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Norwalk Board of Education Reconciles \$248.69 Million FY2025–26 Operating Budget, Plus \$6.5 Million in Additional City and State Funding

Norwalk, Conn. (June 18, 2025) – The Norwalk Board of Education approved the FY 2025-26 Operating Budget Reconciliation at a Special Board Business Meeting on June 18. The adopted BOE General Fund budget totals \$248.69 million, which is a 4% increase from last year. Additionally, the Board also approved an additional one-time \$6.5 million combined appropriation from the City of Norwalk and the State of Connecticut to reinstate school based positions previously eliminated and to also fund the BOE employee health insurance account. At the June 18 board meeting, City of Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling earmarked an additional \$500,000 – added to the original \$6 million to now total \$6.5 million – from the City of Norwalk to be used specifically for the reinstatement of special education supervisor positions.

“It is with immense gratitude that the district thanks Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff and Mayor Rilling for their integral role in securing the \$6.5 million dollar appropriation,” Norwalk Superintendent of Schools Dr. Alexandra Estrella said. “Reaching this final budget has been a difficult and emotional process. The decisions made—particularly those involving staffing reductions—have weighed heavily on all of us because they impact the people who make our schools strong.”

Throughout this challenging budget process, the Board heard from many families and community members strongly advocating for the reinstatement of music and arts positions in the school. Additional funding offered through the city and state allowed the district to reinstate the elementary band and strings program back into the budget. Schools also used their share of the the allocation in extra funds to reinstate several essential positions based on the needs identified by school leaders.

NPS faced one of its most difficult financial years, driven by rising special education and healthcare costs and an increased demand for student support services. To address the structural shortfall, Chief Financial Officer Lunda Asmani and the Finance Department undertook a comprehensive review of the district’s finances. Their behind-the-scenes work



included examining every budget line, identifying areas for efficiency, and modeling multiple funding scenarios. These efforts were key to developing a reconciled budget that could support core services despite limited resources.

NPS also collaborated closely with city leadership, including Mayor Harry Rilling, to explore every possible funding avenue. The district thanks Mayor Rilling for his role in this process and for adding an additional \$500,000 for special education supervisors. The district is also especially grateful to Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff for his role in securing the additional \$6.5 million allocation, which helped reduce the scale of the impact on schools and staff.

Even with the extra funding, the Board of Education was required to make some difficult reductions in staffing in order to balance the budget. The district began by making reductions at the Central Office level, eliminating nearly nine full-time positions after a previous net reduction of 14 positions. While these changes were not immediately visible to most families, they impacted important services such as school improvement planning, data analysis, purchasing, and special education coordination—all of which play a critical role in supporting teaching and learning.

When further reductions were necessary, staffing changes extended to the school level. These reductions followed Connecticut state law and collective bargaining agreements, meaning decisions were based on certification and seniority, not individual performance. Throughout this process, the district emphasized its continued commitment to strong accountability and oversight for all school and district leaders.

As a gesture of shared responsibility, the Superintendent and members of the Cabinet voluntarily declined salary increases for the year. “This was a necessary gesture of shared accountability in light of the sacrifices being made across the district,” said Dr. Estrella.

The active involvement of Norwalk’s residents was a powerful force throughout the budget process. From the first public hearing in September through multiple town halls and board meetings, community members helped shape the final outcome. They also made their voices heard in meetings with the Common Council, the Council’s Finance and Claims Committee, and the Board of Estimate and Taxation. Parents, guardians, and community members serving on School Governance Councils and PTO/PTA organizations provided valuable feedback that informed the work of the Superintendent and Board of Education.

“The strength and unity of our community was a driving force behind the allocation we did receive,” said Dr. Estrella. “Because people showed up, spoke out, and advocated passionately, we were able to preserve many critical programs and services.”



Norwalk Public Schools remains committed to its mission to deliver an excellent, equitable education to all students. Despite the financial challenges, the district continues to prioritize academic achievement and student well-being as it prepares scholars to succeed in an ever-evolving and global society.

For more information and materials related to the FY2025-26 Operating Budget for the Norwalk Board of Education, [please visit the NPS 2025-26 Budget website](#).