



Brookfield Public Schools



"Create Your Tomorrow"

To: Brookfield Board of Education
From: Robert D. Belden, Jr., Chairman Board of Education
Re: **2017-2018 Adopted Budget**
Date: January 31, 2017

Introduction

The proposed budget estimate for 2017-2018 represents our commitment to maintain an excellent educational program and continue to advance the Brookfield Public Schools to continually improve and remain among the finest in Connecticut. The budget maintains a balance among core programs despite increased costs. In a fiscally responsible manner, this spending plan requests new funding necessary to meet the cost of continuing and maintaining the quality of current programs and compliance with legal mandates, and has offset new programmatic investments being made for the betterment of our students with reductions in other areas.

With the Board of Education's Strategic Coherence Plan Goals as our guide; our programmatic investments will enhance several key areas by addressing curriculum development, professional learning, assessment literacy, reading instruction, and organizational structures. This budget will continue to fund all mandated programs and will comply with new commitments reached through collective bargaining, arbitration, and other contractual agreements. Savings will be achieved by continuing to leverage conservative purchasing practices and implementing collaborative purchasing via our participation in the CREC consortium and utilizing the new Town/BOE purchasing agent.

The proposed 2017-2018 budget request is \$41,455,637. This represents a 2.66% or \$1,074,165 increase over the 2016-2017 budget. The net cost of new investments in this budget is \$36,313 since new programs were offset by reductions in other areas.

District-Level Enhancements

The plan strategically strengthens student academic achievement by enhancing professional practice through intentional and aligned professional development activities. Improvement in student performance demands focused and embedded professional development opportunities. Faculty professional development will be focused in the areas of reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and social/emotional awareness. Technology will be enhanced through upgrades to presentation stations and bandwidth at each school, which will support the growing need for wireless access. Additionally, we will implement a data assessment and analytics platform to manage student learning data. Administrators will continue to enhance their supervisory and evaluative feedback skills through ongoing training with ReVision Learning.

Administration and faculty must continue to strategically align the curricula with the standards by developing plans and materials necessary to implement support for increasingly rigorous learning. The Brookfield Public Schools has fully complied with and implemented the Teacher Evaluation and Administrator Evaluation Plans by complying with this statewide initiative. Continued adherence to this unfunded mandate necessitates engagement in administrator professional learning focused on feedback and supervisory skills so that evaluation becomes a tool to support teacher and administrator growth, rather than

simply an endeavor of compliance. The proposal continues to anticipate the need for the commitment of professional meeting time and training in this area in order to meet the standards and provide students with personalized and cutting edge instruction and assessment.

During our budget deliberations, the Board had healthy discussions about the implementation of a district-wide K12 World Languages and English Language Learner (ELL) Coordinator position. The World Languages curriculum leader position was first identified five years ago in the roll out of the K12 world language plan, but has never been filled. The Board sees an important need in this area. In addition, there is a growing population of ELL students, and a district-level leader is needed in the near future. While the need is there, and sensitive to the cost that would come with it, the Board voted to defer this new position request to the 2018-19 budget, so it is not included in this submission.

Center and Huckleberry Elementary Schools Grades PreK – 4

Based upon enrollment history and projections we will reduce one Kindergarten section at Center School and increase one classroom section to Grade 2 at Huckleberry Hill.

The newly arbitrated contract with the Brookfield Education Association provides teachers with one hour of collaboration time per week after school hours. This eliminates the need of the current practice at CES of dismissing kindergarten children early on Mondays for teacher grade level collaboration/planning. Therefore, kindergarten students will have a full day of school on Mondays. This translates to an increase for our kindergarten children of 66 hours or 2 weeks of instructional time per year. This actually saves the district \$21,000 due to the reduction of the mid day bus run.

Whisconier Middle School: Grades 5-8

We will increase the social studies time Grade 5 and 6 students are offered to align with the demands of social studies state standards. This will be accomplished by reorganizing the existing, traditional middle school teaming model in Grade 5 by transitioning to a developmentally appropriate model which will address many of the executive function and transitional needs of our preadolescent students.

In order to provide the necessary increase in Social Studies instructional time, this proposal requests an increase of 1.0 FTE regular education classroom teacher in Grade 6. This will ensure that the 240 students enrolled have a total of 10 classroom teachers to comply with a 24 student to 1 teacher class size ratio. In addition, we will reduce 2.0 core FTE in Grade 5 due to lower student population. However, to increase the Social Studies time in Grades 5/6, Spanish will be transitioned to a new scheduling model whereby Spanish will be taught only as a portion of certain core classes and also as a rotation in our Unified Arts cycle. As a result, there is an increase of 2.0 FTE. Between the class size changes and the changes in teaching model, the overall core teaching staff in fifth and sixth grade increases by 1.0 FTE.

We also propose to pilot an inclusive enrichment program at Whisconier Middle School. This pilot utilizes our existing technology education program staff and focuses on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), creativity & innovation, and communication & collaborative skills.

We will also address revealed needs in reading at Whisconier by hiring a reading teacher. By reducing existing positions no longer necessary, we will add this critical support staff to the middle school.

Brookfield High School: Grades 9-12

After a review of student data and instructional needs, the budget proposal adds one reading instructor at Brookfield High School. The addition of this much needed faculty member will allow us to support the identified needs in developing literacy skills for incoming high school students transitioning from our middle school. Similar to Whisconier, the new BHS reading teacher position requested will be offset by reducing staffing in other areas due to changing student needs.

Our high school data also supports a change in the existing Writing and Numeracy Center models at the high school. The Center's availability will be increased by 500 hours over the duration of the academic year and include multiple subjects with no additional cost.

Our alternative high school model needs one less paraprofessional position as we continue to meet the needs of the students in this program. Finally, our athletic training services will be supported by an outside agency rather than a school employee, providing the district with more flexibility and reducing trainer costs by almost fifty percent.

Athletics/ Elimination of Participation Fees

You may recall that we eliminated pay-to-participate across the district for all students by utilizing existing student activity funds in the 2016-2017 school year. For 2017-2018 we plan to adopt the same approach, utilizing the student activity funds; this requires the recently received restitution funds to flow to the student activity fund in the amount of 56,087.

Summary Review of 2016-2017 Investments

The Boards of Education, Selectmen and Finance along with the community were extremely responsive in supporting the administration in developing the current year's budget and the Strategic Coherence Plan. We have been making excellent progress. As part of this budget submission, we have outlined below a summary of enhancements and new positions that have been undergirding the accomplishment our Strategic Coherence Plan Goals:

- At our elementary schools we have implemented a Reading Foundation Program, Math Program, Columbia Teachers College Reading & Writing Programs and new Spelling Inventory. These programs & materials are supported by embedded professional learning and assessment protocols. Specifically, Huckleberry received faculty to support student speech & language needs as well as a math specialist to provide leadership in curriculum development and coaching.
- At Whisconier two special education teachers and a speech & language teacher were hired to support the increasing need in this area. A math specialist was hired to provide leadership in curriculum development and coaching to support a rigorous mathematics experience for all.
- Brookfield High School hired a business teacher and a social studies teacher to remedy years of burgeoning class sizes and limited student offerings due to attrition. The school to career position was reallocated and replaced with a college counselor in the guidance department to address long standing needs.
- As a district we addressed multiple long standing needs to provide systematic alignment, consistency and coherence:

- Blum Shapiro business audit recommendations:
 - We plan to convert to MUNIS on July 1, 2017 and we addressed almost all Policy & Procedure Revisions including the hiring of a Benefits Coordinator, Technology Director and a Purchasing Agent which the BOE shares with the Town
- Developed and Implemented our Strategic Coherence Plan
- Developed and Implemented our Communications Plan
- Redesigned the district and school websites
- Hired the district English Language Learner Teacher to support the increasing ELL enrollment
- Established and delivered district wide, embedded Professional Development to support Math, ELA, Social Studies
- Adopted, purchased and implemented a K-8 Math Program

Capital Improvement Plan

The 2017-2018 spending plan also includes projects necessary to maintain and update our facilities. These plans can be viewed in the Capital Improvement Plan document. It is important to note that in November, after consultation with the Business and Facilities subcommittee, the Administration submitted a draft 10-year Capital Improvement Plan to the First Selectman's office. For 2017-18, this core capital requirement is \$574,000.

In addition to the core Capital Improvement Plan, our facilities and athletic leaders have identified a need to replace the artificial turf at both the athletic fields at the high school over the next three years and to replace the lighting and press box at the high school field in the near future. The most urgent need is the back field turf replacement, which is required due to age. We have included this in our capital package, but the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance may want to consider this as a separate bonding package. The total amount over the three years is \$1,900,000.

Conclusion

Much care and thought went into the development of this budget proposal. All involved are cognizant of the continuing economic conditions of the state and the Town, and are mindful of the need to bring forth a budget that minimizes the financial burden on the community. At the same time, we are aware of our responsibility to insure the adequate resources necessary to move the Brookfield Public Schools forward as an organization that propels students to become exceptional young people who will shape our future. By restoring the necessary positions eliminated after years of attrition and strategically reallocating resources, this budget accomplishes the aims of the Strategic Coherence Plan.

The budget is lean, responsible and respectful of the Brookfield tax payers. We will be able to sustain and strengthen the educational program currently provided to the children of Brookfield as we propel them to ***Create Their Tomorrow.***