

STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROPOSED 2020-21 BUDGET



Proposed by
The Superintendent of Schools
January 9, 2020

2020-21 Proposed Education Budget

Stonington Public Schools Board of Education

January 9, 2020

Introduction:

The Board of Education submits their budget to the Board of Finance each year in February. Prior to this year's submission of the proposed budget, the District has completed extensive reviews of revenues and expenditures. For the 2020-21 budget, the Superintendent and Director of Finance met with site principals and district department directors to analyze each expenditure recommendation. Each line item in the 2020-21 budget was reviewed and justification was provided. During January, the Board of Education will further consider all expenditures and may make some adjustments to the proposed budget.

Budget Philosophy:

This proposed budget is designed to meet the needs of the District within conservative fiscal parameters. There was no specific target percentage increase set by the Superintendent or the Board of Education. This budget was generated by a line-by-line review of what was necessary to provide quality instruction to all students.

This proposed budget provides for the instructional priorities of each school and sets an established staffing baseline for the next 3-5 years.

Budget Format:

The budget format follows recommendations from the Board of Education and the Board of Finance. Information was added this past year to show adopted and revised budgets for the past two years. The budget is open and transparent and provides rationale for each line item. In addition, the overall budget is listed by department and by school.

Historical Perspective of the 2019-20 Budget:

The development of last year's 2019-20 budget was unique in that the district was dealing with several major impacts to programs. Pawcatuck and Mystic Middle Schools were consolidated into the new Stonington Middle School. This move allowed the student population in grades 6, 7, 8 to experience a strong academic program plus an array of special ENCORE classes. In addition, extended learning blocks allowed for supplemental instruction in ELA and mathematics that included time for extra instruction for support or enrichment as appropriate.

Secondly, the 5th grades returned to the elementary level and Pre-K programs moved back to the elementary sites. This year Deans Mill and West Vine provided programs for Pre-K through Grade 5 in their new updated facilities.

Two school district buildings closed and were returned to the Town and one building was repurposed. West Broad Street School and the former Central Office closed while the former Pawcatuck Middle School was converted to the new District Office. The new District Office configuration provided space for an alternative education center and space for the town to use for recreation programs and supply storage.

Major Budget Challenges for 2020-21 and Beyond:

The goal of establishing a budget must be to maintain and improve instruction for student success within the parameters of what the entire community believes is appropriate financially. This year and for the next several years, it is certain that the State of Connecticut will be making reductions to local funding based on the deficits at the state level. The District will work closely with the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen to consider the impacts of potential reductions to state and to federal funds that have supported educational programs in the past.

Specific Local Challenges:

It is always difficult to provide a budget that meets all of the needs of the District while also keeping costs to a minimum. Prior to making any additions or reductions, the District prioritized needs and expenditures within the education budget to keep the proposed increase to a minimum.

One ongoing impact is that of our special education program. Over the past few years, the District has experienced newly enrolled students requiring extensive services and current students requiring additional services. This trend is expected to continue in the near future. To offset some of the impacts of special education costs, the District has assumed some transportation responsibilities through the purchase of specialized vans. We have also implemented several new programs in our schools and increased our behavioral supports for students with those needs. Beginning in 2019-20 the new Alternative Education Program (ANNEX) for special education students, expelled students, and students who need a smaller instructional setting was initiated at the new District Office site.

Equity between the schools has also been a challenge. With the procurement of additional technology, students in all K-8 schools now have equal access to devices including Chromebooks and teachers have access to smart boards. In addition, teacher and support staff ratios are equitable between the two elementary schools. Budgets and staffing at the elementary level provide equity through formulas and consideration of special needs for each elementary school. The consolidation of the middle schools eliminated the equity issue for that level.

Another need continues to be related to facilities. The Board of Education continues to receive the annual updated Deferred Maintenance Plan that shows the ongoing need to keep our old buildings intact. The Town/BOF may want to consider selling the former Central Office and selling or leasing the West Broad site to offset some of the CIP expenditures.

