### 1. Pre-K program at Greenwich Public Schools (GPS)

### a. The Superintendent's FY22 budget projects 188 students enrolled in the town's PreK program (currently 143 students are enrolled). Of the 188 students projected, how many are expected to be special education students?

It is difficult to project Preschool, other than the trends over time, as children must qualify with special needs. However, next year the projection is staying flat at 188 (please see page 272 in the BOE Budget Book). \*\*Based on the most recent information, 2020-2021 school year, the number will be greater than 188.

It is important to note that Preschool is a federally-mandated program that is driven by the number of eligible students with special needs. As of January 2021, there are 80 special needs students, and there will be an estimated 88 children with special needs expected at the end of the year. Special Needs children enroll throughout the year as they start the program when they turn three years old. The peer students in the class do not begin the program until they are four-years old, and many of these peer students are tuition-paying students. Tuition-paying students that attend this program provide revenue that is reverted back to the Town. For every six students with special needs in a classroom, there are nine children without special needs. Information is provided in the budget book on pages 235 and 236.

### b. For the last five years what is the total actual number (based on October enrollment report) of Pre-K students enrolled in the program and what is the division number between the special education students to the number of mainstream students?

Preschool is not based on an October enrollment count because children start the program when they turn 3 years old, and therefore enrollment is rolling throughout the school year. Last year, we changed the ratio to six students with special needs with nine children without special needs. By changing the ratio, this meant starting the year with one less class, and this ratio will be in place going forward.

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Peers	114	122	118	131	123	108
Special Needs	66	63	70	81	85	93*Known
Total	180	185	188	212	208	201

c. It appears GPS policy exceeds CT's "reverse mainstreaming" policy that describes a 50-50 ratio of students with and without disabilities required for compliance? Who sets the ratio for reverse mainstreaming policy in the PreK program? What is the districts stated ratio policy for reverse mainstreaming? Are there plans to change the ratio in the near future?

Preschool is a <u>federally mandated</u> program for children who have special needs. GPS does not have a choice to eliminate or add preschool sections at will. In our current model, each section (classroom) can enroll six children with special needs. At this time, there is no discussion of expanding preschool beyond what is required by law as enrollment increases for special education needs. As shared above, last year, we

changed the ratio to six students with special needs with nine children without special needs. By changing the ratio, this meant starting the year with one less class, and this ratio will be in place going forward.

# d. The 2019-20 budget mentions the Pre-K program at Parkway was entirely relocated to other schools. Who made this decision and why was that decision made given the building's high-capacity availability at Parkway? Where were the students moved and did the program lose any students due to the move?

The decision for location of our preschools isn't solely based on room availability, it is also dependent on where our students are based. Currently, in the central area of town, the two programs most conveniently accessible for students are Old Greenwich School and North Street School. Both of these programs are full. Old Greenwich School has two preschool classrooms, and North Street School has four classrooms. Previously, there was a program at Parkway, but the bus distance is too far to travel for children who live within the Julian Curtiss, Cos Cob School, North Mianus School, Old Greenwich School and Riverside School areas.

## e. Why does the proposed Julian Curtis education specifications mention a Pre-K program? Which schools are you taking away from to populate Julian Curtis? Why is this decision being done? Who voted on the proposal?

The only discussion has been the addition of two preschool classrooms at Julian Curtiss to accommodate this federally mandated program. While no decisions have been made about placement of preschool classes, rather the suggestion to add two preschool rooms to Julian Curtiss is based upon where students are located as well as the increase that we see in students that are being identified with special needs from birth to three years old. There is a clear community interest in the Pre-K program. For the 2020-2021 school year we had 169 applications for 58 available tuition-paying spots in the program, so 111 families were unable to get a seat through the lottery. For the 2021-2022 school year, we had 202 applications for 59 spots, so 143 families are unable to get a spot through the lottery. As you can see from this data, there is clearly an interest in this program beyond what is federally mandated.

### 2. Program Snapshots

### a. The Program Snapshots created in 2019 is very appreciated. School administration conducted 28 out of 43 program reviews. When will the remaining 15 program reviews be completed?

