

BUDGET QUESTIONS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
January 11, 2016

General Services Presentation:

1. How does the adult education program work and who is responsible for State reporting?
A: The adult education program is run by Enfield. The State mandates districts pay for these services: GED programs, ELL services, and citizenship classes. The State determines the share of the program cost for each district regardless of the number of participants. Suffield's share of the cost is paid through a combination of a state grant and town funds. Enfield is responsible for reporting to the State.
2. What is the 1% change, or approximately \$38,000, based on relative to health insurance premium increases?
A: It is based on what the district paid last year and adjusted for changes in the number of people with insurance and contributions.
3. Does the district have the same health insurance provider as the Town and will the percent increase be the same?
A: Yes. Once we are provided final rates from our insurance company, the town and schools will have approximately the same overall percentage increase. Due to different plans for different groups, the amounts may differ slightly. Currently the schools are using 8%. The town has not completed their budget so does not have an amount yet.
4. What is the balance of the health insurance account?
A: As we are self-insured the balance in this account varies depending on claims paid. Our insurance consultant, MDG Benefits, works with the insurer, Anthem to set rates each year to ensure the balance is sufficient to pay all claims during the year. Depending on our claim experience during the year, the balance may be higher or lower than projected. The projected end of year balance is used to determine the following year's premiums.
5. What is stop loss coverage?
A: Stop loss is coverage for claims over \$150,000. These claims are paid by this insurance rather than our self-insurance fund.

Special Education/Pupil Personnel Services Budget Presentation:

1. Where did you get the data from past years relative to the special education population in the district?
A: The special education population data was the numbers reported to the State each year.

2. Does the administration have a clear understanding as to why the special education population is so high?
A: The administration is not confident the data in the past was entirely accurate, however staff is looking at referral data, which is based on SRBI data, and we are confident the current number of special education students for 2015-16 is correct.
3. What is your sense of the SRBI data?
A: There is much work to be done, but that work has begun by mapping out a very coherent and intentional practice.
4. Is the BCBA proposed in addition to the BCBA already employed in the district?
A: Yes. This BCBA will be provided by the Center for Children with Special Needs as a consultant, trainer and coach. This will allow Ms. Maloney to give more of her time at McAlister as she is currently focused at Spaulding.
5. What is the timeline for the consultant model? Is this a one year or multi-year plan?
A: The consultant will serve as a coach who will model, observe and share information to build capacity of the staff. It would be challenging to accomplish this in one year. It is anticipated this will be a multi-year plan.
6. Why are the special education numbers different in the budget book provided to BOE members than what was presented tonight?
A: The numbers have changed since the initial budget book was printed. BOE members will receive new budget pages after all presentations are completed and a final budget book when the budget is finalized.
7. What was the Excess Cost Reimbursement percentage issued by the State last year?
A: The ECR was 80.2% for 2014-2015 and 79.6% for 2013-2014.
8. With an increased need in special education why are you proposing to reduce the number of paraprofessionals?
A: We want the most highly trained staff working with the districts neediest students. Students who require paraprofessionals will continue to have this support. The reduction in the number of paraprofessionals is actually only four since we have already reduced the number of paraprofessionals since last year's budget through attrition. Additionally, students will share paraprofessionals which is beneficial to special needs students because it helps build independence.