Enrollment Impact on Educational Programs, Staffing and Budget:

The District has experienced declining enrollment for the past several years and will continue to have a slight decline for the next few years. This decline has already resulted in reduced staffing and was part of the decision to consolidate the middle schools and reformat the elementary program grade levels.

The District has now reached a point where further staff reductions will have negative impacts on programs at the middle and high school levels. For example, the number of classroom teachers at Stonington High School has decreased by 3.5 FTE between 2015 and 2018 due to the enrollment decline of approximately 75 students. SHS enrollment will stay somewhat level next year but will slightly decline again beginning in 2022. We are now at a point where further teacher position reductions will limit programs available to students. The administration and Board of Education will need to work together to maintain programs when enrollment continues to decline in the mid-2020's. A similar situation may occur at the middle school level and affect Encore and other classes.

Further staffing reductions would also have a negative effect on the elementary schools. The current instruction design in upper elementary grades includes teacher specialists in language arts and mathematics. This has provided a stronger base for those two important instructional areas resulting in higher student achievement. However, with declining enrollment, keeping that staffing level at both elementary schools will result in an inequity in class sizes. This budget supports equity of programs for both DMS and WVSS so every child in the district has the same educational opportunities and supports.

Lastly, if teaching positions are eliminated due to enrollment numbers and budget reductions, the impact will be on middle and high school music and art programs as those are the areas where class sizes are lower than other subjects. This administration and the Board of Education has worked hard to keep high quality art and music programs. This budget supports keeping the current art and music staffing even with the decline in enrollment.

Addressing the Five Identified Areas of Need/Concern:

During the past few months, the Board of Education has been presented with five areas of need/concern. The following are administrative recommendations re these areas showing no budget impacts.

- 1) **Maintenance/Custodial Supervisor:** This issue has been resolved by eliminating one MO position and adding the necessary supervisor position.
- 2) **Centralized Registration:** The principals have been asking for a centralized registration process in order to assure consistency. Beginning this summer, all new registrations and the re-registration process will be handled out of the District Office through the technology and facilities staff. There will be no additional budget impact to this change.
- 3) **Compliance, Climate and Policy Review:** The areas of concern here relate to providing ample support for Title IX issues, new climate/safety compliance and reporting, Board Policy review and monitoring, and family engagement. We plan to implement two part-time support positions from Title I funds for the climate/safety/policy/family engagement issues. Family engagement will include chronic attendance monitoring and

support. The Assistant Principal - Guidance from SHS will assume a supervisory role to assist with Title IX issues.

- 4) **ANNEX support:** With the implementation and expected expansion of the ANNEX, administrative support and oversight is needed. In addition to the Title IX responsibilities mentioned above, the Assistant Principal/Guidance from SHS will assume administrative responsibilities for the ANNEX.
- 5) **Human Resources Hiring and Processing:** There is a need for a centralized consistent hiring process including hiring checklists, maintenance of personnel files and annual contract/legal notifications to staff members. These responsibilities will be reorganized at the district level with current staff with no additional budget costs.

In summary, the five stated needs/concerns will all be addressed within the current staffing with no additional staff or budget increases.

Looking to the Future:

The District will continue to provide quality instruction to all students within a conservative budget. All students will continue to have equal access to the core curriculum and educational programs and extracurricular offerings will be maintained at the current level.

Strategies for Keeping Costs Down While Maintaining and Improving Programs:

The District has been aggressive with strategies for keeping the costs to our taxpayers at a minimum while maintaining and improving instruction for all students. The following is a list of specific strategies and actions taken in the past year:

