



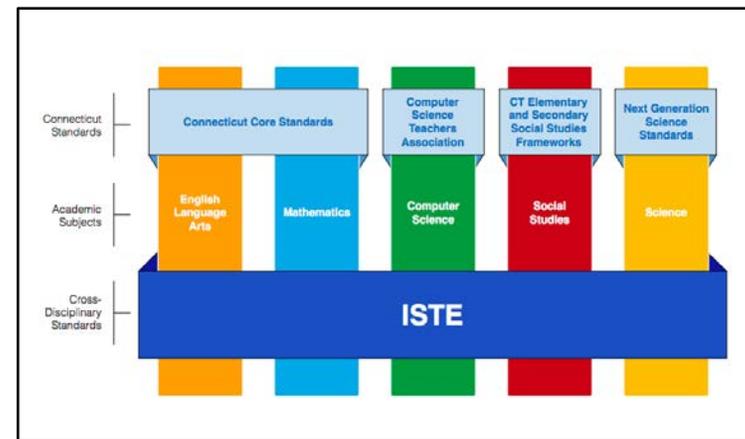
Board of Education Budget Questions – FY21 Superintendent’s Proposed Budget January 21, 2020

#	<u>BOE</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>										
1		The large year to year total increases for the individual schools - is this because of the difference in reporting and format? It looks like employee benefits are posted in each building with the new format. Am I reading it correctly?	In this current budget proposal benefits were posted at the school level. In previous budgets they were posted at the district level. This change led to substantial bottom line variances year over year. The 19-20 budget has now had the benefits reposted at the school level so the variance reflects the actual cost difference.										
2		It looks like substitute costs are relatively flat year to year. I think this is overall a good sign because it's not increasing. As you know, I am always concerned about pulling teachers out of classrooms for staff development. Can we get a breakdown of how many total substitute days there have been for PD over the past 2 -3 years or so and what the proposed total is?	<p>The chart below tracks professional learning-related vacancies that have required substitutes over the past several years.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">School Year</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Total Days Requiring Substitutes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2016-2017</td> <td style="text-align: center;">522</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2017-2018</td> <td style="text-align: center;">506</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2018-2019</td> <td style="text-align: center;">653</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2019-2020 (as of 1/28/20)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">394.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	School Year	Total Days Requiring Substitutes	2016-2017	522	2017-2018	506	2018-2019	653	2019-2020 (as of 1/28/20)	394.5
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			<p>We expect the number of professional learning days for 2020-2021 will be similar to the 16-17 and 17-18 school years. (The increase in 2018-2019 was due in part to newer initiatives that require a considerable amount of training in the first year, like RULER or block scheduling exploration.)</p>
3		<p>It looks like there is a 1.0 FTE increase in library/media staff at Cider Mill in spite of declining enrollment. Can we hear about the rationale?</p>	<p>Library Learning Commons (LLC) staffing is dependent upon programming needs rather than enrollment. The 1.0 FTE is a shift that occurred last year in the school budget and does not reflect an actual increase in FTE.</p> <p>This year, the PreK-5 program certified LLC staff members in each elementary school address several Standards framework through their curriculum including International Society for Technology Education (ISTE), American Association for School Librarians (AASL, and Computer Science and support our teachers in providing lessons and resources for all subject-areas.</p> <p>Our Library Media Specialists serve as computer, technology, technology integrationist, professional learning leaders, and reading advocates. These roles and responsibilities in neighboring districts PK-5 schools are held by staff that have different titles including computer teacher, technology teacher or technology integrator. In Wilton, we take pride in the fact that our Library Learning Commons program received the top award for “Best</p>

Library Program of the Year” by the Connecticut Association for School Libraries last year for our future-focused approach and efforts to prepare our students for the 21st century.

