

Ashford Board of Education  
**Regular Meeting Minutes – February 2, 2023**  
7:00 pm

**Meeting Held in Person and Electronically Via Zoom**

*Note: Per CGS 10-218, Board of Education Meeting Minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exceptions of motions and votes recorded, the minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote by the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.*

**Call to Order**

Chair Jane Urban called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Present were members Jennifer Leszczynski, Kim Kouatly, Marian Matthews and Meghan Smith (7:08 pm). Tess Grous joined the meeting via Zoom (7:11 pm). Also present was Superintendent Cynthia Ford, Principal Polly Borysevich, Asst. Principal David Eichorn and Business Manager Deana Chrzan. There were 3 members of the school staff/community and one member of the public present via Zoom.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All present recited the pledge.

**Curricular Presentation/Board Field Trip**

None

**FY 24 Superintendent's Budget Presentation to the Board**

Superintendent Cindy Ford distributed a revised draft of her FY 24 Budget PowerPoint to the Board. Copies of this document may be obtained by emailing Mrs. Ford at [cford@ashfordct.org](mailto:cford@ashfordct.org). A copy will also be attached to these minutes. Mrs. Ford reviewed in detail each slide and addressed implementation of a new math curriculum, the mandated reading program changes that must be made per the state department of education and funding of that program through grants; continued focus and efforts to address student social emotional learning concerns and implementation of new Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requirements per the state department of education. Other topics of extensive discussion were world language instruction in Ashford School and transitioning to high school; technology hardware updates – moving from iMac laptops to iPads with keyboards for the 1:1 program in grades 5-8. Hardware in lower grades will be replaced as current desktops fade out; consolidation of administrative tasks to achieve increase productivity and efficiencies. Additional discussions were held concerning K-8 science upgrades and overall facility technology hardware updates (phone system, camera and alarm access improvements, wifi routers, etc.)

The presentation continued with Mrs. Ford reviewing increases, decreases and rationale behind the itemized estimated budget. Board members asked questions and shared comments about special education, gifted and talented education, health insurance costs, student services, continued effects of post COVID education, supplies, legal services costs and student transportation. Mrs. Ford noted that some lines within the budget may appear as reduced but this may be due to the application of grant funding to that line.

Joan Celotti, transportation coordinator, was recognized by Mrs. Ford for all that she does in making Ashford transportation work in comparison to other districts. Jane Urban agreed, noting in her conversations with other board chairs how difficult providing transportation has been due to the shortage of drivers.

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

No one from the public offered any comments. Board members took the opportunity to note the following:

- A special town meeting will be held on Saturday, February 11 at 10 am. A vote will be held on bonding for a new roof at Ashford School. The meeting will be held in the cafeteria.
- Members were given written instructions on updating the BOE email profiles by 2/7 as two factor authentication is now required.
- Marian Matthews attended the CABA legislative breakfast and learned a lot about the required reading program changes and other items. She spoke of the need for a legislative committee to stay informed.

**Old Business**

**a. Facility Update**

As mentioned earlier, there is a special meeting concerning the school roof on 2/11/23. The underground storage tank (UST) has been ordered by the town; an insurance claim has been filed for the generator failure, we are currently renting a generator for emergency power and quotes for replacement will be sent to the Capital



Expenditure Committee for consideration. The generator is required for the school to have basic functions (water, heat) during power outages. It is also a shelter site for the Town. No date has been set for the Capital Committee meeting.

**b. Approval of the 2023-2024 Ashford School Calendar**

Minor edits were made the calendar version presented at the last meeting per conversations with teachers. Discussion followed. The board would like Mrs. Ford to add the chosen date for Spring Parent/Teacher conference to the calendar.