The additional 15 programs have been reviewed (or were reviewed as part of the budget development). The BOE staff consider this project complete. The remaining 15 were the following:

- 7 Areas of Special Education: Currently under a comprehensive review with Public Consulting Group to be completed in June 2021.
- 1 Continuing Education: There were no efficiencies to be found. This is a federally mandated program.
- 1 Superintendent Office: Reductions were made as a result of reviewing staffing and organization. Reductions include: Elimination of the Assistant Director to HR (Certified), Downgrade of a Cabinet Position to Director from Assistant Superintendent, Elimination of Administrative Assistive to the Assistant Superintendent, Elimination of the Coordinator of PE, Health, and Elimination of Assistant Food Service Director
- 1 Communications: This department has minimal cost other than 2.0 FTE which is essential for the magnitude of communications. Software utilized is analyzed as part of the budget process each year. Most recently, the addition of Zoom to operate virtual environments for the BOE and large school meetings.
- 1 Food Service: This program was reviewed as part of the budget development and a position was eliminated from this department. In addition, there was a two-year effort to enhance food quality and examine sustainability issues. The new menus will be reinstated once the pandemic ends. The district was doing a good job reducing the contribution to the general fund. However, throughout the

pandemic revenue is considerably down given the constraints of social distancing and cohorting to the cafeteria. Post-pandemic, the district expects the positive trend to return.

1 Transportation: This department only employs one director. A consultant has been working to
review the department for efficiency and working with senior management to reduce bus routes. The
entire contract will not increase more than \$1,000 next year. The increase by contract rate was
expected to be approximately \$300,000 for FY22 before efficiencies were found by the elimination of
three bus routes.

#### 3 Programs remaining are in Operations

• <u>HR:</u> A review of staffing eliminated a full 1.0 Assistant Director position. In addition, HR and Finance has organized their data sets and communications to be more effective and efficient. An internal review of practices, procedures and protocols has been ongoing for 18 months.

From July – August 2020:

- 88 contracts signed (Certified staff)
- 16 Substitute teacher hired
- 122 people fingerprinted (All Staff, including: teachers, student teachers, coaches, etc.)
- 90 requests for accommodations (held over 100 meetings)
- Onboarding staff, including: fingerprinting, substitute teacher orientation, New Teacher Orientation, physicals for employees, etc.
- Remote School and Summer School (payroll, issues management)
- <u>Facilities and Maintenance of Plant:</u> Blum Shapiro conducted a review of the capital projects and infrastructure recommendations which have been put in place. The Facilities Master plan guides the project sequence. This plan is reviewed each year as the budget for the following year is developed. In addition, a monthly reporting on project status is provided to the BOE and general public. The staffing review per square feet has warranted additional discussion that the building level custodial staff is short.
- <u>Purchasing</u>: The purchasing department reports directly to the Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Sean O'Keefe. Below is a snapshot from 2018-2019:
  - o 9,790 Purchase Orders
  - 56 Long-term Contracts
  - o 50 Bids
  - o 30 Addendums
  - 72 Standard Consulting Agreements

Ongoing:

- Posting all bids, addendums and results to GPS website
- Bid Openings, Scope Reviews, Walkthroughs
- Vendor negotiations
- Copier & printer agreements for the school district
- Manage & orchestrate surplus sales
- Supervise & coordinate warehouse duties
- Approve all contract supplements
- b. There was also specific mention that 8 programs needed a Phase II deeper dive study. When will the Phase II "deeper dive" be conducted and reported for the 7 programs outside of special education which has its own separate study?

Those areas were:

- 1. Special Education (a formal study is being conducted right now)
- 2. Advanced Learning Program (we just completed a formal study with consultants and presented publicly on that information)

- 3. Teaching and Learning (we have made adjustments as noted above)
- 4. K-5 classroom (This will correlate with the BOE Strategic Plan update)
- 5. Library Media (there have been adjustments to roles and responsibilities, especially during the pandemic as these positions have become much more technical)
- Curriculum Instruction (CIPL) (a change was made to the job description, leadership title, leadership responsibilities, and staffing adjustments with that department. The change included repurposing FTE from Havemeyer back to direct contact with students)
- 7. Reading/Literacy (The district has moved forward to implement a strong literacy program for phonics, and is in the implementation phase right now.)
- 8. English Language Learners (This is an area we are continuing to evaluate and have consultants working with administration on equity and access to curriculum. Additionally, a district-wide committee was formulated to focus on minority recruitment during the 2019-2020 school year, and for staff and open access to curriculum for EL students (2020-2021 work)).
  - c. You analyzed important programs centered around achievement and stated specific SMART goals in the program review. To pick an example, English Language Arts (pg 21-22) the trending information is not positive that Greenwich is meeting the targeted SMART goals. It is understood there were no assessments in 2019-20 but working from the trends it is likely to also not be achieved.

The SMART goals were not written by current staff, so it is unclear why those targets were chosen. GPS utilizes a multitude of data and is finding success, one such item is Linklt, as described below.

d. As examples, using data from your table it shows from 2015-16to 2018-19the district NOT achieving 80% of students in grade 3-8 with proficiency (75.9% 2015-16, 75.6% 2016-17, 78.0% 2017-18 and 77.5% 2018-19) and 89% of students achieve proficiency on the SAT (81.2%, 84.6%, 86.3%, 82.3%) for the same years. In fact, as the data shows, in some cases achievement has declined in the trending period not improved.

Please refer the answer above.

e. It is unclear what specific action plan is being done to identify the issues to rebound the achievement numbers and provide corrective action.

Currently, the District is using LinkIt to help assess student learning of mastery on the key Connecticut standards. LinkIt, is an instructional tool that was introduced in GPS this Fall for teachers to gain an understanding of their students as individuals, including their current understanding of respective grade level concepts so that future instruction can be personalized for their students; the first instructional analysis took place in Fall 2020 and was used to measure potential learning loss from Spring 2020 due to COVID-19.

In addition, GPS has moved 6 positions out of Havemeyer and back out to schools. This includes the implementation of a .5 math interventionist for every elementary school.

In this budget, GPS is also purchasing new math textbooks for K-8. In order to reach the low budget thresholds over the past five years the district did not purchase new materials. This year, it is essential. The new materials will help heighten the mathematics consistency across the district. The current materials are 9 and 10 years old, well past the life cycle for materials.

f. Will these Program Snapshots once again be done *outside* of the FY22 budget since the budget does not detail the level of information needed to determine the efficacy of the programs?

At this time, the District continues to assess all aspects of the budget, but is not undergoing any additional Program Snapshots review.

g. It was said at previous BOE meetings that the Program Snapshots would be conducted to dive more deeply into the efficacy of the 43 programs. BOE discussions mentioned that those programs that worked would be elevated and better funded and those that appear to not have moved the achievement needle would be sunset. Have any actions such as this or others been done to address achievement results? Please describe.

Yes, these Program Snapshots have helped to provide actionable insights. Within the Curriculum and Instruction Team, the Coaching Program was repurposed to fill a need at the schools, which was a shift of FTE of \$657,124 (page 29 budget book, line 289).

There have been several position eliminations as a result of the reviews. There is currently a review of the GHS master schedule and course offerings. There were no new course introductions this school year.

The Advanced Learning Program is also producing an Action Plan to address equity, access, and gender balance in response to the consultant review.

### 3. Digital Learning

- a. In the past, the budget would report separately on Digital Learning (DL) operating costs (see attached example). Can you please describe the DL FY22 operating costs? Can you please indicate where this information can be found in the FY22 operating costs?
- b.

Currently, there is \$2,324,805 proposed within the Capital Budget to support Technology, of which \$1.4M is allocated to Digital Learning; this includes: Student Devices (\$1.102M), Software (\$161K), Peripheral Hardware (\$57K), Student Connectivity (\$40K), and Network Security (\$40K).

## c. I have asked for years as many others for the goals and metrics for the DL program. Have these goals and metrics been developed? Can you please send outcome if created? If they have not been created please explain why they have not.

