

2018-2019 Budget Questions
February 5, 2018 BOE Meeting

1. **Over the past 4-5 years, how many consultants/partners do we have (name and reason for service) anticipated end date.**

Consultants 2013-14 to 2018-19

	Actual				Budget	
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
CCSN	\$2,500		\$31,225	\$302,350	\$300,000	\$301,600
Program	\$127,451	\$158,843	\$103,927	\$1,560		
Business Operations	\$49,652	\$12,946	\$27,593	\$17,940	\$8,500	\$8,500
Evaluations	\$27,816	\$23,175	\$68,107	\$42,669	\$45,000	\$45,000
Assistive Technology	\$10,428	\$6,023	\$16,548	\$11,600	\$12,000	\$0
Audiological	\$60,584	\$81,665	\$97,962	\$121,085	\$80,000	\$105,000
Miscellaneous	\$9,647	\$17,625	\$3,200	\$8,742	\$2,000	\$2,000
PD	\$11,153	\$28,084	\$71,636	\$87,402	\$45,200	\$17,200
Curriculum	\$22,369	\$76,928		\$27,283	\$30,000	
Speech	\$6,033	\$3,530	\$7,371	\$7,426		
DMG			\$100,000	\$50,000		
Total	\$327,633	\$408,820	\$527,569	\$678,055	\$522,700	\$479,300

- a) Program includes consultants such as Luddy & Associates and Creative Interventions who develop programs for one or more students.
- b) Business Operations includes budget programming consultants (no longer used) as well as safety services, e-rate consultant and asset inventory.
- c) Evaluations are SPED student specific evaluations.
- d) Miscellaneous includes items such as architects, medical advisor and the demographic study.
2. **How many SPED students are unilaterally outplaced and at what cost to district (tuition, transportation and mediation/lawyer costs)?**

From 2014-15 to budgeted for 2018-19, we have ranged from 3 to 6 students. This year's budget is \$412,513. The budgeted amount for 2018-19 is \$276,681. These amounts do not include legal costs. Total budgeted SPED legal fees are \$50,000 in each year.

3. **In the papers, some districts are consolidating services (such as HR) to decrease cost and increase efficiency due to budget crisis. Is this being considered in Suffield?**

We are sharing services with other districts such as the RISE program with Windsor Locks. We also share transportation services when possible. We are exploring sharing of HR services with other districts. The education specific knowledge required for the school department makes it more difficult to share with the town. We do however work with the town on health insurance and other benefits to try and create more uniformity. In the maintenance area, the town plows our parking lots while we clear the sidewalks. Two years ago we took over the school landscaping responsibilities from the town. The town continues to mow the lawns. Overall we continually look for opportunities to share services whether within Suffield or with other districts (including professional development) whenever it is most cost-effective and in the best interest of the students.

4. **What is the amount for each of the expenditures that are in the total “SPED Tuition” line?**
RISE – 3 students at a total cost of \$103,986 including transportation
Unilateral Placements - \$276,681 including transportation
Tuition - \$1,776,088
Transportation (Other than RISE and Unilateral Placements) - \$461,000
5. **Why had special education transportation increased by \$37,000?**
The increase is due to one additional student being transported and an increase in rates and fuel costs.
6. **In the SPED budget presentation, please define what Professional Services are and what is included in this line item.**
Professional Services include all services, rather than supplies, that are purchased from outside vendors. These are:
 - Physical Therapy (including ESY)
 - Speech Services
 - Audiological Consulting/Services
 - Summer Health Services (\$0 budgeted for 2018-19)
 - ESY Purchased Services (Parks and Rec Fees)
 - Nursing Services
 - Consultants
7. **Improving student outcomes in Math has been a particular area of need. The structure with Curriculum development and coaching is designed for improvement, but is there something else we can fund to target this important district weakness more aggressively?**
We are at the point where we need to focus on teachers implementing the new standards and new curriculum resources recently purchased. We have used a consultant the last few years to assist us in building instructional capacity. For 2018-19, we will use our Curriculum Leaders and Instructional Coaches to make sure what we have learned becomes part of all our math instruction. We need to do this before we look to bring in additional resources or technology. For the 2019-20 budget, we will be better prepared to add some of those resources.
8. **Can we identify a dozen items that are able to be cut from the budget and a dozen items that could be added if we were to make those cuts?**
Our budget is developed using a zero-based budget process which means each year we start at zero and determine what needs to be included in the budget. The alternative approach is to determine what needs to be added to the existing budget. This latter approach leads to the layering on of services which may no longer fit with the district priorities. In addition to use the zero-base approach, we use our District Improvement Plan to budget strategically so that we focus our budget on achieving the goals of the plan. With this approach, the Superintendent’s budget contains all the items we need to move the district forward, so we cannot recommend any items we would reduce. We also included all the essential items needed for the district so we do not have a list of items to add.
Should the Board of Education or the Board of Finance, as part of the entire budget process, reduce the school budget below what we have requested, we will make reductions to meet the funds available. However, any reductions will reduce progress on implementing the District Improvement Plan.
9. **What is the impact of not adding pay-to-play fees?**
It would increase the request to the town by \$75,000 which would be a 1.9% increase compared to this year.

