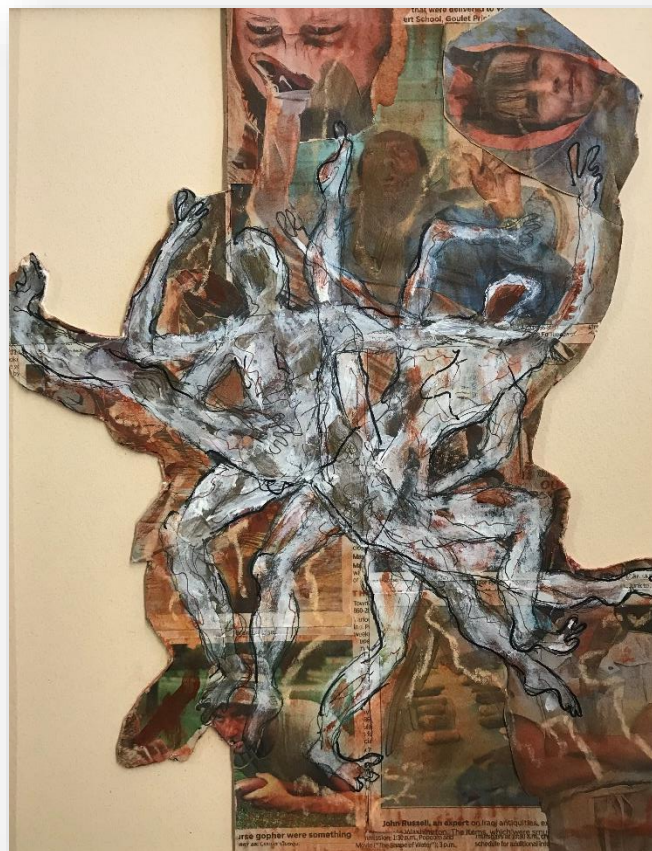


Wolcott Public Schools

2019-2020 Board of Education's Proposed Budget



Gabby Fazzino, Grade 11



Grace Stearns, Grade 11

Tony Gasper, Ed.D., Superintendent

Lori Delbuono-Bartlett, BOE Chairman

Todd Bendtsen, CPA, Business Manager

Vision of the Graduate:

THE WOLCOTT PUBLIC SCHOOLS GRADUATE:

TAKES A PROACTIVE AND SELF-DIRECTED APPROACH TO LEARNING.

- Is willing and capable of improving upon past performance.
- Demonstrates the ability to learn and adapt to new environments and challenges.
- Shows intellectual curiosity.
- Makes connections in their ongoing learning across content areas.
- Sets personal goals and can implement strategies to achieve them.
- Perseveres in the face of adversity and challenge.
- Uses current technologies in ethical and effective ways.

ENGAGES IN AND CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.

- Shows a tolerance for difference, empathy, and a willingness to defend the rights of others.
- Demonstrates a true commitment to civic involvement and responsibility.
- Demonstrates employability skills and self-confidence.
- Can have a respectful and productive disagreement or debate.

