

Questions Received from Board of Education Members Regarding 2017-2018
Superintendent's Proposed Budget – December 1, 2016

1. What information has been obtained from the Town of Avon regarding their budget calculations?
RESPONSE: The Town Manager, Brandon Robertson, provided a memorandum regarding the spending cap that outlined how the Town came to the amount of \$1.7 million as the allowed increase without impacting the spending cap. It noted \$10,126,979.00 for total expenditures for special education which was the number given to the Town prior to knowing exactly what could be included. The Town will provide a new model when their fiscal year 2017/18 budget is competed in February which will be provided to the Board at a future date. A spreadsheet with narrative and modeling for the proposed budget will be provided to the Board as available.
2. Please provide information about the cost and distribution of football uniforms.
RESPONSE: Football uniforms were pre-purchased last year with an encumbrance of \$57,000.00 and released this year per the replacement schedule. The replacement schedule is designed to allow students to have a new uniform at least once in their high school sports career.
3. If the student assistance center (SAC) is eliminated, how will students be supported moving forward?
RESPONSE: Support services for students that have a 504 or IEP will be provided by a certified staff member.
4. What position(s) are being eliminated along with SAC?
RESPONSE: The tutor working in the SAC position will be eliminated because there is no money in the budget to fund it. The position was saved this year because of the supplemental appropriation.
5. There are currently four psychologists and one family engagement specialist. Are all these positions in the proposed budget?
RESPONSE: Yes, these positions are in the proposed budget.
6. Which specific teachers will be eliminated?
RESPONSE: The specific teachers that will be eliminated cannot be determined until course registrations are complete so the staffing needs are known. In addition, staff leave of their own volition which can affect eliminations.
7. Are there other departments that will have positions eliminated?
RESPONSE: Yes, a certain number of positions need to be eliminated from Pupil Services and the Central Office to reach the budget as proposed.
8. Is it more cost effective to bring out-of-district placements back to APS?
RESPONSE: There are some cost savings. Currently there are approximately 30 students who are outplaced and efforts are being made to transition these students back wherever possible through the use of registered behavior technicians who provide necessary tools. It is the desire of the District that every resident is a student at APS but it is not always possible due to special needs.
9. What is the percentage of special education as a percentage of the total budget? Please provide for current and projected budget.
RESPONSE: It is currently 18.5 percent and projected at 19.83%.

10. What is the estimated cost for receiving National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation?
RESPONSE: No money is allotted in the proposed budget because accreditation is a two year process. The NAEYC accreditation will be much less costly than AHS. The cost will be provided at a future date.
11. Can you please provide further clarification on the elimination of the SAC tutor?
RESPONSE: The SAC tutor position has been grant funded in the past but with the loss of Sheff grant funds the position had to be eliminated. However, the MRSA supplemental appropriation received from the Town of Avon allowed for keeping the position this year but not for next year.
12. Can you please provide further clarification on how students who don't have a 504 or IEP will get support that is currently provided by SAC?
RESPONSE: General Education students will still have access to support groups for math and English and other things such as study skills that are built into their class schedules. Once all systems are thought out and put into place, a presentation will be made to the Board.
13. What does losing support staff from Pupil Services mean?
RESPONSE: These positions will be certified and non-certified. Once the needs for support are determined, it will be known which staff will be eliminated.
14. What can be done if there is concern about not knowing the specific staff that will be cut?
RESPONSE: The Board controls the budget and has the authority to determine which positions can and can't be eliminated.
15. Regarding Nutrition Services, wasn't there going to be a move away from paper goods?
RESPONSE: Dishware is not disposable and trays are plastic. However, silverware was being thrown away by students so there is some use of plastic ware.
16. With loss of state funding, is there a thought to move away from mandated healthy foods?
RESPONSE: A few years ago it was possible but now there are federal standards that require participation in the smart food program.
17. What is the status of the breakfast program?
RESPONSE: There is breakfast in every school. The program is financially self-sustaining. The program is not that successful at AMS so this is being addressed. It is successful at AHS, although students tend to buy a la cart. On the whole breakfast programs are not very successful across the state.
18. What nutrition grants are available?
RESPONSE: A grant was applied to from the National Dairy Council and although not overtly stated, grant money is only given to those schools that have 70% free and reduced participation. \$45,000.00 in funds were received from the Department of Defense and allows for participation in the fresh fruits and vegetables program.
19. What is the status of the raised bed project for growing food?
RESPONSE: They were given to the principals to incorporate into their schools. They are not being used right now and it was noted that there are many regulations about what food can be used in the school cafeteria. A written update will be provided at the regular Board meeting.

