

Ledyard Public Schools

Administrative Offices

TO: Fred Allyn III, Mayor

FROM: Anthony Favry, Chair, Board of Education

SUBJECT: Board of Education 2022-23 Approved Budget

DATE: February 22, 2023

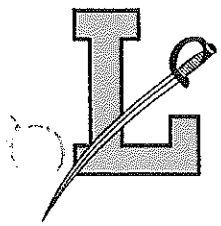
Enclosed is the 2023-2024 Ledyard Public Schools Budget as adopted by the Ledyard Board of Education (BOE). This budget takes into consideration the growing needs of our students and our ongoing efforts to improve achievement levels. The Board is cognizant of the overall financial reality of our community and district challenges.

In the ten year period between 2008 and 2018, Ledyard Public Schools (LPS) experienced both a drop in enrollment and a simultaneous increase in high needs students (19% to 42%). Budgetary pressures, general sentiment around costs, and the practice of primarily using enrollment for calculating staffing, significantly reduced the district's capacity to respond to the growing student need. This has contributed to unacceptable student achievement levels with a troubling opportunity gap that requires targeted interventions and adjustments to the district's programming.

Over the past five years, the BOE has strategically approved targeted and deliberate actions to address the needs of our students. While the issues and complexities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic impacted and continue to impact our students, families, and team; this budget affirms our commitment to address the short and long term needs of our students that existed prior to, and persist after, this period of turmoil. The demands for improved programming, interventions, and other support will not soon disappear.

Funding for education represents Ledyard's greatest expense and arguably its most important function in a democratic society. LPS has continued to provide education at a cost far below any other district in Southeastern CT, and is in the lowest 5% of the State in per pupil spending. While our efficiency is laudable, it is not sustainable, or effective for a growing number of students.

The BOE budget for the 2023-2024 school year is \$35,908,368, a \$1,353,048 (3.92%) increase over the FY 2022-23 budget. This budget expands the district's intervention programming and implements increased support for teacher growth and development. While not fully realized due to existing utility contracts and negotiated pricing for other services, inflationary impacts are addressed in various lines throughout the budget. Contractual obligations agreed to by the BOE and Town Council make up (2.12%) of this year's increase.



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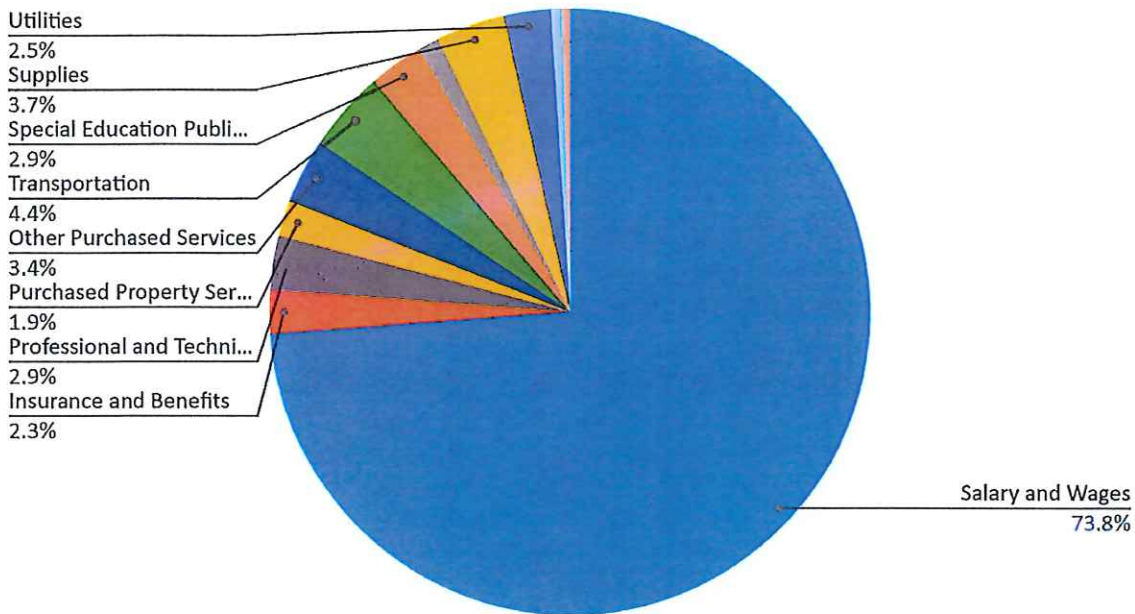
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**BOE ADOPTED BUDGET
SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2023-2024 Budget Breakdown