***Motion made by Kim Kouatly to approve the 2023-2024 Ashford School calendar with one amendment to add the Spring conference date to the calendar. Motion seconded by Meghan Smith and carried unanimously.***

**New Business**

**a. FY 24 Budget Work Session (if necessary)**

Board members entered into lengthy conversations concerning the proposed addition of 1.5 FTE staff to the budget. Deliberations focused on identified needs for certified staff in the areas of World Language, Library Media Specialist, Reading Intervention and School Psychology. Members discussed options for and shared their own opinions as well as the thoughts of residents who have reached out to them directly. The administration reviewed efforts fill vacancies in all of these areas and what their suggestions are based on staff input and review of data. Valid arguments were made for language instruction in the lower grades as well as grades 5-8 and how this affects student high school language placement; the need for a full-time library media specialist has been discussed for several years and is still needed, reading intervention has been identified as a high needs area, and the benefits of having a school psychologist on staff versus outsourcing as a service were supported by the administration. It was noted that all are shortage area certifications and are very difficult to fill across the state. Our vacancies in school psychology, spanish, and library media have been well advertised and there were no candidates.

***Motion made by Jane Urban to amend the Superintendent's FY 24 budget draft to include a full-time reading intervention position and a half time school psychologist in lieu of a full time Spanish teacher and a half time library media specialist. Motion seconded by Jennifer Leszczynski and carried 5 to 1.***

***Yes: Jane Urban, Jennifer Leszczynski, Tess Grous, Meghan Smith, Kim Kouatly No: Marian Matthews***

**b. Approval of the FY 24 Budget for Presentation to the Board of Finance**

***Motion made by Kim Kouatly to approve the Superintendent's FY 24 Budget as amended. Motion seconded by Meghan Smith and carried unanimously.***

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

No public comment. Board member Marian Matthews reiterated the need to stay informed concerning legislative matters. Jane Urban spoke about advocacy for universal school meals. She has a template of a support letter if anyone is interested.

**Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items**

Next meeting date is 02/16/2023. Agenda items: consent agenda (minutes and financial reports); final review of FY 24 budget presentation to BOF; facility update, committee meetings (cafeteria and transportation); Bicknell Scholarship committee representatives, discussion of a legislative liaison/committee.

**Adjournment**

***Motion made by Meghan Smith to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 p.m. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.***

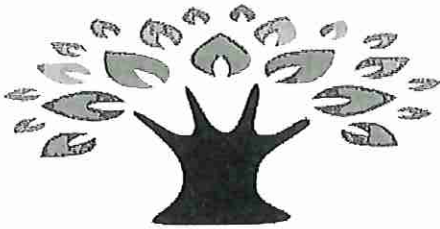
Recorded by: Jennifer Truax

Zoom Recording Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/qNfuJhTLa0tRLTkh0VIWMJKnpKJc0VGyPy20uJZviRcF-g-yCGIN0uITjLxFnC5k.rEghE6P11-WW3WZV>

Passcode: v903Hmq.

# Ashford School Proposed Budget 2023/2024

Presented by: Cynthia Ford,  
Superintendent



\* DRAFT \*

## Ashford Public School Mission

The Ashford Board of Education, in partnership with Ashford School and the community, is committed to providing a safe and positive environment that encourages lifelong learning and empowers students to succeed in their continued educational endeavors. Students will also discover their passions, strive for excellence, connect with their community and the world, and contribute in positive and meaningful ways.

## Ashford Goals:

**CURRICULUM:** Support an exceptional preschool program and ensure a kindergarten to 8th grade curriculum that engages and challenges students to use methods of inquiry to solve problems, think critically, and to express themselves creatively and effectively.

**FINANCE:** Develop and monitor a budget that ensures the best possible education while being fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

**CULTURE:** Foster an environment of physical and emotional health and wellness for all. Support a community that recognizes professional expertise and provides diverse opportunities that enhance teaching and learning.

3

## Goals Continued:

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS:** Provide enriching opportunities for community engagement, meaningful collaboration, and partnership with all stakeholders.

**FACILITIES:** Serve as a leader for Ashford in enhancing energy efficiency and sustainability, developing a maintenance and restoration plan that extends the school's useful life, and in demonstrating environmental responsibility.