The metrics for the DLE are the same metrics for literacy and numeracy. Technology is a tool, and as we have learned in the pandemic, it is absolutely essential. The greatest outcome we have is a full year of teaching hybrid, fully remote, and web streaming all at the same time. Our results are showing that our students are learning, and that utilizing technology to continue the learning has been successful. We had more students take AP exams last year than the year before, and we were within 2% points of the Pre-COVID results. The conversation no longer exists that education must prove the value of technology as schools can no longer teach without it and meet the standard of expectation in 2021 (even post pandemic).

### d. Will you be moving DL at some point to the operating budget as it is for all the other school districts in the state? If so, when. If not, why not.

In Greenwich, there are many aspects of the budget which are managed differently than other school districts across the state (Educational Cost Sharing, Special Education Excess Cost, Benefits). There is no intent to move the digital learning budget as keeping it in capital has been very transparent for the community, and it has worked well. This was also brought into discussion at the Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting with the BET and it was the BET's decision as to how to account for DL expenses.

### 4. Capital Projects

## a. Has the updated enrollment report showing much greater declines in student enrollment throughout the district going to prompt any change in scope, size, prioritization of the future new building projects?

Our building priorities are for: ADA, health/safety, air quality, and program need. The building project response is not to expand capacity, but to add necessary program-focused space. For example, some of the buildings were built in the early 1900's when Special Education services did not exist. In addition, the English Language Program population has changed tremendously in the last 30 years in Greenwich. The small instructional spaces necessary are evaluated as part of the feasibility studies. Additionally, the security aspects of schools have changed since Columbine, Sandy Hook, and other dangerous situations which have taught school districts and safety specialists about much needed facility precautions. None of the projects in the queue for the Facilities Master Plan are adding space for increased enrollment. If space is added, it is to meet the goals of the 21st century programs expected for a high-performing school district.

# b. There are many ADA issues at district schools. Will the BOE be prioritizing first these projects before any other capital updates at the schools? For example, Western Middle School is currently not on the FY22 capital improvement, yet a student is shortly to be enrolled that is wheelchair bound. Please describe the schools by rank to have ADA issues addressed.

The BOE has prioritized these needs. In 2019, the Feasibility Studies for Old Greenwich Schools and Julian Curtiss were removed from the BOE Budget by the BET. The projects are now delayed and much needed ADA improvements, safety, and air quality are greatly needed.

There are ongoing ADA infrastructure projects in the budget every year. Currently, the three identified schools and the Havemeyer building are all prioritized in our capital planning, as they are all in need of ADA upgrades. In many of these buildings, the upgrades necessary are extensive and not simple, minor fixes, ie. building an elevator. We must make our buildings completely accessible, including: playgrounds, bathrooms, sinks, signage, etc.

### WMS Specifically

During the budget process last year, there was \$446,000 approved by the BET and RTM for ADA compliance at WMS for this 2020-2021 year. As a result, a Feasibility Study was completed earlier this Fall via a RFP process with a member of the First Selectman's Disability Committee assisting in selection of the architect/engineering firm. The school district is currently working on ADA at WMS.

Also approved in last year's budget cycle for WMS, was \$178,000 for vertical transportation. Work currently being designed and planned for the summer of 2021, is replacing an existing lift, and the addition of a stair lift to make the lower level accessible. (Budget book from last Spring, FY21, Page 93, 94) )

In addition, the following projects are underway this current year:

Cos Cob School: Playground replacement was approved last budget cycle at \$394,000. This project includes changing the surface from wood chips to accessible rubberized surface.

International School at Dundee: ADA compliance was approved at \$74,000. This project was limited to ADA access to a new ADA compliant Playground. Currently a student or staff member with mobility issues needs to exit the building on the opposite side from the playground. Once outside, they would need to go down a steep incline, traverse the grassed athletic field and then enter the play area. The funding request is for A/E to review the access and to design an approach from the rear accessible doorway to the playscape. This will include an accessible ramped walkway down to the entrance to the playscape. The equipment for the playscape is covered under a previous request.

North Mianus School: ADA compliance was approved at \$111,000.

Riverside School: ADA compliance was approved at \$37,000.

