

# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Board of Finance  
Budget Workshop Minutes  
Board of Education Budget  
April 8, 2019 @ 7PM  
Town Hall, Room 1**

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COLCHESTER  
2019 APR 15 PM 3:03

**Members Present:** R. Tarlov, N. Negron, R. Esteve and M. Egan

**Members Absent:** A. Bisbikos and A. Migliaccio

**Others Present:** A. Shilosky (arrived 7:50), BOE: M. Bylone, B. Bernier, R. Besaw and M. Tomasi, Superintendent J. Burt, Director of Teaching & Learning C. Hewes, Director of Special Education K. Perry, CFO M. Cosgrove, BOS: R. Coyle, many citizens and Clerk, J. Campbell

1. **CALL TO ORDER**-Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman R. Tarlov.
2. **CITIZENS COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**-None
3. **DISCUSSION – Board of Education Budget**-The greeter position is new and is a pilot study. JJIS has a reduction in office staff and therefore the pilot will start there. BOE is looking to expand this program into all 4 buildings. Vendors have been researched. One has been chosen and will be providing a background search and print visitor pass. This will include visitor date, time and destination. This position allows for an added layer of protection. 18-21 Program was being handled outside the district at 5 locations. The current budget projects a start with the cost of 3 students moving into that age opening. Any participants are on the PPT process. It is possible that we could bring in tuition students from other towns once the program is up and running efficiently. C. Maher has established relationships with 9 local businesses for this program. Paraprofessionals are a line item that fluctuates frequently with the moving in and out of students. Currently there are over 90 paras in the district. BOE feels there can be an overall reduction of 2 paras throughout the district as well as a move to the 18-21 program. This number can change before the start of the school year. There is a 1.0 reduction in a speech pathologist in the pre-k program currently there are 3, reducing down to 2. A 1.0 reduction at the middle school is a reading interventionist, which is part of the reduction plan already in place and is in-line with the math support structure, 1 coach and 1 interventionist. A .8 reduction at the high school is .4 PE health, which is currently vacant, and .4 social studies which is a reduction due to the enrollment and analysis of the high school. 1.8 reduction in special programs is a combination of things. There is an afterschool resiliency program, the responsibility will be shifted to Old Bacon. The special education and social worker assigned to this are working after school and being paid in addition to their salary. The shift will remove the extra hours and .4 social studies has been removed from the district. Alt Ed at Old Bacon currently has 3.0 which is 3 teachers. A review of the program reviewed a FT Social Studies is not needed, rather 4 PT teachers in the 4 core areas. Page 10 of the budget book



shows the "other supplies" listed on page 2 of the budget. 1 to 1 chrome book program was researched through other districts, with a Dell "coach" and a digital conversion team put into place. 50 years ago an educator in the front of the room along with a text was your greatest point of access to content. Now we have high quality curated databases with enriched content to be our access point. The promise the digital conversion team made was that the curriculum was going to drive the decision making. As each curriculum was reviewed by the teacher team to explore new technology, it was realized to outfit classrooms/carts for every room in Bacon would soon exceed the population of students, so 1 on 1 became more cost effective. This provides better access to higher quality material. The ramp up in funds this year for the program is because the curriculum has not been visited for a couple of years as we have had leadership changes. 2 committees have been in place to work on curriculum on a board level. There were 2 major increases, Employee Related Insurance and Retirement Payout, to the Employee Benefits which had a total increase of \$561,108. There have been 14 staff retirements. The greeter position is a salary of \$17,000 plus benefits, with a 10 month, 40 hours a week schedule. Each greeter station is approx. \$8,000 to set up. This includes: desk, chair, laptop, wiring, lockdown button, video system and buzzer system. The technology long-range plan has increased by \$175,036 for real purchases for real items that will be installed in August of this year. The capital reserve request will offset future purchases. Each time a new curriculum comes on board there are initial costs that come with that. Currently there is a \$130,000 increase within curriculum implementation. The goal is to level the cost over the years. With budget concerns there is a potential that the full instruments for the curriculum will not be added and will be spread throughout the course of a year or two. When looking at the 4 schools, WJMS has the largest increase. The main driving factor was the increase in electricity and contracts. The building is new so there wasn't any data to budget for. Now that the numbers are similar to another building of its size the numbers have been budgeted off of that. Teacher leader stipends are used to try to unify the district to move the instructional initiatives forward. BOE wants the educators, who know the material the best, to speak for the district rather than administrators. With the declining enrollment, the cost has not gone down because the District has created a budget for sustainability. There are increasing mandates from the State of Connecticut. The board has and will continue to make cuts as needed moving forward. Currently Norwich students should be at 30, but we are only at 20. Our current language in the contract we are allowed to take up to 10. BOE is working to change that to 15 and to also add a lottery to fill positions of those that move or drop out of the Bacon program. NFA is a large school which doesn't always appeal to students, so a positive for those students is that Bacon is smaller and more family style. We do have certain programs that are unique to the area. Currently the tuition amount is not competitive, BOE is looking into that. This tuition program could potentially be used with other towns and Superintendent Burt is looking into that. Norwich is not the only district that doesn't have a high school. There are a lot of reasons for someone to come into the school district, and we do need to remain attractive while we do offer this program.