4

## Ongoing Improvements of 2022/2023

- ★ Implementing new math program K-8 to assist in improvement of our math standard scores on SBAC.
- ★ Piloting new reading programs in grades K-3, 4, 5, and 6.
- ★ Implementing new IEP program.
- ★ Continuing to implement our enhanced Social Emotional Learning curriculum.
- ★ Implementing a new language program for German to align with our German partnership.
- ★ Continuing to work with international organizations for exposure to world languages.

5

## Ongoing Improvements of 2022/2023 continued

- ★ Consolidating Administration tasks and positions to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- ★ Exploring cost savings in our technology while focusing on 21st century innovations.
- ★ Improving our grade level PLCs to focus on data driven instruction.
- ★ Improving our Special Education programming to align with data driven goals and objectives.

6

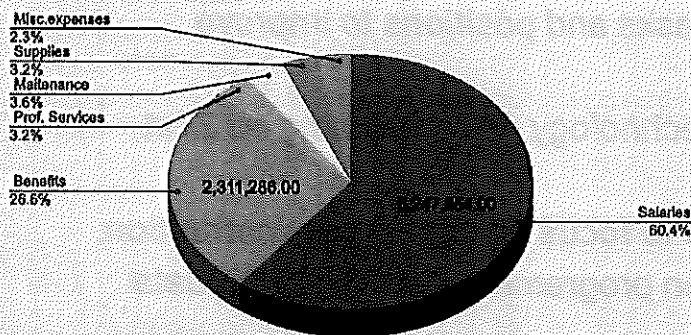
## Looking to 2023/2024

- ★ Implement a new reading program in grades K-6.
- ★ 1:1 iPad introduction in grade 5 to phase out Apple laptops for cost savings.
- ★ Improve our district assessments to allow for students to demonstrate mastery of state standards.
- ★ Improve our Science programs in grades K-8.
- ★ Update our facilities to improve fossil fuel consumption.
- ★ Update our technologies throughout the building.

7

## Proposed Budget for 2023/2024

Proposed 2023/2024



2023-24 Proposed	\$8,685,288
2022-23 Budget	\$8,337,427
Increase	\$ 347,861
% increase	4.17%

### Major Expenditures:

Salary increase: \$53,474

Benefit increase: \$224,066

Maintenance increase: \$38,057

Supplies increase: \$108,029

Misc. Expenses: \$67,553

**Insurance continues to be our largest increase.**

8

## Budget Major Reductions

Budget for only one Outplacement: Budgeted according to current status. Savings of: \$135,455

Reduction in PT services from two days a week to one day a week. Savings of: \$21,500

Moving from analog phone service to a cloud service for phones. Savings of: \$12,250

Special Education costs have been contained through careful planning and programming to meet the individual needs of Ashfords students.

Percent of budget to Special education costs:

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Special Education	1,837,459	1,820,090	1,802,602	1,853,663	1,859,153
Total Budget	7,619,408	7,594,017	7,915,110	8,337,427	8,685,288
Percent of Special education	24%	24%	23%	22%	21%

9

## Classroom Size and Teachers

Projected staffing/Enrollment

2022-2023

2023-2024

Grade/Area	2022-2023			2023-2024		
	Number Students *	Number Faculty	Average Class Size	Number Students *	Number Faculty	Average Class Size
<b>PK-2</b>	137	10	12	156	11	14
<b>3-4</b>	86	6	14	69	5	14
<b>5-6</b>	73	5	15	88	5	18
<b>7-8</b>	69	4	17	69	4	17

10

# Intervention and Specials Teachers:

	2022/2023		2023/2024	
Elementary Intervention		2		2
Secondary Intervention		1		1
Library Media Specialist		0		.45
Elementary Science		1		1
Middle School German		1		1
Elementary Spanish		0		0
Middle School Spanish		0		1
Art		1		1
PE/Health		2		2
Music		2		2

11

# Special Education Support:

	2022/2023		2023/2024	
School Psychologists		0		0
Special Education		5		5
Speech Pathologist		1		1
School Counselor		1		1
School Social Worker		2		2
<b>Total Faculty Members</b>		<b>44</b>		<b>45.45</b>

