Bethel Board of Education Regular Meeting - Budget Workshop

Thursday, January 27, 2022 7:00 PM
Board of Education Conference Room E, 1 School Street, PO Box 253, Bethel, CT 06801

1.	**Call to Order**	**Speaker(s):** Policy 9326
1.A.	Roll Call for Quorum	
1.B.	Pledge of Allegiance	
2.	**Budget Workshop - (IT, Curriculum, SPED)**	
3.	**Correspondence**	**Speaker(s):** Policy 9326
4.	**Public Comment** **(Please note: The Board welcomes Public Comment and asks that speakers please limit their comments to 2 minutes. Speakers may offer objective comments of school operations and programs that concern them. The Board will not permit any expression of personal complaints or defamatory comments about Board of Education personnel and students, nor against any person connected with the Bethel Public School System.)**	**Speaker(s):** Policy 9326
5.	**Adjourn**	

BOE Members 2022-2023 BUDGET Q & A
January 25 & 27, 2022

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Number	Name - Initials	Question(s)	Answer(s)
Schools & Athletics - January 25, 2022			
1.	SC	Who decides on the use of stipends embedded in the teacher contract for sports and/or extracurriculars? For example, do we run all clubs and sports that stipends are allocated for? If not, what happens to the money? Does it go to salary contingency?	Stipends embedded in the Teachers Contract are negotiated during the contractual negotiations with the Bethel Education Association. Through mutual agreement, the negotiating team establishes a subcommittee to look at every stipend in the three-year cyclical process. The team consists of members of the BEA, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, the Athletic Director, the Principals, the Director of Fiscal Services, and the Human Resources Manager. We look at comparative data from other communities, the scope of the work in the stipends, and the overall time commitment. The overall budgeted amount does not allow all clubs to run. The Principals make the decisions on what clubs will run based on student interest and enrollment. We have never not used all of the money to run these clubs/activities. In fact, sometimes the line has gone over. CC
2.	JL	BHS went from 6 to 7 custodians. Is that new or movement? Line 1218	It is because of movement. You will also see that Berry School went from 4 to 3 Custodians. Due to the expansion of Johnson School and the movement of Grade 3, we have re-evaluated the allocation of custodial staff by school in the district. Last year one went from BHS to Johnson. But now with the track center back open and all athletics and extracurricular running at BHS one position went back to

			BHS. That position came from Berry due to the movement of Grade 3 to Johnson. TY
3.	JL	BHS How many coaches and advisors are covered under line 1510?	Please see the answer to #1. TY
4.	JL	BHS Under Purchased Prof & Technical Svcs line 3401 what is the big jump of $80,932?	This reflects the change from salaries to professional services for the Athletic Training provided to athletes. TY
5.	JL	BMS What is the odd certified staff change 61.34 to 59.74 FTE line 1110?	1.0 was the reallocation of a Special Education Teacher from BMS to Berry/COF. .6 if the reallocation of World Language staff, previously split between BHS and BMS to solely BHS. TY
6.	JL	BMS What is the increase in Repair and maintenance $1,850 line 4301?	A safety inspection and any related repairs of the weight room equipment that will be needed. SR
7.	JL	Berry What is the increase in certified staff from 32.40 to 33.90 on line 1110?	1.0 is the reallocation of a Special Education Teacher to Berry/COF from BMS. TY The .5 is a reduction in EL Tutors and the addition of a certified EL Teacher .5 at Berry and .5 at Rockwell TY
8.	JL	Berry What is the decrease in Tutors from 1 to .50 on line 1210?	This change in FTE reflects the change from Tutors to one FTE Certified Staff for EL. At both Berry and Rockwell tutors were reduced .5 + .5 and a certified 1.0 position was established through reallocation. This Certified EL Staff would be working with students at Berry and Rockwell. Therefore the students will receive instruction from a highly trained certified teacher instead of Tutors. TY
9.	JL	Berry: Does the decrease in custodian 4 to 3 have to do with the BHS increase line 1218?	Yes, please see the answer to #2
10.	JL	Johnson; What is the odd increase in certified staff	The .06 at Johnson is to account for one additional music

