



Superintendent's Budget Request 2024-25 School Year (FY25)

Dr. Tamu Lucero, Superintendent
Ryan Fealey, Chief Financial Officer

District Overview

16,400+ students

- 5th largest district in CT

2,400+ staff

- 86% of SPS staff work directly with students
- 97% of Stamford staff work in school buildings

23 Sites / 300+ Acres

- 3M+ sqft of building space
- 300+ acres of property

Pre-K to Adult Education

- APPLES Preschool
- 11 Elementary Schools
- 2 K-8 Schools
- 5 Middle Schools
- 3 High Schools
- SPS Anchor
- Remote Learning Program (9-12)
- Adult & Continuing Education

Funding Stamford Public Schools

Operating Budget:

- Day-to-Day Operations
- Funded by City of Stamford

Grants Budget:

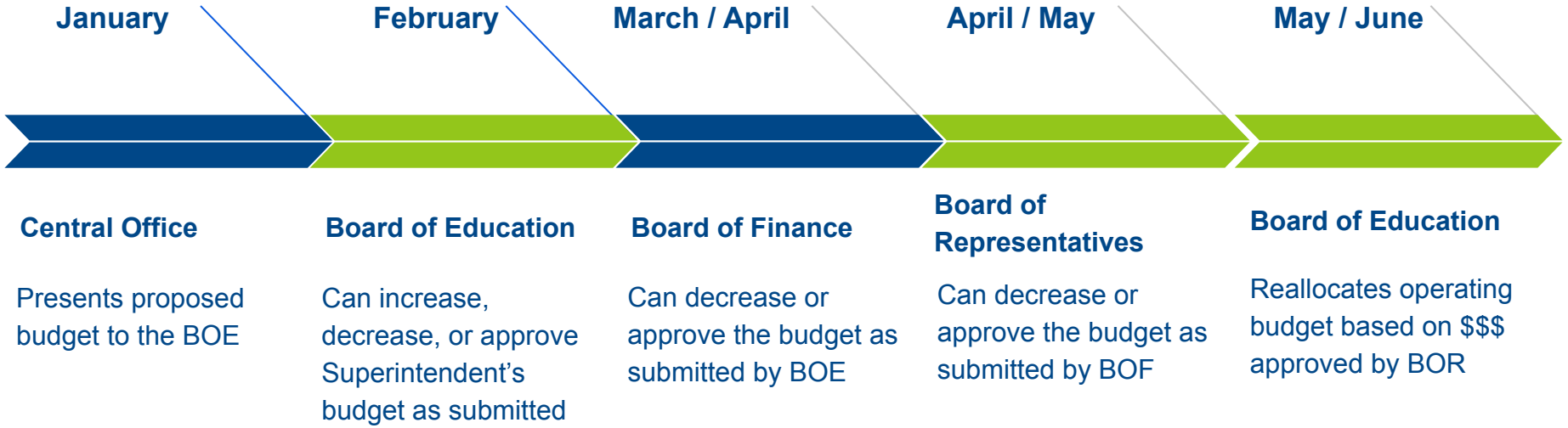
- Designated for specific programs or initiatives
- Funding from federal, state, or private sources

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Operating Budget} \\ + \\ \text{Grants Budget} \\ = \\ \text{Total SPS Budget} \end{array}$$

Capital Budget:

- Major investments/projects, including Long-Term Facilities Plan
 - New Westhill High School, Roxbury K-8 School, and South K-8 School are capital projects
- Funding from City of Stamford and State grants
 - State expected to reimburse 80% of the new Westhill High School, and 60% of both the new Roxbury K-8 School, and the South K-8 School

Budget Timeline



District Snapshot: Spending Comparison

Rank	District	Enrollment*	NCEP 2022-23	Rank	District	Enrollment	NCEP 2022-23
1	Redding	1,175	\$28,648	12	New Fairfield	2,097	\$21,332
2	Greenwich	8,323	\$26,696	13	Stamford	15,820	\$21,023
3	Weston	2,159	\$25,528	14	Newtown	4,021	\$20,728
4	Westport	5,356	\$24,871	15	Norwalk	11,920	\$20,317
5	Sherman	368	\$24,830	16	Stratford	6,966	\$18,613
6	Darien	4,653	\$24,069	17	Monroe	3,417	\$18,449
7	Wilton	3,723	\$23,343	18	Trumbull	6,769	\$18,062
8	New Canaan	4,210	\$23,054	19	Bethel	3,174	\$17,749
9	Easton	1,299	\$22,947	20	Shelton	4,668	\$17,188
10	Ridgefield	4,545	\$22,655	21	Bridgeport	19,092	\$16,503
11	Fairfield	9,360	\$22,440	22	Danbury	11,992	\$14,661
					Average	6,141	\$21,532

Source: CT State Department of Education Bureau of Fiscal Services

* Enrollment adjusted for attendance

SPS Ranked 13th in Per Pupil Spending in 2022-23



Stamford Public Schools

EXCELLENCE IS THE POINT.

