

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING

JANUARY 22, 2015

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with Executive Session scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Present from the Board: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from Administration: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent; and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance.

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Personnel Matters, a Student Matter, and the Southington Administrators' Association Contract, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS, A STUDENT MATTER, AND THE SOUTHLINGTON ADMINISTRATORS' ASSOCIATION CONTRACT

Mr. Goralski declared the Executive Session ended at 7:18 p.m.

3. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

At 7:19 p.m., in Celebration of Excellence, the Board recognized the Southington Blue Knights Marching Band and Band Director, Jeff Shaw, for receiving their Sixth USBands Class V Open State Championship. Mr. Goralski presented a Certificate of Excellence to Drum Majors Nick Ottalagana and Brett Simms who accepted it on behalf of the entire SHS Marching Band. Mr. Shaw also recognized his assistant Sara Ossias, his wife, and the band parents for all their support to make this happen.

4. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

The regular session was reconvened at 7:43 p.m. by Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson. Board members present were Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from the administration were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations; and Ms. Margaret Walsh, Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Student representatives present were James Brino, Christopher Iverson, and Elizabeth Veilleux.

There were approximately 20 people in the audience.

5. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by the student representatives.

Mr. Goralski requested a moment of silence in memory of former football high school coach, Mr. Garrett (Gary) Costello, who recently tragically passed away.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting ~ January 8, 2015

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of January 8, 2015, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Audience

There was no audience communication.

b. Communications from Board Members and Administration

Communication from the Board Members:

Mrs. Carmody reported that the Facility Naming Committee met to discuss naming the walkway to the football field in honor of Dominic D'Angelo to finalize the plans which will be presented to the Board in February.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported that she, Mrs. Queen and Superintendent Connellan attended the CREC Legislative Breakfast for 2015 that morning and she distributed folders from that breakfast to the Board members. She noted that Southington Representatives Joe Aresimowicz, David Zoni and State Senator Joe Markley were also in attendance. She noted that in the folders were talking points for the Southington Board of Education's Legislative Breakfast that will be held in a few weeks. Some of the topics discussed at the CREC Legislative Breakfast were:

- Request of the legislators to delay the secondary school reform implementation date;
- Magnet school funding formula;
- Burden of proof;
- Mental Health Services, which should not be borne solely by the school districts;
- Request to take the SBAC testing out of Grade 11.

Mrs. Lombardi questioned if there was discussion on moving the special education costs beyond where it is right now. Mrs. Notar-Francesco replied that it was not discussed.

Mrs. Johnson requested that, when the Board prepares for their Legislative Breakfast with Southington Legislators, that they discuss with their legislators similar topics from the CREC Legislative Breakfast. Mr. Goralski asked Mr. Connellan to put together the Board's talking points, which they gathered through the budget process, to be discussed at this breakfast.

Mrs. Queen added that two items mentioned at the CREC Breakfast that came up as being no cost to the state to implement would be:

- 1) Roll back the high school reform, which was described as being archaic.
- 2) The Burden of Proof piece would be something that would not cost the state anything. Connecticut is one of the few states in the nation that requires the burden of proof to be placed on the school district.

Mr. Goralski commented on the YMCA Polar Plunge at Camp Sloper. He thanked the staff, faculty, administrators, and students for their fundraising efforts and Mr. Connellan and Dr. Semmel for being good sports and jumping into the cold water as part of his team. He stated that the school met the challenge that he gave them on behalf of the Board to have a representative from each school. He noted that Mr. Madancy and Mr. Bergin also jumped. The event raised \$35,000 and the Board of Education team's contribution was over \$5,000.

Communication from Administration:

Mr. Connellan reported on the following:

1. Hartford Area Superintendents Association Legislative Breakfast - Update: Mr. Connellan stated that Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported on this, and added that he felt that all the school districts were sending the right message to the state legislators and, even though the messages were varied, they were consistent.
2. M.O.R.E. Commission Special Education Work Group - Update: Mr. Connellan reported that he forwarded to the Board members a draft of recommendations that this group will be bringing forward to the Education Committee. It is still a working draft that will again be discussed next week when they meet to put together the final recommendations. He will continue to give the Board updates.

3. School Safety and Security Plan: Mr. Connellan reported that a group of administrators, chaired by Mr. Frank Pepe, have been working on this and March 10, 2015 is the day when administrators will be rolling this out to faculty and staff in their buildings.

4. Polar Plunge – BOE /SPS Support for Students: Mr. Connellan thanked all of the faculty, staff members, and the parents who encouraged their children to participate in the fundraising. He thanked Mr. Derynoski, faculty, staff and students for attending and cheering them on. He pointed out that now approximately 90 students will be able to attend Camp Sloper who otherwise might not have the opportunity.

c. Communications from Student Representatives

Miss Veilleux reported on the following:

- The SHS Book Club started skyping the fourth grade students after reading the book and did questions and answers through Google Doc. The fourth graders loved the book and reading with the high schools students and proposed a competition. The book is based on a girl who has cerebral palsy and is in a wheelchair. The fourth graders made a wheelchair out of recycled materials and challenged the high school book club students to make one too so they can race each other.
- Miss Veilleux reported that she asked Abby Heller, who is a senior and very involved in the high school special education program, Unified Theatre and Best Buddies, for her opinion on how special education students are treated at the school. Miss Heller gave a letter to Miss Veilleux, which Miss Veilleux read to the Board of Education (*Attachment #1*).

Mr. Iverson reported on the following:

- Southington High School Guidance held a “Stress-buster Session” on Thursday and Friday mornings this week from 7:15-7:30 a.m. for students who feel overwhelmed during exams and need to relax. The lights were dimmed and students were meditating.
- FBLA and Key Club are partnering to visit Strong School on January 30 to participate in the Junior Achievement in a Day Program. FBLA and Key Club students will visit classes in Grades 1 through 5 to discuss real world business topics.
- The Junior Achievement Entrepreneurial Academy started that day at Stanley Black and Decker. A group of 24 local high school students meet at Stanley Black and Decker and form a company from the very beginning to the very end. Today was the orientation with Natalie Rickard and Robert Sirko, both juniors for Southington High School, participating.

Mr. Brino reported on the following:

- Mid-term exams are in full swing with Friday, January 23 the last exams in periods seven and eight.
- The Course Fair for the incoming freshmen was this past Thursday. After the main program, there were two special presentations: 1) Project-Lead-the-Way and, 2) Marching Band. There is an additional orientation for students interested in those programs. The students were able to meet with guidance counselors and department heads and teachers from every department at the school regarding course offerings.

Regarding the budget, Mr. Iverson noted that he has heard the art department needs numerous supplies and more money to buy supplies. Miss Veilleux added that she has been involved with the art department for the last three years. She thought that it was important to give the art department more money for supplies because there was only so much the teachers could teach the students with the money and supplies that they had. Mr. Brino added that the student representatives discussed starting a week earlier than originally proposed on the 2015-2016 school calendar, and thought that it was a good idea.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy & Personnel Committee Meeting ~ January 20, 2015

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee discussed the adoption of a Video Surveillance Policy and reviewed a sample policy and regulation that was given by the Board's legal counsel. At the start of the 2015-2016 school year, all school buses will have one or two cameras installed on each vehicle. A policy is needed to have video cameras on buses and school grounds; however, the committee had many questions regarding the regulation. Mrs. Clark stated that the administration will contact legal counsel with their questions and report back to the Policy & Personnel Committee at their next meeting.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mr. Goralski reminded the Board that the Board of Finance meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. The Board of Education will present their 2015-2016 adopted budget to them at that meeting. He thanked Mr. Beaudoin from the Town Board of Finance for attending the Board of Education's second workshop and his attendance at tonight's meeting.

b. Construction Update

Mr. Romano reported that they were in Phase 10 of 12 phases for the middle school projects. Classroom renovations are happening at both Kennedy and DePaolo Middle Schools. The rough framing, plumbing and electrical have all been completed and the finishes are in full swing. The scheduled completion for this phase is early April; however, they are ahead of schedule at both schools.

c. Proposed 2015-2016 School Calendar ~ Third Reading

Mr. Goralski stated that this is the third time this agenda item had come before the Board. All the items reflected in their last discussion have been shared with the PTOs. He did not hear any feedback on the changes from the last meeting until he arrived at tonight's meeting. A parent made a comment to him and Mr. Derynoski before the meeting this evening about the day before Thanksgiving and they told the parent that the calendar has been discussed for over two months now. He told the parent that a half-day would be reduced instruction time and that the Board preferred a full day, which has been the Board's practice.

Mr. Connellan stated that he had not received any comments regarding the proposed calendar. He noted that in the lower right-hand corner of the calendar his office adjusted the language to reflect the additional days at the end of the year from 11 to 16 days.

MOTION: by Mrs. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

“Move that the Board of Education adopt the 2015-2016 school calendar, as presented.”

Motion carried by voice vote with Mr. Derynoski and Mrs. Johnson opposed.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review / Adoption of the 2015-2016 Board of Education Budget

Mrs. DiNello provided the Board with a budget document (*Attachment #2*). She stated that on Tuesday afternoon the Board received a revised document that the administration worked on based on the feedback from the Board at the second workshop. The administration revised the budget for a combination of level services and level funding based on the Board's request. At the first workshop, there were two small adjustments and they were at a 4.42% increase. Through the work of the administration based on the Board's recommendation, they made reductions of \$708,077 or .81%. Currently, the revised operating budget before the Board this evening is at a 3.61% increase. She included a document showing the New Personnel that remains in the budget per the Board's direction. Any additions came along with a corresponding decrease in the budget. The administration reviewed all purchased services accounts and scaled back where appropriate for level service. She took off the 2% increase that was budgeted to the supply line items and re-did the per-pupil calculations based on the October 1 enrollments, and made those adjustments to the budget with the listed decreases. On page 41, the only new items that were requested were the two automatic floor scrubbers, which have been removed from the budget. Within the Special Projects section on page 46, they left the completion of the physics classroom in place because they feel that it is part of level service for the needs of the students at the high school. They moved the request for the three temperature alarms for the kitchen freezers and scaled back the enrichment opportunity that was requested for Robotics, Gardening and the Drama Club to only include the Robotics enrichment opportunity. There was a corresponding decrease for that request because it would be considered new. In the Major Projects and Equipment on pages 64 and 65, some items were moved over the 2016-2017 school year. The only item remaining in the 2015-2016 budget request is the Derynoski School change in fuse panels to breakers. On page 65, the money for the classroom furniture needs remains along with the \$6,955 adjustment from the first workshop at the three schools in most need, and the \$85,000 to continue the funding they have been doing annually for the Education Technology Plan. The total on the Major Projects and Equipment for 2015-2016 would be revised to \$149,093. This is a brief overview of the work that was done from the administration meeting on Friday morning following the workshops and getting this document to the Board on Tuesday.

Mr. Derynoski recommended for safety and supervision issues that the Cross Country Assistant Coach stipends at the two middle schools, as well as the Assistant Coach for the high school Girls Swim and Drive Team, remain in the budget. If not, then they will have to limit the amount of participants, which he would prefer not to do. Mr. Goralski noted that they are

currently in the budget and took a consensus that the Board agrees to keep those positions in the budget for safety reasons.

CONSENSUS: *To leave the Southington High School Girls Swim & Dive Assistant Coach in the budget, along with the Cross Country Assistant Coaches at Kennedy and DePaolo Middle Schools.*

YES: Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Goralski.

Mrs. Carmody recommended keeping in the budget the South End School 0.1 FTE for a Teacher for World Language. She felt that the pilot program was very successful and something that should be continued.

CONSENSUS: *To leave the South End Elementary School World Language Teacher (0.1 FTE) in the budget.*

YES: Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Oshana, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Goralski.

Mrs. Lombardi stated that she requested information today on the ELL (English Language Learners) program. Mrs. DiNello explained that Mrs. Kelly Nichols was present to discuss that request. Mrs. Lombardi explained that during the week she questioned how many students were currently receiving the state recommended time for an ELL student. The answer received was that 12% of our students were receiving the state recommended time of instruction. She then followed up with, if they added one tutor, how would those percentages change? If they had the two tutors that were in the original budget, how would those percentages change? In her estimation, serving this population the very basics of their education and having only 12% or 11 out of 98 students receiving the state recommended instruction is a big gap.

Mrs. Nichols distributed a handout (*Attachment #3*). Mrs. DiNello stated that there was an initial question that Mrs. Lombardi had asked and that went out with a response in regard to the ELL serviced students and today there was a follow-up question on that response. Mrs. Nichols worked on that today to be able to respond to this question. Mrs. Nichols explained that they currently have a population of 105 EL students in K-12. She noted that 65 of the 105 EL students have been receiving services for greater than a year and have not yet fulfilled the state criteria to be exited from the EL program. These students currently receive anywhere from a 30-minute a week service to a two-hour a week EL service. In addition to that is the high priority population of 40 newly identified EL students. Mrs. Lombardi asked if 12% of the 98 students is accurate because that is the number that she was working with. Mrs. Nichols replied that it was not accurate now; however, it was response to the number of students who started with the EL program as of September, newly identified EL students. Mrs. DiNello clarified that currently only 12% of the newcomers are provided EL service one-hour per day. It is accurate because it is 12% of the newly identified students, not 12% of all the EL students.

Mr. Goralski asked what the state requirement was for EL students. Mrs. Nichols responded that the state recommendation is focused on the newly identified EL student. The recommendation is for one-hour a day of EL service. Mrs. Nichols spoke in detail to the attachment.

Mrs. Queen noted that the one-hour a day is not one-to-one, it is in a small group setting. Mrs. Lombardi asked how effective was the group of newly identified EL students to be tutored in a group. Mrs. Nicholas replied that it was not very effective when many of the students speak different languages and have no English.

Mr. Derynoski asked how many hours per week would the 1.0 FTE ELL Tutor be teaching. Mrs. DiNello replied it would be 30-hours per week. The original budget submission was for two 30-hour a week tutors, and it has been scaled back to one tutor.

Mrs. Lombardi's understanding was that this was for two part-time tutors. Mrs. DiNello clarified that the original request was for two full-time tutors, which has been scaled back to one full-time tutor at 30-hours. It could be that the two part-time tutors would equal the one full-time tutor. Mrs. Lombardi thought that in the past the tutors have been part-time. Mrs. DiNello explained that the majority of the EL Tutors are full-time. We have one .5 FTE EL Tutor, but the others are all 30-hours a week. Mrs. DiNello stated that they have full-time tutors because it was very difficult to keep part-time tutors. The part-time EL Tutors did not have benefits and, as soon as a paraprofessional position opened up, they would apply for that position. Therefore, the Personnel Office was continually hiring new EL Tutors. The Board made a decision a number of years ago to mirror the benefits that we gave the EL full-time tutors to what the paraprofessionals were receiving. The current plan in the revised budget before the Board is for one full-time 30-hour a week EL Tutor. Mrs. Lombardi stated that she was hearing two different things regarding a part-time or full-time tutor. The work that Mrs. Nichols did today on the chart was based on one part-time tutor.

Mr. Derynoski recommended keeping the one full-time EL Tutor in the budget.

CONSENSUS: *To keep the one full-time EL Tutor in the budget.*

YES: Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Oshana, Mr. Goralski

NO: Mrs. Lombardi – There is a need for more EL Tutors.

Mrs. Carmody recommended keeping the Thalberg Elementary School Music Teacher in the budget. Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that in the past they were able to move teachers around to accommodate that need and questioned why they could not continue that practice. Mrs. Smith replied that should enrollment decline, whereby they can eliminate a class, they would be able to consider that. It is not so much the student enrollment; it is the class enrollment and how many classes need to be serviced in special areas, particularly music. A couple of years ago, they moved their specialists from 30-minutes to 40-minutes, and they were able to accommodate that without adding any extra specialists. However, this year it caught up with them, and there was a lot of borrowing teachers. They had to factor in the driving time and lunch, and it was impossible to cover this year. Mrs. Megan Bennett, Principal of Thalberg School, came to the podium and explained how it affected her school and that her staff is stretched beyond capacity. Mrs. Clark asked Mrs. Bennett if she had someone available for a 0.2 music teacher. Mrs. Bennett replied that she did not at this time. Mr. Goralski asked how they would go about filling a 0.2 music teacher. Mrs. Smith replied that is similar to how they filled a physical education position at ALTA. They were fortunate to find a beginning teacher who coupled with substituting in a position in their selected field until they found a full-time job and left. It is not an ideal situation.

At this point, there is no other solution other than the 0.2 music teacher. This year, they are patching it at the expense of Flanders School.

CONSENSUS: *To keep the Thalberg Elementary School 0.2 Music Teacher in the budget.*

YES: Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Oshana, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Goralski

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Johnson

Mr. Connellan stated that he sent a memo to the Board members regarding the full-time Special Education Coordinator request that is in the budget (*Attachment #4*). He felt strongly about keeping this position in the budget, having been a Director of Special Education for 17 years and a Superintendent for 10 years. The position is one that Southington needs in order to do all the things in this area that can be done. He views this as something that will allow Ms. Walsh to reorganize, provide better direction and supervision, and put the district into a position of bringing some of the out-of-district students back into the district and create a cost prevention scenario. He felt that it was very important if they want Ms. Walsh to do all the things in that position that she was hired to do. She needs to be able to have the tools to be able to do it. It would involve restructuring and he believed that in the long run they would be in a situation where they will be spending fewer dollars to place students out and fewer dollars for legal fees and will be providing better services to students. He felt that the benefits would be across the district Pre-K through age 21.

Mr. Connellan explained that included in his attachment was correspondence from three principals in support of the Special Education Coordinator position. He asked Mr. Steven Madancy, Principal of Kennedy Middle School, to come to the podium to share his view of the position from a building administrator perspective.

Mr. Madancy stated that three years ago he came to Southington from a district where he saw a comprehensive special education system that was structured in the way that he envisioned Southington could be. When he arrived in Southington he assumed that there were layers of support in terms of accessibility to coordinators, professional development for paraprofessionals, oversight of high priority and complex cases. He discovered that everyone was spread thin here. He noted that it has a ripple effect on the entire organization. Mr. Madancy gave a detailed synopsis on the ripple effect and how the extra position would streamline the way things are done in the district, and help the district become more efficient and proactive in terms of systemic improvement. He noted that he talks to the special education coordinators late at night and on weekends often because they are spread so thin they are just trying to keep up or catch up because they work long hours. He strongly supports this position.

Mrs. Queen reminded the Board that this is the second year in a row that they have heard about the need for another coordinator. They have had two Superintendents and two Directors of Pupil Personnel Services that have told them this same message. This year, they are hearing that another coordinator would allow them to proactively bring some students back into the district. It appears to her that adding this position would be a zero effect on the budget because they are reducing some out-of-district placement costs for a minimum of two students. Mr. Connellan replied that the direction administration received after the last workshop was that, if there were items in the proposed budget needing to be in the budget, they needed to look at where they would achieve the savings in order to fund those items. He knows that they can do this with the

appropriate level of support, and a coordinator would provide that support. He is being conservative when he estimated two students. He did not believe that it could be done without the appropriate level of support. Mr. Connellan is continually amazed because, when he leaves central office in the evening, he thinks that he is the last one out the building, and often finds one or two coordinators are still in the building trying to get the job done. He explained that they are understaffed in this area and felt that they would not be able to get some things done until they have the additional coordinator. With the extra help they would be able to bring students back into the district into existing programs, not creating a new program.

Mr. Goralski stated that he would like to give Ms. Walsh the opportunity to speak to the correspondence that she sent to the Board (*Attachment #5*) regarding a plan and outline of what the Special Education Department would look like, what it services, and what it does. Ms. Walsh first gave her opinion and explained that, during her tenure as a Special Education Administrator, she spent many years in the private sector and public sector. In doing so, she saw what was happening in the private special education facilities and what they were offering students which was different than what was being done in the public educational system. During her tenure in New Britain, she was able to create programs that modeled private special education facilities throughout the district, such as the Wheeler School in Plainville, the Klingberg School, and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center School for children who have significant behavioral psychiatric problems and students who had severe autism. Working with the teams at New Britain, they created those programs and were able to keep students in-district. When she left New Britain to come to Southington, there were 45 elementary students Grades K-5 that were able to be successful in their school with a program that was embedded in the elementary school and, per their IEPs, they could go in and out to be with their typical peers where it was appropriate. It took two years to get it up and running effectively; however, it worked very successfully. She was confident that it could be done in Southington with the proper supports in place and oversight. She knows that special education is very costly and there are many variables that they have no control over, but what they do have control over they can create and be proactive instead of reactive. She gave an analogy that, if she was a surgeon, she has only Band-Aids to work with right now. She needs the tools and equipment to do what she needs to do to make it a successful place for students with disabilities. She thanked the Board for allowing her to express her opinion.

Ms. Walsh walked the Board through what the Special Education Department currently has now and how it would look restructured with the proposed additional Special Education Coordinator. She spoke in detail to the attachment that she gave to the Board.

Mrs. Johnson felt it was a no-brainer to bring back students who are outplaced that are costing approximately the same amount of money as a new Coordinator would cost. Her concern was how long it would take to develop an in-house program for children who are currently outplaced. She questioned if they are not providing that now because they do not have the additional coordinator. Ms. Walsh replied that currently they do have programs in the district but they are mixed. It is called the Language-based Program. They are mixing children with autism with behavioral problems and that is just the way it morphed into a self-contained classroom. There are students in a classroom K-Grade 4, which is not appropriate. She envisions having a program for children with autism in a Grade K-2 classroom and a Grade 3, 4 and 5 self-contained classroom to bring those students back and be housed in a school. Some of the schools have the Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) Program for children with emotional problems, and she would do a Grades K-2 classroom. She would separate the children with behavioral and

emotional problems from the children with autism because they are two different disabilities. Mrs. Johnson questioned if these programs would be in place and will take place prior to the start of the next school year. Ms. Walsh replied that it would not; it is her long-term goal.

Mr. Connellan replied that there are two components to this scenario. The students that they are talking about bringing back right now would go into existing programs, not building new programs. When he was a Special Education Director in North Haven, they built a continuum of services Preschool through age 21, which took six years to do. They did a piece of it every single year and for the most part it was cost avoidance. It takes some time to do, and they will have to spend some dollars on that, but it would cost less. What is missing now is the ability to be proactive and have the quality control part of it, which affects the compliance piece, attorneys' fees, etc. The sooner they start doing it, the better off the fiscal impact would be on the budget. Right now, almost 25% of the budget is spent on special education. He is wholeheartedly behind providing the best possible services that they can, but he knows from personal experience that they can do it, and they could provide good services. Some of those services that are being provided outside the district could be provided in-district. Right now, it could not be done because the current coordinators are stretched. It will take some time to implement these programs.

Mrs. Johnson noted that the adjustments to the Superintendent's budget clearly states that Account #83370, out-of-district tuition, decreased \$120,000, which leads her to believe that this is what is going to pay for two students coming back. Mr. Connellan replied that he was being conservative and trying to look at how they could fund this position that is really needed, and it is possible right now for them to use those dollars in-house instead of paying those dollars in tuition. This is one instance where it will be starting for the 2015-2016 school year.

Mrs. Carmody thanked Mr. Connellan and Ms. Walsh for all the information that they sent to the Board. She felt that the new Director of Pupil Services should have more time to evaluate what they have and to see how they could make the department more efficient before they add a new Coordinator to the position. The Special Education teachers that they already have also feel that they are all carrying a caseload that is overwhelming. She would like to wait until January and give Ms. Walsh six months to be more acclimated to what is happening in the district. She did not feel that they know how many children that they could bring back into the district or how many children next year that they may have to outplace because it is a variable. She stated that they still have a lot of work to do with the legislators, cost sharing in education, and the mandates, and should take their time with this.

Mrs. Queen stated that, when she originally first saw this position proposed, she had a similar thought as Mrs. Carmody. However, she has changed her mind after reading the supporting documentation and listening to an overview that Ms. Walsh gave them tonight. She is astounded at how well Ms. Walsh seems to know the Southington district after only three months. She felt that, if they were going to move forward and bring two students back into the district, it would be beneficial for the students to start at the beginning of the year rather than wait until mid-year. She supports keeping this position in the budget.

Mr. Derynoski pointed out that they are in the beginning phases of their budget deliberations, and he would like to keep the position in the budget because of the savings if they brought the students in-district. The fiscal year budget cycle does not start until July, and he

thought that between now and July would give them time to find the right person, outline some plans to bring in students, etc., before this actually is implemented.

Mrs. Clark was having trouble with the correlation of bringing two students back in-district if they already have the capacity and staff to handle those two students with the hiring of this coordinator. Mr. Connellan replied that it was not so much about our own staff that we have right now, it is about the capacity of the programs and the supervision of the programs. It is about the additional burden that would be placed on building level administrators or on the existing coordinator for that building. It has to do with the overall structure and the support that is provided. Right now, building administrators are taking on some of the roles that a coordinator would do regarding supervision, evaluation, and handling very difficult cases. The correlation would be the supervision, quality control, proactive piece. Mr. Connellan would like more than those two students, but is taking a conservative approach.

Mrs. Lombardi stated that they had two workshops and the Board's consensus was that administration could not add things without coming back and telling the Board where the money would come from and to give the Board savings to substantiate those positions. She pointed out that the administration has done that and kept this position in the budget, substantiated the need with data, and cut \$120,000. She would like to hold administration accountable for at least two children to come back to the district and, if they do that, they have met the objective and cut the budget in so doing. Mrs. Lombardi stated that she was in support of this position.

Mr. Oshana questioned the ratio of 209 students to one special education administrator. Mr. Connellan stated that he simply just did the division and it is not that evenly distributed across the schools. Mr. Oshana asked what would happen if the two students do not come back. He noted that it was staggering with the data that was put together and he did not know how the coordinators could leave their office at night with all the work that has to be done. He asked how they would measure the success of this going forward. Mr. Connellan replied that the initial success would be bringing two students back in-district, which would be their first benchmark for this particular proposal. He knew that they would be able to do it and that they needed to start somewhere. Mr. Oshana felt that it was a 'no-brainer' if they were going to offset the costs, give the Director of Pupil Personnel the opportunity to create new programs, and bring more students back into the district seemed straight forward to him.

CONSENSUS: *To keep the Special Education Coordinator position in the budget.*

YES: Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Lombardi (with accountability and reports when the two students come back in-district), Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Oshana, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Goralski
NO: Mrs. Carmody

Mr. Goralski stated that accountability was the job of the Board of Education along with the Superintendent of Schools. The Board members all sat on the interview to bring Mr. Connellan to Southington with his Special Education experience as a key ingredient. The Board also had the privilege of bringing Ms. Walsh to Southington and what the Board has been hearing in the workshops and again tonight is why the Board selected her. Special education is 25% of the Board of Education budget, and they brought in two professionals who gave the Board a plan that shows cost avoidance and balance. Mr. Goralski felt that the accountability was very clear that it would be Mr. Connellan.

Mrs. Queen asked if the supporting documentation for this position should be part of the minutes. Mr. Goralski replied that all items related to this discussion should be attached to the minutes.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco noted that the accounts for gas heat, oil and electricity were not reduced. Mrs. DiNello replied that was correct and that she wanted to wait until the Commodities Manager is hired. The changes affecting the use of utilities with the expansion of the middle schools, solar projects, and NORESKO performance contracting will all impact next year's utilization. She was very excited that they would be learning soon who the new Commodities Manager would be when the Town Manager makes a recommendation to the Town Council at their meeting on Monday evening. She will be contacting the Commodities Manager to help assist to budget appropriately in those line items and then they can make adjustments to the budget as soon as it is available.

Mrs. Carmody noted a reduction of \$27,700 under Special Projects and asked if Robotics was left in the budget. Mrs. DiNello replied that currently within Special Projects are the physics classroom and the Robotics enrichment opportunity. In the main budget document, it could be found on page 46 and 46a. Mrs. Carmody would like to take Robotics out of the budget because it is an enrichment opportunity for \$17,930.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked for the rationale why administration kept that in the budget and the others were removed. Mrs. Smith replied that the reason for the enrichment opportunities page was because historically they had Project Discover I and II and gifted and talented programs, and the topic of enrichment was debated. The temporary solution was to have a variety of offerings to students who might be interested in various Saturday opportunities such as Talcott Mountain, Middlesex Community College, and other opportunities outside the school arena. If a student happened to be in an elementary school that received an SEF Grant (Southington Education Foundation) such as Thalberg School or a member of the Kelley School student body where they had the gift from the Brino family and were able to facilitate an afterschool program, the students were able to participate in a club that revolved around Legos or Robotics. It fed into the expanded STEM opportunities that are evolving at the middle school level. In prioritizing this page for budget purposes only, and in talking to building principals and Mr. Duffy [Science Coordinator], it was felt that of the three enrichment projects being offered for consideration it was Robotics that more easily makes the connection to the science and math efforts in the middle schools and high school. If all the elementary schools were participants in a Robotics or Lego team, it would be the beginning of starting a Grade K-12 initiative. The elementary schools are the only schools that do not have stipend paid positions to run afterschool clubs and activities. It is an attempt to begin to put in an enrichment concept that all eight elementary schools are interested in. There would be one-time start-up costs as far as supplies and materials and the real cost would be for the stipends for the teachers. If there is going to be a debate or discussion about Robotics, it could be modified further. This would be an attempt to bring forward something more formalized that could be open to a broader range of students in all the schools.

Mrs. Queen summarized that the one-time cost would be the equipment, and the \$8,430, the club advisors stipends, would be the ongoing cost. Mrs. Smith agreed and stated that she and Mr. Duffy thought that after the first year they could pursue grants with Mrs. Boulanger [Grant Writer] for any consumable supplies that would be needed; however, they needed some "seed" money to begin.

Mrs. Lombardi did not think that these enrichment programs were state required or state recommended. She cannot support this when there is a need for more ELL Tutors, which is a basic need for 40 children that do not speak English. They are talking about spending \$17,930 for an enrichment opportunity that some of our schools have done on their own without Board of Education funding.

Mrs. Johnson thought that \$17,930 was a drop in the bucket when they are talking about hundreds of children who will be serviced. She believed that enrichment opportunities serve a very valuable part of the educational process. It is a different kind of value than learning to speak English, but here they are having children learn to speak science, technology and math; a different kind of language for children to learn. They are only getting it after school. She felt that this was money well spent. She would want to ensure that these Robotics opportunities were geared toward inclusion of girls, as well as boys. Mrs. Johnson felt that they need enrichment opportunities in Southington, and this is a very small amount of money given the amount of children who would be participating. This is going to be open to any child who has an interest. Mrs. Johnson would like to see this kept in the budget.

Mrs. Clark stated that she would rather see a school coming to the Board of Education indicating an interest for their students. She noted that Kelley School already has a Robotics program that is volunteered-based. She noted that South End School has had the Drama Club for 10 years, which has been parent volunteer-based. She felt that one stipend teacher would not be able to do it. Mrs. Clark did not support the enrichment opportunities.

Mr. Oshana pointed out that the Board stated that they would be committed to enrichment when they put in the all-day Kindergarten and now the potential is the Board is going to cut all the programs. He would like to see all three programs stay in the budget because if they say that they are going to be committed to something, they should live up to their word. They should not just be committed for one year for a grant-funded program; they should be committed because that is what they thought was right. His big concern is that they are pretty bare bones at this point with this budget and everything is gone except salary and benefits, one potential staff person and some minor enrichment programs. He was in favor of keeping all three enrichment programs in the budget and not just for one-year, but for the long-term.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco noted that there were a lot of things that the Board did not want to lose; however, when she looks at the enrichment piece it becomes a nice to have versus a need to have. She recommends that it is removed.

Mr. Connellan added that per the administration's understanding, they reduced dollars in other areas because they felt this was important for students. They have parents all the time asking about enrichment opportunities. The parents are noting that other children with all types of needs are receiving services; however, their child has a need for enrichment and there isn't anything. He felt that this was a small step in that direction. He pointed out that administration went and reduced other areas to support keeping in the enrichment opportunities. Mrs. DiNello explained that enrichment was an additional item and there was an increase in the testing line item, which was needed, in order to pay for both of those areas as they made a reduction in the New Textbook line item Account #42200 by \$25,850 to eliminate the LLI Kits and they also took an additional reduction in the Principals and Coordinators salary account with the anticipation of bringing in another out-of-district ALTA student. Those were the adjustments in line items in order to keep enrichment in the budget.

Mrs. Queen concurred that for many students enrichment is a need, it is not a nice to have. She liked that the enrichment was opened to all students and that it was not just a gifted and talented program, which they don't have anymore. She thought that an ELL student could participate in the Robotics program because they don't need to speak English to build a robot. It would be a language opportunity with students after school to engage in an informal environment. Mrs. Queen supports the Robotics program.

Mr. Oshana added that to keep the Robotics program in place it is .0004% of the budget. To keep all three enrichment programs in the budget it is .00019%.

CONSENSUS: *To keep the \$17,930 for the Robotics opportunity in the budget.*

YES: Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Queen, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Oshana

NO: Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Lombardi, Mr. Goralski.

Mr. Goralski stated that he was not in favor of anything new and that, when a school wants something, they find a way to get it done. If there is a school that is struggling to find a way to get it done, then that school can come to the Board of Education. Mrs. Queen thought it was a procedural thing for people to come to the Board to ask for different opportunities. She felt that they should go to the administration. The difference here is that it is district-wide, not one school versus another.

Mrs. Queen thought the need to purchase furniture and appropriate lab equipment for the physics classroom exists in this school year and asked if that could be done. They have students right now taking physics, which is incredibly challenging under the best of circumstances for all students of all abilities. She noted the following:

1. It is one of the most challenging curriculums.
2. The district is encouraging students to apply to the most competitive universities in the country that are looking for physics on the application.
3. If the Board wants to keep our students in-district and not looking for math and science opportunities in magnet schools, they need to have appropriate equipment in the classrooms.

Mrs. Queen proposed that they resolve that issue this school year. Mr. Goralski supported Mrs. Queen's request and wanted to know how and where in this year's budget they could fund this proposal and that they would reduce it from the 2015-2016 proposal.

Mrs. DiNello stated that the last report that was given to the Finance Committee in December was a breakeven standpoint. They have not received the first Excess Cost check for special education, which will not come until the end of February. She would have concerns because she would hate to say no tonight and find that towards the end of the school year they are in a position to have funds that could have funded it. There are a couple of vacancies that have not been filled. However, without the special education reimbursement check in hand, she could not say with certainty that they could spend the \$25,000 to fund this in the current year budget. Mr. Goralski appreciated that answer.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco questioned Account #46600, High School Repair of Athletic Equipment, for reconditioning helmets to maintain safety standards for all equipment. She questioned why this was cut when it is a safety item. Mrs. DiNello replied that they will continue to make sure that they recondition football helmets. From a safety standpoint, administration will make sure that is done. That may be done at the expense of purchasing other equipment needs. Since the directive was to scale back the dollars that was the decision that was made. She assured the Board that they will not compromise football reconditioning of helmets for safety in order to stay within this budget line item.

Mr. Goralski pointed out that the three-page document from Mrs. DiNello was exactly what was asked of administration. The directive that the Board gave equated to seven to nine hours of work calculating to figure everything out. The detail that the Board asked for is in the three-page document. He thanked Mrs. DiNello and administration and principals for their work. What administration gave the Board was a totally legitimate budget and after the workshops the administration had to go back and nickel and dime everything to get to what is flat. Mr. Goralski noted that administration did everything that the Board asked of them.

Mrs. DiNello stated that the budget is currently at \$90,197,401 or a 3.59% increase.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

“Move to accept the 2015-2016 Board of Education Operating Budget at \$90,197,401.”

Mr. Goralski respected everyone’s opinion and noted that they all made sacrifices and, if anyone was uncomfortable with certain decisions that were made tonight, to consider the big picture of what they do as a group.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Carmody, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Connellan thanked the Board and acknowledged that they had a difficult task.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: By Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary

Dear Board of Education members,

I'm writing to you about a recommended addition to the health curriculum at Southington High. The high school's health curriculum has proven itself to be repetitive throughout the years, always rehashing the same subjects year after year. Rather than having the same lessons every year, one year there should be a unit on common learning and intellectual disabilities. Educating students on these common disabilities will cut down on bullying and intolerance. In teaching students both with and without disabilities about common disabilities, it allows for students to have a deeper understanding of one another, to realize that disabilities are much more common than people realize, and that we are all different and unique in our own way. If everyone learned how to communicate better with students with disabilities such as autism and downsyndrome, they will be more understanding of those with disabilities and not be quick to label people as "stupid". This would cut down on the amount of bullying and stigma attached with having a disability and it would help every student feel comfortable being themselves in school. Also, if the students are educated about these common disabilities, they may discover that they themselves have a disability. For example, my friend Abby didn't know about dyslexia until 8th grade, and after learning about it she got tested for it and discovered that she was in fact dyslexic. After learning about her disability, she now has the resources that she needs to succeed alongside the rest of her peers without being viewed differently. Education on common learning disabilities such as this can also teach students how different brains work and how to improve the work of the students with disabilities. To conclude, I believe that this addition to the health curriculum would decrease bullying and increase communication and understanding among students of all abilities in our school.

Abby Heller



SOUTHTON PUBLIC SCH


 Sherri DiNello

Director of Business & Finance

MEMO

TO: Board of Education Members
DATE: January 20, 2015
RE: 2015-2016 Operating Budget

At the conclusion of our workshop on January 15, 2015, the Board of Education directed administration to bring back a revised budget that was a combination of level funding and level services (level services is defined as same volume at a new cost). In addition to level services, we could include personnel or projects related to safety. Any other "new" additions needed to have a corresponding reduction.

Attached you will find a three-page summary of adjustments that results in an operating budget request of \$90,215,331 or 3.61%. Numerous line items were restored to level services. A detailed listing of *New Personnel* still included is also attached. The only new position that we are requesting, that does not fall within the parameters of safety and mandated, is the Coordinator of Special Education. We reduced account #83370, *Out-of-Town Tuition*, by \$120,000 to support this request and plan to bring two students back to Southington from their current out placement.

The enrichment request under *Special Projects* has been scaled back to include \$17,930 for the Robotics opportunity only. We also left the increased funding for testing. To support these two areas, we reduced the *New Textbook* line (account #42200) by \$25,850 eliminating the LLI Kits and we reduced the salary line for *Principals and Coordinators* (account #11210) by \$12,500 with the assumption of receiving additional tuition for out-of-district Alta students.

The only items remaining in the *Major Projects & Equipment* section are the following:

• Derynoski	- Fuse panels to breakers	\$ 14,568
• Systemwide	- Furniture (\$42,570 + \$6,955 adjustment)	\$ 49,525
• Systemwide	- Technology	<u>\$ 85,000</u>
		\$149,093

An overview of the adjustments will be reviewed during the Board of Education meeting on Thursday, January 22, 2015; however, please feel free to contact us in advance if you have questions.

SPD/lb
Attachments

Adjustments to Superintendent's Budget 2015-16

Acct #	Description	Amount	
	Superintendent's Budget	\$ 90,912,988	4.41%
	Opening Adjustments:		
33800	Magnet School Tuitions	\$ 3,465	
74000	Major Projects-Classroom Furniture	\$ 6,955	
	Opening Adjustments subtotal:	<u>\$ 10,420</u>	
	Revised Superintendent's Budget	<u>\$ 90,923,408</u>	4.42%
	Reductions Requested by BOE for Level Services		
	Regular Education		
11210	Principal & Coordinator Salary	\$ (12,500)	
11915	Athletic Attendant's Salaries	\$ (5,500)	
11916	Event Supervisor & Chaperones	\$ (8,000)	
12200	Teacher Substitute Salaries	\$ (12,777)	
12220	Secretary Substitutes	\$ (3,000)	
12400	Paraprofessional Substitutes	\$ (2,000)	
14200	New Personnel	\$ (252,838)	
31800	Legal Fees	\$ (20,000)	
31950	Database Services	\$ (78)	
32302	Maintenance of Athletic Fields	\$ (1,934)	
32303	Repl. Of Window Coverings	\$ (30)	
32304	Repair of Glass	\$ (1,421)	
32317	Musical Instrument Repair	\$ (447)	
33900	BOE Expenses	\$ (2,850)	
33905	Administrative Expenses	\$ (200)	
33910	Central Office Travel & Conferences	\$ (4,000)	
34100	Postage	\$ (1,500)	
35100	Recruiting	\$ (90)	
35200	Advertising	\$ (60)	
36100	Printing Expenses	\$ (354)	
39470	Student Activities	\$ (57)	

Adjustments to Superintendent's Budget 2015-16

Acct #	Description	Amount
40110	Central Office Supplies	\$ (310)
40210	Audio Visual Supplies	\$ (530)
40300	General Teaching Supplies	\$ (2,066)
40305	Content Area Literacy Support	\$ (3,289)
40310	Kindergarten Classroom Supplies	\$ (270)
40320	Coordinator Supplies	\$ (284)
40400	Art Supplies	\$ (1,190)
40600	Technology Education Supplies	\$ (963)
40700	Family & Consumers Science Supplies	\$ (527)
40800	Occupational Services	\$ (96)
40900	Music Supplies	\$ (748)
40910	Instrumental Music Supplies	\$ (235)
40920	Physical Education Supplies	\$ (306)
41150	Math Supplies	\$ (450)
41200	Science Supplies	\$ (1,351)
41300	Health Supplies	\$ (344)
41430	Repair of Buildings	\$ (9,370)
41950	Copier Supplies	\$ (697)
42100	Textbook Replacement	\$ (1,323)
42200	New Textbooks	\$ (25,850)
42300	Consumable Activity Books	\$ (1,856)
42400	Periodicals	\$ (475)
42500	Computer Software	\$ (200)
42800	Health Education	\$ (119)
43200	Other Library Expenses	\$ (131)
44200	New Music Equipment	\$ (200)
46200	New Athletic Equipment	\$ (200)
46300	MS Replacement of Athletic Equipment	\$ (40)
46400	HS Replacement of Athletic Equipment	\$ (670)
46470	High School First Aid Supplies	\$ (105)
46472	Awards & Programs	\$ (226)
46500	MS Repair of Athletic Equipment	\$ (10)
46600	HS Repair of Athletic Equipment	\$ (5,704)
46900	Middle School first Aid Supplies	\$ (12)
49310	Business Education Supplies	\$ (238)
49600	Alternative Education Supplies	\$ (300)

Adjustments to Superintendent's Budget 2015-16

Acct #	Description	Amount	
49700	Guidance Supplies	\$ (144)	
49900	Alto & Power School Supplies	\$ (252)	
54000	Equipment	\$ (18,390)	
70000	Special Projects	\$ (27,700)	
	Subtotal Reductions Regular Education	<u>\$ (436,807)</u>	
	Special Education		
83122	Teacher Substitute Salaries	\$ (4,156)	
83123	Homebound Instructor Salaries	\$ (2,000)	
83128	New Personnel Salaries	\$ (16,796)	
83318	Legal Fees	\$ (3,000)	
83339	Administrative Travel	\$ (600)	
83370	Out of District Tuition	\$ (120,000)	
83495	Instructional Supplies	\$ (250)	
83496	Specialized Materials	\$ (250)	
83542	Equipment	\$ (2,000)	
	Subtotal Reductions Special Education	<u>\$ (149,052)</u>	
	Major Projects & Equipment Reductions		
	Major Projects & Equipment	\$ (122,218)	
	Subtotal Major Projects & Equipment Reductions	<u>\$ (122,218)</u>	
	Total Reductions	\$ (708,077)	-0.81%
	Revised Operating Budget	<u><u>\$ 90,215,331</u></u>	3.61%

NEW PERSONNEL REQUESTS REGULAR EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL:

SOUTHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS:

- *Swim & Dive Girls Assistant Coach* **FTE: 1.0** **\$ 2,271**
Currently, there is one male coach supervising and instructing 50 student-athletes. This sport is conducted off-site at the YMCA, which provides two lifeguards as mandated by the YMCA policy. The coaching ratio to student-athlete is 50:1. This position is being requested for safety and supervision purposes. This position was eliminated in 2009-2010; therefore, the request is for reinstatement of the assistant coach for girls swim and dive.

J. F. KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- *Cross Country Assistant Coach* **FTE: 1.0** **\$ 1,722**
The popularity of middle school cross country has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. The team rosters are in excess of 85 student-athletes. This position is being requested for safety and supervision.

J. A. DEPAOLO MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- *Cross Country Assistant Coach* **FTE: 1.0** **\$ 1,722**
The popularity of middle school cross country has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. The team rosters are in excess of 85 student-athletes. This position is being requested for safety and supervision.

SOUTH END ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

- *Teacher – World Language* **FTE: 0.1** **\$ 4,860**
Kindergarten and first grade students began learning Spanish in the 2014-2015 school year. In an effort to expand the offering to Grade 2, as the students advance, requires a 0.1 FTE.

THALBERG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

- *Teacher – Music* **FTE: 0.2** **\$ 9,720**
The number of classrooms has exceeded the capacity of the 2.5 vocal music's scheduling capacity. This year, we need to borrow time from Flanders Elementary School as well as have the instrumental teacher teach a second grade vocal music class in addition to her current caseload.

