

# NEWINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Report to the Board of Education  
and Community on the Results of  
the Recent Listening Tours  
March, 2015

860.667.2000

131 Cedar Street  
Newington, CT 06111

[www.npsct.org](http://www.npsct.org)

# Table of Contents

1.	<u>Executive Summary</u>	3
2.	<u>Listening Tour Format and Information</u>	4
3.	<u>Overarching Themes</u>	4
4.	<u>General Comments and Suggestions</u>	16
5.	<u>Priorities</u>	17
6.	<u>2015 – 2016 Budget Timeline Progression</u>	18



# Executive Summary

---

On January 7, 2015, the Superintendent's Recommended Budget for the 2015 – 2016 school year was presented to the Board of Education. The development of the annual budget is an inclusive process that gathers input from a wide range of stakeholders including students, staff, parents, internal and external advisory groups, and members of the community. This budget has been carefully aligned to our long-range strategic plan ([NPS2025](#)) and designed to promote the district mission and vision as well as the priorities set by our Board of Education in 2013. While the current budget request is currently 4.87% over the current year's adopted budget, it reflects significant reductions to the recommendations made by the various stakeholder groups in an attempt to offset required contractual increases and other associated necessary costs that have been deferred in previous years.

It is imperative that the long range strategic direction and short range action plans are closely aligned to the pulse of the entire community and their expectations. There have been opinions expressed publically that the community can no longer afford to maintain support for the public schools at current levels. The annual budget requests for the past five years have been lower than any in the last four decades and although the final allocation has been closer to the request, there have still been significant cuts year after year that have had a significant impact on the ability to compete with the 29 new magnet schools in the Hartford area.

Before any final budget decisions are made, the town government should hear the opinions of all residents, not just the few who speak publically at meetings. Over the past six years we have tried to be very conscious of the financial tax impact of our budget requests. Numerous proposals for new programming were denied based on what we believed to be the desire of the community because of public statements made at town council meetings. It is important to balance the desire of the community with the ability to afford the cost. This year, we decided to turn the annual budget presentation into a community forum format as a way to collect feedback from parents and members of the community. This new format was well received and provided extremely valuable feedback. This report summarizes our findings from the various listening tours held throughout the month of February.

## Listening Tour Dates, Times and Locations

SCHOOL	DATE	TIME	Location
Anna Reynolds	2/03/15	7:00 p.m.	Media Center
Ruth Chaffee	2/04/15	7:00 p.m.	Media Center
Elizabeth Green	2/05/15	6:30 p.m.	Media Center
Martin Kellogg	2/10/15	7:00 p.m.	Media Center
John Paterson	2/19/15	7:00 p.m.	JWMS Auditorium
John Wallace	2/19/15	7:00 p.m.	Auditorium

# Listening Tour Format and Information

---

Budget documents were posted on the district website well in advance of the start of the tour. This enabled parents and members of the community ample time to review the information in advance and prepare questions. In addition, each participant was provided with handouts detailing the most recent information. The 2015 – 2016 budget information can be accessed by clicking on the links below or on our [website](#).

## 2015 – 2016 Budget Information

[2015 - 2016 Budget Timeline Progression](#)

[2015 - 2016 Budget at a Glance](#)

[2015 - 2016 Superintendent's Budget Request](#)

[2015 - 2016 Budget Summary - February Report](#)

[2015 - 2016 Budget Listening Tour Schedule](#)

[Governor's Proposed Grant Funding](#)

The budget summary information was shared with parents and community members. Since the format was more of a discussion than a presentation, parents were able to ask questions and share feedback throughout the evening. The building principal took notes so the questions could be documented, answered and provided as a resource for other members of the community who might have the same question. It was extremely evident that participants were well prepared as evidenced by the wide range of outstanding questions. Some participants had questions about our business model, strategic and operations plans, and our method of calculating return on investment. Some participants expressed a concern about the sidewalk safety during the recent snowstorms. The majority of the participants had many questions that emerged into four overarching themes: Budget and Finance; Programs and Curriculum; Technology and Infrastructure; and Facilities (Infrastructure and Maintenance).

## Overarching Themes

---

1. **Budget / Finance**
2. **Programming / Curriculum**
3. **Technology / Infrastructure**
4. **Facilities Infrastructure & Maintenance**

In this section we will provide a summary of participant feedback in each of the four areas followed by answers to some specific questions asked by parents throughout the tour. Since many participants had the same or similar questions, they were combined and listed only once whenever possible.

