

**Questions Regarding 2016-2017 Superintendent's Proposed Budget**  
**As of December 2, 2015**

1. Will a lower ratio be consider for first grade next year at RBS along with adequate para support?  
**Response:** An additional section has been included in the 2016-2017 Superintendent's Proposed Budget increasing the number to 5.
2. Where is budget information found online?  
**Response:** It is located under the "Board of Education" then select "Budget."
3. Why it is that enrollment seems to be declining yet the budget is rising?  
**Response:** The enrollment has not decreased at the levels projected. The costs associated with staff compensation, utilities, tuitions and transportation continue to rise thus accounting for 97% of the increase in the 2016-2017 Superintendent's Proposed Budget.
4. Why have there not been news releases about the negotiation of the Avon Education Association and other contracts?  
**Response:** A press release regarding the recent contract settlement between the Avon Board of Education and the Avon Education Association was issued. Another press release is forthcoming regarding contract settlements with organized labor of other support staff.
5. Why wasn't a decreasing increase in salary considered for the subsequent years in the newly negotiated teachers' contract?  
**Response:** The Personnel Subcommittee and the negotiating team representing Avon certified staff did not negotiate and agree to such terms with respect to the general wage increases reflected in the new, three year agreement.
6. Why are salary increases justified by changes in co-pays and prescriptions while the offset is insignificant compared to the Town's ongoing financial commitment?  
**Response:** Insurance co-pays and benefit plans are common items for negotiations that realize savings to the Board of Education budget.
7. Would the Board consider holding informational meetings about the contracts to demystify the contract negotiations process?  
**Response:** This will be considered by the Communications Subcommittee of the Board of Education after the Board's reorganization is completed in January.
8. Why is there is a decrease in the staffing of secretaries?  
**Response:** There is no decrease in staffing of secretaries included in the 2016-2017 Superintendent's Proposed Budget.
9. To whom do press releases go and what is the process? Are press releases posted on the district website?  
**Response:** Generally, communications are forwarded in the following manner:
  - Sent out to all APS families and staff via the district email system, School Messenger
  - Posted on the district website
  - Posted on the district Facebook page

- Sent to Town Council and Board of Finance members
- Sent to the Avon Public Library to be forwarded using the town wide email system
- Sent out to the press which includes Abigail Albair, Alison Jalbert and Sloan Brewster from Turley CT Publications (Valley Press and Valley Life) and Ken Byron from the Hartford Courant

**10. What are the new positions being proposed?**

**Response:**

- 1.0 FTE Grade K teacher PGS
- 2.0 FTE Grade 2 Teacher PGS
- 1.0 FTE Grade 4 Teacher PGS
- 1.0 FTE Grade K Teacher RBS
- 2.0 Grade 3 teaching assistants at RBS, PGS
- 1.0 FTE additional support for Internship Program at AHS
- Increase non-certified district technology staff from 10 to 12 months
- 1.0 FTE permanent substitute custodian district wide

**11. What is a teaching assistant and what do they do? Is it required that they be certified and what is their skillset?**

**Response:** Teaching assistants work directly with classroom teachers on a daily basis to meet the needs of all students. Presently, all of our teaching assistants hold teaching certificates (though not a requirement for the position). Most of the teaching positions are funded through grants and not the regular operating budget.

**12. Is there a difference between a substitute custodian and floating custodian?**

**Response:** Conceptually there is no difference except that substitute custodians are compensated at a lower rate.

**13. Why has the line item for district-wide maintainers custodians increased significantly?**

**Response:** This is the result of recoding individual salary expenditures from the 2015-2016 budget to reflect personnel movement.

**14. Where was the landscaping cost previously?**

**Response:** This is a new request to outsource this function. The lawn mowing is currently completed by district maintainers.

**15. Is the \$446,000 for new tuitions? And why is it so much more this year? Is there a breakdown available?**

**Response:** There were an increased number of students and additional costs for current students that account for the increased funding request. A breakdown of tuitions is available under the Pupil Services section of the Supplemental Budget Information. Please note, tuitions are not regulated by the State Department of Education and also include the costs associated with students attending magnet and charter schools.

