

**BOE 2021-22 Budget Review
BOF Q&A #3
2/24/2021**

36) Re Budget Transfers through 11/30/2020

AMOUNT	FROM		TO		REASON
	CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION	
ADMINISTRATIVE					
\$11,430	100	Certified Salary Adj.	100	Administrative Salaries	To allocate funds for salary adjustments and turnover savings
\$59,977	100	Teachers & Specialists Salaries	100	Certified Salary Adj.	To adjust budgets to current staff and salaries after turnover and advance degrees
\$48,980	100	Non-Certified Salary Adj.	100	Special Education Svcs Salaries	To allocate funds for salary adjustments and add a therapist for the blind
\$50,245	100	Clerical & Secretarial Salaries	100	Supervisors Salaries	To reclassify assistant business director position
\$7,042	100	Non-Certified Salary Adj.	100	Nurses	To add a part time nurse and increase hours due to COVID-19
\$19,269	100	Clerical & Secretarial Salaries			
\$32,281	100	Career/Job Salaries			

a) Pg 18 staffing table. From Approved budget to Current budget there is an increase of 10 FTE. The FTE increase for 2021-22 is shown as 3.16. Budget to Budget the increase is 13.19.

The budget books have traditionally presented “approved budget” to “proposed budget” changes. “Current budget” is included for transparency. The following are the details for the changes between the “approved budget” to the “current budget”:

b) Pg 23 object summary dollar amount for 2020-21 Budget and Current are the same \$78,551,776

Yes. This is typically the case. By necessity, the district operates within the budget appropriated, making adjustments to specific areas as needs and costs change. The district currently anticipates that by the end of the year \$78,551,776 will be spent. For actual amounts spent to date the monthly financial statements provided by the district have this information.

c) How were new 10 positions created with no increase in expense? Where were they created?

The positions set forth in our budget requests are requirements at the time that the budget is prepared (typically 7-9 months before it's approved in April). Increases and decreases to positions occur every year after the budget is approved and positions and requirements are reassessed. Additional positions will then require an offset to another account, such as staffing turnover or other potential savings in non-certified salary accounts. This is just a small sample of the accounts we look at. We will never add a position without identifying an offset.

In this case, in particular, the 2020-21 budget was prepared even prior to COVID and prior to the formulation of the Reopening Plan. Staffing adjustments needed to be made in order to operate under COVID and for State compliance given the guidelines for opening schools (including additional nursing hours, paras, additional teachers to reduce class size in order to comply with social distancing, staff support, tech support (.6 position). In some cases, what was expected at one school in enrollment was needed at another without any cost to the budget. In

other cases, as mentioned before, funds from turnover or other savings in salary accounts are targeted, if possible.

2020-21 changes from Budgeted to Current		
<u>Elementary Education</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Note</u>
HAW - reading	0.20	required additional reading support
HAW - classroom para	-0.72	was not needed at HAW, used at SHS
SHS - classroom para	1.06	additional support hours for math & reading
SHS - classroom teacher	-1.00	non needed at SHS, used at MGS
MGS - classroom para	1.34	additional support hours for math & reading
MGS - classroom teacher	1.00	taken from SHS based on staffing needs there
HOM - classroom para	1.08	additional support hours for math & reading
HOM - classroom	1.00	based on enrollment numbers/class size
HOM - reading	0.50	required additional reading support
HOM - library para	0.14	library specialists - additional hours for 20-21
Total Elementary	4.6	
<u>Reed Intermediate</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Note</u>
classroom para	0.15	additional support hours for math & reading
<u>Middle School</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Note</u>
NMS - SRBI coord.	0.10	Specialists
<u>High School</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Note</u>
NHS - world language	0.34	additional hours
NHS - social studies	0.2	additional hours
School to career	-0.5	reduction of position
TAP job coach	-0.86	reduction of position
Total High School	-0.82	
<u>Special Education</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Note</u>
Para's	1.35	additional SPED para's required
BT	0.93	additional BT for blind student
PT/OT	0.09	additional hours for SPED students' needs
Job Coach	0.02	additional hours for SPED students'

		needs
HS Teacher	1.20	additional support for SPED students
Total Special Education	3.59	
<u>Pupil Personnel</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Note</u>
Additional hours	0.30	additional nursing hours to meet students needs
		floater was decreased by .2 and .5 was added to RIS resulting in .3
<u>Technology</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Note</u>
Tech Support	0.60	additional support required for workload/increased needs in tech support
<u>Total Staffing Changes</u>	<u>8.52</u>	<u>actual staffing changes</u>
Positions reclassified across departments, (funded appropriately through the budget) but not included in original staffing count	1.51	
2020-21 budget to 2020-21 Current	10.03	as seen on page 18 in staffing