		48.35 to 48.41 line 1110?	class for third grade strings at Johnson School. Third grade strings used to be at Berry and Rockwell but with third grade now at Johnson, and in reviewing scheduling, there needs to be one additional section in order to incorporate third grade strings for all interested students. TY
11.	JL	Johnson; I see the Equipment repair line went from 0 to 400 is this due to the finished renovation, line 4303?	This is to cover piano tuning services for the music department. SR The reallocations of non-payroll accounts at Johnson School nets to an increase of $50. TY
12.	JL	Rockwell; What is the increase in certified staff from 24.25 to 25.75 line 1110?	1.0 is the proposed Special Education Teacher .5 is a reallocation from EL Tutors TY
13.	JL	Rockwell; What is the decrease in tutors .86 to .36 line 1210?	Please see the answer to #8 TY
14.	JL		
15.	MO	BHS: Explain the increase in Prof. Educational services and what it includes.	This includes a partnership with NVCC to offer a 6 credit Advanced Manufacturing College Connections program to interested students and Task/STEP coursework at EdAdvance. SR
16.	MO	BHS: Explain Purchased Prof. & Technical Services and the increase and whether one time or trend.	See answer to #4 above. This would be a permanent change for the athletic trainer. SR
17.	MO	BHS: Software technology line. Please explain programs supported and increase.	This line includes Rosetta Stone and Quia licenses for World languages, ALEKS licenses for Math, AP practice licenses, interactive music program subscriptions, and Pear Deck, an interactive resource for increased student engagement. The increase is for Turnitin, an ELA and SS resource and Gimkit for WL. These additional programs were covered by budget

			reductions in those departments. SR
18.	MO	BHS: Sports. Please provide participation in athletics by grade.	Fall-2021 ● 9th-79 ● 10th-74 ● 11th-78 ● 12th-79 Total: 310 Winter- 2022 ● 9th-72 ● 10th-68 ● 11th-52 ● 12th-33 Total: 225 Spring-2021 ● 12th-50 ● 11th-51 ● 10th-64 ● 9th-70 Total: 235
19.	MO	BHS: Please provide participation in NJROTC by grade.	● 9th - 82 ● 10th - 55 ● 11th - 34 ● 12th- 28 Total: 199 A reminder the current 9th grade class is our largest. The pattern of enrollment by grade is very similar year after year, with higher enrollments at the 9th and 10th grade level. CC

20.	MO	BHS: Please provide participation in music programs by grade (band, orchestra, etc.).	Symphonic Band - 47 subset of 34 in marching band All chorus - 38 Orchestra - 22 It is important to note that these numbers do not reflect the total number of students who enroll in music classes, only those who participate in the extracurricular activities/music programs.
21.	MO	BMS: Please provide participation in Sports, Music, and Clubs by grade level.	The intramural program at Bethel Middle School is self-funded. Students pay a fee for participation. Teachers are compensated at the hourly rate from the agreement with the BEA. Fees are waived for programs for students who qualify under financial need. Here is a link to the offerings. Other middle school clubs/programs are outlined in the BEA Contract. Clubs/programs are run based on student interest/enrollment.
22.	MO	BMS: comment on Repair and Maintenance lines that were up.	Please see the answer to #6 above. SR
23.	MO	BMS: Instructional supplies had been cut last year, is this increase an effort to partially restore those cuts?	There was a minor reallocation between instructional and other supplies to more accurately reflect where the funds are spent. The slight increase is a reflection of the increased costs of these supplies. SR
24.	MO	Johnson: Please provide participation numbers for music programs and clubs by grade level.	Strings (grades 3)- 78 (before school) Orchestra (grades 4-5) - 112 Band - (grades 4-5) - 125 General Music 3-5 - 424

