

# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
May 1, 2019 @ 7PM  
Town Hall, Room 1**

**Members Present:** R. Tarlov, R. Esteve, M. Egan, N. Negron, A. Migliaccio, A. Bisbikos

**Absent:**

**Others Present:** First Selectman A. Shilosky, CFO M. Cosgrove, BOS D. Mizla, R. Coyle, Superintendent J. Burt, BOE Administration C Hewes, K Perry, BOE M. Bylone, Renee Besaw, Brad Bernier, Mary Tomasi, Chief Cox, J. Walsh, Town Clerk G. Furman, Tax Collector M. Wyatt, Public Works J Paggioli, Recreation T Quinn and Clerk, K. Cavanaugh

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by R. Tarlov.
2. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA** – *R. Esteve motioned to move agenda item 9.a.i to follow 6., seconded by A. Bisbikos. All members present voted in favor. Motion Carried. 6/0*
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** – *April 17, Regular Meeting – R. Esteve motioned to approve the April 17<sup>th</sup>, Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by M. Egan. Motion Carried. 5/0/1. N. Negron abstained.*
4. **CITIZENS COMMENTS** – None
5. **CORRESPONDENCE** – None
6. **FIRST SELECTMAN**
  - a. **Transfer Requests**
    - i. Discussion and Possible Action on appropriation of funds to the Debt Service Fund – WJJMS. BOS approved their recommendation at their last meeting. *M. Egan motioned to appropriate from General Funds assigned fund balance, investment earnings in the fiscal year 2016/17 & 2017/18 related to the William J Johnson Middle School Project and associated transfer of funds to the debt service fund for future debt payments related to the project (from item number 18501 32650 to line item 18501 5700) in the amount of \$97,601. Motion seconded by R. Esteve. Motion Carried 6/0*
7. **2019 – 2020 BUDGET**
  - a. **BOARD OF EDUCATION**
    - i. **Board Discussion-** R. Tarlov asked for clarification on the pension / teacher retirement in the amount of \$114,397. J. Burt said when the budget was proposed they were not aware of that line item and is currently not part of the budget. M. Egan said some towns list that item separately from the education and town budget. M. Cosgrove said that is not allowed in Colchester by charter. R. Tarlov asked what amount was able to be removed from the \$121k for insurance waivers that were being terminated. J. Burt stated approximately \$28k. R. Tarlov asked about budgeting for MA6 and if this has ever been tracked. M. Cosgrove replied they had tracked it and showed a loss. R Tarlov said he believe we should use the school budget's unexpended funds (200K) now in assigned fund balance. R. Esteve said he thought the same but wasn't sure how to articulate it but that taking some of the unassigned dollars and putting them towards the technology would be positive. A. Bisbikos is also for that suggestion and feels it would be a smart move for the future of the children. J. Burt stated that would take the budget down from the requested \$274k to \$74k on that line, and if you recall the BOE is looking to stabilize that

number at approximately \$350k over the next 10 years, which would result in the following budget seeing an increase of \$275k right out of the gate and would like to make the BOF aware of that. R. Tarlov stated adding the pension the Board of Education is looking at a \$930k increase. A. Migliaccio feels that is still a high number and not having the current update with the teachers' pension or with the DMV status. A. Bisbikos said the BOF had concern with the size of the First Selectman budget and didn't feel it would pass and doesn't think that \$930k is going to pass at referendum for the BOE. He said he could support the 200k – 400k range, given the uncertainty of the state and the massive declining enrollment, but does believe to see good initiatives with the plan. M. Egan said he feels the BOF has been very good at identifying a budget that meets the needs of the town and the BOE and can pass as far as the voters are concerned. A. Bisbikos would like to give the BOE an opportunity to implement their ideas, but is concerned if the town can afford it. A. Migliaccio admires the strides of Dr. Hewes technology plan, understanding it is expensive, but need to start somewhere. N. Negron thinks it's very important to understand the programs that need to be implemented and of course technology is important, but need to create a budget that the public is willing to adopt. The members of the commission discussed the classrooms sizes and the retirement of a guidance counselor. J. Burt stated the curricular implementation is a needed area, and the staff has done an incredible job presenting and creating a curricular to be approve by the board and these funds are essential to implement. These are not textbooks, these are all needed material to improve and increase the structural capabilities PreK – 12. In terms to the guidance counselor, there are National norms and standards that are used by the staff and administrators to be sure they have the appropriate ratio of student to guidance counselor and they are very important for the students moving onto careers and college. A. Bisbikos asked in regards to the current curriculum that is in place if it is not satisfactory enough or not vigorous enough? J. Burt said typically any district will go through a 5 year revision cycle and the change is mostly due to moving away from textbooks. A. Migliaccio expressed concern with bringing out new technology and the need for the replacing and software updating in the future. J. Burt said they do have a spreadsheet that identifies each product and the expected life span, current numbers, and have a plan in place for a cycle to stay current.

**ii. Citizens Comments, Questions, Discussion – Questions and Comments regarding the budget**

D. Bouchard spoke of the current 18 – 21 program in place and the costs, asking of the 9 students in the program, how many are exiting next year and are those savings noted in the budget. J. Burt responded that when a budget is developed the existing number of students is taken that are outplace and they project who will be leaving the district next year and what those projected costs are, which are estimates as students could move in or out and would dramatically change the number. Currently they are budgeting for 3 students. D. Bouchard said if between now and the time that the budget goes to referendum if there are additional students it would be incumbent upon the BOE to let the BOF know. She also spoke to the greeter position that was discussed to cover the traffic in the office and then it was said it was safety that was a concern as well and the new hire could be staffed for safety. If this is a position for a security guard why

isn't it being looked at that way and hiring someone who has the qualifications and outside source that is a trained professional? B. Bernier stated that the security at the buildings is taken very seriously, because it is security it is not something to be discussed in a public meeting, this is just a component of it and a component that the board stands behind and a fairly inexpensive component.

Jennifer Sevigny said as far as the education budget is concerned she would like to see it move forward as it stands and support the funding for the new standards that are in place.

Mary Bylone feels that the town has barley invested in the students in the past years, they have paid for electricity, increasing fuel costs, non-funding mandates from the State, and this budget is more than the 18 years they spend in the system, this is about preparing the youth of this community to be able to handle their life moving forward. Many people choose Colchester because of the education and suggests takin this budget to the people and let them decide.

Rosemary Coyle reported the car tax is not moving forward.

