

2024-2025 Proposed Budget Questions
March 6, 2024, Budget Workshop Meeting

Questions	Answers
<p>1. Do you have state mandates or removal of funding totals of that lump sum? What are the major differences compared to last year? Big ticket items?</p>	<p>The largest impact is the shortfall in the Excess Cost Reimbursement. The unexpected reduction equates to a \$600,000 loss.</p>
<p>2. What are the inflationary costs?</p>	<p>Any budgeted item outside of a negotiated contract is subject to inflation.</p> <p>We have seen significant increases in our custodial supply accounts. If we compare pricing from 2019, we have increases of over 50%. Copy paper costs have gone up from \$23.87 a case to \$31.34, we use approximately 2,000 cases or \$14,940 in paper. Our property insurance has been on the rise due to increased replacement costs of our buildings. Software support contracts are rising more due to the cost of their own labor and equipment costs. A high security lock set for a classroom used to cost \$350 for a high security lock is now over \$500.</p>
<p>3. Is Educational cost sharing going down? ECS goes back to the towns not the school district. We don't project the town side. In the governor's budget he presented cutting \$150 million and shifting that to early childhood education.</p>	<p>If funded as approved in the biennial budget, both towns will see increased ECS:</p> <p><u>Southbury: Current yr fy24</u> \$5,586,719: Approved budget is \$6,999,005 Gov Adjusted: \$6,743,091</p> <p><u>Middlebury: Current yr fy'24</u> \$1,451,313: Approved budget is \$1,899,364 Gov Adjusted: \$2,182,673</p>
<p>4. What is the difference between educational cost sharing and excess cost?</p>	<p>The Educational Cost Sharing grant known as ECS is a formula driven, state funded entitlement grant given to towns. The purpose is to help offset the property tax revenue and subsidize the cost of education.</p> <p>Excess Cost is a reimbursement to school districts based on an itemized submission of local funds used to support students receiving special education services. The grant funds a percent of costs that exceed a threshold of 4.5 x the per pupil expenditure.</p>
<p>5. Please explain how the 2 new math coaches are built into this budget and</p>	<p>While we are hoping to add two math coach position next year, only one of them would be funded through the school budget. Currently we have 2 math coaches</p>

2024-2025 Proposed Budget Questions
March 6, 2024, Budget Workshop Meeting

<p>how these positions will be budgeted into next year's proposed budget.</p>	<p>spread between 4 schools, the addition would allow each elementary school access to a full-time coach. The salary for one coach is in the proposed budget and the other position would be funded through a federal grant. The grant funding is available for multiple years.</p>
<p>6. Please explain the additional 11.5 FTE for paras?</p>	<p>Any position added since the creation of the budget presentation shows up as a new position. A paraprofessional added in April of 2023 will not be included into a budgeted salary account until the 2024-25 school budget. Paraprofessional positions are usually added through an identified student needs as part of the special education process.</p>
<p>7. Please show the increase in pension.</p>	<p>The chart will be in the presentation on 3/27</p>
<p>8. What is the cost per student in this current budget (2023-2024)?</p> <p>9. What is the cost per student in the proposed budget (2024-2025)?</p> <p>10. What is the % increase in the current budget compared to the future budget?</p>	<p>EFS: Submitted annually in September</p> <p>Cost per pupil is determined based on actuals and isn't calculated until after the close of the fiscal year. (June 30th with a run out)</p> <p>Walk through Edsight chart on per pupil:</p> <p>Per Pupil Expenditures by Function (District)</p>
<p>11. What is the balance of the capital non-recurring account? What is the current balance of the capital non-recurring?</p> <p>12. Can you provide a ledger of the transfers into the capital account over the past three years?</p>	<p>On the 20th, Mr. Martino and I will talk about capital projects, and we can include the capital reserve information, including the transfers, into the account. We make the transfer only once per year based on the audited year-end balance. It happens after the final audit is presented to the Board. We will include three years of transfers to the Capital Reserve Account.</p>
<p>13. Edsight shows from 2022-2023 that Region 15 has 100 outplaced students. Is this correct? Can outplaced students be full time vs. Part time?</p>	<p>100 reported: ACES@Chase 5 Special Education 27 WAMS 15 AG Programs 34 Other (includes parent placed, incarcerated, expelled students) 19 Additional 29 at Technical Schools that aren't captured in this number.</p>
<p>14. Please explain why the amount spent on supplies by region 15 is a huge outlier when compared to some surrounding districts? What budget object codes captures "supplies"</p>	<p>Tab 1, page 6 of the budget book has the Supplies Account breakdown. It is difficult to get too granular as we do not have the specifics for other districts. Over the past few years, we have increased our maintenance and custodial supply accounts. Historically these were grossly underfunded and ran over budget every year. Fuel costs are in the Supply Line, so smaller districts or those with newer</p>

