

East Haddam Board of Education

2014-2015 BUDGET FAQs

Responses to citizen (unedited) questions:

1. *The budget is broken down into six sections, can you please explain what they each represent?*

Elementary School: represents the costs associated directly to that school.

Middle School: represents the costs associated directly to that school.

High School: represents the costs associated directly to that school.

Special Education: represents the costs associated directly to special education.

System-Wide: represents the costs to operate the entire district; for example—Central Office staffing, transportation, heating oil, telephones, substitutes, fringe benefits, insurances, etc.

District-Wide: represents the grand total of everything listed above.

2. *“Is there a “COMPLETE” BoE budget book that we can review? A few of us would like to sit down and read the information. I know there is a ‘partial’ budget on line however due to the format it needs to be printed in order to follow line items from one page to another and I am not sure if it is the most current version of the budget.”*

The entire Board of Education budget has been online since March 12th which may be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.easthaddam.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=trees.treePage&p=922-107-1854>

There is a budget book at the Board of Education office that also has been available since March 12th. There is a budget book in the Town Clerk’s office as well.

3. *“Cell phone stipends? Are there cell phone stipends or cell phones in the BoE budget. If so how many cell phones are allocated, and to whom. Do any of the BoE employees receive cell phone stipends, if so who and how much stipends are given per person.”*

There are no cell phone stipends. Cell phones are provided to the Superintendent, the IT Manager and Maintenance Supervisor. There are also “emergency” cell phones at each school with the Principal. The phones are charged to System-wide budget account 2610: Buildings-Custodial, 530: Communications-Telephone. The total cost for cell phones is \$2,475.

4. *“Language Arts HS – proposed cut was indicated on the sheet distributed as \$103,850. Can you give us a breakdown of that amount? It seems high and does not match contracts of any teacher in the system. It was our understanding this was a stand alone cut not the complied cuts of what was in the budget prior to the BoF decision to cut \$600K increase.”*

The sheet of potential cuts distributed indicates at the top that the costs for staffing includes FICA, Medicare and Fringe Benefits. The list of potential cuts may be found on the Board of Education website. Breakdown as follows:

Wages:	\$80,409
Medicare:	1,166
Benefits:.....	22,275
Total.....	\$103,850
Less potential unemployment	(15,340)
Net reduction	\$88,510

5. *“Math Interventionist – \$78,615 --- same question as above.....this was a new position.”*

This was not a new staff member. This was a “repurposing” of a current staff member into a newly-created position by the Board. Breakdown as follows:

Wages:	\$77,275
Medicare:	1,120
Benefits:.....	220
Total.....	\$78,615
Less potential unemployment	(15,340)
Net reduction	\$63,275

6. *“The number \$280,000.00 in contractual agreements has been discussed throughout the budget season. Some are saying this is ALL teachers contracts and others are saying the 280k has new positions in the number. Can you please explain what the 280K entails exactly? How much of this number is actually dedicated to the teacher contract increases.”*

The amount reflects the current contractual obligations of the Board of Education plus all new positions or “repurposed” positions from the Board’s proposed budget. Includes wage increases (per the recently negotiated teacher’s contract, per the administrator’s contract and includes a 2% placeholder increase for the non-certified union) for all staff members and projected insurance increases.

7. *“On the SW budget page travel is listed in several locations with different numbers. First question--- what is travel, who uses it and what for? The second question is on page 4 an amount of \$10,349 is listed, on page 9 an amount of \$3,199 is listed, on page 11 an amount of \$2,150.00 is listed. What is the total amount of travel?”*

First Question: Travel is more accurately described as mileage reimbursement.

Second Question: Page 4 is the summary totals of the System-wide budget. The \$10,349 is for all System-wide Travel. The \$3,199 is Travel related to Professional Development. The \$2,150 is for mileage reimbursement System-wide.

Please see the comments on page SW10 in the System-wide budget account 2320: Superintendent’s Office, 580: Travel/Conference which reflect that the current Superintendent’s contract provides for \$5,000 in travel.

The changes to the other amounts was to better reflect the charge to areas.

8. *“SW budget category 2610, line item 530 – Communications and Telephones. \$17,404. What is that for?”*

The budget is labeled SW Communications-Telephone. It is for telephones for the entire district.

9. *“Where is the 504 IEP student vendor screening NWEA amount listed on the budget. It was stated this was being implemented in the budget.”*

NWEA is not in the budget. NWEA was under consideration to replace the Aims Web universal screening assessment. The decision has been made not to move forward with NWEA at this time. Budget change from last year is a reduction of \$90 (the fee is based on enrollment). Aims Web is budgeted for both the elementary and middle school under 2911: Remedial Reading.

10. *“HS, MS, ES all have line items “student activities”. What is that money used for? I noticed that monies were taken out for the IF’s.”*

The monies are largely used for stipend positions, such as yearbook, student council, newspaper, high school class advisors. Hall monitors are also classified as Student Activities. Other costs are those associated with overall student services and supplies.

Monies were reallocated from the middle school Student Activities budget for Team Leaders to the System-wide budget for the Instructional Facilitators and for the high school from Program Leaders to the system-wide budget for the Instructional Facilitators.