The following visual provides an overview of the standards addressed by our LLC staff through ISTE (across all curricula) and computer science. Scheduling of the LLC staff includes both fixed classes and time to collaborate to support across all curricula while also providing direct instruction:



This year, with the shift in staffing, we have been able to provide:

- 1- LLC Direct Instruction - 45 minutes per cycle (twice the contact time for students over last year).
- 2- LLC Collaborative Planning, Co-teaching and Embedded Professional Learning because of

			<p>additional time blocks in the schedule. Through collaboration with classroom and specialists, the LLC staff has implemented transdisciplinary units of instruction which provides assured experiences for students in the new literacies including Global, Digital and Media Literacy instruction.</p> <p>3- LLC-led Professional Learning - This includes digital resource utilization, STEAM, and community-wide technology and literacy programs.</p> <p>Finally, our LLC staffing ratios are comparable to neighboring districts when accounting for the role of Computer, Technology and Technology Integration teacher which are all held by our LLC staff:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1100 776 1850 1263"> <thead> <tr> <th>District</th> <th>Ratio</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>New Canaan</td> <td>1:247</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Darien</td> <td>1:344</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Westport</td> <td>1:407</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ridgefield</td> <td>1:378</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wilton</td> <td>1:380</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Weston</td> <td>1:550</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	District	Ratio	New Canaan	1:247	Darien	1:344	Westport	1:407	Ridgefield	1:378	Wilton	1:380	Weston	1:550
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4		Although it is not a large \$\$ amount, what is the reason for large percent increase in mileage costs for Middlebrook?	This covers primarily local travel. There is also an amount to support travel to the "Green Ribbon" awards														

			ceremony. This budget line has been underfunded in the past.
5		There are significant increases for conferences/seminars at MB, WHS, and district-wide. What will this provide?	<p>District-wide</p> <p>Digital Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional Learning modules based on the attributes and workshops on Portrait of the Graduate for all staff ● Development and Professional Learning on Transdisciplinary Learning units ● Train-the-trainer sessions for our Technology leaders in our schools including Library Media/Tech Instructional Leaders and Webmasters <p>Student Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Neuropsychology Certification for 3 School Psychs - ● Social Thinking Training ● Greg Tang Math Training - Achievement Gap ● Orton-Gillingham Advanced Training for selected staff ● NASP Conference (School Psychs) - 1 per school ● ASHA Conference (SLP) - 1 per school
6		Supply budgets include basic classroom materials, am I correct? They are increasing, with CM showing a dramatic increase. Does this represent "catch up" to the level of actual needs or are there new needs?	Cider Mill should have \$34,500 under 19-20 for their 8100-9999.42105 current supply budget There is not a significant increase on this line. The information has been corrected. (The initial 19-20 budget was applied to the wrong account # 40605 - Social Security)

7		<p>Digital learning and resources as well as technology show significant increases. I know it will be addressed in the budget workshops. Is there a "short" version/ summary answer?</p>	<p>Digital Learning At Wilton Public Schools began in 16-17 with one cost Center (Technology) which was split into two cost centers (Technology & Digital Learning) beginning in 17-18 to reflect the focus on Ready-Access Digital Learning. The new cost center - Digital Learning - provided a centralized cost center for management, onboarding, and oversight for all software, instructional resources, eTexts and digital tools that serve all teachers, staff and students of Wilton Public Schools.</p> <p>The two departments work together to provide centralized services for technology use and effective integration of technology in the curriculum. The ability to centrally manage resources provides value through economies of scale in negotiations of contracts on a district level rather than classroom or school level as well as oversight for vetting apps and resources for quality, student data privacy, onboarding and training to support to meet the Vision of Ready-Access.</p> <p>The year-to-year increases in the past three years represents some shifts from other budgets of existing resources as well as the addition of resources to use with our new 1:1 and BYOD Digital Learning devices. Specifically, next year, the increases are as follows:</p> <p>Digital Resources include requests from various departments across the district (\$37,146)</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adobe Certification licenses (for students who will take new WHS Advanced Media Course to receive certification) - \$1700 ○ ePortfolio tool (for students at Miller Driscoll to provide a way to reflect on work, share with parents.) \$2500 ○ School Messenger newsletter and texting module (like Remind) to provide a better school-home communications tool for all schools, departments and PTAs. - \$6,000 ○ Video Conferencing software for all staff and parent workshops - \$600 ○ Survey tool for strategic planning open-ended community feedback. - \$12000 ○ Various software shifted from School budgets. - \$8500 ○ Normal increases to contracts (remaining amount) <p>Technology Budget Increases: \$36,697 in redirected expenses for Staff benefits \$176,270 - year 4 of the technology lease \$104,663 - contracted services & new items: \$32,697 for a 3 year JAMF renewal (Apple management) \$25,000 for network security testing and training (new) \$37,777 contracted services price increases \$6,989 for papercut software renewal (new) \$2,200 for e-waste removal and recycling (new)</p>

