

2024-2025 Budget Questions Workshop

January 10, 2024

General/Executive Summary

1. Please give cost estimates for the 3 areas of System Improvements noted in the executive summary pg 3-4.

a. Increase access to high-quality learning experiences for all students.

- Assessment of Proficiency and Performance in Spanish in grades 5, 8, 11 and 12.
 - Total cost: \$9,600
- American Sign Language (ASL) at the middle school.
 - Total cost: \$66,181
- Additional comprehensible readers for middle school World Language classes
 - Total cost: \$4,000
- Middle school World Language digital textbooks/resources
 - Total cost: \$12,000
- Middle school Social Studies texts
 - Total cost: \$5,500
- New textbook for Medical Mysteries course
 - Total cost: \$3,100
- Digital textbooks for high school Statistics and Calculus courses
 - Total cost: \$35,270
- Software for Personal Finance
 - Total cost: \$6,000
- (Updated January 12, 2024) Mobile desks and chairs for middle school English Language Arts and high school Mathematics
 - Total cost: \$185,280
- New textbooks for AP US Government & Politics and AP Environmental Science courses
 - Total cost: \$19,332
- Curriculum - we will be in the Initial Implementation phase for the following newly revised curricula:
 - K-1 Health: \$3,984
 - MS Career/Technical Education: \$7,702
 - MS English Language Arts: \$1,382
 - MS Humanities Enrichment: \$1,328
 - MS Spanish & French: \$8,857

- MS Social Studies: \$2,304
- HS Algebra, Algebra II, and Geometry: \$8,067
- HS English I, II, III, Honors: \$4,428
- HS Spanish Culture & Conversation: \$1,181
- HS World History, US History, Civics & American Government, Crime & Punishment, Ancient History, Anthropology, Economics, Global Human Geography & Culture, and Model UN: \$14,172
- Middle and high school musical instruments
 - Total cost: \$15,759
- New Foran band uniforms
 - Total cost: \$72,000
- Two Teachers in Residence to increase diversity of teaching staff
 - Total cost: \$72,000
- b. Expanding career pathway learning opportunities aligned to industry needs.
 - 3D printers for new middle school TechEd (Engineering Design) courses.
 - Total cost: \$30,690
 - Digital equipment for Law Journalism class
 - Total cost: \$8,686
 - Digital equipment for Foran TechEd class
 - Total cost: \$4,389
 - The addition of an eSports team at the high school level
 - Total cost: \$36,000
- c. Ensuring infrastructure and equipment support effective operations.
 - Computers and servers replacements.
 - Total cost: \$340,572
 - Security cameras and computers.
 - Total cost: \$95,623
 - Additional firewalls for increased cyber security.
 - Total cost: \$38,140

- 2. *System Improvements on pg 3 -- Initial Implementation phase for the curricular areas mentioned – please give examples of what the budgeted dollars would be used for.***

During year three (Initial Implementation) of the Milford Public School's Curriculum Revision Cycle, staff work collaboratively to write implementation guides in alignment to the newly revised curriculum. These teams write the guides and identify appropriate resources to support implementation across the district. Full implementation of the curriculum in this phase occurs in all classrooms with the support of the instructional team (coaches, specialists, curriculum/departments chairs and supervisors). Finally, accompanying assessments are piloted in this phase. Therefore, the budget that supports this phase includes paying teachers for planning time, resource and materials acquisition.

- 3. *New Foran band uniforms – when were these last replaced? What is the expected lifespan?***

The current band uniforms at Foran High School were purchased beginning in the 2006-2007 school year. The tops for each uniform were acquired in the 2006-2007 school year with the pants purchased in 2007-2008. Jonathan Law was provided new uniforms in 2020. The uniforms are utilized for approximately ten events each school year. Therefore, we anticipate approximately a ten year lifespan for the requested uniforms.