Resident stated the reason she chose to move to Colchester was due to the schools and the C3 program and this program is able to help children and parents as well.

Resident spoke specifically on the C3 program and it has been instrumental to her family and the community support has been tremendous.

T Rutko, a lifelong resident of Colchester, taxpayer, resident, the question poses why aren't people staying and it is because the taxes are too high and the 55 and over demographic is not going to be able to afford the long term increase to the budget. He said that in fact there are families moving into the town however they are not staying.

Mr. Rose, resident since 2001, active in the community, and feels that a good community deserves the support of the residents. He feels that you need to invest in the town and the school and thinks this is a good budget and should be put to the voters.

D. Bouchard said that the discussion of cuts to the increase, and were not talking about cutting the budget, this is an increase from last year, and the discussion is about reducing the proposed increase to the budget.

Michelle Gillman thanked the BOF for the work and to the other elected official for their work on the town budget. Ms. Gillman does not support any additional decreases to the budget and feels that the BOE has been very good at managing a tight budget during difficult times and feels it's important to remember that education and school systems are an economic driver for families and businesses to move to town.

Jennifer Sevigny said when she decided to move to town and stay in town, not only because of the schools but the library and the other town funded programs and with that support the town budget as well. And while she understands the discussion is to cut an increase, the increase it to maintain the current curriculum and staffing and all the things that are currently in place, so cutting that would result in what the town currently offers.

Renie Besaw wanted to remind the board that over the last few years the BOE has worked very hard to bring revenue into the town to help offset the cost of the school districts and will continue on that path as we move forward.

**iii. Board Discussion and Possible Action on Budget going to Public Hearing**

R. Tarlov commented on Norwich Tuition and looking at 30 students coming in however budgeting for 21. Any thoughts about budgeting for 25? J. Burt wanted to be transparent in regards to originally over estimating and are currently looking to do 15 new although the numbers change as the day's progress. M. Cosgrove said that what complicates matters is the negotiating of the rate change to be more in line with other districts. R Tarlov asked if the changes in tuition would be effective in this budget. J Burt said no. R Tarlov suggested adding tuition for 5 more students. The board agreed.

A. Migliaccio said the BOE has explained every dollar they are asking for and revenue numbers have not been looked at yet however good news was received regarding numbers that though were going to be cut, and she feels the number is not unfair and would like to move it to the town to let the residents decide.

A. Bisbikos said the board has to be mindful of the people in the room that are not represented and need to be mindful of their voice. The impact a major tax increase would have on their pocket and doesn't feel this is a realistic budget.

R. Esteve supported removing \$100k from the proposal.

N. Negrón thinks the educational budget is very important for the school and split the difference.

M. Egan also supported the \$100k reduction

R. Tarlov said there was \$114k added back on from the pension, \$28k was removed for the insurance and 200K to be funded from fund balance, he is looking to take another \$200k out. A. Bisbikos would like to visit the Town Budget before moving on the Board of Education.

*M. Egan motioned to reduce the Board of Education budget from \$897,750 to \$797,750, seconded by R. Esteve. Motion Carried. 4/0/2. M. Egan, R. Esteve, A. Migliaccio & N. Negrón Yes // R. Tarlov and A. Bisbikos No. Motion carried.*

**b. Town Budget**

**i. Board Discussion**

R. Tarlov reported that on the Board of Selectmen held a Special meeting where they changed the start date of the Paramedic program which resulted in removing all but about 68,000 from the current budget request recommended to pay for the 37K backpack from equipment reserve further reducing the request to about 31,000 in the budget.

**ParaMed Program** - R. Tarlov asked Chief Cox if they are waiting until April 1, why not wait until July 1 if this is approved. Chief Cox said the April 1<sup>st</sup> start

date would hire the Supervisor initial for less than 30 hours and promote a current EMT to a Paramedic. This allow for both to complete the precept (creditation) process and are then ready and through the training by July 1. R. Tarlov asked if the program fails to be passed by the voters and the cardiac unit is purchased, is there a resale value to another town and Chief Cox said it would be. Chief Cox is also applying for other grants that would help with the equipment needed. Chief Cox reported on a 4% reduction from current 7.5%-billing services by changing their billing company. M. Cosgrove stated there is also a cost for the software for the program. The revenue was discussed, having (3) increases ECS, Norwich Tuition and ambulance billing.

**Treasurer Stipend** – The current stipend in place was agreed upon by the BOF and BOS and there was a discussion of possibly changing it after the election.

**OpenGov Reporting, Accountability and Reporting** software – R. Tarlov said this is a good software, however he is concerned that it is not mandatory to be used it won't be used. A. Bisbikos said the voters voted for this program and it is up to the First Selectman to delegate that responsibility for it to be up and running. We are willing to invest in the schools for technology, why are we not investing in our town for greater technology and greater transparency. R Tarlov said if used, it is great software and will enhance productivity and help in making financial decisions and communicating with the public but it has not been used yet and unless the Board of Selectmen require staff to use the software, will be a waste of taxpayer dollars. M. Egan said we are keeping the transparency, the change is for the reporting and it will not be as effective if all departments are not utilizing the software. A. Shilosky said he is able to access Munis and obtain the same information. R Tarlov that the information from Munis is not the same. The board agreed that it should be left in the budget to see if the leadership require its use.

**Social Service Coordinator-** R. Tarlov understands the value of going from a part time to a full time position but said that all new initiative should have been brought to the board during November – February to give time to evaluate. He says compared to other departments, Youth Service has more staffing and we need to evaluate if a Youth Services position could be moved to a full time Social Service Coordinator and therefore not in favor of increasing the hours at this time as it will come with additional cost from the position become eligible for health coverage. M. Egan said from the last meeting discussion it was the consensus to move that position to full time. He said there are more issues within that department that should be addressed to assist with residents and taxpayers.

ii. **Citizens Comments, Questions, Discussion – Questions and Comments regarding the budget**

R. Coyle asked if they received the memo regarding the cuts from the various departments. The BOF has not received that memo and R. Coyle strongly suggested the board members review the impact statements that were received from the departments.

D. Bouchard spoke of the other departments and the amount of staff they hold vs. the hours they are available.

R. Coyle reported and update from the state stating the teacher retirement program did not come out of the finance package.

Resident read a letter to the BOF in favor of the Paramedic Program.

**iii. Board Discussion and Possible Action on Budget going to Public Hearing**

R. Tarlov said the BOF will implement the paramedic program, accept (1) position for the Public Works grounds position is needed and the 2<sup>nd</sup> requested position will be reassessed next year. The board agreed. In terms of the Social Services position, the position will remain in the budget as will the Treasurers stipend.