8		Legal expenses show an increase of 15%. Is this to better reflect actual experience or are we seeing a rise in particular issues?	Legal expenses are based on actuals from 2018-2019.
9		Private tuition shows a third-year of decline, which is great news. What are the major contributors to the decline?	<p>The decline in the tuition lines is attributable to 3 main factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We continue to focus on student-centered planning and realigning our resources to the needs of our students. We are working to expand our early intervention services for both academic and social/emotional/behavioral needs. We are also expanding the professional learning opportunities for general education teachers to use UDL strategies to allow for many access points for all learners. 2. We are focusing our special education and related service resources to allow time (whenever possible and more still needed) to partner with parents and confer with parents and families without taking direct service time from students. 3. We are vigilant in capturing every penny of excess cost reimbursement possible, especially for high needs students being served within the district.
10		Contractual services shows a significant reduction in most locations. What do these include and why the reduced costs?	The reduction in some of the contracted services accounts is a result of funds being shifted to different lines. Facilities funds have been shifted to different accounts. The actual reductions in the line are primarily in special education.

			<p>In special education, there are 3 primary factors for this decline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Efforts in professional learning have developed a higher level of expertise among our staff in all categories2. Engaging our Assistant Directors in “boots on the ground” technical assistance to teams and hands on support to parents/families3. Working with parent advocacy groups and parents to identify areas of need and working collaboratively to address them <p>While we will always need some level of contracted services for our most complex learners, I anticipate that, if funded, the increase in certified staff and ongoing efforts to build internal expertise will continue this trend over the next few years. I hope that this trend will help offset the staffing and professional learning needed to maintain and expand our internal capacity.</p>

**Board of Education Budget Workshop Questions - FY21 Superintendent's Proposed Budget
January 21 - 23, 2020**

<u>#</u>	<u>BOE</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>
1		Can you explain the difference between coaches and instructional leaders and the need to have both?	<p>Instructional coaches work directly with teachers on enhancing their instructional practice. They work alongside teachers in the classroom and during Instructional Effectiveness Team (IET) meetings. By providing <i>in situ</i> feedback and support, they help teachers to apply and problem-solve around their professional learning. They also work with coordinators on developing curriculum and delivering professional learning.</p> <p>Instructional leaders are full time teachers who receive a stipend to provide curricular, organizational, and clerical support to building-level or district-level departments. This work occurs outside of the school day and school year. Many of these departments do not have curriculum coordinators, particularly at the PreK-8 level (at the high school, instructional leaders serve similarly to department chairpersons).</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>		<p>Can you highlight the notable increases in furniture, equipment, and repairs in the schools?</p>	<p>Primary drivers of this line include a budget line of \$20,000 per school to continue addressing furniture replacement. Other equipment replacements include entryway floor mats, blinds in classrooms and in the CM cafeteria, replacement basketball hoops, sound system repair in the Clune, stair tread replacement at WHS, PA speakers at CM, and restroom door and partition replacement at CM and WHS. The other major increase is related to the work at Middlebrook (flooring replacement, ceiling tiles, lighting, painting, auditorium bathroom renovation, and entryway unit ventilator replacement).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p>		<p>Can you explain the main reasons for the increases in the athletic budget? How much is driven by student participation numbers?</p>	<p>The main reason for the increases in the athletic budget is for equipment and uniforms at the varsity level. Typically we are on a five year rotation for uniforms, but funding for several teams' uniforms was cut over the previous years.</p> <p>We are also requesting two additional coaches.</p> <p>The other driver is putting the sub varsity games back into the schedule. For the past two years, we removed two games from every JV and freshman team. The increase in participation numbers affects this in some sports, but not all. (e.g. softball will have a JV team this year for the first time in 3 years)</p>

