

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

December 21, 2007

Greenwich Board of Education Approves Operating Budget of \$124,989,846 Million for 2008-2009, within BET Guidelines

The Greenwich Board of Education approved an operating budget of \$124,989,846 million for the 2008-2009 school year at its meeting last night. The budget, which is within the adjusted BET Guideline, represents an increase of 4.78% over the 2007-2008 budget.

The 2008-09 budget provides the funding necessary to comply with the Board policy “to deliver an excellent education to all Greenwich students at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.” The priorities outlined in this budget are focused on classroom instruction - supporting teachers, administrators and staff in the pursuit of improving achievement for ALL students. Highlights of the budget include:

- Continued thoughtful implementation of the literacy and math curricula;
- Comprehensive review of the science curriculum;
- Review and development of initiatives to enhance secondary education;
- Funding for the first of a four-year rollout of smartboards in grades 3-12, strengthening students’ access to 21st century knowledge and skills;
- Funding for staff development to improve the effectiveness of each teacher in every classroom and to use student assessments throughout the year to guide teaching and learning;
- Funding for training of principals and supervisors for the effective implementation of a strengthened teacher evaluation plan.

As part of its deliberations on the budget, the Board voted to amend the Superintendent’s proposed budget to provide funding for the implementation of a centralized system for residency verification. This system would confirm that students educated in Greenwich are residents of Greenwich or have a bona fide access to an education in Greenwich. The Board voted to reduce the budget for consultants by \$48,500 to fund the additional staff member required to support the system.

There have been some questions raised about the varying levels of per-pupil costs among the different schools in the District. These variations result from such factors as different enrollment sizes and staff seniority—a small school needs a media center just as much as a larger one, yet the cost is shared among fewer students. Likewise, schools with more senior staff will have higher personnel costs per pupil. In addition, per-pupil costs reflect our commitment to ensuring that all students across the spectrum can achieve, whether through advanced learning, special education, English language learning, or intensive reading programs. Investing in these early intervention programs can vastly improve outcomes and reduce required spending on costly, less effective remediation later.

The budget, which was adopted by a 7-1 vote, was developed through an intensive process that involved four public Board meetings, vigorous, in-depth scrutiny of the staff’s proposals, benchmark comparisons with comparable districts, and public comment. The budget complies with the BET guideline of one certified staff member per 10 students. It also reflects a move toward zero-based budgeting. The budget assumes an enrollment of 8,929 students; this compares with 8,827

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students assumed for the 2007-2008 Budget and an actual enrollment of 8,974 students for the school year.

The next step in the budget process is a review by the BET, which will vote in March, after which the Budget is submitted to the RTM for approval at its May meeting.

At the meeting last night, Leslie Moriarty, Vice Chairman, summarized, “The focus of this Budget is improved academic achievement for all students in a fiscally responsible manner, recognizing that a variety of strategies are needed to address different needs. The initiatives include an increased emphasis on improving the effectiveness of our professional staff in every school and every classroom, which will have a cumulative positive impact for future years.”

Sincerely,
Nancy Weissler
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