4. **CITIZEN COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**-D. Bouchard asked 18-21-year-old program is only going to affect those that are currently seniors, those already outplaced won't be asked to come back? Will a child be forced to come back to Colchester? J. Burt This will be based on a PPT process. There may be a student that would benefit from coming back into Colchester's Program but this is based on what the PPT team feels is best for the child. D. Bouchard asked what the worth of a Greeter over a Para? B.



Bernier stated that we need to make sure that our schools are safe for our students. This is a cost-effective measure to do that. J. Burt also replied that the para #s fluctuate often. We rely on the expertise of the staff to make sure we have the appropriate staffing for all students. We have to make sure we are doing a full analysis of the issues to find a remedy that best fits the issue. M. Egan asked what the .4 reduction was in the capstone program. J. Burt replied that the .4 is in social studies and not capstone. BOE is working to make capstone a requirement and to increase capstone. M. Kehogreen stated that data would help with backing the greeter position. She is experiencing a class that could use an additional person in the classroom. J. Burt the greeter is not necessarily for the number of people but for the added layer of protection. R. Tarlov wanted to know why they chose JJIS. J. Burt said that the decision was made because the reduction in office staff was there. J. Bussiere asked what was happening with the resiliency program. J. Burt stated that it is still in existence and will be moved to alt ed. M. Hayes pointed out that the person assigned to the greeter position is not trained with security issues. J. Burt mentioned that the intent is to create another layer of protection. We are not having armed security guards at each door. R. Tarlov pointed out that M. Hayes was asking the investment is \$17,000 and is asking if security level worth the investment. R. Tarlov also asked what the judgment will be as far as the program being successful. J. Burt said if there is less disruption to the office and if it prevents people that shouldn't be in school from entering. N. Negron stated that this is the first line of defense. R. Coyle commented that the experience at her granddaughter's school is a kiosk. You scan your own driver's license and your badge gets printed there.

5. **DISCUSSION – Board of Education Budget**-R. Tarlov stated that without Andrea and Andreas present, he would like to bring the next steps in front of them as well. The agreement was to have BOE come back on the April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting with questions being forward to the BOE beforehand so that they may be able to have the answers for the meeting. M. Egan wanted to remind the BOS and BOE that there are many changes coming from the State and teacher retirement may be one of the items brought to the Town level. He would ask boards to plan ahead and communicate well to the public. B. Bernier stated that he went to the state to testify and shared the testimony with the BOF. See attached.
6. **CITIZENS COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**-D. Bouchard stated that she feels it will be hard to get a \$1 million increase.
7. **ADJOURNMENT**-R. Esteve motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM, seconded by N. Negron. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried. 4/0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanie Campbell