**16. Are outplacements for non-resident student reimbursed?**

**Response:** Yes. The reimbursement is received by the Town of Avon.

17. How many more kindergarten students are needed before another section/teacher is added this year?  
**Response:** This issue will be reviewed with the RBS Principal as he has made no request for additional staff for kindergarten as of this date. The Superintendent of Schools will update the Board after he reviews the matter as noted.
18. Why are both Chinese and Spanish being offered in the elementary levels?  
**Response:** This was agreed upon two years ago and provides students access to multi-lingual instruction beginning in kindergarten.
19. Can students have the choice of taking only one of the languages to diminish time away from the academic classroom?  
**Response:** If the Board of Education directs this to happen, the administration will comply.
20. Has there been any feedback from principals?  
**Response:** Feedback will be solicited from all principals and will be shared with the Board of Education.
21. Is there enough coverage with high school counselors?  
**Response:** Yes. The average caseload per counselor is lower than the national and state average. Currently counselors have approximately 192 students on their caseload and the Director of School counseling has approximately 65.
22. Is there enough support staff in the counseling department to help with college applications?  
**Response:** Yes. There has been no negative feedback received to date regarding assistance with processing college applications.
23. Do we have the proper number of technology staff to help service the technology within the district?  
**Response:** Yes. Additional support has been requested as reflected in the reappropriation of funds to facilitate an additional Technology Field Services Technician position in lieu of the Technology Services Supervisor and making all positions 12 months.
24. Do they have the capability of remote access to work from the Central Office?  
**Response:** Some technicians do, but not all, due to maintaining appropriate network security.
25. Was there a change in title in any of the technology staff?  
**Response:** No. As explained above, the funds appropriated to a supervisor position were reappropriated to fund an additional field services technician position.
26. Has the district encouraged the Internship program to look into partnering with other internship programs with employers, network groups, universities/colleges, etc.?  
**Response:** Yes. This is an ongoing priority for the Coordinator of Internships.
27. Explain the addition of another staff person for the internship program.  
**Response:** This is a non-certified position to assist the Coordinator of Internships to supervise the internship placements and all related work.
28. Through what level are we offering Chinese in the high school?  
**Response:** Levels 1 and 2 currently. Future plans are in place to facilitate Levels 1 and 2 of Chinese to be achieved at AMS (Level 1 was instituted this year). This would facilitate having higher levels taught at AHS.

29. Explain the levels of Chinese being taught throughout the district.

**Response:** Presently, Chinese is being taught in grades K-3, Level 1 at the middle school and Level 1 and 2 at the high school.

30. What is the cost to the district for the Chinese teachers? And are they certified?

**Response:** The teachers of Chinese are certified by the SDE and the district is obligated via an agreement with the Confucius Institute at CCSU to pay each teacher ½ of the Master's degree lane, Step 1 rate of the current contract with the Avon Education Association. The district currently has 3 teachers operating under this agreement.

31. How many languages are offered in the high school?

**Response:** Four (French, Spanish, Latin, Chinese). Instruction in world languages not currently offered are available via the Virtual High School platform.

32. Does the budget account for school psychologists or social workers?

**Response:** The 2016-2017 Superintendent's Proposed Budget provides sufficient funding for one category of position or another and an equal number of positions as funded in the 2015-2016 operating budget.

33. Is it budget neutral if one is swapped for the other?

**Response:** Yes.

34. How is the support working for students who may require more help due to the dropping of one of the academic levels at the high school?

**Response:** The Superintendent of Schools will obtain this information from the AHS administration and report back to the Board of Education. A presentation by the AHS administration to the Board will be scheduled in early 2016.

35. Has more staff been requested at the high school?

**Response:** No additional staff has been requested by the AHS administration.

36. Is there any extra support needed for the Choice students that we do not have currently?

**Response:** The Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning will obtain this information from the building leaders and report back to the Board of Education.

37. Do we still have an alternative high school?

**Response:** No. The need for such programming diminished two years ago.

38. Does the cost of running a school program cost more than outplacing students?

**Response:** No. The outplacement of students is related to the nature and complexity of their special education needs. The previous Alternative Education program was designed to meet the needs of regular education students who were experiencing difficulty in the traditional high school program.

39. Is there any work being done in the guidance departments predicting students at risk to provide special support?

**Response:** The district believes that the existing counseling staff does an excellent job identifying the needs of all students particularly those that are deemed "at risk." There is no established formula and/or metrics in place to predict students who may be identified "at risk."

40. Does PowerSchool have enough data-points to help track students?

**Response: Yes. This software has the capacity to sort data according to identified data points and can be used, if populated correctly, to provide a comprehensive report on individual students.**

41. At the middle school, independent study and language art 7 enrollments seem extremely small as well as some math classes.

**Response: The low enrollments for a few of the language arts and math sections represent the special education self-contained classes. The Independent Study is a scheduling place holder.**

42. The Special Education Clerk Typist position at Pine Grove has gone down, what is the level of support?

**Response: The district believes that there is sufficient coverage to meet the needs of processing special education matters with the existing staff compliment. The position of Special Education Clerk Typist was created as 0.5 FTE well prior to 5 years ago for the purposes of providing assistance with various special education functions. Over the years, these positions morphed into providing additional assistance to the main office of each building.**

43. Are the two elementary schools providing the same opportunities?

**Response: Yes**