Brookfield Board of Education
2025-2026 Budget Proposal Questions & Answers

This document catalogs questions from Board of Education members related to the Superintendent's budget proposal. This document is organized into two sections. The first details general questions about programs and initiatives. The second section details questions regarding specific budget line items. Questions have been answered here generally, but context and depth has been provided further during Board of Education meetings and meetings of the Finance Committee. It is important to note that adjustments to the budget have been made during the review process so some questions may no longer be pertinent to the Board's adopted budget.

BOE MEMBERS - PLEASE TYPE YOUR INITIALS FOLLOWED BY YOUR COMMENT. THIS WILL HELP ADMINISTRATORS FOLLOW UP WITH MORE IN-DEPTH CONTEXTUAL RESPONSES.

General Questions (questions in black, responses in blue)

- RF - Have you explored the USDA School Breakfast Program School Breakfast Program | Food and Nutrition Service? Approximately how much do you think this would add to the budget? Could it be implemented before September 2025?
  KD: This is something we've brought up with District leadership and Chartwells and plan to seek input from the community at an upcoming Advisory Meeting for food service which is scheduled for January 29, 2025 at 1:00PM. This program would be run through the Cafeteria Fund, therefore there would be no impact to the BOE operating budget. A September 2025 implementation would be reasonable.

Specific Line Item Questions

Account #	Title	Question	Response
SALARIES			
51102	Admin Salaries	RF - Shouldn't we see the (albeit, unnamed because they haven't been assigned/approved yet) Curriculum Specialist positions listed in section 4?	KD: The new curriculum positions will remain in the BEA as teacher positions. For clarity, the term used for these positions going forward will be "Curriculum Support Teacher" so as to differentiate between the teacher curriculum positions and the administrator Curriculum Specialist positions.
		RF - If we eliminate Instructional Coaches, are we effectively increasing the number of administrators because	Please see above.

		Curriculum Specialists are in the Admin. contract?	
		JG- Can we get a flow chart of some sort and one from each school breaking down the staff, support staff, admin, curriculum specialists, etc. I need to visually see the proposed changes. Maybe even a before and after. I don't need names but some sort of labels.	KD: The latest organizational chart was put together in March 2024 and can be found here. AM: Please find the updated 2024-2025 organizational chart here (updated as of 1/14/2025).
		JG- I need to see an updated flow chart and a proposed one. AT THE BARE MINIMUM, PLEASE PROVIDE AN UPDATED SLIDE 4, PRESENT AND FUTURE.	Please see organizational charts linked above.
		JG- Slide 12, Specialists and Tutors??? 9.5? Can we break that down? Can we get an updated version for 2025–2026?	KD: The breakdown of Specialists and Tutors are found on slide 14. This has been updated to accurately reflect a total of 9.2 FTEs rather than 9.5.
51106	Team / Curricular Leaders	RF - Where can I find these individual(s) in section 4 of the binder? I just want to understand what comprises the overall figure.	KD: 1. These are stipends. The total stipend salaries of $52,754 is made up of the following positions: • $8,604 - 2 class 5 stipends - Guidance & Fine Arts Team Leaders @ BHS • $9,636 - 2 class 6 stipends - Fine Arts and Health/P.E. Curriculum Leaders K-12 • $20,728 - 4 class 7 stipends - Curriculum Teacher Leaders - 2 @ CLES (STEM and humanities) and 2 @ WMS (STEm and humanities) • $8,604 - 2 class 5 stipends - Assistive

			Technology Coordinator K-12 • $5,182 - 1 class 7 stipend - Climate Coordinator
		JG- So the curriculum specialists get a stipend on top of their salary?	KD: Yes, this is a negotiated stipend in the BEA CBA at a class 7 due to the additional responsibilities required outside of the normal work day including preparing and leading PD, workshops, reviewing and organizing written curriculum projects, researching curriculum and standards adjustment, etc.(Kasey is correct on this-AM)
		Rob - Aren't these things you listed part of a normal work day for out of classroom administrators?... "preparing and leading PD, workshops, reviewing and organizing written curriculum projects, researching curriculum and standards adjustment,"	KD: The Curriculum Teacher Leaders are part of the teacher's union and therefore are contracted for the work hours as defined in the BEA CBA (6 hours 55 minutes). These are not administrative positions.

		JG- So essentially, moving the instructional coaches to curriculum specialists incurs a cost for each because you get a stipend? Did instructional coaches in the past get stipends? If so, what line did that come out of? OR Is the $736,002 (elimination of 7 FTE's) really an even swap of the Reallocation of 7 FTE's?	KD: The $736,002 is the base salary (including any longevity, if applicable) of the teaching positions being reallocated. That being said, instructional coaches are also currently being paid stipends, which is paid out of account 51106. The salary relocation for these positions is budget neutral. The stipends are reduced by 1. • 4 Inst. Coach FTEs w/ stipend moving to 4 Curric. Support Teacher FTEs w/ stipend • 1 Inst. Coach FTE w/ stipend moving to 1 Climate Coordinator FTE w/ stipend • 1 Inst. Coach FTE w/ stipend moving to 1 Math/Science teacher @ BHS (no stipend) • 1 FTE classroom reduction @ CLES moving to 1 FTE math intervention FTE @ CLES The 6th stipend will be reallocated to an existing position (Dean of Students @ WMS).
		JG- Regarding the above, what grade level at CLES is getting the reduction?	KD: This is to be determined as updated enrollment information becomes available including Kindergarten enrollment, updated class size guidelines and updated master schedule/teaming models.
		JG- I get that is TBD, but we need an updated/proposed estimate of sections for each of the elementary grades. I would like to see an "updated" class size report based on a possible reduction.	KD: The 12/4 budget presentation is reflective of 1 reduction in grade 3 as this is *likely* where the reduction will come from. That chart can be found here. It is important to note that this will not be finalized until the summer when final

