

Please note: These minutes are pending Board approval.
Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut

Minutes of the Board of Education virtual meeting held January 21, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

M. Ku, Chair
D. Delia, Vice Chair
D. Cruson, Secretary
D. Leidlein
J. Vouros
R. Harriman-Stites
D. Zukowski

L. Rodrigue
A. Uberti
T. Vadas
12 Staff
2 Press
Public by phone

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and stated it was being recorded and being live streamed.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education go into executive session to interview the candidate for the Director of Technology position and invited Dr. Rodrigue and Dennis Colclough. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 1 – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive session ended at 7:30 p.m.

Item 2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 3 – Action on Candidate for Director of Technology Position

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education appoint Dennis Colclough as Director of Technology effective on or about February 22, 2021. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Delia was in full support of Mr. Colclough and was very impressed with answers to his questions. He is looking forward to his expertise to serve the children of Newtown.

Dr. Rodrigue welcomed Mr. Colclough, was very please he was joining our team, and thanked the members of the committee and Al Miles who was on the second interview.

Motion passes unanimously.

Mrs. Ku was very impressed with him and was looking forward to him joining our district.

Mr. Colclough was excited for the opportunity and the process to fill this position. He appreciated the interview committee which included a variety of members including Al Miles. It gives him an understanding of the core foundation Newtown has.

Item 4 – Special Education Budget

Deb Petersen began her presentation by stating that her staff from teachers to paras, BTs, nurses and supervisors are amazing and they rose to the challenge since March. She also thanked Mrs. Uberti and Dr. Purcaro for reaching out to teachers and taking into account the special education department which was very much appreciated.

Mrs. Petersen spoke about the special education enrollment over the past five years. Currently we have 642 special education students with 20 pulled for home schooling until next year. The number changes almost daily. We have 38 new students to the district with special education needs.

Mr. Delia asked for an explanation on the law regarding how we are not allowed to reduce dollars in this area.

Mrs. Petersen said that under the IDEA Grant we get money for special education but you cannot reduce that amount for the next year and you have to use the funds. You can't spend less than you did the year before.

This year she asked for two special education teachers for the middle school which goes with the new schedule to provide co-teaching which is also new. She also asked for a teacher at Middle Gate because they received more students identified this year. They have 63 students with 11 in the referral process. We anticipate 150 students for ESY so we would like an additional supervisor for the 16 days of summer school.

Mr. Delia asked why there was no increase for training or professional development if adding staff members.

Mrs. Petersen said the staff will come to her when they find training they want to attend. We have had enough funds in our budget to take care of training. No one has reached out so far.

Ms. Zukowski noted that she has two online packages but some of the others are in the curriculum budget and asked if it was because her budget is completely within the special education budget.

Mrs. Petersen said that Everyday Speech is in her budget. We did move some of our staff to digital evaluations and we bought ipads for this. Technology is paid for from her budget.

Ms. Zukowski referred to the special education contingency of \$100,000. The goal said there would be one on a 5-year average which was around \$400,000 and asked if we were going to keep the \$100,000 or increase it to \$400,000.

Mrs. Vadas said we have the previous five-year average. Roughly \$300,000 was put in place three years ago which was supposed to offset the TBDs.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said she would be open to increasing it. It wasn't specific to anything but to be there to plan for the future. We've had to fight to keep that contingency every year and was not sure if now was the time to have that conversation.

Mrs. Vadas clarified that the average amount was \$226,000 over the last five years.

Mr. Delia asked if we add the middle school special education teachers, would that help the students exit special education when they get to high school.

Mrs. Petersen said she doesn't think they would exit from special education but sees them being more prepared for high school. By adding the special education teachers to the clusters it allows these students the opportunity to take a language or art classes.

Mrs. Leidlein asked how much we have used of the contingency money for this year.

Mrs. Vadas said we haven't use any of it yet.

Item 5 – Pupil Personnel Budget

Mrs. Petersen stated she has not asked for additional staffing. Some grants have sunsetted so we are waiting to hear from NOVO and another grant. For Medicaid funds we don't receive a lot of money so it takes a few years for the money to build up to be able to fund a position. \$22,366 of the counselor position salary was provided through the Covid Relief Fund.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites was concerned about social emotional learning and asked if she feels we have the staff resources and Professional Development to adequately support the students.