District Snapshot: Spending vs. State Average

Scaled to SPS 2022-23 Budget \$

	SPS	State Average	Variance
Instruction & Support Services	\$248,025,980	\$245,604,948	\$2,421,032
Central Office	\$4,965,353	\$10,035,867	(\$5,070,514)
Student Transportation/Plant Operations	\$48,852,209	\$43,532,931	\$5,319,278
Other*	\$0	\$2,669,796	(\$2,669,796)
Sum	\$301,843,542	\$301,843,542	

*Food Service and Enterprise Operations (i.e. activities financed and operated like a private business, for example a school bookstore)

Compared to the State Average, SPS Spends:

- **10% MORE** on Instruction & Student Support Services
- **50% LESS** on Central Office

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education. Per Pupil Expenditures by Function, 2021-22 (latest available data as of 12/1/2023). Available [here](#).

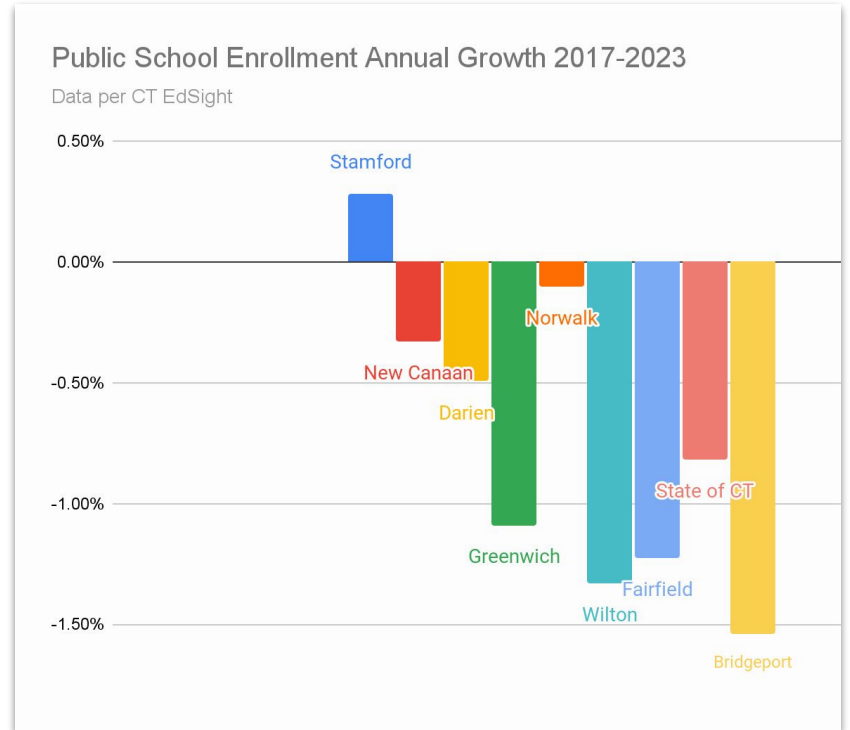


Enrollment Trends

- SPS enrollment grew by 0.28% annually from 2017-2023.
- Enrollment statewide and in neighboring districts declined over the same period.

SPS Enrollment Changes 2017-2023

- Elementary: declined by more than 5%
- Middle School: increased by almost 6%
- High School: increased by nearly 20%



FY25 Enrollment Projections

- ❑ Projections are calculated internally, as well as by Powerschool Predictive Enrollment Analytics, and are based on historical trends and birth rate analysis.
- ❑ Overall enrollment is projected to decrease by 224 students (or 1.37%) in FY25 (from 16,402 students to 16,178 students).
- ❑ This decrease is primarily due to changes in State of Connecticut Kindergarten Age Requirements.
- ❑ The enrollment projection assumes that 400 children will be ineligible for Kindergarten due to the new cut-off date, but that 200 of those will begin school in Fall 2024 via the Teaching & Learning Department's early kindergarten admission assessment program.