12



## Staffing Adjustments:

- ★ Reduced .5 Administrators(Superintendent): Savings of \$44,782 in benefits and \$54,040 in salary with a total savings of: \$98,821.64
- ★ Addition of one part-time Library Media or School Psychologist:
  - School Psychologist would reduce the line for Outsourced evaluation line: \$15,500
- ★ Addition of one certified Spanish Teacher:

Total Addition for 1.5 teachers: \$144,478 of 2.44% increase

13

## Historical Staffing Numbers: Teachers and Paraprofessionals

Year	Certified Teacher Count	Paraeducator Count	Total Instructional Staff
2017-2018	45	23	68
2018-2019	45	23	68
2019-2020	45	23	68
2020-2021	45	22	67
2021-2022	43	22	65
2022-2023	43	22	65

Inclusive of PK-8 classroom teachers, specials, interventionists, special educators and special services staff who are employed by the BOE and certified by the CSDE, and all paraeducators on staff as of October 1<sup>st</sup> annually.

14

## Historical Staffing Numbers: District Operations

Year	Certified Administrator Count	Support Staff Count	Total Staff
2017-2018	2	7	9
2018-2019	2	6	8
2019-2020	2	6	8
2020-2021	3	5	8
2021-2022	3	5	8
2022-2023	2	5	7

District Operations: Administration (Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services, and Business Manager), Support and Licensed/Technical Staff Employees (Admin assistants, Tech Coordinator, Nurse, Payroll/Benefits, Accounts Payable, Financial Director)

15

## Historical Staffing Numbers: School Operations

Year	Certified Administrator Count	Support Staff Count	Total Staff
2017-2018	2	2	4
2018-2019	2	2	4
2019-2020	2	2	4
2020-2021	2	2	4
2021-2022	2	2	4
2022-2023	2	2	4

School Operations: Administration (Principal and Assistant Principal) and Support Staff Employees (Admin Assistants)

16

## Historical Staffing Numbers: Transportation, Maintenance, Cafeteria

Year	Certified Administrator Count	Total Staff
2017-2018	N/A	17
2018-2019	N/A	17
2019-2020	N/A	18
2020-2021	N/A	18
2021-2022	N/A	19
2022-2023	N/A	19

17

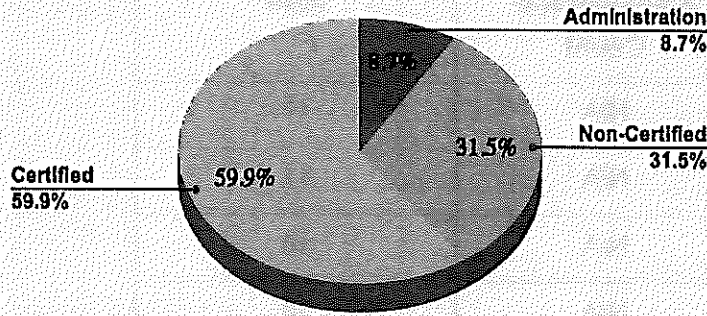
### Certified vs Non-Certified

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
<b>Administrators</b>	429,777.10	534,944.95	557,409.33	529,358.00	473,206.00
<b>Non-Certified Staff</b>	1,635,813.46	1,444,647.41	1,507,819.30	1,545,676.05	1,586,040.00
<b>Certified Staff</b>	2,594,125.59	2,657,654.57	2,757,366.19	2,938,129.00	3,016,943.00
<b>Substitutes</b>	87,704.54	90,658.93	98,324.90	77,025.00	70,025.00
<b>Additional Comp</b>	63,464.69	18,422.32	58,574.66	73,792.00	76,040.00
<b>ESY Certified</b>	-	6,080.00	12,346.40	12,500.00	10,000.00
<b>ESY Non-Certified</b>	-	1,320.00	16,841.94	18,000.00	15,700.00
<b>Total Salaries</b>	<b>4,810,885.38</b>	<b>4,753,728.18</b>	<b>5,008,682.72</b>	<b>5,194,480.05</b>	<b>5,247,954.00</b>

18

# Proposed Budget Salaries:

## Salaries



Salary costs are 60.4% of operating budget.

