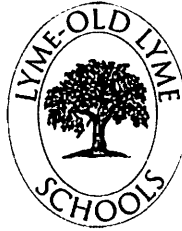


LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Regular Board of Education Meeting

January 3, 2024

Board Present: Jason Kemp, Chair; Christopher Staab, Treasurer; Martha Shoemaker, Secretary; Scott Brown; Laura Dean-Frazier; Susan Fogliano; Gavin Lodge; Alexander Lowry

Absent by Previous Arrangement: Anna James

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Ron Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

Others Present: Olivia Hersant, RETA Co-President; Chloe Datum and Ada LaConti, High School Student Representatives; one community member from LOL

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Jason Kemp. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lodge, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 6, 2023 as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371

T: 860-434-7238 F: 860-434-9959 E: neviaseri@region18.org www.region18.org

III. Visitors

1. Report from Student Representatives

Chloe Datum and Ada LaConti reported on the following activities taking place at the schools:

At LOLHS: December was a busy month at LOLHS. To start the month off, the Chinese Honors Society hosted a movie night, and members of the Athletic Leadership Council and Student Council attended a leadership conference hosted by the CIAC. The Mock Trial team won both of their first trials and will be advancing to the next round of competition. Student Council hosted PJ Day for the Kids, where students and staff wore pajamas and, in turn, brought in \$1 or more to donate to the Connecticut Children's Foundation raising \$448.65. The annual NHS toy drive was a huge success, and it was great to see students pulling together to help the community. Band and chorus held their annual winter concerts, and winter sports are underway with lots of wins from the Wildcats. To finish off the month, Student Council sponsored a spirit week with holiday themes like festive sweater day and candy cane colors day. For Wednesday's advisory, students got to pick winter activities to participate in, e.g., watching a holiday movie, decorating cookies, or karaoke at the Winter Carnival. Before leaving for winter break, a band and chorus performance took place, and students and teachers participated in some fun "minute to win it" style games. Looking ahead to January, midterms are quickly approaching, as well as the Winter Ball at the end of the month.

At LOLMS: December at the middle school was extremely busy. The chorus and band held their annual winter concerts to showcase their skills and hard work. The boys and girls basketball team opened their seasons with victories, and we look forward to a successful season ahead. A special thanks to the high school Select Singers who performed in front of the entire student body. Prior to winter break, the middle school held a spirit week including a PJ Day for Childhood Cancer as well as the second pep rally of the year, titled Reindeer Games where the students showed their school spirit and energy. The 7th and 8th grade students are working diligently on their interdisciplinary projects that lead up to the national History Day competition. We are holding the annual 8th grade showcase on Wednesday evening, January 24, where each of the 8th graders get to show their culmination of research and presentation skills to their families and greater community.

At Lyme Consolidated School and Mile Creek School: December was a festive month at the elementary schools as we participated in CCMC PJ Day, enjoyed holiday sing-alongs, and welcomed the Select Singers from the high school for a very special performance. At Lyme School, all third grade students had a visit from representatives from the Connecticut River Museum and learned about the history of development along the shores of the Connecticut River. This is an interactive and informative presentation and allows students to gain a deeper understanding of this amazing resource just to our west. At Mile Creek School, representatives from the Florence Griswold Museum visited and assisted all students in painting winter scenes. Students enjoyed this art lesson and produced very creative landscapes. Auditions for the spring musical were also completed. This year fifth grade students will be performing *Seussical*. Mrs. Enoch and Mrs. Hine have been participating in a CAS cohort about implementing play-based learning. This has been a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with administrators from around the state as we continue work on Purposeful Play in kindergarten and begin to roll it up into first grade.

