

Unapproved  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MARCH 16, 2009**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the Silas Deane Middle School Media Center, Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT.

Present from Council: Councilor Cascio, Console, Forrest, Hemmann, Roberts, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil.

Present from the Board of Education: Marie Massaro, Raul Rodriquez, Tristan Stanziale, Vice Chairperson Julie Montinieri, and Chairperson Stacey Hodges

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools; and Amy Bello, Assistant Town Clerk

Chairperson Adil welcomed everyone to the meeting and said he appreciates all of the hard work that the Board of Education and school staff has done on this budget. He is pleased with how well the Board of Education and Town Council work together.

**PRESENTATION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET**

Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools, introduced his staff: Michael Emmett, Director of Special Services; Karen Clancy, Director of Business Services; Italia Negroni, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; and Christopher Drezek, Director of Human Resources and Operations. He said that this budget represents a 2.85 percent increase, the lowest since 2000. He said that a 0 percent budget increase would be devastating to the school system. He presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Board of Education's proposed budget [attached].

Chairperson Adil said that the Board of Education has found savings in the telephone contracts this year.

Michael Kohlhagen said that there was an audit of the telephone system and savings were found by removing old fax lines and data lines. He said that this is a service that the Town can use, too. He continued his presentation.

Councilor Forrest asked that the Board of Education pass along to the Town Manager, information regarding their energy programs and asked that the Town and Board of Education work together if it proves advantageous to do so. He asked for an update on the residency program.

Michael Kohlhagen said that he has an updated report from the Residency Officer and will forward it to the Town Manager. He said that this year 51 students were investigated involving 47 families: 22 at the High School, 2 at the Middle School, and 23 at the elementary level.

Stacey Hodges, Chairperson of the Board of Education, said that she was surprised by the number of students at the elementary school level. She said that once these students are in the system, they continue through the system.

Councilor Walsh asked what is the impact of the Sheff v. O'Neil \$2,200 tuition reimbursement?

Michael Kohlhagen said that it is increasing to \$6,000 next year. He has already written a letter to the Commissioner of Education saying that with reduced staff and the current economic crisis, the Town of Wethersfield will not be able to take any new Sheff students next year.

Vice Chairperson Montinieri said that the Hartford Magnet Schools' tuition is a new line item in the budget.

Michael Kohlhagen said that he is looking to cap this expense if legally possible.

Councilor Hemmann asked how many vacant classrooms are in the schools and if she could have a report on class size.

Michael Kohlhagen said that there will be no empty classrooms next year. Some programs will be moving locations at the elementary school level.

Councilor Cascio asked if redistricting was looked at annually or only when there is a problem. He also asked if busing guidelines were looked at.

Michael Kohlhagen said that redistricting was looked at extensively. The busing guidelines are Town guidelines, but the Town is at the outer limit according to the State. He would like to talk to Legislators about a law to allow parents to opt out of busing. This would not be able to go into effect next year.

Councilor Cascio asked about the fee to belong to CABA and what other Towns belonged. He said that historically, the team that was added at the Silas Deane Middle School was to add quality and quantity to the education at the Middle School for students not making adequate progress.

Michael Kohlhagen said that CABA fees are \$23,000. All membership fees were looked at during the budget process. CABA offers legal services and policy updates that are beneficial to the Board of Education. The Town has only the base membership.

Councilor Roberts said that this is a very refreshing budget. She said that the Superintendent and the cabinet taking wage freezes is major, too. She said that they have done a great job.

Stacey Hodges, Chairperson of the Board of Education, said that the Board of Education has asked questions of the staff and administrators and talked to them about the dark outlook on the budget process. She was hoping that the bargaining units would come to the table and talk before the Town budget process begins.

