

LC Education Committee

BOE Q&A 3/22/2018

1. Can you illustrate for us why HS is experiencing the most rapid decrease in students yet their budget continues to increase. How can we find further savings there?

See chart at the end of this document.

2. How is the district assessing grants and future funding?

The Newtown district supported the inclusion of a grant writer to enable us to acquire important grants to help support needed resources and services without the burden on the budget (or at least to carry over needed services to the operational plan over a longer period of time).

As grants expire, the BOE will make an evaluation whether these positions, programs, and services are still necessary, whether these get shifted to various other areas or reduced/eliminated as internal capacities are built from within. Examples are from our ServGrant, in which programs and services were implemented post-Sandy Hook.

Eliminated positions after SERV (School Emergency Response to Violence) grant:

- Assistant principal at SHS (1.0 FTE). Returned to lead teacher position for 2018-19.
- 2nd Assistant principal at SHS (.4 FTE)
- Recovery Project director
- Recovery Project secretary
- Recovery Project financial assistant
- Recovery Project advisor (Dr. Brymer)
- 1 social worker at SHS
- 1 school counselor at RIS (there had been 4 under SERV)

Shifting resources to meet needs:

In 2018-19, moving 1 social worker at RIS to NHS.

However, some of the more recent private foundation grants, such as NOVO, are newer and are still hosting necessary services and resources.

We both assess grants and the results of programs and services throughout the year by reviewing data (depending on the service or personnel), conferring with staff and administration, and analyzing specific information pertinent to the outcomes. In the past, services under grants have either been moved onto the operational plan based on need or eliminated.

3. What is the difference in cost to employ Armed School Security Officers (ASSO) and Security?

Armed School Security Officers are budgeted at \$33,616 for 191 days and School Security (Guard Card endorsed) is budgeted at \$22,341 for 184 days.

4. Is there an additional liability cost/risk to the district for employing ASSO's? Is there a legal risk to NOT employing ASSO's?

There is no additional liability (insurance) cost to the district. Risk is a factor based on proper training. The legal risk and liability of not employing ASSO's would come about if there were an incident where someone was injured by an armed intruder, or an incident where deadly force would be required to prevent it. In this case the individuals harmed would have a strong case to claim the District/Town liable for those injuries; 1) because it happened here, 2) because we fully recognized the potential of it happening again, 3) we instituted the

armed level of security because of the risk, and 4) it was withdrawn without other compensating levels of risk protection.

5. What was the savings of going from 3 tiers to 2 tiers (before buses were added)?

The savings overall going from a three tier to a two tier bussing system, utilizing the same fleet, would have been \$249,521. (Same configuration as last year).

6. Are we benefiting from the maintenance savings that are realized with the newer buses?

We are benefiting from the newer buses through the five year agreement that was negotiated with the bus contractor. The Propane vehicles which are more costly to purchase than the diesel version, run cleaner and have reduced maintenance costs overall. The five year average cost for this contract is 2.4% which represents a very competitive rate. These cost advantages, which were discussed during the negotiations, are included in the overall contract rates.

7. What are the savings on electricity in the buildings with solar panels?

Middle School has not demonstrated savings as the cost to the Capital Installer ALTUS pretty much equals what we would have paid to the utility. The unit cost is calculated each calendar year by the provider in accordance with our Power Purchase Agreement and is currently at .0734 per kw. This is above the average cost of our current supplier by .006 (rate change occurred in December). However, in 2016-17 our supplier rate was on average almost .02 cents less than Altus.

Reed is showing a year to date savings of approximately \$8,200. This contract with ONYX is set at a rate which is \$.02 less than the utility.

8. What would the \$/% change in the past 3-5 years in BOE budget WITHOUT the contractual Salary/Benefits increases accounting for about ~78% each year?

Change in Non-salary Accounts					
<u>2012-13</u>	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2015-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>
\$13,794,538	\$15,293,247	\$15,176,333	\$15,795,421	\$16,100,179	\$15,600,661
\$ Change	10.9%	-0.8%	4.1%	1.9%	-3.1%
% Change	\$1,498,709	-\$116,914	\$619,088	\$304,758	-\$499,518

9. Could you fill in the # of buses utilized in 2013-24 and 2014-15. And why did we see an increase of 4.5 buses in 17-18? Is this number stable in 18-19 given current concerns?

