

Budget Q&A

	Question	Asked By	Assigned To	Answer	Category
1	Do the economics make sense to eliminate a classroom before enrollment has started or to build up the program as large as possible to capture the tuition fees. The enrollment date for ELC begins on January 25th and it clearly states it will be a lottery if more students apply than there are allotted spots. Will a fourth classroom open up if there is high enough enrollment or will all of those families be turned away? During the early planning phases of the new schools, there were 4 classrooms being built for ELC. Why are we capping it at three classrooms and building four? What will the classroom be used for?	A. Howley	Pat / Rich	Current projections indicate that three classrooms (6 sections) is appropriate for next year. If there is high enough community interest to warrant adding a fourth classroom (2 sections), an additional teacher and paraprofessionals could be added if tuition fees would cover the cost. Regarding the plan for the new schools, the classrooms in the new building are being designed flexibly for use by multiple grade levels as enrollment changes necessitate changes to the number of sections per grade level.	Staffing
2	In the budget presentation the heading read PreK - 2nd grade STEAM benefits, breaking down what each grade level would receive but Pre-K had no benefits listed. Was the heading written wrong or was the Pre-K benefit eliminated by accident?	A. Howley	Katherine / Karen	Our Early Learning Center (ELC) Pre K program includes embedded STEAM instruction in our curriculum, per the CT Early Learning and Development Standards. We should have included this in the presentation as the first bullet point.	STEAM
3	Page 31-Technology Non-Payroll-Account 650- District Inst. Tech from nothing to \$74,549?	Greg	Rich / Karen	As part of the change to a new chart of accounts that delineated software based on location and purpose (instructional or system), software was recategorized into the most appropriate budget line for 2021-2022. The total of all tech software lines increases from \$504,881 in 2020-2021 to \$630,093 in 2021-2022. The increase is related to costs for software adopted during the pandemic that is recommended to continue such as Zoom and iReady, among others, as well as hardware such as Chromebooks and upgrades to the High School lab to support STEAM initiatives.	Technology
4	Page 33- Curriculum & Staff Development & Enrichment, Non-Payroll-Account 641- Textbooks & Workbooks from \$57,508 to \$227,000?	Greg	Julie	In 2021-2022, this line includes funding for new K-5 and 6-11 math programs as well as funding for STEAM programming. In 2020-2021, funding included new textbooks for certain HS courses and a 6-11 math program which was deferred due to the pandemic.	Curriculum
5	Page 35 Buildings & Grounds NP- Account 431 Oper of Build. Service Contracts \$216,159 to \$285,911?	Greg	Phil / Rich	Approximately \$50,000 of the increase to service contracts is related to maintenance contract costs for the security operations center. A one-year deferral of these fees was negotiated as part of the original purchase and as a result were not included in the 2020-2021 budget. Increases to elevator service, refuse removal and state mandated water testing make up the bulk of the remainder of the increase.	Buildings & Grounds
6	Increasing Special Ed contingency from \$125k to \$250k?	Greg	Katherine	Due to uncertainties with some student placements for 2021-2022, the contingency is recommended to double to cover potential tuition and transportation costs for outplaced students as well as additional services required due to the educational impact of the pandemic.	Special Education
7	The teacher increases, I assume those are all dictated by the Teachers Union Contract?	Greg	Rich	All salaries are based on the expected contractual rates for the employee in the position as of December 2020. Adjustments for contracts not yet settled are included in the budget as well. All non-union salaries are subject to Board of Education approval in June.	Payroll
8	I was just reading page 33 of the proposed BOE budget [presentation]. Is my understanding correct that the MS band teacher will teach instrument lessons to grades 5-7, but there will be no actual MS (grades 6-8) band or band performances?	E. Waltmeyer	Pat	No, we plan to have band performances grades 5-12. We are still working out the details which depends on the number of registered students in the classes.	Staffing