- 4. *Page 2 of exec summary, #2d – proposal to expand partnership with Bridges to add clinical therapists at Harborside, East Shore, and Foran. What will be the specific cost to MPS for this? What types of services will these clinicians provide and how do they differ from Certified School Counselors?***

Clinicians provided through Bridges have a psychiatric focus in their training, which is different from school based counselors. Bridges child clinical staff will develop individualized treatment plans with measurable goals and objectives. Their approach will utilize their training of Evidence Based Practices that are targeted to address trauma. Effective intervention will be based on baseline and outcome measures to confirm improvement of the presenting symptoms as outlined in the treatment plan. Focused areas for intervention include anxiety, depression, trauma and conduct issues. Clinicians

received extensive specialized training in these areas above and beyond college-level training.

At this time, the five-year grant acquired through Bridges funds clinicians at The Academy, WSMS and Law. The additional three clinicians for HSMS, ESMS and Foran will amount to \$150,000.

Connecticut school districts are required to ensure all students have access to a comprehensive school counseling program delivered by a certified school counselor (Public Act 19-63). The role of the school counselor is comprehensive in nature and provides a “tier 1” approach to supporting all students. Additionally, small group and one-on-one support is provided. The school counselor’s role in realizing student potential for healthy growth is focused on the three broad areas of academics, career and social-emotional development. The school counseling program ensures equitable access to services for all students in each school building.

- a. Executive Summary Budget Message Item 2d. “Additional Clinical Therapists” Grant Attained in partnership with Bridges Healthcare – What is the amount of this grant obtained to cover West Shore and Jonathan Law? What will be the BOE’s cost to cover ESMS, HMS & Foran?*

The five year grant was obtained by Bridges. The approximate salary cost for a clinician not included in the grant is \$50,000 (\$150,000 in total).

- 5. Please include an estimated cost of any newly implemented state mandates included in this budget, including the Right To Read legislation and that two delayed mandates from last year relating to menstrual products and HVAC that will need to be addressed in this budget cycle.*

- a. Page VI – Right to Read Act compliance – can you please share the new deadline for compliance? Is there any update on what this might cost us in this budget year?*

The Center for Literacy and Reading Success at the CSDE has required that all districts adopt one program from an approved list of vendors or institute a compendium of curriculum resources to be in alignment with the Science of Reading. The district began its review of the Approved programs during the Spring of 2023. The potential financial impact of program adoption ranges from

approximately \$187,000 for instructional resources to fulfill the compendium to \$1,263,300 for full adoption of an approved program. Legislation requires implementation for July 2025.

Mandated HVAC requirements will be funded through the Capital Improvement Plan and will cost approximately \$350,000.

Mandated menstrual products are anticipated to cost \$30,000.

- 6. *Security services is listed as a savings area. What was reduced here?***
- a. *What accounts for the decreases in accts 3305 – Security Svcs and 3306 – Contracted Svcs.***
- In 23-24 there was a one-time purchase to enhance the Alertus system by upgrading the outdoor public address systems (speakers) at various schools.

- 7. *Contracted services is listed as a savings area. What was reduced here?***

These savings were a result of a new copier agreement and the elimination of the one-time fee for the utilization study.

- 8. *Specialized programming - please outline the differences in services provided, including with whom and where they will work, between:***
- The new Board Certified Behavior Specialist - District wide Pre K to 12
 - The expanded Bridges work for clinical specialists - Foran, Eastshore, Harborside
 - The two new classrooms for Specialized Program and Behavioral Support will provide services to elementary students (location TBD)
 - The 4 FTE school counselors transferring off of ARP grant. The elementary school counselors added with the relief funds are currently assigned to JFK, Live Oaks, Mathewson, and Orchard Hills and will serve students in Grades K-5.

9. *Specialized programming - What is the topline "all-in" budget request for specialized services? What percentage of the budget does this represent?*

As referenced in Dr. Cutaia's letter, number 2, the total cost will be \$522,603 for specialized services which includes: behavioral support program, specialized support program, additional behavioral support, and additional clinical therapists. This represents .005% of the total budget.