Kindergarten Age Requirements

In 2023, the Connecticut Legislature changed how old a child must be to start kindergarten.

Public Act 23-208, Section 1(a) changed the birth date cutoff date from January 1 of any given school year to September 1 of any given school year.

In Fall 2024, only children born between January 1, 2019 and September 1, 2019 will be automatically eligible for Kindergarten.

Detailed enrollment projections by school and grade are available in the Budget Book.

Operating Budget Goals

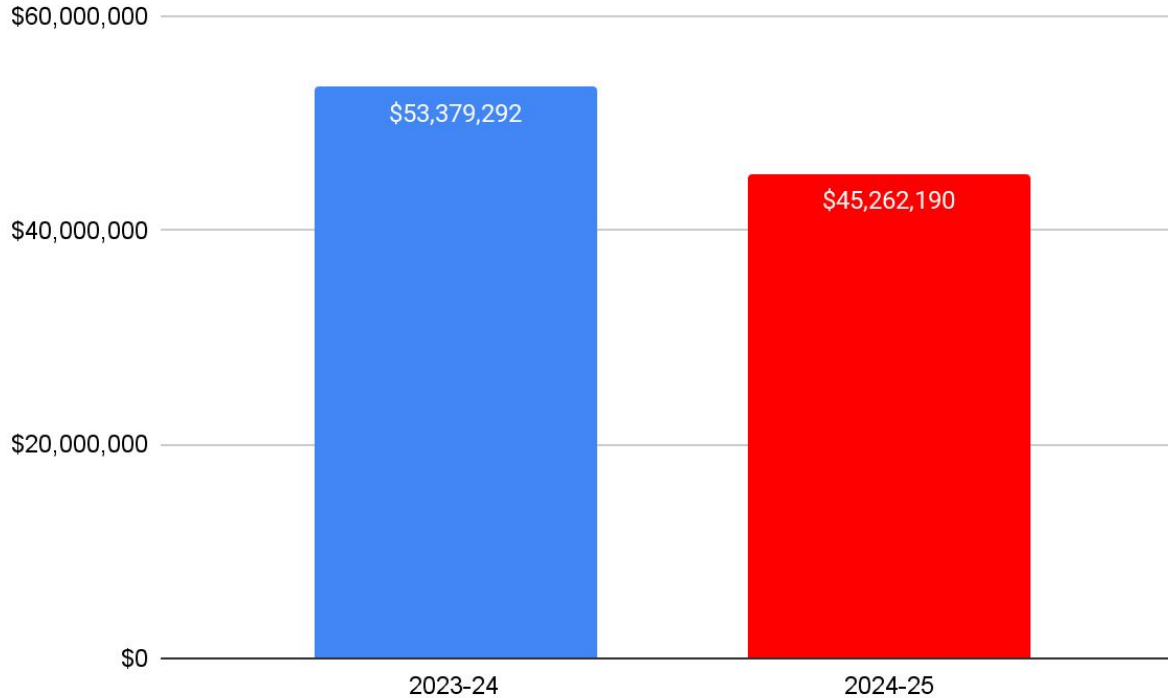
Preserve Existing Programs/Services & Manage the Fiscal Cliff

- Support SPS Mission and Vision
- Align with Current Strategic Plan
- Continue Curriculum Update
- Manage Cost Pressures
 - Special Education
 - Facility Repair & Maintenance
 - Healthcare
 - Utilities
 - Transportation
 - Insurance

What is the Fiscal Cliff?

- Originated in Spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- City Boards were concerned that residents wouldn't be able to pay property taxes
- City Boards reduced the SPS operating budget \$12.5m
- SPS has preserved positions and programs since then using Federal COVID grants (ESSER)
- Those grants expire after FY24

Grant Revenue is Declining



Why are Grants Decreasing?