The board learned through a text from N Needleman that the teacher pension cost was removed from the State budget. M. Egan made a motion to rescind previous approved motion, "to reduce the Board of Education budget from \$897,750 to \$797,750, seconded by R. Esteve. Bisbikos No. Motion carried" motion to rescind was seconded by R. Esteve. Motion Carried. 6/0 – Approved motion rescinded.

A. Migliaccio made a motion to reduce the Board of Education Proposed Budget by \$328,000, seconded by R. Esteve. Motion Carried 6/0

R. Esteve made a motion to reduce the BLS billing by \$15,947, the Paramedic Program to \$237,716, the Grounds Person to \$44,403, and the Debt Service \$97,601, plus associated impacts, seconded by N. Negron. Motion Carried. 6/0

A. Migliaccio made a motion to increase the revenue to ECS by \$767,532, Norwich Tuition by \$77,315, and Ambulance by \$50,000, seconded by A. Bisbikos. Motion Carried. 6/0

**8. TAX COLLECTOR -**

a. Suspense Items- Discussion and Possible

M. Wyatt reported on the suspended tax items for the year, only being parties who filed bankruptcy or was deceased.

A. Bisbikos made a motion from the tax collectors recommendation to suspend \$39,489.85 due to bankruptcy or deceased of resident, seconded by A. Migliaccio. Motion Carried. 6/0

**9. FIRST SELECTMAN- None**

**10. OLD BUSINESS –**

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**12. LIAISONS' REPORTS –** R. Tarlov tabled the liaison reports to the next regular meeting.

**13. CITIZENS COMMENTS –** None

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

A. Migliaccio motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:19pm, seconded by N. Negron. All members present voted in favor. Motion Carried. 5/0

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kamey Cavanaugh, clerk*

## **Interdepartmental Memorandum**

To: Robert Tarlov, Chairman Board of Finance  
From: John Chaponis, Assessor   
CC: First Selectman, Arthur Shilosky  
Date: April 27, 2019  
Re: Budget Recommendations

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It is my understanding that the Board of Finance is considering eliminating the State Certified full-time position of Deputy Assessor as part of a recommended budget cut.

I completely understand and respect that this decision belongs to the policy making Board of Finance, however, I also feel a duty and responsibility to share my expertise on how to adequately staff this revenue producing office so that our town recoups the best return on our investment.

I recognize that the state budget deficit being shifted onto the back of municipalities is making the BOS & BOF's jobs ever more difficult and applaud any efforts to find ways to provide the same services at a reduced cost. However, I sincerely believe that the changes being considered for the assessor's office, while initially will save money in the salary & benefits line items, will ultimately cost the town significantly more in the form of lost revenue (Grand List increase) and cause additional expenses during town-wide revaluation. In other words, I wholeheartedly believe you will lose substantially more money than you would ever save.

The assessor's major job function is to "Discover, List, & Value". The discovery of untaxed property results in Grand List growth not only to the current year, but for each year to follow. When property is not discovered, it may go untaxed for years. When you weaken the supporting staff in the assessor's office it results in the assessor being pulled away from "Discovering, Listing & Valuing". Laying off the Deputy Assessor is the equivalent of laying off your Assessor. I will have to move from my desk to his desk, work the front counter, and perform his job function. The phone calls still get answered, the lawyers, appraisers, title searchers, realtors, elderly, disabled, and veterans, at the counter still get assisted because the customer service portion of the job can never be ignored. What you are eliminating is my ability to "Discover, List and Value" of untaxed property that still needs to be added to our tax rolls.

An assessor without the proper tools is like a carpenter without a hammer and saw. While not initially intended to be revenue producing, the fact is that the assessor's office is the number one revenue producer for Connecticut municipalities.

The 2017 Grand List resulted in an additional \$486,500 tax dollars for FY 18-19 and that additional \$486,500 will also come in for FY 19-20 and every year going forward. The 2018 Grand List resulted in an additional \$330,000 tax dollars for FY 19-20 and every year going forward. Those two Grand List increases will bring in over 8 million tax dollars over the next ten years.

In addition to Grand List growth, our staff assists with revaluation duties. Attached is an article showing that the Northeastern CT Council of Governments went out to bid for a county wide revaluation in order to get a lower price per parcel. The contract, which encompassed revaluations being completed for all eleven municipalities, was in the amount of 1.2 million dollars. NECCOG was boasting of their reduced revaluation price of \$28.85 per parcel whereas Colchester completed our 2016 Revaluation for \$14 per parcel or half of their cost. Additionally, I would argue that our Revaluations are of a higher quality product because we have so much of our own time & energy invested. When you hire out to a sub-contractor who will come and go, you will never find the dedication and quality control concern that you will from a town employee who will live with the finished product for five years. Eliminate the Deputy Assessor position and we can no longer perform a hybrid revaluation where we assist the vendor and reduce the cost. If my memory serves me correctly, Colchester's historic revaluation costs have consistently dropped as follows:

2001	\$284,000
2006	\$154,000
2011	\$132,100
2016	\$ 92,347

As you can see, work performed in-house has accomplished these goals.

- a.) It has reduced our sub-contracting costs
- b.) It has allowed us to discover un-taxed assets prior to waiting five years between revaluations. In other words, we are getting the missing assets (and tax dollars) onto our Grand Lists each year rather than only catching them once every five years.
- c.) It promotes fair equitable taxation for all
- d.) It produces a higher quality final product

Even in poor economic times, I honestly believe the town should fertilize the money tree rather than pruning it.

The better prepared our office is with trained, knowledgeable, experienced staff, the more resources that can be placed into adding taxable property that will far outweigh the small savings that would be achieved from the proposed staffing reduction.

I also feel a need to address the manner in which I became privy to this information. It saddened me to learn about this drastic proposal from the First Selectman. If the BOF had taken the time to invite me to a meeting in order to discuss my budget and my staffing levels I think it would have become apparent that eliminating this position would cost the town way more than keeping the status quo.

However, now that this has been done, and in the manner it was done, the employee whose position was discussed will now believe that he has no job security here in Colchester and certainly begin seeking employment elsewhere.