			Johnson School (pre-pandemic) offered a number of intramural clubs for students. Those clubs were offered over a 10 week period and parents paid a participation fee. Fees were waived for students who are unable to afford them. There is no impact to the operating budget as the program is self-funded. When the program was fully operational approximately ¾ of the school participated. CC
25.	MO	Johnson: Instructional supply lines were cut in last year's budget, is this increase to partially restore that line?	Yes, with the increased student population at JS an increase in supplies is necessary to maintain programs, however, JS covered this increase by reallocating their budget dollars from conferences, travel, and library books. SR
26.	MO	Johnson/Rockwell: Are we meeting state requirements for EL instructors when sufficient numbers of students (i.e., Portuguese, Spanish speaking) are in a school? What is the status of these populations and projections?	There are two different requirements we are obligated to meet. 1. Bilingual Programming The mandated requirement is to provide bilingual programming under the direction of a certified bilingual educator when the number of students in a school building with the same native language reaches 20 or more. This requirement is based on October 1st reporting numbers of the previous year. Currently, Johnson is the only school in the district mandated to provide bilingual programming in the languages of both Spanish and Portuguese based on populations of more than 20 identified English learners with each of these languages. This will continue next year, as our October 1st numbers from this year will mandate us to continue. 2. ESL Programming In addition, we are federally mandated to screen for and

			provide English as a Second Language (ESL) Programming for every student that is identified as an English Learner, including students with disabilities. As of today, we have 189 identified English Learners K-12. (8/30=150 ELs, 10/1=171 ELs, 1/25=189 ELs) Certified Staff: We have a certified bilingual teacher and two part-time tutors at Johnson School. We also have a certified TESOL teacher and a part-time tutor at Bethel High School. Berry, Rockwell, and Bethel Middle School have part-time tutors only. Due to COVID, It is difficult to project our numbers for next year. However, we are experiencing an increase in student numbers and students with complex needs and interrupted schooling. It is becoming increasingly difficult to provide quality support to the students with only part-time tutors in these buildings. MR
27.	MO	General: 1% Account current balance? Is it sufficient to meet matching 2 security grants? What would the remaining balance be?	With the June 30, 2021 addition of $25,299 the balance was $774,856. For the 460 account, we are depending on using (per BOF) at least $100,000. The Bethel share of each Security Grant from the Department of Homeland Security is $72,904 for Multimedia and $106,605 for Public Schools Grant. This would leave us with a balance of $495,347. The 1% account is one-time money meant for emergencies and opportunities. The grants are certainly opportunities as Bethel gets 54 cents on each dollar towards school security improvements. But the 460 account is an operating, thus recurring,

			expenditure, and should be funded from operating/recurring revenue streams. TY
28.	MO	Central Office Acct: Explain Tuition Regular Ed - Public line.	This line covers the tuition cost of Bethel students who choose to attend a VoAg HS or the elementary Danbury AIS magnet school. SR
29.	MO	General: Comment about state program to bring kids from other districts into Bethel and financial and practical feasibility.	Bethel was included in the Open Choice program authorized by the Connecticut General Assembly. This link will provide BOE members with an overview of the program. As discussed in Board of Education meetings, the program is only financially viable IF you have open seats in classrooms. Given our current enrollment issues, we are not recommending participation in this program. CC
30.	MO	General: What are current overall costs attributed to all transportation for the district?	Current estimated transportation costs for this year including Regular Education, Special Education, and fuel is $3,052,989.SR
It, Curriculum, SPED - January 27, 2022			
31.	KD	Rockwell: Given the increase and needs of our Special Education, what would indicate a need for a third special education teacher? What would be the threshold for caseloads? What is the breakdown of identified Special Education students: LD? SLD/Dyslexia, OHI, etc. Would one special education teacher focus on structured literacy and the new special education teacher focus on other needs?	On October 1 there were 32 students in special education at Rockwell (current enrollment= 38). Based on student needs and our current COF population, we project similar enrollment at Rockwell next year. We currently have 2 special education teachers at Rockwell and are requesting an additional teacher for next year. We have a specialized social-emotional-behavioral program at Rockwell, known as FLEX, for students in K-2. The teacher in this program ideally will have 8 students, although there have been times, such as this year, that we have had up to 13 students in FLEX. The remainder of the students at