4		<p>Regarding athletic trainers - can you compare the current model (1.5 FTE plus supplemental private providers) vs. increasing to 2.0 FTE in terms of cost and service levels?</p>	<p>To supplement a trainer from an outside company for 103 days, at 6 hours a day, at a rate of approximately \$55 per hour would cost \$33,990. The cost of a full-time trainer including benefits is approximately \$60,000. (We already have a ½ time trainer so adding the additional .5 will be about the same that we pay for supplemental support.</p> <p>The advantages of hiring a full-time trainer include: promoting continuity in the athletic training program; Deepening trust among the trainers, athletes and families; And, having continuity of understanding of our emergency action plan, should an emergency arise.</p>
5		<p>What is the reason for WHS math FTE increasing more than other departments?</p>	<p>Our performance data in mathematics is certainly not where we want it to be. Therefore, we reached a decision to increase staffing in math in an effort to lower class sizes in lower level math classes including Algebra 1 and Geometry 1. Our rationale was that we should intervene early and support these higher needs students in smaller, personalized learning environments where teachers can really know their students and their individual learning needs.</p>
6		<p>Are we offering sufficient and appropriate course selections for STEM and coding and career prep in technology? (if you feel this is not a direct budget question - we can address this question in other venues.)</p>	<p>We are constantly evaluating and broadening STEM opportunities for our students. At the high school, we offer a very comprehensive curriculum in our Science and Math departments. Our Project Lead the Way curriculum includes Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of</p>

			<p>Engineering, and Aerospace Engineering. Current coding classes include a semester course in Computer Programming, Web Design, Student Help Desk and full year courses in AP Computer Science and Data Structures and Algorithms.</p> <p>Our PreK-8 preparation for the Wilton High School advanced courses begin at Miller Driscoll with units on computational thinking, coding and design thinking (a framework that guides problem solving). As indicated in another question, these units in our elementary schools are instructed by our Library Learning Commons staff who are trained in Educational Technology. These units in PreK-8 provide a foundation for students to pursue advanced level courses at WHS.</p> <p>The STEM Curriculum Review begins in the following year and further development of these courses will take place at that time.</p>
7		<p>The digital learning and technology budgets show significant year-to-year increases and historical increases. Highlights and needs? Digital resource line shows large increases in the district summary - is this a formatting issue?</p>	<p>Digital Learning At Wilton Public Schools began in 16-17 with one cost Center (Technology) which was split into two cost centers (Technology & Digital Learning) beginning in 17-18 to reflect the focus on Ready-Access Digital Learning. The new cost center - Digital Learning - provided a centralized cost center for management, onboarding, and oversight for all software, instructional</p>

resources, eTexts and digital tools that serve all teachers, staff and students of Wilton Public Schools.

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			<p>district. Not included in the district-wide Digital Learning budget are tools that are used for interventions and specialized apps required by IEPs . Some of these resources appear in school budgets or in the district-wide student services budget and are summarized as one line in the district summary.</p>
8		<p>Do we have enough funds in the budget to develop the transdisciplinary units we want?</p>	<p>Yes, we have earmarked funds in the district Digital Learning account in Training/Conferences as well as Digital Resources to support ongoing development of the transdisciplinary units. Our LLC staff has been instrumental in supporting their development and they will have summer days to work with teachers to develop/refine units. In addition, we have digital resources that allow our students to collaborate with classrooms in other countries, create websites, virtual exhibits and the request of the ePortfolio tool will support the ability to share work in a safe space with parents. Finally, we budgeted professional learning to address the connection of transdisciplinary learning to the Portrait of the Graduate.</p>
9		<p>Could we get an update on ELL enrollment? Is the staffing level adequate to address the needs?</p>	<p>As of January 27, we have 33 students identified as ELL (see distribution below). The current staffing level of 2 ELL teachers is sufficient to meet the needs of students and comply with CSDE requirements for ELL services.</p> <p>In addition to providing the services outlined below, ELL teachers must also assess new students to determine</p>

eligibility, coordinate Title III grant funding, administer the statewide annual language assessment, provide all designated accommodations and modifications for statewide academic assessments, and support family involvement in the schools.