10. What is the impact on revenue if the pay-to-play fee were reduced to \$70 per sport/\$140 family cap instead of \$125 per sport/\$375 family cap?

At \$70 per sport with a \$140 family cap, the fee would generate \$36,330. With this amount of revenue, it would make more sense just to add the total \$75,000 to the budget request.

11. Has the district reached out to other districts to determine how much of a participation drop off they have seen?

We have heard from 10 districts who implemented pay-to-play. None of them saw a drop off in participation when they implemented pay-to-play. This includes nearby districts including Enfield (implemented in 2009-10), Simsbury (implemented for many years), Somers, West Hartford (implemented for 20 years) and East Granby. We would waive the fee for all students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. We would also set up a process for families to apply for a hardship waiver of the fees due to their particular circumstances.

12. Does the \$75,000 in expected revenue factor in any drop in participation, or is it based on full participation from this year?

The \$75,000 is based on the full number of participants in 2016-17.

13. Do other districts charge for extra-curricular activities other than sports?

East Granby charges a fee for all extra-curricular activities. Most districts charge only for sports, some for high school only, but some for both middle and high school sports.

14. How much revenue would a parking fee at the high school generate?

Approximately \$20,000.

15. What is the timing of evaluation of new insurance carriers? Can this possibly be done by this year for this budget cycle? If it were to occur part way through an approved budget, how can we manage any realized savings?

The RFP for new insurance carriers closed on January 31. We received a number of responses. The evaluation will take place over the next 6 to 8 weeks so it is unlikely to be complete prior to BOE budget approval. It is possible that the BOE budget will be adjusted by the Board of Finance, if we project significant savings.

16. For District Management Group (DMG), what were the goals and annual benchmarks that were set when bringing their services into the district? What results have we seen that justify keeping them in district for another year? What is the long-term plan for how long they will stay?

DMG has provided the framework for all our strategic budgeting work which has allowed us to remove silos and prioritize our needs as a total district. This work has allowed us to continue to implement our District Improvement Plan even with the current budget situation. DMG has worked with us to improve secondary schools scheduling and to create more balanced class sizes. This was accomplished at the high school and currently they are assisting us at the middle school to find similar efficiencies in scheduling and staffing to provide improved instructional services to students. Last year DMG completed a time study of special services. We are currently working with staff to adjust schedules and practices to increase direct time with students based on the time study.

DMG will continue to work with the district at no additional cost until all the original goals are complete. These goals include examining and refining the allocation of district resources to improve student outcomes, developing secondary school schedules which support the district's vision and goals for students and utilizes efficient scheduling and staffing practices and improving the efficiency of special education services to increase the impact of staff expertise. There are no funds in the 2018-19 budget for DMG.

17. What are the projected class sizes for the elementary grades and how does that compare to previous years?

Per the table below, there has been very little change in average K-5 class size over the five years which includes the projection for 2018-19. There is always some variability from year to year as enrollment changes.

The administration monitors enrollment by grade weekly starting in June. If we find that class sizes are increasing beyond an acceptable amount, we would recommend adding teachers at that time.

K-5 Class Size

Grade	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
K	17.6	20.0	18.4	20.2	20.1
1	19.7	19.5	20.9	18.4	21.3
2	20.6	20.1	19.4	20.7	18.7
3	20.8	19.0	20.4	20.7	21.6
4	20.4	21.4	19.1	20.0	21.1
5	24.1	20.4	21.4	22.0	20.1

Average 20.5 20.1 19.9 20.3 20.5

18. What research is being cited showing no adverse effects on student outcomes when increasing class sizes up to 25 students in younger grades?

Most of the research is done for grades K-3. A recent study in California comparing class sizes of 20 to class sizes of 29 found small positive gains in student outcomes. Most of the differences in student outcomes are explained by factors other than class size such as teacher quality and curriculum.