In the Preschool Program: December was a busy month at Center School. We welcomed the high school and middle school Select Singers for a holiday concert, and families visited for the annual gingerbread celebration. We also participated in the annual PJ Day fundraiser when all wore pajamas to school and raised nearly \$300, which will be donated to the Connecticut Children's Hospital. In January we will be learning about winter, wild animals and snowmen. We will read *Animals in Winter* and *The Snowy Day*, and we will create a reenactment of the classic story *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. We will learn the letters M, N, O and P, and we will learn about the freeze/thaw cycle by studying things that freeze and melt. During good citizenship chats, we will discuss Martin Luther King, Jr., and talk about what our dreams are for the future. In math, we will practice writing numbers and learn the AAB pattern. In art, we will make our own versions of *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh. The color of the month is blue and our shape of the month is the star.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IV. Correspondence

Mr. Kemp reviewed a summary of the correspondence that the Board received over the last month.

The opinions expressed in the correspondence are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the position of the Regional School District #18 Board of Education or its employees.

Sender	Date	Subject
Kim Thompson	December 21, 2023	Consideration of expanding the transportation policy to daycares within a certain radius or drive time from Center School.
		Consideration of all day PreK for the 3 year old program. *

**The actual correspondence has been omitted intentionally because it contained identifiable student information.*

V. Administrative Reports

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the January personnel report which reflected the following:

Vacancies	
Instructional Assistants	LOLHS
Art Teacher .8 FTE (Long-Term Substitute Position)	LOLMS
Custodians	TBD
Social Studies Teacher (temporary position mid-January - June)	LOLMS
Speech Pathologist (.65 FTE)	Mile Creek and Lyme School

Appointments			
Name	Position	Location	Effective Date
Lauren Levasseur	Speech Pathologist	Lyme School, LOLMS and LOLHS	January 3, 2024
Kayte Wheeler-Penezic	Elementary Spanish Teacher	Mile Creek School and Lyme School	January 29, 2024
Courtney Strekel	Kindergarten Teacher (long-term substitute)	Mile Creek School	January 22, 2024
Alethea Reynolds-Lee	Kindergarten Teacher (long-term substitute)	Mile Creek School	January 29, 2024

Resignations/Retirements			
Name	Position	Location	Effective Date
Jodi Lenz	Custodian	LOLMS	December 11, 2023
Erin Hrinak	Speech and Language Pathologist	Mile Creek and Lyme School	January 12, 2024

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the January enrollment report which reflected a total of 1,295 students in-house, a decrease of one student from last month this time.

Mr. Neviasser gave an update on the progress towards the district goals.

Curriculum

Continue to document/revise curriculum in accordance with the five year Curriculum Revision Cycle.

- PreK teachers used their scheduled Monday meeting on December 4 to continue on curriculum renewal.
- Departments and teams continued curriculum work during designated times in their daily schedule.

Human Resources

In alignment with state guidelines, utilize the PDEC committee to revise the teacher evaluation plan, communicate new expectations, and provide introductory training to all certified staff.

- PDEC did second read of guidelines and planned for the January 11 follow-up meeting.

Community

Collaborate with the community via regular updates in an effort to maintain and enhance school-community relationships.

- Held a community meeting for neighbors regarding the Mile Creek renovations.

- Continue to post monthly oil release updates on website and inform abutting neighbors of well test updates.
- *FOCUS on Education* newsletter is at the printer and will go out later this month.

Facilities

In preparation for construction to begin in the summer of 2024, develop strategies to minimize classroom disruption, adhere to the approved budget and design, and continue to maintain existing facilities via the five-year plan.

- Building Committee met to review interior details of Mile Creek School renovations.

Sustainability

Develop “Green Teams” at each building to identify, address, and support student-driven sustainability initiatives.

- LOLHS. Clean up at Watch Rock/Elizabeth P. Karter OLLT preserve. Met with Chartwells to discuss options for waste/recycling stations and plan to reduce stainless cutlery being thrown out.
- Mile Creek School. Focusing on reducing waste in the cafeteria. Student leaders have scheduled a meeting with the cafeteria staff to discuss their ideas.
- Center School. We continue to teach students about recycling in the classrooms and in the cafeteria, and we continue to “upcycle” by repurposing waste items such as “upcycling” cardboard boxes into life-size gingerbread houses.
- LOLMS. Students attended the kickoff meeting with Sustainers of the Sound where they met with other area schools at Avery Point to learn about the conservation and preservation of Long Island Sound. They participated in a book talk from Sea Grant where they were gifted a book. They also participated in fish printing on t-shirts to commemorate the day. As part of the local effort to become active stewards of the environment, students went to the John Lohmann Preserve to learn about local flora and fauna, specifically, invasive species.
- Lyme School. The Green Team continues with their composting effort. They have been focusing on educating their peers about general recycling efforts around the school to increase participation and understanding around this effort.

