

Bethel Board of Education Regular Meeting - Budget Workshop

Tuesday, January 23, 2024 7:00 PM

Board of Education Conference Room E, Live Stream:

<http://devos2.bethel.k12.ct.us/show?video=763ff4de0370> Materials can be viewed at: <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Organization/2425> The opportunity for members of the public wishing to make comments can attend and comment in-person or may send public comments to the Board via email or letter and it will be included as part of the record of the meeting., 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 - Schools/Athletics

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 2024-2025 BUDGET Q & A
January 23, 25, and 30, 2024 & February 1, 2024

#	Name - Initials	Question(s)	Answer(s)
January 23, 2024 - Schools/Athletics			
1.	SC/KD/ JLarsen/JA	Since funding has ended for the position, has the SEL Coach been reallocated?	<p>Yes. The SEL Coach will go into a teaching position that he is certified to teach. We have an opening. CC</p> <p>EI support for schools will continue in the form of coordination of programming, PL planning, and support for data collection and analysis. An EI Coach stipend will be added to this year's IDEA grant proposal. CS</p>
2.	SC/BF	I noticed various fluctuations in leases for copiers (line 44442)? For example, BHS is at an 18% increase, Johnson is at a 16% increase and Rockwell and central office are at -13% and -44%. Why?	Based on usage needs and the age of our copiers we have realigned the machines on our lease. For example, we reduced a copier at the Central Office and upgraded machines at BHS and Johnson School. The charges per building were updated to reflect the current usage. The total budget for the copier lease is flat from year to year.
3.	SC/KD	BHS has a 100% increase in line 7302 for furniture from \$8k to \$16K	It actually is a total of \$15,000. Part of the increase is due to the replacement of desks and chairs through normal wear and tear. The other expense is a light tower for the band to practice. The light tower was \$5,000. It is more cost-effective to buy the tower as opposed to renting it year to year. The rental of these lights is approximately \$2,000 per year.
4.	SC	During the initial presentation back in early January, Dr. Carver discussed PA 23-137 and the \$257,693 in additional spending which totaled \$444, 559. Do we have a total	We are not projecting any out-of-district placements for 22-year-old students in 2024-2025. However, for next year and every year going forward, we will have approximately 2-5 additional students per year at our high school and/or enrolled in transition programs. We have accounted for these students in our staffing request. CS

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		increase for next year?	
5.	SC	In the 460 account, is snow plowing included in the lawn care and maintenance?	No. Snow plowing is taken care of by the town. They pay for the cost. Lawn care includes the mowing of all areas around the schools, mulching, and tree/limb removal for those areas. CC
6.	SC	Are there any immediate items in building maintenance that we should use the unexpended funds for?	The purpose of the funds by written agreement with the Board of Finance is for emergencies and opportunities. The funds should not be used for the maintenance of the schools. We are also concerned regarding the funding levels of the account if we have an emergency. We have used the unexpended account when there was an emergency (boilers at Bethel Middle School).
7.	BF	The increase in the recently approved substitute rate is just over 18%. Please explain the budgeted increase of 25.45%.	In the past, we were charging some of the Building Substitute Salaries to the ESSER grant. We are now planning for that spending in our operating budget.
8.	BF/ JLarsen	Please explain the large decrease in out-of-town transportation.	The overall transportation budget has been increased 3% per our transportation contract. Funds were moved from the out-of-town to the in-town line as the majority of our transportation is in town. We are running the same number of buses, only the allocation of the expense changes from year to year based on the number of students being transported to the VoAg and VoTech schools. Also, in the past, we were responsible for transporting students to both Shepaug and Nonnewaug as well as Abbott Tech. We are only busing students to Shepaug and Abbott Tech now.
9.	BF/SC	Please explain the HS school's increase in coaches and advisors. Is some part of the increase due to new out-of-season allowed practices If yes how much and how was that	No. The increase is not related to out-of-season practices. We had to add an Assistant Coach in Softball due to numbers and Title IX. This coach was added a few years ago, but the stipend was not adjusted. The rest is an adjustment based on actual spending.

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		<p>calculated?</p> <p>Line 1510. BHS has a 4.69% increase in coaches totaling a little more than \$17k. Is the increase the result of a contractual increase or are we offering additional programming?</p>	<p>The budget does not include any additional sports teams. It maintains all of our current athletic programs.</p>
10.	BF	<p>How much of the budgeted amount for this year for medical insurance has already been expended? What would be the best guess as to how much will be spent? If less has the remainder been already reallocated? where?</p>	<p>The budgeted amount for this year’s medical insurance that was spent is approximately 50%, or \$4,089,195. Any savings will be spent on facilities overages and technology.</p>
11.	KD	<p>Please explain the 70% increase in textbooks for BHS.</p>	<p>Online licenses for textbooks in Social Studies. It is the online subscription for AP US History and AP Euro. The renewal is up. It is also a replacement for books that are lost and damaged and books to meet course demands.</p>
12.	KD	<p>Is the cost for the 6-8 ELA program accounted for in this budget?</p>	<p>There will be no cost associated with this budget. All core materials have been purchased in the current budget using Title Grant funding.</p>
13.	KD	<p>Berry School shows an increase in tutors, conference registration fees, printing, Prof.Development/Travel/Mileage/Dues/Fees, Equipment-tech, Library Books and Periodicals. Please explain.</p>	<p>Berry’s school budget remains flat. Funds were reduced in some areas to allow for increases in other areas. For example, there were reductions in the literacy budget due to the new literacy library and program. There is more in special education instructional supplies due to the new class. There was an increase in the library budget to align resources to Project Based Inquiry (PBI) within reading program research.</p>
14.	KD	<p>Johnson has increases in School monitors, custodians-overtime, conference fees, Prof Development,</p>	<p>We needed to add an additional lunch monitor at Johnson after we consolidated from 7 lunch waves to 5, which resulted in larger lunch sizes.</p>