Mrs. Petersen has the same concerns. We have seen a rise in student anxieties so we are contracting with outside resources to work with students at home. She is confident in the staff professional development to help.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked if there was an area needing more support. Mrs. Petersen stated that we have the staff we need right now but we don't know what next year will bring. The decision for an outplacement is not taken lightly. We get very creative to try to keep students in our district. Those numbers go up and down.

Item 6 – Health Budget

Anne Dalton thanked the Board for their support in this difficult year which has given the nurses enough time and staffing to step up to the challenges. She is very proud of them. We have had extra staffing in the elementary schools due to the virus to help in our isolation rooms in three of our schools. They have had additional time so they could help with contact tracing. There is a nursing position moving from the middle school to the high school which is due to following a student who needs one-on-one nursing care.

Ms. Zukowski referred to page 142 and asked why the extra time was carried forward.

Mrs. Dalton said it does not reflect the extra time we had for Covid.

Mrs. Vadas said we transferred money into the nursing account for additional coverage. That amount is for the additional time they are working.

Mrs. Dalton said the nurses have worked more than a seven-hour day for a long time as one needs to be in school once buses have cleared to be available if there are any issues on buses.

Ms. Zukowski asked if the intent was to go to an eight-hour day.

Dr. Rodrigue stated that we moved this forward and has talked to the nurses' union about this prior to Covid. We want to carry that forward.

Mr. Delia thanked Mrs. Dalton for all she and her staff have done this year and asked if there was anything she didn't ask for that she thinks she will need.

Mrs. Dalton hoped to return to normalcy by next fall but if not we will continue to need help. We are okay right now.

Item 7 – Newtown High School Budget

Dr. Longobucco thanked her staff at Newtown High School who have risen to the occasion and also thanked her nursing staff so much for all they have done. The budget drivers include having needs based on the high school and district strategic plans and objects as well as state mandates, to ensure all programs have adequate resources, to have technology and platforms to ensure online access and equity to all students, to monitor class size and enrollment across the disciplines, and be aware of contractual increases. She also spoke about the Capstone Project for seniors.

Ms. Zukowski inquired about the co-taught classes and Dr. Longobucco assured the Board that we always try to keep this level classes smaller and the students are being well-served as we have good teachers in these classes.

Matt Memoli thanked Dr. Rodrigue, Dr. Longobucco and the Board for their support of the athletics program.

Item 8 – Curriculum Budget

Mrs. Uberti thanked the incredible staff, teachers, support staff and paras, as well as administrators, for their dedication to help us move forward. The curriculum budget is broken down into four sections which include staff and curriculum development, staff training provided by outside consultants, contracted services, and textbooks. Some reductions include moving the K-6 FLES teachers into the school budgets, payment for two para professional development days has been absorbed into the para salaries, next year's professional development will require less coverage for teachers during the school day, K-5 math training is included with the purchase of a new resource, there is only attendance at two local conferences, less supplies are need for science now, and duplication of some memberships will be in school budgets.

Ms. Zukowski asked if online courses would be in the curriculum or schools budgets. Mrs. Uberti said historically they have been spread out. The ones in her budget are hinged to go across grades and some include the high school but most are multi-level. Seesaw is for Kindergarten and grade one so that might be moved to the school budgets.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites noted that we have spoken about an equity audit on the curriculum in PEAC and asked if that was looked at to add to the budget and how we can support that process going forward. There is also public support for doing that.

Mrs. Uberti said that has been discussed and we are waiting for the new position to be filled to work on a plan for that. We also have a committee in place to help achieve that.

Dr. Rodrigue thanked the administrator at the meeting this evening.

Mrs. Ku also thanked everyone for being there and all staff members in terms of dealing with this Covid year.