Board of Education

Attend professional development opportunities offered through CABA including the CABA/CAPSS Convention and the state-mandated new BOE member workshop.

- No new updates.

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the budget development meeting schedule which will occur over the next several weeks.

2. Business Manager’s Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of December 31, 2023. Fluctuations of note: There are fluctuations on spend to budget in some of the line items, but the overall spend to budget is

almost exactly the same as this time last year. This year 48.9% to budget and last year 48.4% to budget.

Year To Date Revenue Report

	2022-2023 Received	2023-2024 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,521,402	\$12,715,313
Town of Lyme	\$5,918,777	\$2,927,102

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report. An increase of \$13,142 in spending for miscellaneous repairs was reported including a broken sewer pipe, door repair and back flow preventer repair at Lyme School; door repair at the high school; and repair to the kiln at the middle school. Balance stands at \$146,253.

Mrs. McCalla gave an update on the bus tracking application which is currently up and running. Mrs. McCalla has been working with several parents who are having trouble with the app but there have been no major issues in its use. Mrs. McCalla noted the confidential nature of the information provided as parents must know their student's PowerSchool ID number to use the notification system.

VI. Educational Presentation

1. Review of Budget Process

Holly McCalla, Business Manager, and Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services, gave a presentation on the budget process.

A copy of their presentation is attached to these minutes for informational purposes.

Mrs. McCalla addressed questions on the budget presentation in the following areas: grants for educational programs based on Title I identification; increase in educational cost share; and social media misinformation.

Mrs. Dougherty addressed questions on the special education presentation in the following areas: student transportation for out-placements; unilateral placements; tuition students and extra costs borne by parents; out placement expenditures; planning and placement team meetings; 504 vs. IEP counts; transition program enrollment and cost sharing of this program with Old Saybrook Schools.

VII. Chairman & Committee Reports:

- a. Facilities.* Mr. Staab reported that this group met earlier in the evening at Mile Creek School where the overall condition of the school is in good shape with outstanding issues such as HVAC and storage to be addressed via the renovation project. The committee also reviewed the five year facilities plan with some cost savings discussed. The next meeting of this committee will take place at the Middle School.
- b. Finance.* No report.
- c. Communications.* Mrs. Dean-Frazier reported that this group met on December 12 where

Bridget Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing, discussed the various communication vehicles currently in place. The January edition of the *Focus on Education* newsletter is being finalized and articles include outgoing and incoming Board members, purposeful play curriculum and a facilities update.

- d. *Policy*. Mr. Kemp reported that Policy 5141.31 Interscholastic Athletics: Health Assessment/Participation Criteria was revised at this committee's December meeting and would be reviewed later in the meeting under New Business.
- e. *LEARN*. Dr. Brown reported on this group's last meeting when discussion centered on LEARN's efforts to get the state to provide more aid so that costs don't get passed along to the school districts.
- f. *LOL Prevention Coalition*. No report.
- g. *PreK-8 Building Committee*. Mrs. Fogliano reported that there was a recent resignation from this committee and, most likely, they will elevate one of the alternates to full membership. If this occurs, then appointment of a new alternate will have to occur. Mrs. Fogliano and Mr. Lowry, newly appointed Chair and Vice Chair of this committee, have spent a lot of time trying to play catchup on past committee efforts and touring the buildings. Mrs. Fogliano also addressed the need for simultaneous bidding of the work because of their tight timeline. Mr. Kemp reviewed the committee's efforts at their December 18 meeting which included review of internal finishes with input from Kelly Enoch and staff and updates to the project schedule and the HVAC grant waiver.