**Attachments:**

BOE Slide Review

2019/2020 Proposed Budget 2018/2019 Adopted Budget Comparison

B. Bernier testimony



## BOF Meeting - April 8, 2019

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### Bacon Enrollment

October 1, 2018 enrollment 780

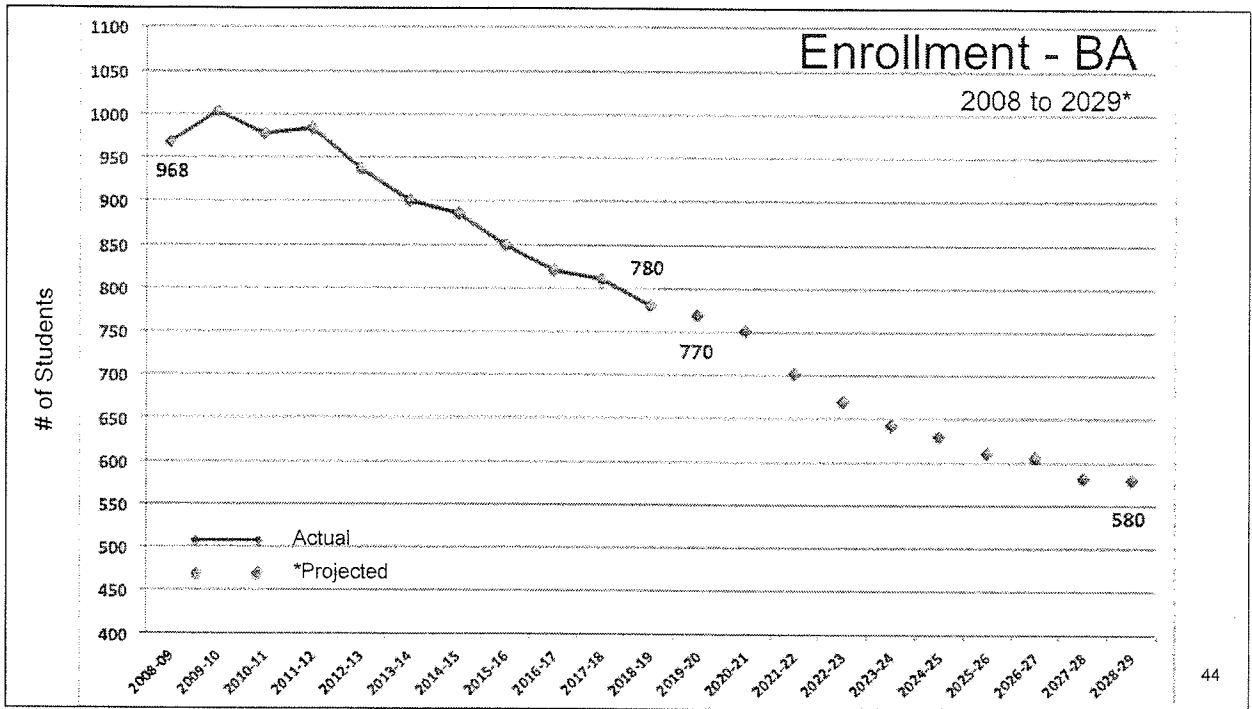
20 of the 780 are tuition students from Norwich

9<sup>th</sup> – 8

10<sup>th</sup> – 8

11<sup>th</sup> – 6

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## Projected Norwich enrollment 2019-20

Total projected = 30 students

9<sup>th</sup> – 10 students

10<sup>th</sup> – 8 students

11<sup>th</sup> – 8 students

12<sup>th</sup> – 6 students

*(See proposed language next slide)*



## Norwich Tuition Agreement

Current language states “up to 10 students” per grade

Maximum enrollment for 2019-20 is 40 students

Proposed language – pending approval of new agreement

Up to 15 students per grade

45 students maximum for 2019-20; 60 maximum in subsequent years

Vacant seats in grades 10-12 may be placed into lottery or for transfers

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## New 18-21 Program

### Staffing

1.0 FTE Certified Special Education Teacher

1.0 or 2.0 FTE Classified Paraprofessional (depending upon enrollment)