In 2013-14, 53 vehicles were used, in 2014-15, 44 local and 9 Special Ed for a total of 53 buses. The increase in buses for 17-18 came from the need for one additional special education vehicle, based on a number of new students moving into the district, and the compression of three tiers into two tiers, which equated to three and one half busses. These buses were required essentially due to the same number of students being transported to the same number of facilities in less time. Therefore, there was a need for additional buses and reconfigured routes. Currently this is a stable configuration subject to change based on special education needs.

10. Are iPads still relevant? Would it make sense to move to Android tablets, or even better, Chrome Books?

Yes the iPad is still relevant in certain educational usages. Each year we evaluate the iPad inventory for age and compatibility with adopted apps. During this evaluation consideration is also given to each device's use.

At the lower grades the iPad still is the most desired device for grades K-2.

In the case Reed and the Middle School, the choice was made to not replace the iPads with iPads but to instead replace them with Chromebooks. This has not eliminated the use of all iPads within these schools. The iPad is still the device of choice for creating videos and supporting reading classes.

11. Can the district start to do away with projectors given the latest technology?

We have explored a move towards touch interactive screens. The biggest consideration has been image size. We have demo-ed several different manufacturer's models and still find that unless you look at models that are 72 inches or large, the view from the back of the room is not desirable. There is also a cost factor that must be considered. The replacement of a projector runs between \$1000 and \$1400 depending mostly on if the project is ceiling or wall mounted. The larger interactive displays we have been looking at run around \$3500.

We are also watching the development of bulb-free projectors that may have a longer life. Currently these have a higher price tag than the traditional units.

We will continue to monitor new display technologies and consider the alternatives as we look to replace obsoleted units.

12. What are the surrounding district budget increases?

District Reference Group B – 5 year average (most to least) – updated 3/17/2018

DRG-B	proposed					5 year average
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Brookfield	4.66%	2.44%	4.19%	2.28%	5.45%	3.80%
West Hartford	3.77%	2.53%	3.55%	4.65%	2.94%	3.49%
Farmington	2.69%	3.70%	4.37%	2.13%	2.54%	3.09%
Fairfield	2.99%	3.29%	2.59%	3.12%	3.10%	3.02%
Cheshire	3.61%	3.50%	1.57%	1.05%	2.83%	2.51%
Madison	2.03%	2.49%	3.65%	2.03%	2.08%	2.46%
South Windsor	1.94%	4.71%	1.98%	-0.76%	4.06%	2.39%
Trumbull	2.18%	2.34%	1.77%	1.42%	4.22%	2.39%
New Fairfield	2.43%	1.34%	3.18%	0.00%	4.90%	2.37%
Regional District 15	2.79%	2.48%	2.86%	0.79%	2.79%	2.34%
Avon	2.78%	2.66%	1.64%	2.68%	1.87%	2.33%
Guilford	2.97%	2.49%	1.99%	1.99%	1.87%	2.26%
Amity	3.53%	1.86%	1.99%	1.26%	1.87%	2.10%
Greenwich	2.10%	2.00%	2.22%	2.00%	2.04%	2.07%
Glastonbury	3.31%	2.21%	1.90%	0.00%	2.20%	1.92%
Monroe	1.68%	1.75%	2.43%	0.00%	2.75%	1.72%
Granby	1.90%	2.39%	-0.36%	0.79%	3.49%	1.64%
Newtown	0.42%	0.34%	3.18%	0.92%	2.20%	1.41%

Simsbury	1.05%	1.30%	1.51%	0.99%	1.75%	1.32%
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Other surrounding districts' budget proposals (as of 3/14/2018):

Bethel 1.80%

Danbury 5.3%

Darien 2.34%

Easton 4.44%

Redding 4.34%

Region 9 3.02%

Region 12 3.79%

Weston 3.44%

Wilton 2.24%

13. What are the costs/benefits of diesel fuel versus propane fuel?

Diesel is dirty, propane is clean and better for the environment. Propane is cheaper than diesel and leads to fewer maintenance issues. During the frigid winter this year the propane started right up, can't say the same for diesel. Charts demonstrate cost impact.