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds Expire on June 30, 2024

15% decrease in grant funding

Full Cost of Maintaining all Programs & Services

School Year	Status	Description	Total	Increase
2023-24	Approved	Current operating budget	\$313,562,896	
2024-25	Draft	Amount required to maintain all current programs, services, and staff from 2023-24. (Moving 123 positions from the ESSER grant to the Operating Budget, plus estimated increases in wages, healthcare, transportation, Special Education, facilities, and other operational areas)	\$344,488,841	9.85%
2024-25	Submitted to BOE	SPS Administration eliminates \$7+m in costs from draft budget and reallocates \$3+m using other funding sources	\$333,737,756	6.43%

Superintendent Operating Budget Request

2023-24 Operating Budget \$313,562,896

2024-25 Operating Budget \$333,737,756

Change 6.43%

2024-25 Total Budget (Operating + Grants)

2023-24 Total Budget \$366,942,188

2024-25 Total Budget \$378,999,946

Change 3.29%

SPS Budget Request in Context

District	Requested Increase	Status as of 1/10/24
Danbury	17.50%	Proposed to BOE
Westport	8.83%	Proposed to BOE
Norwalk	8.20%	BOE Approved
New Canaan	6.54%	Proposed to BOE ← Stamford 6.43%
Darien	6.19%	Proposed to BOE
Meriden	6.07%	Proposed to BOE
Greenwich	5.60%	BOE Approved

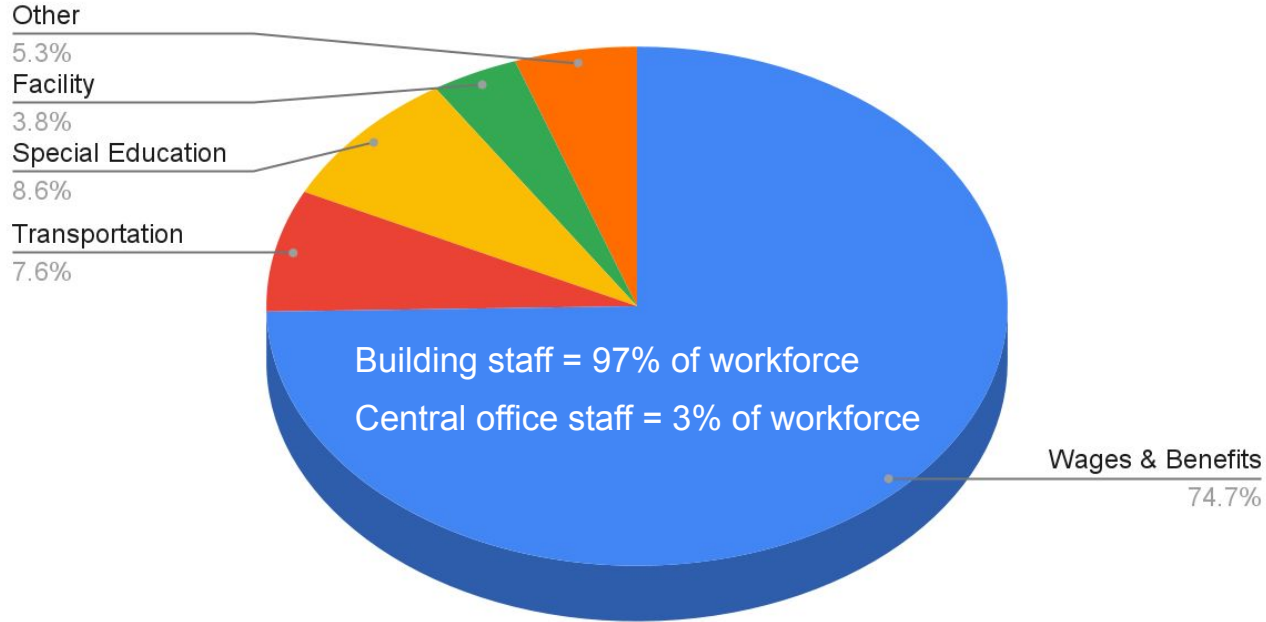
2024-25 Superintendent Request Summary

Category	Increase	Increase (%)
ESSER Positions (111.1)	\$9,342,999	2.98%
"Excess" Operational Costs*	\$5,567,550	1.78%
All Other Costs	\$5,264,311	1.68%
Sum	\$20,174,860	6.43%

*Excess Operational Costs are the portion of the increase above a 3% increase in:

- Transportation (9.75%)
- Healthcare (7%)
- Special Education Tuition & Pupil Services (7.8%)
- P&C/GL Insurance (28%)

FY25 Budget - All Funding Sources



Other includes ALL of the following:

- Classroom Supplies
- Classroom and Office Furniture
- Textbooks/Workbooks
- Athletic Equipment
- Staff Professional Development
- Districtwide Internet Connection
- Districtwide Software
- Instructional Technology
- Property & GL Insurance
- Telephone Costs
- Postage Costs
- Districtwide Copiers
- Dues & Fees