In summary, personnel adjustments are made throughout the year (both positive and negative) based on student needs, changes in schedule, increased SPED IEPs and new students, unexpected class size growth. These adjustments, both positive and negative, are carried over into the next budget year but not as new requests, as these were funded by offsets in turnover, savings from late hiring, open positions not filled, and other sources.

37) a) What non-English languages are taught in elementary, intermediate, middle and high school?

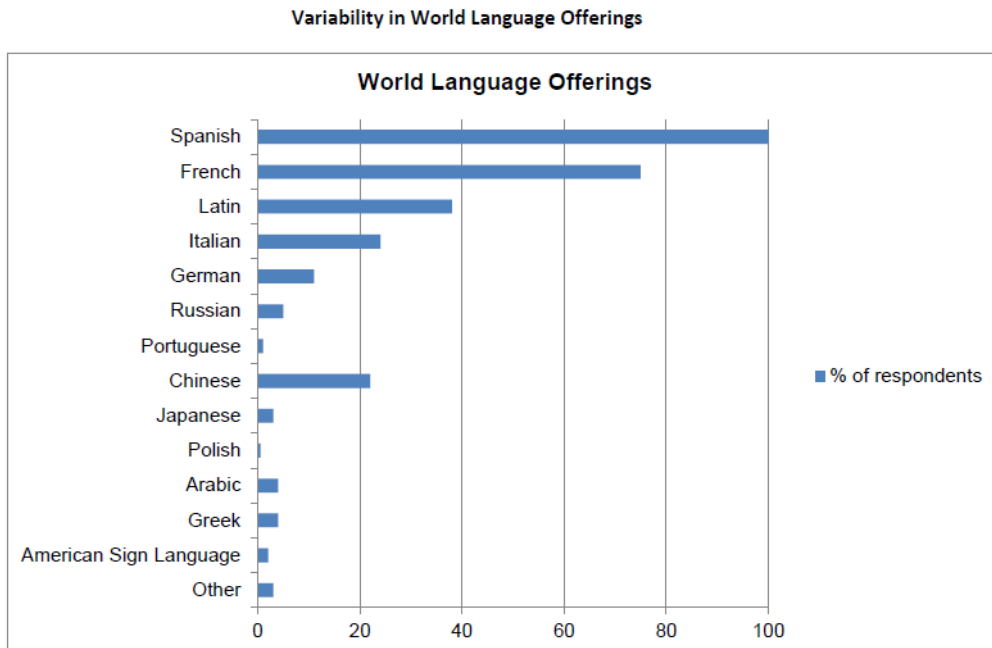
After a multi-year phase-in, Spanish will be taught in all grades K-6. At the Middle School, students take either Spanish or French. At the High School, students may take French, Italian, Latin, and Spanish.

b) What languages are part of Language Arts?

“Language Arts” typically is shorthand for “English language arts/literacy” as defined by Connecticut Common Core State Standards and involves the study of reading, writing and spoken English. This is the core English academic required by the State for all students.

c) What languages are considered “World Languages”?

The state does not define World Languages (but does specifically include American Sign Language).” A “Status Report on World Language Instruction in Connecticut Public Schools, 2012” commissioned by the Connecticut State Department of Education indicated the following languages being taught in Connecticut schools:



- 100% of those respondents offering a World Language, offer instruction in Spanish

38) Nurses. The COVID numbers (8/10/2020 and 9/11/2020) included additional Nursing staff (hrs per day and new 0.8 FTE). But on pg 144 comparing the Budget and Requested columns identifies a 0.2 FTE increase?

The COVID doc lists the floater position in whole as a .80 FTE as seen on page 144. Originally a floater position was a 1.0; however, this was reduced to a .80 and a .50 was added to the Reed school where it was needed. The net increase in dollars resulted in .30 FTE (the .8 was merely an internal note so we could identify where the dollars were originally coded). This position was needed to support the nursing staff dealing directly with students and families related to COVID and contact tracing.