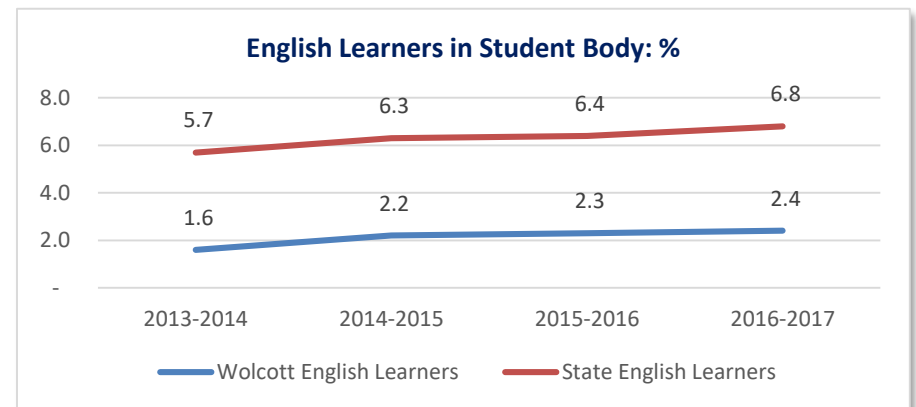
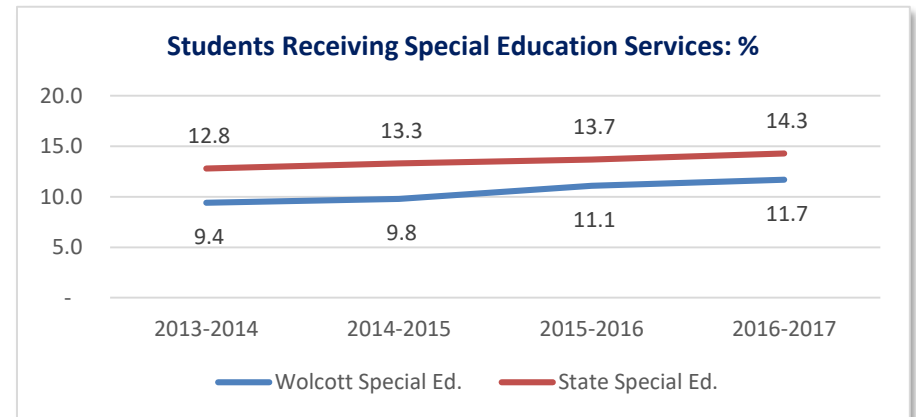
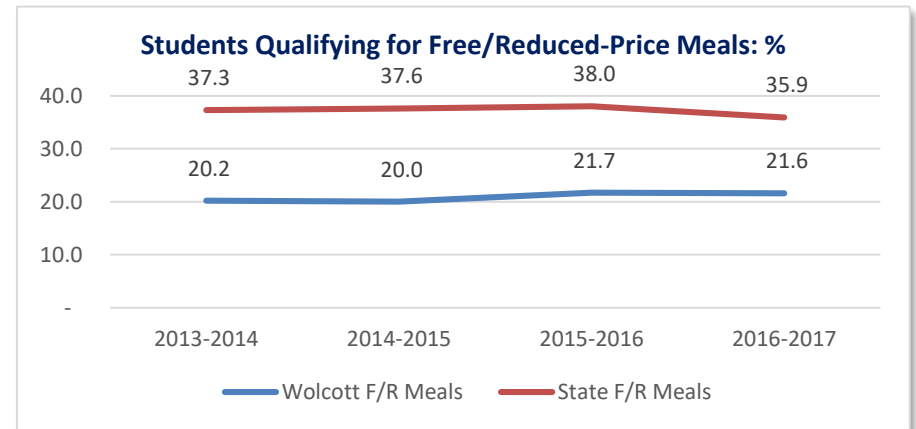
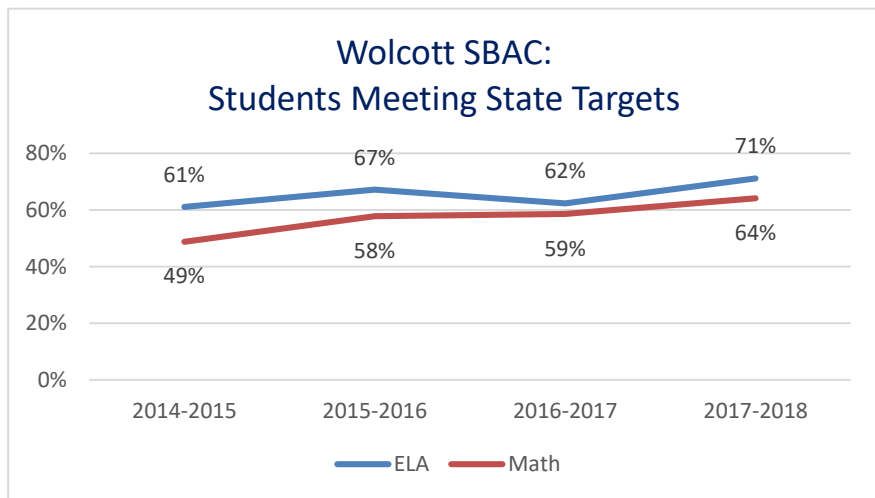
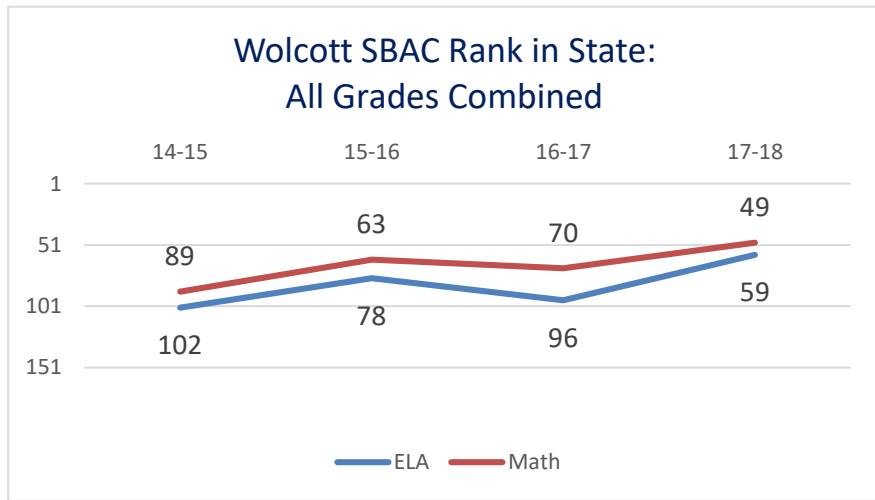
DEMONSTRATES CRITICAL CORE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.

