

News from the Stamford Public Schools

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For immediate release

Contact: Sarah Arnold, Public Affairs Officer (203) 977-4095

**STAMFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRESENTS COST-CONSCIOUS
BUDGET FOR 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR**

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joshua Starr will present a pared-down \$228.6 million proposed operating budget to the Board of Education on January 15th. In creating the 2009-2010 budget, Dr. Starr acknowledged the need to bring forward a plan that is as frugal as possible, while also continuing the reforms of the past three and a half years.

Nearly all of the 4.57% increase is required to meet contractual agreements, unfunded federal and state mandates, project implementation, and general operating costs. The Superintendent's plan includes program enhancements to Literacy in order to increase student achievement levels that are unacceptably low. The Literacy initiative represents \$846,000, or .39% of the total budget. As part of the scaled down budget, other program improvements to areas such as social studies, world language, art, and music have been put on hold.

Overall, the proposed budget is staff neutral and seeks to preserve current elementary class sizes of approximately 20 students. According to Dr. Starr, cutting staff will be a last resort. "We are going to need to rely on the intelligence and commitment of the professionals who are part of our system to get through this year and next. We have made huge strides in math and science in the last few years and I am confident that even in a difficult budget cycle, our staff will continue to build on that momentum."

Of special concern next year is an anticipated 10% reduction in state and federal grants, which is directly tied to lower state and federal revenues. Additionally, increased funding is necessary for rising special education costs, transportation related to the phasing in of the redistricting plan, custodial pension contributions, and OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits). Finally, a slight increase in enrollment (1.3%) is expected, given the likelihood that private/parochial students will opt for public school.

The 2009-2010 proposed budget also includes reductions to clerical and custodial overtime, supplies, repairs and maintenance, professional development, and high school athletics. The Board of Education has set up the following schedule to review the budget:

Thursday, January 15 – 7:00 p.m., 5th floor meeting room, Stamford Government Center
Tuesday, January 20 - 7:00 p.m., 5th floor meeting room, Stamford Government Center
Thursday, January 22 - 7:00 p.m., 5th floor meeting room, Stamford Government Center
Thursday, January 29 - 7:00 p.m., 5th floor meeting room, Stamford Government Center
Tuesday, February 3 - 7:00 p.m., 5th floor meeting room, Stamford Government Center
Thursday, February 5 – 7:00 p.m., Public Hearing, Cloonan Middle School, 11 W. North St.
Thursday, February 12 – 7:00 p.m., Board of Ed vote on budget, 5th floor meeting room, Stamford Government Center

The budget will then be reviewed by the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives in April and May. The Board of Education will make final appropriations in June.