

WOLCOTT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent's Proposed Budget: 2021-2022



Student art projects

Tony Gasper, Ed.D., Superintendent

Cynthia Mancini, BOE Chairman

Todd Bendtsen, CPA, Business Manager

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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.

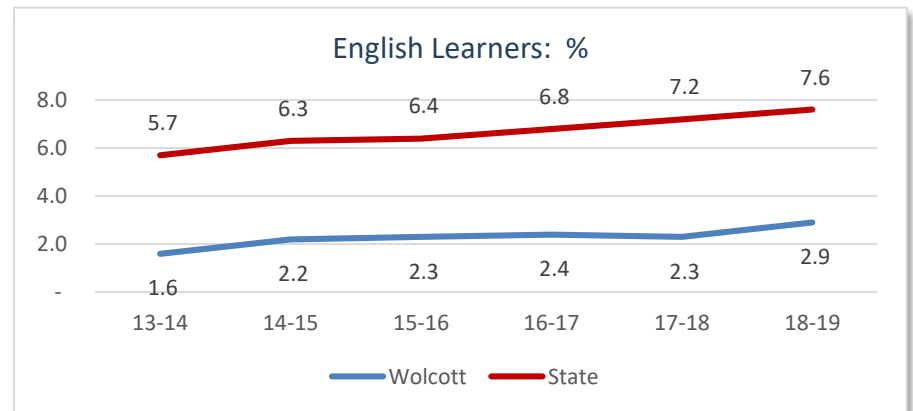
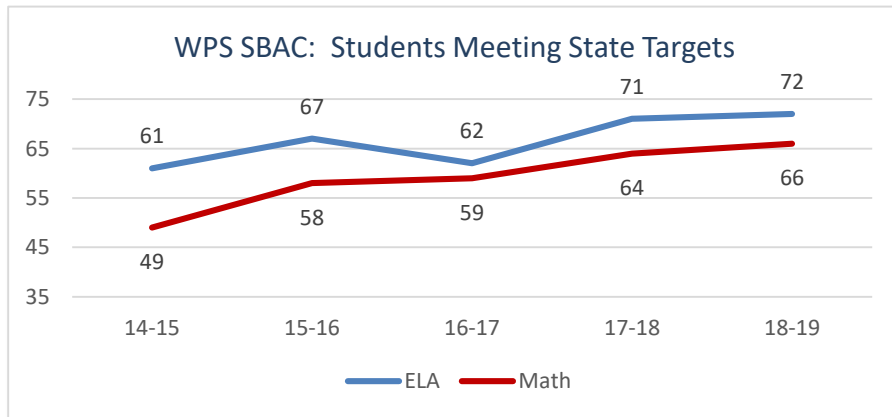
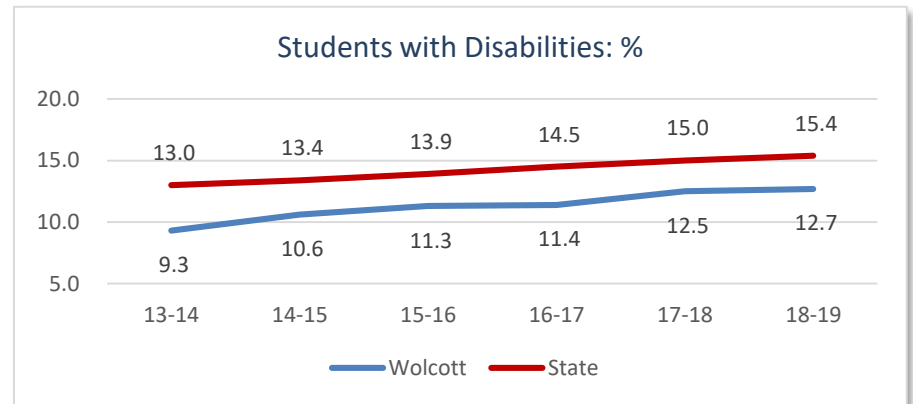
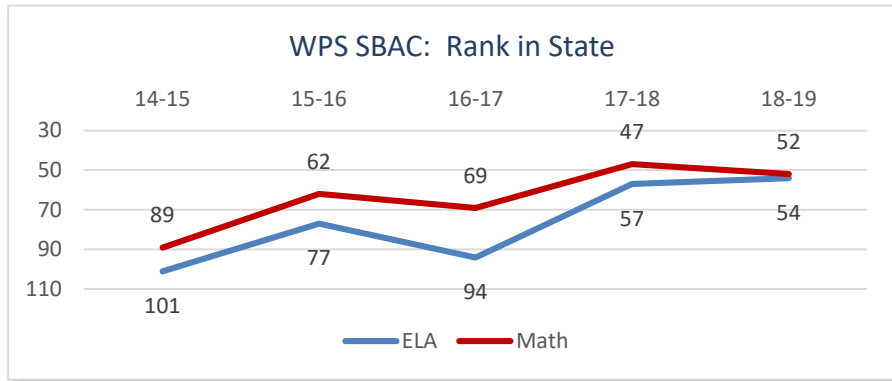
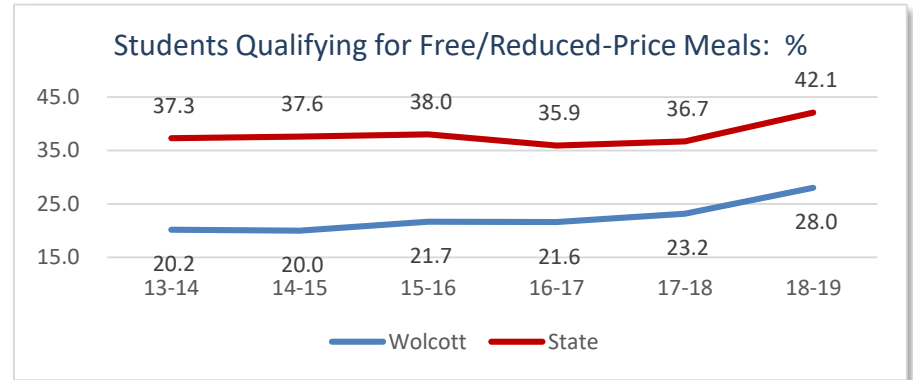
DEMONSTRATES CRITICAL CORE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.

