

Bethel Board of Education Special Meeting Budget Workshop - Schools/Athletics

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 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

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#	Name - Initials	Question(s)	Answer(s)
February 3, 2026 - Schools/Athletics			
1.	JMG	3302 What kind of PD is planned?	Our district Professional Learning (PL) plan is created through our district PL Council which is composed of educators and administrators from various departments and from each of the buildings. Our PL plan is aligned to our district strategic plan and theory of action and often includes choice sessions for our educators. Our educators have a voice in what they need and it is grounded using data and feedback. PL can range from learning strategies for an upcoming unit of study, to learning about how to use generative AI safely and responsibly in the classroom, to calibrating around a performance task, and understanding assessment results and planning for instructional needs (this is not an exhaustive list).
2.	JMG	5301 Communications I understand. What does “research” involve?	We pay for services that allow students to do research such as Gale Cengage, Infobase (Facts on File), CultureGrams, JSTOR, Rosen Teen Health & Wellness, Discovery Video, Capstone Press, ImageQuest, and Encyclopedia Britannica. These resources provide reliable, peer reviewed materials for students.
3.	JMG	6110 I was glad to hear teachers are turning to copying pdfs, which means relying less on textbooks. Can we encourage more teachers	We use a range of resources in our classrooms, including open educational resources. Most of the textbooks used are required for AP/ECE courses at the high school. Students have shared that having a physical textbook is helpful to them.

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		to rely less on textbooks?	
4.	BF JL	1215 Please explain the large increase in School Monitors at RS, BS and JS.	Funding for two part time security monitors was added at the high school in this line. Also, the elementary schools have increased the use of lunch and recess monitors for the 2025-2026 school year. This was partially due to a reduction in special teachers for this year, who used to cover recess. This was a shift to more cost efficient resources. The total amount of the increase is related to a slight increase in lunch/recess monitors. If you subtract the cost of the security positions (below), then the remaining dollar amount is to cover the salaries of the additional monitors.
5.	BF	1215 Is the number listed at BHS for security monitor for two people. If yes, is there a reduction somewhere in salaries for the present position?	Currently a building substitute is manning the front desk at the high school. Funding for that position was removed from the budget. The total variance for that line is \$109,708. The total cost of the two security staff at Bethel High School is \$65,000. This is a non benefited position.
6.	BF	Please provide the percentage of next year's budget taken up by 1) medical/dental insurance 2) SPED (teachers (salaries and benefits), paras (salaries and benefits), out of district placements, SPED transportation 3) multilingual teachers (salaries and benefits as well as other associated costs). Please also provide for 5 years ago and 10 years ago if readily	Special Education, Health & MLL Spending Trends

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		available.	
7.	BF KD BR	Self-insurance was briefly considered last year but was dropped at that time due to time constraints to put the necessary information together. We have now had a full year to adequately explore that option. I would hope and expect we are very close to discussing that option. Are we? A larger pool of participants provides for lowered costs. Will town employees participate? If not, why not?	<p>We have a preliminary quote for a self insured model, that appears to be more cost effective than continuing with a fully insured policy. We expect to have a final quote in April after February claims data is available. A decision will be made at that time, but it looks highly likely that we will be shifting to a self funded model.</p> <p>The town has not yet made decisions about healthcare next year. We will continue to work with them on the most cost effective options for both the town and the BOE.</p>
8.	BF KD LS JL BR	We all know there were a large number of positions and other items that were lost this year due to budget cuts. As presented some have been budgeted back in the proposed budget. Please provide a list of all items budgeted back as well as a list of items lost this year that have not been budgeted back.	<p>Only the school psychologist, \$44,561 for replacement of aging technology in district, \$39,350 for supply line increases and some funding for Conferences, Travel & Dues & Fees were added back to the budget.</p> <p>Items not added back include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 Circle of Friends Preschool teachers ● 1 Elementary Classroom teacher ● 4 Elementary Specials Teachers (Art, PE Teacher, Music, Computer Science) ● 1 Middle School Elective Teacher ● 1 High School Special Education Teacher ● 1 HS Science Teacher ● 2.5 Instructional Coaches - were completely eliminated. We