### 5. Transportation Costs

a. The FY22 budget indicates a small savings of \$992 for the elimination of 3 buses. Is the FY22 assumption that all students are once again allowed use of the buses since it is currently requested due to Covid-19 that parents not utilize the buses unless no other means for transport are available to them.

The budget is a business as usual budget for FY22. This year due to the pandemic, we are running buses for those families who need it as an essential service and because running our buses is mandated. Most of our families are driving their children to school this year.

However, it is important to note that many of our buses generally run between 50-60 students during a normal school year. However, with the savings of \$300,000 due to bus efficiencies, this would bring our annual contractual increases up by only \$992.

### 6. Exceeding BET FY22 Budget Guidelines

- a. The Superintendent's budget exceeds both the operating and capital BET FY22 Budget Guidelines. The BET FY22 Guidelines allowed the BOE more spending capacity (3.38% BOE vs. 1.24% Town) given the 3% wage increase for BOE certified employees and \$1.6 million special education out of district placements. Also, as we know, Greenwich's BOE budget still does not have allocated the health and other benefit costs as all the other 168 towns in the state. If so, the BOE spending rises to 4.22% and the Town 2.92%. The BOC has advocated for years for this allocation change, and we were at least pleased with the first step with the disclosure of the benefit costs by department. As shown in the BET's Guidelines, BOE benefit costs are rising 8.1% (from \$35.9 million to \$38.8 million) in FY22. The town also absorbs other BOE costs typically paid by most other school BOE's in the state (digital learning, debt service costs, in kind services from P&R and so on). Thus, the full apples to apples disclosure are not reported locally as it is to the state with the standardized report each district completes.
- b. To meet the BET FY 22 guidelines, and considering declining enrollment and major staffing changes with remote learning, are there any efficiencies, reprioritization, deferments, staffing changes that can be identified and achieved through a new lens with the FY22 schools' budget?

The proposed budget that is currently in review is the Board of Education's Proposed Budget and that was voted on in December 2020.

On average, across 11 elementary schools, next year GPS is only expected to see a decline of approximately 3.2 students per building. If a building comes in under enrollment, a position is shifted to a building which came in with higher enrollment. These staffing changes occur every year during the summer months. If a position is not needed, then the position is not filled.

Since 2016 the district has reduced 12 elementary K-5 positions. The district continues to look for efficiencies in all areas. Below is an enrollment chart that outlines the number of students and sections. Additionally, listed below are positions that have been eliminated and/or repurposed.

#### Positions Eliminated

- Elimination of the Assistant Director to HR (Certified)
- Downgrade of a Cabinet Position to Director from Assistant Superintendent
- Elimination of Administrative Assistive to the Assistant Superintendent

- Elimination of the Coordinator of PE, Health
- Elimination of Assistant Food Service Director

#### Staffing Changes

- Havemeyer Instructional coach moved back to K-5 for Math Interventionist
- Havemeyer Instructional coach moved back to K-5 for Math Interventionist
- Havemeyer Instructional coach moved back to K-5 for Math Interventionist
- Havemeyer Instructional coach moved back to K-5 for Math Interventionist
- Havemeyer Instructional coach moved back to K-5 for Math Interventionist
- Havemeyer Instructional coach FTE shifted to a 1.0 counselor for EMS

### Summer School

Summer School was restructured for the Summer of 2020 and is planned to continue in that format in the 2021 budget (please see below for changes). Restructuring included a focus on closing the achievement gap in literacy, numeracy, and secondary tuition courses for acceleration. This is a change from a full-day Summer School model that included physical education and art to a shortened day that focused solely on reading, writing and math.

- Reduction of approximately 98 summer school positions
- In 2019 there were 197 staff and in 2020 there were 99

### Preschool

- A change in the staffing formula reduced 1 section which is recurring now each year.
- Elimination of Teacher 1.0
- Elimination of Professional Assistant 2.4

#### K-5 Reductions

• 12 FTE reduced (sections) since 2016 due to enrollment declines

However, it is important to note that even if enrollment is declining in one area that does mean that we are adequately staffed in other areas. For example, K-5 enrollment is declining slightly, and we have reduced 12 FTE (classroom sections) since 2016 (see table below). However, preschool has grown by 4 sections since 2016, which requires an additional teacher and two assistants. As a reminder, Preschool is a federally mandated program for children who have special needs. We are managing the growth, by taking such actions as adjusting the preschool ratio; had we not adjusted the radio, we would need another section.