Operating Budget by Major Object

Object	Description	2023-24	2024-25	Variance	Cont %	Note
100	Salaries and Wages	\$187,699,139	\$196,983,021	\$9,283,882	2.96%	Positions from ESSER offset by reductions due to enrollment projections & scheduling efficiencies
200	Employee Benefits	\$48,719,124	\$51,769,885	\$3,050,761	0.97%	Premium increase of 7% offset by use of \$1m from reserve
300	Educational, Rehabilitative, and Legal Services	\$11,619,032	\$14,040,909	\$2,421,877	0.77%	\$600k for new state mandated HVAC work; \$900k for Special Ed Pupil Services due to IEP requirements
400	Building Upkeep and Repair	\$8,339,956	\$9,191,603	\$851,647	0.27%	\$443k increase in electricity costs
500	Transportation, Out-District Tuition, & Other Svcs	\$46,169,782	\$50,663,369	\$4,493,587	1.43%	\$2.8m increase in transportation costs under new contract; \$772k increase in Property & Casualty premiums from City; \$930k increase in Special Ed Out of District Tuition incl. use of \$1m carryover grant
600	Supplies, Materials, and Heating Fuels	\$9,785,507	\$9,877,869	\$92,362	0.03%	
700	Equipment	\$1,058,953	\$1,034,034	(\$24,919)	(0.01%)	
800	Dues and Fees	\$171,403	\$177,066	\$5,663	0.00%	
Sum		\$313,562,896	\$333,737,756	\$20,174,860	6.43%	

2% Net Reduction in FTE - Proposed Budget

Object Description	Change in FTE (Operating)	Change in FTE (Grants)	Change in FTE (Net)	Summary*
101 Teachers	(4.2)	(31.1)	(35.3)	43.1 teachers (incl. 19.5 Technology Integration Teachers) from ESSER to Operating; +4.0 Westover 6th Grade; +4.7 Special Education; -20.0 K-5 (State Kindergarten law /enrollment projections); -24.0 High School (Increase max enrollment in electives and other courses where appropriate, more flexibility with PE/Health scheduling, more co-seating or offering low-enrolled courses in alternate years); -12.0 teachers to Alliance Grant; +6.0 Big Picture Learning (Alliance)
103 Teacher Support	6.0	(3.0)	3.0	1.0 School Psych; 2.0 Speech Pathologist; 3.0 Social Workers from ESSER
112 Administration - Non Certified Discretionary	(2.0)	(8.0)	(10.0)	-2.0 Public Affairs , -8.0 Lockwood Pre-K (Grants)
115 Paraeducators	10.0	(20.0)	(10.0)	19.0 Kindergarten Paras from ESSER; 10.0 Special Education Paras; -11.0 Kindergarten due to reduction in classes
117 Security Workers	29.0	(29.0)	0.0	Positions from ESSER
118 Parent Facilitators	23.0	(23.0)	0.0	Positions from ESSER
Sum	61.8	(114.1)	(52.3)	

*For a comprehensive list, please see Section 5 of the Budget Book.



Stamford Public Schools

EXCELLENCE IS THE POINT.

Reduction in Certified Teacher/Staff Positions

Proposed budget includes net reduction in FTE teacher and other certified staff:

2023-24	2024-25	Difference
1,609.6	1,577.3	(32.3)

Proposed reductions based on enrollment projections and operational efficiencies:

- Decreased K-5 enrollment
- Maximizing enrollment in HS courses (i.e. run 1 class of 28 rather than 2 classes of 14)
- Eliminating under-enrolled HS courses
- Co-seating or offering some courses less frequently (i.e. every other year)

Attrition (retirements, resignations, etc.) should decrease actual number of *people* affected

Additional reductions likely if City Boards reduce the requested 6.43% increase

Certified teacher wages and benefits = 47% of the proposed FY25 operating budget

Analysis of FY25 Health Insurance Premiums

	Estimated Cost	Increase vs FY23	Contribution to Budget Increase
2024-25 Health Insurance Cost Projection (Current)	\$40,540,835	\$2,709,422	0.86%
2024-25 Health Insurance Cost Projection (Self-Insurance)	\$42,473,629	\$4,642,216	1.48%