39) a) What measures are considered “common assessment data”?

The context of how this term is used is important. There are many, many common assessments used in the district: NWEA, DIBELS, biliteracy assessments, formative and summative assessments designed by teachers, CTAA, NGSS assessments, SBACs, PSATs, SATs, AP scores, and Connecticut Physical Fitness Exams are some of the common assessments used in the district. Aside from the typical high stakes SATs and SBAC, other standardized assessments are used as tools to provide important information to districts about the progress

of individual students and cohort groups. These are not meant as comparative data with other districts. In fact, the State discourages using any data comparatively since the goal is to improve student learning across grade levels as they move through the system from where they begin to where they end.

b) Last year you provided a number of pages with useful information showing SAT, AP and SBSA scores. Are these the instruments considered “common assessment data”?

SAT scores, AP exams, and SBACs are some common **standardized** assessments that are considered “high stakes.” SATs and AP scores are often included in college entrance applications. SBACs are one of many measures used by the State to assess student performance within a given district. Again, SBAC assessment data is most useful to improve future curricular and instructional practices, as well as to support student growth and achievement.

c) In the introduction Thursday, 2019 SAT scores were presented. Where SAT, AP SBSA etc. tests given in 2020? If so would you share Newtown results

SBAC and the school-day PSAT and SATs were not administered in the 2019-20 school year due to COVID. Instead, students took the PSAT/SAT when they returned to school in the fall of 2020. AP tests for 2019-20 courses were administered to students at home in the spring of 2020. SBAC tests were not administered for the 2019-20 school year in Connecticut.

Fall 2020		SAT	
Total Number with Scored Tests	Percentage Level 3 or 4 (Meet or Exceed) %	Average Score	
347	85	574	
347	65	562	
Fall 2020		PSAT	
Total Number with Scored Tests	Met Benchmark %	Average Score	
330	82	539	
330	57	515	

AP EXAMS	AP Exams Takers	AP Total Exams	Exams with Scores of 3,4,5
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Newtown School District	437	823	694
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40) a) Last year in response to a question 10 “Could we get further detail on pupil service increase.” The response states “The number of SPED students (which is different from special education) has actually increased...”

The statement in parentheses should have read “pupil services” not “special education.” SPED and Special Education are synonymous. On the other hand, SPED is different from pupil services, which is why they appear in different sections in the budget. Pupil services include counseling, social work, psychology, and health and medical services.

b) Please remind us of the definition of Special Education (SPED)

Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) gives eligible children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 (upper age limit varies depending on state law) the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). According to the regulations, a child qualifies for special education and related services under IDEA if a team of professionals evaluates the child and determines that:

1. the child has a disability, as defined in Section 300.8 of the IDEA regulations, and
2. the child needs special education services because of that disability.

The evaluation must consider all areas related to the suspected disability; it also must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies. Within 30 days of concluding that your child qualifies for services, the school district must hold a meeting to create an individualized education program (IEP) for your child.

c) Students with IEP. Are all students with IEP considered to be in SPED? Do all SPED students have an IEP?

Only Special Education students have IEPs (Individualized Learning Plans) that outline objectives and modifications to their programs. Our district is bound to these IEP documents for all our SPED students.

42) What are Newtown High School graduation rates?

Row	Measure	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	
	High School Graduation Rates	99.0	96.6	96.5	
	% students starting in the fall graduating at commencement				

	White	357	370	380	
	Non-White	64	39	32	
	% of students entering NHS as First Years graduating at commencement				
	White	n/a	n/a	na/	n/a
	Non-White	n/a	kna/	n/a	na/
	Where NHS graduates go after graduation				
	4-year college/university	79%	78%	87%	
	Community College	4%	6%	4%	
	Military	1%	1%	0.7%	
	Other	16%	15%	8.3%	

43) Technology: In the December 31, 2020 Financial report, there is a comment that “technology equipment remains stable for now as we do not anticipate the need for additional Chromebooks or other distance learning devices.”

This was accurate as we had already purchased what we needed for the 2020-2021 school year by December 2020 to account for students who needed devices for remote learning during the pandemic and the need for remote/hybrid learning models.

