

Follow-Up Questions/Information Requests
Re: Sprague Board of Education Budget Proposal

Item 1. Budgeted salaries increase by ~12.6% in the proposed budget compared to the current year budget (+\$294K over current year \$2,333K). It appears that roughly the first 4% to 5% of that increase (approximately \$100,000 to \$120,000) is attributable to staffing changes highlighted in the budget summary (3rd grade teacher, front office, etc.). The Teacher's contract appears to provide an FY 2020 increase in the 2% to 3.5% range (inclusive of steps depending on the current step)

- ***Please provide detail on the assumptions used for salary/wage adjustments for other staff***
- ***Please provide additional detail on what is driving salary increases for existing funded positions***

Response

- Please provide detail on the assumptions used for salary/wage adjustments for other staff
 - New third grade teacher is based on starting wage for teachers
 - 0.6 FTE front office position is based on a \$19.05 hourly rate
 - Sports stipends are based on contractual stipend rates and estimates based on prior costs for sports officials
- Please provide additional detail on what is driving salary increases for existing funded positions
 - Existing contractual increases
 - Projected increases related to ongoing non-certified negotiations
 - 3% increase for administrators and remaining staff
 - Increase in superintendent salary because of upcoming staffing change

Additional Discussion:

Overall, salaries in the proposed budget increase by approximately \$294,000 compared to the current year budget, or by about \$267,000 compared to current year projections. Based on further discussion with the Business Office, much of the increase in salaries and wages accounts can be itemized as follows:

Contractual increases for Teachers	Approx. \$40,000
Additional 3 rd Gr. Teacher	Approx. \$45,900
Social Worker to 1.0 FTE:	Approx. \$17,500
Additional staff front office:	Approx. \$20,500
Non-Certified negotiations:	Approx. \$57,200
Admin positions (incl. Superint.)	Approx. \$8,200
Other non-union	Approx. \$4,800

The above items account for about \$194,000 of the aggregate increase in salaries and wages. Additional analysis is required to determine the remaining factors driving the increase.

Item 2. The “Proposed Staffing” table in the presentation shows staffing levels for FY 2020. Please provide a comparable table for FY 2018 and FY 2019.

Response

- FY20: Please note, specials (art, music, PE) teachers were omitted from the FY20 proposed staffing. Please see the updated table below

FY 20 proposed			
	Total FTE	Grant FTE	Net General Fund FTE
Administration			
Superintendent	0.4		0.4
Special Education Director	1		1
Principal	1		1
Business Manager	0.6		0.6
Teachers			
Classroom Teachers*	21		18
Pre-School Teacher	1	1	0
Special Education	4		4
Social Worker	1		1
Psychologist	1		1
Nursing			
Public	1	0.25	0.75
Parochial	1		1
Paraprofessionals	16	2	14
School and Central Office Support	5.6		5.6
Maintenance	2.9		2.9
Lunch Aide/Recess Monitor	0.25		0.25
Total	57.75	3.25	51.5

FY 19	
	Total FTE
Administration	
Superintendent	0.4
Special Education Director	1
Principal	1
Business Manager	0.6
Teachers	
Classroom Teachers	20
Pre-School Teacher	1
Special Education	4
Social Worker	0.8
Psychologist	1
Nursing	
Public	1
Parochial	1
Paraprofessionals	15
School and Central Office Support	5
Maintenance	2.9
Lunch Aide/Recess Monitor	0.25
Total	54.95

FY 18	
	Total FTE
Administration	
Superintendent	0.4
Special Education Director (contracted)	0
Principal	1
Business Manager	1
Teachers	
Classroom Teachers	24
Pre-School Teacher	1
Special Education	4
Social Worker	1
Psychologist	1
Nursing	
Public	1
Parochial	1
Paraprofessionals	17.85
School and Central Office Support	5
Maintenance	3.6
Lunch Aide/Recess Monitor	0.25
Total	62.1

Item 3.

Within the Benefits category, it appears that total Health Insurance costs increase by about 16%. Please identify how much of the increase is attributable to:

- **Additional staffing**
- **Changes in premium costs**
- **Other drivers of health insurance costs**

Response

- Additional staffing
 - Changes in existing staff, either because of resignations and replacements or because of changing personal situations have contributed significantly to the increase in our estimated health insurance costs for FY20
 - No health insurance was estimated for the 0.6 FTE front office staff person
 - No changes exist because of the increase in the social worker position
 - An estimated budget of \$22,849.06 for a family insurance plan was included for the additional third grade teacher
- Changes in premium costs
 - Premium costs have been estimated according to a 3% increase for FY20
 - Actual premium costs are expected around May
 - Sprague is part of the CT Partnership Plan 2.0
- Other drivers of health insurance costs
 - There are both reductions and increases in health insurance costs, because the Sprague BOE must budget each health insurance cost based on actuals, and is unable to budget for health insurance benefits for all staff
 - Nearly all staffing changes involving eligible staff affect the benefits budget

Additional Discussion:

Part of the increase is attributable to the addition of one 3rd grade teacher and to the projected increase in premium rates. The balance of the increase may reflect a shift toward more enrollments at family level of coverage, but verification is needed.

