

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON JANUARY 27, 2022 AT 7:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Anne Harrigan-Secretary; Faith Ham, Andrew Martelli, Samantha Rosenberg, Timothy White (7:04)

Board Members Absent: Anthony Perugini-Chair

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer; Robin-Anne Carey, Director, Pupil Personnel Services; Mary Joscelyn-Gadd, Ed.D., Principal-Cheshire High School; Michael Woods, Principal-Dodd Middle School; John Perosino, Assistant Principal-Dodd Middle School; Diana Burns, Principal-Chapman School; Kimberly Dessert, Principal-Darcey School; Amy O'Brien, Principal-Doolittle School; Scott Jeffrey, Principal-Highland Elementary School; Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator; Ryan Murphy, Family & Community Engagement Coordinator

Public access was made available through live streaming the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools. Public comments were accepted at CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 P.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Mr. Grippo led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. AUDIENCE

Dr. Solan reported he received one piece of correspondence from John "Jack" Bestor, 45 Truss Road, who emailed via the CPSCOV19@cheshire.k12.ct.us address. Mr. Bestor expressed his support for the Superintendent's Budget Request. He said at a time when our students are under a great deal of stress related to all aspects of learning, he feels that the district administrators and Cheshire teachers, with the support of the Board of Education, have navigated the many challenges of the past year-and-a-half. He wrote that although he has expressed concerns about specific policy objectives, the staff deserve the support of the community and should be rewarded with a budget that they feel addresses their needs moving forward.

3. SUPERINTENDENT'S SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED BUDGET AND RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS.

Dr. Solan shared a presentation (on file) reviewing questions that were raised throughout the budget process. The question was asked regarding the calculations used to determine per pupil costs for general education and for special education per pupil costs. The Superintendent explained net current expenditures (NCE) are calculated as defined in

Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-261(a)(3). NCE includes all current public elementary and secondary expenditures from all sources, excluding reimbursable general education transportation, tuition revenue, capital expenditures for land, buildings and equipment, and debt service. The information for determining NCE is provided from the Education Financial System (EFS). In 2020/21, the estimated NCE for general education students was \$15,773 and the estimate for special education students was \$33,079.

Dr. Solan reviewed that Extended School Year (ESY) Costs are Individualized Education Plan (IEP) services that are provided outside the regular school year which are needed to provide a student with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The Planning and Placement Team (PPT), which includes parents, must decide each year whether or not a student requires ESY services to support appropriate progress. Total estimated ESY costs for 2020/21 were \$406,079.

A Board member asked for the number of students who are exited from the Special Education program each year. He reported an average of 26 students have exited annually since 2017.

In response to the inquiry of the impact of not adding the three new elementary positions, Dr. Solan responded that due to the increase in enrollment, class size averages in 6th grade would increase to the highest they have been in 8 years.

BOARD REVIEW REGARDING THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET.

The Superintendent reviewed his Budget Recommendation. He stressed again that this budget is driven by climbing enrollment and medical benefits, which on its own, represents 55% of the budget increase. The remaining 45% of the budget increase is grounded in preserving current service levels. Without including insurance benefits, the budget increase is only 2.44%. Dr. Solan reviewed budget priorities including sustaining class sizes and focusing resources in the classroom.

Discussion continued regarding ECS funding, medical benefits, enrollment projections and class sizes, mental health staffing due to the pandemic, as well as various line items of the budget request. Board members expressed their concern with medical benefits costs. Dr. Solan agreed with their concerns and said it is not only education, but the rising insurance costs are being felt throughout the Nation. He said they will continue to work with the Town Council.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION REGARDING THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET.

There were no audience members in attendance and no public comment via email.

POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING 2022/23 PROPOSED BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET.

Mr. Grippo polled the Committee members and it was agreed not to take action this evening. The Committee will meet again on February 3rd.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Ms. Ham, and seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Grippo, Finance Committee Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 2/28/2022.