



Brookfield Public Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION

To: Brookfield Board of Selectmen
From: Robert Belden
Re: 2016-2017 Adopted Budget
Date: January 29, 2016

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 full-time 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. To achieve these positions, this plan reallocates one classroom teacher position made available due to a decline in enrollment. Two additional classroom teaching positions will be reallocated to **Center School (CES)** in kindergarten and grade 1 to accommodate the increase in population in first grade and the projection of increased enrollment in kindergarten. 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)**. This teacher will lead professional learning, implementation of the math program, and curriculum writing in the area of math. 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 one SLP. This is not adequate to appropriately service our students with speech and language needs. The addition of 2.0 FTE Special Education teachers is also necessary to adequately 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 one teacher over the next several years working toward a more ideal ratio of 15 students to 1 teacher which is within standard practice guidelines. An additional paraprofessional position is necessary to accommodate the needs of the specific children attending our K-8 schools.

Reading foundation materials (K-3) will be purchased along with developing a new math curriculum and purchase of a math program. In addition to other instructional and curricular enhancements, these specific programs will provide consistency of instructional materials and vertical alignment. Furthermore, this plan will 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 new history and business teachers 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. There is also a lack of elective opportunities for students in several areas, including the business department, due to past reductions. The 2016-17 budget 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 and creating a technology-based World Language Lab (discussed later in this letter). Lastly, we plan to provide the high school with a paraprofessional to appropriately support our students within the co-teaching model.

A modest increase to the funding of our athletic budget is proposed to completely support our existing program and also fund the middle school athletic program. 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 funding from the athletic budget. New for the coming year, we have added funding to support baseline concussion testing for our student athletes. 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. A comprehensive review of the health curriculum is planned in the coming year.

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 goal, we must support the assistant superintendent with appropriate staff. The Blum-Shapiro audit recommends a full time Benefits Coordinator be hired immediately. Furthermore, a part time Purchasing Agent, shared with the town is also recommended. A secretarial position, lost through attrition, is also necessary to support this new model (further information on the Blum-Shapiro audit is included later in this document).

The Blum-Shapiro audit also recommends the restoration 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 this existing IT position. Currently, managing the BHS iPad program is taking up to 20 hours per week of IT work time. No additional staff was hired five years ago to manage this initiative. 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.

Further organizational enhancements within the instructional department will include restructuring the Curriculum Specialist (CS) 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 (CS) will become a K-8 content area leader in an identified subject. All three (CS) 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 early 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 22 students or 45%. The ELL specialist will directly teach students and train our teachers in Sheltered Instruction and other instructional strategies that will support effective teaching our students. These strategies will also benefit all students, including those with special needs, and ultimately benefit all students as classroom teachers continue to develop and add to their repertoire of teaching skills.

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 a compliance effort. We will continue our commitment of professional meeting time and training in this area to meet the standards and provide students with personalized, 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. Moreover, 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 they will participate in professional learning activities. The students will know these teachers; these teachers will know the students and be familiar with 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 over other districts by accessing, assessing and recruiting new teacher talent.

The 2016-2017 spending plan additionally includes projects necessary to maintain and update our facilities. These plans can be viewed in the Capital Improvement Plan document (attached). A major capital investment is necessary to support another long standing Board of Education goal, a World Language Lab. This space will be supported with both hardware and software to support the existing language offering at the high school. As part of our planned phase- in, we envision this space offering our students the option of exploring many other languages beyond Spanish and French.

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 ensure 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. Restoration of critical positions eliminated through attrition and strategic reallocation of resources are at the heart of this budget and accomplished fundamental goals.

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.

Robert Belden
Brookfield Board of Education Chairman