## **UPDATE ON THE TOWN'S BUDGET**

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that she has completed the Town budget today and will be sending it to the printer this week. There is a difference in the revenue from last year to this year of \$1,400,000 and an overall increase in expenditures of \$462,022, for a total gap of \$1,900,000. The Town expenditure percentage increase is -2.62 percent and the Board of Education expenditure percentage increase is 2.85 percent. This budget would increase the average household tax by 5.55 percent. She said that this is a revaluation year and the mill rate will go down. She said that she doesn't want to touch the fund balance because the State may remove another 10 to 15 percent in State aid to cities. The problem with a revaluation year is that there will never be a 0 tax increase. In this current revaluation, condominium values have increased 30 percent, smaller "starter" homes have increased 18 percent, average upper middle homes have increased .01 percent and upper end homes have decreased 16 percent. Therefore some taxes will go up and some will go down. The Town Council will have to really concentrate on the expenditures in this budget.

Chairperson Adil said that there was a 30 percent increase to commercial real estate values, too.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that in a revaluation year, the mill rate usually goes down 7 to 8 points.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if Vision Appraisal has provided information on the affect of the revaluation on the budget to educate the public on the revaluation.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that information would be provided in the budget presentation.

Terry McGuiness, 115 Windmill Hill, asked how Wethersfield's taxes compare to surrounding Towns.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that Wethersfield's taxes are a little higher than Rocky Hill's taxes. Rocky Hill has a much larger commercial tax base. It is consistent with surrounding Towns. The Town's taxes are much lower than Hartford's.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he would like to see a report with the number of condominiums, small homes, upper middle homes and upper homes.

Councilor Roberts said that a 0 percent budget increase will still mean a tax increase for some property owners.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that every property owners' property values have gone up since the last revaluation.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that is not true. Some homes have actually gone down in value in the past five years.

Chairperson Adil reminded everyone that the Town does not go around increasing values when home values increase. The Town, by State law, has to pick a point in time to make these revaluations. He said the Board of Assessment appeals were low in number this year.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that some property owners may not have understood what the revaluation will mean for their taxes. He said that he would like to see a full report of each home.

Chairperson Adil thanked the Town Manager and Superintendent for their presentations and looks forward to hearing more about salary freezes on both sides of the aisle.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:45 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Hemmann. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

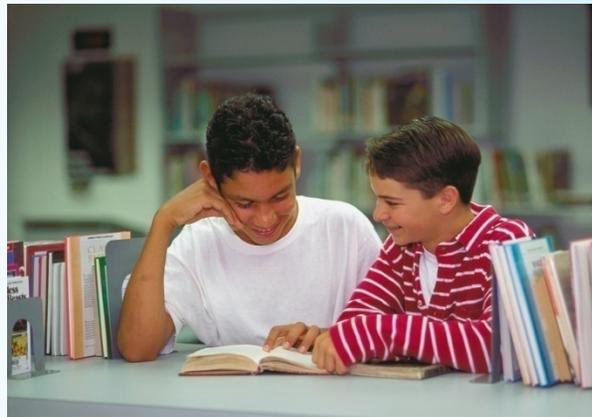
# Wethersfield Public Schools

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2009-2010

Recommended Education Budget  
Approved by the Board of Education

Town Council Meeting  
March 16, 2009



**Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools**  
**Rigor and Success for Every Student**

# Vision of the Wethersfield Board of Education

The Wethersfield Board of Education has created and adopted a vision for the Wethersfield Public Schools that focuses on three areas of central importance.

- As a result of the ***opportunities and outcomes*** they will have experienced in our school system, students will value their years in the Wethersfield Public Schools and face their future with optimism and confidence;
- The ***overall quality of our school system*** will be recognized for its excellence in the region and the state; and
- The ***school system's relationship with the Wethersfield community*** will be as an active partner with town government and civic organizations in strengthening the quality of life in our community.

