

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET PRESENTATION
MINUTES

Town Hall Meeting Room
Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Present:

Committee: Stephen Walko, Chairman
Edward Krumeich, Michael Mason, Larry Simon

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator; Dr. Larry Leverett, John Curtin, Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Colleen Giambo, Board of Education;

Board: Nancy Barton, James Himes, Arthur Norton, Alma Rutgers, Robert Stone, Leslie Tarkington, Peter Tesei

Board Ex Officio: James A. Lash, First Selectman

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M.

Colleen Giambo, Chairman of the Board of Education (BOE) began the presentation to the Budget Committee. Mrs. Giambo began by explaining that over the last year and a half, the BOE has been improving its governance system. Policy Governance, a framework devised to help focus on the BOE's most important tasks: setting policy and strategic planning. This system was adopted to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the school system. Resources have been aligned with strategic directions. The recommended budget is \$113,865,757, more than \$500,000 under the BET guidelines. The proposal is a 3.9% increase over last year's budget. Maximizing achievement for all students is the objective, as well as closing gaps in performance. Some of the elements to improve the academic experience of students include the elementary foreign language program, adoption of a new elementary math curriculum and the addition of a portfolio system to improve student writing in the middle schools.

Mrs. Giambo reported that the current enrollment cycle has passed its peak, and a gradually declining enrollment is the current reality. While maintaining existing staffing ratios, the district will employ fewer teachers next year due to the declining enrollment. Retirement and attrition will allow for the adjustment in staffing levels, resulting in fewer teachers needing to be replaced.

Dr. Leverett then made his presentation to the Board.

- Re-allocating resources in an efficient manner, and linking them with results and strategic directions.
- The budget is fiscally responsible and sensitive to the shifts in enrollment that have occurred over the last few years.

Dr. Leverett stressed the following strategic directions:

- align the focus of schools in terms of the goal setting process
- examine the patterns of resource allocation
- adoption of key initiatives to move forward
- measure results in a way available to staff, parents and members of the community

Aligning adults in support of improving teaching and learning and maintaining facilities and aligning resources with instructional priorities are also essential to achieving the BOE objectives.

A number of the initiatives introduced in this year's budget are multi-year initiatives and will continue beyond 2006-07. Commitments include multi-year focus on improving the performance of students on literacy and numeracy, and increasing the role of Central Office in the area of professional development.

- A 9% increase in the Contracted and Other Services Account is primarily caused by fuel increase costs.
- A 5.6% increase in the Supplies accounts attributed to efforts to implement a comprehensive maintenance program in order to stay ahead of problems that may occur in systems.
- A 19.4% increase for the Maintenance accounts, focuses on capital projects under \$25,000, and complements the BOE comprehensive maintenance program.
- The Fixed Settlements account moves toward budgeting for the previously unanticipated cost of settlements. Prior to FY 2006-07, other ways to absorb settlements were found. The amount of \$200,000 is roughly what has been spent in the past, but not formally budgeted. The breakdown is \$150,000 in the area of special education and \$50,000 budgeted for unanticipated human resources settlements.
- Personnel Services: 2.8% increase. An adjustment in current year staffing (not deploying 4.6 full time equivalent positions) reflecting sensitivity to a variance between actual and projected enrollment, resulted in a \$318,816 reduction in expenditure. Additionally, in response to declining enrollment, 20 positions were eliminated, offset by the number of retirees. There has not been a reduction in programs or services, nor has there been any layoff of school personnel in order to achieve a savings estimated to be approximately \$1.7 million. An additional salary savings of \$110,000 for an additional 5 retirees, and a salary differential from resignations of \$172,925 are also among the savings.

Accounting Conventions:

Enrollment Impact on 2004-05 Expenditures:

9238 anticipated enrollment
9083 actual enrollment
\$104.9 million appropriation base
\$103,505,114 expenditures (\$1.3 million returned to the town, as a result of withholding the deployment of staff and imposing a spending moratorium)

Enrollment Impact on 2005-06 Expenditure:

9151 anticipated enrollment
9003 actual enrollment

\$109,589,129 appropriation base
Expenditures TBD

2005-06 numbers impacted by cost containment, declining enrollment and unanticipated expenses and adversely affected by rising energy costs.

Enrollment Impact on 2006-07 Expenditures:

8905 anticipated enrollment

\$113,865,757 appropriation based on projected enrollment

Student performance is the measure of value of the programs implemented. SAT 1 verbal and mathematic scores are the highest in five years, and highest for the district in 16 years. Average scores continue to increase on a year to year basis.

Participation rates in advanced placement courses have doubled.

CAP performance scores show some increase over the past four years, but needs to improve in overall performance.

Performance on the Connecticut Mastery Tests has plateaued, trailing best in class. More than 80% of students are achieving at the mastery level or above. There is concern about those students (20% on the CMT and 30% on the CAP) who consistently achieve below mastery.

Approximately 85% of students are in the high performance category, more than half of these being high growth.

11% show low performance or low growth, or not making a year's worth of progress for each year spent in the educational system.

16% of students are not at goal on the reading portion of the CMT 6th grade reading score.

The mission of the Greenwich public schools is to educate all students to the highest level of their academic potential and to teach them the skills and knowledge that enable them to become capable, creative and responsible members of society.

Dr. Leverett concluded by saying that the budget is responsive to that mission, linking resources, demonstrating fiscal responsibility, managing declining enrollment and responding to unanticipated events.

Dr. Leverett also thanked all of the members of his cabinet for their efforts in preparing the budget.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Zebrowski, Recording Secretary

Stephen G. Walko, Chairman