 66.67% increase in substitutes
 - v. 126 8.1% increase in Instructional Assistant
 - vi. 101 5.28% increase in Admin salaries
- b. 201-213 Good job holding down benefit costs
- c. 330 What does this cover and why a \$356,720 / 37.08% increase?
- d. 627 – same question as above on shared fuel costs

14) Overall increases seem inconsistent

- a. M.S. 2.25%
- b. H.S 2.93%
- c. L.B.H. 5.89%.
- d. Flanders 5.95%
- e. Niantic 9.81%
- f. Central Office .92%
- g. District 5.93%

Compilation of Board of Selectmen Comments
2022 / 2023 Board of Education Budget
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Bill Weber (cont.):

Tab 4

- 15) Thank you for continuing to strive to lower the tax burden on the town. I hope we can find more opportunities in this area.

Tab 5 CIP

- 16) \$2 million a year for repairs / upgrades at two schools, the H.S. & M.S., is a significant sum. Can you provide past year capital budgets to gage growth in this area? In a year with significant growth in all areas of spending \$100,000 for new lockers, \$100,000 to repave a parking lot, or \$.3 million for auditorium seats with tables and electric & network outlets feel like the kind of items that could be deferred to a year where there isn't as much growth in other areas.
- 17) In the past there were discussions about shared lawn care equipment with parks and rec. to reduce the total capital expended by both areas. The \$60,000 tractor would fit in that category. Are those conversations created a plan?

Anne Santoro:

COMMENTS:

(1) Selectmen received the BOE budget documentation at the time of the presentation of that documentation on March 2 and at the time we were required to forward the budget to the Board of Finance with our comments and recommendations. This did not allow for meaningful review or discussion ahead of that forwarding and is the reason for this email and for points having to be made at our March 16 meeting.

(2) Using the current proposed numbers, the Board of Education budget would amount to 67.13% of the total budget. This is part of an upward trend that the Board of Education and the Town generally may want to examine and contain. Beginning in FY '17-18, the Education budget was 65.77% of the total; '18-'19--66.28%; '19-'20--66.38%; '20-'21--66.77%; '21-'22--66.9%.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) Meaningful Comparisons-- I agree with Mr. Weber that student enrollment and staffing curves would be helpful in understanding the Education budget. Also helpful would be per pupil cost and importantly, year over year % budget increase, as compared to a relevant reference group. This could be the official District Reference Group (DRG) or some acceptable variant of this group if the DRG is outdated. The Per Pupil Expenditure chart (p.15 of presentation) provided compares East Lyme to 14 other districts, only 4 of which are in our DRG.

(2) Revenue-- It would be helpful to provide revenue information on any "stand alone" programs or sources, i.e., before or after care, Creative Playschool, rentals to organizations, etc. Even if these are modest sums, they provide a fuller picture.

(3) Capital Budget for '22-'23-- The \$2,804,400 request is very large and stands in addition to the budget total of \$54,608,478. A number of the items and projects requested would require bonding. I am concerned about our debt and debt servicing, as well as our bond

Anne Santoro (cont.):

rating, as I think we all are. I believe Anna Johnson can provide an updated chart of our debt and anticipated payments that may assist in revising and reprioritizing the proposed Education CIP for '22-'23. Obtaining an updated chart was discussed at a recent Selectmen's meeting.

(4) Exchange of Information--I understand that Kevin and Anna have met recently with Education administration concerning Education's Capital Budget. That is great and I'm looking forward to a helpful exchange of important financial information between the Town and the Board of Education. I believe that going forward, this exchange should take place before as well as during the budget process. This would assist Town officials in making financial decisions that are in the best interest of the Town as a whole.

Anne Cicchiello:

Comments of BOE 22/23 Budget:

1. It was unprofessional and disrespectful of the BOE to provide the Board of Education BOE budget to the Board of Selectman (BOS) 15 minutes before the hearing was to start on the budget. This allowed the BOS members no time to review and analyze the BOE budget prior to the hearing. In the future, the BOE should submit the BOE budget to the BOS a minimum of two weeks before the scheduled presentation.
2. A proposed budget increase of 4.59% is too large of an increase given that the residents of East Lyme are still recovering financially from the pandemic which lasted two years. To strap the residents with a large tax increase is not reasonable or fair.
3. The BOE has many admirable goals which they enumerated during its presentation. However, not all of their goals should and can be accomplished in one financial year. The BOE should slowly phase in teachers, counselors, and math coaches over the next few years so that our residents don't get a huge tax increase.
4. The ARP funds could be put towards one time Capital Improvement Projects such as the duct work cleaning and installing HVAC systems which are directly related to the pandemic rather than hiring new staff who may become part of the operating budget.