### Enrollment

Estimated 3 students for the 2019-20 school year

Space for 5 total students, possible tuition students

Increase in enrollment in subsequent years would increase staffing levels

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## New 18-21 Program Costs

Reductions	
Reduction of 1.0 FTE Certified at CES	\$ ( 50,501)
Estimated Outplacement for 3 students (Average Tuition & Transportation = \$95,000)	\$ est. (285,000)
Move 1.0 FTE Classified (TBD)	\$ (20,000)
Additions	
Addition of 1.0 FTE Certified	\$ 50,501
Supplies	\$ 7,000
Other support staff 1.0 FTE Classified	\$ 20,000

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## Technology

Details on the Technology Purchases in Board Approved Budget:

Account # 281007 – 42690; Pages 177, 190-191

Account # 281007 – 50205; Page 202

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## Planned Technology Purchases for 2019-20

Technology Budget	2019/2020
Chromebooks	519
iPads	80
Laptops	35
Advanced Lab Computers	30
Image Projection Devices	18
Network Support & Other*	67

\*Erate rebate funding

50

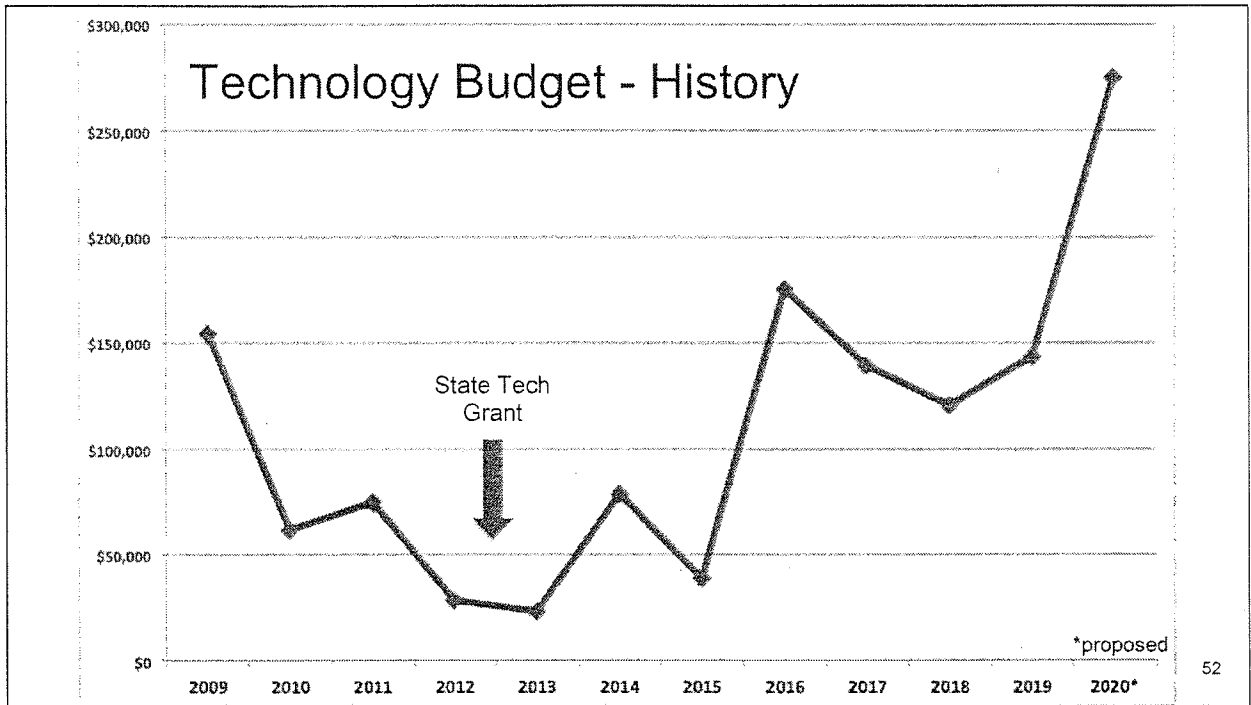
## Technology – Long Range Plan

*When will the district reach sustainable levels in technology?*

Sustainability at identified goals will be achieved in FY2021 for a majority of devices, including Chromebooks, laptops, and PCs