			enrollment numbers are determined.
		JG- How is it budget neutral (or not a savings) if you are taking away two stipends (one from the proposed climate coordinator and one moving to the CLES intervention teacher?	KD: The salaries are budget neutral because the assumption is that all 7 FTEs will be reallocated rather than reduced. The Climate Compliance Teacher will have a stipend, the CLES math intervention will not. The stipends as a result of this reallocation is a reduction of 1, however that 6th stipend will be reallocated to an existing position (Dean of Students @ WMS).
		JG- Can we get a flow chart of some sort and one from each school breaking down the staff, support staff, admin, curriculum specialists, etc. I need to visually see the proposed changes. Maybe even a before and after. I don't need names but some sort of labels.	AM: Please find the updated 2024-2025 organizational chart here (updated as of 1/14/2025).
		JG- I don't see the instructional coaches on the org charts.	The Human Resources Department is working on updating this to reflect the changes proposed in the 25-26 budget and will be linked here when it is complete.
		JG - Are we using the terms specialists or interventionalists or are using them interchangeably? Are we using Reading and Literacy interchangeably?	AM: The curriculum positions being proposed in lieu of instructional coaches are not the same as interventionists. Interventionists are certified teachers who are specifically assigned to Tier 2 intervention for identified students (through individual or small group instruction). The curriculum support teachers will be assigned to research, review, update/write, and provide professional learning on the written curriculum to ensure that it is properly aligned to state and/or federal standards, meets the needs of students, and

			is being taught with fidelity (focus is Tier 1 for all students). With regard to reading vs literacy, reading is considered a prominent part of literacy in general. As an example, K-3 teachers all teach literacy (using CKLA program this current year) while reading interventionists focus on specific areas of need in reading/literacy for students who are identified through the MTSS program. These teachers DO have a specific CT certification for reading; there is no comparable certification in other academic areas (such as math). At the HS level, English teachers focus on literacy across the continuum (media, text, etc) while reading teachers focus on remediation of skills for identified students (again, Tier 2 intervention).
		Rob - Is there a way for us to get more Interventionists vs curriculum specialists? Also - If this is their job description why are they getting a stipend for it?...	KD - The curriculum support teachers will be assigned to research, review, update/write, and provide professional learning on the written curriculum”
		JG - I haven’t seen the completed charts, but can build in the changes in my follow-up questions: ● School #1 BHS- 1 math interventionist currently, but will shift to another ½ interventionist (one instructional coach is going to a full-time science and math)? 2 reading specialists? ● School #2 WMS- 3 Literacy and 1 Math? Aggie Burns? Don’t see her on the flow chart? ● School #3 CLES- 5	KD: If the budget is approved as proposed, the number of interventionists at each building would be as follows: ● BHS: 1 math, 2 reading ● WMS: 1 math, 2 reading ● CLES: 2 math, 5 reading The only increase here is at CLES with the additional 1.0 FTE math interventionist. The new math/science FTE at BHS is a classroom teaching position.

		Reading and 1 Math but will shift to another 1 interventionist (one instructional coach is going to a full-time math interventionist)?	
51110	Teacher Salaries	RF - Budget Binder section 4, page 7, "Total General Fund Teachers", in '24-'25, ESY was an additional $52,366. In '25-'26, it's only an additional $35,000. Why is this? Same page…why is there no increase for Summer School teacher costs ($32,000 both years)?	KD: The $52,366 was a budgeted number for ESY in 24-25, however actuals were $32,266. Summer School actual teacher cost was $27,919. Teachers are paid an extended duty rate of $43 for both ESY and Summer School. This is an increase from 24-25 of $1/hour and is contracted in the CBA.
		RF - Budget Binder section 4, page 7, "Total General Fund Teachers", the increase in Teacher salary is calculated at 3.88% but the Summary sheet (binder section 3) is showing 3.07%. Why is this?	KD: This is because the budget schedule in section 3 compares the proposed budget to the 24-25 budget, rather than the actual salaries being paid this year. The increase you see in the salary schedule in section 4 that details each teacher's salary increase is based on the current staff employed today, which is a smaller total dollar amount due to teacher turnover savings. Essentially, roughly $175K of the total salary increase of $865,356 is already being accounted for in the 24-25 Adopted Budget teacher salary line.
		WY - Re: "roughly $175K of the total salary increase of $865,356 is already being accounted for in the 24-25 adopted budget" - so this is due to teacher turnover savings? Does this mean this number will/may change depending on what happens for the remainder of this year?	KD - If salaries were to change between now and the budget referendum, then yes, we could update the salary schedule to account for any increase/decrease in salary expected for next year and communicate that to the BOF prior to their final adoption.
		RF - In '24-'25, were Instructional Coaches on the	KD: Yes, Instructional Coaches and the new Curriculum Teacher

