

BET Budget Q&A

Following BOE Presentation

Doug Fenton ([spreadsheet shared](#))

On the **Personnel (100s)** response, I'd like to provide a couple clarifying items that are not meant as questions:

- The analysis I shared evaluating core personnel expenses vs budget put 51100 (Overtime), 51310 (Substitutes), and Professional Services (including 51420) on a separate line from Core Personnel to account for the adjustments made in the FY '25 budget. Similarly, it shows the Salary Adjustment Account (51990) both included and excluded in the budget vs actual comparison.
- I believe the following statement should reference the **2025-26** budget rather than the **2024-25** budget. "For example, the loss of Title I funding has been fully built into the **2024-2025 budget**, so the budgeted salary reflects the actual cost of those positions."

You are correct that it should reference the **2025-26** budget. The loss of Title I funding (approximately \$770,000) occurred after the 2024-25 budget was passed. We have then built the 2025-26 budget by having the 5.0 FTEs, equivalent to \$662,807, shifted from grant funding to operating budget.

Personnel

1. Please add context to the statement: "At this stage, we are seeing some early signs where there are an unusual number of certified staff taking unpaid leaves of absence." Specifically, quantify the number of staff taking unpaid leave of absence vs. the prior three years.

This assessment was intended to be qualitative in nature and not quantitative. Leave is extremely fluid throughout the school year and coupled with unfilled positions, the district knows that the salary line is running under budget. We will continue to monitor this throughout the year.

	<u>Jan. 29, 2026</u>	<u>Dec. 16, 2025</u>
Teacher unpaid - end of year	7	5
Teacher unpaid - partial year	1	7
GOSA unpaid - partial year	0	1
Total	8	13

Transportation

2. My understanding is that the bus contract with DATTCO will be open to renegotiation after the FY '26-27 school year. If so, what resources would put GPS in the best position to prepare for the upcoming negotiation?

The District will be releasing an RFP in February 2026 for Transportation Services. At this time, we do not anticipate additional resources for RFP or contract discussion. The district has routinely released RFP for transportation in the past.

3. **In the budget presentation, it suggests the expense of SPED transportation (inclusive of Pre-K) is roughly equivalent to the expense of GenEd transportation. This is atypical compared to some Fairfield County peers (Darien, New Canaan, Westport) where the SPED share of Pupil transportation expense is much lower than GenEd. Both New Canaan and Darien have insourced SPED transportation. What, if any, evaluation has been done on the comparative cost/challenges of insourcing SPED transportation for GPS?**

The bus monitor cost is the key difference between general education transportation and Special Education/preschool transportation. For the 2025-26 school year, the daily bus monitor rate is \$260.

This is also very difficult to compare from district to district. Greenwich covers +/-45 square miles across the district, while a town like Darien is +/-14 square miles. This impacts the number of routes, and the time it takes to run those routes.

Also, in a community like New Canaan, they have a very different demographic and many parents do not opt in to preschool. The three-year-old program only meets four days per week, and is only five hours long. The four-year-old program only meets four days a week for three hours. They are significantly smaller with much less need so they do not have our growth in programming which requires more transportation expenses.

4. **What evaluation has been done regarding a long-term lease for bus parking vs. a capital investment for a permanent, owned solution?**

The issue is one of availability of property for sale versus long-term lease. We are open to both options. However, suitable property for sale has not been presented. GPS does have a real estate expert working with us on locating suitable properties.

5. **You wrote: "We have reduced 18 bus routes in GPS for the shift in start times. At the current year 2025-2026 DATTCO rates, it is a saving of \$2.28M (= 18 bus routes x \$695 per day x 182 days per year)." To clarify, is this the cost to return the District to 2024-25 start times?**

Eighteen bus routes are needed to return the district to 2024-2025 start times. At the 2026-2027 bus rates, it will be \$2.6M (= 18 x \$144,000 per bus). Also, it is not as easy as just restoring the exact same routes. Different students are in our schools with various walking zones for younger versus older students. It could take anywhere between 16-20 buses to restore the routes. Until the routes are done with all current riders, we would not have an exact calculation. However, the \$2.6m is a very strong estimate based on 18 buses.

6. What is the estimated incremental expense solely to return the K-5 schools with later start times back to the prior 8:45 AM start time?