Fuel comparison of delaying propane vehicles and using diesel buses instead

With Budgeted unit prices

	<u>Number of Buses</u>	<u>2018-19 Per bus Ceiling</u>	<u>Total Gallons</u>	<u>Price Per Gallon</u>	<u>Budgeted Cost</u>	<u>Reconfigured Fleet</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Diesel	20	2,200	44,000	\$ 2.00	\$ 88,000		
	33		72,600			\$ 145,200	\$ 57,200 additional cost
Gasoline	9	2,200	19,800	\$ 2.15	\$ 42,570	\$ 42,570	\$ -
Propane	26	2,970	77,220	\$ 1.09	\$ 84,170		
	13		38,610			\$ 42,085	\$ (42,085) savings
Budget based on unit ceiling					\$ 214,740		
Budget based on unit ceiling						\$ 229,855	
Additional cost to delay 13 additional Propane vehicles							\$ 15,115 add'l cost

With potential pricing increase

	<u>Number of Buses</u>	<u>2018-19 Per bus Ceiling</u>	<u>Total Gallons</u>	<u>Price Per Gallon</u>	<u>Revised Cost</u>	<u>Reconfigured Fleet</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Diesel	20	2,200	44,000	\$ 2.25	\$ 99,000		
	33		72,600			\$ 163,350	\$ 64,350 additional cost
Gasoline	9	2,200	19,800	\$ 2.15	\$ 42,570	\$ 42,570	\$ -
Propane	26	2,970	77,220	\$ 1.49	\$ 115,058		
	13		38,610			\$ 57,529	\$ (57,529) savings
Budget based on unit ceiling					\$ 256,628		
Budget based on unit ceiling						\$ 263,449	
Additional cost to delay 13 additional Propane vehicles							\$ 6,821 add'l cost

<u>Engine Type</u>	<u>Contract limit</u>	<u>Budget \$</u>	<u>Likely \$</u>
Diesel	2,200	\$4,400	\$4,950
Propane	2,970	\$3,237	\$4,425

FUEL CONSIDERATIONS BASED ON FLEET CONFIGURATION

Fuel Estimate maintaining current fleet configuration

Fuel	Fleet	MPG	% of Fleet	Miles Portion	Gallons for miles	Cost/ Gallon	Per day \$	Approximate to budget
Diesel	33	6.5	60%	2,520	387.7	\$ 2.00	\$ 775.38	\$ 141,895
Gasoline	9	9.0	16%	687	76.4	\$ 2.15	\$ 164.18	\$ 30,045
Propane	13	4.4	24%	993	225.6	\$ 1.09	\$ 245.93	\$ 45,004
Totals	55		100%	4,200			\$ 1,185	\$ 216,945
4,200 DM								

Fuel Estimate with 13 more vehicles going Propane (as contracted)

Fuel	Fleet	% of Fleet	Miles Portion	Gallons for miles	Cost/ Gallon	Per day \$	Approximate to budget	
Diesel	20	36%	1,527	235.0	\$ 2.00	\$ 469.93	\$ 85,997	
Gasoline	9	16%	687	76.4	\$ 2.15	\$ 164.18	\$ 30,045	
Propane	26	47%	1,985	451.2	\$ 1.09	\$ 491.85	\$ 90,009	
Totals	55	100%	4,200			\$ 1,126	\$ 206,051	
4,200 DM 13 change								Propane saving \$ 10,894

With potential pricing increase

Fuel Estimate maintaining current fleet configuration

Fuel	Fleet	MPG	% of Fleet	Miles Portion	Gallons for miles	Cost/ Gallon	Per day \$	Approximate to budget
Diesel	33	6.5	60%	2,520	387.7	\$ 2.25	\$ 872.31	\$ 159,632
Gasoline	9	9.0	16%	687	76.4	\$ 2.15	\$ 164.18	\$ 30,045
Propane	13	4.4	24%	993	225.6	\$ 1.49	\$ 336.17	\$ 61,520
Totals	55		100%	4,200			\$ 1,373	\$ 251,197
4,200 DM								

Fuel Estimate with 13 more vehicles going Propane (as contracted)

Fuel	Fleet	% of Fleet	Miles Portion	Gallons for miles	Cost/ Gallon	Per day \$	Approximate to budget	
Diesel	20	36%	1,527	235.0	\$ 2.25	\$ 528.67	\$ 96,747	
Gasoline	9	16%	687	76.4	\$ 2.15	\$ 164.18	\$ 30,045	
Propane	26	47%	1,985	451.2	\$ 1.49	\$ 672.35	\$ 123,040	
Totals	55	100%	4,200			\$ 1,365	\$ 249,832	
4,200 DM 13 change								Propane saving \$ 1,366

This estimate does not include summer school, field trips, athletic trips, driver training or dry runs. Amount used will differ from amount purchased.