Item 4. Please provide a summary of the Technology plan, including a description of the uses for the increased funding for hardware and the additional network/technical support.

Response

- Instructional software costs, \$16,279.01; based on estimated costs of AimsWeb Complete, Don Johnston Start to Finish Library, Google Chrome Management Licenses, Learning A-Z, Lexia Learning, Read Naturally, Renaissance STAR Learning, and student applications
- Non-instructional software costs, \$29,714.29; based on estimated costs of AccuFund, AVG AntiVirus, Follett Destiny Maintenance, Frontline, Network Solutions, PowerSchool, Professional Software for Nurses (SNAP), SWIS PBIS, West Interactive School Messenger, Windows License Renewals
- Other Technical Services (2230.53520); Network support, estimated \$82.40 per hour * 8 hours per day * 1 day per week * 52 weeks = \$34,278.40; Computer \ technical support, estimated at \$32.96 per hour * 7.5 hours per day * 3 days per week * 52 weeks = \$38,563.20; Extra summer support, network, estimated at \$659.20 * extra 8 days = \$5,273.60; Extra summer support, computer \ tech, estimated at \$247.20 x 8 extra days = \$1,977.60
- Technology hardware – instructional (2230.57340), estimated \$10,000 for the replacement of student chromebooks and devices
- We have approximately 220 chromebooks in the building, half of which are 7-8 years old, obsolete, and in need of replacement
- Technology hardware – non-instructional (2230.57341), estimated \$20,000 for the replacement of network switches, firewalls, and staff computers on an as needed basis
- The majority of our staff computers are between 9 and 10 years old, obsolete, and in need of replacement
- Previous BOE budgets for technology hardware have been minimal and devices have not been adequately replaced
- We included technology hardware on our capital & non-recurring budget (CNR), but we do not anticipate that this portion of the CNR budget will be approved

Item 5. Please provide an itemization of the grants that were budgeted/anticipated in the FY 2018/19 budget and those that are budgeted/anticipated in FY 2019/20. For each grant source please indicate whether:

- ***The grant is treated as an offset to a specific operating account(s) (i.e. the account is budgeted net of anticipated grants)***
- ***The grant is treated as a General Fund revenue (i.e. the related expense is not budgeted net of the grant)***
- ***Is treated as an off-budget item with its own set of self-balancing accounts***
- ***Please include detail on the Grant Funded FTEs referenced in the Proposed Budget handout***

Response

- The grant is treated as an offset to a specific operating account(s) (i.e. the account is budgeted net of anticipated grants)
 - Wages Paid to Teachers, Regular Education (1000.5110), offset by Title I, \$103,818 estimated for FY20, based on the FY19 award amount; the narrative identifies salaries for teachers to provide early intervention to K-3 students
 - Wages Paid to Teachers, Special Education (1200.51110), offset by IDEA and School Readiness, \$131,968 estimated for FY20, based on the FY19 award amount; the narratives identify a special education teacher and preschool teacher salaries
 - Wages Paid to Instructional Aides, Special Education (1200.51120), offset by School Readiness, \$20,000 estimated for FY20, based on the FY19 award amount; the narrative identifies a special education instructional aide for the preschool program
 - Tuition – Adult Cooperative (1300.55690), offset by adult education grant, \$15,000 estimated for FY20 based on the FY19 award amount
 - Purchased Pupil Services – PT/OT (2160.53230), offset by IDEA grant, \$51,000 estimated for FY20 based on the FY19 award amount; the narrative identifies services to assist student educational and health challenges
 - Tuition – HS Special Ed – public schools (6000.55610), offset by Excess Cost grant, \$110,000 estimated for FY20 based on the estimated FY19 award amount; the Excess Cost data collection will be in December 2019 and March 2020 and is highly dependent on individual students and approved costs
- The grant is treated as a General Fund revenue (i.e. the related expense is not budgeted net of the grant)
 - In addition to the significant state grants above, we receive smaller grants or reimbursements that were utilized historically to offset related costs
 - Wherever possible, these amounts are being utilized to offset costs in the negative grants budget line for FY19
 - Example: Medicaid revenue offsetting the pay for a psychologist or the magnet school transportation grant
- Is treated as an off-budget item with its own set of self-balancing accounts
 - Grants are treated as both a general fund revenue and as off-budget items
 - Significant grant income such as those listed above directly offset our budget and are listed as such
 - Additional components of the grants, which are smaller and more difficult to estimate, that include professional development, curriculum development, supplies directly for special education students, etc are off-budget items with separate accounts
- Please include detail on the Grant Funded FTEs referenced in the Proposed Budget handout

- The Grant Funded FTEs included in the presentation include those paid via School Readiness, IDEA, Title I, and the non-public health grant

Additional Discussion:

Certain grants are budgeted as offsets to specific expense objects in both the current year and FY 2020 budget. For example, Title I grant funding of about \$103,000 is treated as an offset to the Teachers salaries account in the Regular Education account group. In these cases, the expense is budgeted net of the anticipated grant. These anticipated grant resources total approximately \$431,000 in the FY 2020 budget.