- 1) With consolidation in 2019-20, the District returned two properties to the Town. The Town could sell or lease those properties to help cover the educational expenses of this and of future budgets.
- 2) When there is an unexpected expense, the District looks to reprioritizing expenses before requesting new funds from the Board of Finance. An example of this would be the initial cost of the four HVAC units at Stonington High School. In this case, reprioritizing M/O funds accomplished the acquisition and installation of the units without requesting additional funds.
- 3) The District has attempted to regionalize programs with neighboring districts. From regular education programs to special education programs to food service and adult education programs, this effort to share program costs will continue.
- 4) The District has made every effort to keep utility costs down. We were able to negotiate favorable electricity costs. In addition, we are considering programs to replace current lighting systems with new LED lights that will provide significant energy savings in future years.
- 5) The District has taken several actions related to employee benefits that will provide quality insurance coverages while reducing costs. In December 2016, the District hired a new health care insurance consultant. In addition, the District issued an RFP for health benefits that has the potential to keep increases to a minimum. As of

2017-18, all negotiated contracts have the high deductible health plan (HDHP) as the base program for all covered employees which will also minimize future premium increases.

- 6) In June 2019, the District offered a retirement incentive program to teachers for the first time ever. Teachers who took advantage of this program were offered a financial incentive with a variety of options. Thirteen teachers signed up for this program which helped with the staffing needs of consolidation and with financial issues for 2019-20.
- 7) The creation of the ANNEX allows us to provide educational services for students outside of the regular school setting and/or in lieu of outplacements. The plan is to expand this program in 2020 and beyond.

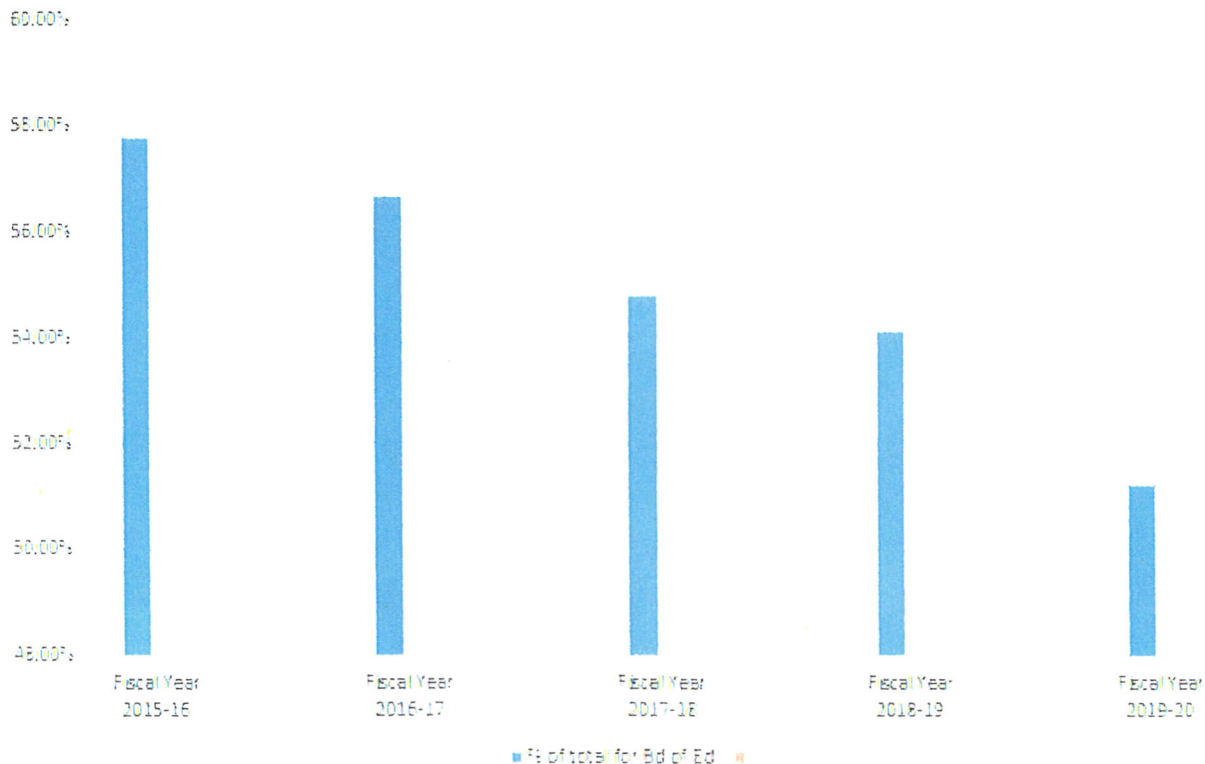
Budget Increase for 2020-21:

The Board of Education proposed budget for 2020-21 includes an increase of **3.48%**.