Reduction of .5 Administrator

Addition of 1 full time Spanish Teacher

Addition of .5 School Psychologist or Library Media Specialist.

Substitutes are not broken out as certified/non-certified.

2023-24 Proposed	\$5,247,954
2022-23 Budget	\$5,194,480
Increase	\$53,474
% increase	1%

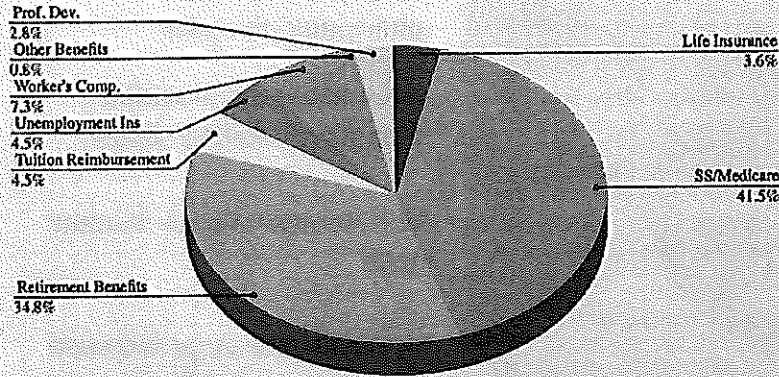
19

## Employee Benefits

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Employee Insurance	1,204,073.23	1,201,245.22	1,338,958.53	1,704,683.77	1,863,225.00
Life Insurance	12,754.97	14,399.80	13,427.03	17,856.00	16,165.00
SS/Medicare	181,442.39	170,243.29	171,147.93	169,975.72	186,115.00
Retirement Benefits	146,335.54	159,027.38	159,604.32	91,428.46	156,076.00
Tuition Reimbursement	21,650.72	9,999.90	7,441.86	15,000.00	20,000.00
Unemployment Ins	33,341.00	8,204.50	13,299.94	32,657.00	20,000.00
Worker's Compensation	32,314.34	34,365.00	33,682.71	35,999.00	32,655.00
Other Benefits	3,600.00	6,357.63	5,573.17	6,000.00	3,600.00
Professional Development	12,523.22	1,103.09	10,084.80	12,450.00	12,450.00
Mileage	687.81	-	1,075.42	1,170.00	1,000.00
<b>Total Benefits</b>	<b>1,648,723.22</b>	<b>1,604,945.81</b>	<b>1,754,295.71</b>	<b>2,087,219.95</b>	<b>2,311,286.00</b>

20

# Proposed Budget Benefits



2023-24 Proposed	\$2,311,286
2022-23 Budget	\$2,087,220
Increase	\$224,066
% increase	10%

