

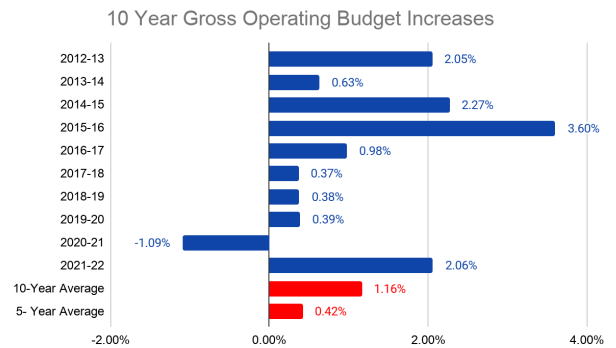
**School More Critical Than Ever to Haddam-Killingworth Children**

On May 4, 2021, the RSD 17 Board of Education 2021/22 School Gross Budget of \$42,749,049.19 will be brought to the towns of Haddam and Killingworth for a referendum. After revenue, grants and fund balances, the towns will be assessed \$40,553,509.24, \$24,567,989.10 for Haddam and \$15,985,520.14 for Killingworth. Voting will take place at regular, local polling places.

With schools proving to be more critical than ever to the education and well-being of Haddam and Killingworth children, the Board of Education’s goals in this year’s budget are to:

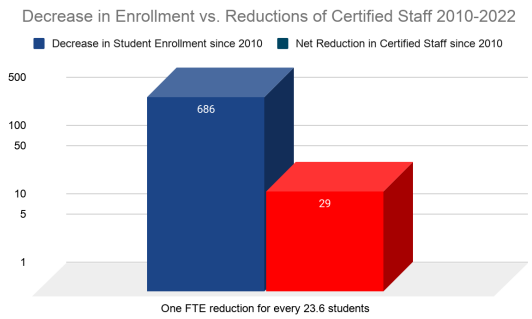
- Provide needed resources to fulfill the District’s Mission and the Vision of the Graduate, and,
- Secure resources to support student learning and social emotional development which was interrupted by COVID-19, and
- Produce a fiscally responsible budget - balancing student needs with community resources.

The Board of Education’s proposed gross budget represents an increase of 2.06% percent from last year’s significantly decreased budget, however, a \$400,135 increase over two years ago. The Annual Town Assessments represent an increase of \$153,850.84 for Haddam or 0.63% and \$671,088.05 for Killingworth or 4.38%.



**Board of Education’s Commitment to Balancing Student Needs with Fiscal Responsibility**

Each year, the District deploys a Continuous Improvement Plan to address student learning goals as well as overall school factors and proposes investments in learning programs and support for students. In support of its Mission, the Board attempts to fund these learning-based investments by advocating for District efficiency and resource management. The budget is categorically very similar year to year: 68.97% being composed of salaries and benefits; 14.57% for Pupil Services (including Special Education); 6.77% for Building Maintenance/Operation; 5% for transportation; 3.84% for Debt/Debt Service; and 1.67% for Learning Programs, Supplies, and Tools. As a result, contractual salary increases and benefits paired with other categories can potentially push the budget up approximately 3%, each year due to student need or inflationary impact. The work of the Superintendent in partnership with the Board of Education is to be fiscally responsible, resourceful and re-examine and redeploy assets, find efficiencies, and use fund balances in order to fulfill student achievement without necessarily increasing the budget by 3% each year and keep the subsequent town assessments as low as possible.



**Salary and Health Benefits:** While remaining committed to community-valued class sizes, expanding individual student support and educational tools and employing high-quality educators, this year’s budgeted salaries will increase by only \$51,721 (.23%). The potential 3% increase was offset due to a reduction of 5.5 FTE staff (3 Certified, 2.5 non-certified) and four retirements. Since 2010, and included in this proposed budget, the District has responded to declining enrollment

through a net reduction in force of 29 Certified Staff. These reductions average out to one classroom teacher for every decrease of 24 students.

The Board is proposing to offset the 3.5% increase in health benefits provided through the CT State Partnership II Plan by using \$208,000 from the District's Medical Self-Insurance Fund. This Fund was established by the District to manage the administrative and risk aspects of the self-insured health plan and pay for employee medical, dental and vision claims. The Board of Education moved to the State Plan in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, but left the Fund intact for three years to ensure that the State Plan would be a viable alternative to self-insurance. The District can now appropriately use some of those funds to offset health insurance increases.

**Pupil Services:** At nearly 15% of the proposed gross budget, Pupil Services varies year-to-year depending on student special education needs. In the 21/22 budget, there is an increase of \$902,000 (17%) over 20/21. The bulk of this increase is in tuition, transportation and professional services to aid our students. Grant funding from the state for special education will increase and offset total projected special education costs by a projected \$1,109,000.

**Offsetting the Impact of the Pandemic:** In a multi-year response to the pandemic's effects on students and learning, the District has prioritized supporting all students to meet their growth targets as well as addressing their social-emotional needs. Additional Federal Coronavirus grant funding is anticipated and tentative plans are in place to provide additional support to directly counter learning loss, including reading and math academic support staff, expanded access to summer school programs, adding social-emotional programs and support for grades 4-12, and upgrading the technology and connectivity in our schools. In addition, the Board proposes making crucial investments in learning recovery for our students, including an investment in personalized learning software, which individualizes tools for students and feedback to teachers as well as replacing district technology hardware, i.e. Chromebooks and Smartboards, which have reached the end of their use.