SYSTEMWIDE:

- *Tutor – English Language Learners (ELL)* **FTE: 1.0** **\$ 16,200**
The district currently has 98 students requiring English language services. The high school tutor is servicing six students in preparation for graduation and the remainder of the students are in Grades K-8. There are 30 Grades K-8 students new to the district this year, 10 of whom are non-English speakers. The TESOL/Bilingual State of Connecticut Department of Education recommends that non-English speakers receive a recommended one-hour per day of English language instruction. The following are 14 languages that represent the district's English Language Learners population: Arabic, Bosnian, Urdu, Polish, Italian, Punjabi, Albanian, Tagalog, Nepali, Chinese, Ukrainian, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

NEW PERSONNEL REQUESTS

SPECIAL EDUCATION

SYSTEMWIDE:

➤ *Special Education Coordinator*

FTE: 1.0

\$115,913

Given the increased need for staff training and support, academic and behavioral needs of students, the increased number of students with special needs, and the overall depth and breadth of programming necessary to increase student performance, this position is necessary. The job responsibilities in this position will include addressing school-based needs at five elementary schools, including teacher evaluation responsibilities. In addition, the staff hired in this position will be in charge of providing support to the nonpublic schools and assigned district programs. The additional staff in the department will provide the means for a long overdue restructuring. The restructuring of the special education department will enable staff to more succinctly address the development of appropriate in-district programs across all levels and allow for a focus on district-wide professional development that focuses on proactive ways to increase student achievement and to decrease student behaviors.

EL K-12 as of January 2015

Population **105 EL Students K-12** 65 EL students have been in the district for more than a year and have not yet fulfilled the State criteria to be exited. These students currently receive 30 min/week to 2 hours/week of EL service.

40 newly identified EL students entered the district in the last year.

Current Service Hours for Newly Identified Students		
Hours of Service	Percent of Students	Number of Students
<1 hour/week	2.5%	1
1 hour/week	37.5%	15
1.5 hours/week	2.5%	1
2 hours/week	35%	14
3 hours/week	7.5%	3
4 hours/week	7.5%	3
1hour/day (small group)	7.5%	3

(1 PT Tutor) Service Hours for Newly Identified Students		
Hours of Service	Percent of Students	Number of Students
<1 hour/week	2.5%	1
1 hour/week	32.5%	13
2 hours/week	25%	10
3hours/week	10%	4
3.5 hours/week	10%	4
4 hours/week	7.5%	3
4.5 hours/week	2.5%	1
1hour/day (small group)	10%	4

(2 PT Tutors) Service Hours for Newly Identified Students		
Hours of Service	Percent of Students	Number of Students
<1 hour/week	2.5%	1
1 hour/week	7.5%	3
2 hours/week	45%	18
3hours/week	10%	4
3.5 hours/week	10%	4
4 hours/week	10%	4
4.5 hours/week	2.5%	1
1hour/day (small group)	12.5%	5



SOUTHINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Timothy F. Connellan
Superintendent of Schools

MEMO

To: Board of Education Members
Date: January 21, 2015
Re: Special Education Coordinator

As you know, a Special Education Coordinator position has been requested in the budget. Attached are several communications from administrators in support of this proposal. This is a cross-section of the support expressed by the Administrative Leadership Team. Many of the administrators were prepared to speak in support of this proposal at the budget workshops, but the timing of the discussion perhaps precluded that opportunity. My rationale for including the request in the budget proposal includes the following:

1. The current number of Southington students identified with disabilities is 835 as of October 1, 2014. If we could apply this as a direct ratio it would be approximately 209 students to one special education administrator given the current staffing of 4.0 full time equivalent positions. The distribution of students across schools is not even, but the overall numbers provide a glimpse of approximately how many cases are overseen by each administrator. This ratio if continued will inhibit not promote the development of proactive and innovative educational programming.
2. The current structure will not allow the Director the time or opportunity to engage in the activities necessary to fully analyze the student and district needs and to develop strategies, programs, or alternatives to meet those needs in a timely fashion.
3. Currently, special education administrators cannot adequately monitor and evaluate out of district placements resulting in the reduction or elimination of opportunities to return students to in-district programs. The addition of a Coordinator will increase the districts' ability to implement that type of monitoring with the intention of developing transitions back to appropriate in-district placements. With the inclusion of a Coordinator position, it is anticipated that at least two students currently placed out of district can be returned to in-district programs in the 2015-16 school year. There may be other students who can return to district but the very conservative approach used in this proposal is just two. That being said, without the additional administrative support provided, it would not be wise to plan on returning two students to in-district placements. Therefore the funds reallocated from the tuition account to support the Coordinator position, approximately \$120,000, would need to be restored to the tuition account.
4. The average special education case is much more complex than it was even ten years ago. Special education is the most regulated area of public education and the most litigated.

The time the Director spends performing activities and functions that are more appropriately conducted by Coordinators severely limits the time available for district-wide supervision, consultation with building administrators and program evaluation. These are activities which contribute to the District's ability to fulfill its responsibilities under the law and remain in compliance resulting in fewer cases in which parents file for administrative hearings under their due process rights. A direct effect and fiscal impact will be a reduction in the need for legal intervention and therefore a reduction in the cost of legal representation.

5. The most involved and litigious cases are the responsibility of the Director in any school district. The Director must be flexible enough in her schedule so that the intensive involvement in these cases does not have a negative effect on a school based schedule or case load. Without an additional Coordinator, the Director will still have a direct school based caseload and will still have to handle the most difficult cases. It will have an adverse effect on schools and/or programs that would otherwise be handled by a Coordinator.

This proposal is based on the needs of the District. The reorganization of the Pupil Services Department hinges on staffing the department at an appropriate level. The proper and appropriate way to staff this department so that it can operate effectively and efficiently is with a Director who has oversight of all staff, programs and services but not a school based responsibility and with three Special Education Coordinators assigned as proposed by the Director in the attached document. Having served as a Director for approximately seventeen years, I have experienced what Meg Walsh is experiencing now and what she will be experiencing in the ensuing years. The District has the need to provide the level of support proposed so that the Director can function in the way envisioned when she was hired. The sooner that support is provided, the sooner the District will begin to experience the positive outcomes that we know can accrue from the implementation of proactive and innovative practices. The need for this position clearly exists. I base this assessment on my seventeen years as a Director and ten years as a Superintendent, having experienced a variety of combinations of staffing patterns in Pupil Services. If the Board determines that we simply cannot afford this position at this time, I can accept that decision. There are many services that we just cannot afford to provide. That is part of the larger picture of public education and the ability of a community to meet identified needs. However, I cannot accept the rationale that the position is not needed because that simply is not the case. My years of experience in this specific area and as a Superintendent tell me otherwise. When I was appointed as Superintendent in Southington, I was told that one of the reasons was my background in special education and pupil services. At that time, I indicated that I would always be candid regarding my observations and assessments. My very candid assessment is that this position is needed if we are to move forward with the changes necessary in the Pupil Services Department. Again, I can accept a determination by the Board that we cannot afford to fund the position at this time but the need clearly exists. The Administrative Leadership Team of this district, the professionals who live this work every day all recognize that the need exists.

January 19, 2015

To the Members of the Board of Education,

Please accept this letter of support for the Special Education Coordinator position proposed within the 2015-2016 school budget. Having come from a district similar in size and demographics three years ago, I have first-hand knowledge and experience of the benefits of a comprehensive special education department.

In my previous district, the position titled Director of Pupil Personnel Services was reserved for the person charged with advising and supervising the coordinators with regards to their respective assignments, overseeing the compliance and operations of special education, both legally and logistically, and continuous planning for improvement of services and systems throughout the district. During my tenure in the Southington Public schools, I've witnessed a similar effort being made by both a past Director and our current Director. The challenge within our district comes with the additional responsibilities we charge our Director with. Unfortunately, those responsibilities are coupled with the reduced layers of support within the coordinator ranks. This causes our Director of Student Services to have to tend to tasks that compete with the overall demands of the position.