Due to dozens of recent retirements over the last ten years, there seems to be a shortage of trained, experienced, assessment personal. When Bloomfield needed to hire an assessor it took them over fourteen months after which they hired someone who had never been an assessor, came from a revaluation background, and did not have a ton of experience. Danbury cannot find someone to fill their vacant assessor position and I was told they were offering \$140,000 per year. Farmington cannot fill their assessor position with a posted salary range of \$89,000 - \$114,000. I heard Stamford still cannot fill an assistant assessor position with an annual salary of \$100,000.

Learning on the job costs money. If we lose one of our trained employees because they quit fearing their position has no job security and with the lack of trained professionals available, we get stuck hiring a replacement who requires training. Meanwhile, Colchester loses money for 3-5 years during the training process, the quality of our work suffers, the cost of revaluation increases, and taxation is less fair.

Our town is so very lucky to have the trained, certified, dedicated staff currently assembled and certainly this team will not last forever but, in my opinion, we should be doing everything we can to keep it together as long as possible because, at the end of the day, it is the Colchester tax payers who end up benefiting the most with a fair & equitable administration of the local property tax.

There is much that I have omitted and if I have not already convinced you that this would cost more than save, I am happy to come to a future BOF meeting and discuss this matter further. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Respectfully,  
John Chaponis



<http://www.hartfordbusiness.com>

## 11 CT towns trying regional grand list reval

BY GREGORY SEAY

5/11/2011

*Editor's Note: This story has been updated since its posting earlier in the day.*

A consortium of 11 northeastern Connecticut towns has hired a Dallas appraisal-services vendor to conduct what authorities say is a money-saving regional revaluation of all the taxable real estate within their borders -- the first ever in the state.

The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) extended a contract to Tyler Technologies Inc., which lists a Tolland office, that is significant for the willingness of individual municipalities to band together and hand over a chore so vital to their operating bottom lines, observers say.

NECCOG granted Tyler a \$1.2 million contract to do members' reval work on a total of about 43,000 parcels, John Filchak said Wednesday. NECCOG's executive director. The price works out to \$28.85 per parcel, a fixed rate that no one else could touch, Filchak said.

Until Tyler's bid emerged, a NECCOG official says, the group even considered setting up its own staff to do grand list appraisals to save its members money.

"This wasn't an easy effort, but overall it will be worthwhile," Ashford First Selectman Ralph Fletcher told HBJ Today.

Ashford is one of the NECCOG member towns that will rely on Tyler Technologies for its reval. The others: Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Sterling, Thompson and Woodstock.

Union is the only member that chose not to participate. Meanwhile, Filchak said Sprague is awaiting the state's clearance to join the regional reval bloc.

Fletcher is convinced the novel Connecticut regional approach to property reval -- which mustered legislative approval last year -- is likely to be copied by other communities as they and the state grapple with dwindling revenues.

He isn't alone. The regional revaluation is a first for Connecticut, Filchak also said in a statement Wednesday accompanying Tyler's announcement.

"The monies saved for our towns and the efficiencies gained are impressive and are, we believe, a model for other regions in Connecticut and other states," he said.

Fletcher says hiring Tyler will cost Ashford \$65,000 -- about 25 percent less than the \$86,000 the town spent in 2007 for an on-site inspection of its grand list.

Typically, cities and towns in Connecticut and other states contract individually with an outside vendor to revalue all residential, commercial and industrial property within their borders as a prelude to setting tax levies that fund their municipal budgets.

Connecticut law requires towns to reappraise properties every five years; once every 10 years the reappraisal must include an on-site inspection, which adds to the cost.



### The Impact of Proposed Budget Cuts to the Recreation Department

1. These statistics show that while the Recreation Supervisors salary has a negligible effect on the Town's proposed budget, it has a devastating effect on effectiveness and success of the Recreation Department.
  - The Recreation Supervisors position represents 33% of the staffing hours in the Recreation Department.
  - The Recreation Supervisor salary represents 45% of the taxpayer funded Recreation Departments budget.
  - The proposed Recreation Supervisors salary represents 0.47% of the Town's total proposed budget.
  - The proposed budget for the Recreation Department represents 1% of the Town's total proposed budget.
  
2. Eliminating the Recreation Supervisor would have a profound and far reaching effect on the Colchester community. Without a Recreation Supervisor, we will be forced to eliminate the Recreation Department camps. The Recreation Supervisor is responsible for all aspects of our camps. These camps include vacation camps, preschool camps and summer day camps.
  - While losing camps would be terrible for many, many families in Colchester- the campers are not the only ones affected by this. There were 799 camper contacts in 2018.
  - The Recreation Departments camps offer employment to numerous people throughout the year. Most of these employees work in a camp capacity. The employees range in age from 16- 60 years of age. Loss of income will surely affect their families as well. There were 24 camp staff last year.
  - The Recreation Department offers a "Leader in Training" program (formerly the Counselor in Training program). The young teens enrolled in this program benefit from the career training, work supervision and skill development that this program provides. There were 28 Leaders in Training last summer.
  
3. The 2018 summer day camp generated \$54,775 in net revenue. Our camp is certified by the CT Office of Early Childhood which allows parents to apply for federal assistance to cover their cost of camp (if they qualify). Without this certification, many parents would not have access to this Federal funding option.
  
4. \$44,000 (plus payroll expenses) of the camp revenue is used to fund the Recreation Specialist position. This position is not funded in the tax payer funded budget. Without the summer day camp revenue, we will not be able to fund the Recreation Specialist position, likely eliminating a second position in the Recreation Department. This would bring the Recreation Department from 3 fulltime positions to one. Were this to happen, there would be many more cuts in programs, events and services offered to the community.

## Tricia Dean

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**From:** James Paggioli  
**Sent:** Friday, April 26, 2019 2:24 PM  
**To:** Tricia Dean  
**Subject:** Re: Request by Art

Tricia,

As stated during the previous Board of Finance meeting: The reduction of one of the two Full time proposed DPW Grounds Maintainer I positions would result in a "better than current, but not sufficient to meet current demands" that the Department receives during the year for services. It becomes a timely-ness issue in regard to responding to calls for service in regard to maintaining mowing, field prep, repair, and general upkeep of the Town's and BOE facilities, meeting requests for line stripping/painting at Athletic fields at the Rec-Plex had also been incorporated in the initial request. Note: this request would be eliminated with the proposed cut of/to one additional Maintainer I position. As mentioned previously there has been an increases and/or changes of use at parks and other areas, (open space acquired in previous subdivision approvals, trails, etc) that are requiring an increase in maintenance hours used at each site, along with the use of staff to conduct general repairs to the buildings of the Town, that were previously conducted by the Facilities Manager position that was removed from the budget.