10. *Page IV – Under first sub-bullet, "Development of a recruitment plan with action steps that enhance the diversity of our workforce". Can you discuss the report required by the state and its deadline for submission? Will this require significant resources to comply?*

The state requires that all Connecticut school districts develop and implement a plan to increase educator diversity. The plan will be developed by a district team and a draft is due to the CSDE on March 15 for review. The final plan, completed after feedback from the CSDE, is due on May 15 and districts must begin implementation of the plan on July 1, 2024. The plan will have a goal in each of three areas: recruitment, hiring, and retention, along with strategies for attainment of the goal.

The resources to comply with *developing* the plan are the time and work of our team. The resources to *implement* the plan will primarily be funds for professional development on implicit bias. In part, the addition of the Associate Director of TMD (added in this current year's budget) will support this work and limit the need to expend district funds to comply.

\$72,000 is included in this budget to participate in the Teacher in Residence program which will help us better diversify our teaching staff.

11. *Page VI – Second bullet – Is there additional information regarding the increase in costs of energy prices starting in January 2025? If not, do you have an ETA on when this might be better known?*

We recently entered into a new contract which will begin in December 2024. Our rate, at that time, will be approximately 10.8 cents per kWh. Currently, we are paying 6.4 cents per kWh.

Salaries - 1000

- 12. 1110 - page X The Admin line: proposed budget is \$6.1M, in 21/22 the line was \$5.4M and on page XV it lists the headcount, proposed 35.5 and in 21/22 it was 33.5. I'd like to know more about how that line item went up 700k with only two more people.***

The increase between the 21/22 Expended amount and the 24/25 Proposed Budget consists of contractual and step increases for administrators which span three fiscal years. Additionally, the Board supported a new Supervisor for Equity and Engagement. There is also an accounting shift from 1120 Non- Certified Supervisor (-1.0 FTE) to 1110 Administrator (+1.0 FTE).

- 13. 1110 on pg 1 –Who is included in the “All Schools” line and what is the policy/ programmatic impact of change going from 7 FTE to 8 and adding one more in central office.***

Included in the All Schools line are the central office instructional supervisors. In 22/23 .2 FTE was added for the Supervisor of Early Childhood and in 23/24 .8 FTE of the Equity and Engagement Supervisor which was shifted from the ARP ESSER grant to the general fund. The remaining portions of these two FTEs are funded by grants.

The district added a Supervisor of Equity and Engagement to best support the Board of Education's [Equity Resolution adopted in December 2020](#). The Supervisor works with students and staff across all 14 schools.

- 14. Acct 1111 Page 2: the teacher head count seems to fluctuate by year. Is that only driven by student headcount, channeling finding staff or are there other variables that are considered? Same question for both reg ed and special ed***

Regular Ed teacher headcounts will fluctuate year to year based on the enrollment per grade level in each school (and therefore the number of sections needed per grade) and the course offerings/enrollment in the middle and high schools.

Special education FTE will increase by 2 since there is a proposal for a behavioral support program and specialized program classroom at the

elementary level. The number of special education teachers teaching at each school yearly is based on the number of special education students in a building.

15. Acct 1117 – Please give more details of the increase in the budgeted amount for substitute teachers, since the pay rate has remained stable.

a. Acct 1117 Substitute Teachers - 23/24 Adopted \$960,040 – 24/25 Proposed Budget \$1,246,740, increase of \$286.7k and 29.86%. Why such a big increase? There are still building substitutes, but the projected lack of interns is concerning and creates a ~\$287k increase.

b. Substitutes - please explain the significant increase in the request for substitutes. How much of it reflects a shift away from interns vs how much reflects an increase in overall demand for substitutes across the district?