2/12/2018

14. What is the 10 year history of student to teacher ratio?

Student:teacher

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 actual	2018-19
Elementary	17.7	17.6	17.0	15.9	14.6	14.4	14.2	14.5	14.6	15.2
Reed	16.4	17.3	16.9	15.8	14.9	15.0	15.4	14.5	14.8	15.1
NMS	13.8	14.1	13.7	14.0	13.4	14.0	13.8	13.7	13.5	12.8
HS	15.2	14.9	14.7	14.9	14.5	15.0	14.3	14.7	14.3	14.3

15. p24/p188 - Could you describe the 64% increase in Curriculum?

Curriculum and Staff Development budget increased by 64% due mainly to organizational changes as described on p. 188. The newly created staffing section contains staff members that have been moved from various cost centers in the budget. District administrators contain the Director of Guidance (previously budgeted in HS guidance) & the Director of Arts & Music (previously allocated throughout the schools and the ELL teacher (previously budgeted in Special Education

Additionally, areas of focus are the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which are being rolled out statewide, Responsive Classroom, expansion of the elementary school Spanish program to grade 3, and continued implementation of the concept-based curriculum model. A major revision process is underway to revise/update curriculum in science (\$10,200), new Spanish 3 (\$1,275), art and music (\$5,940), elementary in science and art/music (\$17,425), RIS (\$17,000) in STEM, science and math, NMS (\$6,365) to continue revisions in literacy, science, math and social studies. Due to implementation of new NGSS units in science across K-12, the supplies budget has increased (\$17,535). NGSS will be a State-mandated assessment for accountability in every district.

Object	Increase	% Increase from previous year	Accounts for % Increase of Total Curriculum and Staff Development Budget	Description
Director Salaries	\$231,499	1000%	55%	New 1.0 FTE Director of Arts & Music & 1.0 FTE Director of Guidance, previously non-administrative roles budgeted within the school level
Specialist Salaries	\$108,225	86%	26%	English Language Learner 1.0 FTE moved from Special Education to Curriculum and Staff Development budget
Staff & Program Development	\$45,704	26%	11%	Please see budget book, p. 189 for details
Contracted Services	\$1,277	2%	0.3%	Please see budget book, p. 191 for details
Tuition – Danbury Magnet	\$4,320	12%	1%	Increase in cost of tuition (\$1,784 to \$2,000) per student
Supplies	\$17,535	50%	4%	Please see budget book, p. 191 for details
Textbooks	\$15,337	142%	4%	Artificial increase due to prepurchase of this year’s textbooks from 16-17 budgets. This makes the request align with typical annual costs for textbooks.

16. For the years highlighted, can you explain what reductions were made each year to reflect Year-over-Year decreasing student population?

Comparison of Classroom Teachers to Student Population

Year	Student Enrollment	Certified Staff FTE's	Change in Certified Staff
2008-09	5,602	453.99	.27
2009-10	5,490	452.40	-1.59
2010-11	5,451	452.50	.10
2011-12	5,298	449.36	-3.14
2012-13	5,126	450.28	.92
2013-14	4,880	449.83	-.45
2014-15	4,738	435.93	-13.9
2015-16	4,554	435.35	-.58
2016-17	4,422	424.68	-10.67
2017-18	4,346	420.79	-3.89
2018-19	4,263	416.84	-3.95
Ten year change	-1,339		-37.15

17. Follow-up on question from 3/13/2018.

- a. Previous Question: Pgs. 61-70 – Why is the budget for MG approximately \$70,000 higher than SH when SH is bigger?