The average budget increase for the past three years is as follows: 2018-19 at 2.64%; 2019-20 at -0.0030%; 2020-21 at 3.48% for an average of **2.04%**.

The District's share of the total Town budget continues to decrease as shown below.

**Percent of Bd of Ed
Budget as Compared to total Town Budget**
(Source is from the Town of Stonington Adopted Budgets as found on the
Town of Stonington website.)



Staffing and Program Summary for 2020-21

Stonington High School:

- 1) The 2019-20 teacher staffing will remain for 2020-21 even though there is a slight decline in enrollment. Any reduction at this time would affect program offerings.
- 2) The Assistant Principal - Guidance position will assume some administrative responsibilities at the District Office including assistance with the ANNEX and with Title IX issues.

Alternative Education Program (ANNEX) at New District Office:

- 1) Options to expand existing Annex Program during the 2020-21 school year
 - a) The addition of a program to meet the needs of elementary special needs students with behavioral challenges
 - b) The addition of a program to meet the needs of our 18-21 year old population who require full time transition programming (vocational training and daily living skills)
 - c) Each option would require the additional teaching staff (1 per classroom), as well as support services staff (paras and behavior technicians). It is projected that staffing costs would be supported by reduced need for NPS tuition. The addition of these programs will be determined based upon the ability to create an appropriately sized cohort of students, all with similar needs.
- 2) Three of the students currently enrolled in the ANNEX would otherwise be in a NPS setting at a total cost of approximately \$198,000.

Stonington Middle School (SMS):

- 1) Maintain 23 FTE core teacher staffing.
- 2) Funding for musical instruments and instrument repairs.
- 3) CIP main issues for SMS:
 - a. Replace roof
 - b. Air conditioning
 - c. Safety entrance; cameras; security
 - d. General appearance, paint
- 4) Reduction of the 1.0 FTE Dean position
- 5) Reduction of 0.6 FTE guidance counselor position

Elementary Schools:

- 1) Additional library para hours for general library coverage as needed
- 2) Extracurricular stipends of \$5,068 for each elementary school for clubs, sports, other needs

- 3) Continue with music split 0.5 FTE instrumental teacher position
- 4) Provides teacher staffing based on enrollment plus additional teachers in grades 3, 4, 5 for departmentalization if needed (3.0 at WV and 1.0 at DMS).
- 5) Social worker 0.5 FTE from DMS to WVSS. Replace at DMS with 0.6 FTE guidance counselor split with SMS.

Special Federal Funded Programs (Title 1, Title 2, Title 4):

- 1) 1.0 FTE Math Interventionist (WV)
- 2) 1.0 FTE Elementary Program Coordinator (DM/WV)
- 3) 0.6 FTE Math Interventionist (SMS)
- 4) 0.6 FTE Reading Interventionist (SMS)
- 5) 0.4 FTE Curriculum Specialist (SMS/SHS)
- 6) 0.3 FTE Family Engagement and Chronic Absenteeism Specialist
- 7) 0.1 FTE School Safety and Family Engagement Specialist

Other District Impacts of 2020-21 Budget:

1) Non-Public School Placements (NPS)

- a. Current total of 27 NPS placements
- b. Of those 27, four are placed by DCF/State
- c. Of those 27, eight are in specialized transition programs for students 18-21 year olds
- d. Total projected NPS enrollment for 2020-21 is 23