- Can read, view, understand and communicate complex topics across multiple subject areas.
- Can form hypotheses, select and implement strategies, execute formulas, and check work to solve problems.
- Shows an appreciation of the role of the arts across world cultures.
- Understands how current events and historical concepts impact the present and future.
- Possesses skills that support independent and responsible living.

Budget Priorities: 2019-2020

- INVEST STRATEGICALLY IN INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL, RESOURCES, AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF TEACHERS IN SUPPORT OF THE BOARD'S VISION OF THE GRADUATE: We are beginning to implement the Board's Vision of the Graduate and to ensure that Wolcott's children and teachers have up-to-date resources in the classroom is an ongoing need. All programs have proposed strategic projects in support of the Board's Vision of the Graduate.
- MAINTAIN WORKABLE CLASS SIZES THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM: We propose to continue using teaching and paraprofessional staff in efficient ways to maintain appropriate student-to-adult ratios.
- MAINTAIN A HIGH LEVEL OF SERVICES TO SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND IN SCHOOL COUNSELING: As was seen in the past three years, this budget continues the district's commitment to serving students with special needs and to all students' social-emotional development. As our data have shown, the need for mental health professionals continues to rise even while overall enrollment continues to slip. In addition this year, I propose the addition of a teacher of TESOL to address our growing English-learner population – now at 67 students district-wide.
- BUDGET EFFICIENTLY FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE: As our buildings and grounds continue to age, substantial costs are involved with maintaining and updating aging equipment and facilities. We have strong concerns about the short-term maintenance and long-term viability of our facilities.
- ACHIEVE ALL OF THE ABOVE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY: Wolcott remains one of the lowest-funded school districts on a per-pupil basis but with one of the greatest returns on investment. *The overall increase requested in this budget is less than the total of our contractual obligations and mandatory special education cost increases.*

Where we stand: In the most recent round of state testing (SBAC), Wolcott schools have shown significant growth and advancement. The growth we have seen in these scores has moved our rankings from slightly below the state median to nearing the top quartile. WPS students now rank on par or ahead of several more affluent districts in Connecticut. This improvement has happened while the demographics of the town and school system continue to change.



Celebrations...

- Student academic performance in grades K-8 continues to improve as measured on our internal (i-Ready) and external (state SBAC) assessments with year-on-year, cohort, and four-year trend all showing improvement.
- Our state-wide ranking on SBAC performance has risen 40 and 43 places over four years on Math and ELA respectively. We now outperform many districts that are much more affluent than Wolcott.
- Student academic performance at WHS continues to improve with the school being recognized on the AP Honor Roll by the College Board and ranked in the Top 10 in the state for number of students taking UCONN-credit coursework.
- WHS students have been named to the Connecticut Music Educators Association all-state choir.
- Student athletics continue to perform well with WHS Dance recently winning the NVL title.
- Our annual financial audits continually result in no findings of improper methods or areas in need of improvement.
- Preliminary NEASC accreditation report for WHS commends the hard work of our maintenance and custodial staff saying *"The building and facilities are exceptionally clean. The efforts of the custodians and maintenance personnel disguise deficiencies in the building infrastructure..."*

and Struggles

- We struggle to fund and attract sufficient staff for academic support for those students who need it; especially at the middle and high school levels.
- We struggle to support the mental-health needs of all of our students; especially at the elementary and middle levels in which we have only one social worker for four schools. This leaves these professionals to predominantly only focus on counseling services required by special education and 504 plans.
- We struggle to update our curriculum documents in a timely way due to the lack of district-wide paid personnel to engage in this process regularly. The preliminary NEASC accreditation report for WHS states *"...the school lacks vertically and horizontally articulated curricula as evidenced by the lack of content-specific grade 6-12 coordinators in the district."*
- Our buildings and facilities continue be of concern across the district. During strong rain storms and snow melt, all buildings experience substantial roof leaks. Infrastructure systems such as electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and data are quickly becoming obsolete and their maintenance is a drain on the Board's budget and personnel. From the WHS preliminary NEASC accreditation report: *"Electrical and plumbing systems are antiquated and not able to support current demands. The roof leaks in a number of places as evidenced by stained ceiling tile throughout the building. There are visible cracks in the brick façade of the building and water infiltration in a number of places due to the need to replace flashing and re-point the bricks."*
- Our English-Learner population is growing (currently at 67 students) and we struggle to assign qualified staff to address these students' needs.