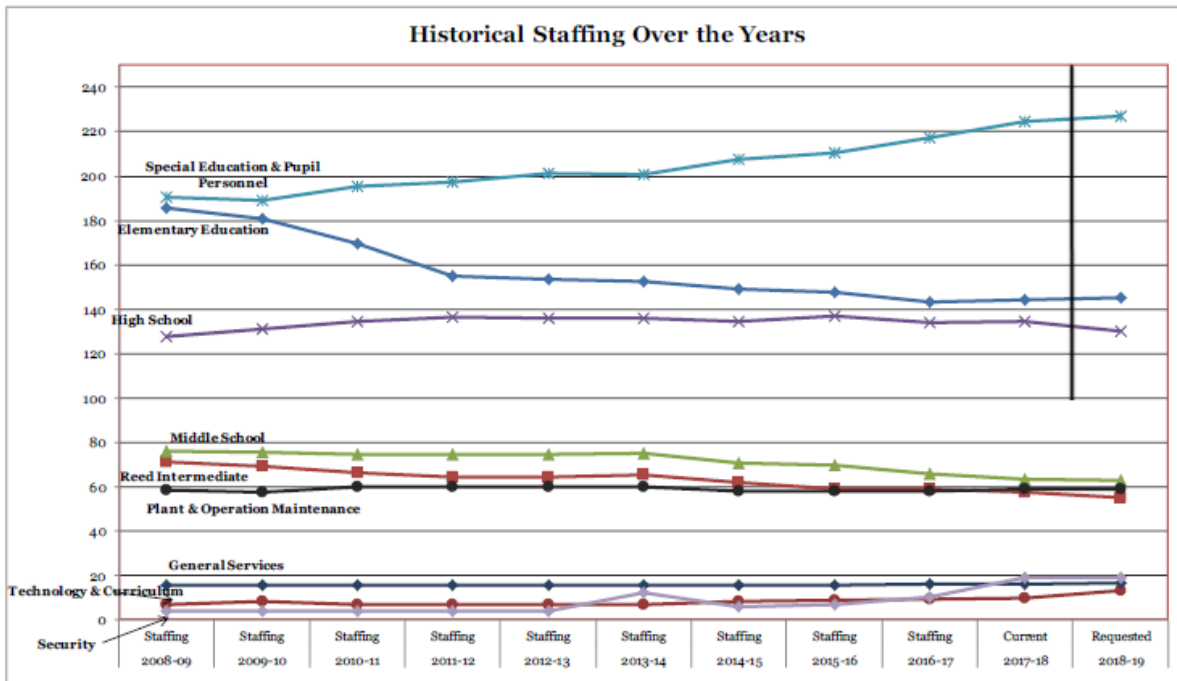
The difference in budget between these two schools is mainly due to differences in certified and non-certified salaries (p. 61 and 70). Given that the numbers of staff are nearly identical (p.68 and 79), the differences are explained by the salary level of the staff in each building (as determined by contracts).

- b. Given the answer to “a”, what is the makeup of the staff at SHS versus MGS that accounts for the difference in salaries of certified staff?

A quick look at the salary step breakdown for the two schools revealed the following:

	# SHS teachers	# of MGS teachers
Salary steps 1-5	12	4
Salary steps 6-10	8	9
Salary steps 11-15	15	24

18. Given the population decreases at the K-4 level, why have teacher position reductions not been more in line with these decreases? (Seem to be in line or less than upper grades where decreases have not been as great)



According to the table you provided (for question 18) and the chart on page 243 of the budget book (above), the staffing has been consistently reduced at each level, parallel with enrollment. In the last two years, the enrollment has started to increase in the elementaries and the number of staff has also increased.

19. Of all the new students who came into the district (2017-18), what percentage was identified for Special Education services?

135 new students transferred into Newtown Public Schools for the 2017-18 yr.

20.7% were already identified requiring Special Education Services

20. My first impression pulling these numbers is that instructional staff-to-student ratios remain fairly consistent as the student population decreases, but spec/security/maintenance/transportation staffing increases negate any decreases. This confounds any savings, and when combined with contractual salary/benefits increases, it may be more difficult to identify areas to reduce. Please correct or add to this observation to help create an overall assessment based on questions below.

Your impression is generally correct and is illustrated well by the graph on page 243 of the budget book. You can see that staff for Special Education and Pupil Services has increased while staff in the schools, particularly the elementary schools has decreased significantly (correlated with decreased enrollment). As you note, security has also increased.