## 1. Budget / Finance

### Summary:

Participants were appreciative of the transparency of this year's budget information and had many outstanding questions specific to items in the budget. The general consensus was that while nobody ever likes to see taxes increase, it was likely unavoidable if we want to maintain the current level of services. There were concerns regarding the rising cost of health care, suggestions about working with town government to improve efficiency, and general support for the budget request provided we were confident that we were realizing an acceptable return on investment. Participants were pleased to know that we will be working with the District Management Council (DMC) to begin to calculate our Academic Return on Investment in several key areas and programs.

### Questions / Comments:

- ? **How we will respond if the demand for students with special needs increases?** The resource requirements for our population of students with special needs has steadily increased each year. This issue is not unique to Newington as every district in Connecticut struggles to find ways to meet the mandated needs of every child. In Newington, we have done several things to manage our costs without negatively impacting programming for our students. We have implemented several programs including two autism programs and our transition academy for our 18-21 year old students located at the town hall. These programs save the district well over a million dollars each year.
- ? **Concern was expressed regarding a "fixed" vs. "variable" budget? Suggestion was made to consider collaboration with surrounding districts to offset the expense to support students with special learning needs.** There are many items in our budget that can be accurately predicted when preparing the budget. It is important to remember, the 2015 – 2016 budget recommendation prepared in December must predict every possible scenario that will occur through June of the following year. Since the Board of Education cannot maintain a "contingency" or "rainy day" fund, it must use every possible tool to accurately predict the needs both anticipated and unanticipated. Birth rates, annual average housing stock turnover, and other trend data are used to forecast the budgetary needs of the district. We are members of a consortium investigating ways to share resources regionally and do so whenever possible. Because of the complex set of laws governing Boards of Education and the even more complicated and individual town charters and the diverse relationships between the two governing bodies, efficiency doesn't stand a chance. Unfortunately until legislation is passed changing the way Boards of Education are financed, governed, and operated, we are left with no choice but to continue with the current structure. Fortunately, we have a great working relationship between the Town and Board and make every effort to work together to do what is best for all Newington residents.
- ? **What will the BOE do with remaining funding should there be leftover funding from health benefits?** It is the BOE's discretion as how these funds, if available are applied. Typically, any excess health benefit funding goes to fund what is called the "cut list". As the budget goes through the process, cuts are made at every level. These cuts go on a list as deferred items awaiting possible alternative funding sources. Each year there is well over a million dollars on this list so obviously we can't recover all of the cut items. For the past several years we have

relied on health benefit dollars to fund technology, buses, and maintenance that has been deferred. Insurance is always a risk but we have been fortunate the past few years to not have many serious staff illnesses. A couple significant illnesses could deplete the fund and we would not be able to fund any of the cut list items.

? **Do we have students attending schools in Newington that do not live here?** Yes we do. These students fall into one of five categories:

- a. Open Choice (Hartford) – We currently enroll approximately 100 students from Hartford through the open choice program. The State pays Newington \$4,000 per open choice student to cover all educational costs.
- b. Tuition – There are some families who do not live in Newington but choose to enroll their children in our school and pay the full annual tuition (Approximately \$16,000).
- c. Court/Agency Placed – There are several students who have been placed in our schools by the courts or other State agencies. The State of Connecticut pays the full annual tuition (Approximately \$16,000).
- d. Homeless – The McKinney-Vento Act prevents districts from withdrawing students who can be considered homeless. The numerous motels on the Berlin Turnpike are an example of this provision. While some of our students do reside in these motels on a more permanent basis, even those who stay only one night are entitled to educational services in Newington if they become homeless.
- e. Residency Violator – Each year our Director of Security and Residency discovers several students who do not fit into one of the above categories. Our district uses software that regularly crosschecks information and highlights irregularities in patterns and activities. These irregularities sometimes prompt an investigation which may lead to the discovery of a residency violator. Residency violators are given a due process hearing and a final determination with regard to the reason of the violation. Residency violators are given the option to pay tuition, move to Newington, or withdraw from the district. Significant savings are achieved each year by investigating and enforcing residency requirements.

? **Why are we paying money for field trips?** The cost of chartering a bus for a field trip can be several hundred dollars. In most districts that cost is passed on to the parents or students. In a typical example of a class of 25 students going to New Haven, the cost of the charter could be about \$300 or more than \$10 per student. Because we own and operate our own school buses, we only charge about a \$3 fee per trip. This fee does not pay for the cost of that particular field trip but rather goes to the school's student activity transportation fund. When we are not able to provide a bus or driver for a particular trip, we must contract the trip to a private charter company. Rather than charge the actual cost, the student still only pays the \$3 fee and the remainder is paid through the student activity transportation fund. Out of state field trips requiring a motor coach are contracted out and that cost is passed on to individual parents and students.