Item 9 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to adjourn. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously

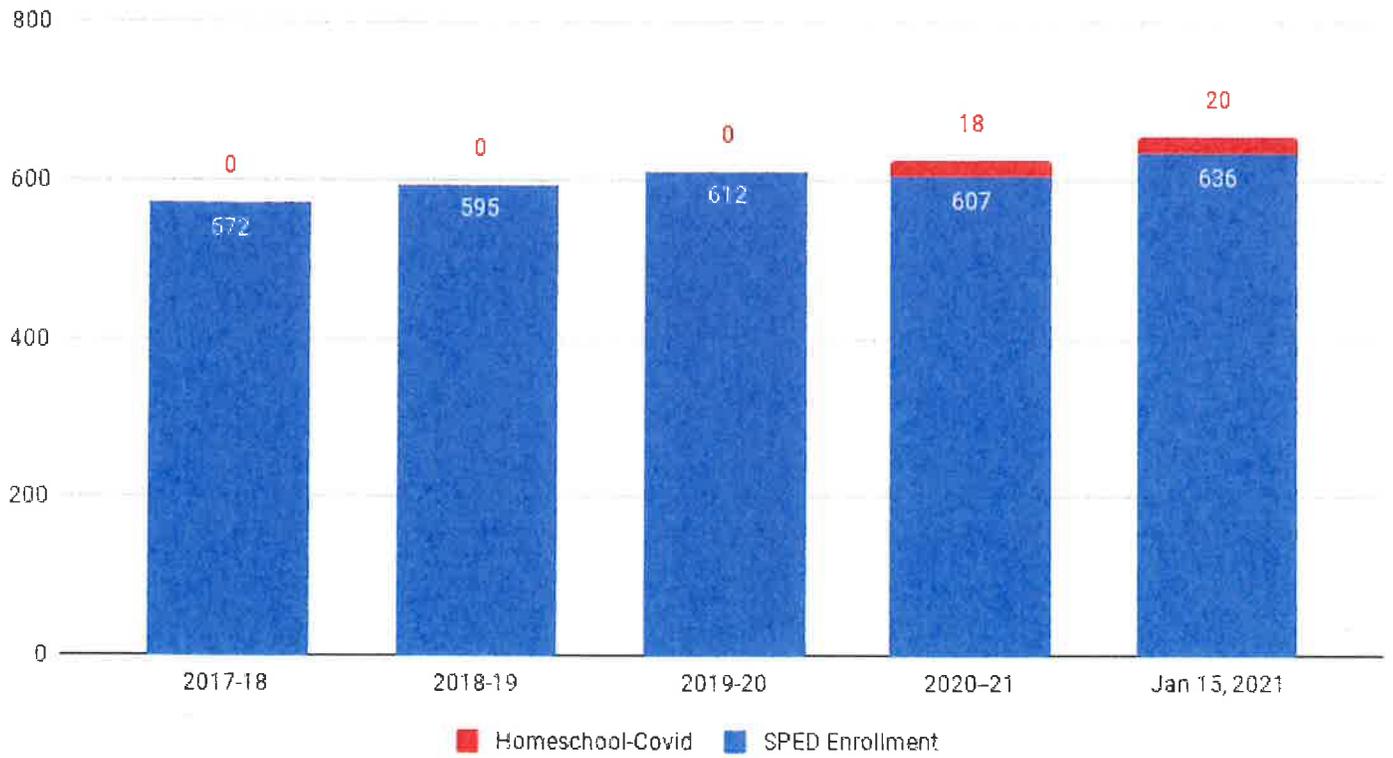
Item 10 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