			Rockwell have primarily academic needs due to Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia, ADHD, or Speech-Language Impairment that are addressed via push in, pull out, and structured literacy services provided by a Resource teacher. This current school year we temporarily moved a Special Education Teacher from Berry to Rockwell due to caseload size and the significance of student needs. (That position is required at Berry next year.) We have divided caseloads as best we can to be able to provide services to all students at Rockwell. CS
32.	JL	Supervisor of Special Education-SW went from 1 to 2 please explain the need for this and how it is funded?	We reorganized our special education leadership team last year to include 2 supervisors, rather than 1 supervisor and 2 teacher-level coordinators of special education. Administrator-level leadership is necessary for staff and program development in special education, as well as for accountability purposes. Most of the funding for the position is a transfer from the teacher salaries. CS The current structure allows for 1 supervisor at Pre-K to 5 and 1 supervisor 6-12+ TY
33.	JL	Behavior Analyst- We went from 1 in 20-21 to 2 in 21-22 to 3 in 22-23 please explain the need and cost is there a savings over contracted workers?	In previous years the district contracted for BCBA services from CREC and EdAdvance. Employing district BCBAs is a better use of resources because we have those individuals full-time, and do not pay for extra hours, such as transport to and from our district. We have shifted funds from contracted services to salaries in this proposed budget, accordingly. CS In the budget you will see a reduction on the Contracted Services line and an increase in the BCBA staff line. However, Contracted Services is a line that has been

			running over-budget for a few years. So the reduction in Contracted Services is for the reallocation but also adjusts for the additional costs we have been incurring. TY
34.	JL	Tuition SPED- other LEAS-SW line 122-5602 what is the increase? Please explain.	LEA stands for Local Education Authority and generally refers to a town or regional school district. In this context, “other LEAs” refers to specialized placements at CES and EdAdvance, which are RESCs or Regional Education Service Centers. Part of the services provided to districts by the RESCs are outplacements for students with disabilities. The budget request reflects the fact that we have additional students placed at these schools this year. In general, placements at CES and EdAdvance are less expensive than similar placements at private special education facilities. Transportation options when we use RESC placements are also more cost effective, as we have several students traveling to the same location(s). CS
35.	JL	Can you please explain the high cost of outside placements on one 122-5602 through 5605? Why must we have this and why so much money?	Tuitions are set by the outplacement schools. The costs are typically higher due to the staffing ratios and specialized services offered through the programs. Tuition ranges from $60,000 to a high of $220,000 based on the Individualized Education Plan of the student. The budget request reflects projected tuition (adjusted for projected increases) for students who are currently outplaced. We are required by state and federal law to provide these services to students if we can not meet the child’s needs in the district. CS
36.	JL	With all the increased needs and complex cases in Special Education are we fully covered with enough OT, PT, and Speech staff for the district?	Our OT, PT, and SLPs are busy with robust caseloads. At times, we have needed to contract for outside evaluations or additional services. CS
37.	JL	I see many cuts to the curriculum in the area of	The overall curriculum budget did not decrease, rather it

		training. Will our staff be fully prepared to teach all the curriculum without this training?	was redistributed to other lines where the money is being spent. We will address the professional learning needs of our staff with the current allocation. KB
38.	JL	With all the technology added to teaching through the pandemic and the whole district being 1:1 are we staffed with enough people to service all of the district's computer needs? Long waits for repairs and or help for staff can inhibit learning.	We added an additional full-time IT staff member in the last budget cycle. That brought us to four full-time staff members. We also have 4 college interns. We also have used grant monies to support additional overtime. We are currently closing tickets at the rate they are opened. Wait times are determined by the complexity of the issue. In general, if they are not complex, they are closed in a timely manner. We give staff and students loaner devices if the issue can not be fixed immediately. In addition to the IT department we have Library Media Specialists that support day-to-day operations and just-in-time support. There is also a Tech/Web Champ in each building that supports use of instructional technology and website development. DB, DA
39.	MO	With the impact of SPED costs, some perspective would be helpful. What percentage of the budget is attributable to SPED?	Looking historically, we used to run about 20 to 21% of our budget as Special Education. Per the EFS we are now at 23%. TY
40.	MO	From a historic perspective, as a percentage of the budget, have SPED costs been stable, increased or decreased over the past several years?	Per our answer to #39, our Special Education costs have increased both in amount and also as a percentage of our budget. This is reflective of both the increase in the number of Special Education students and the level of services required. TY
41.	MO	If our excess costs were fully funded, how much would we receive from the state? Based on current information, what do you expect the District to receive? (Any change from the $600K placeholder in	Last year we did receive $623,592 which was a positive result of receiving 80% of excess cost. The year before we received $526,786 which was 71% of excess cost. Based on this history we are budgeted at $600K. If we were to