? **Concerns about state funding. If we don't get an increase in funds from the state, what goes?** Fortunately, the Governor has not proposed any cuts in funding for Newington. In fact, there will be a slight increase in State

funding to Newington. The proposed funding can be downloaded from our website or click [here](#) for the information.

- ? **Have we done a study about home value increasing because of the school district, business growth in town, etc?**  
No we have not, but that is a great idea!

## 2. **Programming / Curriculum**

### **Summary:**

Parents had many great questions about our curriculum and how the academy programs worked and were very pleased with and overwhelmingly supportive of the progressive direction of the district. There were two very big concerns on the minds of our parents. They were very disappointed that we have not made any progress on implementation of a World Language program at the elementary level. They felt very strongly that Newington was very far behind in our World Language program and that the lack of early childhood (preschool) options were significant reasons for parents wanting to explore their options for making decisions about where to send their children.

### **Questions / Comments:**

- ? **A question was asked regarding the Encore program at the middle schools.** The structure of the middle school schedule is currently being reviewed to provide maximum support for the integration of information, media and technology. Since students will have full access to a device all of the time, technology will no longer be a place that students have to visit. We believe a team approach is the best way to support this important shift in practice.
- ? **What are outplacements?** When students' needs cannot be met here. The district saved a lot of money with the Transition Academy and the extension Autism Program at EG.
- ? **Do we feel enrollment projections are accurate?** Although it has been a little more challenging in recent years because of the magnet school impact, our enrollment projections have been remarkably accurate. New England School Development Council (NESDEC) has provided our enrollment projections for several years and does a very good job.
- ? **Any thought about increasing the amount of preschool students? Is the proposal being considered?** Yes, there are plans to renovate at Anna Reynolds and John Wallace and add Pre-K classrooms. We are looking into possible ways to fund both the renovation and the cost of increasing Pre-K slots.
- ? **Is STEM here to stay? Will elementary schools be doing STEM?** The Newington Public Schools will continue to integrate STEM as part of the program. STEM allows students to apply science, technology, engineering, and mathematics content and STEM standards of practice as they engage in learning activities that investigate the natural world. Learning experiences are designed for students to understand and address real life issues and solve problems or challenges. This integration as well as the hands-on approach helps students to understand

the relevance to everyday life. As we adopt the Next Generation Science Standards at the elementary level, the curriculum will be refined to integrate STEM practices and activities into current areas of study.

? **When will science standards be moving forward?** The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are currently being reviewed at the State Board of Education level. The last update to the State Board Of Education occurred on 2/4/2015, by Dr. Ellen Cohn, Division Director. While the NGSS were rolled out in April 2013, the CSDE has taken a conservative approach to consideration for adoption garnering stakeholder input that has included the Newington Public Schools representation (Dr. Matthew S. Wlodarczyk and Jen Freese) in the District Advisory Committee to the SBOE. The DAC was convened in August and October of 2014 to gauge district readiness to inform the SBOE of the shift to a new set of standards in Science Education that are grounded in the findings of the NGSS. The two options that the DAC was considering were advocating for adoption (as is) of the NGSS or an adaptation (changes) of the NGSS to the SBOE. It has been indicated by Liz Buttner, SDE Science Consultant, (most recently at the CREC Curriculum Council on 1/22/2015) that the SBOE will be moving forward with consideration of options for adoption vs. adaptation of science standards for CT this Spring. The SBOE heard an update on 2/4/2015 from Dr. Ellen Cohn, Division Director, regarding the CSDE process on NGSS. State representation has been solicited for representation on a State Science Accountability-ESEA Waiver focus group. According to Liz Buttner (CSDE Science Consultant), "Science in Accountability focus group is a two-way conversation about policy that will affect your district's "status" in terms of state accountability in the future. It's an opportunity for the district to be one of 10 invited to influence the degree to which -- and the manner in which -- it believes science education should be factored in to statewide indicators of the district's performance." NPS has the distinction of being one of 10 districts that has been selected to be a part this focus group. Furthermore, it has been recommended by the State to begin to provide professional learning to work with teachers on 3 dimensional learning (DCI, Practices, Cross-cutting Concepts) & grow best-practice instruction around the 8-scientific practices, in advance of SBOE and CSDE official action on the NGSS.

