

# BUDGET

## Q&A

1. I was surprised to see the budget set up based on the current district configuration. I know the BOE has not yet approved the redistricting plan, once that is complete will line items just move to their respective locations within the budget, resulting in the same overall amounts district wide?

We are awaiting the Board's approval for the plan.

However, the good news as you alluded to is that either way, our budget remains the same in terms of staffing needs.

2. Does the BOE need to approve the entire redistrict plan for the K-12 classes and the FAST program, or just the FAST program?

It is our hope that the BOE approves the entire plan as FAST Academy has no impact on our GB. We need their approval for Southwest as this does have an impact on class sizes.

3. What happens to the budget bottom line if the grant for the remaining portion of the FAST program, that is not funded by Alliance Funding, does not open back up again or is not approved if it does open?

We have the funds already earmarked in our Alliance funds for this wonderful program. If not approved, these dollars will be reallocated for other district initiatives.

4. Section 2 shows a breakdown of a total of 16 Grade 3 teachers between Tarringford and Vogel, however in section 3 page 65 current configuration and the redistrict configuration on page 67 only accounts for 15 Grade 3 teachers. What is the number of Grade 3 teachers will we need and does this affect the bottom line on the budget?

You are correct, there are currently 16 teachers and nothing has changed.

5. Section 2 shows a breakdown of a total of 13 Grade 4 teachers between Southwest and Forbes, however in section 3 page 65 current configuration and the redistrict configuration on page 68 it accounts for 15 Grade 4 teachers. What is the number of Grade 4 teachers will we need and does this affect the bottom line on the budget?

You are correct, there are currently 13 teachers and nothing has changed.

6. Section 2 shows a breakdown of a total of 15 Grade 5 teachers between Southwest and Forbes, however in section 3 page 65 current configuration and the redistrict configuration on page 68 it accounts for 14 Grade 5 teachers. What is the number of Grade 5 teachers will we need and does this affect the bottom line on the budget?

You are correct, there are currently 15 teachers and nothing has changed.

7. Certified Staff Salaries Account 5111: The budget states that certified staff salary increases average 4%, yet the certified salary increase is 7.51%. Why the difference between these percentages? In the description on page 8 it mentions stipend increases, perfect attendance incentive and School Resource Officers, aren't those under different line items, or are those separate line items all under account 5111? FY 24-25 \$28,748,975 and FY 25-26 \$30,907,916 an increase of \$ 2,158,941 (7.51% increase).

All of the above come under 5100 and account for the total % increase.

8. Non-Certified Staff Salaries Account 5112: The budget states that increases for non-certified staff are 4%, yet actual budget growth is more than double at 10.08%. Are the new custodial positions solely the cause of this increase and why the difference in the two stated amounts? FY 24-25 \$9,405,801 and FY25-26 \$10,354,057 an increase of \$948,256 (10.08%).

All of the above come under 5112 and account for the total % increase. You are correct in noting that the additional custodians impacted this amount.

9. For Account # 5200 Employee Benefits: It mentions that health benefits are part of the 10.42% increase, with the new health provider, weren't premiums held at previous amounts for a certain amount of time, and what was that amount of time, and what are those health benefit increases?

The amount is largely due to contractual increases in tuition reimbursement and clothing allowances. Health premiums were held at current amounts through the end of the 2024-25 school year. Health insurance costs are increasing as well as premiums which were shared to all unions from Anthem.

10. Section 2, page 16 Account 5111.5 Stipends has a 23.23% decrease. What stipends are no longer being funded for such a decrease?

Stipends were moved to the correct line item - all stipends have been contractually updated.

11. Section 2, page 16 Account 5190 "Other Salaries" has a 693.35% increase, what are these other salaries? I am assuming they were in other line items and if so which accounts have they been moved from?

This is because amounts for SRO's were updated to actual salaries from the City and perfect attendance is reflected on this particular line item.

The items listed here are possible clerical mistakes and don't seem to be affecting the budget bottom line.

You are correct - these items(numbers 12 - 15) were clerical errors that have been updated.

12. Section 2 on Page 32 Under TMS Alliance 6490-12-71-5111.01 Blue Line total for Assistant Principals totals 1.0 FTE, but there are two listed above this line.

13. Section 2 on Page 40 the line for Speech Pathologist Total Account Number 5100-08-95-511.60 the total FTE is 0.7, but there is a total of 0.9 FTE listed above this line.

14. Section 2 on Page 40 the line for Alliance 6490-12-71 5111.61 the total FTE is 1.7, but there is a total of only 1.0 FTE listed above this line.