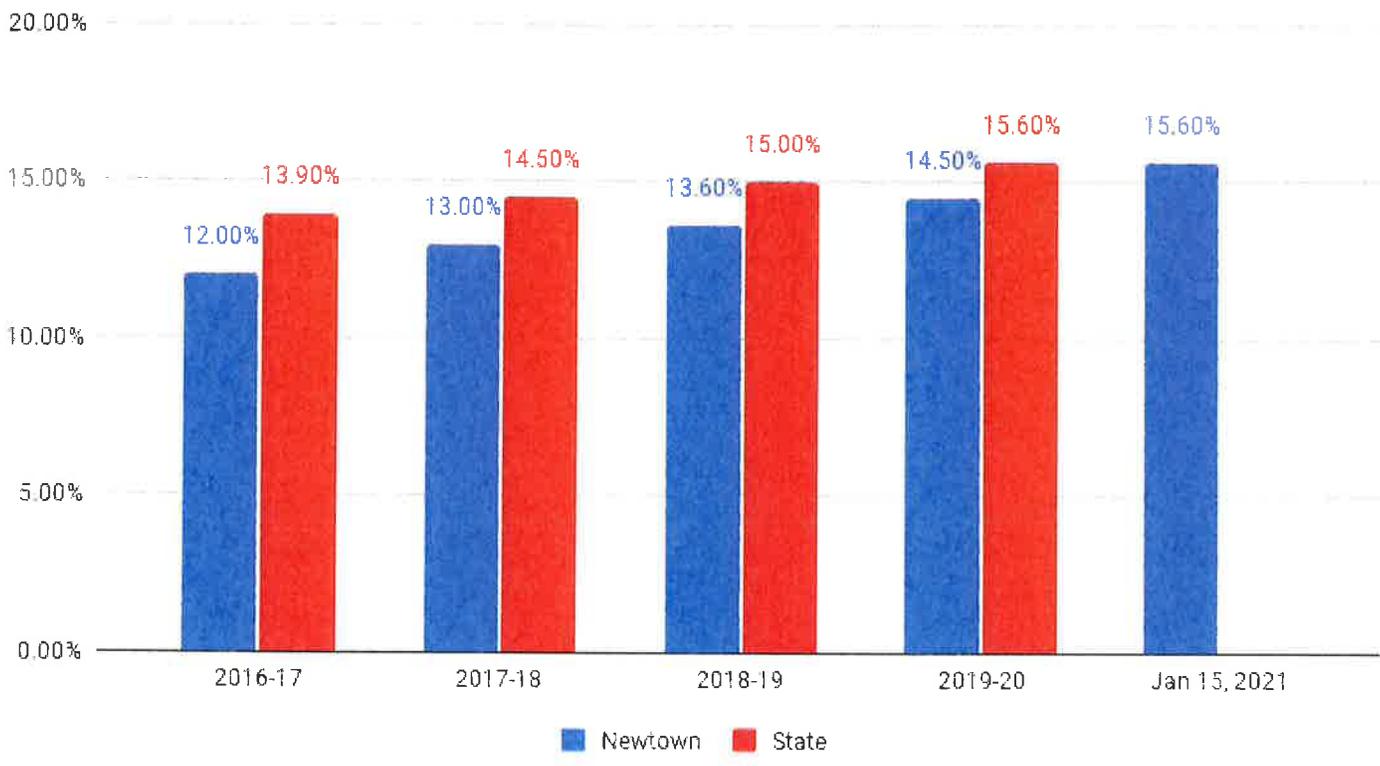
Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

District Special Education Enrollment- 5 Years



State/District Special Education Percentage



Newtown High School



2021-2022 Budget

Budget Drivers

- Needs based on school and district strategic plans and objectives and State-mandates
- Ensure all programs have adequate resources to maintain a high level of quality instruction
- Technology and platforms necessary to ensure online access and equity to all students
- Class size and enrollment across the disciplines
- Contractual (certified and non-certified contracts, increases in other contracts such as transportation and insurance)

Proposed 2021-2022 Budget

Reductions

- ❖ Certified Positions
 - ✓ 1.0 FTE- Social Studies
 - ✓ .80 FTE- Science
 - ✓ .50 FTE- Tech Ed
- ❖ Non Certified
 - ✓ 1.0 Tutor Math Center
 - ✓ .50 Career Center
 - ✓ .29 Paraeducator

Additions

- ❖ Equipment
 - ✓ Melody Chimes
- ❖ Contracted Services
 - ✓ Swank
 - ✓ Kami
 - ✓ Math XL
 - ✓ Pear Deck
 - ✓ EdAdvance - Capstone
- ❖ Staff Training
 - ✓ Gizmos

Class sizes and Enrollment

	2020-2021 Actual (1441 Students)			2021-2022 Projected (1396 Students)		
	Students (FTE)	Sections (FTE)	Average	Students (FTE)	Sections (FTE)	Average
Department						
Science	1498	79	19.0	1451	76	19.1
Social Studies	1677	77	21.8	1624	72	22.6
Tech Ed	25	2.5	10.0			

Curriculum & Staff Development Budget Proposal 2021-2022

Anne Uberti
Assistant Superintendent
Presentation to the Board of Education
January 21, 2021



Goals of the 21-22 Budget

Strategic Plan: Objective 1, Strategy 1:

“We will develop and implement a rigorous academic curriculum and ensure that all staff use effective instructional tools, best practices, assessment data and intervention resources to improve academic standing and inspire students to excel.”