2) Magnet Schools Enrollment Data

School	2018	2019	Projected 2020
Winthrop Magnet Elementary School STEM	1	1	5
Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School	7	6	6
Science and Tech Magnet School SE CT (Gr 9-12)	14	13	10
Visual and Performing Arts Magnet (Gr 9-10)	2	2	1
Visual and Performing Arts Magnet (Gr 6-8)		3	1
Science and Tech Magnet School SE CT (Gr 6-8)	2	4	2
Regional Multicultural Magnet School	12	11	17
The Friendship School	5	2	4
Dual Language and Arts Magnet School	3	3	4
Marine Science Magnet High School of SE CT	29	29	30
Three Rivers Middle College Magnet School	4	7	4
Total	79	81	84

2018-19 Adopted Budget	Acct	2018-19 Expended	Acct	2019-20 Adopted budget	2019-20 Revised Budget	Description	2020-21 Bd of Ed Proposed Budget	Increase	% Change	Reason for % Change
2,188,335	111	2,309,324	111	2,107,369		Administrative Salary	2,191,014	83,645	3.97%	Administrators' contracts
14,772,338	113	14,280,588	113	14,482,513		Teacher Salary	15,057,086	574,573	3.97%	Teacher contract, no new positions
847,997	114	964,382.00	114	995,212		Secretarial Salary	1,023,801	28,589	2.87%	Conditions of employment wages, no new positions
1,313,349	115	1,318,069.00	115	1,275,281		Maintenance/Custodian Salary	1,296,229	20,949	1.64%	Custodial/Maintenance contract. No new position but one less maintenance employee but one new Maintenance/Custodial Supervisor position.
365,698	116	318,693.00	116	313,280		Nurse Salary	312,976	(304)	-0.10%	Will have a retirement.
1,873,778	117	1,854,713.00	117	1,786,178		Paraprofessional Salary	1,918,608	132,429	7.41%	No new positions that are added but additional positions added in 2019-20 due to IEPs for special needs students. This can happen throughout the year as needs arise.
651,699	118	640,950.00	118	668,047		Non-Certified Professionals	666,935	(1,112)	-0.17%	
0	120	290.00	120	0		Other Salaries	0	0	0.00%	
290,063	123	341,440.00	123	290,063		Sub Teacher Salary	304,566	14,503	5.00%	Increase in rate from \$85.00/day to \$100.00/day.
16,000	124	22,297.00	124	16,000		Sub Secretary Salary	16,000	0	0.00%	No increase
40,500	125	15,611.00	125	40,500		Sub/PT Maint/Cust. Salary	49,535	9,035	22.31%	Based upon substitutes and part time custodians. Was under budgeted.
132,200	126	189,202.00	126	133,713		Sub/PT Nurse Salary	140,021	6,307	4.72%	Per contract and this is where nurses are paid when a nurse goes on leave.
45,100	127	84,417.00	127	45,100		Sub Paras Salary	45,100	0	0.00%	No increase
461,573	133	386,038.00	133	474,869		Added Teaching / Stipend Positions	501,641	26,772	5.64%	Additional positions at Stonington Middle School and Elementary Schools and new teacher contract.
10,500	134	17,435.00	134	10,500		General OT for secretary	10,500	0	0.00%	
135	135	71,922.00	135	-		General OT for maint/custodians	29,870	29,870		
67,902	153	163,972.00	153	172,000		Tutor Salary	146,700	(25,300)	-14.71%	Less possible costs per total hours.
23,077,032		22,979,343.00		22,810,625		Total Salaries	23,710,582	899,957	3.95%	
	200	77,070.00	200	114,000		OPEB	125,991	11,991	10.52%	As per agreement with the Town of Stonington. First year that OPEB was known before budget was proposed.
4,608,045	210	4,581,912.00	210	4,688,353		Health Insurance	4,885,304	196,952	4.20%	Estimate
18,000	211	-	211	18,000		Flex Plan	18,000	0	0.00%	
33,000	214	25,449.00	214	35,000		Life Insurance	35,000	0	0.00%	
6,720	215	6,969.00	215	7,055		Long Term Disability	7,700	645	9.14%	Minor increase due to salary increases.
482,259	221	428,007.00	221	496,727		Town Pension	481,727	(15,000)	-3.02%	Majority now based upon actuarial study as received from Town of Stonington for employees in the defined benefits plan. New employees go to defined contribution plan