- 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.

Superintendent's Budget Priorities: 2021-2022

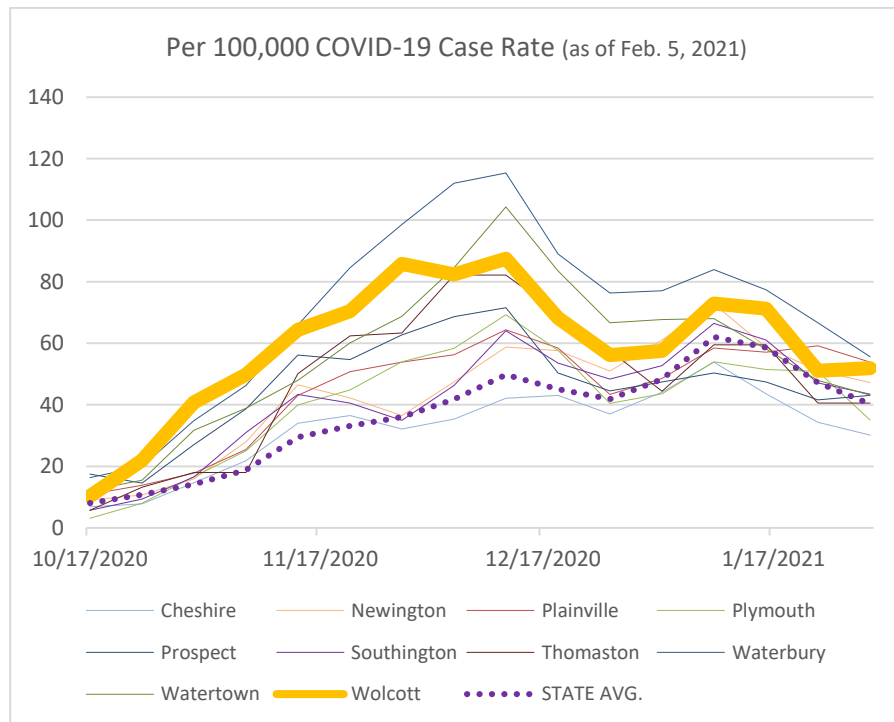
- INVEST STRATEGICALLY IN INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL, RESOURCES, AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF TEACHERS IN SUPPORT OF THE BOARD'S VISION OF THE GRADUATE: We continue to implement the Board's Vision of the Graduate and to ensure that Wolcott's children and teachers have up-to-date resources in the classroom is an ongoing need. All programs have proposed 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: Wolcott has continued to experience increases in the percentage of students needing specialized instruction. One way in which we have provided for these needs is by continuing to increase the number of paraprofessionals providing services to identified students.
- 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 (160th of 166) but with one of the greatest returns on investment.