	# Students Direct Services	# Languages	# Students Monitor Year 1	# Students Monitor Year 2
MD	27	12	3	2
CM	2	2	2	12
MB	3	2	3	2
HS	1	2	2	
TOT	33	17	10	16

Could you outline the costs and benefits of our membership in the Tri-State Consortium?

10

\$7600 - Annual Membership Fee
 \$7650 - Tri-State Visit Fee (occurs every 2-3 years)
 \$6400 - Associated Costs for a Tri-State Visit (materials, supplies, hotel, meals, etc.)

			<p>\$750 - Training Fees (for staff to participate as visiting team members)</p> <p>The Tri-State Consortium was founded in 1992 by a group of high-performing school districts in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. It has developed an alternative assessment model designed to enhance student performance. Member districts receive triennial assessment visits by teams of "critical friends" (i.e., trained educators from within the Consortium who evaluate district programs using eight indicators). An evaluation report is developed by the visiting team that reflects the district's approach to each of the indicators, the degree to which the approach has been implemented, and student performance results that are attributable to that approach. The report is used to prioritize and plan actions that will support further growth.</p> <p>In addition, the Consortium provides six study group opportunities for school and district leaders. These study groups meet four or five times annually and focus on issues relating to leadership, student learning, and topics of interest. The Consortium also holds two annual conferences available to all member districts.</p>
11		For Special Ed and Curriculum and Instruction - are we providing appropriate and adequate teacher	<u>Office of Curriculum and Instruction</u>

	<p>training funds for the components of comprehensive literacy?</p>	<p>Training and Conferences:</p> <p>MD: \$28,700 CM: \$25,000 MB: \$0 HS: \$1,000 District: \$18,000 (from Title II) to support professional learning at MB and WHS</p> <p>The above funds support staff participation in professional learning both in-district and out-of-district.</p> <p>Miller-Driscoll and Cider Mill allocate some of these funds to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. "Project" schools have available to them a wide range of services and supports. For more detailed information, go to: https://readingandwritingproject.org/services/professional-development</p> <p>The Office of Curriculum and Instruction has provided on-going support to MB and WHS for ELA professional learning through the Educator Collaborative. TheEdCollab provide on-site, standards-aligned literacy professional development services to schools. This includes speaking services and site-based professional development. They also host a number of online professional learning opportunities that connect</p>
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educators around the world to one another and to today's leading voices in literacy.

Although not included in Training and Conferences, it is important to note that instructional coaching is the most effective form of professional learning. Coaches work directly with teachers on enhancing their instructional practice by providing *in situ* feedback and support, helping them to apply and problem-solve around their professional learning. For a very thoughtful analysis of the research on instructional coaching, see:

<https://www.educationnext.org/taking-teacher-coaching-to-scale-can-personalized-training-become-standard-practice/>

The Humanities curriculum coordinator also works closely with coaches to provide much of the in-district professional learning during department and after-school meetings. The focus of this learning is often on the implementation of units of instruction, lesson study, and/or assessment practices.

In addition, both Miller-Driscoll and Cider Mill have supported special education teachers and reading interventionists in receiving training in the Orton-Gillingham (OG) methodology. OG is an approach that prepares teachers to individualize instruction to meet the specific phonemic and phonological needs of each