2024-2025 Proposed Budget Questions
March 6, 2024, Budget Workshop Meeting

	<p>buildings may have less overall cost. Some comparison districts (Orange and Woodbridge) do not have a high school and are only K-8 districts, while Region 5, Amity is just one high school.</p>
<p>15. Please explain what “Other Purchased Services” is on Edsight. EDSIGHT only gave high level breakdowns. Are transportation costs included in Purchased Services (\$10,200,570)</p>	<p>This is where transportation sits. Region 15 was at about \$1,700 in per pupil allocation last year; this is higher than many of the districts because we serve a much larger geographical area. Larger towns often have higher transportation costs.</p> <p>For the most part, our building demands are mostly constant but the decline in enrollment over the past few years has increased our per pupil. For instance, there are fewer students in high school, but the rise in energy rates means it costs more to heat and light the same space. While we have decreased some teachers, it isn't a linear equation. Losing 30 students across four grades and a myriad of classes does not result in a staff reduction, but the cost of transportation, energy and supplies has gone up, compounding the impact to the per student cost. If we use the 24-25 proposed budget, for every 100 fewer students, our per pupil would increase by \$672, add to that the annual inflationary increases and apply that retroactively to the years of declining enrollment and that can help illuminate some of the shift to our per pupil expenditure. While many districts saw similar enrollment decline, that was not true for all districts, but it is part of the story if you want to look through the per student cost lens.</p>
<p>16. Is ELL support always considered a mandated special service or only if it a part of a student’s IEP?</p>	<p>ML services (formerly referred to as ELL) are mandated services. They are not a special education service and fall under their own category of required student services. Currently we lack the staffing to fully support the increased needs in ML services.</p>
<p>17. Many of our classes are well below our own R15 recommendations and the class sizes of other towns. As in previous years where you’ve shown your logic on how you determine R15 class size, can you share this logic with the BOE</p>	<p>The Board class size resolution speaks to optimum but in at least that last 15 years, has not functioned as a recommendation. We have been below that threshold for a long time and have created those expectations for families. (see slides)</p>
<p>18. In your 2020-2021 budget presentation to the board, you mentioned we hoped the pension would be funded at 70% in 5 years. I do not think we will hit that mark— though we have a year to go. Obviously, it is hard to predict the</p>	<p>In the prior years we had agreed to continue to add \$30,000 each year to our pension line. In order to keep on track, we have increased this to \$50,000 a year to keep up with more pensioners retiring. We are very mindful of 70% but we continue to balance the overall budget with the pension allocation.</p>

2024-2025 Proposed Budget Questions
March 6, 2024, Budget Workshop Meeting

<p>stock market beyond market volatility, are there other reasons that might be holding us back here?</p>	
<p>19. Can we get an update on the recommendations of the curriculum audit? What are our strengths and weaknesses and impact on the budget, if any?</p>	<p>The budget supports our curriculum writing cycle, which has adopted the suggestions provided through the audit.</p>
<p>20. In regard to \$100K needed for curriculum writing and PD in response to the state reading mandate. If our ELA curriculum development, PD, and instructional practices were already headed down a certain path, and it's a path that we choose to remain on regardless of a mandate, then wouldn't the investment in curriculum writing and PD be worthy in its own right, not in response to a mandate? Why are these specific investments needed now?</p>	<p>The additional funding allows the Region to accelerate the work we are doing.</p>