		the budget?)	receive 100% as we are supposed to it would be approximately $750K or $150K more than we budgeted. TY
42.	MO/BF CS	At one time there was an idea for a regional initiative to acquire or lease a building for SPED education to lower costs for participants and have more control over education offered. Is there any movement on that possible initiative? Are there any other thoughts about controlling spiralling SPED costs?	Plans for an additional regional program have not materialized. The committee stopped meeting during COVID. We likely will resume the committee next year as many of the district leadership has changed. However, if an outplacement is needed, we continue to place students in RESC outplacement programs (EdAdvance and CES) when possible because programming is cost-effective as compared to private outplacement schools. The best way to control special education spending is to maintain our in-district programs at adequate staffing levels, so that student needs can be met in our school buildings. CS
43.	MO	What are the qualifications to be a Tutor, including education and experience?	Tutors are required to have a bachelor's degree. We also prefer that they are certified teachers. Many of our tutors are certified teachers. Tutors implement learning plans under the oversight of the Specialists or the certified staff member. CC
44.	MO	We have run very lean in staffing the IT Dept.I share the same concerns with JL. Simply put, are we adequately staffed to meet the needs of the District, including staff and student devices as well as infrastructure in school buildings?	See question #38. We do the larger infrastructure projects during longer breaks and summer. This has been a great teaching opportunity for the college interns where they actively participate and experience these projects and provide the assistance we need to perform these in-house and save on installation and consulting costs. DB, DA

45.	SC	Line 6110- Schools districtwide. I think I calculated $324,605. What constitutes "instructional supplies" and is this line regularly spent in full year to year? Do schools do any type of inventory on an annual basis to assess what we have from year to year that are consumables?	Instructional supplies are those that are considered "consumable." They are generally what is used in the classroom whereas Other Supplies are more used in the office. Instructional supplies can be workbooks, paper, pencils, etc. used by the students. Workbooks need to be ordered each year. Yes, sometimes supplies carry from year to year or there are some dollars that a Principal may request be transferred to another budget line. But last year, with the reduction from the BOF, most supply lines were reduced and the Principals must manage very tightly. TY
46.	SC	What is the increase in total dollar amount and percentage of non-salary and benefits expenses?	The total increase proposed is $1,937,277 3.95% Salaries $1,039,830 2.1% of the 3.95% Benefits $ 518,883 1.05% of the 3.95% Non-Payroll $ 378,564 0.80% of the 3.95% The largest increases in Non-Payroll are Transportation and Special Education Tuition. TY
47.	SC	Are there direct reimbursement from the Federal government for certified ESL teachers, as mandated under the law? Answered in person. Just adding as part of the official record.	We receive two grants: Title III Grant for which we receive $26,689 ($988.98 is allotted for Saint Mary's) Bilingual Grant for which we receive $3, 413.00 We use every dollar for EL staff. TY
48.	SC	How many teachers have been fully trained in sheltered approach to English? Answered in person. Just adding as part of the official record.	The SIOP model, which is also referred to as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, is a set of research-based instructional strategies teachers can use to support English learners in the mainstream (Tier I) classrooms. In order to build the capacity of our staff to implement these strategies, we have engaged in many opportunities for professional learning. The most impactful work has been

