

Frequently Asked Questions Windsor Board of Education Budget

1. *How much does the state provide to the Town per pupil for education?*

The Town annually receives an Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant. For 2008-2009 the grant is \$11,547,663 that amounts to approximately \$2530 per student. The ECS monies remain in the Town budget. The Town also receives some funding for transportation. For 2008-2009 the Town is anticipated to receive \$487,001.

2. *There are four elementary schools and Roger Wolcott Early Childhood Center. How can we be sure there is equity in the budgets for each school?*

For each elementary school's site-budget, a formula based upon the number of students is used. For the current 2008-2009 school year specifically \$198 per student is allotted for supplies and equipment. There will be no change in this amount for 2009-2010.

3. *Is the school system required to provide transportation to public AND parochial school children?*

Yes, by law Windsor Public Schools must transport both public and parochial students. In addition to transporting students to Windsor Public schools, we transport students to St. Gabriel and Trinity Christian schools and to Praise, Power and Prayer school.

4. *Are we required to provide kindergarten to children in Windsor who desire it?*

Yes. Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-15 define the obligation of towns to maintain public schools. "Public school including kindergartens shall be maintained in each town for at least one hundred eighty days of actual school sessions during each year."

5. *What is the difference between "Major Maintenance" and "Capital Improvement?"*

Capital Improvement projects tied to the schools involve new construction, additions, modifications or improvements of a non-recurring nature that will cost at least 1/10 of 1% of the tax levy; or a project that is a repair/maintenance task of significant magnitude, complexity and/or cost to warrant referring the project to the Public Building Commission. Projects not meeting the above criteria but needing to be addressed would be considered under the Major Maintenance Plan. Painting of classrooms, repair and replacement of equipment, e.g., lighting, refinishing gym floors, replacing carpet and/or tile are examples of work that falls under Major Maintenance.

6. *Are both the Capital Improvement and Major Maintenance budget items included in the Board of Education budget?*

No. The Capital Improvement Plan is included in the Town's budget while the Major Maintenance Plan is in the Board of Education budget.

7. *What does the Windsor Public Schools (WPS) pay to monitor that only students who live in Windsor attend the Windsor Public Schools?*

The 2008-2009 budget provides for one full time and two part time Residency Officers dedicated to investigating students who are suspected of not being Windsor residents at a cost of approximately \$95,000.

8. What percentage of the Board of Education budget is dedicated to special education?
In the 2007-2008 school year, 18.9% of the budget was for special education and the pupil services that support special education (psychologists, social workers, speech clinicians, aides for visually impaired, physical therapists, and tutors).

9. How does the percent of Windsor students in special education compare with the State average percent of students in special education?
In the Windsor Public Schools special education students comprise 11.7% of the student population compared to the State average of 11.4%.

10. At what age do children begin to receive special education services?
The District assumes responsibility for children in need of special education services beginning on their third birthday. In Connecticut, the task of assessing and serving special needs children before the age of three is the responsibility of the Birth to Three System.

11. Are parents required to pay for the extra costs of educating children with special education?
No. By law the responsibility for costs of educating special education students, as with all students, rests fully with the school district that has responsibility for their education.

12. How much funding does the State provide for special education compared to the costs?
The Special Education Excess Costs that the Town received from the state for 2007-2008 amounted to \$1,020,500 compared to a Special Education/Pupil Services budget for the same year of \$10,454,640. The 2008-2009 Special Education Excess Costs the Town will receive from the state is estimated to be \$1,100,000.

13. There are special education students who attend school out of the district. What is the average cost of an out-of-district tuition?
The average cost of out-of-district tuition is \$50,000 per student.

14. How much does the state reimburse the Town for the tuition that is paid out?
The amount of reimbursement depends upon who places the child.
For a child placed out of district by the Windsor Public Schools, reimbursement is provided for tuition costs that exceed 4.5 times the per pupil costs to educate a student, i.e., for costs above approximately \$56,698.
For a child placed out of district by a State Agency, e.g., Department of Children and Families (DCF), reimbursement is provided for tuition costs that exceed 1 times the per pupil costs to educate a student, i.e., for costs above approximately \$12,598.
Reimbursement is made to the Town, not to the Board of Education.