		normal BEA Step schedule and will those individuals remain on that schedule regardless of their role in ‘25-’26? For example, an Instructional Coach (6THYR, Step 13) was paid $107,132 not including longevity. That same person is projected to be paid at Step 14, $113,026, next year (not including longevity). Is that increase accurate if that person were to become a Curriculum Specialist next year? What about if they were to become a classroom teacher? I’m not sure how to articulate this question any better but will try to do so at the next meeting.	Leaders are both part of the BEA and their salaries are based on their education and years of teaching experience, rather than the teaching position they hold. For example, when the Technology Integrator Instructional Coach position was eliminated in the 24-25 budget, the teacher in this position was moved to a 5th grade classroom position with the same salary she would have otherwise had if she had remained the Technology Integrator Instructional Coach.
		RF - How many Summer School teachers do we employ? How many ESY teachers?	KD: In the current year, we paid 10 teachers for Summer School and 10 teachers for ESY. Teachers were paid the extended duty rate of $42/hr (increasing to $43/hr in 2025-26) as contracted in the BEA CBA.
		RF - We are adding .2 FTE for an increased need in French. Will this be additional hours for a teacher we already have or are we trying to hire new for this small number of hours?	KD: It is unlikely that we would be able to hire a certified teacher for a .2 FTE position, therefore the thinking is that an existing staff member would increase his/her schedule to accommodate this additional section. This is the cost of that one additional section based on the current salaries teaching French.
		JG- K-5 World Language- # of staff breakdown and total salary (to include benefits/medical)	KD: K-5 World Language is 3.0 FTE with total salaries of $272,218 (this includes the 1.0 FTE Portuguese bi-lingual at $75,027.) The current census has only 1 of these employees taking benefits, which would be $32,682 based on next year’s rate estimates. The cost for medical and dental benefits are: $32,682 for family, $26,468 for

			employee + spouse, $13,496 for single. 6th Grade Spanish is 1.0 FTE at $76,646 in salary with $13,496 in benefits based on the current census.
		JG - At CLES, could this be used to gain more instructional time for CKLA or IM? Or to do a STEM/STEAM experience or gifted and talented or WIN (What I Need)	AM: CLES is currently reviewing the master schedule in order to appropriate more time for instruction in academic content areas (specifically math). This does not mean there is an intention to do away with any currently offered specials or programs. There has been no incorporation of gifted or talented programming for the 2025-2026 budget as this has not been discussed at any level in many years.
		JG- Would need an update or proposal about said changes in the master schedule.	
		JG - 6th grade World Language- Same as above. Also, how would this affect the scheduling because this is a special? So grade 6 has two blocks of UNAH. Where does world language fit into the grade 6 scheduling and how would it affect the UNAH block?	AM: As presented at CAPE, the current WL program is undergoing curriculum review/revision (K-12); the middle school administration is reviewing the 6th grade schedule in general, but this will not have an impact on budget. Please review slides 8 and 9 from this linked presentation for more information on scheduling for World Language.
51111	Teacher Turnover Savings	RF - No questions. This is budgeted as a negative contingency against the budget as usual	
51124	Paraprofessional Salaries	RF - This is a historically high turnover group. How do our pay rates compare to that of our	KD: The starting pay rates for area towns that we are aware of are as follows:

		neighboring districts? E.g., Newtown, New Milford, Bethel. Danbury, I know, is much higher but still has issues hiring, correct?	• New Milford: $18.35 • Newtown: $17.11 • New Fairfield: $16.59 • Region 12: $20.51 Brookfield is competitive, if not better, than these rates with starting rates of $18.21 and $27.58 (the higher rate is for ABA paras).
		RF - Can you explain why some paras got significantly larger increases compared to others?	KD: The paraeducator contract has a defined step salary scale based on years of service. If a para moves up a step, they will receive both a GWI plus a step increase.
51126	Tutors	RF - Where did this item go? We used to budget for tutors but I don't see that in the budget.	KD: Tutors are paid out of our Title I grant funds. This year we have funding of $34,800 allocated to 4 tutors (1 math, 1 science, 2 ELA). The last year they were fully funded out of the operating budget was 2020-2021.
		WY - Question for context: is this a stable funding source?	KD: Brookfield's Title funds increased significantly during Covid (similar to many other districts across the state). In 2018/19 Title Funds were approximately $116K. This increased up to a peak at $313K in 2023, and in 2025 (current grant year) they have come back down to $162K.
51130	Substitutes - ST	RF - This is budgeted at our forecasted expense for the SY '24-'25 which makes sense. Can/will the figure be adjusted in March/April if there are significant changes to the current year's actuals?	KD: Once the budget is adopted by the BOE it will be in the hands of the BOS and BOF. If they were to request a change in the budget we would certainly look at all accounts - including substitutes - and make adjustments as necessary.
51131	Substitutes LT	RF - Historically, what percentage of this has been covered by leaves and vacancies and what percentage	KD: I believe we have this somewhere - I will upload here before the end of the week!

		has been a true exposure. If you could provide a table of some sort with this data for the past 4-5 years, that would be helpful.	
51140	Clerical/Comp	RF - Is there anything other than contracted increases involved in this figure? E.g., has the number of employees or their working hours changed?	KD: There are no changes in FTEs or working hours. This cost accounts for the contractual salary increases for 26 employees in the Secretaries & Technical Employees Union (22 secretaries/clerks, 4 IT Techs) and the base salary (not including an increase) of 10 additional unaffiliated employees. Funding for an increase for the 10 unaffiliated employees is accounted for in 51910 SALARY NEGOTIATIONS. There is one IT Tech position that was not filled at the time the budget was developed which can be updated prior to finalizing.
51145	Health Staff	RF - There is unaffiliated health staff? I thought they would all be a part of the Nurse's unit.	KD: The unaffiliated staff in this account are the Athletic Trainer (1 FTE) and Occupational / Physical Therapists (3.8 FTEs across 5 employees).
51150	Custodians	RF - Is there anything other than contracted increases involved in this figure? E.g., has the number of employees or their working hours changed?	KD: There are no changes in FTEs or working hours. This cost accounts for the contractual salary increases for 17 custodians plus a placeholder for 2 FTEs that were unfilled at the time the budget was developed. These 2 FTEs have since been filled, therefore this salary line can be updated.
		RF - How many vacancies do we have for custodians? How many vacancies recur each year? In other words, do we have some net number of custodial vacancies across the district that are historically always vacant year after year?	KD: We have just filled the open positions at CLES and WMS and are now fully staffed with 19 FTEs. It's hard to predict when a vacancy will occur, but in the last 2 years we have had a total of 6 vacancies.