			through our two certified staff members. They have been providing sessions for staff through PL days (Full and Half days) as well as in the moment support during PLC and SRBI meetings, as well as planning with teachers to help them work with students in their classrooms and provide access to grade-level instruction. Over the last three year (with some interruption by COVID), some of our secondary staff has also been working with a consultant from ACES (Area Cooperative Educational Services). This work has been focused on building the capacity of our teachers to understand the needs of English learners at the various stages of language acquisition as well as plan for instructional strategies to meet their needs through the sheltered approach to teaching. We also have many staff that are engaging in other training offerings throughout the state. We also have some staff that are pursuing their TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certification to help with their understanding and build their skills. This is an ongoing process for the district that will take time as there is much to learn. This work to build the capacity of our classroom teachers in the mainstream (Tier I) is an important part of the additional targeted ESL or Bilingual instruction that we are mandated to provide to all of our Identified English learners. MR
49.	BF	What is the present percentage of SPED students to the total student population? How does this compare to the recent past? If increasing what may be the cause?	14% of our current student population receives special education services. As a point of comparison, the state percentage of students with disabilities is over 16%. The percentage of students with disabilities in Bethel has increased over the course of the last decade, mirroring state

			and national trends. There are multiple and complex reasons for the overall increase in students with disabilities in our state. In Bethel, some of the specific reasons for our increase are: 1) additional students identified as having Autism, Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia, and ADHD; 2) more students than usual being identified in the 2020-21 school year; and 3) more students moving into our district with IEPs than are leaving our district. CS
50.	CS	While I recognize that different students have different needs and that caseloads from year to year and building to building may vary in complexity, could you provide some insight on what might be an ideal or target range for caseload for a SPED teacher? There was a question about thresholds that was asked earlier, but I am wondering about what might be optimal.	There is quite a bit of variability in our caseloads, as different students have different needs. However, in general, teachers who provide services in self-contained settings typically have smaller caseloads (8-10 students). In addition, older students are more independent and therefore caseloads at the secondary level are larger than caseloads at the elementary level. Projected caseloads for September 2022 are listed below. (Please note that these are estimates based on our current student population, and would increase if we have a significant number of students with IEPs move to Bethel from other districts, as we did this year. Caseloads also increase throughout the year as on average, 75 additional students are identified each year through the special education evaluation process.) BHS Foundations= 9 STEP/TASK= 20 Community Partnership Program= 9 Resource (average)= 18 BMS Foundations= 9 FLEX= 7

			Resource (average)= 13 Johnson Foundations= 8 FLEX= 6 Resource (average)= 13 Rockwell FLEX= 12 **Resource (average, if an additional special education teacher is added)= 10 Berry Foundations (average)= 6 Resource (average)= 8 CS
51.	CS	How has the SEL coach impacted meeting increasing student SEL needs? What is the current status/timeline for teacher training? Given the level of ongoing need, do we have enough support in the proposed budget to meet the projected and possibly increasing needs in this area?	The SEL Coach has been instrumental in helping us achieve actions and goals that are articulated in our strategic plan. These include: selection and implementation of core (Tier 1) SEL programming, staff training, and individual coaching for teachers. We are focusing on building our programming and increasing staff/teacher capacity at the Tier 1 because we believe that providing SEL instruction and strategies in the general classroom will be the best way to address a need that impacts more than 15% of our student population. The SEL Coach position will continue for 2 more years due to ESSER funding. We have also used ESSER funds for specialized training for school psychs, school social workers, and school counselors to enhance their interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3) and improve outcomes for students who need

			additional support beyond instruction that is provided in the classroom. Core program materials costs are planned for in our curriculum budget. CS
52.	CS	The District usually does a good job of anticipating the need for updated curriculum materials. Are there any areas that you feel need updated materials that are not currently included in next year's budget?	The Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Teaching and Learning have worked with the department chairs and coordinators to create a multi-year cycle of updating curricular materials. They maintain that information in planning for the budget. CC
53.	MO	General: What are current overall costs attributed to all transportation for the district? **Follow-Up Question**: What is the breakdown of transportation costs?	Current estimated transportation costs for this year including Regular Education, Special Education, and fuel is $3,052,989.SR **Follow Up Answer:** Transportation Estimates for 2021-2022 Regular Ed- In District $1,453,579.00 VoTech/VoAg $144,128.00 St. Mary's $174,759.00 $1,772,466.00 Special Ed- In District $500,567.00 Out Public $150,880.00 Out Private $503,706.00 $1,155,153.00 Diesel $125,370.00 Total Estimated Transportation costs for to/from school only $3,052,989.00 This cost does not include athletics. Field trips are self

