

## The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn  
119 Gorman Road  
Brooklyn, CT 06234

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Mae Lyons, Board Chair  
Justin Phaiah, Secretary  
Isaias Sostre

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair  
Kayla Burgess  
Rick Ives

**Mission:** The Brooklyn Schools will foster a drive for learning within each student to reach his/her greatest potential. To achieve this mission, the school will continually improve its educational programs and services to meet this community's expectations for a quality education for all.

The Brooklyn Board of Education held their monthly meeting in the Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium and virtually on January 18, 2023 via Zoom webinar. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Ms. Burgess. Mr. Ives and Mr. Sostre were absent.

Also in attendance were Patricia Buell, Superintendent, Barbara-Jean Toth, Special Education Director, Charles Carey, Business Manager, James Graef, Director of Facilities, Heather Tamsin, BMS Principal, Adam Bender, BMS Assistant Principal, Paula Graef, BES Principal, and Mark Weaver, BES Assistant Principal.

The Brooklyn Board of Education will hold multiple budget workshops to determine the needs and priorities for the 2023-2024 school year. There will be as many meetings as necessary to agree to a budget to be shared with the Board of Finance. Each budget workshop will be via Zoom and the Public is welcome to attend.

We will not be able to respond to questions live, but welcome comments or questions at [budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org](mailto:budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org). Budget questions and answers will be posted on the Brooklyn Public Schools website at [www.brooklynschools.org](http://www.brooklynschools.org).

This budget will be passed by the Board of Education once they have finished discussing the budget.

Budget workshops for the 2023-2024 school year are scheduled for:

January 18, 2023	5:00-7:00 PM	March 22, 2023	6:00-7:00 PM
January 25, 2023	6:00-7:00 PM	April 26, 20223	6:00-7:00 PM
February 22, 2023	6:00-7:00 PM		

1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order

Mrs. Lyons began with roll call: Melissa Perkins-Banas, Kayla Burgess, Justin Phaiah, and herself, Mae Lyons, were present. Rick Ives and Isaias Sostre were absent.

Quorum established. Meeting called to order at 5:02 p.m.

## 2. Budget Discussion

### a. Department Head Presentations

Mrs. Buell stated that this is the beginning of the budget process. She stated that staff are present to discuss the Budget Priorities and Decision Making Process, which includes Successes, Challenges, and Budget Planning. Mrs. Buell wanted to thank everyone for all of their efforts. in putting their department budgets together to present this evening.

Mrs. Buell discussed Budget Priorities and the Decision Making Process for Brooklyn Public Schools.

Current Successes:

- Special Education staffing at full capacity
  - School Psychologists
  - Speech Pathologists
  - Speech Assistant
- Instructional Coaching Model
  - Peer observations
  - Coaching cycles: staff support
  - Professional development
  - Strengthening classroom instruction/student outcomes
- Implementation of a new math program at the middle school
- Ongoing work on the Science of Reading at the elementary school
- PowerSchool has been implemented and parents are accessing the parent portal

Next Steps:

- Curriculum Planning: adopt a new math program for the elementary school to align to the middle school
- Reduce BCBA (.45) and increase social work hours at the elementary school
- Special Education Administration (.55 FTE)
- Staffing Shortages
  - Substitutes
  - Reading Intervention
  - Math Intervention
- Student and Staff Attendance: COVID
- Mathematics Progress Monitoring K-8th grade
- New State data system for IEPs

Budget Implications:

- Special Education: Increase is less than \$7,000

- Maintain the instructional coach at the middle school
- Add a social worker at the elementary school based on student population and need

ARP ESSER/ESSER II Funding:

- Purchase a new math program for the elementary school (5 year)
- Grant funds will be used for five years of curriculum materials in math for both the elementary school and middle school
- Technology 5 Year Plan
  - 1:1 devices grades 3-8
  - Access to class sets of devices grades PK-2

Plan for funding cliff with ARP ESSER:

- 2024-2025 Hardware/Software \$147,000
- Finance Office Staff/Grant Administration: \$42,000

Mr. Bryant, IT Director, discussed the Technology budget moving forward for the projected replacement plan, which includes:

- 5 year Chromebook replacement cycle (updated from 4 years)
  - Chromebook 1:1 for grades 3-8
  - Google licensing model has increased
  - Replace Chromebooks that have expiring licenses for 2023-2024
  - Offset purchase cycle
- 5 year Windows and Apple replacement cycle
  - Desktops, laptops
  - Outdated operating systems
  - Software compatibility
  - Refresh 15 laptops per year
  - Refresh 40 to 5 desktops per year
  - Continue retiring Apple Desktops
- 8 year network infrastructure replacement cycle
  - Intrusion prevention
  - Technology updates
  - Wireless controllers need replacement
  - Firewall needs replacement at the end of 2023-2024
- 4 year ipad replacement cycle
  - Add 10 new ipads
  - Purchase 10 devices a year starting year 2024-2025
- 5 to 7 year Smartboard replacement cycle
  - Projector based Smartboards have been replaced or replacements have been ordered
  - Start replacing earlier 6000 series Smartboards (some software is no longer working on this series)

Mr. Bryant also discussed the projected replacement plan based on typical enrollment and the projected network infrastructure refresh plan.