? **What is the district's philosophy regarding screen time? How are we building face to face instruction?** For effective learning and retention students need interaction with teacher, content and peers in both online and face to face instruction. Online resources do not replace the classroom teacher. Technology is a tool and resource for learning. Learner to teacher interactions will occur in every classroom, everyday. This type of interaction happens when a teacher delivers information, provides feedback or simply encourages or guides the learner. In the technology environment, this occurs as the teacher guides the students by guiding learning through questions, presenting problems, etc. The use of the Google platform, Google Apps for Education (GAPE), will also support interactions with teachers and peers that will prompt both online and face to face discussions.

? **Is there a % of time curriculum will allow for students using a computer? What about hands on learning?** A percentage of time for using computers has not been defined; however, students will have access to a range of print and online learning resources. Hands on learning will remain a constant. Online learning may support the hands-on learning via video demonstration in preparation or review of a learning experience. As an example, students may view a lab experiment prior to the actual hands on experience to know what to expect and how to proceed or students may view the experiment following the hands on experience to note similarities and

differences. At the secondary level, some high school students have the opportunity to participate in internships, job shadowing, and real life hands on experiences as a component of their coursework.

? **How will population changes affect staffing? (i.e. if ELL Population shifts)**

Newington Public Schools is responsive to the needs of our students. In some instances, population changes do affect staffing such as when the district experiences in decreasing or increasing enrollment there are changes to the number of classroom teachers assigned to a school. This is also true when experiencing an increase or decrease in a specific sub-group population. There is currently a budget request to add an additional 0.5 ESOL teacher to meet the needs of the ELL population.

? **Can you explain the World Language program? What is happening with the World language? (Requirements, credits, etc.)** We are working towards having World Language on the core at the middle school level. A suggestion was made to do it right or not at all. Parents felt **very strongly** about this topic and that it should begin in Kindergarten and implemented through grade 12.

? **Are students earning college credits at the High School?** Yes, there are some students who will leave our High School with a full year of college credits under their belt. We offer numerous Advanced Placement (AP) credit courses.

? **What type of assessments/testing requirements exists for high school students?** High school students participate in a variety of assessments based on course enrollment. The majority of the assessments are developed by the teachers and reflect student learning in the specific content area. The district utilizes Measures of Academic Progress in grades 9 and 10, a nationally normed assessment as a yardstick for measuring student performance in reading and math. Newington initially used the Grade 10 CAPT as a graduation requirement as well as graduation credits as required by State law. Currently, the class of 2018 will be required to attain 25 credits to graduate. We are working to design ways to meet these requirements through the establishment of new courses and programs as the State shifts from the Grade 10 CAPT to the Grade 11 SBAC. Hopefully, when a new commissioner is appointed – we can discuss a more effective and efficient system for Newington's students.

? **Can you explain the Academy programs?** The Academy of Biomedical Sciences at Martin Kellogg Middle School opened on the first day of the 2014-2015 school year. It is an extended day program. Students take Humanities in the morning and then go to the academy to do their MATH/Science programs.

Twenty-five seventh grade students, class of 2020, are currently enrolled. The academy offers an innovative program focused on biomedical sciences and STEM related careers. Academy students engage in a project-based curriculum and focus on learning rigorous content within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to develop skills necessary to address challenges and real world problems in biotechnology, biomedical research and various medical fields. Students will gain in-depth knowledge of the human body, disease mechanisms, major biological themes, and other topics related to biomedical science. Students will have opportunity to learn from and work with leaders in the biomedical community by way of guest presenters,

teachers, field trips, and mentorships. Newington Public Schools is building nontraditional partnerships with professionals in the biomedical fields to help create an exciting and innovative learning environment for students involved in the academy. We have currently partnered a relationship with UCONN and Jackson Labs.

The Academy of Aerospace & Engineering at John Wallace Middle School is scheduled to open on the first day of the 2015 – 2016 school year. Twenty-five seventh grade students from the Class of 2021, will be enrolled. This is a similar concept. Students will be designing and building amphibious vehicles and aircraft. Aerospace engineering deals with designing and building machines that fly. Students will study Aeronautical engineering (within the Earth's atmosphere), and Astronautical engineering (outside the Earth's atmosphere). Aerospace engineering requires in-depth skills and understanding in physics, mathematics, aerodynamics and materials science.