Substitutes for the approximate 650 teachers employed in MPS are budgeted for in this account. Contractually, teachers receive 4 personal days and 15 sick days per year. The days taken by teachers vary significantly due to personal life circumstances. Each year teachers also may require long-term leaves because of pregnancy, life-threatening illnesses, injuries, and family emergencies.

The current pay rate for per diem substitute teachers is \$140 and this was also the rate for 2022-2023. A long-term sub who works 30 consecutive days in the same assignment will be paid a higher rate of \$ 281.11.

This line also includes two teachers for our participation in the Teacher in Residence Program (through CREC, a RESC, with the goal to diversify our teaching staff). The only cost that is not a variable is the teachers in residence cost, which is \$60,000. The number of building subs will go up if building interns cannot be secured.

We do our best to budget an anticipated amount, based on what we think we will need and according to prior year's expended amounts. With the continued shortage of interns (due to the decreased amount of students entering the field of education), we anticipate having to add more building subs each year and that is one reason for the increase.

While the increase is significant in year-over-year adopted budget amounts, when you look at expended amounts, last year's expended budget in this account was \$1,382,629 which is greater than the 24-25 requested amount. Year to date

expenditures in this account demonstrate an anticipated deficit as referenced in the quarterly budget report from Jan 8, 2024.

16. 1123- the hourly aides dropped from 14 FTE to 3, is the need gone or are the students serviced by other staff now?

3.0 FTE in the 24-25 budget are in-school suspension monitors at each middle school. In 21-22, this account represented school greeters (8 at the elementary and 3 at the middle school). In 22-23, these positions joined the secretarial bargaining unit. You will see them listed on page 5 in account 1121.

17. Acct 1127 Page 7: overtime salaries; what classifications of employees are getting overtime? I saw the definition on page 10 but if it's possible to display the previous year's expenditures by job classification that'd be much appreciated.

Any hourly employee is eligible for overtime pay. Some examples of hourly employees are custodians, secretaries, paras, greeters, security guards, IT, van drivers, etc.

18. Acct 1130 Pg 8 - How many retirements are we budgeting for in this 24-25 request?

a. Page 8 – Account 1130 Retirements – how many retirees are included in the budgeted amount of 825k?

We have budgeted for 15 retirements.

19. Salaries and referencing Executive Summary page XVII Enrollment and Staffing Projected 24/25) The projected non-classroom-regular-ed teacher FTE for 24/25 is:

	# of Classrooms	2024/2025 FTE Teachers Reg Ed (including all specialists)	Teachers Regular Ed beyond Classroom
CPM	15	26.15	11.15
Mead	15	25.65	10.65
OAS	20	31.85	11.85
PDS	12	21.45	9.45
LOS	13	23.75	10.75
Math	19	30.65	11.65
OHS	18	29.55	11.55
JFK	17	27.15	10.15

What is the impact of scaling back the Instructional Coaches from 4 per Elementary to 2 per Elementary. In asking this I have: -rewatched 12/8 BOE meeting regarding “Instructional Highlight: K-12 English/Language Arts & Literacy” -reviewed presentation of the 4/17/23 meeting regarding “Elementary Instructional Coaches”

This would reduce staffing by 16.0 FTEs. In the teacher's contract, the reduction of FTEs is based on seniority and certifications. Therefore, in most situations these more senior teachers will bump less seniors teachers (lower salaries). The savings is then based on entry-level salaries.

Also, in the “BOE Proposed Budget Potential Reductions dated March 27, 2023 there was a line item: “Eliminate One Elementary Instructional Coach Per School”. At the time this would have been 8 FTEs at \$44,550 each for a savings of \$356,400. I would like to understand the dollar impact of going from 4 to 2. The number of \$44,550 seems low as some names listed in the BOE Staff Directory appear to be those of some tenured teachers. Also, in Appendix E, page A14, there is nothing less than a \$52K salary.