Other devices such as iPads, will reach a sustainable level by FY2023

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## Technology – Long Range Budget Plan

The request for FY2020 is \$274,842, which is an increase of \$175,036

The Capital Reserve original request was \$91,162

The Original Total request was \$366,004

Future requests are estimated to be approximately \$350,000 for the next four years with similar amounts estimated for the next five years

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## Capital Budget

Account # 26007-48734, # 260007- 50205, # 281007-50205  
 Budget on Pages 179-180, 201  
 Narrative on Pages 212-213

Location	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Bacon	\$ 117,200	\$ 123,750	\$ 87,750
WJMS	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
JJIS	\$ 24,800	\$ 15,000	\$ 30,000
CES	\$ 18,000	\$ 21,250	\$ 42,250
System Wide	\$ 0	\$ 55,735*	\$ 55,735*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 160,000</b>	<b>\$ 215,735</b>	<b>\$ 215,735</b>

\*Pending Long-range Capital Plan

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## Employee Benefits - Details

Account # 258007 – 412\_\_\_, Pages 176, 183 – 189

Location	FY 2019-20 Budget	Increase \$ over 2018-19
Total Employee Benefits	\$ 6,971,007	\$ 561,108
Employee Related Insurance	\$ 5,325,896	\$ 385,584
Other Employee Benefits (Retirement Payouts)	\$ 287,428	\$ 143,308

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**COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MAJOR ACCOUNT GROUPS - SUMMARY  
FY 2019-2020 PROPOSED BUDGET AND FY 2018-2019 ADOPTED BUDGET**

	<b>FY 2017-18 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>FY 2018-19 ADOPTED BUDGET</b>	<b>FY 2018-19 REVISED BUDGET</b>	<b>FY 2019-20 PROPOSED BUDGET</b>	<b>INCREASE/ (DECREASE)</b>	<b>PERCENT CHANGE</b>
<b>SALARIES</b>	24,307,830	25,497,807	25,493,498	25,574,537	76,730	0.30%
<b>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>	6,624,219	6,409,899	6,409,899	6,971,007	561,108	8.75%
<b>SUPPLIES</b>	824,829	748,239	750,231	897,707	149,468	19.98%
<b>TRAVEL, TRAINING, DUES</b>	2,497,458	2,492,657	2,491,698	2,470,397	(22,260)	-0.89%
<b>CONTRACTUAL &amp; OTHER SERVICES</b>	3,354,871	3,231,957	3,244,333	3,429,636	197,679	6.12%
<b>UTILITIES AND TAXES</b>	1,175,127	1,266,292	1,266,292	1,419,210	152,918	12.08%
<b>REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>	369,027	389,277	388,877	377,092	(12,185)	-3.13%
<b>CAPITAL OUTLAY</b>	226,620	185,145	104,195	105,950	(79,195)	-42.77%
<b>TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS</b>	279,127	328,071	400,321	319,586	(8,485)	-2.59%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39,659,108</b>	<b>40,549,344</b>	<b>40,549,344</b>	<b>41,565,122</b>	<b>1,015,778</b>	<b>2.51%</b>

**COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**MAJOR ACCOUNT GROUPS - DETAIL BUDGET COMPARISON**  
**FY 2019-2020 PROPOSED BUDGET & FY 2018-2019 ADOPTED BUDGET**