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		<p>Tech Supplies, ,other supplies, and equipment-technology. Please explain.</p> <p>Please also explain for Rockwell as I see similar increases.</p>	<p>Custodian overtime was increased to reflect actual spending trends and the contractual wage increase.</p>
15.	SC	<p>Where can members of the public review all of the documents contained in the budget book?</p>	<p>We publish on our Financial Dashboard the budget summary and the object codes. We also publish all presentations.</p>
16.	SC	<p>Slide 15: If I am understanding correctly, there are 28 students with disabilities currently in COF that can't move on to K because of their age and dates of birth and 32 typical peer students who also can't move to K for the same reason. Because of this we are running a 4 year old classroom and a transition K program. What is the breakdown of the 60 students between the two programs? Obviously, other districts are going to have the same challenge for their typical peers not old enough for K. Are other districts offering similar programs? Also, do we have people with the appropriate certification to drop to pre-k special ed? Are we confident that we won't have an influx of students between now and next year that would necessitate</p>	<p>Correct. There are 28 students with disabilities that would need programming for full day four year olds. 14 of those 28 have Fall birthdays. So, we would have space for 30-32 typical peers to meet the 50% ratio of typicals to students with disabilities. Our optimal class size for preschool is 14 students, given the age of students and developmental needs. We have elementary teachers who are certified to teach preschool and would relocate them based on their certification and contractual language.</p> <p>There is always a possibility of an influx of Kindergarten students. It is a challenge we have every year. Based on an analysis of enrollment trends and students with Fall birthdays, we feel we are in good shape. We have some flexibility with 2nd grade if we find we have to move teachers, because currently the first grade class is small.</p>

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		additional K classes?																					
17.	SC/BF/JA	Slide 16: Berry school first grade enrollment projected of 112 students divided by 5 is 22.4. 21 students is listed as the class size.	<p>There was an error in my calculation. I will fix the slide. CC</p> <p>It is important to note that all students with significant disabilities (in self-contained programs) are assigned a general education classroom, but they spend a variable amount of time in the general education setting based on their individual needs. For example, a student may be included in the classroom for snack time. If a student does go into the class, they are supported by another adult. Projected caseload information for self-contained programs next year is listed below. CS</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School- Grade</th> <th># students with Significant Disabilities</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Berry- K</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Berry- 1</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Berry- 2</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rockwell- K</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rockwell- 1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rockwell- 2</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Johnson- 3</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Johnson- 4</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Johnson- 5</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	School- Grade	# students with Significant Disabilities	Berry- K	10	Berry- 1	10	Berry- 2	12	Rockwell- K	9	Rockwell- 1	2	Rockwell- 2	4	Johnson- 3	12	Johnson- 4	13	Johnson- 5	10
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18.	SC/KD/ JLarsen	Line 1215 Johnson School. There is an 86% increase in School Monitors? Why such a large increase?	<p>We needed to add an additional lunch monitor at Johnson after we consolidated from 7 lunch waves to 5, which resulted in larger lunch sizes, requiring more supervision of students.</p> <p>To accomplish this, we transferred the lunch monitors from BMS to JS because with the new MS schedule, teachers perform the duties.</p> <p>Overall, Lunch Monitors are reduced by a very small amount.</p>
19.	SC/KD	Line 6901 Johnson School. Why is there a 45% increase in “other supplies?”	The increase in other supplies is to cover the increasing cost of custodial supplies.
20.	SC	What is the total cost to implement our new reading program? Where are these costs reflected in the annual budget?	<p>There is no impact on the budget. The total cost of the program was \$620,745.13. The program was funded through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Right to Read Grant: \$103,000 ● ARP ESSER: \$517,745
21.	JLarsen/ KD/ JA	Looking at the increase in overtime spending for custodians across all schools would it not be more cost effective to hire another custodian?	We considered this. The majority of Custodian overtime is from staffing weekend events and snow removal. Adding an additional custodian would eliminate a portion of the overtime expense, but not all of the overtime. At this point it is still more cost effective to use an overtime model.
22.	JLarsen/ JA	Please explain how we only have 2 new positions in certified staff added to budget but BHS has increase 84.77 to 87.53 BMS 60.62 to 62.54 Berry decrease 33.60 to 33.30 Johnson decrease 49.41 to 49.21 Rockwell 26.05 to 26.55	<p>The overall change in certified staff FTEs from the 23 - 24 budget to the proposed 24 -25 budget is 4.38. The proposed budget includes a new elementary special education teacher and a new MLL/Literacy specialist .</p> <p>This year, we made the following shifts. 1 special education teacher was added at the beginning of the year as a result of moving the position out of ARP ESSER and into the operating budget. Additionally, funds were reallocated from the other staff line to fund a special education teacher at BHS.</p> <p>The remaining 0.38 reflects fluctuations in teachers who teach an additional class</p>

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			(per contractual obligations). The FTEs have been rebalanced by school to reflect the current needs of our students and teacher assignments.
23.	JLarsen/JA	Please explain the tutor line being zero at BHS and BMS	This is because the BHS and BMS tutors are charged to the systemwide tutoring line and not the schools.