		RF - Why isn't the cost for any substitute custodians included in this line? Or do you feel that would add confusion rather than clarity?	KD: $10,000 has been added to 53300 Other Professional Services for custodian substitutes
51155	Maintenance	RF - How many salaries make up this total? Are all unaffiliated?	KD: There are 3 salaries in this account: 1FTE Facilities Supervisor, 2 FTE Maintenance Mechanics. All are unaffiliated.
51160	Monitors	RF - Why is this account decreasing by almost 11% when minimum wage is going up?	KD: Actuals for last year were $94,925, which was the first year of actuals for CLES. The proposed budget of $111K considers an increase in minimum wage and assumes the same number of employees and hours as last year.
51170	Co-Curricular	JG- What is driving the 11.45% increase in this line? What's the anticipated work?	KD: Approximately half of this increase (~$24K) is an increase in athletic stipends with the new Ski Team stipends and contractual increases to existing stipends. To view the full list of clubs/athletics/activities paid out of this account, click here.
		JG- What is the WMS Focus Club $43.00 $8,600.00?	KD: WMS Focus Club is after school tutoring. It is paid at $43/hour as per the BEA CBA.
		JG - Why is there a boys assistant volleyball coach and not a girls?	KD: We can reduce 1 Boys Volleyball Head Coach position ($5182). In total there should be 5 volleyball coach positions: 2 boys volleyball coaches, 3 girls volleyball coaches. The difference between the girls and boys is that the girls have 3 teams and the boys have 2.
		JG-How many boys volleyball teams are there? I thought only varsity?	KD: From Mr. Baldwin: *Boys Volleyball 2 coaches* *1) Head Coach* *2) Assistant Coach who is*

			actually the JV Coach *There is not enough players for freshman* *Girls Volleyball 3 coaches* *1) Head Coach* *2) Assistant Coach who coaches JV* *3 Freshman Coach*
		JG - WMS Dean of Students $5,182 1 $5,182. Is this factored in?	KD: Yes, this is budgeted for WMS.
		JG- What is that stipend for?	KD: This is for the extended time required outside of BEA contracted time to follow up with parents, assist with family-school relationships, and oversee extra curricular activities as needed. In addition, the BEA CBA provides additional stipends for other teacher-leader positions; this provides for equity across the bargaining unit
51175	Transportation - Messenger	RF - Is this split 50/50 with the Town? Which side determines the wage increase?	KD: This is a Town union employee. The Board of Education pays this employee 2 hours/day at the rate determined by the Town.
51300	Extended Duty	RF - This item is decreasing by over $18K. In what ways has IM Math and World Language contributed to this decrease?	The decrease is more in line with the vision for curriculum revision and review overall as the current practice is to ask each department/building/level to formally propose curriculum projects and account for those upcoming projects in their budget requests (rather than allocate a ballpark amount to curriculum writing and then plan for revision/review projects). In addition and in particular with world language, there has been a great deal of ongoing curriculum revision happening during the contractual year (i.e. during

			collaborative teacher time, designated Wednesday after school time, etc), so that has decreased the amount of money needed for extended duty curriculum writing projects. This is not feasible in all subject areas/cases, but it has had a slight impact over the past few years.
		JG- May I see the breakdown of how the $274,906 was spent in 2023-2024. Also, how the adopted $257,308 for 2024-2025 has been spent so far this year.	KD: To see a breakdown of the actual expenditures from this account for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, please click here.
51350	Student Safety	JG- What positions fall into this line?	KD: These are the school security employees located at each building. A total of 6.0 FTEs.
51630	Overtime	RF - Is this based on past use of/need for overtime or how was this $50,000 increase calculated?	KD: The total budgeted expense for this overtime account is $50,000, which is an increase of $1,000 from the previous budget year.
		RF - Are we on track with a budget in the current year of $49,000? Given actuals from years prior, we'd be over budget this year so perhaps $50,000 is not enough?	KD: We are currently running over budget in overtime for the custodial staff at CLES and WMS due to the leaves and vacancies in this unit. When we have extended leaves and vacancies, overtime increases because others are required to stay longer hours to ensure that the buildings are maintained adequately. As of January, we should be fully staffed in this area which should decrease the spending in this area. This budget shortfall is expected to be covered by the salary savings due these vacancy positions. Additionally, we have added $10,000 in professional services for substitute custodians in the 25-26 budget to address this