Generally speaking: Its better than before, not enough to meet demand. As a Department Head in a Public entity, managing realistic response to demand in budgetary constrained times is part of the job description.  
Jim

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**From:** Tricia Dean  
**Sent:** Friday, April 26, 2019 9:21 AM  
**To:** Maggie Cosgrove; John Chaponis; Valerie Geato; Tiffany Quinn; Kate Byroade; Patty Watts; James Paggioli  
**Cc:** Art Shilosky  
**Subject:** Request by Art

Please see the attached proposed cuts from the Board of Finance. This will be discussed at their next meeting on Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Art is requesting for each of you to provide an impact statement on each of the proposed reductions. Send Art your statement by 4pm on Monday, 4/29.

Thank you,

**Tricia Dean**

Executive Assistant to the First Selectman

Town of Colchester

127 Norwich Avenue

[tdean@colchesterct.gov](mailto:tdean@colchesterct.gov)

P: (860) 537-7220

**BUDGET QUESTIONS FROM BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGARDING BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTED BUDGET  
May 1, 2019**

1. *Regarding SAT for Juniors: Who pays for the test? Did the state pay for the teachers, proctors and anyone else needed or did tax dollars cover SAT costs? Is the SAT testing every year hereafter? Is there a cost associated or assigned to this we should know about?*

The CT SAT is the official annual state achievement assessment for all 11th grade students across the state and the actual test is paid for by the CSDE. The state does not reimburse the district for staff to proctor any state assessments at any grade level. However, there are no direct costs to the district for state assessments as each building is able to cover the time of assessments with building staff.

2. *Home schooled children: are they calculated as far as fund formulas go at the state level? Do our schools collaborate with homeschooled children? If so are we receiving any part tuition by the state? Is homeschooling common in our district? Does a school district have any mandates regarding home schooled children and their cost of education?*

The district is currently aware of 19 students who are homeschooled in Colchester. Homeschooled students do not count towards a district's enrollment or funding calculations nor are there any financial obligations on the district.

3. *If a high school child enrolls in online school, do we have any participation or mandates in that experience?*

Online/virtual learning must be approved by the high school administration prior to enrollment by a student if that student wishes to count earned credits towards high school graduation. Students may only access an online university if it is accredited. All costs for the course are borne by the student/family. See Board of Education Policy #6172.6.

4. *Regarding homeschool or online, do either of these avenues offer of opportunity to our district to offer programming?*

The district does not offer programming to homeschooled students. At this time, the district offers limited online programming to CPS students, however, we are continuously exploring these opportunities as technology and offerings evolve over time.

5. ***Bacon Sports: Is it mandated that every sport have a boy and a girl coach? Tennis, Golf, Cross Country for example, Why can't one coach cover both sexes? If I coach both sexes do I get both the stipends?***

Title IX (federal law) states: *Participation: Title IX requires that women and men be provided equitable opportunities to participate in sports. Title IX does not require institutions to offer identical sports but an equal opportunity to play.*

Coaching decisions are made by the building administration along with the athletic director and are contingent upon equal access to certified coaches and appropriate athlete to coach ratios. Gender is not a factor in hiring of coaches. (See question #6 for multiple stipends)

6. ***How many stipends could one teacher collect? Can I be a music teacher at full salary, plus be Marching Band, Jazz Band director, drama music director and earn the \$13,000 in stipends? Plus get a marching band assistant to earn \$2,200 also?***

Stipend positions are posted on an annual basis and filled by the building administration. It is possible for one staff member to hold more than one stipend position, however, a staff member cannot be both a "lead" and "assistant" for the same club or activity and receive two separate stipends.

7. ***How much money was collected by Pay to Play 2017 & 2018?***

School Year 2016-2017 total collected: \$91,085

School Year 2017-2018 total collected: \$89,370

8. ***Please explain why BA has the least stipends increase relating to teacher leaders.***

The new teacher leader positions in all buildings include current positions that will be redefined as "teacher leaders", such as department chairs and team leaders. Bacon Academy has the least increase in this line as they have the most current positions that will be redefined in the 2019-2020 school year.

9. ***Historically, how many Para's/specialists were hired after each budget passed? Please provide a total for years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18.***

2015-2016: 2

2016-2017: 4

2017-2018: 3

10. *CES is reducing a reading specialist, how many IEP/PPT's would bring this position back?*

The proposed budget reduces one (1.0) FTE Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) in the Pre-Kindergarten program at CES, leaving 2.0 FTE dedicated to this program which is sufficient to meet the required speech therapy hours of the Pre-K students. The size of classes, as well as the ratio of students with IEPs and those without, are limited in the Pre-K program, which would prevent a significant increase in the number of service hours and the need for an additional SLP. The proposed budget does not include a reduction of a reading specialist at CES.

11. *Why is Building Staff Development \$0 for schools and \$27k for CO (Page 11)? Reason its up from \$2,200 in 2017-2018 to \$27k? Can you tell me why this item is not detailed on page 192?*

The detail for this item can be found on Line 221006-43322 - Staff Development (pages 167-168). The reasons for the increase in this line include centralization of state mandated training that was originally in each building's budget, the centralization of professional development funds to ensure equity between buildings and alignment to district initiatives, and the inclusion of Teacher Educator and Mentor (TEAM) funds in the local budget. In prior years the CSDE provided funding to pay teacher mentors and to pay for the TEAM dashboard and each fiscal year it is unclear whether or not the state will pay for this two-year requirement for new teachers to gain permanent certification.

12. *Does Systemwide serve as a contingency in some cases? For example, we have \$15k in professional development for systemwide in addition to the schools, SpEd and CO having their own assigned budget for this need...what or whom is systemwide going to cover for PD?*

Systemwide does not serve as a contingency. Professional development funds for the buildings are centralized in the curriculum budget except for professional development funds required by contract, which are designated in each building or department budget.

13. *Noting that BA 20% & WJJMS 41% higher in electricity costs... each roughly \$47k. What drove Bacons increase? How is Bacon electricity \$283k and WJJMS \$163? WJ has the tech spike...please explain. CES is up 12%. JJIS is the only school in alignment with expected energy cost increases. Just noting that energy consumption costs have increased by +\$100k since 2017 in the new budget and its above a COLA explanation. With the exception of WJJMS, why BA & CES calculated at such a higher energy consumption cost? Comparing the schools, why do you feel JJIS won't spike if the others do?*

Proposed electricity budgets for each facility are determined by historical data and price per kilowatt hour. Factors that impact the electricity use vary by building and by month/year, which include square footage, summer activities, after school activities, the age of the building and efficiency of the building envelope. All buildings are impacted by variance in weather conditions and temperatures, which change year-over-year. A significant impact on the electricity use for WJJMS for the current fiscal year was the construction activity that was not completed until December 2018 at which time the building envelope was closed and major interior construction was completed.