Mr. Kemp encouraged the Board members to reach out to their legislators on the Right to Read legislation with the recommendation to amend the act to add waivers for high performing school districts. Mrs. Fogliano reported that she is attending the CAFE legislative breakfast and will hammer home this point. Mr. Neviaseer discussed the support received from State Senator Martha Marx and State Representative Devin Carney on this issue, but an email from the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents was not very encouraging. There is a possibility of this going to committee where Board members and others could testify.

VIII. New Business

1. Tuition Student Requests for 2024-2025

Mr. Neviaseer reviewed three preschool tuition requests for children of staff members for the 2024-2025 school year – all for the preschool program.

Mr. Neviaseer explained that priority for preschool enrollment goes to residents first, and approval would need to be contingent on enrollment numbers for this program.

MOTION: Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the tuition student requests for the PreK-4 program for the 2024-2025 school year contingent on enrollment numbers.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

2. Board of Ed Meeting Schedule for 2024-2025

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the regular meeting schedule for the Board of Ed for the school year 2024-2025. He explained that this requires Board action so that it can be filed with the town clerks in Lyme and Old Lyme by the January 31 deadline.

MOTION: Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lodge, to approve the 2024-2025 Board of Education meeting schedule as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. Policy Review

The Board reviewed Policy 5141.31 Interscholastic Athletics: Health Assessment/Participation Criteria. The only change was the removal of the following sentence due to the standard practice of no longer accepting bridge notes: *Only with specific approval from the school district medical advisor or the school nurse supervisor, a note from a health care provider ("bridge note") may be accepted provided such note indicates that a health assessment appointment is scheduled within four weeks.*

MOTION: Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lodge, to waive the second reading and approve Policy 5141.31 Interscholastic Athletics: Health Assessment/Participation Criteria.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

IX. Old Business

There was no old business to report.

X. Executive Session

Mr. Staab made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lodge, to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing the superintendent's mid-year evaluation. Mr. Neviaser was invited to attend the executive session.

XI. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned upon a motion by Mr. Staab and a second by Mr. Lodge at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Shoemaker, Secretary

Summary of Communication to Board of Education
January 3, 2024

Sender	Date	Subject
Kim Thompson	December 21, 2023	Consideration of expanding the transportation policy to daycares within a certain radius or drive time from Center School. Consideration of all day PreK for the 3 year old program. *

**The actual correspondence has been omitted intentionally because it contained identifiable student information.*

School Budgeting 101

Presented to Regional School District #18 Board of Education

Wednesday January 3, 2024

Holly McCalla, Business Manager

3 Sources of Public School Funding

1. Local Money - Local Revenues, Property Tax
2. Federal Money - Grants (IDEA, Entitlements)
3. State Money - State Aid & Grants (ECS, Excess Cost, HVAC or Security Grants)

Grant Programs

- ▶ State Education Grant Programs
 - ▶ ECS-in FY '21 RSD 18 received \$298,799. In FY '23 RSD 18 received \$689,752
 - ▶ Excess Cost-It's complicated, more on this later
- ▶ Federal Grant Programs
 - ▶ Title I-in FY '22 grant is \$51,254 (serves the under privileged)
 - ▶ Title II-in FY '22 grant is \$18,797 (teacher training and development)
 - ▶ Title III-in FY '22 grant is \$3,908 (serves English Language Learners (ELL))
 - ▶ Title IV-FY '22 \$10,000 to support ESSA initiatives (Every Student Succeeds Act)
 - ▶ IDEA- in FY '22 grant is \$305,194 (serves special education students)

Excess Cost Grant

- ▶ The Department of Education administers the Excess Costs-Student Based grant pursuant to CGS §10-76d, §10-76g and §10-253. Costs in excess of **four and one-half times a town's average cost per pupil** for the prior year are paid for students placed in a special education program by a school district, pursuant to CGS §10-76g(b).

Excess Cost Grant Example

Towns Net Current Expenditure per Pupil (NCEP)* (RSD #18's actual from 22-23, source CT SDE)	\$23,081
Threshold for Grant to District (4.5 X NCEP)	\$103,865
Cost for Hypothetical Outplaced Student (includes tuition and transportation costs)	\$155,000
Excess Cost Grant Eligibility	\$51,135
Recent state average of reimbursement 70%	\$35,795

SETTING BUDGET GUIDELINES AND GOALS



Goals for student achievement should drive the budget process.

