

# SPS QUARTERLY

Stamford Public Schools | Stamford, CT

Winter 2024

**W**elcome to the Winter 2024 SPS Quarterly, a publication created to keep our community-based organizations and partners, City Board members and staff, faith-based organizations, business leaders and the community at large informed about what's happening in Stamford Public Schools.

Thank you for reading and for supporting Stamford Public Schools!

Dr. Tamu Lucero  
 Superintendent  
 Stamford Public Schools



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## 2024-25 Operating Budget

Stamford Public Schools recently presented its 2024-25 proposed operating budget to the Board of Education. We are requesting a 6.43% increase for FY25 to help address the fiscal cliff created when, due to uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, City Boards reduced the SPS budget by \$12.5 million in Spring 2020. SPS has utilized Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds to maintain more than 100 staff positions and programs that otherwise would have been eliminated in Spring 2020, but those funds expire on June 30.

In addition to the expiration of ESSER funds, other factors contributing to the requested increase include ongoing inflationary pressures, contractual increases in wages and benefits,

increased transportation costs, and increased special education costs.

The Superintendent's Proposed Budget is subject to review, revision, and approval by the Boards of Education, Finance, and Representatives, a process that takes several months. Historically, City Boards have granted SPS an average increase of around 3% annually. If granted only a 3% increase this year, we would need to reduce the operating budget by nearly

\$12 million, which would mean cutting programs, services, and staff positions.

I encourage you to view CFO Ryan Fealey's budget presentation to the BOE Fiscal Committee to learn more about what's at stake. The presentation is accessible from the finance department section of the SPS website. Thank you in advance for supporting our efforts to secure the crucial funding necessary to help every student succeed.

## Funding Stamford Public Schools



## 2024-25 School Registration

It's hard to believe, but it's time to register students for the 2024-25 school year! Please encourage anyone with a child eligible for kindergarten to register as soon as possible. Early registration enables us to better manage enrollment and staffing for the upcoming year.

Please remember that the kindergarten age requirements in Connecticut have changed. Children must be five years old on or before September 1 of the school year to be automatically eligible for kindergarten. For the 2024-25 school year, children must have been born on or before September 1, 2019, to be automatically eligible to register. Families with children born between September 2, 2019, and January 1, 2020, must apply for early kindergarten admission prior to registering. Check the SPS website for more information or email [ofce@stamfordct.gov](mailto:ofce@stamfordct.gov).



## 2024-25 Program of Studies

February marks the annual release of the Stamford Public Schools Program of Studies, which details the academic opportunities available to 4,000+ students at AITE, Stamford High School, and Westhill High School

Students can complete a traditional high school diploma program or pursue specialized academic programs such as the Stamford Regional Agriscience and Technology Program, the Academy of Finance, Early College Studies, the High School of Business, JROTC, or the International Baccalaureate diploma program.

Stamford Public Schools also continues to expand its career pathways. Next year, students will be able to pursue their interest in areas like public safety and advanced manufacturing with new courses in the fundamentals of emergency medical services and blueprint reading, respectively. These offerings are in addition to existing pathways in disciplines including construction management, culinary arts, information technology, and more.

The Program of Studies is available to view and download in the Teaching & Learning Department section of the SPS website. Students and families with questions about the Program of Studies should speak with their child's school counselor.



*Students from WHS And SHS's AP Art and Design, Studio Art and UConn ECE Drawing enjoyed a January field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC.*

## Middle School Magnet School Lottery

The deadline to enter the 2024-25 Scofield Magnet Middle School Lottery is Friday, March 1 at 4 pm. The lottery is open to Stamford students entering grades 6, 7, or 8 in Fall 2024.

Families interested in learning more are invited to attend an information session at Scofield on Wednesday, February 28 at 7 pm.