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			<p>transitioned as Curriculum Integration Specialist 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 custodian ● 0.5 Nurse ● 1 Part time IT Tech Support Specialist ● 1 Special Services Secretary ● Please see the linked memo for additional information.
9.	GH	1218 / 1320- custodian overtime - Is overtime needed because there isn't enough staff to do the necessary duties? If there isn't enough staff, would it be more cost-effective to hire additional staff or pay existing staff overtime for the additional work?	<p>The majority of custodian overtime is driven by work on Saturdays and Sundays and snow removal. Our current level of staffing does not allow us to cover all sections of the buildings when someone is on vacation or absent. Due to budget constraints we are reducing cleaning services instead of paying overtime when possible.</p>
10.	GH	1215 School Monitors - SW - Salary - Security Monitors: What type of situations have other districts experienced that the HS is trying to avoid? What sort of training will the security monitors need/receive? Will it include anti-bias and de-escalation strategies?	<p>After school hours and in transition times, there are a variety of situations that warrant the additional staff, with sometimes hundreds of students that are unsupervised. They include, but are not limited to, vaping, discourage mean behavior (afterschool), threatening behavior, vandalism, and unauthorized people in buildings.</p> <p>We would provide training in restorative practices. We would also work with our SRO's and Tyler Stevens on building security protocols. We would also provide them with Physical Management Training or PMT, which focuses on de-escalation strategies. Anti-bias training is always a part of our initial training. Please remember, we are not requesting armed</p>

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			security guards, but to the extent that they have security background would be helpful.
11.	GH	1230 Contingency - SW - Salary - How is this used?	The Contingency line is less than 0.3% of the operating budget. This is where funds are budgeted for salary increases that have not been negotiated yet. This year we are negotiating with the secretaries union, the nurses association and a new superintendent. This also includes increases of the non union employees, which the Board typically determines in June.
12.	GH	1310 Substitute Teachers - SW - Please explain the increase?	<p>We use a building sub model in our district to provide consistency and allows us to fill absent positions easier than attempting to get a daily sub. The expense of a building sub is slightly more; however, it is a need since it is difficult to get substitutes.</p> <p>In 2024-2025 expenditures for substitute teachers exceeded \$1M. We are trending to spend \$1M in 2025-2026. The increase is to bring the budget in line with historical spending. We anticipate needing to increase substitute pay when the minimum wage is increased next January.</p> <p>This line also includes the reduction of the front desk monitor at BHS.</p>
13.	GH	3000 - PURCHASED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - Please describe the services rendered for the following services: 3101 Purch. Serv. - Fiscal 3301 Curriculum & Tech Empl Training	<p>Purchased Services Fiscal includes services for unemployment claims processing, Payroll software system support and eRate administration services.</p> <p>Curriculum and Technology Employee Training includes funding for Advanced Placement (AP) training for teachers and when we bring an expert in to work with our staff.</p> <p>Special Education Employee Training includes funding for required training</p>

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		<p>3301 Special Ed Empl Training 3302 Professional Development 3401 Prof. Technical Services</p>	<p>(for example, PMT training in de-escalation and physical management strategies) as well as training in instructional techniques that are aligned with department needs or goals.</p> <p>Professional Development includes funding for teachers to attend out of district professional workshops.</p> <p>Professional Technology Services includes our offsite data backup services.</p>
14.	GH	<p>5000 - OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES - Please describe the services rendered for the following services:</p> <p>5301 - Communication and research services 5601 Tuition - Regular Ed - Public 5800 - professional development/travel/mileage</p>	<p>Communication and research services include fees for telephone service, internet connections as well as research materials and services for students (see above).</p> <p>Tuition - Regular Ed Public includes funding for Bethel students who attend magnet schools such as the Shepaug Agriscience School and the AIS Magnet School in Danbury. We are legally required to pay this.</p> <p>When employees drive to out of district professional development workshops we reimburse them at the IRS mileage rate.</p>
15.	GH, KD	<p>8100 - What do the various Dues & Fees cover?</p> <p>CO Dues and Fees: Why the increase? Is this due to the cuts in dues and fees from the 25-26 budget? Are they being reinstated?</p>	<p>Dues and Fees cover memberships to professional organizations such as CAFE. More details are listed on the Dues and Fees page of the Superintendent's Budget Presentation. Belonging to these organizations are critical. They provide us opportunities for professional learning, policy updates, and legislative advocacy.</p> <p>The increases are modest. The total increase across all of the organizations is \$10,056. We are not adding new dues and fees, it is for the existing</p>