	FY 2017-18 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	FY 2018-19 ADOPTED BUDGET	FY 2018-19 REVISED BUDGET	FY 2019-20 PROPOSED BUDGET	COMPARISON	
					INCREASE/ (DECREASE)	PERCENT CHANGE
<b><u>SALARIES</u></b>						
CERTIFIED PERSONNEL SALARIES	19,069,937	19,774,702	19,774,702	19,718,018	(56,684)	-0.29%
CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL SALARIES	5,153,544	5,646,219	5,641,910	5,792,069	145,850	2.58%
ADDITIONAL STAFF HOURS	42,694	42,386	42,386	30,450	(11,936)	-28.16%
CLASSIFIED OVERTIME	41,655	34,500	34,500	34,000	(500)	-1.45%
<b>TOTAL SALARIES</b>	<b>24,307,830</b>	<b>25,497,807</b>	<b>25,493,498</b>	<b>25,574,537</b>	<b>76,730</b>	<b>0.30%</b>
<b><u>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</u></b>						
EMPLOYEE RELATED INSURANCE	5,360,979	4,940,312	4,940,312	5,325,896	385,584	7.80%
SOCIAL SECURITY	372,304	396,044	396,044	408,457	12,413	3.13%
MEDICARE	334,646	372,365	372,365	376,886	4,521	1.21%
RETIREMENT	213,744	234,197	234,197	242,272	8,075	3.45%
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION	24,058	21,375	21,375	26,350	4,975	23.27%
WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE	247,016	301,486	301,486	303,718	2,232	0.74%
OTHER EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	71,472	144,120	144,120	287,428	143,308	99.44%
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>	<b>6,624,219</b>	<b>6,409,899</b>	<b>6,409,899</b>	<b>6,971,007</b>	<b>561,108</b>	<b>8.75%</b>
<b><u>SUPPLIES</u></b>						
POSTAGE	17,913	17,450	17,450	17,700	250	1.43%
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES	168,346	219,900	218,900	236,209	16,309	7.42%
MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES	56,544	64,500	64,500	63,800	(700)	-1.09%
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES	26,460	26,664	26,664	24,000	(2,664)	-9.99%
TEXTBOOKS	84,369	75,750	75,750	69,035	(6,715)	-8.86%
LIBRARY BOOKS	17,786	15,010	15,010	14,627	(383)	-2.55%
PERIODICALS	3,691	5,167	4,837	2,630	(2,537)	-49.10%
OTHER SUPPLIES/MATERIALS	449,720	323,798	327,120	469,706	145,908	45.06%
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES</b>	<b>824,829</b>	<b>748,239</b>	<b>750,231</b>	<b>897,707</b>	<b>149,468</b>	<b>19.98%</b>