WPS Return on Investment: *

When comparing dollars invested to overall performance on state tests, WPS fares very well in return on investment. While ranking second overall (163 districts) in the State, WPS ranks first in our District Reference Group (17 districts).

RANK	ROI: \$ PER ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX PERCENTAGE POINT	DISTRICT
1	\$ 168.67	Ellington
2	\$ 169.39	Wolcott
3	\$ 173.75	Cromwell
4	\$ 177.84	Rocky Hill
5	\$ 178.27	Danbury
6	\$ 183.61	Brookfield
7	\$ 183.76	Regional District 10
8	\$ 183.98	Woodstock
9	\$ 184.05	Southington
10	\$ 185.79	Shelton
*		
82	\$ 276.06	RSD 7 - State Median
*		
154	\$ 524.05	Hampton
155	\$ 532.65	Regional District 11
156	\$ 532.99	North Canaan
157	\$ 538.70	Hartford
158	\$ 546.76	Kent
159	\$ 548.68	Regional District 01
160	\$ 587.44	Regional District 12
161	\$ 593.58	Canaan
162	\$ 811.88	Cornwall
163	\$ 859.08	Sharon

*ROI = Per-pupil funding divided each district's Accountability Index as calculated by the Connecticut State Department of Education

Comparing Resources & Investment in Education:

This year, Wolcott ranks 156th in per-pupil spending on education. WPS remains one of the lowest-funded school districts in the state. However, there is a disparity between Wolcott's ability to pay and its actual investment in its schools.

SPENDING RANK	PER-STUDENT SPENDING	DISTRICT	AENGLC RANK "ABILITY TO PAY"
1	\$ 42,009.12	Sharon	13
2	\$ 35,123.29	Cornwall	14
3	\$ 30,243.06	Regional Dist. 12	7
4	\$ 29,674.67	Canaan	40
5	\$ 26,104.89	Kent	33
6	\$ 25,077.46	Hampton	127
7	\$ 24,678.68	Regional Dist. 6	31
8	\$ 24,131.41	Westbrook	25
9	\$ 23,017.79	Salisbury	9
10	\$ 22,979.56	Norfolk	27
*			
82	\$ 17,413.48	Stonington - State Median	35
*			
154	\$ 14,409.57	Plainfield	152
155	\$ 14,275.00	West Haven	159
156	\$ 14,104.66	Wolcott	124
157	\$ 13,780.60	East Hartford	160
158	\$ 13,731.79	Ellington	95
159	\$ 13,730.73	Meriden	156
160	\$ 13,689.08	Bridgeport	165
161	\$ 13,663.83	Woodstock	109
162	\$ 13,058.85	New Britain	166
163	\$ 12,899.45	Danbury	125

*Point of interest: In order for Wolcott Public Schools to arrive at the statewide median level of funding, approximately \$7,450,000 would need to be added to our budget allocation. (State median per-student spending minus Wolcott's spending, multiplied by 2,253 students)

Strategic Investments:

Enhance School Security: Add photo identification scanners to all school security desks. Add and upgrade security cameras district-wide. Add a security vestibule to WHS main entrance. *(Recommended by 2018 School Safety Committee)*

Improve Mental Health Services: Add a school psychologist to mental health staff currently serving grades K-5. *(Recommended by 2018 School Safety Committee)*

Improve Services to English Learners: Assign a current certified staff member to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) district-wide. No net increase in FTE.

Improve Curriculum Alignment and Delivery in Math: Increase one 0.45 math interventionist to 1.0 to include curriculum/content coaching in job responsibilities. *(Recommended in WHS NEASC preliminary accreditation report)*

Continue Commitment to Student and Classroom Technology: As current devices age they need replacement. Continue planned expansion toward one-to-one computing for students.

Better Support Early Literacy Learning: As we did with the Envision series for math, invest in a modern resource for literacy in grades K-2.

Modernize the Alcott Library: Invest in up-to-date technology and furniture to improve student experience and teacher desire to utilize library resources.