Salaries and Wages (object codes 51010-51300) – Increase \$1,236,854 (4.89%)

Teacher salaries support regular education activities, library media services, the special education program, pre-kindergarten program, guidance and career services, intervention, social workers, and school psychologists. Teacher Salaries (51030-51050) increase overall by \$802,148.52. This increase includes the contractual gross wage increase plus step and six known retirements at an estimated savings of \$223,000. The 2023-2024 budget includes requests for 5.0 FTE new educators to align with our strategic plan. These requests include an instructional coach to bring best instructional practices to classrooms by working closely with teachers to support their professional learning and implementation of curriculum; three ELA interventionists to work directly with students needing tiered support; one EL teacher to instruct students who speak a language other than English. Currently the district has 45 English Language Learner (ELL) students who are served by one full time teacher and one grant funded tutor; current staffing is not adequate to provide required EL instruction to students.

Due to a statewide shortage in athletic trainers, we are requesting a part time, 0.5 FTE staff position for an athletic trainer and have removed the athletic trainer stipend. The district is currently utilizing an EMT on a per diem basis for game coverage but needs a regularly staffed

position to reduce liability, improve student safety and improve efficacy in the athletic program. This will also enhance communication, provide coverage at freshman and junior varsity athletic events, and assist coaching staff in evaluating and implementing sport specific conditioning programs and methods.

School Administration is involved in activities associated with directing and managing individual schools' operations following system-wide policies and standards. The administration is responsible for the supervision of all school operations, including oversight of curriculum and instruction, students' academic and extracurricular activities, assignment of duties and evaluation of staff members, and maintenance of educational records. Staff budgeted and assigned to this program includes four (4.0) Principals, five (5.0) Assistant Principals, and four (4.0) Special Education Administrators. The Ledyard Administrators Association (LAA) contract calls for a gross wage increase of 1.75%.

Salary objects additionally provide funding for the AFSCME Secretarial bargaining unit, the AFSCME Custodian/Maintenance bargaining unit, the AFSCME Information Technology bargaining unit, and the AFSCME Paraprofessional bargaining unit. These staff members are responsible for the oversight of critical district tasks that include administrative tasks for school building offices, the Central Office, student data, attendance data, purchasing, maintenance and cleaning of five building sites, maintenance of playing fields, maintenance of equipment, student information systems, information technology hardware used by staff and students, and assistance in oversight of students.

Employee Benefits (object codes 52200-52800) – No change (0.00%)

Unemployment Expense (52600), District Tuition Reimbursement (52350), and Social Security/Medicare Expense (52200) are flat-funded based on trends and previous fiscal year expenditures.

The Town historically funds medical expenses for school district personnel. The Ledyard Education Association, our largest bargaining unit, will increase from a 22% premium share in the 2022-2023 fiscal year to a 22.75% premium share in the 2023-2024 school year. In 2023-2024, the LAA Group will have a 20.5% premium share (increase of 0.5% over 2022-2023); the AFSCME Custodian/Maintenance group will have a 17.5% premium share (increase of 0.25% over 2022-2023); the AFSCME Secretary group continues at a 19% premium share, which is unchanged for the duration of agreement; the AFSCME Paraprofessional group has a 20% premium share (increase of 1% over 2022-2023). The AFSCME IT group has an 18% premium share in 2022-2023 and will enter into negotiations during this budget year.

Insurance costs typically increase annually; assuming a 9% increase to insurance rates and flat enrollment in the Connecticut Partnership Plan, the increases in employee percentage share represent a savings of approximately \$166,916 in the town's budget.

Professional/Technical Services (object codes 53210-53740) – Increase \$129,950 (14.27%)

Professional and Technical Services are forecasted to increase in 2023-2024. General education professional development has decreased by \$2,800 based on the professional development calendar and availability of grant funds.

We estimate an increase of \$90,000 in special education student services (2091260 53400), an increase of \$40,000 for occupational therapy (53440), and an increase of \$15,000 for physical therapy. This is related to mandatory services for special needs students including contracted registered behavior therapists, special education professional development, and an increase of students receiving occupational therapy and physical therapy services based on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans.

Purchased Property Services (object codes 54100-54900) – Increase \$82,625 (13.88%)

Most lines under purchased property services are flat funded. There is an increase on technology equipment maintenance in the amount of \$36,625 related to our fiber network, copier leases, K-12 technology services, and out of warranty and failing equipment repair. The increase in the purchased property services is directly offset by savings in technology staff salaries (2122230 51060). Our estimated impact of ERate grant opportunities offsetting costs in this line are \$105,676 based on our 2022-2023 award.

