

**BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: February 5, 2025
LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School, Collaboration & Innovation Center, Room 112
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405
SUBJECT: FY 26 Budget Workshop Meeting

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Peter Berdon, Chair	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels, Vice-Chair (Virtual)	Board of Education
Y	Meaghan DeLucia, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Judith Barron	Board of Education
Y	Adam Greenberg	Board of Education
Y	Marie McNamara (Virtual)	Board of Education
Y	Ram Shrestha	Board of Education
Y	Shawn Tiernan	Board of Education
Y	Laura Troidle	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Christopher Tranberg, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Allison Moran, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Blaize Levitan, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: Kim Castoro, Director of Business Services (Virtual); Charles Cicarella, Director of Student Services; Charlotte Charbono and Liz Sanchez (Virtual), Zum Transportation Services; Jim O'Connor, MRT Principal

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL

01 Meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM by BOE Chair Peter Berdon.

AGENDA CHANGE

This evening's Executive Session was tabled.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Christina King, Branford resident, spoke about an article that she read in *The Sound* Newspaper regarding the Superintendent's proposed budget, her concerns regarding the Towns revaluation, the mill rate and taxes, the Board of Finance vote, getting more information and what could be cut and Branford's reputation as a great school system.

Eli Olken-Dann, District parent, spoke about the proposed change to preschool and moving it to a potential full day, the timing for making the decision (not ideal), how families need to plan for their children, information on the District's website, the draw to the pre-K program, putting children in different schools and having a place to go for their daughter.

Kelsey Discepolo, District parent, spoke about echoing the concerns shared, being blind sighted by the plan, her son missing the cut off this year, having insight on the change and not knowing hurt families, being accessible and equitable to families, having families' best interests in mind and whose opinion being taken into consideration.

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PUBLIC COMMENT (Continued)

Abby Bulchardt, Branford resident, spoke about also echoing what others have said, her plans to sign her son up for pre-K last year and the age change, information on the District's website, the possibility of not sending her son to pre-k, trying to plan ahead and get by.

Julia Bier, District parent, spoke about not having time to plan, her conversations with her son, the schedule at her current preschool, having a four-year-old go for a full day in an environment that they don't understand, having to drive to two different schools or waiting for buses, having so many moving parts and the possibility of things happening next year.

Madison Cassese, District parent, spoke about echoing what others are saying, struggling with her two children, communicating with tax payers, sending something out in the mail or being alerted differently.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about presenting a contrast to the previous speakers, looking at it from a broader perspective and the budget, the great budget by the Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer presentation last week, it being a markedly improved budget presentation and process, it being a critical budget, looking at it from a more macro perspective, the Superintendent being brought on to be a change agent, looking at the district as a valued entity and a positive component or looking at it as a necessary evil (one or the other), a lot of positives to gain doing it the right way, looking at test scores. Mr. Jerolman concluded by suggesting an honest budget (6.8%) not give backs, a path toward higher than 6.8% and urging more assertive action.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

02 FY 26 Budget

Superintendent Tranberg began by stating that tonight's presentation is broken into three segments; 1. Charlotte Charbono from Zum will provide a presentation and responding to questions, 2. Highlights from the Q&A document (picking up from last week) and 3. A memo with supplemental material that will be delved into.

Among the items from her presentation that Ms. Charbono discussed this evening were; Ridership Analysis (attendance % to date and key takeaways), costs reductions if walk to school policy is followed, Walk to School Policy (BHS - 194 students affected, WIS 112 students affected, Tisko School - 34 students affected, Murphy School - 48 students affected, Sliney School - 94 students affected, total of 482 current students affected) including Key Takeaways and Cost Savings (reduction of 1 Type D route - \$421.36 per day x 180 days = \$75,844.80), Bus Stop Consolidations - Private Facility Drop Offs (mid-day routes and AM and PM runs), Opting Out of Transportation, Operational Change and Athletics.

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)

Ms. Carbono concluded her presentation by answering Board member questions that included; sidewalks, speed limits, percentage of ridership, walking distances, traffic volume, a small universe for walking (where you could walk and where you couldn't), athletic transportation (non-contractual service) and how it affects the budget, athletics and timing (coordinating to save money), looking at reducing transportation costs what would it take in terms of adjusting start or dismissal times (how much time would be needed for an effective change), what other teams have two buses, regarding athletics - coming up with a set amount of savings, bell times and total routes and becoming more efficient at WIS to reduce overall costs.

FAQ

Dr. Tranberg began by discussing; providing a path to what 5.8% would look like, what would be the impact to what the taxpayer would feel, impact on taxpayer 4%. In a continuation from the last meeting, the following questions were addressed; new leadership positions, budget forecast, PreK (further clarification, wrap around, if kept what does it do to the budget), food services, insurance (RFP, policy), ESS, SBHC, BHS (are we still funding prom, yearbook and senior outing), technology, EL and ML, SPED (what do we pay per student for special education services at each school), summer school, cell phones, Communication Coordinator (cost), Master Facilities and cost per pupil (number at each school)?

ADJOURN

03 MOTION (Troidle/Greenberg) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (by all BOE members attending in person and virtually)

Mr. Berdon adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meaghan DeLucia
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich