

Greenwich Board of Education Follow Up Questions Part IV Following December 5, 2024 Budget Meeting

Michael-Joseph Mercanti-Anthony (December 11, 2024)

- 1. What would be the district's recommendations for absorbing the loss of Title I funding without adding to the bottom line?**
- 2. What would be the district's recommendations for absorbing the curriculum costs without adding to the bottom line?**

GPS can not absorb Title I or Curriculum without a significant impact to the District's Strategic Plan. It would be a reduction to the district's overall operating budget, or the equivalent of \$1,422,735.

When the Superintendent's Proposed Operating Budget is presented each year, it is done so with efficiency in mind. Reductions and/or consolidations are recommended from the start. I refer back to the presentation slide which showed the gap (included below), and it was orally noted what a gap of \$4.6M would mean to GPS in staff: 40-45 positions. A gap of \$1,422,735 would be less than 40-45 positions, but it would still be positions.

Keep in mind the existing gap in Title I funding is people (FTE). There are existing staff in Title I schools who must move from the grant to the operating budget due to the federal reduction in funding.

Two Points of Reference

- 1. The BOE should ask the BET to review the methodology utilized this year for teacher salaries. There is a difference in how all salaries are being calculated between the BOE and the TOG which accounts for approximately \$1.4M of the gap. Put another way, almost the exact total of the Title I and Curriculum funding needed.**

BOE Calculation - takes all existing and planned staff, such as the additional PreK or those moving from Title I grant to operating and applies the General Wage Increase and actual increment (step). The salary line is as accurate as possible based on all actual staff and contracts for FY26.

BET Calculation - For FY26 they just applied 3% to the TOG line, which is the GPS non-certified staff along with TOG staff, and 3% to the certified GPS staff line. They did not account for actual existing staff and contracts. For example, GEA is 2.5% wage increase for FY26 + an increment of 1.8%. BET utilizing only 3% provides an increment step of only 0.5%. Hence, why the guidelines are not covering contractual costs. Salaries are the largest driver to the budget and should be more precise.

The BET seems to have changed their methodology for developing a guideline. In previous years, the BET referenced the percentage increases included in our actual contracts, thus the percentage was not the same as what was applied to the TOG as a whole. This year, the 3% guideline is applied to both and is not sufficient to cover our costs:

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
TOG	2.42%	2.30%	3.16%	3.00%
BOE	3.19%	4.36%	4.10%	3.00%

2. If FTE reductions were made, those decisions are done in collaboration with building administrators. Both GEA and GOSA have already expressed concerns about any FTE reductions.



**BET Guidelines 2025-2026 Operating Budget
set on October 29**

Increase of 2.96%

Does not cover contractual & student-need costs

A Decrease in Proposed Budget

↓ \$4,597,399


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