Medical Insurance to Increase by 20%

Dental to Increase by 10%

Life Insurance to Increase by 5%

1 Placeholder for Insurance

21

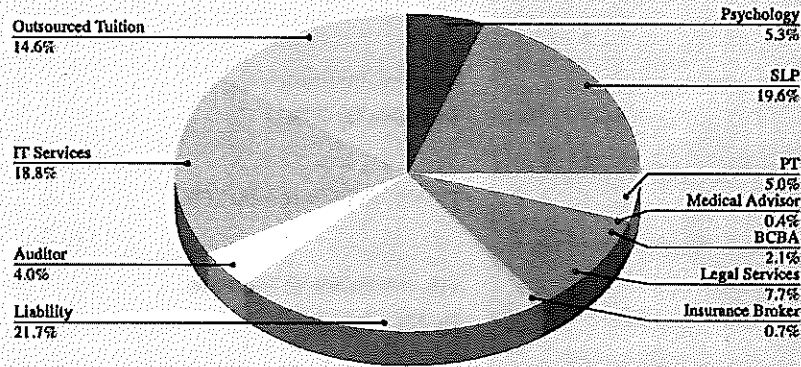
# Services

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Outsourced Psychology Services	\$18,321.42	\$3,271.80	\$25,522.50	\$7,000.00	\$22,500.00
Outsourced Speech Services	\$84,097.00	\$82,788.00	\$80,719.70	\$70,231.00	\$82,950.00
Outsourced Occupational Services	\$71,536.64	\$77,437.75	\$66,335.50	\$40,000.00	\$0.00
Outsourced Physical Therapy	\$45,736.50	\$54,032.00	\$41,832.00	\$42,500.00	\$21,000.00
Outsourced Medical Advisor	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Outsourced Behavior Therapy	\$21,716.15	\$13,713.52	\$5,521.28	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
Website Development	\$7,810.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Legal Services	\$11,036.00	\$26,371.91	\$35,463.81	\$34,000.00	\$32,500.00
Insurance Broker	\$3,150.00	\$3,150.00	\$3,150.00	\$3,150.00	\$3,150.00
Liability Insurance	\$42,606.90	\$54,625.66	\$77,185.43	\$50,549.00	\$91,520.00
Auditor	\$21,842.50	\$15,410.00	\$12,976.00	\$15,000.00	\$17,000.00
IT Managed Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$73,028.00	\$79,500.00
Outsourced Tuition	\$114,371.00	\$96,831.92	\$170,299.06	\$177,202.00	\$61,747.00
<b>Total Purchased Services</b>	<b>\$443,724.11</b>	<b>\$429,132.56</b>	<b>\$520,505.28</b>	<b>\$523,160.00</b>	<b>\$422,367.00</b>

22



# Proposed Budget Services



<b>2023-24 Proposed</b>	<b>\$422,367</b>
<b>2022-23 Budget</b>	<b>\$523,160</b>
<b>Decrease</b>	<b>\$100,793</b>
<b>% decrease</b>	<b>24%</b>

Only 1 outplaced special education student anticipated this year

OT outsourced providers brought on staff for 23-24

SLP Increase due to student need

In Liability the large increase is for projected Cybersecurity (based on claims in whole country, they should start coming back down)

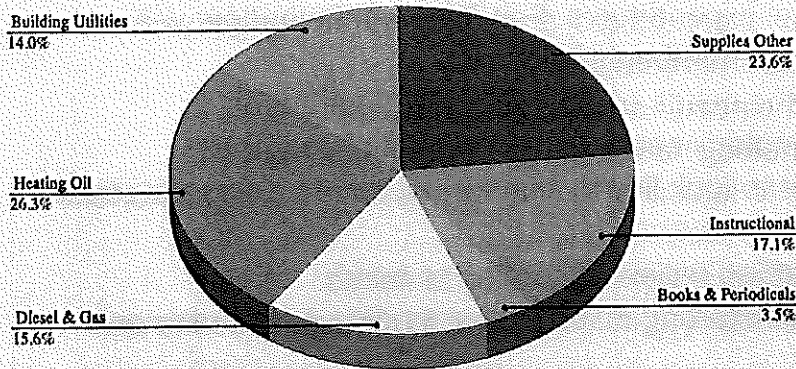
23

## Supplies

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Supplies, Other	111,580.99	129,253.54	137,905.69	51,312.00	109,690.00
Instructional Supplies	94,184.51	95,649.89	107,876.58	50,232.00	79,654.00
Books & Periodicals	3,874.61	1,155.78	4,005.29	2,900.00	16,100.00
Diesel & Gasoline	41,916.78	22,745.53	25,437.26	65,656.00	72,685.00
Heating Oil	65,638.11	65,795.06	50,847.24	92,140.00	122,190.00
Building Utilities	54,907.56	57,808.43	59,585.45	74,167.00	65,000.00
<b>Total Supplies</b>	<b>372,102.56</b>	<b>372,408.23</b>	<b>385,657.51</b>	<b>336,407.00</b>	<b>465,319.00</b>