Support Team-Building at Frisbie: Train and support teachers in team-building as outlined in the Vision of the Graduate.

Improve Wakelee Computer Lab: Upgrade the lab facilities from traditional desktop lab to a “maker space” in which students can improve problem-solving and hypothesis-testing skills as outlined in the Vision of the Graduate.

Add Academic Clubs at TMS: Support the request for peer-tutoring club and coding club.

Modernize Outdated Curriculum Documents: Implement a summer writing academy to renovate curriculum documents in need of attention. *(Recommended in WHS NEASC preliminary accreditation report)*

Expand Student Access to Academic Support at WHS: Add opportunities for students to visit with math teachers for support. *(Recommended in WHS NEASC preliminary accreditation report)*

Implement Innovative Student Scheduling at WHS: Invest in “Enriching Students” software to allow students and teachers to self-schedule flex time supports.

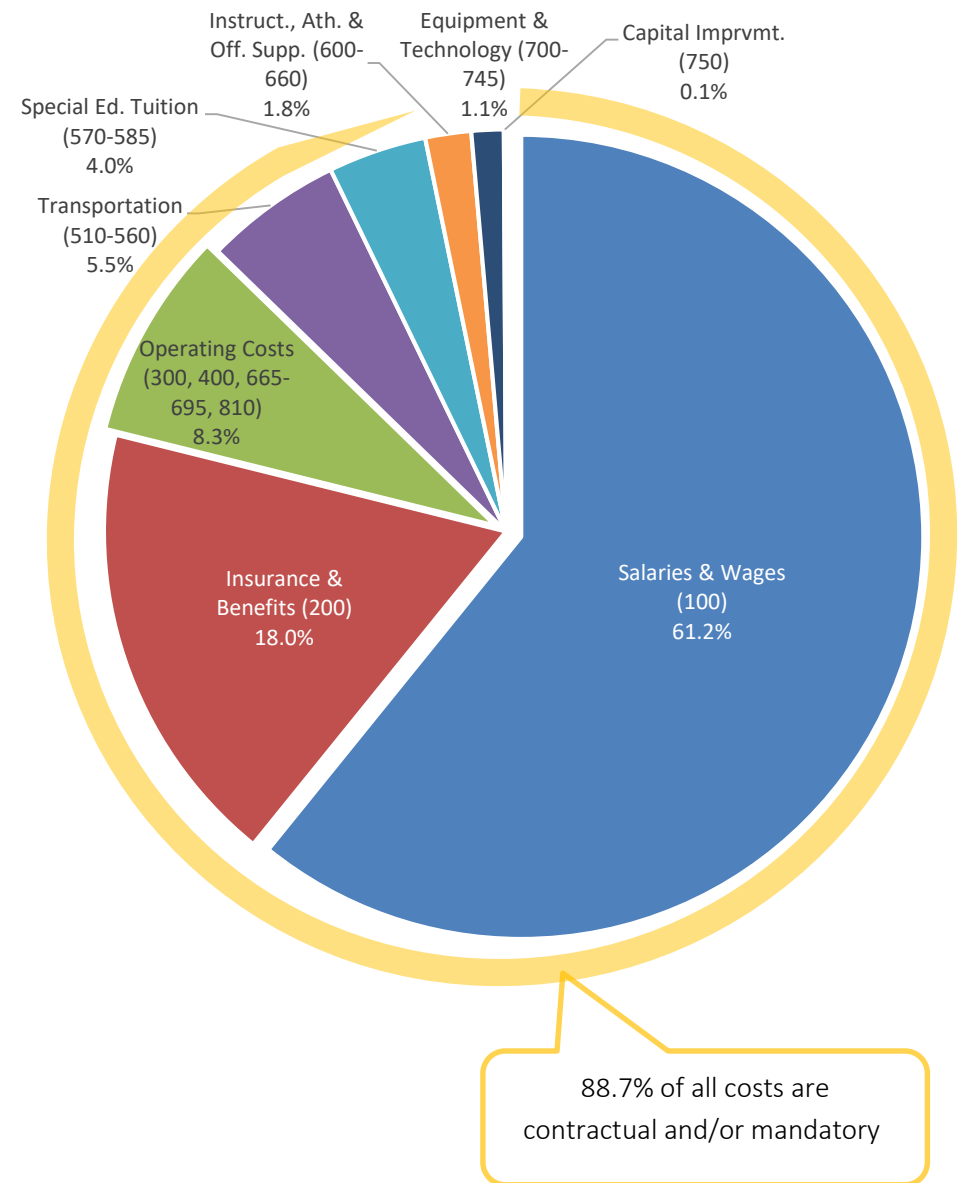
Summary of Budget Expenditures:

As is typical, the majority of the Board's budget is dedicated to salaries, wages, and benefits. Connected to this, the majority of the proposed increases for the 2018-2019 budget year are directly connected to contractual obligations in these lines. An analysis of the overall budget shows that 88.7% of all costs are contractual and/or legally mandatory in nature.