			funding. Given the bid openings, if we go by the lowest base bid, we are looking at a potential 6.5% increase.
54.	KD	Follow up question from #37: With the training costs being cut, how will this impact the Right to Read Act? Thinking ahead and knowing the requirements of the Right to Read Act, has training for gen ed and special ed teachers in structured literacy- OG, Wilson, Heggerty, and Lindamood Bell Programs been taken into account?	See #55 for information about structured literacy training for special education teachers. CS This will not impact any training we would need to engage in for general education. Over the past few years we have already been making shifts outlined by the recommendations in the Right to Read Act that we do not already have in place. Some of these include expanding our instruction in foundational skills through the implementation of Fundations, a multisensory structured language program in grades PreK-2, three years ago, which included intensive full-year training from a Wilson specialist. We have also begun the implementation of the Heggerty resources to support instruction in phonemic awareness in K-2 and will be working with our preschool program in the near future. This work has included professional learning regarding supporting the development of phoneme awareness. We are very fortunate to have highly trained literacy specialists and instructional coaches who are consistently supporting and building the capacity of our classroom teachers to meet the needs of our students. We have also worked closely with consultants over the years such as Margie Gillis who is working closely with leaders at the state level.

			Our Literacy Specialists and Instructional Coaches are also trained in one or more of the following: Wilson Reading, Just Words, LiPS, Seeing Stars, and Visualizing and Verbalizing to support the needs of students. MR
55.	KD	Follow-up from #52: Have programs such as Verbalizing and Visual, LIPS, Seeing Stars, Talkies, SPIRE (list is not inclusive of other programs), been considered as resources to support curriculum and Tiered Interventions and Special Education (thinking Science of Reading)?	Yes. Over the past few years, we have prioritized professional learning/training funds in special education to improve our capacity to provide evidence-based reading interventions. We have also taken advantage of CSDE training offerings in structured literacy, which are free for employees of public schools. We have special education teachers trained in one or more of the following in every building: Wilson Reading, Just Words, LiPS, Seeing Stars, and Visualizing and Verbalizing. In addition, our district speech-language pathologists are in the process of being trained to implement Visualizing and Verbalizing; they have also engaged in professional learning regarding supporting the development of phoneme awareness. Notably, last year 12 of our special education teachers completed an Orton-Gillingham introductory training offered by CSDE/SERC. As we have some students who do require OG instruction, one of our most highly trained special education teachers will be pursuing OG certification this summer. CS
56.	CM	What are the implications if we do not hire the additional SPED teacher?	Special education services are mandated. If we are not able to provide needed services to students to make appropriate educational progress, we run the risk of students requiring compensatory services or outplacements. CS

57.	CM	I know we are constantly looking at the current inventory of technology but has any forecasting been done based on future needs and is there any plan to begin increasing those with our growing enrollment?	We have created a 5-year cycle of replacement of student devices that ensures all devices are operational and supported for instruction and testing. New purchases are based on enrollment numbers and include a loaner pool. Loaner devices are reallocated to newly enrolled students as needed and the loaner pool is refreshed from Chromebooks coming out of service with some usable life. We are fortunate that the staff devices, which would have been an expense to the operating budget, were purchased with ESSER fundings. Our regular cycle allows for loaners. We have used this pool to absorb the increase in enrollment. We have utilized devices that have come out of the cycle to absorb the cost of repairs, which is done in-house. We include all of our devices (boards, servers, laptops, desktops, network infrastructure) into our forecast and adjust accordingly based on our needs at the time. Our current needs are met but we are going to have to plan for the future replacement of new equipment acquired through the renovations and ESSER purchases. DB, DA
58.	CC	Can you provide the overview of increased FTE's from year to year? It seems confusing.	403.03 to 405.33 1.0 BCBA 1.0 New SPED Teacher for RS .12 BHS Art (2 semesters of additional section of Art at BHS) .12 BHS Business (2 semesters of additional section of Business at BHS) .06 JS 3rd Grade Strings
59.	CC	What is the latest news on health insurance CT Partnership 2.0?	A letter was received by both the State and Siegel to increase the budget to 8% due to a recent analysis of the claims rates. Our budget currently is budgeted at 6%. The difference between both is $162.467