- ? **How many students can you accept in each academy?** We can only accept 25 students in the Aerospace Academy in the fall of 2015. We will accept another 25 students at Martin Kellogg and 25 students at John Wallace for the 2015-2016 school year. The current total capacity of the middle school academy programs is 100 students due to the facilities. There are currently no plans to expand the program. We will evaluate the program space needs once they have been fully operational for two years.
- ? **Do students stay in the program once they are in or do they need to reapply every year?** Once a student has been accepted into the program, they do not need to reapply.
- ? **How will this work for students who are not enrolled in the Academies?** Most middle school students likely haven't made any concrete decisions on college or career pathways. The traditional middle school experience is still available to all students; however, non-academy students also have the ability to take Algebra and Geometry for credit so they will be prepared for all of the possibilities and opportunities available to them when they enter the high school. The academy students attend school on an extended day schedule and participate in a project-based curriculum specific to biomedical sciences. Non-academy students will still participate in project-based science experiences more general in nature as part of their regular science classes.
- ? **Some of the other students do not have extra-curricular activities?** Some students had to make difficult choices such as changing schools or missing music lessons. We have adjusted the schedule so the academy students can participate next year in performing in music groups.
- ? **What programs are in place for those students once they leave the academies after 8th grade?** First we need to make sure students have the prerequisite skills necessary to be successful in mathematics and science programs before placing them into an academy at the high school level. Once students get to the High School, the academies are less about a place and more about a planned program of study. Students will begin to hone their interests and branch off into a wide range of STEM pathways. Current course offerings such as forensics, nanotechnology, and many other math, science, and technology courses will become part of a sequence of pathways giving students multiple options to explore. Because the courses will not be exclusive to academy

students the opportunities for any student range from “testing the waters” by taking one course or committing to a full academy program.

- ?** **Does the high school have facilities to accommodate the students who are currently enrolled in the middle school academy program?** We are in the final design stages of the high school STEM facilities. The project has been designed into two phases of construction/renovation. At this time only Phase I has been requested and will meet the needs of the students currently enrolled in the middle school programs. The north wing of Newington High School is scheduled to be renovated in time for the arrival of the current grade seven students. The facility will include biomedical and aerospace labs, an updated culinary kitchen, a broadcasting studio, an Information Technology network training and design center, and a shared multipurpose “think tank” where teams of students can brainstorm ideas and test simulated designs and model prototypes. Phase II is planned for the future and will depend on program interest and available funding sources. Phase II would include an expanded biomedical facility that would simulate a variety of “real world” lab spaces specific to career pathways in the health care industry. Also included in Phase II would be a hospitality / event center capable of hosting large functions without any disruption to the daily operation of the school. This center could become a valuable resource to the town and provide a source of revenue for the district to self-fund smaller renovation projects.
- ?** **What are the other academies at NHS?** This fall three academies were opened at Newington High School. The IT and Digital Innovation Academy, The Finance and Business Management, and The Culinary and Hospitality Academy. These academies are open to all students based on availability and do not require a commitment to follow the full sequence if a student chooses not to do so. You can find more information on the high school website or [click here](#).
- ?** **I read in the newspaper that students can receive Microsoft certification? How does this work and do other schools offer these certificates?** For the 2014 – 2015 school year, students can receive a “Microsoft Office Specialist Certification” directly from Microsoft. We are hoping to expand our partnership with Microsoft and other industry leaders and incorporate other industry certification opportunities for the 2015-16 School Year.
- ?** **Can we get Federal Funds for the Associate Degree Program?** Obtaining federal funding is a complicated process and sometimes difficult for a suburban community to obtain. Having the knowledge and skills of a professional grant writer would be very helpful. A cost/benefit analysis could be done to determine our return on investment. We currently have a College Career Pathway program that students can earn college credits towards their Associate Degree at Capital Community College. In addition, we are hoping to partner with other colleges and universities. In addition, numerous students take advantage of the extensive Advanced Placement (AP) or UCONN course offerings at Newington High School. Many students obtain several college credits through course work at NHS that can be transferred to their college or university.

### 3. Technology & Infrastructure

#### Summary:

Parents were both excited and anxious about the district's implementation of 1:1 computing. There were many questions ranging from the logistics of the roll out to who would be responsible for damage to the device. Considerable time was spent at each session discussing the district's vision, board priorities, and long range planning process for how technology will be used as a tool to transform learning. Some parents were concerned that students would be working on a computer all day. Technology is nothing more than another tool that can be used to extend learning for our students. Parents of students involved in the current grade 4 pilot programs were able to ease some of the concerns parents had. A mandatory information and training session is given to parents prior to assigning students with a device. The district will also be providing "help sessions" and "tech support channels" once the program is rolled out in the fall.