			situation. The substitute custodial rate is $20/hr versus the time-and-a-half hourly rate for overtime that we're currently paying.
51900	Occ./Phys. Therapy	RF - I see that we are absorbing the cost of 1 FTE that was previously paid out of IDEA grant funds. What's the reason we can't continue using that revenue source for this?	KD: This is a .5 FTE OT/PT position that should have been rolled into the budget last year but was missed. IDEA funds are fully allocated to 16 paraeducators, 2 special education teachers and 1 IEP compliance teacher.
51910	Salary Negotiations	RF - This item will be zeroed out each year, then, correct? What would happen if, by chance, the Board negotiates to use less than this sum for all new collective bargaining agreements taking place that year? WY: Do we budget a different amount each year depending on which contracts are scheduled to be negotiated?	KD: Yes this account would be moved to salary lines as contracts are negotiated and settled. As with any account that may have a fund balance at the end of the year, if those funds are not needed to cover a shortfall in another area, the balance would be returned to the Town. KD: Yes, this amount would change depending on the bargaining units that are scheduled to be negotiated.
<u>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</u>			
52100	Group Life	RF - This is an estimate. When will final figures be known?	KD: We don't always see an increase in this expense year-to-year, but we typically don't have this information until spring. Our HR/Benefits Coordinator is waiting to hear back from Boston Mutual to see if they have any updated information at this time.
52210	Social Security	RF - When will final figures be known for this?	KD: Social security expenses are estimated based on salaries of non-certified employees, therefore it can fluctuate depending on changes in staffing.

52300	Pension Cont.	RF - This is just for teachers, correct?	KD: No, teachers and certified administrators pay into a state pension fund (Teacher Retirement Board, or “TRB”). This is the cost related to the retirement plans offered to non-certified employees, which are either the Town defined benefit pension plan or a 401(a) matching retirement plan.
		RF - Is this budgeted based only on current employees without considering vacancies that could be filled mid-year?	KD: In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of employees choosing the 401(a) plan over the Town pension plan (from 2 employees in 2022-23 to 9 in 2024-25). This estimate accounts for all 9 employees on the plan, but does not consider additional employees coming onto the plan.
52500	Tuition Reimb.	RF - Is this regularly utilized?	KD: Tuition reimbursement is negotiated in the BAA contract, but is not always utilized. It was utilized last year (2023-2024) but not since 2017-2018 before then. There is currently 1 administrator pursuing a doctoral degree, therefore we believe this will be utilized in the upcoming year.
52600	Unemployment	RF - What does it mean to call this a “self-funded” account? Do we not have insurance for this?	KD: That is correct, we do not have unemployment insurance. Rather, when an employee files a valid claim for unemployment, we are responsible for funding the full amount of the claim.
		RF - Is it more cost effective to self-fund? What would unemployment insurance cost for an organization of this size?	KD: Unemployment insurance is paid to both the federal and state government based on gross wages. For 2024, the minimum unemployment tax for the state of CT is 0.1%, which - based on our salaries - would be a minimum of approximately $33K. Therefore, It is typically much more cost effective for us to be self-funded.

52700	Workers Comp	RF - Can we budget this on a 5 year historical average?	KD: We typically estimate this in alignment with the Town, as we are under the same policy. We can discuss this with the Town.
52800	Health Insurance	RF - I agree that budgeting based on a 5 year historical average is wise but out of curiosity, what are actuaries saying (this is written as of 1/2/25)?	KD: Currently they are saying between a 7 and 12% increase. For context, this time last year they were predicting a 7% increase and it ended up coming in at 2%.
52950	Disability Insurance	RF - This is budgeted for a 3.5% increase? What's the rationale for this?	KD: In looking at this account further, we can adjust this account down.
PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL SERVICES			
53020	Legal	JG - is the $10,000 increase due to their hourly rate being more than our past legal firm? What is the reasoning or justification for the $10,000 increase in SPED legal services?	KD: The recommended increase in SPED legal services is based on historical spending in this account. ($42K in 2024, $31K in 2023).
		ES - This is a line item that we have seen over budget in past years. I asked why it was kept flat last year with no response. Based on current spending legal fees would need to stay at or under $6100 a month to stay at budget which seems unlikely.	KD: The recommended increase in SPED legal services is based on historical spending in this account. ($42K in 2024, $31K in 2023).
53200	Prof Ed Svcs	ES - This line seems under funded for special education from previous years spending. What is driving this number lower?	KD: Prior years actual spending was $7,153 in 2023-23 and $3,679 in 2023-24. The 2024-25 budget was approved for $15,035
53300	Other Professional Services	JG - What is driving the 23.46% increase in Board of Education services? Plant operations?	KD: The increase in professional services are as follows: • BOE: security at Board meetings • Plant: $10K in substitute services for extended leaves / vacancies and increases to indoor air testing, alarm monitoring,

			sprinkler/fire extinguisher inspections
		JG - Re:Security at Board meetings - Is that an increase only for security? Or are there other items in this line?	KD: There are other expenses paid out of this account, but the increase is largely due to the budget for security. Here is a breakdown of the various expenses in this account.
		JG - What bargaining unit(s) are up for negotiations? And who did we bargain for in 2024-2025 (admin and ?)?	Contract terms are as follows: BEA: 7/1/23-6/30/26 Custodians: 7/1/23-6/30/26 BAA: 7/1/22-6/30/25 (negotiations completed in summer 2024) Paras: 7/1/21-6/30/25 (negotiations to start this spring) Nurses & Secretaries: 7/1/24-6/30/27
		ES - What is the actual cost of security at BOE meetings as well as more recently subcommittee meetings? Is this line item being increased due to recent increased presence?	KD: Security for a 3 hour meeting costs just under $200. This is a relatively new item and was not budgeted in the past.
		ES - This line seems under funded for special education from previous years spending. What is driving this number lower?	KD: BCBA services were historically paid out of this account for Special Education through 2022-2023. In 2023-2024 BCBAs were hired in-house, which accounts for the decrease in this account seen in 2023-2024. Actuals to-date spent for Special Education from this account is $203K, with encumbered funds of $89K. While the 2025-26 budget is $62K under that total of $292K, the number is estimated based on expected and/or known changes that will be taking place in various cases next year.
		ES - Can we utilize distinct OT and PT providers for ESY as we are likely paying much higher fees to an agency.	KD: Yes, ideally we use BPS employees to staff the ESY program. When that is not possible we are required to use