15. Section 2 on Page 49 Armed Security Officer is missing the FTE count. The blue line total under it shows 1.0

16. Account 5270 - Workers Compensation we are at 105% for 2025 (approx. 25k over). This is not reflected in the new budget. Are we expecting a reduction in premiums next year? Are positions that are held in grants (IDEA, Title 1,2, Alliance etc.) covering their respective portions of these fees via a transfer or do all these benefit type charges get paid for out of GB?

Historical trends from 2021-2024 range from \$474K to \$538K. With this analysis, we cannot predict workplace injuries and based on trending data the amount budgeted was appropriate. This may have been an anomaly year. We are awaiting our quote for next year but if the Board would like to consider increasing it 5% in anticipation of an increase and adjustment could be made.

17. Account 5280 - Retiree Insurance was brought up as a question in the January budget meeting. Historically this account always works its way back down to 100% due to retirees paying in their portion of the insurance. Donna & Kim felt this was due to more retirees taking the early retirement resulting in TPS paying their portion. If it's the latter does 5280 need an increase to accommodate?

Based on trends with some retirees completing their 3 year cycle, the budget is appropriate.

18. Bus Fuel - Obviously, a pending RFP on this and we don't want to give vendors an idea of an expectation. Are we assuming this is likely going to be an increase to the 25/26 budget once the RFP comes back?

As shared at the last budget committee meeting, we are eligible to apply for a Federal propane credit which would likely offset the increase.

19. Budget proposal calls for 5 new custodians out of GB. Are the existing custodial positions at Forbes being moved to Alliance so that the proposed program would be funded entirely out of Alliance (183k)? What about the cafeteria and other resources like the library?

Custodians are budgeted in the 2025-26 GB budget proposal. Cafeteria comes from a separate budget that is self funded and receives reimbursements based on participation levels. All other supplemental resources will be allocated as needed.

20. 5430 Repair Equipment & 5430.03 General Maintenance - Given that we have been getting zero-dollar capital increases from the city and the current proposal is to continue running all our buildings plus the two new ones (THS/TMS) how are we justifying a reduction in maintenance/repairs with the same buildings in place? Keeping Spending flat on maintenance and repairs to keep our aging buildings running and extending the service life of any/all equipment would seem a necessity with zero capital budgets year after year. I fully understand that the new building will have no “repairs” in year 1 and limited for years to come but we will need more maintenance supplies due to the square footage increase and our other buildings are only getting older, and we are forever having to put off capital improvements due to a lack of capital.

The repair equipment line item is reduced due to account clean up. We made a new account to put equipment demands in to separate “repairs” and purchasing “new equipment” These are district wide accounts.

Fuel costs were lumped into the RepairEquipment Line. In order to have a more accurate expense line, a new one was created specifically for fuel (5625) and the amount was recorded there for the 2025-26 school year.

21. 5430.10 Snow Plowing - Final year of contract with Gibson Property is valued at \$102,867.96. Budget has this at \$122,868.00.. Can you share the thought behind the 20k increase? The new campus is certainly larger, but I didn't think it was doubling the amount of plowing at that one location.

Gibson's contract does increase to \$102,867.96 in the third year and we added \$20,000 extra for the additional THS/TMS/Central Office layout. This amount was quoted to us by Gibson. Dean has spoken to others in the industry and this is a reasonable estimate. Please remember, when this was bid by competing vendors, the rendering was not enough to give a precise price.

22. 5510 Student Transport - All Star contract is approx. 4% increases each year. From FY23/24 to FY25/26 (proposed) there is a nearly 20% increase in student transportation. I realize the normal explanation is additional SPED transportation, but our SPED tuition has remained relatively flat. Is there another contributing factor to this increase?

This increase is due to the many locations with varying distances for students receiving services offsite for the SPED program.

23. 5622 Electricity- This line item is being kept flat from last year, but we are proposing keeping more buildings open. We will still be responsible for Migeon for a period of time, the new campus is more efficient but much larger, and the Siemens project won't have a meaningful impact as far as savings go (at Intermediate school) until we've finished paying back the project via our utility bill. Is there a savings somewhere that would suggest leaving this account flat even with rising electricity costs?

Being optimistic about cost savings from the new complex (SLAM and O&G have touted savings due to the state of the art energy efficient design) and limited use of Migeon Avenue (out by Sept 1) and Forbes, we don't anticipate a need for an increase next year.

24. 5625 - Fuel - no entry for this in FY24/25 - what is this?

This account is added to clean up the accounts - better for clerical and tracking purposes. The fuel cost was budgeted and expensed out of the cleaning supplies account in the past.