The 2021-2022 budget will address the 1:1 chromebooks for freshmen which were not fulfilled this year due to the lateness in obtaining devices as well as obsolete replacements across all grades.

Other devices in the budget, which are chromebooks for our freshman were part of our move to 1:1 technology.

a) Do we have a census on Chromebooks? iPads? (How many in each category and what is the division among schools?)

	Total	HAW	HOM	MGS	NHS	NMS	RIS	SHS
Chromebooks								
Students	3,290	290	292	391	706	631	597	383
Staff	312	44	31	51	25	53	55	51
iPads								
Students	415	74	61	54	25	3	91	107
Staff	181	13	16	37	48	25	19	24

b) Last year (pre-Covid), \$525,000 was requested for technology equipment and the budget book (p. 151) indicates that \$115,000 was transferred “into” the capital non-recurring. How do we reconcile this surplus with the increased demand for chromebooks, etc. post-Covid? Where did the money come from to cover the cost for those additional devices? How many devices were purchased since March 2020 and were any of those geared toward replacing existing, older devices?

The \$115,000 shown in red in 2020-21 is not a surplus. This was a part of a reduction to the BOE budget that was offset by the Town’s capital non-recurring fund. Thus, \$115,000 was spent on Technology in 2020-21, but was not included in the annual budget.

Additional devices that were purchased in the current year used \$400,000 that was appropriated from the Town’s Capital Non-recurring Fund in September 2020 for BOE COVID-related expenses. The \$400,000 only covers a portion of the additional devices as this account is still in the red.

The four-year phase-in plan to issue a Chromebook to every high school student was suspended for 2020-21 to allow distribution of these devices to students in need throughout the district. Thus, Chromebooks for High School freshmen are included in Technology Equipment 2021-22 budget (\$119,000) to re-initiate the four- year plan.

44) Staffing: Has the Diversity Compliance Coordinator position been filled or will that be filled in next year’s budget? If filled already, where did the funding for that position come from?

The position has not yet been filled, but we are hoping to fill this position with grant funding for the 2021-22 school year. The BOE approved the start date for this position at the latter part of this school year, and funds in personnel for positions not filled would allow for this to occur. The rationale is for someone to begin working with staff, students, leaders and families in order to establish a trusted presence within the district before the onset of the new school year. The prorated cost was approximately \$17,000 for the position to be filled in April. The funds will come from the non-certified turnover accounts.

45) Special Education: Is the increase in FTEs in paraeducators from 2018/19 because of increased children in the district or because of increased identification of children already in the district? How many special education children did we have in 18/19, 19/20, 20/21? In each year, how many were children that were new additions to the district (as opposed to existing students who were given IEPs)?

The number of special education students in the district has been consistently trending upward in the past five years.

2018-19: 621 (June 1 enrollment)

2019-20: 623 (June 1 enrollment)

1/21/21, the district had 636 identified students. However, as of today, February 22, 2021 the district has 653 special education students (plus 20 students homeschooled with intent of re-enrolling for the 2021-22 school year). Should these students re-enroll as stated by the parents, the district's number of special education students would be 673.

Furthermore, for the 2020-21 school year, 38 new students identified with special needs moved into the district. Some of these students required 1:1 paras given the severity of their disability and as outlined in their IEP's received from previous district.

46) Transportation: Of the students attending in person, do we have a sense for the percentage that are taking buses versus those that are being dropped off? Have we been able to realize any savings from the reduction of bus usage by families due to covid?

At this time, we have not reduced any of our buses as they have all been running. For the month of December when we were fully remote, we did receive a 5% discount. Currently, we have approximately 75-80% students fully in-person to date. As was stated in another question, we consolidated buses and runs when we moved from a three tier to a two tier system when we changed the school start time. Due to our goal of accomplishing this as a "no cost" solution, we revised bus routes and configured routes and stops, which raised the number of students on buses at the time. We review this each year, and all taxpayers pay for bus transportation whether they use it or not. All students need to have a bus seat available.

47) Athletics: What percentage of 19/20 and 20/21 were school sports in session for? Did all coaches get paid regardless of whether they coached or not?

In 19/20 we ran full fall and winter sports, spring sports were cancelled however all coaches were paid for their virtual work with students. For 20-21 we ran a fall season and are half way through the winter season, all coaches have been paid.