			an outside agency in order to provide the required services to students.
		ES - What are we doing as far as early intervention and identification to reduce the need for outside testing?	KD: We budget based on the needs of the current population of students and account for any trending increases in costs associated with all testing. WR: Our intervention system is outlined in this manual. Our special education manual is located here. IEE (Independent Educational Evaluations) are driven by parent requests at PPT if they disagree with the district evaluations. However, the Special Education Director and Supervisors meet regularly to project potential outside evaluations that school teams might request to obtain more detailed information about a student's behavior, academic progress or concerns that are not included in the scheduled triennial testing conducted by the district.
53400	Technical Services		
PURCHASED PROPERTY SERVICES			
54300	Maint. & Utilities	ES - Are we still exploring solar for CLES? What is the estimated time frame for BHS and WMS roof completion? Is solar an option once completed?	KD: Yes, I believe the Town is still exploring this avenue. The roofs at BHS and WMS are all being replaced in phases over the next 10 years. We are ensuring that all new roofs are engineered to accommodate solar panels.
54301	Building Maint.	RF - Are we seeing any additional increases in this account due to the reduction it received in 24-25SY as a result of purchasing the snow removal machine for CLES? What	KD: As you likely recall, we increased our Maintenance/Repair budget last budget cycle in order to incorporate more of the "routine" or "smaller" repair needs

		maintenance was postponed and was it factored into the budget for 25-26?	identified in the building conditions study into our annual operating budget. The plan is to fund this line item at the higher level until all of the repairs identified in the study have been completed. The budget transfer out of this account that was needed in order to purchase the snow removal equipment at CLES may result in extending this higher level of funding for a slightly longer period of time. For context, the maintenance/repair account was increased by $82K last year to address these repairs and the snow equipment cost just under $16K.
54402	Rental Srvcs		
54930	Copiers	JG- What is driving the 28.76% increase in the copier lease? Don't we have a set contract? How long is our contract for?	KD: We are currently in year 1 of a 5-year contract with Canon, which was settled after the 2024-25 budget was approved. The 24-25 budget was underfunded, therefore while next year's copier expense is an increase over the current year budget, it will be in line with the current year actuals.
TRANSPORTATION			
55100	Gen'l Transport		
55108	Spec Ed Transport - In		
55109	Spec Ed Transport - Out	ES - Is this number including the students who are currently slated for or in the process of being outplaced?	KD: No, this is the cost for the students that are currently outplaced and will most likely continue to be outplaced next year.
55150	Athletic Transport	ES - What would this line item be if we were not using bussing from outside vendors?	KD: We currently use 2 outside vendors for athletic transportation due to difficulty in securing drivers for these additional runs. One vendor offers pricing that is

			comparable to that of All Star, albeit slightly higher (generally within $150 for a typical run). The other vendor, which is used as a last resort, is much more expensive and costs about 2.5x what we would normally pay to All Star for the same run.
55155	Field Trips	JG- Is this 25.35% increase due to just the WMS Trill and Thrill field trip?	KD: Yes, this increase is largely due to the WMS Trills and Thrills Adjudication for band and chorus ($9K).
		ES- What field trips are the District funding? Does this include transportation for CLES to BHS for field day?	KD: Yes, this includes transportation for CLES field day at BHS. A complete list of field trips can be found here.
OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES			
55200	Liability Insurance	Rob - Is it possible to get another quote on the Insurance so we can lower the payments? How does “shopping around” for insurance quotes work at this level?	KD: We are covered under the Town’s insurance policy through CIRMA. This is the portion of the total policy that is attributed to the BOE. CIRMA is a very reputable company that services many municipalities across the state. We would have to speak with Town leadership to see if there is any interest in going out to bid.
55300	Telephone	Rob - What telephone services is this for? Do we have Mobile phones throughout the district? Are these only for the regular telephones? Similar question - Is it possible to “shop around” for better prices?	KD: The breakdown of phone expenses are listed here. The district currently has 29 mobile phones (various administrators, supervisors, custodians, mechanics, IT technicians, nurses, athletic trainer). EC - The district phone service is in year 2 of a 5 year contract. The current vendor was awarded the contract as lowest bidder. We will go out to bid again in spring

			2028. For mobile phone, we can certainly shop this around and look at alternative providers, however, Verizon has remained to be the most reliable for our users. Also, there are other factors involved in keeping Verizon as well, such as the existing signal boosters at BHS and WMS.
55301	Postage		
55325	Data Line	Rob - Is it possible to combine our data charge with the telephone line to save money? Are they separate companies? Is it possible to combine the two and if so, will that save us money or cost us more in the long run?	EC - Unfortunately, it is not possible. They are not only different companies, but are also completely different services, so it is not possible to combine. Data line (Fiber WAN service) covers the network connection between all the buildings (BHS is our data center, and this connection connects TSO, WMS, CLES back to BHS for the network. Internet, phones, etc. all use the data line connection to work. This service is also discounted for the district by 50% through the federal E-Rate program. Phones are not eligible for this discount, and any combining would negatively impact this discount.
55500	Printing	JG- What is driving the 73.91% increase in printing?	KD: The $805 increase in this account is for certificates, passes, letterhead, etc. at CLES.
55604	VoAg Tuition	Rob - This doesn't make much sense to me… We expel a student but then have to pay for his/her tuition somewhere else? Is it an Alternative Learning placement i.e. a school for "misguided" students?	KD: Yes, under CT law, "Connecticut law requires LEAs to offer an "alternative educational opportunity" to students who have been expelled in certain circumstances and further provides that LEAs may offer such an opportunity to any expelled student." Therefore, if a student is expelled, we are