253,202	223	233,361.00	223	251,231		FICA	268,774	17,543	6.98%	Per wages
337,354	224	310,180.00	224	332,052		Medicare	340,157	8,105	2.44%	per wages
187,618	231	184,296.00	231	169,650		Workers Compensation	169,650	0	0.00%	Using estimated actual costs of workers comp.
81,341	232	1,925.00	232	81,916		Unemployment	81,916	0	0.00%	
31,200	240	24,500.00	240	31,200		Course Credit	33,200	2,000	6.41%	Per contract
	250	320,335.00	250	-		Retirement	-	-	-	deposited additional funds in 2018-19.
6,038,739		6,194,004.00		6,225,183		Total Benefits	6,447,419	222,236	3.57%	
20,520	310	17,607.00	310	20,390		Student Enrichment	19,000	(1,390)	-6.82%	There is less for student enrichment at DMS.
9,300	312	26,457.00	312	22,800		Professional Development	31,800	9,000	39.47%	Focus on RTI and Foundational Skills in Reading Hill Literacy-Tier II Training in Reading (expanding on current training with Hill Literacy) Co-Teaching SHS Continuation Gd. 10 EASTCONN and Improving Student Engagement in Tier 1 SMS increase due to previous funding covered under Title II
173,400	313	153,541.00	313	169,837		Pupil Services/Athletic Trainer	177,337	7,500	4.42%	This is for timer, announcers, crowd control and similar costs.
332,228	319	463,217.00	319	415,204		Prof/Tech Service	462,125	46,921	11.30%	The largest increase is for services within the Maintenance Budget. There are increased costs for HVAC equipment at the high school and a service contract for the building management system for all facilities in the district.
18,543	332	15,527.00	332	17,543		In Town Travel	17,700	157	0.89%	
44,481	390	41,136.00	390	43,178		Referees	44,773	1,595	3.69%	Cost of referees. Usually an increase each year.
52,550	391	47,742.00	391	56,085		Police Services	55,200	(885)	-1.58%	No Thanksgiving Day football game.
651,022		765,227.00		745,037		Total Purchased Services	807,935	62,898	8.44%	
1,178,865	410	815,872.00	410	1,088,305		Public Utilities	933,758	(154,547)	-14.20%	Institute energy savings such as LEDs and other systems. Also reductions in expenditures.
460,816	430	453,293.00	430	448,859		Repairs/Maintenance	455,805	6,946	1.55%	The largest increase is in the maintenance department.
123,450	440	97,516.00	440	77,714		Rentals	83,578	5,864	7.55%	There are slight increase in the rental of copiers and other office equipment.
1,763,131		1,366,681.00		1,614,878		Total Utilities/Rental/Repairs	1,473,141	(141,737)	-8.78%	
1,355,245	510	1,421,757.00	510	1,490,770		Regular Transportation	1,550,493	59,724	4.01%	Per contract
465,345	511	613,389.00	511	564,467		Spec Ed Transportation	575,900	11,433	2.03%	Estimate of transportation costs for outside special needs students.
86,120	512	78,558.00	512	97,753		Field Trips & Away Games Transp.	102,730	4,977	5.09%	Per contract
326,556	520	239,071.00	520	298,876		Property/Liability Ins.	297,376	(1,500)	-0.50%	Slight decrease estimated with West Broad St. school and Central Office no longer the responsibility of the Bd of Ed.
142,467	530	143,029.00	530	139,282		Communications	137,652	(1,630)	-1.17%	There is a renegotiated cell phone cost.
2,500	540	2,089.00	540	2,500		Advertising	2,500	0	0.00%	
18,974	550	11,427.00	550	14,174		Printing/Binding	14,174	0	0.00%	
2,386,519	560	3,116,865.00	560	2,790,805		Tuition	3,003,770	212,965	7.63%	Based upon estimated tuition for magnet schools, adult ed, and outside special needs placements.
87,575	580	65,822.00	580	83,550		Conference	79,550	(4,000)	-4.79%	There is a decrease in special services conference funds.
4,871,301		5,692,007.00		5,482,177		Total Transport/Insurance/Tuition	5,764,145	281,968	5.14%	