BA =	204,414 Sq. Ft. (Includes the 2 portables 11,850 Sq. Ft.)
WJJMS =	121,697 Sq. Ft. (72,617 Sq. Ft. NEW / 49,080 Sq. Ft. RENO)
JJIS =	118,000 Sq. Ft.
CES =	108,685 Sq. Ft.

14. ***Does BA culinary class need 9k in grocery and supplies? That's about \$950 per month can you tell me what the culinary class spent last 2 years to see if this is typical?***

Line 101504-42611 (page 119). Yes, the requested funds are necessary. Bacon Academy typically runs 6-9 Bake Shop and Culinary Arts classes per semester with an average enrollment of 15 students per class, or 75 to 135 students. The funds in this line item fund all of these classes, or approximately \$7 - \$12 per student per month.

The last two years actuals (for the entire Line) are:

School Year 2016-2017 total:	\$11,730
School Year 2017-2018 total:	\$ 9,769

15. ***Special Ed: Postage (page 151) \$7650 for 51 units at \$150 per staff member. Who are the 51 staff members in SPED?***

Line 240005-42535 is for Postage and is listed at \$1,700 (page 151).

Line 120005-42611 is for Instructional Supplies and is listed at \$7,650 (page 151).

Members of the special education department are listed in this departmental tab in the adopted budget and not in individual building budget tabs. The 51 staff members include special education teachers, behaviorists, speech language pathologist, social workers and school psychologists. School supply lines are allocated to classroom teachers and this line allows for these individual staff members to have the appropriate supplies for their work with students and for their offices.

16. ***Curriculum for 18-21: \$7,000 how many kids are you projecting for 2019-2020? Are these curriculums static models able to be used YOY or are they outfitted for expected enrollees? Is this a one time cost or will we see new curriculum every year?***

Line 12005-42611 - Instructional Supplies (page 151). The district is currently estimating that three students will start in the new 18-21 program for the 2019-2020 school year. The proposed \$7,000 will be used for both instructional supplies and for new curriculum to ensure that the needs of the students in this program are met. The curricular materials and some of the instructional supplies will be a one time cost and will be replaced on an as-needed basis as with any other curriculum or instructional supplies. Part of the instructional supplies will be consumables, such as groceries, and will be an annual cost.

17. ***What is Q-Global at \$2100? Train the trainers 26 x \$150 = \$3900....what is the unit? People? Kits? (Page 152)***

Line 12005-42690 - Other Supplies/Materials (page 152). Q-Global is the system that scores all of the district's Pearson individual assessments including the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale (IQ) and the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-3). These assessments are used for initial special education eligibility and re-evaluations for students' triennials.

Line 12005-43320 - Professional Development (page 152). Crisis prevention training is the physical restraint and de-escalation training required by state law. This cost covers the cost to re-certify our four trainers and 22 staff members in the district (26 staff).

18. ***Regarding the 43323 Contracted Services: are these funds held in case needed or are the services currently contracted? For example: do we have an interpreter on payroll now for \$10,000? If not, is this an expected expense in 2019-2020? (Page 153)***

Line 12005-43323 - Contracted Services (page 153). The district is required to translate certain documents and provide translation services for parents/guardians attending special education meetings whose first language is not English or are hearing impaired. The district does not have an interpreter on the payroll and contracts these services on an as-needed basis. Historical data is used to determine the estimated costs in this line item.

19. ***Why are there are high "implementation" costs associated with curriculum that are separate from buying technology, maintenance contracting, insuring, training teachers and teacher leaders?***

Line 221006-44610 - Curriculum Implementation (pages 171-172). The Curriculum Implementation line supports four new curricula (Visual Literacy "Art", Science, Career

Technical Education, and World Language). The curriculum implementation costs includes the supplies, software, textbooks, instructional materials needed by each curricular area. Device technology is not included in the curriculum implementation budget; rather, that is in the technology budget. Curricular decisions drive technology decisions, and device costs related to new curricula are built-in to the technology budget. For example, in review of the “art” curriculum, we identified we could not support kids reach a number of standards related to using technology because the students didn’t have classroom access to the devices needed for that work. iMacs were added to the technology budget to support the art curriculum. This lines provides all of the new supplies associated with a new curriculum. For example, the largest amount in this line is to support the new Science curriculum that is aligned to the new Next Generation Science Standards. What is not included in this budget is new textbooks for science classes, which is typical implementing new curriculum and is typically very expensive. The new Science standards require a different inquiry approach and do not require textbooks. It is important to note that this line was \$0 for the past two budgets as new curricula were not ready to be introduced.

**20. *Is it true that foreign exchange students are permitted to attend schools without tuition? Do we have any?***

Board of Education policy # 5111.1P addresses the district’s approach to foreign exchange students for both J-1 and F-1 visas and limits the number to two (2) students per year. Students under a J-1 visa do not pay tuition while students under a F-1 visa do pay “full, unsubsidized public education costs”. The district currently has two students attending Bacon Academy under a J-1 visa.

**21. *What is our Math current class size?***

Class sizes at CES and JJIS are included in each Board of Education regular monthly meeting minutes and range from 18 to 23. Math classes at WJJMS range from 17 to 23. Classes at Bacon Academy range from 6 to 30 students.

**22. *Proposing to drop capital reserve of \$50k per year.....I will want to hear about this idea again. I hesitate to eliminate long term planning goals with short term needs. What did we used the reserved dollars for from past years? Were the past dollars used in a one time expense or transfer or did we use the funds every year negating the idea to roll call it later?***

Line 260007-50205 - TRSF to BOE Capital Reserve (page 201). The reduction of \$55,735 in this line is a one year reduction. The purpose of this reduction is to both offset the increase in the overall budget as well as to allow for the district to develop a long-range facility plan similar to the town’s long-range plan. The \$55,735 does not have a specific allocation.

Future budgets will not be \$0 and will include amounts in this line that reflect actual costs and timelines for replacement of specific items associated with maintaining our facilities, such as boilers and HVAC systems. Reserve funds have been used to offset costs as they occur during the fiscal year, such as a significant repair to Bacon Academy's air conditioning system in the 2018 summer. The last question is unclear.