As explained during the budget meetings last spring, the elimination of teaching staff is based on seniority and certification. Additionally, we discussed how payroll cycles would impact this reduction. Currently employed teachers would get paid through the summer because paychecks are spread out over summer months. Therefore, the next year’s savings are based on 10 months of salary hence the \$44,550 estimated savings per FTE.

20. How much of the salaries increase is mandated by the new union contract/s?

Board of Education approved contractual increases are below:

	2024-2025
Union	% Increase
MEA (Teachers)	3.75%
MASA (Administrators)	2.25%
Custodians	2.50%
Secretaries	2.75%
Security Guards	2.25%
Paraprofessionals	2.50%
Food Service/Media Aides	2.75%
Non-Union Employees	3.50%

Benefits - 2000

Contracted Services - 3000

21. Page 13 acct 3212 – please explain the decrease in Sub Teaching Services/Teaching Interns. What is that? There is no supporting narrative given. Please explain the decrease.

We have experienced a steady decrease in the number of Interns available to us each year. We host interns from the following universities: Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, Quinnipiac University, Southern Connecticut State University and the University of Bridgeport. We used to also use the University of New Haven up until such time when they closed down their Education program due to lack of enrollment/interest. All universities are experiencing Large decreases in enrollment in their education programs, thus making the number of available interns decrease as well.

When the number of interns decreases, the 3212 account will be overfunded and teacher subs will be used instead, resulting in more money being charged to the 1117 Substitute Teacher account.

Facilities - 4000

22. Pg 16 Acct 4100 - Is there any explanation of why the electrical costs from Foran was 156k and in 22/23 it jumped to 269k? And we are at 262k now.

In 21/22, the city installed a new microgenerator (energy source) which resulted in a change in the method of billing. The timing of this change resulted in an anomaly of the billing between the city and the board of ed which crossed fiscal years.

20/21 expended	\$227,000
21/22 expended	\$156,966
22/23 expended	\$269,512
23/24 adopted	\$242,722
24/25 proposed	\$262,658

23. I am happy to see a greater investment in the 24-25 request for buildings and grounds accts 4304/4305. Please provide some examples of projects that were requested but not included in this budget request.

(Question answered on January 11, 2024)
2024-2025 Building and Grounds Projects

Transportation, Tuition & Other Support - 5000

24. Page 23 – Account 5106 Field Trips – can you add some detail as to why the expense is growing by 31% (~25k)? Does it include anticipated fuel cost increases?

As the district continues to build its curriculum for core and elective courses across the disciplines, we continue to explore opportunities to connect learners with experiential learning experiences that are authentic. For example, as our

fine and performing arts programs evolve to incorporate more voice and choice, there are additional experiences for our choir, band and strings students to participate in MIOSM concerts, as well as symposiums and festivals through the University of Connecticut and Sacred Heart.

As we continue to perform needs assessments and reflect on our growing career and technical education programs, we have created intentional opportunities for students to engage in job-embedded, industry related experiential learning through programs such as the Connecticut Manufacturing Roadshow and Milford Vascular Institute.

25. Page XIII / Page 24 – Account 5401 Telecommunications – please discuss the additional costs to increase this by 20% (~50k)

The additional costs associated with telecommunications are wireless hotspots which came off of the Emergency Connectivity Fund grant. Some phone lines still need to be converted to VOIP/cell service such as elevators, areas of refuge and fire/security systems.

Educational Supplies - 6000

26. *Pg 29 – Accts 6100 and 6110: are these totals resulting from individual school requests?*

Each school develops its instructional and non-instructional supply budgets identifying the specific requests needed to meet the needs of students and staff in each building. This process also honors the collaborative nature of our work in MPS and therefore involves instructional supervisors working with building leadership to review supply accounts and discuss needs for each building.

Account 6100 and 6110, it is a combination of both, individual school requests and other district departments. Please refer to page 29 for a breakdown by school/department.