2018-19 Adopted Budget	Acct	2018-19 Expended	Acct	2019-20 Adopted budget	2019-20 Revised Budget	Description	2020-21 Bd of Ed Proposed Budget	Increase	% Change	Reason for % Change
85,228	610	123,906.00	610	95,793		Non Instructional Supplies	91,093	(4,700)	-4.91%	Funds have been decreased for school administrative office supplies and curriculum assessment supplies.
266,748	611	282,817.00	611	280,320		Instructional Supplies	273,620	(6,700)	-2.39%	The largest decrease is in the special education general supply account.
600	612	4,340.00	612	600		Dist Tech Supplies	1,200	600	100.00%	
244,550	615	221,513.00	615	244,161		Maintenance Supplies	251,250	7,089	2.90%	
209,405	620	135,205.00	620	248,399		Transportation Fuel	249,899	1,500	0.60%	
309,500	625	284,051.00	625	396,668		Heat Energy	396,670	2	0.00%	
78,187	635	69,984.00	635	68,455		Instr. Bid Supplies	71,000	2,545	3.72%	
53,317	640	37,081.00	640	52,117		Classroom Books	49,712	(2,405)	-4.61%	Small decrease at schools and speech classroom books.
22,050	650	17,094.00	650	21,000		Library Books	22,500	1,500	7.14%	There is an increase the high school but a decrease ant the middle schhol.
3,400	655	1,766.00	655	2,300		Media Supplies	2,300	-	0.00%	
18,850	660	16,070.00	660	18,000		Professional Materials	17,900	(100)	-0.56%	
1,291,835		1,193,827.00		1,427,813		Total Fuel/Supplies	1,427,144	(669)	-0.05%	
29,000	700	69,965.00	700	40,000.00		New Equip Instruction	31,390	(8,610)	-21.53%	When looking at this account and the account below the difference is that there is no increase.
6,900	710	92,151.00	710	5,700.00		New Equip Non Instruction	14,500	8,800	154.39%	See right above.
62,175	720	71,062.00	720	58,050.00		Replace Equip Instruction	59,550	1,500	2.58%	
15,915	730	90,621.00	730	18,565.00		Replace Equip Non Instruction	21,400	2,835	15.27%	Small increase at the high school and maintenance department.
113,990		323,799.00		122,315.00		Total Equipment	126,840	4,525	3.70%	
89,840	810	107,578.00	810	81,695.00		Dues/Fees	88,628	6,933	8.49%	New management system for SHS.
133,866	812	140,003.00	812	136,397.00		Dist. Tech Dues/LIC	137,820	1,523	1.12%	Increases in software pricing.
223,706		247,581.00		218,092.00		Total Dues Fees	226,548	8,456	3.88%	
								-		
38,030,756		38,762,469		38,646,120		Total Budget	39,983,754	1,337,634	3.46%	
		Less Revenue Estimates:				Less Revenue Estimates:				
	45600	(739,881.00)		(547,514.00)		sped excess cost state grant tuition	(583,054.00)	(35,540)	6.49%	Estimate that we have a larger reimbursable cost for outside placements which meets the state excess cost grant.
	45110	(81,788.00)		(182,504.00)		sped excess cost state grant transportation	(164,451.00)	18,053	-9.89%	Continually trying to find lower costs for outside placement transportation costs. So excess costs state grant would be less.
	174		174					-		
(15,000)	179	(15,548.00)	179	(15,000)		Gate Receipts	(15,000)	-	0.00%	
38,015,756		37,925,252		37,901,102		Grand Total Budget	39,221,249	1,320,147	3.48%	