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					INCREASE/ (DECREASE)	PERCENT CHANGE
<b><u>TRAVEL, TRAINING, DUES</u></b>						
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	23,333	37,975	37,016	51,215	13,240	34.87%
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS	14,883	31,869	31,869	27,430	(4,439)	-13.93%
PUPIL SERVICES	99,540	95,493	95,493	86,082	(9,411)	-9.86%
REGULAR EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION	1,167,383	1,211,164	1,211,164	1,261,581	50,417	4.16%
SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION	928,421	827,549	827,549	753,967	(73,582)	-8.89%
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION	190,784	199,243	199,243	207,331	8,088	4.06%
TRAVEL	29,334	37,573	37,573	38,501	928	2.47%
DUES AND FEES	43,780	51,791	51,791	44,290	(7,501)	-14.48%
<b>TOTAL TRAVEL, TRAINING, DUES</b>	<b>2,497,458</b>	<b>2,492,657</b>	<b>2,491,698</b>	<b>2,470,397</b>	<b>(22,260)</b>	<b>-0.89%</b>
<b><u>CONTRACTUAL &amp; OTHER SERVICES</u></b>						
LEGAL	106,221	100,000	100,000	100,000	0	0.00%
PROFESSIONAL & OTHER SERVICES	213,840	176,320	187,366	172,399	(3,921)	-2.22%
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	49,195	49,195	49,195	51,657	2,462	5.00%
PROPERTY INSURANCE	87,682	95,119	95,119	77,710	(17,409)	-18.30%
LIABILITY INSURANCE	55,063	56,940	56,940	55,501	(1,439)	-2.53%
AUTO INSURANCE	848	1,124	1,124	1,058	(66)	-5.87%
ADVERTISING	550	570	570	580	10	1.75%
PRINTING	8,294	17,810	17,810	16,185	(1,625)	-9.12%
VO-AG TUITION	121,827	115,991	115,991	95,522	(20,469)	-17.65%
PUBLIC TUITION	1,206,007	1,195,156	1,195,156	1,324,506	129,350	10.82%
PRIVATE TUITION	892,352	735,191	735,191	817,287	82,096	11.17%
STATE AGENCY TUITION	111,836	105,060	105,060	0	(105,060)	-100.00%
MAGNET TUITION	326,565	359,693	359,693	337,694	(21,999)	-6.12%
OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES	35,280	34,795	34,795	37,513	2,718	7.81%
CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION	0	0	0	130,000	130,000	100.00%
SOFTWARE LICENSING & SUPPORT	139,311	188,993	190,323	212,024	23,031	12.19%
<b>TOTAL CONTRACTUAL &amp; OTHER SERVICES</b>	<b>3,354,871</b>	<b>3,231,957</b>	<b>3,244,333</b>	<b>3,429,636</b>	<b>197,679</b>	<b>6.12%</b>

**COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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					INCREASE/ (DECREASE)	PERCENT CHANGE
<b><u>UTILITIES AND TAXES</u></b>						
WATER/SEWER	51,959	51,600	51,600	60,850	9,250	17.93%
TELEPHONES	36,203	36,834	36,834	40,770	3,936	10.69%
HEATING OIL	245,879	326,151	326,151	342,225	16,074	4.93%
ELECTRICITY	755,054	726,600	726,600	857,115	130,515	17.96%
PROPANE	0	750	750	500	(250)	-33.33%
GASOLINE	1,554	2,277	2,277	750	(1,527)	-67.06%
DIESEL	84,478	122,080	122,080	117,000	(5,080)	-4.16%
<b>TOTAL UTILITIES AND TAXES</b>	<b>1,175,127</b>	<b>1,266,292</b>	<b>1,266,292</b>	<b>1,419,210</b>	<b>152,918</b>	<b>12.08%</b>
<b><u>REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE</u></b>						
RECYCLING	29,638	30,633	30,633	30,621	(12)	-0.04%
CLEANING/REPAIRING MAINTENANCE	112,451	120,916	120,516	105,523	(15,393)	-12.73%
EQUIPMENT CONTRACTS	114,635	122,528	122,528	115,011	(7,517)	-6.13%
MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	112,206	114,200	114,200	125,187	10,987	9.62%
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	97	1,000	1,000	750	(250)	-25.00%
<b>TOTAL REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>369,027</b>	<b>389,277</b>	<b>388,877</b>	<b>377,092</b>	<b>(12,185)</b>	<b>-3.13%</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL OUTLAY</u></b>						
INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT	3,479	4,080	4,080	0	(4,080)	-100.00%
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT	45,060	19,065	10,365	14,700	(4,365)	-22.90%
FURNITURE & FIXTURES	0	2,000	2,000	3,500	1,500	75.00%
CAPITAL OUTLAY	178,081	160,000	87,750	87,750	(72,250)	-45.16%
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY</b>	<b>226,620</b>	<b>185,145</b>	<b>104,195</b>	<b>105,950</b>	<b>(79,195)</b>	<b>-42.77%</b>
<b><u>TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS</u></b>						
TRANSFER TO BOE CAPITAL RESERVE	0	80,735	152,985	72,250	(8,485)	-10.51%
TRANSFER TO EDUCATION GRANTS FUND	62,981	35,000	35,000	35,000	0	0.00%
TRANSFER TO ADULT EDUCATION FUND	3,810	0	0	0	0	0.00%
TRANSFER TO DEBT SERVICE FUND	212,336	212,336	212,336	212,336	0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS</b>	<b>279,127</b>	<b>328,071</b>	<b>400,321</b>	<b>319,586</b>	<b>(8,485)</b>	<b>-2.59%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39,659,108</b>	<b>40,549,344</b>	<b>40,549,344</b>	<b>41,565,122</b>	<b>1,015,778</b>	<b>2.51%</b>