Mrs. Tamsin and Mr. Bender presented information regarding the Brooklyn Middle School's budget drivers that impact student outcomes for the 2023-2024

school year, which include:

- Maintaining 1:1 chromebooks
- Refining progress monitoring data collection and tools
- Continuing our SEL Data Meetings with the support of social work staff
- Continuing to update library materials
- Professional Development
  - Able to reduce budget through the support of the Instructional Coach

Areas of need:

- Support of teachers instructional and professional development through the continued work of our ESSER funded instructional Coach

Staffing:

- Increase of 1 additional core academic teacher to maintain current class size
  - 5th grade stays at 5 teachers
  - 6th grade increases to 5 teachers
  - Grade 7 reduces to 4 teachers
  - Grade 8 increases to 5 teachers
  - Related Arts (6 teachers, 1 library paraprofessional)
  - Interventionists
    - 1 Math
    - 1 Language Arts
    - 1 Instructional Coach

Mrs. Lyons stated that she has always heard that 7th and 8th grade are departmental, how will you structure going from 5 to 4 teachers? Mr. Bender stated that there is a writing teacher and a reading teacher when there are 5 teachers in those grades and when reducing to 4 teachers, one teacher will teach both writing and reading.

Mrs. Graef and Mr. Weaver presented information regarding the Brooklyn Elementary School's budget drivers that impact student outcomes for the 2023-2024 school year, which include:

- Greenhouse Project
- Library fiction and nonfiction books
- Staff development:
  - Science of Reading
  - Paraprofessional training
  - Related Art
  - Mathematics
  - Pacing Guides
  - PBIS and SEL

Areas of Need:

- Mathematics universal screen and progress monitoring assessments
- New Mathematics program
- Science of Reading

- Student social emotional needs

Staffing:

- Maintain all certified staff
  - 3 PreK teachers
  - 4 Kindergarten teachers
  - 5 grade 1-4 teachers
  - Related Arts (4 teachers, 1 library paraprofessional)
  - Support staff
    - Instructional Coach
    - 2 Reading Specialists
    - 1 Math Intervention teacher
  - Reductions in ESSER funded positions
    - .5 Reading intervention
    - Lexia paraprofessional

Mrs. Toth presented the Special Education budget drivers for Brooklyn Middle School, Brooklyn Elementary School and High School for the 2023-2024 school year, which include:

- Out of District Placements & Tuition increases
- Continuing to support in district specialized programs
- ARP and ESSER Grant funding is ending June 2023
- Students transferring into district
- Transportation costs have increased
- Special Education Supervisor

Areas of need:

- Increase support in Special Education Administration
- Maintain and enhance in district specialized programs
- Professional development
  - New State system CT SEDS
  - Quality IEP writing

Staffing:

- Maintain all staff
  - 14 Special Education teachers
    - 5 Special Education teachers will be dedicated to in district specialized programs
  - 2 Speech Pathologists; 1 SLPA
  - 1 Occupational Therapist
  - 1 School Psychologist
  - .45 BCBA
  - 4 Social Workers
- Reduction in ESSER funded position
  - Special Education teacher
- Increase Special Education Administration
  - .55 FTE ten month Special Education Supervisor

Mr. Graef discussed the Facilities budget drivers for Brooklyn Public Schools for

the 2023-2024 school year, which include:

- Utilities
  - Major increase in oil pricing (record low pricing year before)
  - Decrease in Energy savings due to solar
  - Increase in water rates
  - Increase in property insurance
- Staffing
  - Challenges in multiple long term medical leaves/work restrictions cause same staff shortages
- Repair and Labor Costs
  - These lines have increased due to supply and skilled labor shortages/higher labor costs
- Capital Considerations
  - Garage (30x40) to house all equipment
  - Tractor (bucket, forks, snowblower) similar to small Massey Town tractor
  - F250 4x4 XL extended cab, short bed with V-plow, hitch salter

Mrs. Buell stated that the Administrators can be invited back at any time to answer questions and asked the Board if they had questions now they would like to ask.

Dr. Perkins-Banas wanted to ask about the special education teachers moving to the specialized program and if it was the program she discussed earlier. Mrs. Toth stated that there is a Therapeutic Learning Program and there is also the Intensive Instruction Classroom. She stated that the needs have increased at the elementary school and wants to reallocate support to those programs.

The Board members did not have any additional questions for the Administration at this time. The Board members and Mrs. Buell thanked the Administration and staff for their time and effort in putting together their presentations.

Mrs. Buell stated that all budget documents will be posted on the Brooklyn Schools website at [www.brooklynschools.org](http://www.brooklynschools.org). Anyone that has comments or questions about the budget to email [budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org](mailto:budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org). Budget questions and answers will be posted to the Brooklyn Schools website at [www.brooklynschools.org/announcements](http://www.brooklynschools.org/announcements).

Next Budget Workshop is January 25, 2023 at 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Buell stated that normally she does not have a finalized number for the Board and stated that she would share the number she has with the Board.

Dr. Perkins-Banas asked if Mrs. Buell is aware of the tuition increase for Woodstock Academy, which she believes is a 5% increase. Mrs. Buell stated that the increase from last year to this year is a 9.5% increase. She stated that the number given from Woodstock Academy usually includes the building/facility fees.

Mrs. Buell stated that Mr. Carey has been great working with on the budget process and she thanked him for his hard work in putting together the budget documents. Mrs. Buell stated that the budget for the 2023-2024 school year is 5.85% increase over this school year. She stated that there could be some savings with insurance and high school enrollment choices, and have not locked in on fuel rates as of yet. Mrs. Buell stated that she and Mr. Carey discuss the fuel rates on a daily basis and there is a placeholder in the budget. She stated that the majority of the budget drivers are insurance, salaries and high school enrollment.

3. Public Comment

none

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:02 p.m.

(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 4, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

*Donna L. DiBenedetto*

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Board Clerk