Equipment - 7000

Other Educational Support - 8000

Grants

27. Will all the ARPA funding allocated to BOE be exhausted?

Yes, the ARP/ESSER grant expires September 30, 2024.

28. Page G1 – Entitlement and Competitive Grants – there are several lines that have ‘non-finalized’ budgeted numbers. Can you discuss the difference between entitlement grants and competitive grants? Are there potential general fund budget impacts for non-finalized values?

Entitlement grants provide funds to schools and districts based on a predetermined formula which can be based on a variety of factors including enrollment and socioeconomic status. Competitive grant applications are open to all districts and originate upon the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) from an office within the State Department of Education. Competitive grants require schools and districts to submit a formal application that is reviewed, scored, and funded based on the quality of the proposed program.

Non-finalized values indicate that we have not received the final award letter from the state and the grant is in process and we do not see any significant changes to those figures. Upon submission of a grant application, a program manager at the state department reviews the application before it is passed to the fiscal office for approval of grant funds to be allocated to a district. This process can transpire over the duration of several weeks once the grant has been submitted as complete.

Appendix

29. Pg A21 – Buildings Projects abatement for 13 classrooms. How much abatement is left to do?

There is still abatement that needs to be completed across the district, including instructional spaces. It is difficult to quantify how much is left to complete all abatement work across the district. When renovation or construction projects occur, there are times when structural analysis requires us to perform abatement. Because of the age of our buildings, in most cases, we plan for abatement when

conducting renovation/updating projects such as in these 13 classroom floor replacements. Abatement is part of our continual process of facilities maintenance.

30. Page A21: With respect to the grounds and building projects, some are obviously more of a critical need than others (abatement/ceiling work for example). Can the lists be prioritized from a "need" vs. "want" standpoint?

The list has been prioritized on a scale per school based on highest need to lowest. This is impacted by many factors which are reviewed annually. Life safety projects take priority. Some of those factors include current initiatives/programs, age of facility/grounds, etc. All facility/grounds projects are considered in the context of “needs” as related to district priorities.

31. Page A3 – Q/A # 15 – Is it correct that the City received ~ \$9.6M last year and the BOE received ~ \$1.2 reimbursement from the City?

These are two separate and distinct funding sources. The first is known as Education Cost Sharing which is given to the city to defray the cost of funding public education. The amount of \$9,673,235 is an approximate amount that the city will receive in education cost sharing.

The second is Excess Cost Grant given to the city to assist in funding the shortfall in cost for special education students who exceed 4.5 times the average cost per student. MPS makes an annual reimbursement request to the city based on those students whose education costs exceed 4.5 times the per pupil costs to educate a student. Last year, the Board requested \$1,173,474 from the money the city received from the State for excess cost.

Additional Questions

32. For play-based learning in PreK and K, how many need to be completed or revised based on learnings?

All pre-K and K classrooms have been provided with the necessary furniture and resources for play-based learning.

33. *What is the breakdown of mandatory vs discretionary spending? Broadly speaking, what budget categories fall into each bucket?*

It is mandatory for students to attend school for a minimum of 180 days but it is not, for example, mandatory that we provide certain athletic and extracurricular opportunities. As aligned to the Board's mission, vision, commitments and goals, we believe that all aspects of our programming and budgeting fall under the category of non-discretionary spending.

34. *Please share requests that were not included in the final budget request. Would very much like to know some of the programs "on the cutting room floor" that didn't make the budget.*

Some of the deferred requests include:

- Art teacher
- Mandarin teacher
- Multilingual Learner teacher
- Specialized programming at middle and high school
- Specialized equipment
- Additional firewall
- Vertical mobile white boards
- Elementary social studies materials
- Kiln at PDS
- Additional security cameras and replacement cameras
- Digital equipment for Art
- Equipment for physical education
- Additional musical instruments
- Pottery wheel
- iPads
- Additional maintenance truck
- Maintenance equipment