15. How much does the district pay in out-of-district tuition?
Over the last five years the average costs have been \$2,499,000.

16. On average, what are the gate receipts taken in annually from football and basketball?
Gate receipts for girls and boys varsity sports average \$24,500 a year.

17. How are the gate receipts used?

The gate receipts are used to offset a number of costs in the athletic program, e.g., the funds are used to pay for game officials, timers, ticket takers, security personnel, trainers and equipment reconditioning.

18. How many WPS students participate in magnet schools?

For the 2008-2009 school year, 393 students are enrolled in 20 magnet schools. (See the chart that follows this document for the breakout.)

19. For how many of these students do we pay tuition and at what cost?

For 2008-2009 we paid tuition for 214 students at a cost of \$518,444.

20. Why do we pay tuition for only some students to attend magnet schools?

The issue of tuition payment for students attending magnet schools has become more complex over the past year. In the past, whether we paid tuition depended on the type of magnet school and/or whether we were a partner with a particular magnet school. For example, in Hartford, there are Hartford “host” magnet schools – operated by the Hartford Board of Education – for which we do not currently pay tuition, with one exception, Classical Magnet. This year we paid tuition for new students entering the school. There are currently 173 Windsor students attending Hartford Host magnet schools.

Windsor pays for tuition for students attending magnet schools operated by the Capital Region Education Council (CREC) with whom we have partnered over the years. These programs include Hartford Montessori, Greater Hartford Academy for the Performing Arts, Greater Hartford Academy for the Arts and Science, and the Metropolitan Learning Center. Over the past two years, we have also been billed for students admitted to Great Path Academy Magnet School and the University of Hartford Magnet School, schools we have not partnered with, but because of a change in the legislation, obligates us to pay if Windsor students attend. Currently we have 205 students attending CREC magnet schools. Last summer, under the Sheff settlement, CREC opened up four new magnet schools: a Public Safety Academy (6-12), Reggio Emilia Early Childhood Academy of the Arts and Sciences (PK – 5), Charter School for Young Children (PK – 3), and the International Baccalaureate Early Childhood Magnet School for Global Citizenship (PK – 5). Though potentially we could have Windsor students attend these schools, and pay tuition for them, under an agreement with Commissioner of Education Mark McQuillan, suburban towns that already participate in magnet schools at 5% of their student population, which Windsor does, are not supposed to have to bear a further burden with respect to student participation. Specifically, students from towns with under a 5% participation rate are supposed to be accepted before students from towns with over a 5% participation rate. However, the “rules” are in a state of flux. We are closely monitoring the situation and scrutinize every tuition bill and student acceptance to these magnet school programs.

21. How is a student selected to attend a magnet school?

Up through the current year students have generally been selected to attend a magnet school through a lottery run by the individual magnet school. Next year it is our understanding that there will be a central lottery for both the CREC and Hartford Host magnet schools. The only exception to the lottery rule has been the Greater Hartford Academy for the Performing Arts. Students attending this magnet school are chosen by audition.

22. *If a special education student attends a magnet school, who is responsible for the costs of the special education services: the magnet school or WPS*

Windsor Public Schools are responsible for the special education costs of any Windsor student who attends a magnet school. For 2007-2008, our special education service costs for special education children attending magnet schools were \$82,100.

23. *Is the Board of Education responsible for transporting students to Magnet Schools?*

Most students attending magnet schools are bussed by Hartford or the Capital Region Education Council (CREC). The Windsor Public Schools transports 24 students to three schools: Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science, Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and Glastonbury High School Vocational/Agriscience program.