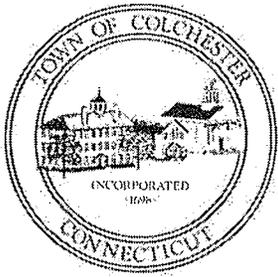
**23. *Why is BA travel over \$20k every year, almost 10x other schools and 4x higher than SpEd? What's the additional travel needs of BA?***

Lines \*\*\*\*\*-43850 - Travel (multiple pages). The "Travel" line items cover a number of different expenses, including mileage reimbursement for staff, field trip transportation supplements, travel to academic competitions, travel to art/music competitions, and athletic transportation. Bacon Academy also has a significantly higher rate of student participation in extracurricular activities with total travel costs of over \$90,000, which is off-set by \$73,000 in Pay-to-Play revenues.

**24. *Regarding the school greeter: if a parent comes up as a sex offender...Can that parent drop off a lunch? Meet a teacher? Pick up a kid? What do you currently do for sex offender parents needing parent-teacher conference? Do you call the police for escort if one walks in to get their child? Do you send out parent letters explaining why the cops were at the door today and the sex offender threat that was on campus?***

Currently, parents or guardians who are known to be registered sex offenders are permitted to attend meetings for determining their student's progress, placement, or individual education plan (IEP). As the district does not have a system to check whether or not a parent or guardian is on the national sex offender registry this approach was difficult to enforce. With the new software pilot at JJIS, the district will have an immediate check on all visitors attempting to enter our buildings. The Board of Education is in the process of reviewing a new policy to address sexual offenders access to create a standard approach to this issue. In general, a registered sex offender would only have access as a parent or guardian as described above or to vote or to attend a meeting open to the public.

The district has safety protocols in place to respond if an unauthorized person attempts to gain access to the buildings. Our administration and office professionals do an outstanding job of informing parents of any extraordinary incidents on an as-needed basis.



# *Town of Colchester, Connecticut*

95 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

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Patricia A. Watts, Director of Senior Services/Municipal Agent

April 29, 2019

Re: Impact of Proposed Budget Cuts on the Department of Senior Services

The proposal includes eliminating 8 hours of service from our department—a department which has been stretched already by its growth rate of nearly 120% across 5.5 years, without any increases in staffing levels. The impact of a 20% reduction in hours across our service branches (programs, transportation, social services and meals) is that we would have less time to serve a growing demographic and thus be able to provide fewer programs and services.

Our current hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

The proposal includes closing on Fridays so that our new hours of operation would be 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. on Monday-Thursday. This would not be advisable, as it can be difficult for some of our frail seniors during our closure on the weekend. Mondays tend to be busy because after the weekend, some of our members who may have been alone, are anxious to reconnect or have an opportunity to get out of the house. Extending the weekend closure by another day (or 50% longer-now Friday-Sunday) would present a hardship for those whom our senior center represents a safety net and a link to vital services, such as transportation and nutrition services and socialization.

If the budget requires this elimination of hours, I would propose that we remain open 5 days per week, but adjust the hours, as follows:

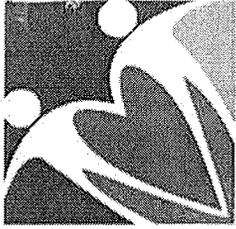
Monday-8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (7.5 hours with 30 minute unpaid lunch for staff)  
Tuesday-8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (7.5 hours with 30 minute unpaid lunch for staff)  
Wednesday-8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (7.5 hours with 30 minute unpaid lunch for staff)  
Thursday-8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (7.5 hour with 30 minute unpaid lunch for staff)  
Friday-8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (4 hours with no staff lunch break)

This way, we continue the continuity of 5 days of service, we can still serve the Community Café meal 5 days per week, buses would continue to run 5 days and so would programs, with some adjustments. I believe this would better serve our senior population. It also would provide an easier transition (for staff and seniors) when the Town is able to support a 40 hour senior center, which it will most certainly need with the senior population continuing to expand.

Respectfully submitted,

*Patricia A. Watts*

Patricia A. Watts

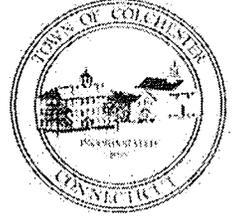


## Colchester Youth & Social Services

127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 205, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

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[www.colchesterct.gov](http://www.colchesterct.gov)



# Memo

**To:** Board of Finance  
**CC:** Maggie Cosgrove, CFO, Art Shilosky, First Selectman  
**From:** Valerie Geato, Y&SS Director   
**Date:** April 29, 2019  
**Re:** Budget Impact Statement

If it were determined that Youth & Social Services needed to eliminate a full-time position, I would certainly not eliminate a Youth Services Program Coordinator.

The Youth Services Bureau (YSB) is essential to the families in Colchester because we provide services that no other agency in Town provides. Connecticut General Statute 10-19m states that;

*(a) one or more municipalities, may establish a youth service bureau for the purposes of evaluation, planning, coordination and implementation of services, including prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, pre-delinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youths referred to such bureau by schools, police, juvenile courts, adult courts, local youth-serving agencies, parents and self-referrals. A youth service bureau shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment and follow-up services. (b) A youth service bureau established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section may provide, but shall not be limited to the delivery of, the following services: (1) Individual and group counseling; (2) parent training and family therapy; (3) work placement and employment counseling; (4) alternative and special educational opportunities; (5) recreational and youth enrichment programs; (6) outreach programs to insure participation and planning by the entire community for the development of regional and community-based youth services; (7) preventive programs, including youth pregnancy, youth suicide, violence, alcohol and drug prevention; and (8) programs that develop positive youth involvement. Such services shall be designed to meet the needs of youths by the diversion of troubled youths from the justice system as well as by the provision of opportunities for all youths to function as responsible members of their communities.*

Eliminating a YSB Coordinator would be devastating to our programs and services. First, the number of programs and services we provide would be drastically impacted – each Program Coordinator facilitates after school programs each day as well as school-based programming throughout the week. Each year hundreds of kids would be impacted by the loss. We would have to eliminate many programs including; Girls Circle, Community Service groups such as Youth Force Group, Divorce Support, Social skills programs, and more. We would be providing 150 programs rather than 300 programs. The drop-in program would have to be restructured entirely, as I currently rely on the two Coordinators to manage that program and supervise the part-time staff. If one of the Coordinator positions is eliminated, I will likely become a program coordinator once again. I will not jeopardize the safety and well-being of the kids in our care and I cannot ensure that with only one coordinator and 3 or 4 part time supervisors. Additionally, summer programming would be

significantly impacted and, in some cases, cancelled. Each year, we take up to 33 kids on about 30 summer trips. Eliminating this position would mean that up to 330 kids would not be able to participate.