#### Questions / Comments:

- ? **Is 1:1 technology included in the budget for students in grades 3-8?** Yes it is. If this line item makes it through the budget process we will be able to provide every student in grades K-2 with daily access to an iPad, every student in grades 3-10 with a Chromebook or laptop, and the ability for students in grades 11 and 12 to bring their own device or allow limited check out of a device at the high school library.
  
- ? **When they are in a certain grade—like 4th will they have computers?** Students in grades K-2 will have daily access to iPads, but the device will remain in the classroom. Students in grades 3-8 will have a Chromebook that will be individually assigned and can be taken home. The district will still maintain desktop and laptop computers in the computer labs and media centers in every school. Students will be exposed to Windows 8 and Microsoft programs at all levels as well as iMac computers at the secondary level in art and music classes. Upon graduation from Newington High School every student should be proficient in the use of multiple platforms and devices.
  
- ? **What is the liability with Chromebook next year and the rationale for sending them home?** We are sending the devices home because to promote "life-long learning" we believe students should be able to learn whenever they want and have access to the resources whenever they need them to learn something. Although we have been sending the devices home with the pilot classroom students for some time now and haven't lost one yet, we fully expect some of them will meet with an untimely end. There is obviously a difference between accidental and deliberate breakage. To put things into perspective, the cost of a Chemistry book at Newington High School is more than the cost of a Chromebook. Our students carry around six or more of these books and inevitably some are lost each year. We expect students to take reasonable care of their books and will expect the same for their Chromebook. We are in the process of developing an insurance program for those parents who are nervous about breakage. There will be a mandatory parent information and training session prior to distribution. Stay tuned.

- ? **Do you think most of our families have internet access? Wi-Fi?** Yes, based on our survey most families in Newington have access to the internet at home. Currently there are numerous locations throughout Newington that have “hotspots” including the Lucy Robins Wells Library. The Chromebook is designed to be able to work offline even without an internet connection; however, the functionality would be limited until the device connects to the internet again.
- ? **What if a parent says they don't want it?** They don't have to take it home. You don't need a district owned device to access the work. Students can access their account from any computer, tablet, or phone connected to the internet.
- ? **Will our books become electronic? Is the intent of Chromebook to replace text books?** First we need to get Chromebook in every student's hands first. Eventually, we will be able to write and distribute our own content including books. The purpose of the Chromebook is not to replace books although many of the resources including books will be available in digital format.
- ? **Are other high schools/districts doing this?** Yes, Glastonbury has implemented iPads in their high school. Many districts are moving in this direction very quickly. Our teachers involved in the pilot studies indicated the iPad was a great tool for K-2 but that beginning in grade 3 they needed more capability.
- ? **Is the IT Staff able to support 1:1?** The move to 1:1 devices is expected to allow for the removal of aging student computers in classrooms and some interdisciplinary labs. This anticipated reduction of these devices should allow the IT departmental staff to shift its resources to meet the technical support demands of a 1:1 initiative.
- ? **Is there security on the devices? Can they save to the network? You are protected by built-in security.** Each webpage and application you visit runs in a restricted environment. So visiting one page that's been infected with something malicious can't affect anything else on your computer. The devices cannot save to the network. These devices are designed to create, save, and to collaborate via cloud storage. Students will be able to use computers on the school network to get to files stored in the cloud.
- ? **Is your Wi-Fi able to support this?** Yes it is. Our entire technology infrastructure was rebuilt to meet the demands we planned to place on it; therefore, we purposefully did not purchase large quantities of devices until we were able to build the infrastructure to support them. Our infrastructure now has the ability to handle all of the devices as well as full streaming video. We continually monitor the network and heat map areas that need more access. We expect a few weak areas throughout the district but we will monitor and are prepared to add more access points if needed.
- ? **Are you ahead of the curve or catching up?** Yes to both! We are catching up on purchasing devices; however, we spent considerable time and money designing and building the infrastructure first before we began purchasing devices so we are ahead of most districts in that aspect.

- ? **Do we block internet sites such as games or Facebook?** Our filters monitor and block access to information and sites on the World Wide Web as required by the [Child Internet Protection Act](#). We focus on teaching students *digital citizenship*, therefore, access and instruction around social media sites is not prohibited. Some games are blocked due to content, but we do teach Advanced Programming, Gaming Development, and Mobile App Development courses at Newington High School, so we are careful to balance our restrictions as to allow students to learn the necessary skills required in the curriculum.
- ? **Will the academies be using Chromebooks?** No, they will maintain the use of a Lenovo laptop. Some of the specialized modules used in the academies will not run on a Chromebook. Google Classroom is used in the academies; therefore, although the device may be slightly different, academy students can still use their device in all of their non-academy classes.