25. As proposed, will FAST academy not have a nurse on premise? It would appear the budget is suggesting transferring the Forbes nurse to the intermediate school and leaving the SW nurse where they are. This would result in one nurse at Intermediate or one nurse for TMS correct? Wouldn't the alternative program (which has a higher likelihood of conflict) need a dedicated nurse? If so, will this be funded out of GB or Alliance?

The nurse that is currently allocated to the parochial schools and the Torrington Transition Academy will provide services at FAST Academy.

26. The city was splitting the SRO officers 50/50 with us. What is the new split for the SRO's?

It is still 50/50. The amount of the increase was based on a change in personnel that included a larger compensation package (approved by the city).

27. 5610.01 Instructional supplies appear to be where the proposed new math program is being funded from. This account also funds the year over year consumables for the reading program. If the reading program is \$447,139 the existing FY24/25 budget is being cut by over 130k. What are we cutting to make this happen?

Math supplies are embedded in the overall math program cost (\$447,139). The district has secured cost savings with regards to those purchases. We appreciate your concern regarding curriculum materials, but please realize the reason for the savings is that science and social studies are now embedded in the literacy curriculum.

28. 5430.2 Landscaping is off in FY24/25 it should be \$218,182 for the current fiscal year per the schedule of values in the Jespersen contract unless an adjustment was made due to construction. This contract needs to go out to bid obviously but should we at least carry the current year contract value forward?

There was an error in the 24/25 budget line, it should have been \$225,000.00 per contract.

29. 5530 Communications - What is the cause behind this significant increase in costs? This line item was \$131,350 in FY23/24 went down to \$94,050 in FY24/25 and now it's back up to \$122,057.

The cost increases on the Communications line are due to us switching phone service and repair providers. Once the building project is complete this number is expected to decrease.

30. 5650 Instructional Tech Supply - What has caused the 160% increase for FY25/26? If we go back a year this line item was \$10,000 now it's \$200,000. Can we get a generalized description of what is coming from these line items?

The cost increase on the Instructional Tech Supply line is due to the Emergency Connectivity Funds (ECF) no longer being available. Over the past few years, we would typically use ECF to help with costs associated with refreshing our fleet of devices that were at the end of their life cycle.

31. 5810 - Dues and Fees increase of 57%. What is the driving force behind this and what comes out of this account?

Five year trend data shows this line item has traditionally been under funded by over 50%. Items in this line include organizational memberships and subscriptions such as CAS Treasurer, CAPSS, EdAdvance, Marshall Memo, Capell, LCSA, etc... These memberships and subscriptions provide us resources and entry into various conferences to enhance our professional development. Hence the correction and we should be fine moving forward.

32. Custodian Increases follow up question-I see in the presentation by building that 5 new custodians are going to New THS/New TMS. Did we not have night supervisors previously? We previously had 12 custodians to service 6-12 and the proposal includes 17 to service 7-12. How was the increase in headcount determined/calculated?

We have never had night custodians before but the position is in the contract. The 17 that are allocated to THS/TMS include the allocation

for Torrington Intermediate School (TIS). (4 of these custodians plus 2 from Forbes will be for TIS)

33. This budget presentation refers to the FAST academy positions being added but is showing line-item detail for the existing Forbes/Southwest buildings as remaining K-5. I'm not sure how a budget committee member can reconcile this budget in its current form. We would need to be able to see the proposed budget laid out by building and where the positions are going to properly analyze it. Since we are displaying FAST Academy and accounting for its positions, I would have assumed this budget would have represented THS/TMS, Intermediate , VW, Tarringford, SW, and Forbes (FAST). There is definitely a budgetary impact to GB and capital for keeping these buildings open. How do you suggest we represent this cost to the committee?

As shared during the redistricting presentation, all current 4-5 teachers from Forbes and Southwest will have a position at the new TIS. Additionally, the grade 6 teachers currently at TMS will remain at the new TIS. Therefore, this represents the exact staffing requirements as they appear in the presented budget. FAST Academy will be in need of additional staff as also shared during the presentation and these staff members will be funded from grants.

We have allocated funds to keep Forbes open as FAST Academy. These are as follows:

Forbes Estimated Utils.	
Water	\$8,213.70
Sewer	\$7,604.00
Natural gas	\$26,580.00
Electricity	\$71,039.00
	<b>\$113,436.70</b>

If FAST Academy is not approved, there would be a potential \$113,437 in GB savings. However, to not repurpose Forbes School and not utilize it as an educational institution, we would forfeit approximately \$300,000 in Title I funds. This would result in a deficit of \$186,563.