21. Please provide a brief narrative for the chart below that describes the relationship between student population loss (-863), instructional staff reductions (-35.2), and specialist/non-instructional positions (+48.2)... and despite reductions in instructional staff, a net increase of +13

STUDENT POPULATION		2012-13	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-2019		TOTAL
P20	PreK	45	9	54	-12	42	-8	34	3	37	31	68	0	68	23
	K-4	1605	-140	1465	-80	1385	-62	1323	-29	1294	23	1317	20	1337	-268
	grade 5-6	819	-31	788	-58	730	-29	701	-42	659	-11	648	-30	618	-201
	grade 7-8	893	-36	857	-23	834	-22	812	-62	750	-38	712	-37	675	-218
	HS	1764	-48	1716	31	1747	-63	1684	-2	1682	-58	1624	-59	1565	-199
	TOTAL	5126	-246	4880	-142	4738	-184	4554	-132	4422	-53	4369	-106	4263	-863
	CUMULATIVE POP LOSS		-246		-388		-572		-704		-757		-863		
TRANS															
	# ToTal Busses	??		??			50.5		50.5		55		55		
			GREEN=Ratio of student to instructors K-12 (e.g., '12-13 K-4 is 1605/1												
STAFFING		2012-13	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-2019		TOTAL
P49	K-4	153.53	10.5	152.61	9.6	148.88	9.3	147.55	9	143.07	9	144.04	9.1	145.12	-8.41
P106	grade 5-6	64.35	12.7	65.28	12.1	62.07	11.8	58.87	11.9	58.85	11.2	57.45	11.3	55.04	-9.31
P126	grade 7-8	74.48	12	74.77	11.5	70.48	11.8	69.52	11.7	65.54	11.4	63.25	11.3	62.94	-11.54
P162	HS	136.11	13	136.11	12.6	134.65	13	136.74	12.3	134.02	12.6	134.57	12.1	130.17	-5.94
	Sub Total	428.47	12	428.77	11.4	416.08	11.4	412.68	11	401.48	11	399.31	10.9	393.27	-35.2
	Special Ed	154.24										179.39		178.39	24.15
	Pupil Pers Svc	46.85										45.11		48.57	1.72
	Curriculum	0										1.9		5.4	5.4
	Tech	7										8		8	1
	Gen Svcs	15.6										16		16.5	0.9
	Security	4										19		19	15
	Plant Ops	60										59		59	-1
	Tranp Svcs	0										1		1	1
	Cont Ed	1.57										1.57		1.57	0
	Sub Total	289.26										330.97		337.43	48.17
	TOTAL STAFF	717.73										730.28		730.7	12.97
															NET STAFFING CHG

(Chart provided by LC member)

Similar to budgetary questions relating to declining enrollment, staffing levels are determined by several factors, only one of which is enrollment. Other factors include educational goals (providing increased social-emotional supports) and changes in programs (implementation of new language program in elementary schools) or services (increased need for school security, English Language Learners, or Special Education).

