



Stafford Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

Winter Newsletter

February 2019

From Mr. Moccio's Desk:

In my fall newsletter, I stated that effectiveness, efficiency, and convenience for parents/guardians, students, and staff are primary considerations when reviewing new initiatives. Keeping these considerations in mind, our focus over the last several months has been to create a budget for the upcoming school year, which balances the needs of the district with the town's willingness and ability to pay. This extensive, collaborative process analyzed every line item of the budget.

On January 14 and 28, 2019, I presented the proposed 2019 – 2020 Budget for the Stafford Public Schools to the Board of Education. My initial proposal reflected an increase of 1.78% as compared to the 2018 – 2019 CT State Department of Education's Minimum Budget Requirement (CSDE-MBR)*. Following presentations and deliberations, savings realized from newly accepted resignations and retirements were reinvested on items that are a priority and align with the district's vision, while strategically supporting growth for all students.

The revised budget is currently an increase of 1.55%. Although the proposed 2019 – 2020 budget includes the reduction of several open positions for next year, it also contains the addition of positions that will expand programming and district-level support, as well as provide funding for curriculum revision and continuous learning for all staff.

As part of the budget process and in an effort to assess effectiveness and efficiency, on January 14, 2019, the Board authorized administration to begin the process of collecting and reviewing information related to the district's current grade configuration. As per the Every Student Succeeds Act, the federal government requires the State of Connecticut to determine and publish the per-pupil spending for *each school* in the state in addition to the district per-pupil calculation. The information the administration gathers will supplement the State requirement. This information will not be used to inform the 2019-2020 budget, but rather to assist with long-term planning as the district continually works to improve student achievement and increase opportunities for all learners. The district's 3-year budget trend shows an average town approved increase of just 0.516%, with the 5-year budget trend showing an average increase of 0.711%. Should that trend continue, the district may struggle in meeting the varying student needs while best preparing all students for future success.

While student test scores are not the sole indicator of district success, they do provide a measure of the strength of current programming and identify areas for continued growth. A recent article in the *Journal Inquirer* articulated a trend of decreasing student achievement scores in Stafford. For those that have not read the article, it discussed overall score results on the spring 2018 standardized assessment in grades three through eight. The article associated a downward trend in scores to the transitions taking place in the district at the time.

Based on an in-depth review of the test scores, the current administration targeted areas for improvement and is fully committed to revising our curriculum, strengthening classroom instruction, aligning assessment practices, and providing high-quality professional development for our staff. Additional information regarding all spring 2018 standardized test scores (SBAC, AP, and SAT) and current in-school assessments can be accessed on the district website (www.stafford.k12.ct.us) under Departments > Curriculum & Instruction > District Assessment Results, or by clicking "[2018 District Assessment Results](#)". The PowerPoint presentation provides detail regarding each assessment category and explains the steps the district is taking to increase overall student achievement.

I have expanded my newsletter to include highlights and achievements. In an ongoing effort to increase communication and acknowledge the exciting work students and staff are doing in our district, we are in the process of creating a Stafford Public Schools Facebook page. I hope that you will take the time to "like" our page.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events!

Summary of 2019 – 2020 Proposed Budget

- ✓ Superintendent's proposed 19-20 budget reflecting a 1.78% increase as compared to CSDE-MBR* presented to the Board of Education (BOE) on January 14 and 28, 2019
- ✓ Following presentations and deliberation, savings realized were reinvested while reducing the budget to a 1.55% increase
- ✓ The proposed budget provides additional programming and district support in the following areas:
 - World Language Teacher (SMS)
 - Band Teacher increased to full-time (SMS/SES)
 - IT Technician increased to full-time (District)
 - Maintenance Worker (District)
- ✓ Click [here](#) to be connected to the district website (www.stafford.k12.ct.us), which contains additional information including:
 - Overview of process and identified priorities
 - Enrollment information
 - Trends in budgetary allocations and increasing levels of student need
 - Staffing adjustments
 - Details related to reinvestment of savings since initial budget presentations



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Dates to Remember

Monday and Tuesday, February 18 & 19, 2019

Presidents' Day / February Break

Monday, February 25, 2019

BOE Meeting – Stafford Elementary School, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday and Thursday, March 6 & 7, 2019

Gr. PK-5 Conferences (Shortened Day)

Friday, March 8, 2019

Professional Development Day (No School)

Monday and Tuesday, March 11 and 12, 2019

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Registration at West Stafford School

Wednesday and Thursday, March 13 and 14, 2019

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Registration at Staffordville School

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

Connecticut SAT School Day

Thursday, March 28, 2019

Professional Development Day (Early Dismissal)

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

CT Science Testing – Grade 5

Monday, April 15 to Friday, April 19, 2019

April Vacation / Good Friday

Tuesday, April 30 to Friday, May 24, 2019

Smarter Balanced Assessment Testing Window

Wednesday, May 8, 2019

CT Science Testing – Grade 8 and 11

Highlights and Accomplishments

Stafford High School was the sole Connecticut recipient of the **AMGEN Biotechnology Experience Grant** funded in conjunction with the University of Rhode Island and AMGEN Biotechnology of Rhode Island. Ms. DeSantis and Ms. Baer's biology students participated in the program before the holiday break, learning the biological principles around genetic cloning and utilizing research grade equipment to transfer a fluorescent protein gene from a sea anemone to a bacterial cell.

Our fifth grade teacher team has been working with Mrs. Erickson, Technology Integration Specialist, on the **Connecticut Invention Convention program**. All fifth grade students have been immersed in the engineering design process where they have selected a novel project idea, constructed and tested prototypes, and formatted presentations of their data. Students will present their projects at a showcase to be held on **March 21, 2019, at 5:30 p.m., at Stafford Elementary School**. Thank you to the fifth grade teachers for their hard work in supporting our students on their projects!

Stafford Middle School was recognized as a National Unified Champion School. Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation, is working with the administrators at the primary schools in hopes of expanding the program.

Rotary Student of Month

September - Paige Beaudoin

October - Dalton Cox

November - Julianna DeSantis-Raymond

December - Nick Wyse

January - Madison Prentiss

February - Kathryn Hornung



Upcoming Board Meeting Topics

- ❖ 2019 – 2020 Budget Approval - February 25, 2019
- ❖ Continuation of a common graduation gown discussion - February 25, 2019
- ❖ Fall and Winter Sports Presentation - March 11, 2019
- ❖ Districtwide Celebration of Excellence - May 20, 2019

Board meeting agendas are posted no later than the Friday preceding the Board meeting on the district and school calendars on the website. Board meetings are normally held at Stafford Elementary School, in the cafetorium, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Nurses' Corner

The school nurses have updated the Health and Wellness Information on the Health Services portion of the website. Click [here](#) to see the latest information.



*2018-2019 CSDE-MBR

Each year the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) calculates the minimum budget requirement (MBR) a municipality is required to appropriate to their respective Board of Education. The calculation factors state funding to the Town of Stafford through the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant and the number of student-age children residing in Stafford, which includes those attending Stafford Public Schools, plus resident students that attend private and parochial schools, or receive homeschool instruction.

For the 2018-19 school year, the CSDE calculated the MBR value to be \$27,898,655.39, or \$239,655 more than appropriated by the Board of Finance and voted on during last year's town referendum. Per the CSDE, the Town of Stafford has until June 30, 2019, to either appropriate the \$239,655, or a penalty of \$479,310 will be assessed to the town through a reduction of the 2020-21 ECS grant. It is my understanding that a town meeting will be required in order to appropriate the money. Should a town meeting be scheduled, I will notify you of the date, time, and location.