Technology repair (2122230 54320) is increased by \$46,000 for the replacement of out of warranty/failing projectors and SMART boards at Gallup Hill School and Ledyard Middle School.

Maintenance department repair costs (2112600 54300) are flat funded based on current fiscal year usage. There is a state mandated Building Management System (BMS) review in 2023-2024 at an estimated cost of \$18,500 but based on analysis the current budget should be able to accommodate this expense; this is an area of risk.

Other Purchased Services (object codes 55100-55900) – Decrease \$215,750 (-4.82%)

The budget for transportation (55100) is based on a contractual increase of 3%; at a cost of \$347.61 per day per full-sized bus. This budget line also includes the Magnet School Transportation Grant reimbursement from the State of Connecticut, estimated at \$130,000, which is reduced due to low enrollment/ridership.

Pupil Transportation services include conveying students to and from school as required by state and federal laws. In addition, the district provides transportation to school sponsored activities. Ledyard currently contracts for twenty-three (23) regular buses and six (6) special education buses. Other providers are utilized for specialized transportation for students, including but not limited to homelessness, DCF placement, IEP or 504 determination, or out of district placement.

Tuition costs are related to three areas: special education out-of-district programs, magnet schools, and adult education. Special Education outplaced tuition is highly volatile and is an area of risk; special education is flat funded in this budget based on current year costs and

Excess Cost grant projections. Due to enrollment forecasting, Magnet school tuition (55660) is reduced by \$31,000, and public special education tuition (55600) is reduced by \$265,000.

Rather than operating an independent program, Ledyard Public Schools participates in the Norwich Collaborative Adult Education Consortium. The consortium provides mandated courses in citizenship, English for those with limited proficiency, and courses leading to a graduate equivalency diploma (GED). A state grant partially funds this program, and Ledyard Public Schools is required to fund the balance. The adult education line (55900) is flat funded.

Supplies (object codes 56110-56900) – Increase \$120,120 (5.70%)

Electricity (56220) increases by \$40,000; flat-funded based on usage and an estimated increase during the second half of the 2023-2024 school year due to a new contract for supply in December 2023 and potentially volatile new rates. Natural gas (56210) is flat funded; we have a current agreement through September 2023, however we have historically underspent this budget line. Heating oil (56200) is increased by \$42,230 based on market fluctuation, and diesel (56260) is increased by \$20,000 based on market fluctuation. Heating oil and diesel are negotiated annually each spring. Due to fluctuating markets and increasing costs, our utility costs are areas of potential risk.

Maintenance supplies (56900) increased by \$20,000 due to rising supply costs and inflation. This budget line had increased for 2021-2022 for pandemic related supplies, then was decreased for 2022-2023.

While many instructional supply lines are flat funded based on previous fiscal year results and projected current fiscal year expenditures, we have included relatively small requests for a WorldLanguage Lab at Ledyard Middle School, a pilot program to allow enrichment opportunities for students to experience more foreign languages. Additionally, we have increased funding for supplies in the agriscience program by \$10,000 due to rising costs; this budget has been flat funded for several years.

Textbooks (56400) have been adjusted based on the curriculum cycle. General instruction textbooks decreased by \$58,310. Mathematics instruction textbooks decreased by \$15,600, foreign language textbooks increased by \$21,800, social studies textbooks increased by \$500, and reading instruction textbooks increased by \$1,500. Testing supplies and instructional supplies for curriculum initiatives increased by \$21,100 to support materials for foundations, purposeful play, and patterns of power.

Testing supplies for special education increased by \$5,000 based on current fiscal year needs and instructional supplies for special education increased by \$1,400 for Ledyard Transition Academy supplies.

Equipment (object codes 57300-57350) – Decrease \$10,000 (-4.59%)

Most equipment budget lines are flat funded based on a review of current fiscal year levels. District software lines are flat funded based on current usage, current fiscal year grant narratives, and projected usage. Maintenance replacement equipment (2112600-57310) has been decreased by \$10,000 due to no new equipment requests for 2023-2024.

Dues and Fees (object codes 58100-58120) - Increase \$9,250 (6.42%)

Most district fees (58100 and 58120) are unchanged based on current fiscal year levels and information from Project Oceanology, which has a \$0 increase for 2023-2024. Special education dues and fees (2091200 58100) are increased by \$9,250 for Thrively software, which provides assessment data for special education transition services.