24

# Proposed Budget Supplies



<b>2023-24 Proposed</b>	<b>\$465,319</b>
<b>2022-23 Budget</b>	<b>\$336,407</b>
<b>Increase</b>	<b>\$128,912</b>
<b>% increase</b>	<b>27%</b>

Reduction of \$12,500 due to new phone system

Heating Oil is based on 34,000 gallons @ \$3.5889 plus tax

Diesel is based on 36,000 gallons @ \$3.6616 plus tax minus contributions from DPW, Fire/Ambulance Service, and Region 19 Transportation contract

Textbooks for World language courses

Increase in Science for programming along with overall increase supplies for teaching and learning

25

# Budget Development

26

## Budget Development Process

- ★ Examined past years actual expenditures. Focusing on the budget year 2019/2020. These are actual numbers pre-COVID.
- ★ Surveyed the teachers for the needs of classroom for instruction.
- ★ Surveyed teachers on technology needs for instructional purposes.
- ★ Met as administrative team to look line by line for needs to increase student instructional demands.
- ★ Examine class size and staffing review according to needs.
- ★ Met with Board of Education starting in November to discuss process and timeline.
- ★ Set up community opportunities through Coffee and Conversation on November 2, 2022 and a Saturday work session on Nov.12, 2022. Advertising opportunities through the Ashford Citizen and K12 alerts.

27

## Accounting Codes Structure

**Sample**

**100.1000.100.30.1.10**

Fund	Function	Object	Extension	Education Type	Department ID
Indicates Funding Source	Indicates School Program	Indicates the Type of Expense	Breaks Down the Function	Regular or Special Ed	Used to further clarify expense if necessary

28

# Accounting Code Structures continued...

Fund	Object	Education Type	
100 Series	General Budget Fund		
200 Series	Federal/State Grants		
300 Series	Miscellaneous Grants		
Function			
1000	Regular Education Instruction	1	Regular Education
1200	Special Education Instruction	2	Special Education
2100	Support Staff	3	Transportation
2130	Health Services	210	Employee Benefits
2140	Outsourced Psychologist	Extension (Examples)	Department ID (Examples)
2150	Speech	10	Central Office
		11	Ashford School
		12	Special Education
		13	Maintenance

29

Title I (continuous)	56,000.00	Funds a grant to provide a bus driver position for homeless student transportation
Title II(continuous)	9,400.00	Used for Professional Development (PD) of Staff
Title III(continuous)	800.00	Used for EL supplies and programs
Title IV(continuous)	10,000.00	Used for technology purchases not included in regular budget
REAP(continuous)	30,000.00	Educational supplies, books, technology, PD
IDEA 611(continuous)	117,275.00	Funds salaries for 1.5 Special Education teachers
IDEA 619(continuous)	7,168.00	Partially funds one paraprofessional
School Readiness (Continuous)	113,400.00	Partially funds our Pre-K program
School Readiness Quality Enhancement (Continuous)	3,881.00	Funds programs for Preschoolers
ESSER III (Expended by September 2024)	330,000.00	Funds curriculum writing and supplies, and technology in our classrooms to address learning loss from the pandemic, BCBA services and additional speech related services.

30

## **Next Steps:**

**BOE Budget Workshop February 16, 2023:** BOE review and discuss budget. Finalize information going to the Board of Finance on March 2, 2023.

**BOE attend BOF March 2, 2023:** BOE presents to the BOF their 2023/2024 budget requests and answer questions.

**BOF March 16, 2023:** Reviews Budget requests with additional clarifications and discuss recommendations.

**BOF March 23, 2023:** BOF adopts proposed budget and sets the date for Public Hearing.

**Proposed Town Public Hearing April 4, 2023:** Public Hearing, last chance to make any changes to budgets.

**April 5, 2023:** BOS Sets dates and approves notice for Town Meeting and Referendum.

**April 14, 2023:** Town budget books available to the public.

**April 18, 2023:** Annual Town Meeting.

**May 2, 2023:** Proposed Ashford Town Budget Referendum.