At the building level, I can tell you unequivocally, that we as administrators absolutely depend on the advisement and consultation of our coordinators when navigating unique and sometimes adversarial waters. During my time in Southington, I've seen the challenges the coordinators sometimes face when trying to follow up with our Director as she is tending to assignments and tasks more suited for a coordinator, reducing her accessibility. Furthermore, I continue to correspond with my assigned special education coordinator well into the evenings, and even on weekends, as the size of each of their respective caseloads challenges them from communicating during the school day. This evidence is simply a testament to the scope and demands of their jobs, and thankfully, a testament to their dedication and professionalism as well.

It is my utmost belief that the time and attention required of the Director should be reserved for the overall systemic oversight and improvement of the district relative to special education, as well as to serve as the direct line of communication to the superintendent and legal departments often sought on a daily basis. Furthermore, the Director's time needs to be reserved for the thorough research and analysis of extensive reports and paperwork relative to high profile cases and pending due process hearings. Lastly, the Director's time needs to be spent immersed in continuous professional learning and conversation so he/she can continue to be the district expert to lead all others within the department, thus building capacity. It cannot be time spent handling responsibilities that a coordinator would be best suited for. This change in operating procedures would only streamline our efforts to ensure compliance, improve communication, and provide systemic improvement over time.

In closing, it is understandable that one's mindset might assume that the Director should be in the boat rowing with the sailors. Before the increasing complexities and legalities of the special education landscape, this may have been a reality. However, it's paramount that we understand every ship needs a captain. Please provide additional support to this department to further streamline the responsibilities and assignments of all, thus allowing for the oversight and improvement that you wish to see going forward.

With sincere appreciation for your consideration,

Steve Madancy

Megan Bennett
Principal at R.E. Thalberg Elementary

I emphatically support the request for an additional special education coordinator for Southington Public Schools. I will not speak to the need across the district, although I do know my situation is not unusual, but rather share my experience at Thalberg.

Thalberg School is fortunate to have the support of Carol Bagwell as our special coordinator. Carol has been instrumental in her guidance of our school based special education decision-making. Carol has created an exceptionally functional special education team at the building site level. The problem is that Carol has to be reactive in her support rather than proactive in our planning. Thalberg has a relatively low special education percentage in comparison to other Southington Schools. Nine percent of Thalberg students have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

2013-2014 School Year Carol Bagwell's involved constituted the following at Thalberg for direct support:

- Training for SBAC accommodations
- Evaluation for Guidance Counselor and Social Worker
- Secondary Evaluation Support for 3 Special Educators
- Monitoring the BCBA's services within the school
- Coordination of Extended School Year services
- Five intensive cases in which her direct support and attendance was necessary at 10 PPTs in which she needed to prepare through review of the IEPs as well as team member updates.
- Bi-weekly phone consultations regarding coordination of services and advisement for special education law questions.
- Hiring team for new special educator (review of resumes, interviews)
- Review IEP documents

I share this information knowing that Thalberg has fewer demands on Carol's time than other Southington Schools. More students are able have their special needs served within our Southington School. We need to make sure we are also able to properly support these new programs and support with supervision and proactive planning for success. We have reached maximum capacity on the time allotment for our current special educators. As a district, we have created a situation in which we have to react to problems which has the potential to be more costly (both monetarily as well as educationally for our students needing special education services).

Priority for New Personnel

As an SPS administrator currently working in one of the busiest elementary schools I can attest to the need for additional related service personnel including a special education coordinator and a school psychologist that were requested in the 2015-2016 budget. Unfortunately, the psychologist position was cut during the budget workshop process. Having at least one related service staff member available in our buildings every day is critical to maintaining a safe school climate for all students.

The special education coordinator assigned to Hatton School is also assigned to several other elementary schools and has a caseload of students who are out placed that require her attendance at case conferences and PPTs outside of Southington. In addition to the inclusive special education caseload of students, Hatton also houses four district based programs (3 preschool classes, 2 self-contained classes and the ABA program) that the coordinator has oversight for. Many of these students have very involved Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) that require frequent case conferences and PPTs. There are times when a coordinator must be present for these high profile cases to make educational decisions that may have financial implications.

Each of our three coordinators and Director of Pupil Services is responsible for overseeing special education and other related services in several schools and district-based programs. Building and district level administrators are expected to be instructional leaders. Currently, it is impossible for the special education coordinators to do much proactive work due to their heavy caseloads both within and outside of the district. The school system requires another coordinator so that children, families and schools can be appropriately supported.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Kamerbeek

January 18, 2015

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I realize that in this time of fiscal challenges it is important to question the need for additional staffing, especially an administrative position. However it is imperative that the Department of Pupil Services has appropriate oversight and direction. Special education is a service that is provided to students who have a disability. It also has very clear and delineated legal guidelines that are mandated and need to be adhered to. In order to lead the department and maximize our resources it is imperative that we have the appropriate staffing. A fourth coordinator would allow the Director to oversee the compliance and overall operations of the department as well as ensuring that we are maximizing our existing resources. It would allow for creating and implementing policies and procedures that are consistent throughout the district, especially with regards to the development and implementation of student's IEPs and services.

The addition of another coordinator would allow for a restructuring of the department, assigning the coordinators to schools and responsibilities with a focus on building capacity of the teams in each building. This would allow for better decision making and developing explicit IEP's for students. I am asking you to support the addition of another coordinator to this department in order to do the work that needs to get done.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me. I appreciate your attention to this matter.



Meg Walsh

Restructuring of Special Education Office

January 16, 2015

Coordinator – High School Special Education Services

- Grades 9-12 special education oversight at SHS.
- Achieve Program – program for 9-12 graders with ASD or ID
- TEP Program – Program for students who are emotionally disturbed
- Post Graduate Program (18-21year olds) Including - Activities of Daily Living, Employment, Independent Skills, Life Skills – currently servicing 11 students.
- Supervise/ evaluate secondary school counselors
- ALTA
- Para educator PD facilitation
- Attend PPT's which are more complex in nature

Coordinator – Middle Schools

- Grades 6-8 special education oversight at JAD and JFK
- Achieve Program for Middle School Students
- Team Program for students with emotional disturbance
- Supervise/evaluate DW school psychologists
- Non-public
- Para educator PD facilitation
- Attend PPT's which are more complex in nature

Coordinator – Preschool and Elementary

- Pre-school coordinator – three and four year old identified students. Housed at Hatton Elementary and South End Elementary school. Total of 4 classrooms with a.m. and p.m. sessions. Servicing approximately 85 students per year
- Grades K-5 special education oversight at Hatton, Strong, Plantsville and South End Elementary Schools
- Supervise/evaluate DW speech and language clinicians.
- B-3 liaison
- Supervise ABA program
- Para educator PD facilitation
- Attend PPT's which are more complex in nature

Coordinator – Out of District Placements and Elementary Schools

- Grades K-5 oversight at Kelly, Thalberg, Flanders and Derynoski Elementary Schools
- Case manager for students who attend Private Approved Special Education Facilities (PPT'S)
- Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center case manager (PPT's)
- Magnet Schools
- Para educator PD facilitation

Role of the Director

- Primary supervisor and evaluator for the coordinators
- Attend SDE trainings to remain current with statutes
- Liaison between District and Federal/State law
- Secondary evaluator for any pupil services staff who are in need of support
- Design professional development plan for para educators for the school year
- Design professional development plan for special education and pupil service staff
- System's work – designing efficient and effective policies and procedures for special education and pupil services department.
- Current best practices and strategies regarding teaching of identified students
- Keeping all staff informed regarding any and all changes in state and federal laws for special education
- Supervise and evaluate elementary counselors
- Attended PPT's as needed
- SRBI
- T-EVAL
- Other responsibilities as deemed appropriate by Superintendent