Where we Stand: In the most recent round of state testing (SBAC), Wolcott schools have continued to show growth and advancement. The growth we have seen in these scores has moved our rankings from slightly below the state median (in 2014-15) to nearing the top quartile. WPS students now rank on par or ahead of several more affluent districts in Connecticut. We now outperform districts such as Shelton, West Hartford, Litchfield, and Madison. This improvement has happened while the demographics of the town and school system have continued to change. (source: [CT EdSight](#))



The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the School System and our Ongoing Response:

For the context of this budget plan, it is important to remember that Wolcott experienced a much stronger impact of the COVID-19 pandemic than did most surrounding towns. The chart below shows the per-100,000 case rate over time for the state average, selected surrounding towns, and for our community. (source: [CT Open Data Portal](#))



As a school system that employs 437 people, many of whom live in town, each and every confirmed case has a broad impact beyond just the person infected. Nearly every case caused other students and adults to quarantine. This caused the school system to constantly adjust and evolve as we attempted to maintain as much in-person learning as possible. Any key decision regarding in-person learning was done in consultation with

Chesprocott Health District. Despite the heavier impact on our community, Wolcott Public Schools offered more in-person learning than many other school districts that were much less impacted than we. (source: [CT EdSight](#))

Our Pandemic Response in Service to Wolcott's Children:

- Planning for the school year involved our START team of over 30 stakeholders including parents, Chesprocott Health, and staff members from all bargaining groups.
- The Board of Education approved key policy changes to support the work of schools.
- The Board of Education approved a one-year increase in substitute teacher pay which successfully attracted a higher number of applicants.
- School nurses are to be commended for their hard work in contact tracing. To support their work, the Board of Education approved the one-year appointment of three nursing aides shared across the five schools.
- Teachers, school counselors, and administrators have made innumerable phone calls, virtual meetings, and home visits to support student engagement.
- Additional custodial shifts are used to constantly circulate to sanitize touch points and ensure that cafeterias are ready for each lunch wave.
- Additional Latchkey services are provided to lessen the impact on parents when schools have Flex days.
- Students who have fallen behind on assignments are given flexibility to complete this work while also holding them accountable for the work.
- After-hours tutoring by teachers and student peers is being provided to students identified as struggling academically. (MS & HS currently, ES upcoming)
- A variety of check-ins by our counseling and mental health staff for students who become disconnected from school.
- Evening virtual programs will be offered to teach parents skills to support elementary reading and math in the home.
- The Summer Studies 2021 program will be specifically designed to help students with academic loss due to the pandemic.

Federal Pandemic Recovery Funding (ESSER):

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) entitlement funds will provide the school district with the opportunity to address student needs related to the pandemic and help us to minimize the impact that these enhanced services would otherwise place on the local taxpayer. These funds must be used for services and resources for COVID-19 response and recovery as outlined by the State of Connecticut. They may not be used to offset normal operating costs. (Source: [CT.gov](https://www.ct.gov))

In the first round of funding (\$198,698), the bulk of these funds were used to fund our program to give students access to meals. Additionally, plastic shields for classrooms and cafeterias were purchased along with HVAC supplies, technology supplies, and PPE.

The second round of funding to Connecticut school districts is much greater (\$880,939 for Wolcott) to be spent over the next two years. With input from families, staff members, school and district leaders we've compiled a thorough plan to address the near-term needs of Wolcott's children.

Addressing social and emotional health:

- Implement district-wide training over two years for Mental Health First Aid ([National Council for Behavioral Health](https://www.nationalcouncilonbehavioralhealth.org/)) to help staff members become better attuned to students' emotional state and needs.
- Implement a district-wide approach to school and classroom climate (such as Yale University's [RULER](https://www.yale.edu/ruler) program) so students and staff members can share a common vocabulary and conversations.