20. Will there be reductions in the Central Office?
RESPONSE: Yes, although they will be modest since the office is lean compared to similarly sized school districts.
21. What is the LPL Financial contractual obligation of \$25,000.00.
RESPONSE: LPL Financial is the vendor for contributions to the Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) trust. Contributions were formerly sent to Webster Bank.
22. Is there an actuarial requirement for that contribution from a public perspective?
RESPONSE: That was the case previously, but now there is an actuarial requirement. When attending the actuarial evaluation meeting it was brought to light that the OPEB was underfunded and it was determined that a minimum of \$200,000.00 will be funded in the OPEB trust annually.
23. What is the balance of the OPEB fund?
RESPONSE: The balance of the OPEB fund is approximately \$100,000.00.
24. Who is the fiduciary for the OPEB fund?
RESPONSE: The Town of Avon is the fiduciary for the OPEB fund.
25. What is the OPEB portfolio invested in?
RESPONSE: This information will be provided as available.
26. Is OPEB only for retirees until they reach the age of 65?
RESPONSE: No, certified staff and retirees can stay on insurance benefits for life but it does become secondary to Medicaid.
27. Is the Futures Education contract recurring?
RESPONSE: No, it is complete.
28. Why do transportation costs differ and why are they so high?
RESPONSE: Transportation is governed by contracts and therefore looking for lower priced transportation is not allowable. Transportation companies have high costs due to such things as maintenance. District owned buses are used where possible. Special education is excluded from transportation contracts and Pupil Services does an excellent job of finding low cost transportation for those students.
29. Does the money collected from parents for field trips cover the entire transportation costs?
RESPONSE: The schools do a good job collecting the proper amount of money to cover trips and the money goes through student activities fund. General funds for bus transportation are covered by Central Office for whole class trips.
30. What was the result of the poison ivy abatement?
RESPONSE: The treatment that was utilized in the fall was ineffective so the abatement was postponed. A saline solution mixture that is effective will be used in the spring.
31. Will the lawsuit that was settled by the Office of Civil Rights determining that East Hartford was not supporting the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) have an effect on APS?
RESPONSE: No, APS is proactive and diligent about providing supports for ELL.

32. Is there the possibility that an additional security camera can be added inside the building outside of the gymnasium area where students congregate after school?
RESPONSE: Additional cameras are slated to be put into interior hallways adjacent to major entry points with a centralized point for monitoring and will be paid for out of the current budget.
33. What efforts are being made to find untypical grants?
RESPONSE: There is the chance that a new security grant may be available and that will be looked into. Non-traditional databases are being explored but the demographics of Avon hinder the District's ability to demonstrate need for grant money. There is a \$350 million dollar federal grant to promote computer science education and this is being thoroughly explored.
34. Why do there continue to be consulting fees for curriculum revision?
RESPONSE: When the work on curriculum started ongoing professional development with an expert was promised to staff. As curriculum revisions continue, having a curriculum consultant provides access to curriculum from the whole country. They are specialists and are helping Avon to be a leading District with their curriculum.
35. Please clarify number 50 on the Q&A document dated November 28th and November 30th regarding the breakdown of line items for certified salary in Central Office.
RESPONSE: Superintendent \$179,637.00/0.00% increase; declined increase that was offered.
36. The cost of substitutes is very high, is there an increase in absenteeism for teachers?
RESPONSE: Absenteeism is tracked annually and remains consistent. This is an area that needs to be addressed with teachers. Teachers are not supposed to request time off near the holidays and there are small perfect attendance bonuses, but there is no incentive large enough to have someone not take a day that they want to take. Administration has spoken with union leaders and they are concerned as well and a practice has been put into place so that the associations help pay for substitutes. A teacher absenteeism report will be provided.
37. Why is there an increase of \$31,000.00 for Instructional Equipment?
RESPONSE: This line is for technology. It was necessary to provide improved technical equipment so AHS students could move to next level and computers were repurposed at the middle school.
38. Please indicate why there is an increase on the degree change stipends? The level we are at now seems high, please clarify.
RESPONSE: Per their contract, certified staff must notify Administration of degrees they will be receiving that cause them to change lanes. The amount budgeted fluctuates depending on what notifications are received and the difference between current salaries and the lane change that will occur when the degree is obtained. Having younger teachers on staff contributes to the increase since these are the teachers who are receiving degrees and changing lanes.
39. Have the services of the Flippen Group been completed?
RESPONSE: No, the Flippen Group services in the amount of \$51,000.00 will be used as there are fifty staff members that still require training.
40. Please provide the number of anticipated retirements?
RESPONSE: There are three retirements.