Certain other, mostly smaller grants, have been treated as off-budget items as an ongoing practice. The corresponding expenses for these grants are not included as expenses in the operating budget. Because these grants are associated with a corresponding off-budget expense, achieving the additional budgeted \$205,615 in aggregate grants in the current fiscal year may not be achievable.

Item 6. Given the degree of uncertainty around special education tuition costs, please provide a description of how these costs are projected for budgeting purposes.

Response

- Special education tuition costs are estimated by combining the following information: known enrollment information for our current students, estimated tuition costs, and a review of the typical enrollment changes in prior fiscal years, and year-end PPT decisions may alter placements
- Tuition rates are estimated both by known rates and by estimated tuition increases by school/institution based on prior rates; not all schools/institutions have provided definite tuition information for the following fiscal year at the time of our budget cycle
- Our special education director reviews all student cases, attends all PPTs, and provides feedback on expected upcoming placements and the progress of current students
- All care is given to moving students into the most appropriate and most fiscally responsible environment, agreed upon via planning and placement team (PPT)

Item 7. Please provide a 5 year history of Special Education Excess Cost reimbursement detail.

Response

- 2018-2019: 9 students, 12 contracts; cost = \$690,446; reimbursement to date = \$85,852
- 2017-2018: 7 students, 10 contracts; cost = \$547,121; reimbursement = \$107,844
- 2016-2017: 7 students, 8 contracts; cost = \$376,387; reimbursement = \$65,214
- 2015-2016: 4 students, 6 contracts; cost = \$296,381; reimbursement = \$101,934
- 2014-2015: 4 students, 6 contracts; cost = \$313,042; reimbursement = \$130,576

Item 8. Please provide as early as possible, an update to the current year projections.

Response

- Report as of end of March attached

Additional Discussion:

The updated projections for the current fiscal year show an end of year overage of approximately \$147,000.

Item 9. On the slide that is titled Projected High School Tuition Costs please place the projected transportation cost associated with each school (may not be any transportation costs associated with the technical schools)

Response

PROJECTED HIGH SCHOOL TUITION COSTS

Estimated enrollment, 2019-2020	Regular Education	Special Education	Total	Est cost	Est transportation cost
ACTS Arts Magnet High School	1	0	1	6,076.20	0
Ellis Technical High School	1	0	1	0	0
Griswold High School	17	7	24	427,516.96	28,000
Lebanon VoAg	0	1	1	18,765.98	17,000
Lyman Memorial High School	2	0	2	22,848.00	17,000
Montville High School	1	0	1	11,406.66	28,000
NFA	90	0	90	1,171,551.60	55,500
NFA (PACE)	0	3	3	57,485.16	
NFA (Resource)	0	5	5	95,808.60	
NFA (Sachem)	1	1	2	56,860.92	
NL Science & Technology Magnet	3	0	3	9,393.60	0
Norwich Tech High School	18	0	18	0	28,000
Three Rivers Middle College Magnet (LEARN)	1	0	1	6,099.60	0
Windham Technical High School	1	0	1	0	14,000
Mount Saint John	0	3	3	221,760.00	28,500
Sharp Training	0	3	3	42,000.00	55,000
Whole Life	0	1	1	15,153.52	25,000
TBD	0	1	1	105,248.00	30,000
Total	136	25	161	2,267,974.80	326,000

- Other transportation costs not included on this table include: elementary outplacements, Sayles School transportation, preschool transportation, ESY transportation, homeless students, fuel costs, discrepancies in dismissal/early days, unanticipated special education transportation needs, field trips, safety drills, 8th grade visits to potential high schools
- All NFA students are transported together at this time
- The chart above includes both special education and regular education transportation costs

Item 10. For Griswold School please assess the IEP requirements for the 7 SPED students to determine if their needs can be met in the NFA PACE, RESOURCE, SACHEM program

Response

- Students are placed and served according to their Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs). Sprague is not the only representative on the PPT, as the PPT may also include building administrators, teachers, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, other related service providers, DCF, parents/guardians, surrogates, and other related members.

- Each IEP is individualized and tailored to the needs of individual students, so the cost of a student in Griswold may not accurately compare to the cost of a student at NFA
- No representative from Sprague can unilaterally move a student from their current program to another program; such decisions would need to be agreed on as appropriate and in the best interests of the child by the PPT team.
- Care is given to place students in a fiscally responsible manner, however the needs of the students must come first under IDEA regulations.
- We cannot reveal the details of our students' IEPs due to FERPA.

Item 11. Lastly, the SACHEM program has 2 students listed – 1 regular ed and 1 special ed student – is that a special education program? If so, why is there a regular education student listed? If not, what is that program? Its PPE is high.

Response

- The SACHEM campus is a transitional program that serves eligible students who are having difficulty succeeding in the general NFA population. Please see the NFA website for more details on NFA's specialty programs: <https://www.nfaschool.org/academics/specialty-program>
- We have two students placed at SACHEM, one is regular education, and does not have an IEP. We are limited on what we can disclose regarding the personal details of our students under FERPA, but this was determined to be an appropriate placement for both students due to their individual education needs.