Influences on 2018-19 Budget

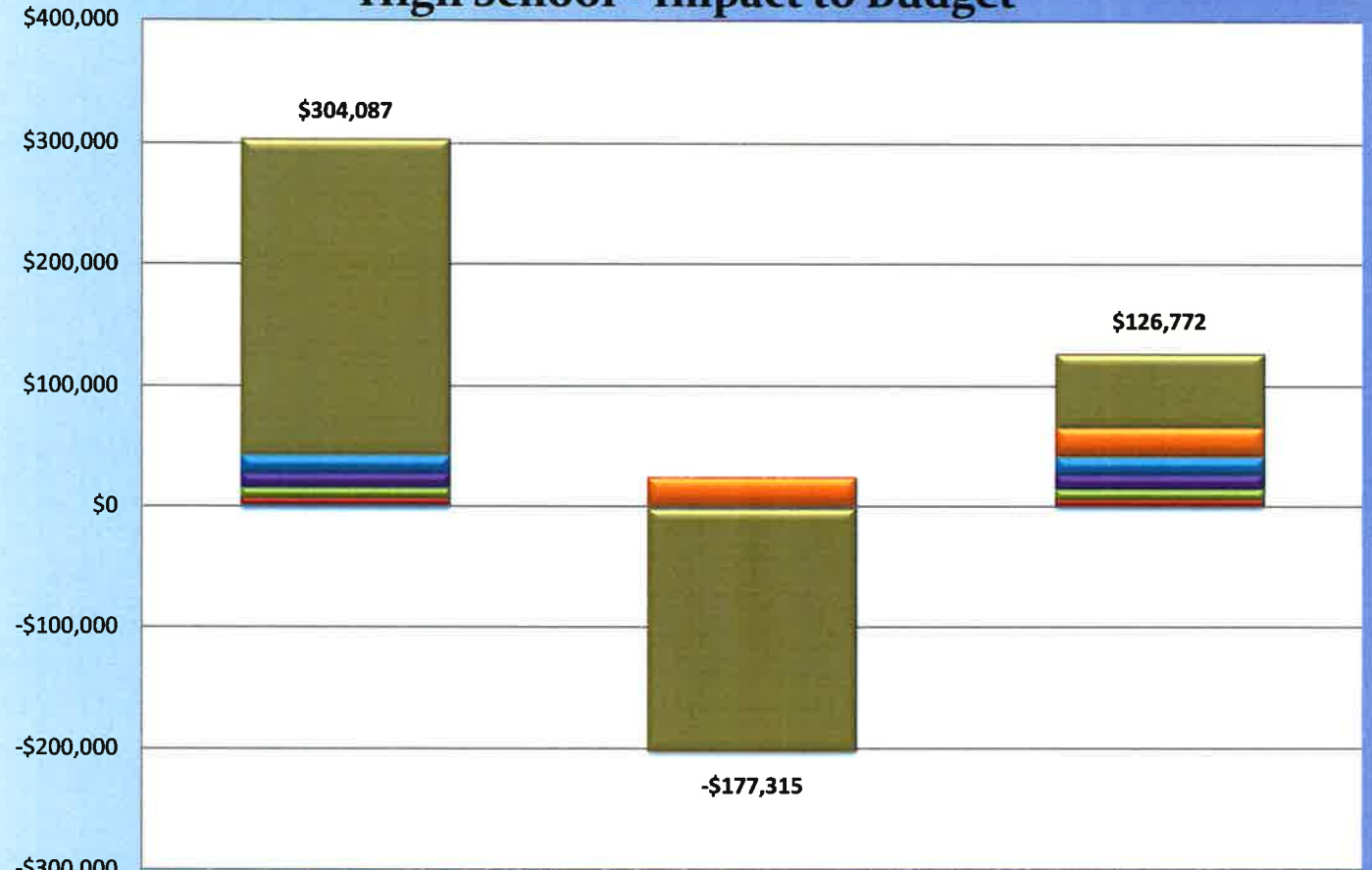
- Budget Priorities and Educational Goals
- Contractual obligations and economic factors
 - Maintenance
 - Salaries
 - Benefits
 - Supplies
- Enrollment – number of staff
- Changes in programs or services

More specifically, staff in each of the schools has been reduced since 2012-13 based on enrollment changes and consistent with class size guidelines. This can be seen by the reduction of 35.2 FTE in Elementary/Reed Intermediate/Middle/High School staffing between 2012 and 2018.

Some areas are independent of overall enrollment changes, though, and have changed based on a change in educational goals, programs and services. Most notably, Special Education enrollment has increased by 24.15 FTE because of increasing demands in this area. Additionally, 6 security personnel were added to staff immediately after 12/14, and more recently, 9 Armed School Security Officers were transferred from the town budget to the district budget for a total of 15 security personnel. Curriculum increased by 5.4 FTE for a variety of reasons, including the implementation of a new language program in elementary schools (2 FTE), the movement of an English Language Learner teacher from the Special Education budget to Curriculum (1 FTE), and the movement of two personnel from the high school budget (2.0 FTE) to serve as administrators.

*Just a note of clarification: the green numbers appear to be based on **total staff** (not teachers) in the school, including administrators, specialists, clerks and paraeducators.*

High School - Impact to Budget



	Principal's Increase to Budget	Superintendent's Change	Balance after Superintendent's Change
Staffing	\$261,063	-\$200,662	\$60,401
Project Lead-the-way		\$24,347	\$24,347
Textbooks	\$14,865		\$14,865
Tuition Vo Ag & Magnet (more students)	\$12,218		\$12,218
Musical & Athletic Equipment	\$8,200		\$8,200
Athletic Insurance	\$5,500		\$5,500
All Other Objects	\$2,241	-\$1,000	\$1,241