11. *“Where is the line item for the recording secretary for the BoE? And how much is that line item budgeted for in 2014/15. This position was created/allocated in the middle of the current budget year what budget line item did the money come out of for the position this year?”*

The recording secretary is funded in the System-wide budget under 2310: Board of Education, 300: Purchased Services. There was no change to the budget for this position. Current year budget amount is \$5,850 and next year budget amount is \$5,828.

12. *“DW – item number 1125 Computer Education has a significant decrease. What was the decrease from?”*

This is because these costs are now included in Shared Services.

13. *“DW Tuition \$733,385 has an increase of 17.8%. Can you explain why.... And the actual number of students that we are placing out of district from 2013, 2014 and proposed in 2015.”*

Tuition is for special education (reflected in the Special Education Budget) and magnet school (reflected in the System-wide Budget). A major increase (\$66,000) is for the alternative high school program that is run in a partnership with East Hampton. To date, East Hampton has been bearing a greater cost than we have for the program. We are reviewing the number of special education students to ensure that we provide a concise overview of out of district students as well as their associated costs. The Director of Pupil Services is not in the office this week to review and confirm the data—we will publish that data as soon as possible. The total number of magnet school students are as follows:

2013: 27

2014: 23

2015: 27 (projected—we don't will not know the actual number until next October/November.)

14. "DW item 2320 Central office has an increase of 102.5% (82,450) what exactly is in that increase?"

Please see the System-wide budget page SW10:

- **440 Rentals:** the budget note indicates copier leases have been reallocated more appropriately to the Superintendent's Office from the Building's-Custodial budget.
- **640 Textbooks:** the budget note that indicates that there is a district-wide placeholder for textbooks.

15. "DW 2420 What and who is the Directors office? Isn't that central office?"

The District-wide budget reflects the total. Please see page SE6 under the Special Education budget. This is for the Director of Pupil Services.

16. "DW 2514 DW payroll services. What is the anticipated savings on this line item if we have less staff as indicted in the documents for proposed cuts?"

The District-wide budget reflects the total. These costs are shown in the System-wide budget. Yes there could potentially be anticipated savings, based upon reductions; however there would be a corresponding increase to unemployment under the same budget. It should be noted that the Payroll Services budget provides for the costs associated with Social Security, Medicare, Employee Retirement Savings and/or 403B matches (in accordance with union contracts) and Unemployment.

17. "HS ball fields and clay. Is that amount in the BoE budget or is that in the Capital budget?"

Capital is not reflected in the Board of Education budget. Please see the System-wide budget page SW12, 2630—Care and Upkeep Grounds, 610—General Supplies.

18. "DW rentals have increased by 159%, why?"

The District-wide budget reflects the total. These costs are shown in the System-wide budget. As referenced above under the Central Office budget there was a reallocation from Buildings-Custodial to the Superintendent's Office. Please see page SW11, 2615—Buildings-Maintenance, 300—Purchased Services which reflects a \$50,456 reduction as noted in the comments.

19. "SW custodial and maintenance over time. Can a break down of that line item be given and why is it so high?"

Custodial/maintenance overtime can fluctuate greatly based on weather events. We budget based on a five year average. Here is a history of overtime actuals:

2008-2009:	\$52,125
2009-2010:	\$47,278
2010-2011:	\$48,601
2011-2012:	\$56,168

2012-2013: \$50,398

The five year average is \$50,914. The budget request for 2014-2015 remains at the 2013-2014 request level of \$51,085.

20. *“In the past several years there has been a budget surplus that the town has matched. Several questions have been raised in regard to where were these surpluses in the budget? Have the budget line items that had surpluses been adjusted accordingly? What is the anticipated surplus for this budget year? The other set of questions that has been asked is what is the amount in that account? Where are we allocating that money. The sheet that we received with the grants and matching (no title on the top of the page.... But it starts with the security grant and ends with the town funding opportunities) was confusing especially with the explanation”*

The town DOES NOT MATCH Board of Education budget surpluses. In 2010 the Board of Finance established a Board of Education reserve fund. The Board of Finance allocates \$100,000 per year to the fund for future capital needs. In addition, year-end Board of Education surpluses have been deposited into that account—a process that requires Town Meeting approval. Please see the Other Budgetary Funds section of the budget book, pages 8 and 9 which has a history of the monies transferred in and out of the Board of Education reserve fund (as well as other reserve funds). For the past couple of years we have implemented budget freezes, we have improved our liability insurance costs by merging policies with the town, we have saved money on electricity, etc. Any savings are reflected by reducing the next year’s budget. At this time we are not projecting a large budget surplus for the Board of Education for the current fiscal year. We are awaiting information on outstanding grants and will have a better idea in the upcoming weeks where we stand. Please see page DW5 under the District-wide budget for a seven year history on spending by area. It demonstrates areas where we have realized savings (and increases) over the years.

21. *“The allocation for the superintendent search in this current budget year, where was that money allocated from and what adjustments have been made to that line item for the following year? I believe it was 13k and then we heard 16k Can you please id the amount we are spending on the search and where that money came from.”*

The Board of Education approved an amount not to exceed \$20,000 (this includes the cost of the search firm and advertising). The funds will be transferred from System-wide, 2620: Insurance, 210: Health Insurance to System-wide, 2310: Board of Education, 300 Purchased Services.

Please note this year has been an anomaly with regard to health insurance. We realized greater savings moving to Connecticare than we originally projected.