48) The answer to a previous question (15a) indicated that \$106,847 of High School "student travel and staff mileage" was for student athletics. There is also \$106,847 on page 127 of the budget book listed for athletic travel. Is this a duplicate charge?

No. Interscholastic Sports and Activities are a Program within the High School budget (see page 105 for a list of all Programs). Each High School Program is detailed in the subsequent pages and each Program that includes a line 580 for Student Travel or Staff Mileage contributes to the total for that line within the High School budget. Because the details for Athletics are extensive, it has its own tab, but it provides the details for Interscholastic Sports and Activities Program within the High School budget. Thus, \$106,847 appears on the 580 line on page 124 and references the details. The detail is what is shown on page 127.

49) Class Size

Class Size is a major determinant of the BOE Budget. Drift on class size can have substantial financial impact. I fully recognize that scheduling students is not like scheduling things and that the number of students can change from the time of budget preparation to opening of school. Some observations regarding the economics of class are below.

- a. Guidelines for class size are presented in the budget book. Table below shows a few years of projected and actual class size at the elementary schools (Higher grades we too challenging for me to extract) The BOE is very consistent in projecting class size with no apparent creep year over year.

Class sizes for upper grades are in the budget book on pages 76, 89, and 107.

- b. In the years shown, in no class was a class projected over the guideline. Except in 3rd & 4th grades in 2019-20, one or two students could be added to each average without exceeding the guideline.

	2019-20 Projected pg 51	2020-21 Projected pg 44	2021-22 Projected pg 44	2018-19 Actual Actual	2019-20 Actual pg 44	2020-21 Actual pg 44
K						
Average Class Size	15.8	15.4	15.4	16.5	16.4	15.4
Guideline	15 - 18	15 - 18	15 - 18	20	15 - 18	15 - 18
1st & 2nd						
Average Class Size	17.7	17.6	17.8	18.1	18.0	17.1
Guideline	20	20	20	20	20	20

3rd & 4th							
Average Class Size	20.5	20.3	20.3		20.1	19.7	19.0
Guideline	19 - 21	25	25		25	25	25

Just one thing to keep in mind when looking at elementary school class sizes is that each of the four schools operate separately. So, the challenge of “right-sizing” classes is limited by the numbers within that school. For example, in 2020-21, Hawley’s fourth grade classes had a total of 52 students split across three rooms/sections, averaging 17 students per room. Although that is a smaller class size, reducing the rooms to two by making a reduction would have placed 26 students in each room - more than our guideline in a typical year (and too many in a year of a pandemic in an older building and smaller rooms with no HVAC system for ventilation). Most importantly, higher class sizes have a negative impact on learning as it is difficult to meet the individual needs of students..

50) Special Education

- a. The 2019-20 BOE Budget book has some very useful statistics regarding special education students. In particular the table showing out of district special education was illuminating:

School Location	Cost	Actual 2018-19	Budget 2019-20	Cost Per 2018-19
1	\$ 538,615	3	3	\$ 179,538
2	\$ 411,948	3	3	\$ 137,316
3	\$ 249,206	1	2	\$ 249,206
4	\$ 198,240	7	4	\$ 28,320
5	\$ 150,000	4	2	\$ 37,500
6	\$ 151,175	2	1	\$ 75,588
7	\$ 166,990	1	1	\$ 166,990
8	\$ 263,572	3	3	\$ 87,857

9	\$ 172,590	2	2	\$ 86,295
10	\$ 59,256	1	1	\$ 59,256
11	\$ 179,848	3	3	\$ 59,949
12	\$ 188,746	1	2	\$ 188,746
13	\$ 242,831	1	1	\$ 242,831
14	\$ 107,800	1	1	\$ 107,800
16	\$ 104,000	3	2	\$ 34,667
17	\$ 30,000	2	2	\$ 15,000
18	\$ 4,100	2	1	\$ 2,050
19	\$ 75,000	1	1	\$ 75,000
20	\$ 82,095	0		
		41	35	
Mediated	\$ 572,900	14	15	\$ 40,921

The breakdown for the 2021-22 anticipated costs are as follows:

2021-22 OUT OF DISTRICT SPECIAL ED TUITION			
SCHOOL	STUDENTS		COST
	2020-21	2021-22	
LOCATION 1	4	4	\$778,613
LOCATION 2	3	3	\$395,445
LOCATION 3	1	1	\$73,700
LOCATION 4	3	2	\$214,400
LOCATION 5	2	2	\$110,324
LOCATION 6	2	2	\$123,840
LOCATION 7	1	1	\$80,815
LOCATION 8	3	3	\$272,073
LOCATION 9	1	1	\$83,600
LOCATION 10	1	1	\$82,497
LOCATION 11	1	1	\$74,492
LOCATION 12	1	1	\$158,116
LOCATION 13	2	2	\$280,000
LOCATION 14	2	2	\$197,434
LOCATION 15	2	2	\$215,140
LOCATION 16	1	1	\$89,756
LOCATION 17	1	1	\$164,590
TBD		2	\$130,000
OTHER SPECIAL ED COSTS (INCLUDES MAGNET & VO/AG SCHOOLS)			\$58,900
ALLOWANCE FOR INCREASES			\$103,614
MEDIATED AGREEMENTS	18	13	\$770,772
			\$4,458,121
EXCESS COST GRANT			(\$1,261,493)
NET BUDGET	49	45	\$3,196,628

To the extent that the breakdown is readily available, additional special education statistics could be helpful in understanding the dynamics of variance. See table below:

The years in the heading on the table were changed to allow us to share the data we have. We do not project the number of students in SPED as it changes so frequently. As an example, at the time the budget was prepared (1/12/21), there were 636 students receiving SPED services. Currently, there are 653 SPED students served by the district.

· Remind me what “Mediated,” “PAL,” and “RISE” mean

PAL and RISE are two in-house special education programs (self-contained).

Mediated refers to mediated settlements with families regarding services to be provided for students, and where previous agreement has not been typically reached in a PPT or other

meetings. Mediated settlements are often handled by both the district and family attorneys to mediate between the two groups.

- Row 13 if SPED & IEP are the same, there is no need for this row.

These are the same.

- Row 14 what is behind the nearly doubling of the Transition Program?

The Transition Program has not doubled. It is a change in program classification. The 2020-21 Community Partnership number includes PAL & RISE. In prior years, these were separate. The number of students participating in the Transition program for 2020-21 from Newtown is 6 and 3 from other districts.

Row	Group	JUNE 2016	JUNE 2017	JUNE 2018	JUNE 2019	JUNE 2020	2021 Current
1	Elementary Special Ed Students <i>*INCLUDES PAL (2016-2020)</i>	160	173	183	188	196	182
2	Intermediate Special Ed Students	91	84	90	97	80	89
3	Middle School Special Ed Students <i>*INCLUDES RISE (2016-2020)</i>	57	86	97	94	98	91
4	High School Special Ed Students Preschool (2016-2017) OOD (2016-2020) Preschool/NCP (2018-2020) -RISE, PAL,PRE-K, OOD,NCP	133 62 27	121 71 23	112 25 82	129 23 90	146 23 80	171 120
5	Total Special Ed Students pg 128 graph	530	558	589	621	623	653
6	SPED - In house*	x	x	x	x	x	x

7	% Tuition <\$50,000 Out of District	12%	13%	14%	13%	12%	8%
8	% Tuition \$50,000 to \$100k Out of District	47%	40%	37%	35%	30%	33%
9	% Tuition \$100k to \$199k Out of District	35%	37%	38%	42%	53%	53%
10	% Tuition >\$200k Out of District	6%	11%	11%	10%	5%	6%
11	Total Out of District pg 34	36	40	42	41	40	43
12	Mediated	13	16	15	22	18	13
13	Students with IEP (If different from SPED) STUDENTS WITH AN IEP ARE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	x	x	x	x	x	x
14	Transition Program- NCP pg 128 & 136 See page 34, PAL & RISE are included in this number in 2020-21			16	15	16	31
15	Community Partnership-SAME AS ABOVE-NCP IS THE NEWTOWN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR AGES 18-22 THERE ARE 6 NEWTOWN STUDENTS AND 3 STUDENTS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS						6

** All SPED students are considered part of the district. Students who are outplaced can return at any time. The district remains responsible for their IEP and services. Students have a home in NPS schools and their outplacement is part of their IEP.*