Increasing staffing for academic interventions:

- Add 1.0 FTE reading intervention teacher to be shared among elementary schools.
- Elevate two current part-time elementary mathematics intervention teachers to full-time and equitably redistribute these resources across elementary schools.
- Add 1.0 FTE mathematics intervention teacher to Tyrrell Middle School.
- Add 1.0 FTE mathematics intervention teacher to Wolcott High School in place of separate teachers teaching an extra class.

INTERVENTIONIST STAFFING IN FTE:

	AES (260)	FES (276)	WES (375)	TMS (545)	WHS (707)
Current ELA	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0
Current Math	0.675	0.675	1.0	1.0	1.0
2021-23 ELA	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.0	2.0
2021-23 Math	1.0	1.0	1.45	2.0	1.0

(student enrollment)

Training and resources to support effective instruction:

- Training on intensive literacy methods for special education teachers and literacy specialists
- Google Educator Level 1 training for all teachers
- Learning software licenses to support one-to-one Chromebooks

Targeted instructional time and assessment:

- Academics-focused summer studies program that is free-of-charge and targeted firstly at those students in greatest need of academic support for success in the coming grade level
- Institute Fontus and Pinell reading assessments for all elementary school students to gauge specific literacy learning needs (one year only).

School safety:

- Purchase food-safe cleaning solutions to make sanitizing cafeterias between lunch waves more efficient and effective.

WPS Return on Investment:

When comparing dollars invested to overall performance on state tests, WPS fairs very well in return on investment. While ranking fourth overall (166 districts) in the State, WPS ranks first in our District Reference Group (17 districts). (Source: [CT-SDE Fiscal Services](#))

ROI RANK	DISTRICT	DOLLARS PER PERCENTAGE POINT OF SBAC ELA
1	Cheshire	\$ 199.93
2	Southington	\$ 203.81
3	Rocky Hill	\$ 203.87
4	Wolcott	\$ 204.23
5	Ellington	\$ 206.36
6	Trumbull	\$ 207.99
7	Farmington	\$ 210.34
8	North Stonington	\$ 211.00
9	Shelton	\$ 212.51
10	Granby	\$ 213.07
	<i>Deep River – Median</i>	\$ 282.89
156	Windham	\$ 516.38
157	Regional District 9	\$ 518.73
158	New Haven	\$ 525.12
159	Bloomfield	\$ 526.16
160	Waterbury	\$ 529.64
161	Bridgeport	\$ 536.39
162	Newington	\$ 552.03
163	Sharon	\$ 574.00
164	East Windsor	\$ 575.41
165	New Britain	\$ 662.52
166	Hartford	\$ 809.71

***ROI** = Per-pupil funding divided by the percentage of students who met or exceeded state target in ELA in 2019

Comparing Resources & Investment in Education:

This year, Wolcott ranks 160th (of 166) 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. (Source: [CT-SDE Fiscal Services](#))

SPENDING RANK	PER-PUPIL SPENDING	DISTRICT	ABILITY TO PAY RANK (AENGLC)
1	\$ 41,996	Sharon	10
2	\$ 35,464	Cornwall	15
3	\$ 33,028	Canaan	26
4	\$ 32,016	RSD - 12	8
5	\$ 30,066	RSD - 1	39
6	\$ 28,782	Kent	29
7	\$ 26,764	Salisbury	8
8	\$ 26,672	Hampton	125
9	\$ 26,242	Westbrook	22
10	\$ 25,971	Norfolk	36
84	\$ 18,234	<i>North Branford – Median</i>	99
157	\$ 15,256	Naugatuck	155
158	\$ 15,127	Woodstock	111
159	\$ 15,112	Shelton	59
160	\$ 15,020	Wolcott	132
161	\$ 14,905	West Haven	160
162	\$ 14,609	Ellington	101
163	\$ 13,872	New Britain	166
164	\$ 13,794	East Hartford	142
165	\$ 13,714	Meriden	158
166	\$ 12,772	Danbury	124

Points of interest:

*WPS's overall budget is \$6,996,975 (21.4%) behind the state median.