The following table and chart demonstrate the expenditures reorganized for easier understanding – uniting some budget object codes into more meaningful groups.

Major Cost Centers	
Salaries & Wages (100)	\$21,757,798
Insurance & Benefits (200)	\$6,403,477
Operating Costs (300, 400, 665-695, 810)	\$2,963,717
Transportation (510-560)	\$1,971,870
Special Ed. Tuition (570-585)	\$1,408,631
Instruct., Ath. & Off. Supplies. (600-660)	\$656,363
Equipment & Technology (700-745)	\$395,975
Capital Improvement (750)	\$31,200

Summary Budget Expenditures: Percent of Budget

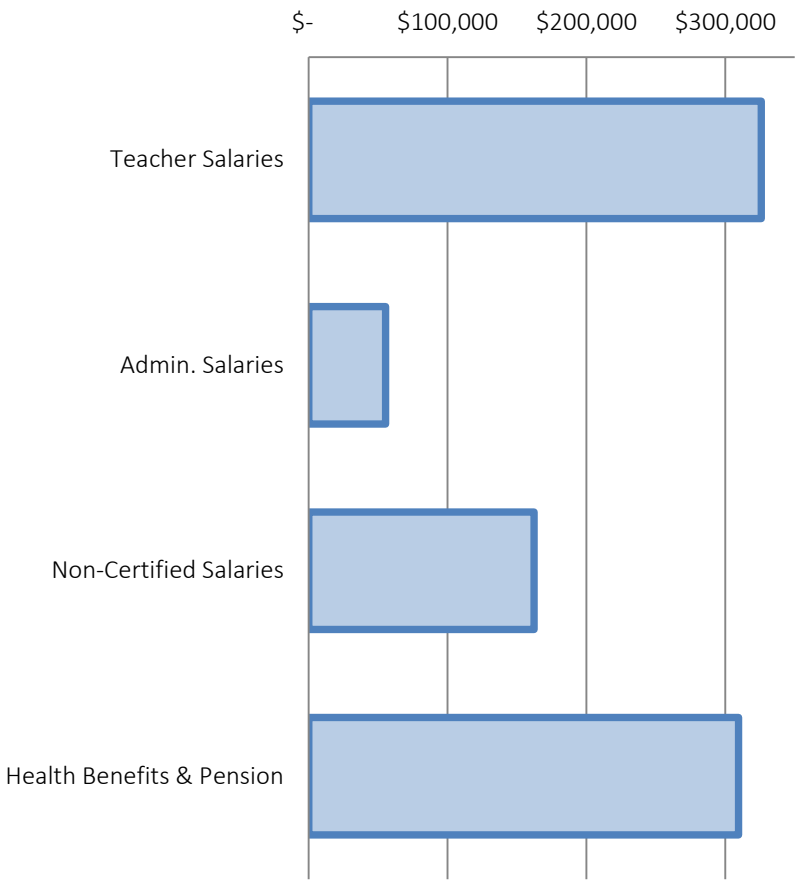


Contractual Cost Changes

Increases in teacher salaries have been kept to a minimum because lesser-paid faculty now replaces highly paid teachers that were shown in last year’s budget. The budget includes an additional school psychologist to address mental health needs and a TESOL teacher at the elementary schools. Also included is an additional teacher to reduce elementary class sizes.

While the district continues to move more employees to high-deductible health care plans, our costs continue to rise moderately.