- Budget decisions should be made in alignment with the district's strategic plan.
- Decisions should be a collaborative effort between the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and school administrators.
- Input should be collected from all stakeholders: faculty/staff, parents, town leaders and taxpayers.



Understanding the Line Item Details

Certified Salaries: Encompasses all teaching and administrative staff

Non-Certified Salaries: All other positions, IA's, secretarial, facilities, tech. staff, et al.

Employee Benefits: Medical, dental, life, WC, tuition reimbursement etc.

Instructional Programs: All costs associated with educating regular education students

Special Education: Costs for SpEd including transportation and tuition

Support Services: Guidance, Health Services, Library Media

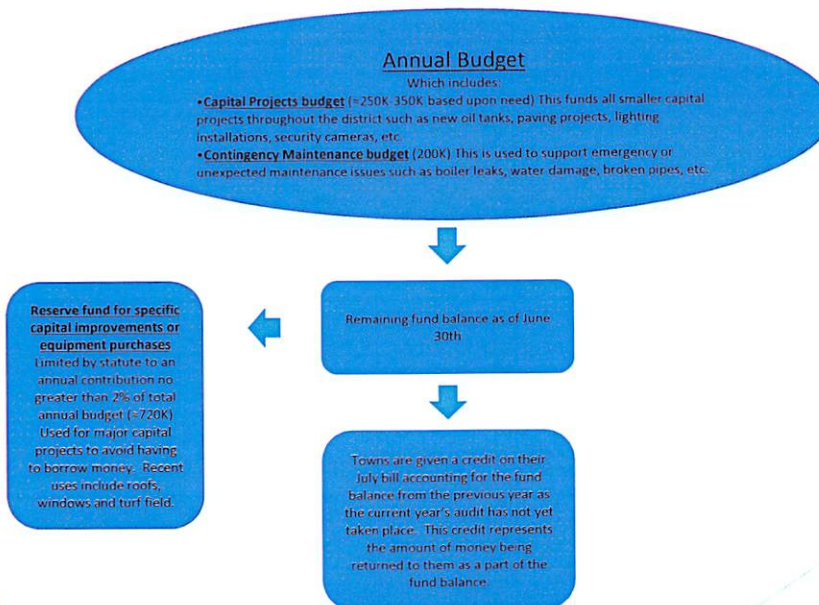
Administrative Services: Board of Education, superintendent's office, business office, school office expenditures, district wide tech purchasing, graduation costs

Pupil Transportation: Delivering regular education students to and from school

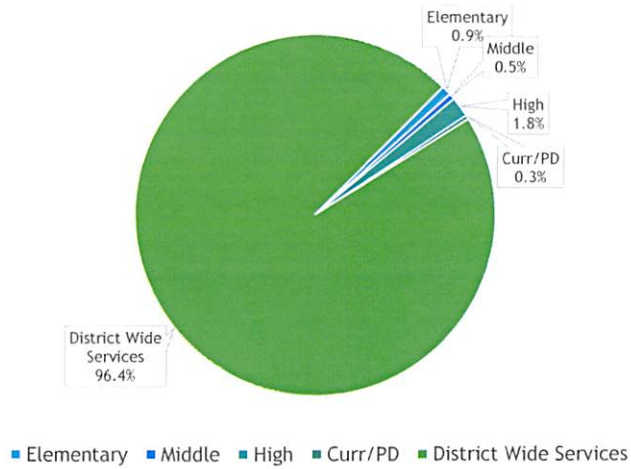
Plant Operation & Maintenance: Cleaning and upkeep of all facilities and grounds, including capital expenditures and contingency spending