*WPS's overall budget is \$3,301,650 (10.1%) behind 132nd ranked Tolland (adjusted for district enrollment).

Comparing Resources & Investment in Education:

To give context the level at which Wolcott funds its schools, the following comparison is offered. For the analysis, Wolcott's per-pupil spending (\$15,020) is subtracted each district's amount. This difference is then multiplied by the Wolcott student enrollment (2,197). This illustrates the amount that would be added to the WPS budget "catch up" to the other district while controlling for district size. (Source: [CT-SDE Fiscal Services](#))

TOWN	PER-PUPIL SCHOOL SPENDING	DOLLARS NEEDED FOR WOLCOTT TO "CATCH UP"
Wolcott	\$15,020	
Southington	\$15,548	\$1,160,016
Waterbury	\$15,567	\$1,201,759
Bristol	\$15,802	\$1,718,054
Thomaston	\$16,243	\$2,686,931
Plymouth	\$16,404	\$3,040,648
RSD - 16	\$16,791	\$3,890,887
Watertown	\$16,878	\$4,082,026
Cheshire	\$17,086	\$4,539,002
Plainville	\$17,324	\$5,061,888
Newington	\$17,744	\$5,984,628
State median	\$19,577	\$7,067,749
State average	\$19,295	\$9,392,175

(adjusted for district enrollment)

Strategic Investments for BOE Consideration:

(These costs not already included in this budget)

Administrative support for WES: Cost - \$148,004. With the addition of a fourth section of Kindergarten at WES, several key staffing ratios are now far out of balance for this school. Adding an assistant principal will afford more time to the principal to support teachers and programming.



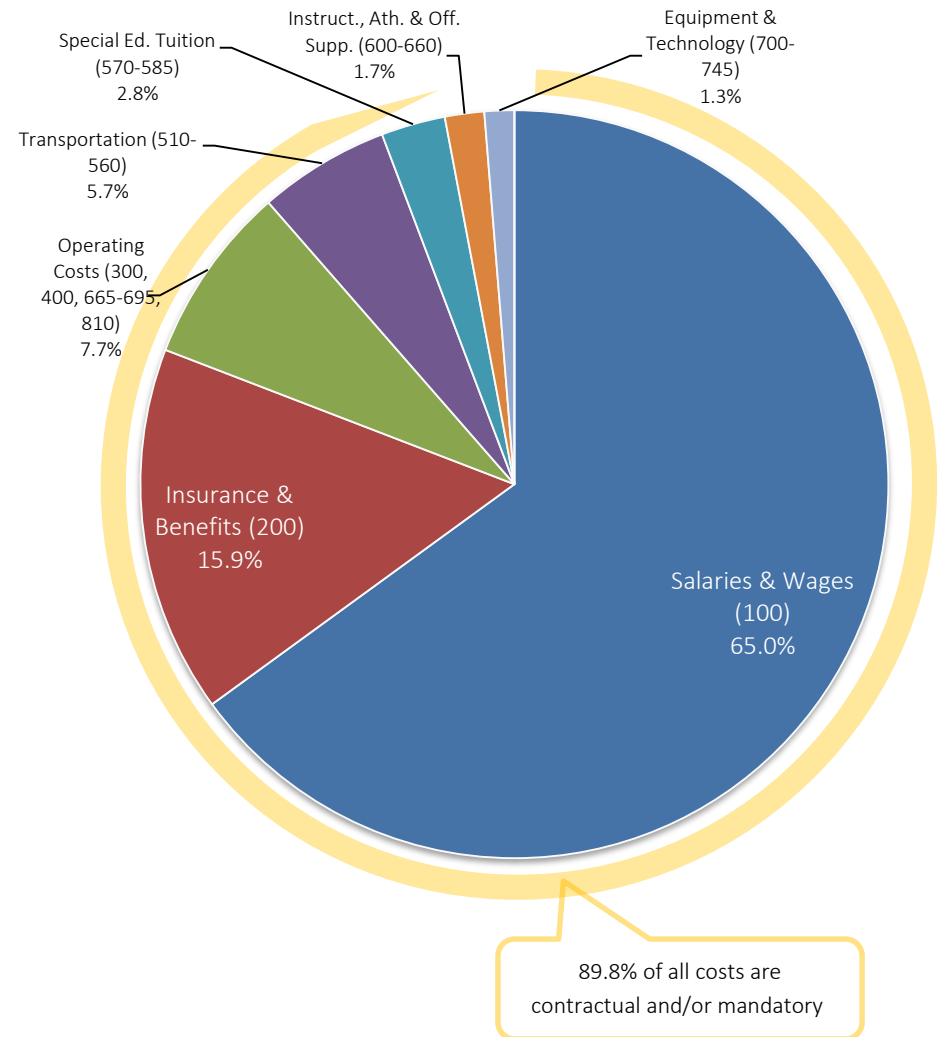
Summary of Budget Expenditures:

As is typical, the majority of the Board's budget is dedicated to salaries, wages, and benefits. An analysis of the overall budget shows that 88.6% 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)	\$23,124,727
Insurance & Benefits (200)	\$5,644,230
Operating Costs (300, 400, 665-695, 810)	\$2,749,896
Transportation (510-560)	\$2,016,421
Special Ed. Tuition (570-585)	\$986,938
Instructional, Athletic, & Office Supplies. (600-660)	\$604,371
Equipment & Technology (700-745)	\$457,443
Capital Improvement (750)	\$0

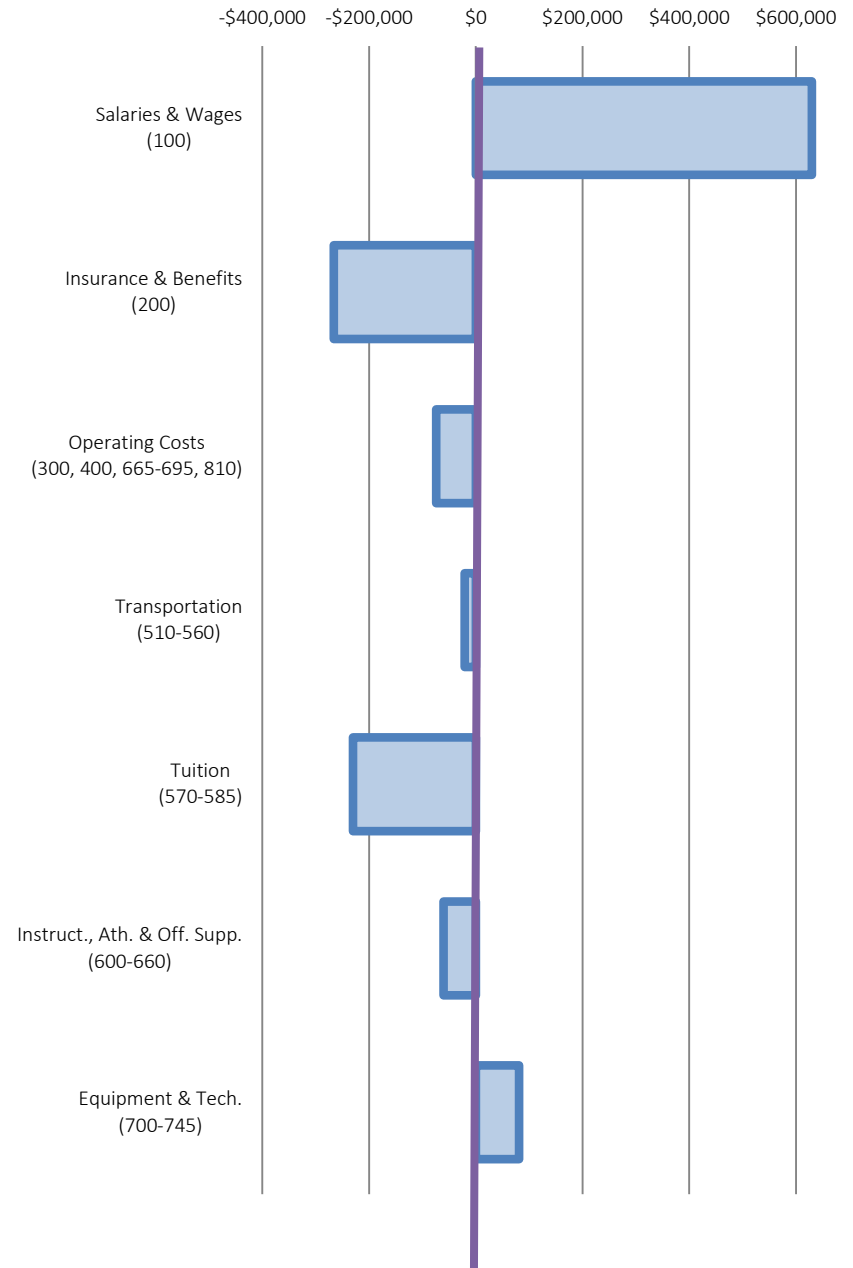
Summary Budget Expenditures: Percent of Budget