Testimony in opposition of:

House Bill 7148: An act concerning the State Budget for the biennium ending June thirteenth, 2021, and making appropriations therefor.

Submitted by: Brad Bernier  
21 Jolin Lane  
Colchester, CT 06415

Sen. Abrams, Rep. Rosario, and members of the Appropriations Committee for the bill above,

My name is Brad Bernier and I have the honor of serving as Chairman for the Colchester Board of Education. Joining me this evening is Vice Chair Ms. Renie Besaw. We are here to testify on House Bill 7418, specifically regarding the disbursement of ECS funds and the billing of municipalities for a portion of teacher retirement costs. Our community has the dubious distinction of facing the largest reduction in ECS funding, in dollars, of any community. On top of that there is a proposal that shifts funding responsibility for a portion of the teacher retirement obligation to our community. We are speaking in opposition.

Colchester is a community of just over 16,000 people, with a student population of just over 2,500 students. Our schools provide diversified programming for our students. We prepare our students for college with a multitude of AP opportunities as well as many dual enrollment classes. Many of our grads start college as second semester freshman- or greater. We provide strong visual and performing arts opportunities, a wide variety of sports, and two languages. Our Career Tech Ed program is a specific point of pride, with a recent partnership with the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board allowing for our students to have a path directly into a manufacturing job at Electric Boat or one of the many members of their supply chain. We are proud to say that we have graduates attending Ivies as well as graduates earning a very livable wage on the manufacturing floor of EB!!

You would think that all of this would necessitate large expenditures. It does not. In fact, our per-pupil expenditures have been some of the lowest in the State. For 2017, the last statewide data available, we were 135 of 168 in per pupil expenditure. In spite of that, our performance is well above the State average, with the district placing 33 of 168 on the State performance index. Colchester Public Schools provide a great return on investment.

How do we do it?

We share services. My custodians maintain Town buildings. Town groundskeepers maintain School fields and grounds. Our finance office is one of the few in Connecticut that is shared by both the Schools and the Town- and has been for decades.

We pursue efficiencies. We maintain a self-insurance fund for health care- shared with the Town. In a move towards further reducing redundancy, we provide for systems level budgeting. We have taken advantage of energy savings programs.

We develop relationships with our stakeholders. We engage our residents and our business community in our processes.

We pursue opportunities. We are currently pursuing opportunities with the Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline, an initiative put forward by the U.S. Department of Labor in partnership with the CT Department of Labor, with the goal of further enhancing our educational offerings.

A few days back, Senators Duff and Osten authored an article in the CT Post which reference what a UCONN study detailed as the "Optimal district size". That district was 2,800 students, a number which provided for optimal educational achievement and cost effectiveness. We are a model of that "Optimal" district. We see educational achievement among our students and cost effectiveness.

What is our reward?

Our funding through the Educational Cost Sharing grant is proposed to be reduced more than any other district in the State, over the next biennium. Reducing our expenditures to account for these reductions will decimate much of what we have been able to accomplish. You are killing the model district.

What are we asking for?

Use our district as the model. Take our practices and share them with challenged district, not our funding.

While we understand that change may be needed, we ask that it be incremental. The plan from the last cycle was that. Arbitrarily accelerating the schedule will have a negative impact on ours and many other districts.

Thank you very much for providing us the opportunity to testify. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time using the following contact information.

***Bradley J. Bernier***

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