Eleven additional buses would be needed for Cos Cob, Glenville, International School at Dundee, North Mianus, North Street, and Parkway to have a 8:45 AM start time. At \$144,000 per bus, incremental expense is \$1,584,000.

Outplacement and Settlement

7. If a bill similar to HB 7277 (AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT) were to pass, what would you expect the impact to be on the BOE budget?

There are aspects which did pass last year. School districts are hopeful that setting the rates for out-placement settings will help to gain greater cost control over escalating annual tuition rates.

As for students staying with the district through the age of 22, that is already in place and was changed several years ago.

The language around the use of the category “Developmental Delay” also passed last year. This category was utilized in PreK, and it is now extended through the age of nine. This change could have significant impacts with more children qualifying for services in kindergarten through third grade. The category is extremely broad and a change from the more stringent categories utilized in the K-3 grades (ADHD, Autism, Learning Disability, etc.). This is an area the district will be watching during the next few years.

Additional Operating Questions

Evaluation of New Investments

8. How do you evaluate the success of new programs and investments, both qualitatively and quantitatively? Is there a consistent framework utilized?

We measure academic growth, progress toward IEP goals, and qualitative feedback from staff, families, and service providers that speaks to the quality and impact of a program. Operationally, we also examine relevant performance ratios before and after program implementation to understand shifts in service trends. These are complemented by financial analysis when relevant. For example, in last year’s BET Budget Committee meeting, we presented our Special Education Outplacements analysis, which demonstrated cost-avoidance resulted from lower proportion of students requiring out-of-district placements.

Tuition

9. Did the BOE change tuition rates for preschool and/or Out of District students for the 2026-2027 school year? If not, why not?

Tuition rates for 2026-2027 are scheduled to be presented to the BOE at their February 19, 2026 meeting.

School Lunch Fund

10. According to your Monthly Financial Report (1/16/26), the FY '26 Food Services budget is running below its forecast by ~\$170k. Why is this?

The 1/16/2026 Monthly Financial Report presents a YTD result as at 12/31/2025. We have a monthly School Lunch financial review. We are expecting the Full Year results to be in line with the original budget.

11. The School Lunch Fund budget is forecast to run a deficit of ~\$1mm in FY '27. What strategies are being used to improve this deficit? How has the performance so far in FY '26 impacted your forecast for FY '27?

Refer to the BET Budget Committee Meeting booklet on School Lunch Fund. It is important to look at historical trends pre-COVID. The Town of Greenwich has always supplemented this fund. However, during COVID, the federal government provided free lunch to all students via action by the USDA. Our GPS reimbursables were up due to the high volume of lunches and breakfasts served. This was not, and is not expected to be, the trend. It allowed GPS to build up a balance, which was able to offset the TOG contribution for a few years. Our Food Service program has now normalized and is back to the standard operation, which requires financial support. The district is always looking at ways to provide healthier, more desirable, and revenue generating opportunities through menu enhancements and ala carte items.

Rental of Town Buildings (46202)

12. On what cadence are the Facilities Rental [Fees](#) for GPS updated?

Yearly in the spring with an effective date of July 1.

13. Of the ~\$281k of revenue from Rentals last year, which facilities generate the majority of revenue?

Greenwich High School facilities, particularly the Performing Arts Center, generated the majority of revenue.

14. Why did we see a significant increase in rental revenue (~ +60%) in FY '25 vs prior (non-COVID) years?

First, facility rental rates across the district were increased by 5% effective November 1, 2024, reflecting the updated cost elements in the FY 2024-25 operating budget. Particularly, rates for the Performing Arts Center (PAC) at GHS were increased by approximately 20%.

Second, there were conscious efforts to follow up and collect outstanding invoices. For example, two invoices totaling \$5,100.50 issued in June 2024 remained outstanding for more than 300 days and were not paid until April 2025. They were followed up monthly until payment was received.

Capital Budget

GHS Pool

15. Have the EdSpecs of the GHS Pool Renovation been voted on?

No. The EdSpecs were presented to the Board of Education as a first read on November 20, 2025. After Board and community feedback, the administration made a statement at the Board of Education's Budget Meeting on December 11, 2025 that the EdSpecs, as presented, are on hold. The administration and professional team are evaluating additional options for the site. No firm date has been set for revised EdSpecs.