Reducing staffing at a time when the expectations of YSB's are growing just doesn't make sense. Last year, the Statute regarding Family With Service Needs removed the Truancy and defiance of school rules from Court jurisdiction and replaced it with C.G.S. Section 10-198a(b) which requires local boards of education to adopt and implement policies and procedures concerning truants who are enrolled in schools under their jurisdiction. These policies and procedures must include but need not be limited to:

*"(1) The holding of a meeting with the parent of each child who is a truant, or other person having control of such child, and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the child being a truant . . . (2) coordinating services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services. . ."*

The remaining FWSN behaviors, which are listed below, will be removed from Court jurisdiction in the next year or two, and responsibility will fall on the community (YSB) to handle locally.

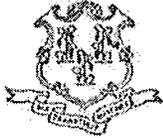
*"(3) "Family with service needs" means a family that includes a child who is at least seven years of age and is under eighteen years of age who, according to a petition lawfully filed on or before June 30, 2019, (A) has without just cause run away from the parental home or other properly authorized and lawful place of abode, (B) is beyond the control of the child's parent, parents, guardian or other custodian, (C) has engaged in indecent or immoral conduct, or (D) is thirteen years of age or older and has engaged in sexual intercourse with another person and such other person is thirteen years of age or older and not more than two years older or younger than such child;"*

We cannot go backwards at a time when we are expected to be doing even more to support kids and families. Reducing the level of service we provide erodes our sense of community and intensifies feelings of isolation and disconnection among our kids and families.

If I were forced to eliminate a position, I would eliminate the Social Services Coordinator. I would reduce the role to include only the food bank and change the name of the department back to Colchester Youth Service Bureau. At which point, the Town of Colchester would no longer provide other Social Services, including energy assistance. The hundreds of calls that come in each year regarding housing, SNAP, medical insurance, utilities, home care, etc. will be directed to call 211. Clients will have to go to Norwich to apply for the CT Energy Assistance Program and Operation Fuel. The Christmas gift giving program will have to function without the assistance of Social Services, and the Back to School program will be eliminated. The United Way Food Share truck would also cease to operate here or would have to partner with another Social Services agency.

Regarding the food bank, our Program and Administrative Assistant would take on the task of food distribution each week and would continue to be responsible for ordering food and supplies for the food pantry. We would likely need to bring volunteers into a role we once considered confidential, in order to meet needs.

When I was first presented with the idea of bringing Social Services into our Department in 2010, I thought it was the most efficient way to maintain the Department and provide higher quality programs to our most disadvantaged citizens. I never thought that merging departments would one day jeopardize the existence of a department that I've dedicated my entire professional career to cultivating and is recognized as one of the strongest YSBs in the state. Our kids need and deserve a fully operational Youth Service Bureau, please do not pit the needs of these two vulnerable populations against each other.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Superintendents of Schools

**FROM:** Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer 

**DATE:** February 22, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules

Public Act (P.A.) 16-147, *An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee*, includes a provision that removes truancy and defiance of school rules as reasons for Family with Service Needs (FWSN) referrals to juvenile court. The following is an excerpt from the public act:

**Section 7** of P.A. 16-147, amends subdivision (5) of Section 46b-120 of the general statutes so that the definition of a FWSN no longer includes a family with a child who is at least seven years of age and is under eighteen years of age who *“is a truant or habitual truant or who, while in school, has been continuously and overtly defiant of school rules and regulations.”*

This means that, effective August 15, 2017, the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) of the judicial branch no longer accepts FWSN referrals for truancy or defiance of school rules.

Court referrals for truancy were eliminated in order to remove the link between truancy and the school-to-prison pipeline. Judicial involvement for non-criminal matters such as truancy has been documented to increase the likelihood of future engagement in criminal acts, dropping out of school or incarceration. Additionally, national research shows that students who are truant benefit from school and community-based interventions designed to identify and address the reasons for missing school.

Since 1991, state statute has required districts and schools to work with families and community agencies to support students who are truant to return to school. The following is an excerpt from Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Sec. 10-198:

C.G.S. Section 10-198a(b) requires each local and regional board of education to adopt and implement policies and procedures concerning truants who are enrolled in schools under their jurisdiction. These policies and procedures must include but need not be limited to *“(1) The holding of a meeting with the parent of each child who is a truant, or other person having control of such child, and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the child being a truant . . . (2) coordinating services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services. . .”*

Many districts and schools in Connecticut are implementing school-based and/or community-based interventions which have helped thousands of students who have been truant and/or chronically absent improve their attendance. However, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) recognizes that an alternative intervention may be necessary if collaboration with the parent/guardian has not resulted in improved outcomes for the student who is truant. In that case, a formal referral to a community-based partner for support services can help the student and/or family access a system of coordinated care.

Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules

February 22, 2018

Page 2

Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) are well-positioned to serve as a critical partner for community-based services. C.G.S. Section 10-19m defines the role of a YSB as *“the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment and follow-up services.”*

YSBs were designed to facilitate a system of supports and services that are individualized and developmentally appropriate for the child/youth and their family. As a coordinating partner outside of the school system, a YSB can be a resource for schools/districts, a referral source for community services and a partner in service planning, navigation and family engagement. A community-based intervention from a YSB may be especially helpful if the relationship between a family and school has become strained.

To assist districts in developing a system to formally refer students who are truant to the community’s YSB, the CSDE has developed a *Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules Form*. This form is intended for districts to use to make referrals to YSBs in lieu of the previous FWSN referral form. The CSDE also developed a *Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide* designed to be used as a side-by-side resource to assist in completing the *Youth Service Bureau Referral for Defiance of School Rules Form*.

The Department recommends developing partnerships with the YSBs that serve students in your community. Contact information for all YSBs can be found on the [Connecticut Youth Services Association website](#). Refer to the Connecticut Youth Services Association for guidance if your community does not have a YSB.

In addition, the [CSDE Chronic Absence webpage](#) contains resources to assist districts in improving student attendance.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact John Frassinelli, Bureau Chief, at 860-807-2050 or [john.frassinelli@ct.gov](mailto:john.frassinelli@ct.gov).

DRW:jf

cc: Connecticut Youth Services Association