## 4. Facilities Infrastructure & Maintenance

### Summary:

It was surprising how much misinformation was out there regarding the way the Capital Improvement Projects program operates and how it relates to the annual budget. Participants were genuinely concerned about making sure we maintain our facilities and infrastructure. Much of the concern appeared to stem from the town hall renovation project issues. Residents were worried about how the town was going to catch up on years of deferred maintenance that now seems to be negatively affecting the ability to attract new families to Newington.

### Questions / Comments:

- ? **A question was asked regarding the roof over the high school pool.** The replacement of the pool roof can no longer be deferred and must be repaired this summer. The repair cost is currently included in the maintenance budget. This item will not be considered as a possible cut from the maintenance budget.
- ? **What is the designation of priority 1, 2 items etc.** Priority 1 items are those that have been identified as needing to be done in the next year. Priority 2 items are those that are needed but can possibly be deferred for another year.
- ? **What is the additional CIP funding (rumored to be at \$88,000,000)** One of the Board's priorities is to provide infrastructure and facilities that support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Major CIP recommendations require funding through the Town's Capital Improvement budget (i.e. renovating school(s)). We have not built a new school in more than 40 years and only 2 have been "renovate as new" projects that were completed 8 years ago (Ruth Chaffee & Elizabeth Green). The annual Capital Improvement Program in Newington has allowed for many smaller projects to be implemented so that we can avoid or delay the major capital projects we are seeing in neighboring districts. Routine CIP items are managed through the 125-Account. The routine 125-Account refers to the \$125,000 mandated by Town Charter for routine maintenance items. By Town Charter, all tuition and rental fees are deposited to the account to manage the routine maintenance items. The Board provides a list to the Town of current year and nine (9) past years routine items. *Perhaps the "rumored" amount was a tally of the past nine years, which is incorrect.*
- ? **What are the renovation proposals for Anna Reynolds and John Paterson Schools?** Anna Reynolds was built in 1956 and John Paterson was built in 1961. Although our maintenance staff has done an outstanding job, the facility infrastructure is well beyond the expected life and beyond our ability to address through routine maintenance. Both schools require approximately \$14,000,000 to renovate (currently 59% State reimbursable). Anna Reynolds was originally proposed for renovation next year; however, it has been deferred again due to funding requirements. Anna Reynolds cannot be deferred much longer due to the deteriorating condition of the facility.
- ? **The current bus garage is not sufficient. Are there any plans for the bus garage? Can we build on the existing bus garage?** This is on the CIP list and will likely be considered as part of the town hall renovation.

## General Comments and Suggestions

---

- 🗨️ Parents would like to see smaller class sizes.
- 🗨️ My son is in the accelerated math program, and he really likes it.
- 🗨️ Parents would like to see World Language for elementary schools.
- 🗨️ Parents appreciated the weather cancellation/delay phone calls the day before as it was very helpful to plan. They especially appreciated the 90 minute delay call the day before.
- 🗨️ A proposal was made, as we develop our district curriculum to further support technology integration, to consider making this available for profit.
- 🗨️ Suggestion was made to provide to only those students that need a Chromebook with one vs providing all students 1:1
- 🗨️ Concern was expressed regarding the allocation for an SRO, and the value of this position
- 🗨️ Recommendation was made to ensure an appropriate allocation in the area of maintenance.
- 🗨️ Maintenance on the Town Hall was deferred and look what happened. Don't let maintenance be put off.
- 🗨️ Suggestion was made to investigate opportunities to access grant funds
- 🗨️ Discussion regarding the use of schools on weekends, custodial overtime, etc.
- 🗨️ Many parents were very unhappy about the quantity and quality of our school lunches.