16. Why is A&E Funding for the Pool Replacement \$4mm, or roughly twice as large as A&E funding for the recent school renovations?

This is a specialized project. A&E fees are likely to be little higher than a typical school project. The amount represents 8% of construction costs. The funds would allow additional services, such as environmental consultation.

Riverside School

17. The approved BOE Capital Budget had construction funding included in the FY '27-28 fiscal year. The First Selectman's Budget presentation had construction funding in the FY '28-29 fiscal year. What insight do you have on this change?

Now that the Riverside Building Committee has been established and funds are allocated for the work necessary for the Planning and Zoning Commission to approve municipal improvement, the building committee will be able to provide a refined project schedule.

ADA Compliance

18. After completing the ADA compliance program at a given facility, is that facility deemed to be fully ADA compliant? For example, will the two year, \$4.3m investment in North Mianus School make that facility fully compliant?

No, making a building ADA accessible does not necessarily mean that the entire building is "compliant" as if it were a new build.

Upon completion of the ADA transition plan, a facility may be considered substantially compliant based on the specific barriers addressed within the project's scope. It is important to note that ADA compliance is an ongoing obligation for public entities rather than a one-time certification.

At North Mianus for instance, addressing the high-priority items identified in the ADA report would allow the building to be classified as a "Designated Accessible Building." This ensures that individuals with disabilities can effectively approach, enter, and utilize the facility.

We should avoid the term "fully compliant," as the current scope intentionally targets specific representative elements—such as one sink or restroom per program area—rather than every individual fixture in the entire building. This strategic approach aligns with industry standards and mirrors the process implemented at new projects within our District. As facilities evolve to meet new educational, safety, and maintenance needs, further accessibility upgrades may need to be integrated to ensure continued alignment with federal standards.

Ceilings & Lighting

19. Roughly what percentage of GPS lighting has been transitioned to LED? When do you expect this project to be completed?

90 - 95% LED with the Parking Garage at Hamilton Avenue scheduled to be completed Spring 2026

Julian Curtiss Renovation

20. The CIP sheet for the Julian Curtiss renovation states: "The request is for Phase III, funding to renovate the cafeteria at Julian Curtiss to provide a larger cafeteria space." However, the Project Cost worksheet makes no reference to the cafeteria, with the primary cost listed as "ADA Work \$2.5mm." What specifically is this project funding?

The project description needs to be updated on the CIP sheet from 2025-2026 to 2026-2027. Cafeteria phase 3 was funded in the current year at \$2.450 million. The request this year is primarily the ADA work from the study at \$2.5 million.

Please see the Silver Petrucelli + Associates ADA Self Evaluation & Transition Study Final Report, [starting on page 80](#). Priority one was completed at the entrance last summer. The \$2.5 million will go towards the additional priorities.

Roofs

21. What is the condition and age of the roofs being replaced at Cos Cob and North Street?

Cos Cob Roof: (per the assessment completed by roofing consultant, Watsky Associated, Inc, in 2025)

"The shingles across all roof areas are more than 20 years old and have reached the end of their service life. The existing insulation beneath the shingle roofs does not meet the current minimum R-value requirements. We recommend a full replacement of all sloped roof areas. This should include replacement of all insulation to meet current energy code (R-30 minimum), replacement of all associated sheet metal flashings, and replacement of the existing EPDM liner in the Yankee gutters. The replacement roofing system must comply with all applicable Building Code requirements, for wind and fire resistance and minimum insulation R-values."

Note that the roof area proposed to be replaced at Cos Cob is limited to the pitched roof or shingle roof that was installed during the reconstruction project after the fire of 1990. The flat roof areas were replaced in 2002 and have an estimated useful life until 2032.

North Street Roof: The last consultants report completed on the North Street roof was in 2017 and noted that the roof "should provide about 10 more years (or 2027) of service."

Note that the district has completed a significant amount of work on equipment located on the roof and the additional foot traffic may have had a negative impact on the roofing system. It was determined that we should schedule a replacement based on the age of the system.

The FY25-26 CIP sheet indicates a request of \$500K in FY26-27 and \$1M in FY29-30. The initial \$500K would be utilized for professional service and potential any emergent repairs needed. The later request would be to complete the project.