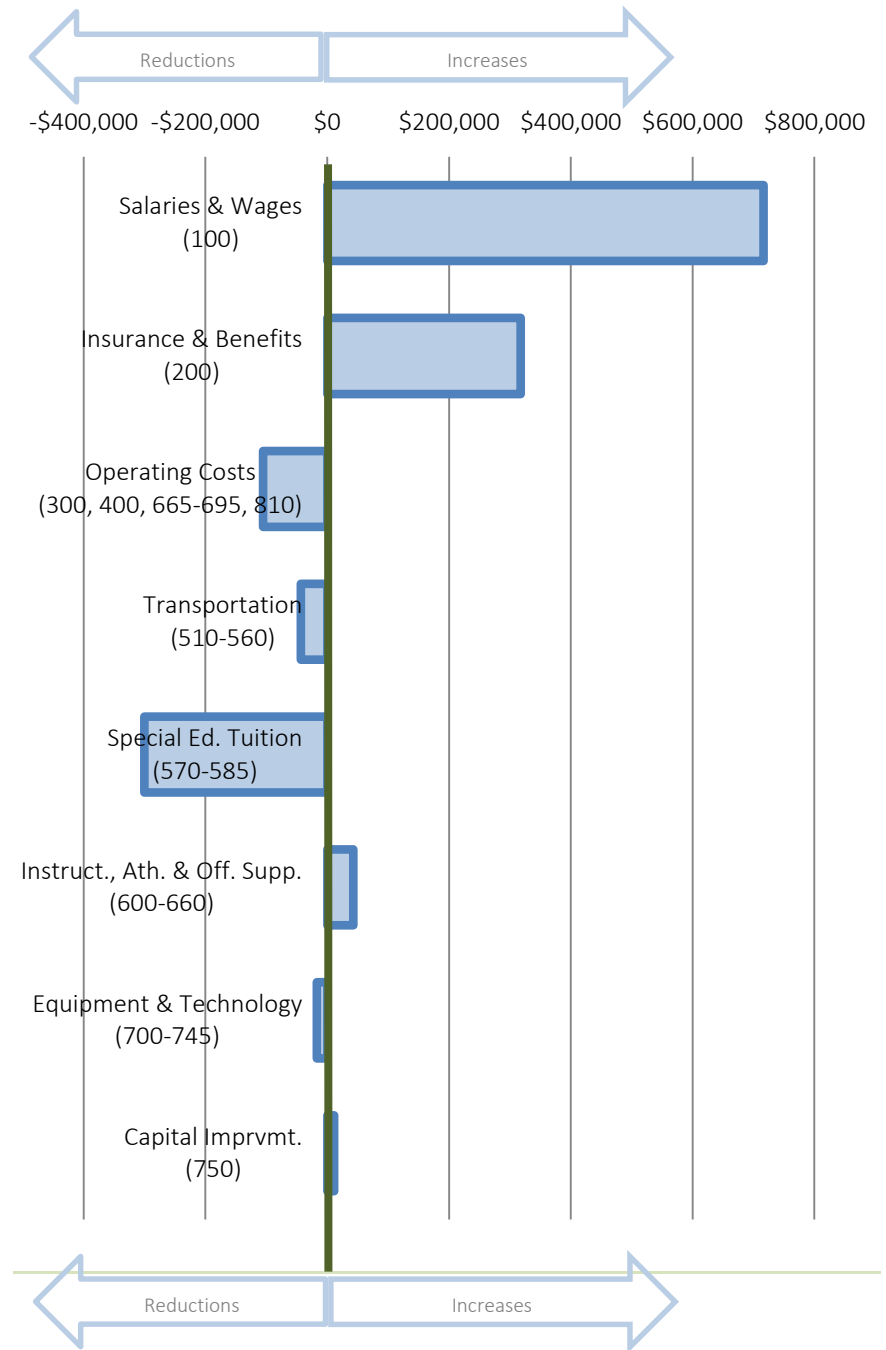
Contractual Cost Changes	
Teacher Salaries	\$ 325,865
Admin. Salaries	\$ 55,500
Non-Certified Salaries	\$ 162,256
Health Benefits & Pension	\$ 309,509
	\$ 853,130



Overall Cost Changes

A look at overall cost changes shows several efforts to reduce expenditures wherever possible. In a break from the trend of recent years, special education tuition costs are down. As we have presented in previous years, these are the most unpredictable costs that are also legally mandated according to the educational plans for a small number of our students. Thanks to fewer outplacements and a new contract structure for our special education transportation contract, we are able to reduce costs in transportation as well. Despite over \$450,000 in cost reductions, these savings are not able to fully overcome contractual and insurance cost increases.

