

Brookfield Public Schools
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT



To: Brookfield Board of Education
From: John W. Barile, Superintendent
Re: 2016-2017 Budget Proposals
Date: December 16, 2015

The proposed budget estimate for 2016-2017 as presented represents our commitment to maintain an excellent educational program and advance the Brookfield Public Schools to among the finest in Connecticut. The budget maintains a balance between core programs despite increased costs. In a fiscally responsible manner, this spending plan requests limited new funding necessary to meet the cost of continuing many current programs. By design we will be enhancing several key areas by reallocating and restructuring several current positions. This budget will fund all mandated programs and comply with new commitments reached through collective bargaining and other contractual agreements. Savings will be achieved by leveraging conservative purchasing practices and implementing collaborative purchasing via our participation in the CREC consortium. The spending plan continues to support our K-12 Spanish program and programs in the Performing Arts. Additionally, the budget continues to support school sponsored extracurricular activities including academic enrichment, arts, athletics, and service related endeavors.

This budget strategically strengthens student academic achievement by enhancing professional practice through intentional and aligned professional development activities. Improvement in student performance demands focused and imbedded professional development opportunities leading to the improvement of teacher effectiveness. Faculty professional development will be focused in the areas of reading, writing, math, personalization, social emotional awareness and technology. Administrators will continue to enhance their supervisory and evaluative feedback skills through ongoing training.

Whisconier, Huckleberry and Center School (Pk-8)

To meet the instructional needs the district faces in 2016-17, the plan proposed will increase two part-time (.5 FTE) positions to full-time positions at **Huckleberry Hill (HHES)**. The part-time Math Specialist and part-time Reading Specialist positions will transition to full-time positions. These fulltime teachers will lead professional learning and curriculum writing in their respective subjects. It is important to acknowledge that for the past several years math has been a neglected subject with respect to professional learning and curriculum support in Brookfield. To achieve these positions, this plan reallocates one classroom teacher position that is available due to a decline in enrollment. Another classroom teaching position will be reallocated to **Center School (CES)** in Grade 1 to accommodate the increase in population in this grade level. The current kindergarten class is well above the teacher to student ratio in each classroom due to a previous reduction of one classroom teacher.

Critical to ensuring coherence and educational quality is the purchase a K-6 math program, which would include text books, on-line resources and professional learning. To support this endeavor a 1.0 FTE Math Specialist must also be added at **Whisconier Middle School (WMS)**.

The sole reason for the existence of our profession is the student

This teacher will lead professional learning, implementation of the math program, and curriculum writing in the area of math, a neglected subject in Brookfield for the past several years. Math teachers will receive one to one coaching and feedback from the math specialist. This position will also, in partnership with the math specialist from HHES, support alignment of instruction, assessment and curriculum from elementary to high school. A 1.0 FTE Speech & Language Pathologist (SLP) teacher will be added to HHES so that both HHES and WMS will not have to continue sharing one SLP as is presently the case. The ideal SLP to student case load is 30-40 students to 1 SLP and currently we are at approximately 60 students to 1 SLP. This is not adequate to appropriately service our students with speech and language deficits. The addition of 2.0 FTE Special Education teachers is also necessary to properly serve our high need population. The plan is for 1.0 FTE teacher to be assigned to HHES and 1.0 FTE teacher to be assigned to WMS. Increasing the staff will reduce the existing teacher to student case load of 30 students to 1 teacher over the next several years working toward a more ideal ratio of 15 students to 1 teacher which is within standard practice guidelines. Center School will need one paraprofessional to service the needs of an incoming, high needs child.

~~Reading foundation materials K-3 will be purchased along with developing a new math curriculum and purchase of a math program. Along with several other instructional and curricular enhancements; these specific programs will provide consistency of materials and vertical alignment and build capacity of our faculty while providing fundamental skills for our students in these critical subject areas.~~

Brookfield High School 9-12

The high school will begin its restoration of recently eliminated positions. The plan includes hiring a new history teacher and business teacher for the upcoming school year. Currently these departments are experiencing class sizes well beyond the Board of Education's established class size ranges. Presently, one history class has 33 students enrolled. Furthermore, course offerings are limited in many subject areas. The 2016-17 budget plan will reduce our non-certified School to Career Coordinator position and reallocate these funds to invest in a long desired Board of Education goal to hire a full time, certified College & Career Counselor. We also will work to bolster our current World Language program by conducting a program review. Lastly, we plan to provide the high school with a paraprofessional to appropriately support our students within the co-teaching model.