Debt Service: Long term debt obligation expenditures

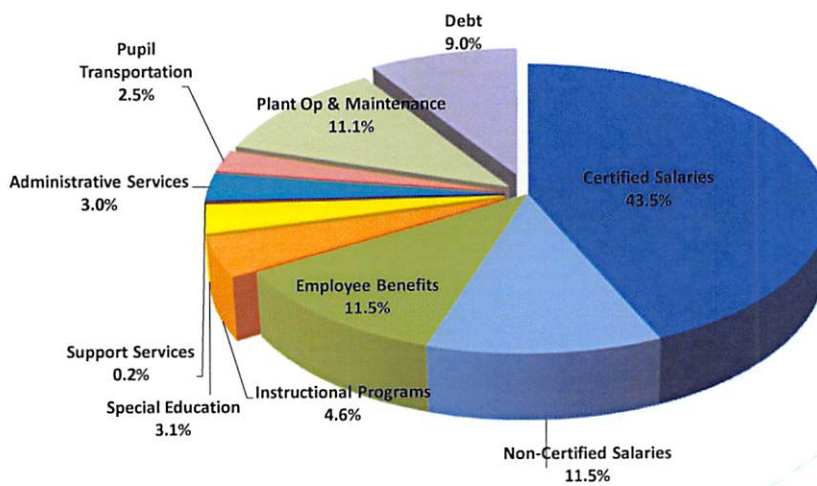
UNDERSTANDING OUR BUDGET STRUCTURE



Schools vs. Districtwide



2023-2024 Proposed Budget \$35,844,345 2.91% increase



Discussing the Budget with Stakeholders

- ▶ Know the message
 - ▶ What are we asking for and why?
- ▶ Know your audience
 - ▶ Demographics
 - ▶ What's important to them?
- ▶ Tailor your message to the audience
 - ▶ Would you have the same discussion at the Senior Center that you would have with the PTO?

When Do You Communicate?

Year Round!

- Student achievements
 - ❖ Academic
 - ❖ Athletic
 - ❖ Artistic
 - ❖ Extra-Curricular
- Outstanding programs
- Special recognitions

Timeline of Budget Events Moving Forward

January

- District and school based budget presentations

February

- Public budget forum and Board of Education adoption

March

- Preparation of budget book and special edition of *Focus on Education*

April

- Meet with respective Boards of Finance and various community groups
- District budget hearing
- Budget voting cards are mailed

May:

- District budget meeting
- Budget referendum

Questions?

Understanding Special Education Costs

Melissa Dougherty

January 3, 2024

The Budget...

Constant:

- Supplies
- Dues
- Professional Development

Variable:

- Public Tuition
- Private Tuition
- Special Education Therapy and Evaluation
- Transportation

What Causes the Variability?

Our obligation to educate all students in their least restrictive environment.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (rev. 1990)

Education of all Handicapped Children Act 1975

District recommends an out of district placement to meet the student's needs

Students move to the district and were previously placed by sending district

DCF involvement

Unilateral Placements

Parent requests for Independent Educational Evaluations

Additional supports/evaluations required for educational programming

Out of District Placement Examples

School Name	Daily Rate	Yearly Tuition	Transportation
Natchaug Hospital	\$353	\$66,717	\$2,472
Waterford Country School	\$347	\$64,195	\$22,341
Meliora		\$138,420	\$32,720
Foundation School		\$68,500	\$37,026
LEARN		\$115,650	\$26,961
Public School		\$22,412	N/A

Sample Budget

Example: Projected 2024-25 Special Education Budget					
Student	School	Tuition	Transportation	SpEd Therapy and Evaluation	Total
Student A	School Z	\$115,650	\$26,961		\$142,611
Student B	School Y	\$115,650	\$26,961		\$142,611
Student C				\$97,900	\$97,900
Student D				\$5,000	\$5,000
Projected Budget: \$388,122					
Student E	School W	\$108,000	N/A		\$108,000
Student F				\$3,600	\$3,600
Student G & H				\$195,800	\$195,800
Projected Increased Expenditure: \$307,400					
Projected Adjusted Expenditures: \$388,122 + \$307,400 = \$695,522					

Special Education Therapy and Evaluation Examples

Professional Services	Cost Per Year
Behavioral Supports	\$97,900 per student
Independent Educational Evaluation	\$5,000 ea.
District Evaluation Request/Consultation	\$5,000 ea. / \$1,350 ea.