			still required to fund their education. The expense related to 55604 VoAg Tuition is not for expelled students, rather it is for students attending the ag-stem program in Region 12.
55610	Magnet School Tuition		
55630	Special Education Tuition	Rob - How are we supposed to make up for the Special education shortfall we see on this line item? Are there grants we can be awarded for these expenses?	KD: The Town holds a contingency for special education tuition to cover shortfalls in this account. This is so that we do not budget for unknown needs. We do receive funding from the IDEA grant, $603,689 for 17 paras, 3 teachers, and a small amount of PD.
		Rob - With special education having such a hefty and **mandatory** budget to meet the needs of our students is there a way to seek alternative funding to help offset the high costs?	KD: Special education expenses are rising throughout the state and funding that municipalities have relied upon to offset these expenses are being cut. Excess Cost Grant Revenue was reduced to a 59% reimbursement this year, when it has historically been between 69-73%. We are utilizing all funding sources available to us at this time, however the cost share to municipalities will continue to grow unless and until the state makes changes.
		ES - Is this number including the students who are currently awaiting placement or in the process of being outplaced? I know we have 1 and possibly more at CLES that we are not yet funding but it has been agreed upon so I would hope those are included here. I know an actual number would be difficult but an average number	KD: No, these are for students that are currently outplaced and will likely continue to be outplaced next year. If additional students are outplaced prior to the budget being finalized, this would be adjusted.

		should be utilized for safe budgeting.	
SUPPLIES AND OTHER			
55800	Travel Reimb.	Rob - Are there any specific grants or funding sources earmarked for transportation? What are these travel reimbursements for and is it possible to lower them in any way?	KD: This is for various conferences that are attended throughout the year and across many departments. It is also for mileage reimbursement for administrators that travel within the district, as negotiated in the CBA.
56100	Office Supplies	JG- What is driving the 12.68% increase in office supplies?	KD: The $3700 increase in this account is largely due to a 'Class Creator' license at CLES ($2000) and an increase in general office supplies at WMS ($1500). *This may be able to be reduced*
56110	Instructional Supplies		
56112	Custodial Supplies		
56114	Maintenance Supplies		
56205	Fuel - Transportation	Rob - With the price of fuel coming down are we able to lock in a rate when getting fuel? What vehicles are we using that cost us this much in fuel for the year?	KD: We have locked in the fuel rates for 25-26 at $2.674 for diesel and $2.4561 for gasoline. This is for fuel for 26 diesel school buses and 10 gasoline vans (small buses). The calculations for the fuel expense can be found here: 56205 FUEL - TRANSPORTATION calculation
56210	Natural Gas		
56220	Electricity	Rob - What plans do we have in place to help ease the financial burden of Electricity? Is the town able to "step in" and do something to help us out? There has to be some kind of alternative to what we are	KD: The 2025-26 proposed budget for electricity is calculated using a 2-year average of kWh for each building, the contracted supply rate of $0.0988/kWh, and an average delivery rate of $0.09378, or approximately a 5%

		paying now.	increase compounded over 2 years. The budget does not contemplate the enormous spike in delivery costs that we've experienced this year because we are being told by Eversource that these rates will return to "normal" before the start of next fiscal year. We have been communicating the current budget shortfall in electricity regularly to the Town since the start of the year. To see how we are forecasting electricity for the current year and next, please click here.
56240	Heating Oil		
56255	Propane		
56265	Water	Rob - Will this cost be different if/when we get the water pipeline project finished?	KD: Yes, that is correct. Right now CLES is the only school building on the public water supply. If/when WMS is added to the Aquarion water supply, then this cost would increase. We would also see a decrease in 53300 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES in the maintenance budget to account for the decrease in water testing at WMS.
56290	Other Supplies	Rob - What are the types of things that fall under the Supplies-Other category? How can we lower this line a bit? Does this only cover the Custodial department for "other"?	KD: 'Other Supplies' are increasing 6.9%, largely due to an increase in special education evaluation tools ($11K). Other supplies that are expensed to this account include supplies for the nurses' offices, athletic trainer supplies, various technology supplies, and library supplies.
56292	Water/Sewer	Rob - Is this a price that can be negotiated with the vendors? Or is this something that's pretty much locked into?	KD: This is not negotiated, rather it is a cost set by the WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority) Department in the Town of Brookfield.

56294	Refuse/Recycling		
56400	Periodicals/ Subscriptions	Rob - What books and periodicals are these for?	KD: The books and periodicals expensed to this account can be found here.
56410	Textbooks	Rob - Is it possible to lower this cost by making everything digital? Is it already digital or do we get in print and digital?	KD: Digital licenses are as expensive as physical textbooks, and require more frequent purchases / possible updates than a hardcopy textbook.
56420	Library Books		
57330	Furniture & Fixtures	ES - Why are the 2 music cabinets, 15 filing cabinets and blinds for a support room (stating a quantity of 22 so I am sure it is for more than 1 room) in this budget? Shouldn't this be funded out of the CLES build budget?	KD: I believe these are items that were not anticipated to be needed when the project was funded, therefore they were not included in the CLES building project.
57344	Instr Equipment - New		
57345	Instr Equipment - Replace		
57350	Technology Software	Rob - What technology software are we paying so much for? What platform drives this cost up the most? Are there any alternatives and what kind of work is it being used for?	EC - There are a number of software resources in this budget line. All software is reviewed in detail annually. We try to combine resources as much as possible (ex. Switching to ParentSquare this year for all communication instead of 5 different tools, which also saved money). When software is purchased, alternatives (free or paid) are always considered, and sometimes chosen. Some of the software in this line is also part of the district curriculum. The breakdown will show the cost of each software resource we use. The person(s) collecting the data depends on the software resource in question.
		JG- Can Eric provide again the	KD: To see the complete list of