24. *Is the Board of Education required to provide an education for students expelled from school?*

By law the Board of Education must provide an alternative education, e.g., at least two hours of tutoring per day, for students through the age of 18 who are expelled. The Board of Education is not required to provide an alternative education program for an expelled student between the ages of 16-18 when the expellable action involved any of the following: possession of a deadly weapon on school property or at a school sponsored activity, the use of a deadly weapon in the commission of a crime off school property, the sale or distribution of drugs on school property or at a school sponsored event, or the sale or distribution of drugs off school property. The school district is also not obligated to provide an alternative education to students ages 16-18 who have been expelled previously, or to students over the age of 18. The Board of Education can choose, however, to provide an alternative educational opportunity.

25. *Is the student breakfast/lunch program included in the Board of Education budget?*

No. The Windsor Food Service program is self-sufficient; no Board of Education monies are used to support the program.

26. *Where do the Windsor Public School teacher salaries fall compared to the 31 greater Hartford communities?*

At the entry level of the Master's Salary Schedule, Windsor teacher salaries rank 21st of the 31 greater Hartford communities.

27. *Does the Board pay social security for certified staff?*

No. Certified staff do not pay into the Social Security System, rather they pay into the Connecticut Teacher Retirement System. The Board of Education makes no social security payments on behalf of certified staff.

28. *Does the Board pay any part of teacher retirement?*

No. Teachers pay into the Connecticut Teacher Retirement. The Board of Education pays no part of a teacher's retirement.

29. *Does the Board pay health benefits for retired teachers*

No. The Board does not pay any health benefits for retired teachers.

30. *If the Board of Education has money left over in its budget at the end of the fiscal year, can the funds be carried over to the next school year?*

No. By law, the Board of Education must return unspent funds to the town.

31. *What is the average amount of dollars returned to the Town by the Board of Education over the last six years?*

Over the last six years approximately \$1,161,000 was returned to the town, an average of \$193,500 each year.

32. *Is the Windsor Adult and Continuing Education program a part of the Board of Education budget or the Town's budget?*

The Adult and Continuing Education Program is part of the Board of Education budget.

33. *Is any part of the Adult Education program mandated by law?*

Yes. Required programs include instruction in Americanization and United States citizenship, English for adults with limited English proficiency, Adult Basic Education, and GED (General Education Diploma) preparation classes. School districts may not charge tuition for these programs.

34. *Is there an annual audit of the school system's financial activity?*

Yes. The audit firm of McGladrey & Pullen is hired by the Town to audit both the Town and School System. The audit includes the general fund, grant funds, food service and student activity funds.

Magnet School Enrollment and Tuition

2008-2009

2007-2008

Hartford Magnet Schools	Enrollment	Cost	Enrollment	Cost
Classical Magnet	18	0	18	0
Classical Magnet tuition students	4	10,000	0	0
Capital Prep	18	0	16	0
Hartford Middle Magnet	20	0	9	0
Noah Webster	27	0	16	0
Simpson Waverly	2	0	8	0
Sport and Medical Sciences Academy	11	0	7	0
Kinsella	13	0	6	0
Pathways to Technology	19	0	13	0
University High School	16	0	12	0
Annie Fisher (Montessori Magnet)	7	0	15	0
Breakthrough	20	0	20	0
Subtotal	175	\$10,000	140	0
CREC Magnet Schools				
Montessori	36	95,832	29	0
Greater Hartford Academy of Performing Arts	10	18,500	11	20,350
Greater Hartford Academy of Math & Science	8	28,824	6	19,650
Metropolitan Learning Center	148	355,792	154	336,490
Great Path Academy Magnet School	1	3,000	1	2,600
University of Hartford Magnet School	7	16,828	7	15,295
Charter School for Young Children	2	NC	NA	0
CREC Subtotal	212	\$518,776	208	\$394,385
Other Magnet Schools				
Big Picture High School, Bloomfield	3	0	NP	0
Bloomfield Agriscience	0	0	2	5,882
Glastonbury Agriscience	3	7,911	4	10,584
Other Subtotal	6	\$7,911	6	\$16,466
Total	393	\$536,687	354	\$410,851