Note: Estimates from Gallagher as of December 2023



Recent Operating Budget Growth

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
BOE Operating Budget	\$248,574,216	\$255,113,422	\$263,903,563	\$269,736,292	\$272,790,679	\$283,069,806	\$285,555,203	\$293,586,146	\$301,843,542	\$313,562,896	\$333,737,756
% Change Operating	1.43%	2.63%	3.45%	2.21%	1.13%	3.77%	0.88%	2.81%	2.81%	3.88%	6.43%
% Change CPI-U	1.66%	-0.03%	1.46%	2.23%	2.28%	1.71%	1.37%	5.39%	8.20%	3.70%	3.00%

10-Year CAGR BOE **2.99%**
10-Year CAGR CPI-U **2.91%**

Fiscal Cliff Created

2023-24: Largest increase in 15 years

Assumes 6.43% for 2024-25

Note: CPI-U is as of September, except 2024-25 which is projected

Source: https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/data/consumerpriceindexhistorical_us_table.htm



Recent Total Budget Growth

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
BOE Operating Budget	\$248,574,216	\$255,113,422	\$263,903,563	\$269,736,292	\$272,790,679	\$283,069,806	\$285,555,203	\$293,586,146	\$301,843,542	\$313,562,896	\$333,737,756
BOE Grants Budget	\$27,546,793	\$27,258,096	\$29,639,511	\$32,076,240	\$30,613,226	\$32,810,755	\$41,959,712	\$49,870,316	\$63,620,664	\$53,379,292	\$45,262,190
BOE Total Budget	\$276,121,009	\$282,371,518	\$293,543,074	\$301,812,532	\$303,403,905	\$315,880,561	\$327,514,915	\$343,456,462	\$365,464,206	\$366,942,188	\$378,999,946
% Change Total	1.84%	2.26%	3.96%	2.82%	0.53%	4.11%	3.68%	4.87%	6.41%	0.40%	3.29%
% Change CPI-U	1.66%	-0.03%	1.46%	2.23%	2.28%	1.71%	1.37%	5.39%	8.20%	3.70%	3.00%

10 Year CAGR BOE Total Budget 3.22%

10 Year CAGR CPI-U 2.91%

Lunch Fund Status

- Between 2015-16 and 2020-21, the average balance in the lunch fund was \$458,000
- During COVID, the USDA reimbursed districts for all meals served, and at a much higher rate per meal, which allowed the fund balance to increase to \$3.7m. These funds can only be used for the Lunch Fund.
- In 2022-23 and 2023-24, SPS opted in to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which enabled SPS to provide free breakfast and lunch to ALL students.
- Based on Stamford's current demographics (which impact funding), CEP creates an operating loss in the Lunch Fund
- Without a change to the reimbursement formula, 2024-25 is projected to be the last year that SPS will be able to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students **without an offset from the operating budget** (potentially \$2m)
- Norwalk's FY25 Board of Education approved budget included a \$1.3m contribution from the operating budget to the Lunch Fund

Additional Budget Cuts: What's at Stake?

Even after submitting a Superintendent's Proposed Budget with **\$10.5m** in cuts, history suggests that the Boards of Finance and Representatives will reduce the proposed budget by at least an additional **\$10m**.

In that event, the Administration will propose additional reductions to balance the budget that **may** include:

- Reduction in Instructional Paraprofessionals (kindergarten)
- Reduction in Security Staff (K-12)
- Reduction in Office Support staff (schools and central office)
- Elimination of Instrumental Music (elementary schools)
- Limited Elective Course Offerings (high schools)
- Reduction in Parent Facilitator staff (K-12)
- Limited Specialized Program Offerings (i.e. Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Early College Studies, AgriScience)
- Eliminate or Adjust Positions (Dean of Students, Restorative Support Facilitators, Department Heads, Athletic Directors)
- Reduction in central office and school-based administrators (Coordinators and Assistant Principals)
- Reduction or repurposing of Certified Teacher Support Staff (i.e. Teachers on Special Assignment, Administrative Interns, Technology Integration Support Specialists, Teacher Leaders for Student Support)

Budget Schedule

Tuesday, January 16: 2024-25 Superintendent's Requested Budget Overview

Wednesday, January 24: Departmental Presentations

Kevin McCarthy Facilities

Dr. Michael Fernandes Special Education, Student Support Services, Interscholastic Athletics

Amy Beldotti Teaching & Learning

Dr. Lori Rhodes Alternative Ed, Adult Ed, Family Engagement

Angela Asaro Research & Policy

Tuesday, February 1: BOE Budget Public Hearing

Tuesday, February 6: BOE Budget Workshop Meeting

Thursday, February 22: Special Board Meeting- BOE votes on budget