**Overdue Investments in Student-based Equipment:** The Board proposes using \$185,000 from the 20/21 Operating Budget to pay for items that have been postponed from each of the past five Superintendent Budgets and can no longer be deferred. Replacing library tables and chairs that are original to HKHS, repairing safety hazards in the HKHS announcing tower, replacing 14 year old AP Psychology textbooks, and replacing the torn and damaged wrestling mats at the HKHS will all be purchased by the end of 20/21. A playground will be added at KES for the pre-school program that was moved there this year, Middle School science textbooks will be updated to meet current state standards and mats will be purchased for the HKHS cheerleading team, which has had to borrow them and no longer can.

**Capital Fund and Debt Service:** In Connecticut, Regional School Districts own and maintain the school buildings as opposed to municipal or local school districts, which include building costs in their town budgets. The RSD 17 budget includes the full 1% allowed by state statute to be allocated into the Capital Fund to cover planned maintenance including the boiler circulation pump at KES, paving and sealing parking lots, repairs and upgrades to the HKHS greenhouse, and school building painting projects.

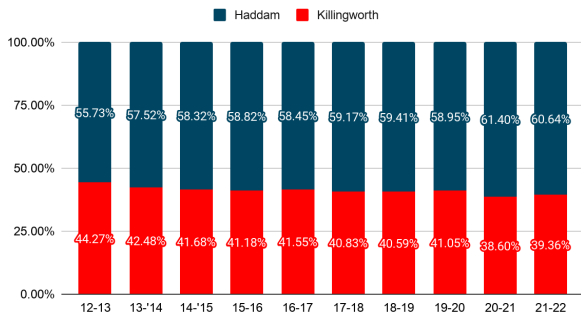
<p><b><u>When were the schools built?</u></b> Killingworth Elementary- 1948 <i>additions added in 1968 &amp; 1989</i> Central Office- 1954 Burr Elementary-1973 High School - 1974 Middle/Intermediate School- 2007</p>
---

For large building projects, the Board must secure town approval to bond for funds to make necessary improvements or repairs. The District has two outstanding bonds; one for building HKMS which will be paid off in 2024, and one for

the HKHS Energy Project which will be paid off in 2030. When the District bonded for the HKHS Energy project it received the bond at a higher interest rate with a premium of about \$1.4 million over par, which the District plans to use either for payment of the principal or interest, or a project that might otherwise demand borrowing. This year, the Board proposes transferring \$371,687.50 from this Bonded Capital Project Fund to offset the entire 21/22 Debt Service (interest) expense.

**Town Assessment and Refund**

Percent of the Budget Paid By Haddam and Killingworth



**Assessment:** Haddam and Killingworth pay a share of the budget based on the number of students each town enrolled on October 1st of the prior year. This "Average Daily Membership (ADM)" is driven by how many students from each town graduate, enroll in pre-K/Kindergarten, students choosing to attend school out of the district or homeschooling and students who move in or out of the District. Last year's budget saw a jump for Haddam when Killingworth's enrollment decreased significantly. Breaking the trend of previous years, this year's budget assessment represents

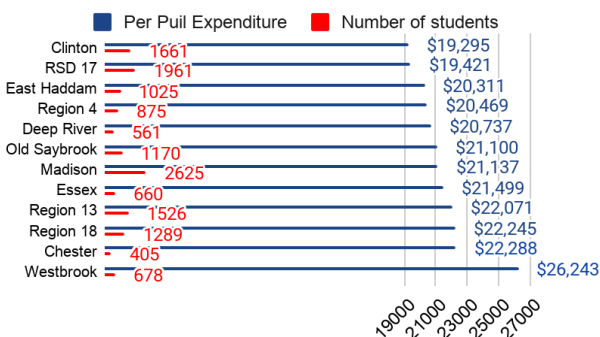
an increase for Killingworth's budget share because Haddam's enrollment is decreasing by 81 and Killingworth by 28 students. Haddam's share of the 2021/22 assessment is 60.6% and Killingworth's 39.4%.

**Refund:** At the end of every fiscal year, the District typically ends the year with a positive balance remaining in the budget. The unspent Audited Fund Balance is credited to the following year's town gross budget obligation (proportionately to the number of students enrolled in the year the balance was created.) This year, the 2019-2020, \$929,684 Audited Fund Balance will be credited to Haddam and Killingworth

**It's all about Long Term Sustainability.....**

The 2021/22 budget represents a commitment to our students and our towns. With the 91.22% percent of budget made up of fixed costs, the district has managed to keep increases to a minimum through reallocating resources, strategic planning and thoughtful spending. Through careful budget planning, RSD 17 continues to remain below most neighboring towns in per pupil expenditure and right in line with the state average of \$19,295. In the past year school has been more critical than ever to Haddam and Killingworth children. The investments we make now in our students will pay dividends by creating compassionate, critical thinkers who will contribute to improving our society.

2019-20 Per Pupil Expenditure Comparison



**Haddam BoE Representatives -Prem Aithal, Brenda Buzzi, Jen Favalora, Shawna Goldfarb, Joanne Nesti, Peter Sonski**  
**Killingworth BoE Representatives - Eileen Blewett, Joel D'Angelo, Nelson Rivera, Suzanne Sack, Kathy Zandi**