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Norwalk Board of Education Reconciles FY2026-27 Operating Budget

Norwalk, Conn. (May 14, 2026) - The Norwalk Board of Education voted to reconcile the FY2026-27 Operating Budget during a special meeting held on May 14, approving a total budget of \$259.33 million. This represents a 4.91% increase over the current year's budget.

The approved total includes \$257.38 million in tax-funded monies and an additional \$1.95 million in state funding allocated to the district.

The reconciled budget prioritizes maintaining staff within school-based budgets, helping to preserve direct support for students and classrooms. However, reductions to non-personnel items within school-based budgets were necessary. Reductions were also made in non-school-based areas, including personnel. This will impact services that support our schools.

As part of the reconciliation process, the Board also voted to exit the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which currently allows Norwalk Public Schools to provide free meals to all students. Continued participation in CEP would cost the district approximately \$2.4 million in the 2026-2027 school year.

Several factors informed this decision. Under the approved state budget, Connecticut will provide free breakfast to all students and free lunch to students who qualify for reduced-price meals, a shift that is expected to generate approximately \$900,000 in savings for the district. However, districts cannot participate in CEP while also receiving these state-funded benefits.

The district's initial plan was to opt out of CEP while continuing to cover the cost of meals for all students. However, due to current budget constraints, sustaining free universal meal coverage is no longer feasible without implementing cuts that would directly impact students.

Accordingly, the current budget reflects that families of students who do not qualify for free or reduced price meals will be responsible for paying for those meals. This change is projected to generate approximately \$400,000 in parent revenue, helping to offset the expense within the Board of Education budget.



It is important to reiterate that no child will be denied a school meal. However, families who do not qualify for free or reduced price meals will be required to pay and will receive invoices, representing a return to pre-COVID practices.

Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella continues to work with philanthropic organizations to secure funding that could allow all students to receive free lunch.

The Board of Education sincerely appreciates the parents, families, staff, and community members who advocated throughout the budget process. Your voices played a meaningful role in demonstrating to the Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET) and the City Council how strongly the Norwalk community values public education. The strength of the school district remains closely tied to the strength and future of the city, and continued investment in education is an investment in Norwalk itself.