A modest reallocation to the funding of our athletic budget accounts is proposed to completely support our existing program which includes the middle school. Historically, middle school funding for athletics has been dispersed from the high school budget. Furthermore, other CIAC activities such as cheerleading and dance team have been self sufficient for the majority of their needs and should receive appropriate funding from the athletic budget. New for the coming year; our Athletic Director will take on leadership, supervision and evaluation of the health and physical education departments K-12. This is a restructuring of the existing stipend model where two full time teachers share the coordination of programs for this department. As part of this transition, a comprehensive review of the health curriculum is planned in the coming year. Utilizing existing pay to participate-student activity funds, we will finally eliminate pay to participate across the district for all students.

District

Through reallocation of existing funds, several key district positions that were eliminated in past years can be restored for 2016-2017. The assistant superintendent's office has traditionally been a position that oversees personnel and manages compliance with legislated mandates. For this position to focus on ensuring coherence in our instructional program Pre K - 12 and on to college entrance, it is necessary to devote the preponderance of the assistant superintendent's time and effort to teaching and learning and to shift responsibility for compliance to support staff. To truly be the instructional leadership position that Brookfield has been missing for years we must structure the office of the assistant superintendent differently. To accomplish this necessary aim, we must support the assistant superintendent with appropriate staff. The Blum Shapiro audit recommends a full time Benefits Coordinator be hired immediately. A secretarial position lost through attrition is also necessary to support this new model.

Further organizational enhancements within the instructional department, will include restructuring the Curriculum Specialist positions at CES, HHES and WMS. Each specialist is currently expected to be an expert in all core curricular areas; math, language arts (reading & writing), science, and social studies. With the upcoming rollout of new science and social studies standards, in addition to the voluminous district work that we've embarked upon in math and language arts, we have an opportunity to develop expertise within each content area. Each Curriculum Specialist will become a K-8 content area leader in their respective subject. All three will continue to lead their home schools in language arts while developing their content area leadership expertise. The math curriculum specialist will be stationed at CES so that this individual can coordinate our math program with the math specialists at HHES and WMS (discussed earlier in this document).

A certified English Language Learner specialist must be added to comply with legislation and support our increasing enrollment in this area. In the past year we have seen an enrollment increase of students with these needs of 20 students or 40%. The ELL specialist will directly teach students and train our teachers in sheltered instruction and other instructional strategies to effectively teach our students as they assimilate to America and learn English. These strategies will also benefit students with special needs and ultimately benefit all students as classroom teachers will continue to develop their repertoire of teaching skills.

It is also necessary to restore the District Technology Director position lost through attrition two years ago. This individual will maintain the existing technologies and provide leadership for the many software and hardware enhancements planned. Currently, one of our existing full time IT Tech Staff persons receives a stipend to lead the district in this area. This person not only has the full time responsibilities for her IT work but the district also placed the management of the iPad initiative on the existing IT positions. Currently, managing the BHS iPad program is taking up to 30 hours per week of IT work time. No additional staff was hired five years ago to manage this initiative at its outset. A Technology Director is integral to ensuring that the district stays current with educational technology, anticipating both current and future needs, and planning for the professional learning of our teachers in the area of technology. The Director of Technology position will rectify this matter.

Administration and faculty must strategically align the curricula with the standards by developing plans and materials necessary to implement support for increasingly rigorous learning. The Brookfield Public Schools fully implemented the Teacher Evaluation Plan and Administrator Evaluation Plan by complying with this unfunded mandate. However, we will continue to engage in professional learning in this area so that evaluation becomes a tool to support teacher and administrator growth, rather than simply implement this initiative as a compliance effort. 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.

As a district we are instituting a Teacher Development Program. This program will be funded through a reallocation of existing funds within the substitute teacher accounts. The plan includes the hiring of four certified building substitutes per school. Such a program will support the schools on several fronts. By hiring building substitutes that are year long positions, we help to rectify a long standing substitute teacher shortage area. Furthermore, we will be supporting student learning when the teacher is absent, as a certified Teacher Development Program substitute will be able to deliver the actual lesson the teacher planned. These individuals will be known by the students and staff as they will become part of the fabric of the school by way of their consistent attendance. The substitutes will benefit as these teachers will participate in professional learning activities and we will help them with interviewing skills. The students will know these teachers; these teachers will know the students and the procedures of the schools. The Teacher Development Program will benefit the teachers, the students, and the district as a whole. We gain an important advantage to other districts by accessing, assessing and recruiting new teacher talent.

The 2016-2017 spending plan also includes projects necessary to maintain and update our facilities. These plans can be viewed in the Capital Improvement Plan document (attached).

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 toward an organization that propels students to become exceptional young people who will shape our future. By beginning to restore necessary positions eliminated after years of attrition and strategically reallocating resources, this budget accomplishes these worthy aims.

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.