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			organizations.
16.	LS	1210 With the addition of 2 FTE Tutors, please explain where they will be and what their focus will be on.	The tutors are already on board and were previously funded by grants, which have been mostly flat funded. They provide literacy, math and multilingual intervention. Tutors also provide for homebound instruction and for students that are expelled. We have always run over on the tutor budget and need to correct for that.
17.	KD	3302 Please explain the increase in Conference registration fees. What conferences are attended?	We have been delaying professional learning in order to reduce expenses. Conferences attended include, but are not limited to, Associated Teachers of Mathematics in CT (ATOMIC), Connecticut Reading Association (CRA), Tier 1 instructional strategies, music, art, and PE conferences. In addition to the operating budget, we also use Title II grants to pay for professional learning.
18.	KD	6113 Please explain the increase in General Supplies: Sports and Clubs	Uniform replacement Volleyball, Boys and Girls Basketball, Softball It also includes equipment replacement.
19.	LS	5100/5103 District Transportation has a minor increase but St Mary's transport increased 3%. Please explain why one increased more than the other.	Overall, the district transportation lines are up 3% per the increase in our bus contract. 5100 is up 3%.
20.	KD JL	1210/1510 Berry School/Johnson: What are the roles of the tutors? Why the increase? What coaches and advisors were cut?	There is no increase or decrease in tutors. There is a shift in how we are paying our tutors who were previously paid for by grants. Tutors work under the direction of our math, literacy, and ESL specialists.

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		<p>1210 Johnson: Why the decrease in tutors?</p> <p>Rockwell: Why such an increase in tutors?</p>	<p>They support our intervention programming in the district.</p> <p>In our last budget we had to cut 2.5 Instructional Coaches. The 3 remaining Instructional Coaches transitioned into a new role, Curriculum Integration Specialists.</p> <p>JS eliminated stipends for Yearbook and TV Studio. Yearbook is now being managed by PTO and the TV studio is during the day.</p> <p>MS reduced stipends (Dance Team, Math League, Robotics League, and Year Book Advisor)</p> <p>BHS eliminated Key Club.</p>
21.	LS,& SC	<p>7302 Middle School - please explain the increase in furniture and fixtures</p> <p>7302. What furniture needs to be replaced for 22.89% increase in spending at BHS, 153% increase at BMS, 20% increase at JES,</p>	<p>At BMS the increase is a need to replace broken desks and chairs, which date back to the renovation.</p> <p>At BHS, they try to buy a classroom replacement per year to address broken furniture. In addition, there is library furniture at BHS that needs to be replaced.</p> <p>At Johnson School, they also need to replace broken furniture and filing cabinets. This increase is only \$200.00.</p>
22.	LS	6901 Rockwell - please explain the increase in Other Supplies	This is an increase in the cost of custodial supplies.
23.	KD JL	4442 Why increase in copier leases?	We have transitioned away from preprinted workbooks and textbooks. Instead we are printing more resources for students which has resulted in

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		6901: Why increase in Other supplies: fiscal services	<p>increased copying fees and paper expenses.</p> <p>Other supplies fiscal services include an allowance for incurred debt associated with unpaid school meal balances.</p>
24.	LS	2210.903.1221 Other Staff - Summer School. Please explain what was eliminated here.	We have transitioned to a self funding summer school model for regular education (HS Credit recovery). The summer school coordinator stipend will be paid for via student fees to attend summer school.
25.	JL	2500.101.2600 I see a large decrease in unemployment compensation. Can you explain how this will work?	The 2025-2026 budget included an increase in unemployment due to budget related staff reductions. We are able to decrease this line for 2026-2027 as we do not anticipate the same level of staff reductions.
26.	JL	2310.101.1217 Can you explain the staff increase in Nurse-SW-Health Services?	The total number of nurses is staying flat at 7.5. Funding has been reallocated from BHS to SW nurses for the float nurse, who works across multiple schools. This line also includes funding for ESY nurse support.
27.	JL	1100.101.1310 Are building substitutes part of this line?	Yes
28.	JL	On the secretary lines across schools I see increases and decreases without the number of staff changing can you explain?	In 2025-2026 We reduced 1 special education secretary and redistributed assignments. The corresponding budget updates across the schools are incorporated in the 2026-2027 proposal.
29.	SC	3201. What “professional educational services” at BHS totaling \$41,000?	Professional education services at BHS includes EdAdvance (health care internships) and Virtual High School.