		<p>learner, including students with dyslexia. For more information on OG certification, please see: https://www.ortonacademy.org/training-certification/individual-certification/</p> <p>Professional learning in literacy instruction is available to all who teach or support literacy, including special education teachers. However, it is important to note that special education teachers require professional learning in a wide range of topics, which may affect their ability to participate in all of the professional learning provided in literacy instruction.</p> <p><u>Student Services</u></p> <p>I have budgeted funding for continued work in Orton-Gillingham for teachers.</p> <p>Additionally, we have budgeted \$30,000 for 3 School Psychologists to become certified school neuropsychologists to assist in comprehensive evaluations (I would like to eventually have at least 2 school psychologists at each building with this “micro-certification”</p> <p>Our SLPs will be working on leading the assessment and interventions in phonemic and phonological awareness and vocabulary development</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">12</p>		<p>Can you highlight the educational and financial impact of the new Genesis program? The reason for increase in cost next year?</p>	<p>The cost increase for the Genesis Program in year 2 is primarily the result of adjusting salaries for actual staff (when we projected salaries we used the MA9 staff replacement cost average of \$73,000; Actual salaries are substantially greater because 3 of the 4 staff are veteran teachers paid at the top of the scale) and transportation (\$64,942). In the current year we did not budget for transportation because we share transportation with the Community Steps program. We will continue to share transportation, but we will need an additional van to allow the runs to be under 1 hour in length. Students in both programs are coming from all over town. Even with the modest increase, the program is resulting in both cost savings (tuition, out of town transportation) and cost avoidance (reducing our reliance on costly out-of-district placements)</p> <p>The educational benefits to the students are overwhelmingly positive. Attendance has improved for all students, students are actively engaged in authentic learning, parents/families are seeing significant relief from crisis management and an overall reduction in family stressors. Students are setting and exceeding all of our goals.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">13</p>		<p>Can you provide a summary of special education enrollment over the past 2 or 3 years - prevalence rate, types of disabilities, number of students by schools, etc. How do we compare to our DRG</p>	<p>Yes, see attachments for data.</p> <p>In the near future we will continue our focus on increasing internal capacity to meet the needs of a wider variety of students. It is clear that our students</p>

		schools and the state? Do you see any emerging trends, shifts, or changes for the near future?	continue to require strong social and emotional learning targets to meet the many challenges of life in the 21st century. Our focus from early on must be to increase risk/distress tolerance, persistence in the face of failure/challenge, improving the ability to solve problems that do not present with easy answers, the ability to influence others and the ability to learn, relearn, and unlearn.
14		The number of special education certified teachers line shows a 5.0 FTE year-to-year increase and a 5.0 FTE decrease in special education paraprofessionals. Can you outline the rationale and benefits of the redeployment?	The purpose of this change is to provide all of our schools with additional resources to provide high quality support to children with disabilities and their families by staff who are highly trained. This redeployment of resources will be used to provide high quality instruction, increase communication and collaboration with families, and provide support to general education teachers. The goal continues to be to reduce the achievement gap and provide equal access to the Vision of the Graduate for students with disabilities. The paraprofessionals represent part of the offsets to cover this adjustment. Additionally, we are reducing our reliance on contracted services.
15		Facilities Can you please layout the entire MB facilities upgrade - phase I and II - in order to understand the complete need?. Can you provide an overall summary of the needs and the downside to delaying the work? Do you think the timeline is	The complete plan for Middlebrook (and subsequently WHS) is to replace all of the carpet with VCT tile, replace ceiling tiles, update lighting and paint classrooms and corridors. Because of the size of the building, to manage costs, the project has been broken into phases and spread over multiple years. Phase I targets the Peterson

		realistic for the amount of work to be accomplished?	Wing, main entryway, main office and a portion of the 8th grade hallway. Phase II will address the rest of this building. As part of phase II we will need to conduct asbestos abatement. Depending on the cost of that, we may require a third year to complete the project before moving on to the HS.
16		Can you provide a summary of the good news both now and anticipated on energy costs because of solar installations?	<p>As Chris Burney reported, once the Virtual Net Metering Solar field is online we should realize approximately \$100,000 in savings over the course of the first year. Over 25 years, the district could realize savings of approximately \$1.8million.</p> <p>The final \$25,000 payment to eversource for the gas project is included in the 2019-2020 budget.</p> <p>Our bus fuel contract expires at the end of June. We expect to lock in a less expensive rate for the coming school year.</p>