Overall Cost Changes

A look at overall cost changes shows several efforts to reduce expenditures wherever possible. Prudent planning helps us reduce special education outplacement costs for the third year in a row. This budget line is particularly volatile, however, depending on students that may move into or out of town. Salaries here show an increase. Part of this increase reflects the superintendent's recommendations for strategic investments in additional classroom personnel.

Overall Budget	Net Change
Salaries & Wages (100)	\$629,647
Insurance & Benefits (200)	\$ -265,683
Operating Costs (300, 400, 665-695, 810)	\$ -74,169
Transportation (510-560)	\$ -20,775
Special Ed. Tuition (570-585)	\$ -230,060
Instructional, Athletic, & Office Supplies (600-660)	\$60,080
Equipment & Technology (700-745)	\$81,115
Total Change:	\$59,995
	0.17%



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)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 projected.
PK	60	55	49	49	45	68	65
K	132	143	148	139	154	125	137
1st	126	146	143	150	140	153	128
2nd	138	128	144	152	148	134	153
3rd	154	147	133	151	150	149	138
4th	149	160	152	138	153	162	155
5th	181	152	162	160	149	155	167
6th	183	199	168	182	171	169	172
7th	189	188	204	173	190	175	174
8th	232	193	190	208	172	202	179
9th	200	208	174	161	176	166	180
10th	187	203	210	177	167	183	170
11th	193	182	200	208	180	176	183
12th	221	191	182	208	211	177	177
Total	2345	2295	2259	2256	2206	2194	2180
Change		-2.1%	-1.6%	-0.1%	-2.2%	-0.5%	-0.6%

Notable Changes in Object Lines District-wide

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

#104, Teacher Salaries: Increase here reflects contractual increases and recommended additional staffing in special education ASD program and high school to support the Junior seminar. (+\$434,548 +2.97%)

#320, Professional Educational Services: This line covers services for special education students provided by our contractor I.P.P. Number of students receiving these services is expected to decline.

(-\$44,371 -9.45%)

#450, Purchased Services: As our school buildings continue to age, a greater and greater investment in maintenance and repairs is necessary.

(+23,726 +4.80%)

#510, Transportation: Thanks to prudent long-term planning of special education services, accompanying out-of-district transportation is greatly reduced. This reduction was more than enough to offset the contractual increases for general transportation. (-\$31,157: -1.72%)

#570 & #585 Tuition to Public and Private LEAs: Continuing a recent trend, we predict having fewer students at outplacements for the coming school year. (-\$230,060 -18.90%)

#615, Instructional Supplies: Teachers and principals are to be commended for the thoughtful way in which they request instructional supplies.

(-\$39,054: -10.67%)

#675, Electricity: Conservation efforts continue. (-\$8,000: -1.67%)

#685, Fuel Oil: Prudent bidding nets substantial savings.

(-\$22,526: -18.85%)

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.
- Thanks to prudent, appropriate planning by our Special Education department, outplacement costs are expected to decline again next year (third year in a row).
- Prudent contract negotiations are continuing to support a reduction in health claim costs.
- Near-term costs related to pandemic recovery were assigned to federal ESSER entitlements.
- Timely bidding on fuel oil netted substantial savings to the district.
- The system's investment in LED lighting continues to result in reduced electricity usage.

Budget Summary

<i>2020-2021 Board of Education approved budget:</i>	<i>\$35,524,031</i>
2021-2022 Proposed Budget:	\$35,584,026
Budget increase dollars:	\$59,995
Budget increase percentage:	0.17%

* Statewide average increase in superintendent's budget: 2.16% with 25 districts reporting.