		breakdown like he did last year (which will also answer Rob's questions). Who is in charge of collecting the data for these software programs? I only see NewsELA listed under Liz Spencer's admin responsibilities.	software technology, please click here.
57390	Other Equipment	Rob - What falls under "other equipment" and is this something we have to replace each year? What is the "shelf life" for the other equipment we are purchasing?	EC- This budget line for IT covers some maintenance/support on network hardware, Chromebooks, SMART Boards, network equipment, staff laptops. We have a 5 year rotating life cycle for most equipment replacement, and can provide that detail if you would like
58100	Continuing Ed. Dues and Fees	Rob - Trying the "Grant" route again - Is there any funding available from the state to help offset some of these costs?	KD: Approximately a third ($29,581) of this expense is for memberships for the Board/District to organizations such as CABE, CAPSS, EdAdvance, Western CT Superintendents Assoc. Athletics accounts for another large portion of this expense ($23,376) and this is for the SWC membership, as well as various other associations and tournaments.
58414	Contingency	*None - No Budget*	
<u>RECURRING REVENUES</u>			
43150	Medicaid Reimbursement	Rob - How does this item line work? Does this mean the figures we are seeing in Parenthesis are something we owe or that we are getting back to us? If we are getting it back, when do we get it? (WY: same)	KD: Yes, the accounts in the 40000 range are all revenue accounts, so these are funds we are receiving from various sources. We receive Medicaid reimbursement quarterly, once quarterly expenses are certified and filed (RelayHub assists with these filings after data in compiled in-house). We are reimbursed for a portion of

			administrative expenses for employees who work directly with students that qualify for medicaid.
43300	Special Education Excess Cost	Rob - These are grants that have already been awarded to us or we are going to apply for? When do we receive the funding for it?	KD: We are not required to apply for excess cost grant revenue, however we do have to send certified estimates of our expenses three times each year. The first certified estimate is due in December, any changes to those estimates are due in March, with a final filing due in September for the year that ended in June. Once the initial estimate is submitted in December, students cannot be added, meaning if a new student is outplaced in January we would not receive excess cost grant revenue for that student that year. Payments are usually received in February, May, with final payment for any adjustment received in December. The December payment goes to the Town as it is outside of our fiscal year. The first payment is usually about 75% of the total we will receive.
		WY: building on Rob's, what is the impact here of the state's new reimbursement formula?	KD: The state's new formula reduced our excess cost grant revenue by about 10%, which is a $110K reduction from what we had forecasted last month based on the historical reimbursement of ~70%.
		RF - How many payments do we see per year on this?	KD: We receive 3 payments (February, May, December). See above for more detail.
		RF - How many payments have we already received to date and at what reimbursement rate did that payment come out being based on encumbered and paid costs by that point? My thoughts	KD: We have not yet received any payments for excess cost yet. However, in early January the state releases the award estimate, so we know what we will be receiving based on the

		on this relate to how much we will see in future payments. I'd like to understand if we've already gotten most of what we will get.	data that the state received in December. The information from the state can be found here. (Be sure to click the box that says "To view all grants plus the effect of the caps, click this box" in order to see the excess cost grant revenue.
4330`	Health Services Grant		
43302	Team Mentor Reimbursement		
43303	Magnet School Transportation Grant		
43304	Adult Education Grant		
44310	Tuition for Individuals - Reg. Ed.		
44311	Pre-K Tuition		
44705	Building Use Revenues		
45108	Library Book Fees		
48000	Other Revenues		
48200	Universal Service Fund (E-Rate)	WY: What is this? (It's a big ticket item)	EC: E-Rate is a federally funded program that provides a reimbursement to districes for qualifying technology purchases. The amount of funding a district receives is based on our free & reduced lunch student count. Our count provides us with a 50% discount on technology that qualifies. There is a very strict process to apply and receive this funding, the district uses a consultant to support BPS in obtaining this funding (E-Rate Online)

			Technology that the district can receive 50% reimbursement on includes: Internet services, Fiber WAN (network connection between schools and TSO), networking & wi-fi equipment, maintenance and support contracts for network switches & firewall. As an additional insight, this program is actually funding through telephone & communication bills. It is one of the surcharges you will see on a monthly cell phone bill
48803	BHS Parking Fees	Rob - Does this mean we are expected to collect approximately 20k in parking fees? These fees are paid by the students?	KD: Yes, this is the revenue collected at the High School for student parking on school grounds.
		WY: Why a reduction of $3000 for 25-26? Does this reflect smaller class sizes (e.g., class of 2027)?	KD: It is reduced to be more aligned with historical actuals and yes, we do not expect to see this increase as class size is not increasing.
48940	Chromebook Revenues	Rob - This is pretty cool - How are we collecting revenue from Chromebooks?	EC-These funds are collected through our 1:1 program agreement. Students at BHS & WMS can “opt-in” to the program each year and pay a rental/insurance fee for a district issued Chromebook for the year. The fee structure varies. See the 1:1 agreement here.
49103	Transfer from Cafeteria Fund		