Budget Q&A

9	Page 6 – How are we planning to “reallocate” an Assistant Principal to work in PPS?	Samantha	Pat / Katherine	Approximately 20% of one of the assistant principal's times will be used to chair PPTs, supervise and evaluate PPS Staff, and other administrative duties as assigned by the Director of PPS.	Staffing
10	Page 12 – How do we justify increasing class sizes in ELC, while simultaneously reducing classrooms?	Samantha	Pat	Class size in ELC is not expected to increase based on current projections. Some students will enter from Birth to 3 throughout the school year, but a seat is held for them in preparing class size projections. A waiting list for typical peers will be established. If there is high enough interest from typical peers where the cost of an additional teacher could be offset by the tuition revenue, we will discuss it with the Board.	Staffing
11	Page 14 – Why is there an 88.02% increase in professional development?	Samantha	Julie	The 88% increase refers to the full curriculum budget. The vast majority of the increase is the cost of the new math texts.	Curriculum
12	Page 17 – What is the \$2328 equipment budget for CONS designated for?	Samantha	Rob	Grade 2 requested rugs for their classrooms. This can be removed from the budget, we will not be ordering rugs.	Consolidated School
13	Page 21- What furniture are we purchasing at the MS for \$5520.00?	Samantha	Christine	Bookcases that need to be replaced because they fell apart when we packed up classrooms. We have also added titles to classroom libraries and need more storage for these books in the classroom.	Middle School
14	Page 23 – Why do we have a \$3500 increase for Professional Educational Services at the HS?	Samantha	James D.	In addition to yearly allocations for things such as musical accompanists and college/career speaker programs, we have requested professional development specifically for high school teachers focused on task development and engagement.	High School
15	Page 29 – 1) Why do we have a \$4000 advertising budget – what are we advertising, where are we planning to advertise, and why do we need to advertise at all?	Samantha	Pat/ Rich	The additional \$4,000 in the advertising budget is to fund marketing videos to promote programs within New Fairfield.	Marketing
16	Page 29 - 2) Technology software costs for both FS and HR total \$45,709 – What software are we purchasing for these departments?	Samantha	Rich	The financial services software line is the cost of the district's financial management program, eFinancePlus. Previously, this was charged back to the district as part of the shared service model with the town. The HR software line includes AESOP and Applitrack expenses. Additionally, the pandemic has shed light on the challenges of having paper time sheets so AESOP will be expanded to include digital timesheets.	Finance & HR
17	Page 29 - 3) what is the \$10,000 cost in HR for “other professional services?”	Samantha	Rich / Kara	This line funds substitute nurse services through a contracted provider.	Finance & HR
18	Page 33 – 1) please provide an explanation for the \$22,950 increase for “other professional services/testing and evaluation”. What are we spending this on?	Samantha	Julie	The money in this year's budget is for new Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment kits for K-5 classrooms. Our current sets are two versions old and the new versions are significantly improved.	Curriculum
19	Page 33 - 2) Why does it appear that we are cutting enrichment costs across the board, yet we are asking for a \$450.00 increase in dues and fees?	Samantha	Julie	The dues and fees increase is for Math Counts and Math Olympiad registrations for students. The funds have been spent yearly, but from varying accounts. We are adjusting Enrichment expenses based on our model for the coming year. There is less need for speical "extras" such as field trips if we are providing a comprehensive program.	Curriculum
20	Page 37 – why does the budget show a \$28,881 increase for speech and audio services?	Samantha	Katherine	This line funds contracted services through CREC soundbridge that is partially offset by the IDEA grant. There has been an increase in students with hearing impairments who require these services.	Special Education
21	Page 41 – As in past years, could you please provide us with the actual job descriptions for the Transition Teacher, Transition Paraprofessionals and the Math Interventionist?	Samantha	Katherine / Julie	See attached job descriptions.	Staffing