### **Off to a great start!**

SPS has partnered with the Parent Teacher Council of Stamford (PTC) to relaunch the Stamford Coalition of Parents Expecting Success (SCOPE S), a parent support network and community resource on special education issues that meets monthly during the school year. SCOPE S meetings are in-person at the Rippowam Middle School media center. Please mark your calendars for upcoming SCOPE S meetings:

- March 13th
- May 8th

### **Westover to Become K-8 Program**

The Stamford Board of Education recently approved the plan to accelerate the transition of Westover Magnet School into a K-8 program. Beginning in Fall 2024, students who currently attend Westover – whether by attendance zone or the magnet lottery – will be able to remain there through Grade 8.

### **New High School Attendance Policy**

Updated regulations for high school attendance went into effect at AITE, Stamford High and Westhill on January 2. The new regulations eliminate loss of credit penalties tied to attendance while strengthening the multi-tiered system of support for students who are not meeting attendance expectations.

Thank you to the multidisciplinary team of high school teachers and administrators and members of the City’s Youth Services Bureau who worked diligently to update these regulations.

### **New Middle School Feeder Pattern**

As part of the transition of Westover Magnet School into a K-8 program, the BOE also approved the following changes to the middle school feeder pattern:

- Students currently attending Stillmeadow Elementary as their zoned school will be assigned to Turn of River as their zoned middle school.
- Students currently attending Hart Magnet Elementary as their zoned school will be assigned to Rippowam as their zoned middle school.

Students zoned to Roxbury Elementary will remain assigned

to Cloonan for grade 6. The assignment will continue until the new Roxbury K-8 facility is completed. Students attending Hart via the magnet lottery will remain assigned to their zoned middle school – Dolan, Rippowam, or Turn of River – for grade 6.

You can verify your child’s zoned elementary, middle, or high school in the school registration section of our website.

### **2023-24 Climate Survey Coming in March**

The annual SPS Climate Survey will take place from March 18 to April 3. Students, staff, and families will be asked to complete the survey, which will help us understand the quality of school relationships and how welcome and comfortable people feel in their buildings. The survey link will be communicated via the Superintendent’s Weekly Message, as well as by building principals, parent organizations, and community partners.

Please encourage all SPS families to complete this survey, as it provides feedback that helps us improve our programs and services.

### District Calendars for 2024-25 and 2025-26

The Stamford Board of Education recently voted to approve the school district calendars for 2024-24 and 2025-26.

Next year, schools will be closed in recognition of the following federal holidays and religious observances: Labor Day, Rosh Hashanah, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Eid-al-Fitr, and Memorial Day.

The approved calendars are available to view and download on the SPS website.



### Quick Takes

- **New K-8 South School Added to State Priority List**  
As part of the Long-Term Master Facilities Plan, we continue to submit school construction plans to the state for approval and placement on the Department of Administrative Services priority list. In December, we learned that our proposal to build a two-campus K-8 program in the Cove neighborhood was placed on the priority list for State funding at a state reimbursement rate of 60 percent. This is the third new construction project to be added to the list, with both the new Westhill High School and the Roxbury K-8 projects currently in the design phase with anticipated occupancy for 2027-28 school year. Thank you to our Stamford Delegation in Hartford for their support of these and other projects that improve Stamford Public Schools!
- **Winter Closings, Delays, and Early Dismissals**  
Winter isn't over yet, which means there may be additional closings, delays, and early dismissals due to inclement weather. Families should make sure their contact information is correct in PowerSchool to ensure they receive messages about closings and delays.

### School Physicals Required for K, 7th and 10th Grades

All students entering kindergarten, 7th and 10th grades in Fall 2024 are required to provide the school nurse with documentation of a recently completed annual physical. Failure to provide this documentation may result in your child being unable to attend school.

The Stamford Department of Health encourages parents to schedule their child's annual physical around their birthday rather than waiting until the physical is needed for school.

Families without a pediatrician can utilize the free, full-service student health centers operated in partnership with Family Centers. For a list of student health centers and information about registering to use this service, visit the Family Centers website.



Thanks for reading. For more information about Stamford Public Schools and up-to-date information on events and activities, visit our [website](#).