Listening, Learning, Leading

Identified priorities related to curriculum and instruction and staff development are derived from meaningful interactions with all stakeholders:

- Districtwide curriculum committees
- Direct conversations with teachers and paraeducators
- Discussions with Board members in C&I
- Feedback from parents, students and fellow administrators
- Firsthand observations of classrooms
 - Collegial conversations with staff from comparable districts
- New state and/or federal initiatives
- Unanticipated conditions impacting education

Staff & Curriculum Development

- Continued development and adoption of curriculum in the Concept-based Curriculum and Instruction format (CBCI)
- Funding for staff to provide for or participate in necessary staff development:
 - Coordinators to develop and lead in-house training and support
 - New Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM)
 - 2 days of Professional Development prior to the start of the school year to support new K-5 math resource
 - Collaborative Planning Summer Meetings for K-4 Leadership Teams
- District Committees that provide leadership and direction in the following areas:
 - English Language Arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Studies
 - Digital Literacy & Technology
 - Curriculum Development
 - Professional Development
 - Special Project (Vision of the Graduate)

Staff Training

Professional development opportunities provided by outside consultants:

- New, mandated TEAM Hub to manage new teacher state-required training and support
- Professional development supported by outside consultants
 - Lesson study for NHS Science teachers to continue to shift instructional practices as required by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
 - Professional development on differentiation and the use of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to increase rigor at RIS and NMS
 - Support for teachers at NMS in the shift to a co-taught special education model
- Attendance at Regional Conferences
 - Connecticut Reading Association
 - Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England
- English Language Learner (ELL) Training
 - Provide support to our ELL teacher, as well as build capacity of staff who support ELLs on a daily basis
- Professional Development Day Speakers and Presenters
 - 2 Full District PD Days and 6 District Professional Learning Community (DPLC) days

Contracted Services

- Rubicon Atlas (Annual Renewal)
 - Curriculum management platform
- NWEA Map (Annual Renewal)
 - Measures of Academic Progress - district-wide computer adaptive assessments of academic progress
- Dibels (Annual Renewal)
 - The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills® (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills used as universal screening tool for early detection of possible reading disabilities
- Virtual High School (Annual Renewal)
 - Online learning opportunities for those who have not had success in the traditional school setting

Textbooks

- **Amplify**
 - Hands-on science kits to aid in the implementation of the NGSS Science Standards at the 6-8 levels
- **Western Civilization Textbooks**
 - Replace outdated textbooks to coincide with adoption of the recently approved Western Civ. curriculum
- **Spanish Books for Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES)**
 - Grades K-6
- **Mystery Science (2-year subscription)**
 - Elementary Science Resource

Textbooks

- **New K-5 Mathematics resource - 6 Year Contract**
 - K-5 teachers currently piloting two new possible resources: Envision and Bridges
 - Selection will take place this spring with rollout and training prior to implementation in fall of 2021
 - Quotes for each program have come in at around \$200,000; \$70,000 was included in the current budget to offset the impact on the 21-22 budget and an additional \$30,000 that will not be expended in other lines due to the impact of the pandemic will be applied resulting in an estimated \$100,000 impact to next year's budget.

Contracted Services

- **Seesaw (1-Year Contract)**
 - Interactive learning platform used in Kindergarten and Grade 1
- **Screencastify (1-Year Contract)**
 - Google Chrome extension makes it easy to record, edit and share videos of a computer screen and that can be easily shared
- **IXL (Year 2 of a 3 Contract)**
 - Personalized online learning platform used in district for math and ELA
- **Lexia (1-Year Contract)**
 - Research-based, digital reading program that helps students work independently to develop critical literacy skills
- **Newsela (1-Year Contract)**
 - Digital resource that takes real news content and turns it into leveled reading material that is aligned with state standards

Other notable changes to Curriculum & Staff Development Budget

- **Specialist Salaries**
 - K-6 FLES teachers have been moved to school budgets
 - ELL teacher remains
- **Para-educators**
 - Payment for 2 professional development days absorbed into para salaries
- **Substitutes**
 - Next year's PD plan will require less coverage for teachers during the school day
- **Staff Training**
 - K-5 math training included with the purchase of a new resource
- **Staff Mileage/Travel**
 - Only including attendance at two local conferences
- **Supplies**
 - Less supplies for science now needed
- **Memberships**
 - Duplication of some memberships with school budgets