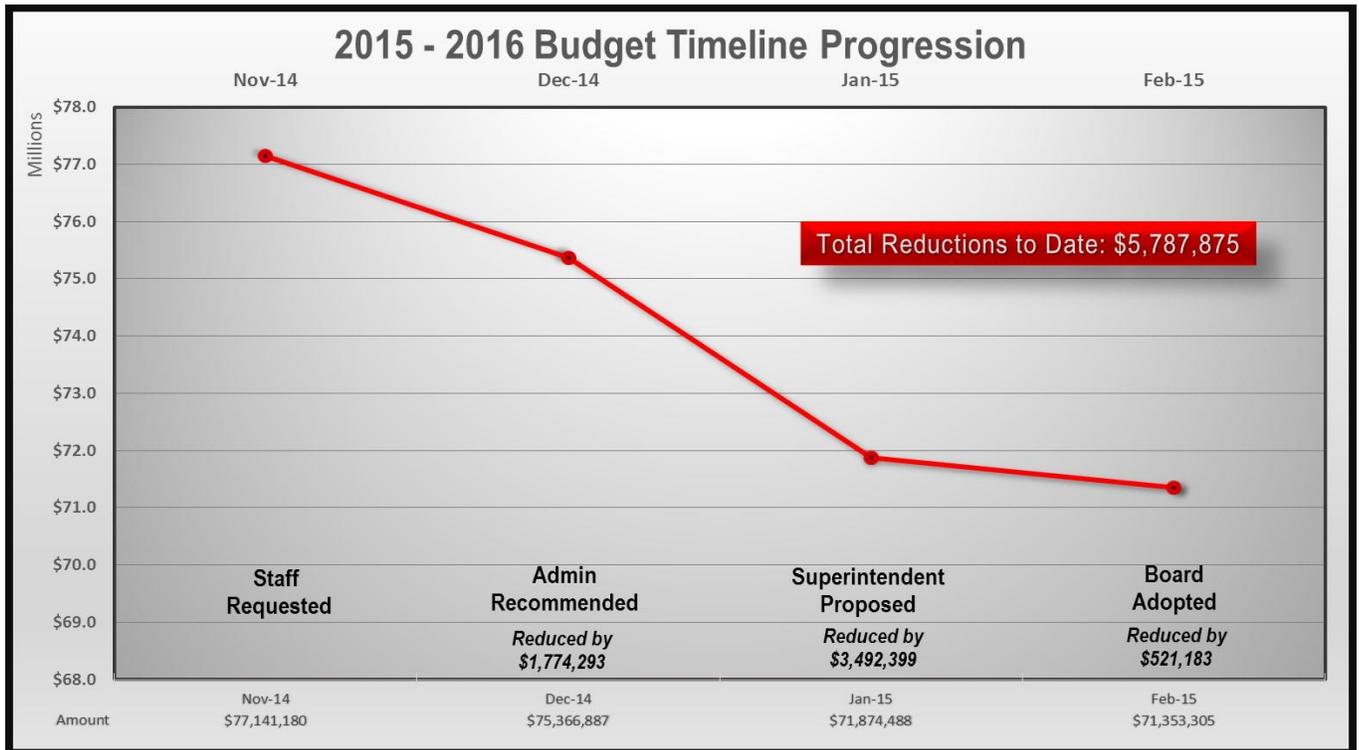
# Priorities

<b>i</b>	<b>Summary of Conversations With Participants</b>
	<p><i>Parents were very eager to share their feedback and were very open and honest about some of their concerns. It was very clear that the quality and reputation of the schools was the primary reason many of our parents chose Newington as their home. While parents were understandably concerned about tax increases, they seemed to be more concerned about the negative impact on property values that would occur if the quality and reputation of the schools declined.</i></p> <p><i>While parents were generally very happy with the schools, there were three areas in which parents expressed disappointment in our lack of progress. At each of the learning tour stops, parents were very vocal about moving forward with the following three things.</i></p>

## Parents Top Priorities for Moving Forward in the Very Near Future

Priority	Comments
<b>K-12 World Language Program</b>	This was the hot button issue for many parents. Parents were very disappointed that we have not implemented World Language into our elementary program. They want to see it implemented beginning in Kindergarten and carried through high school.
<b>Early Childhood Options</b>	This too was a major concern for parents. Many parents are seriously considering sending their three and four year old children to magnet schools because we currently do not have universal preschool. Parents were honest by saying that once children are comfortable in a school they would be very reluctant to move them. They fully support and strongly recommend the district move forward quickly with increasing access to preschool in our schools.
<b>Deferred Maintenance</b>	Parents were also very concerned about the deferred maintenance issues in town and were very vocal about not having another “Town Hall” emergency. There were many questions about the reasons for not funding at the very least the priority 1 maintenance issues in our schools.

# 2015 – 2016 Budget Timeline Progression



We are very thankful to the many parents and community members who took the time to share their opinions and ideas with us throughout this process. We are continuously seeking ways to provide the best possible educational experiences for our students. Feedback and ideas are always welcome, so please feel free to send us an email or give us a call.

[www.npsct.org](http://www.npsct.org)