Overall, our administration continues to evaluate where we can make efficiencies and reductions to ensure that we maximize our dollars in service to our students. The drivers for our budget increase can be seen in the table below. As is evident, the major drivers of our budget increases are tied to contractual obligations (salaries), Special Education Tuition, restoring classroom materials and equipment, and K-8 textbooks. These are all necessary items in our budget. It is important to note that there are many areas, such as social workers and funds to respond to the Special Education Audit that the BOE did not fund in this budget.

Additionally, when compared to the guidelines set forth by the BET, our budget increase amounts to a difference of \$966,838 or (0.59%), and the items driving this direct percentage increase can be viewed below.

- \$300,000: Special Education Tuition
- \$666,838: Restoration of materials and supplies

Fixed Cost	\$ Increase	% of Total
Salaries and Other Contractual Payments	\$2,314,955	35.71%
Special Education Tuition	\$1,900,000	29.31%
Classroom Equipment Equipment	\$756,300	11.67%
Textbooks	\$692,585	10.68%
Teaching Supplies and Materials	\$644,859	9.95%
Custodial and Maintenance Supplies	\$555,379	8.57%
Library Books	\$136,006	2.10%
Utilities	\$3,160	0.05%
All Other (net)	(\$520,839)	-8.03%
Total YTY Increase	\$6,482,405	100%

### GPS K-5 Enrollment 2016 to 2021B

								2021 v
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021B	2016
сс	Actual	446	434	411	389	360	371	83%
	Sections	22	22	21	19	18	19	
	Avg Cls Sz	20.3	19.7	19.6	20.5	20.0	19.5	
GL	Actual	444	450	411	404	398	376	85%
	Sections	21	22	20	20	20	18	
	Avg Cls Sz	21.1	20.5	20.6	20.2	19.9	20.9	
НА	Actual	341	318	336	313	314	304	89%
	Sections	19	19	19	18	17	18	
	Avg Cls Sz	17.9	16.7	17.7	17.4	18.5	16.9	
	Actual	383	365	369	369	361	359	94%
ISD	Sections	18	18	18	18	18	18	
	Avg Cls Sz	21.3	20.3	20.5	20.5	20.1	19.9	
	Actual	330	338	320	282	275	253	77%
JC	Sections	18	17	18	17	14	13	
	Avg Cls Sz	18.3	19.9	17.8	16.6	19.6	19.5	
	Actual	257	258	230	260	261	261	102%
NL	Sections	15	14	13	13	15	15	
	Avg Cls Sz	17.1	18.4	17.7	20.0	17.4	17.4	
	Actual	496	505	492	497	489	490	99%
NM	Sections	24	23	24	25	25	24	
	Avg Cls Sz	20.7	22.0	20.5	19.9	19.6	20.4	
	Actual	381	371	376	371	325	332	87%
NS	Sections	19	19	19	18	18	18	
	Avg Cls Sz	20.1	19.5	19.8	20.6	18.1	18.4	
	Actual	407	428	407	390	351	347	85%
OG	Sections	20	20	19	19	19	18	
	Avg Cls Sz	20.4	21.4	21.4	20.5	18.5	19.3	
РК	Actual	224	216	220	212	225	226	101%
	Sections	12	12	13	12	13	14	
	Avg Cls Sz	18.7	18.0	16.9	17.7	17.3	16.1	
RV	Actual	468	471	484	457	445	444	95%
	Sections	22	23	24	21	23	23	
	Avg Cls Sz	21.3	20.5	20.2	21.8	19.3	19.3	
К-5	Actual	4177	4154	4056	3944	3804	3763	90%
	Sections	210	209	208	200	200	198	
	Avg Cls Sz	19.9	19.9	19.5	19.7	19.0	19.0	

2021 v