Overall Budget	Net Change
Salaries & Wages (100)	\$716,566
Insurance & Benefits (200)	\$317,648
Operating Costs (300, 400, 665-695, 810)	-\$105,203
Transportation (510-560)	-\$43,261
Special Ed. Tuition (570-585)	-\$300,542
Instruct., Ath. & Off. Supp. (600-660)	\$43,006
Equipment & Technology (700-745)	\$-17,101
Capital Imprvmt. (750)	\$11,250
	\$622,363
	1.78%



Student Enrollment

As is true with the majority of Connecticut's public school districts, Wolcott continues to see a slow, steady decline in student enrollment. (*Projected)

Grade	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*
K	132	143	148	139	132
1	126	146	143	150	141
2	138	128	144	152	151
3	154	147	133	151	155
4	149	160	152	138	154
5	181	152	162	160	140
6	183	199	168	182	178
7	189	188	204	173	182
8	232	193	190	208	173
9	200	206	174	161	200
10	187	203	210	177	161
11	193	182	200	208	177
12	221	191	182	208	208
Total	2,285	2,238	2,210	2,207	2,152

Connected to this, the school system seeks to keep class sizes at a workable level while budgeting in a fiscally responsible way. (*Projected)

Staffing Changes	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*
Elementary School Faculty	64.35	62.95	60.95	61.5
Middle School Faculty	50	49.7	49.7	49.7
High School Faculty	65	64.7	64.1	64.1
Special Education Faculty	34	35	35	36
School Administrators	8	8	8	8
District Admin. / Directors	7	6.625	6.625	6.625
Non-certified Instruct. Staff	46.85	52.1	63	63
Secretarial / Nursing	16	16	16	16
Maintenance / Custodial	22	22	22	22
Technology Staff	2	2	2	2

Efforts to Control Cost Increases

As always, our focus in preparing this budget has been on providing students with high-quality educational experiences while spending in the most efficient way possible. To this end, the following methods were used to control costs.

- All principals and department leaders were asked to thoroughly examine all budget requests and to prioritize them as appropriate.
- Examine all special education programming for efficiency while still providing appropriate services. Thanks to prudent, appropriate planning by our Special Education department, outplacement costs are expected to decline next year.
- We continue to participate in consortium a consortium fuel oil.
- The conversion of Tyrrell Middle School from fuel oil to natural gas is expected to reduce costs again for next year.

Budget Summary

2018-2019 Board of Education approved budget:	\$34,966,668
2019-2020 Contractual cost changes:	\$760,130
2019-2020 Net reductions	-\$137,767
2019-2020 Proposed Budget:	\$35,589,031
Budget increase dollars:	\$622,363
Budget increase percentage:	1.78%

Notable Changes in Object Lines District-wide

The following is a summary of changes of note by object code.

#104, Teacher Salaries: Costs here are governed by the recently ratified four-year contract with the union. (+\$238,940: +1.70%)

#107, Psychologist Salaries: Increased caused by the hire of a new school psychologist that would be split among the elementary schools. (+74,488: +20.02%)

#113, Tutor Wages: The number of students who are on specialized, homebound instructional programs has risen. Additionally, grant monies previously funded this line are no longer available. (+\$44,791: +63.8%)

#114, Aide Wages: With an increase in the number of students who need intensive, specialized support, so rises our need to hire staff in this area. These students are those receiving special education and also students learning English. Additional aides also address class size needs at FES. (+\$114,208: 13.78%)

#201, Health Benefits: Despite prudent management, the experience in our pool combined with industry-wide prevailing increases, this line must be increased to maintain the recommended fund balance. (+\$255,948: +5.83%)

#350, Leases & Maintenance: We have completed all leases for desktop computers. These machines are still in very useable order and another new contract is not needed for the coming year. (-\$6,971: -3.97%)

#390, Staff Development: While we still hold the need for staff development in high priority, this increase only partially restores cuts that were made in last year's budget. (+\$17,525: 28.38%)

#450, Purchased Services: While this line shows an increase, it would have been a decrease of \$3,959 had the Town not decided to discontinue in-kind services of lawn mowing at BOE properties. This service was put out to bid for 2019-2020 with the lowest bid being \$42,510. Previously, none of this cost was borne by the BOE. (+\$38,551: +8.39%)

#510, Transportation: Although per-bus costs will increase according to the service contract that is in place, we continue to plan efficiently; reducing the total number of buses where necessary and prudent. (-\$67,664: -3.76%)

#570 & #585 Tuition to Public and Private LEAs: In a break from recent trends, we predict having fewer students at outplacements for the coming school year. (-\$300,542: -17.58%)

#615, Instructional Supplies: This increase only partially restores the cuts that were made in last year's budget after the budget process finished. (+\$35,444: +10.29%)

#675, Electricity: Conservation efforts continue. (-\$14,704: -2.72%)

#720, Technology Equipment: This line was strongly cut last year. This increase only partially restores investment to previous levels. (+\$2,693: +24.06%)

#735, #740, & 750 Equipment: Partially restores important purchases that were delayed last year. (+\$16,036: +38.1%)