Budget Q&A

22	Page 44 – 1) Why is the cost for a Head Nurse/Psych almost double?	Samantha	Rich / Pat	The head nurse stipend was raised to \$4,000 at the start of the 2020-2021 school year to align with other grade level leader stipends in the district.	Staffing
23	Page 44 – 2) the Cons/Psych is up \$33,751.00, but the number of staff is the same. Why is this?	Samantha	Rich	The payroll budget each year is established based on the person filling the position at the time of budget development. After the budget was developed, a replacement psychologist was hired at a higher rate based on the NFEA contract. The FY22 budget reflects the contracted salaries for individuals filling the position as of December 2020.	Staffing
24	Page 46 – With all of the teaching position cuts that are being proposed, how do we justify hiring another FIN/OPS secretary for \$57,378.00.	Samantha	Rich / Pat	This line items reflects the position that was added at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, in part by reallocating staff from the athletics office, based on need in this fin/ops department. It is a budget to budget change.	Staffing
25	How do the funds from the latest federal pandemic relief bill (or any other Federal or State funds not yet factored in) play into the budget? Is it money we must use in the current budget year only, and if so, are there items we can remove from next year’s budget as a result? If we can use some or all of it for next year, can we budget for it?	Rick	Rich	All anticipated grants are factored into the 2021-2022 budget request. In the current year, all ESSER and CRF funds related to COVID-19 are allocated. However, the ESSER funds do not need to be spent until 9/30/22 and could be reallocated if other grant funding became available. New Fairfield is expected to receive additional grant money from the latest federal relief bill that was passed at the end of 2020. As of 1/7/2020, specific allocations to local districts are not yet available. Additional grant money and/or improved year-end projections will be an area to monitor as we move through the budget process to determine if certain items can be purchased this year through realized savings.	Grants
26	Can you put a number on our “math everyday” initiative? That is, what we are spending (and how) that is specifically in support of that effort, vs. what we would have spent for our ongoing math improvement plan.	Rick	James / Julie / Rich	Math is offered everyday at the K-8 level. The high school introduced the math workshop model to provide math everyday for students who are below benchmark. The workshops provide an additional 40 minutes of math instruction on the day opposite the student's regularly scheduled math class. The total FTE allocated to math workshop is 1.2 or approximately \$90,000. To address the mathematics performance gap, two additional math interventionists are proposed at a cost of \$150,000 and new mathematics programs K-5 and 6-11 are proposed at a cost of \$220,000, including professional learning. An additional math coach at the high school level that was not filled in 2020-2021 due to the pandemic is also included at a savings of \$18,000 due to additional grant funding. Ongoing math improvements are supported by math interventionists and coaches at the K-8 level at a cost of approximately \$450,000.	Mathematics
27	P. 3 of our NESDEC report from Oct 26, 2020 says “New Fairfield’s substantial population of immigrants remains an important variable within the new class of Kindergarteners each year”. (I asked about this at the meeting in which this document was presented but did not get an answer.) Was this line meant to apply to NF, and if so, is it taken into account in the ELL numbers in the budget?	Rick	Rich / Julie	NESDEC made an error in this statement in the original report. It should have said "New Fairfield’s potential in-migration of students remains an important variable within the new class of Kindergarteners each year". This revision provides further justification for including a contingency teacher at the elementary level to respond to potential changes in enrollment between now and the start of the school year. Currently, we have a full time ELL teacher. She is currently providing direct instruction to 60 students, districtwide and has assessed 57 newly registered students this year. She also consults, participates in PPTs and CSTs, and provides professional development.	Enrollment
28	What is the cost of the technology lab upgrade at the HS?	Kim	Karen / Rich	The lab at the high school is budgeted at \$40,000 in the technology equipment line.	Technology

Budget Q&A

29	What rate is being paid for the former administrator who is consulting with the special education department?	Kim	Rich / Katherine	The rate is equivalent to a post-retirement reemployment rate of \$633.61/day. It was an oversight to not specifically include funds for this work in the contracted service account for 2020-2021. In the 2020-2021 school year, this particular consultant has reviewed IEPs, coordinated compensatory services, coordinated scheduling of speech services, and consulted with individual case managers on PPT and IEP technicalities. This service is being paid from the special education evaluations and contract service line. We often hire consultants to support work throughout the district in areas such as professional development, social emotional learning, coaching, and curriculum writing.	Special Education
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