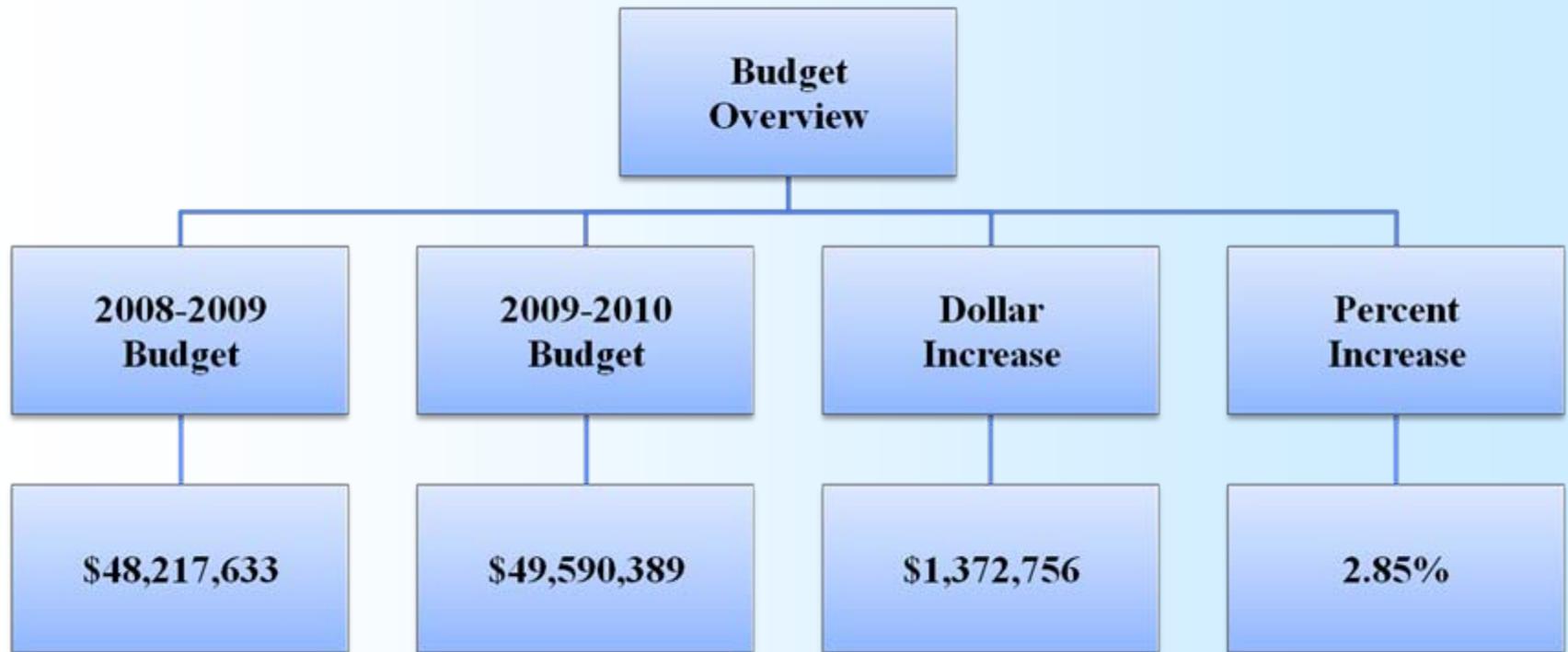
# **SMART\* GOALS**

The Wethersfield Public School District will:

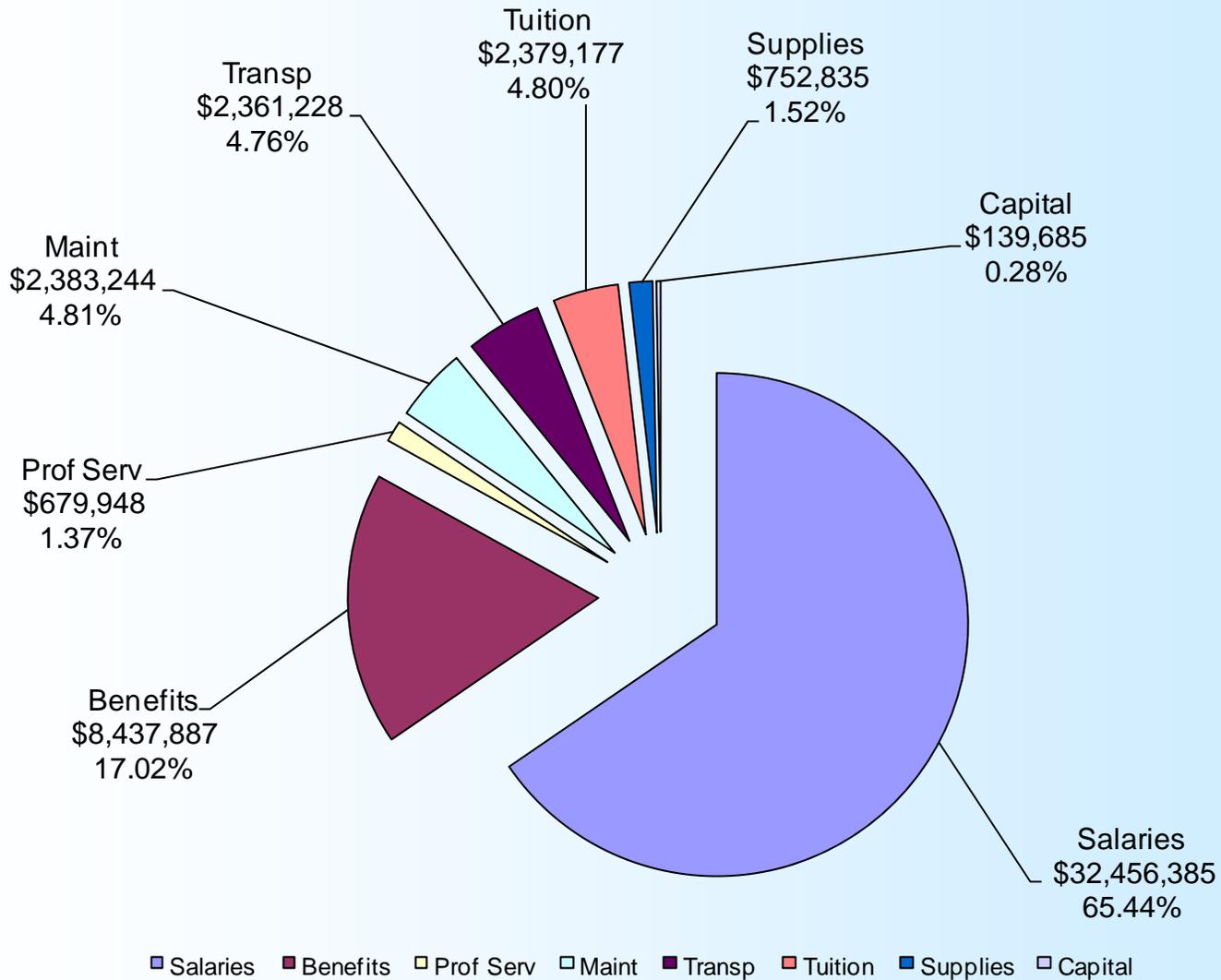
- 1. Improve Student Achievement**
- 2. Strengthen Student Support Services**
- 3. Improve Communications Systems**
- 4. Assess and Strengthen Capital Improvement and Financial Management**
- 5. Improve Use of Instructional Technology to Impact Student Achievement**

\*(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)

# Budget Overview



## Distribution of Recommended Budget Expenditures by Percent



2009-2010  
Recommended Education Budget  
Development Summary

2008-09 Adopted Budget

\$48,217,633

2009-10 Rollover Budget

\$51,174,325

**6.13% increase**

or \$2,956,692 increase

2009-2010  
Recommended Education Budget  
Development Summary

**2009-10 Recommended Budget represents reductions of 2.25% or \$1,086,961**

2009-10 Recommended Budget	\$50,087,364 <b>3.88% increase</b> or \$1,869,731
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2009-10 Recommended Budget as of 3/5/2009	\$49,862,813 <b>3.41% increase</b> or \$1,645,180
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2009-10 Recommended Budget as of 3/5/2009	\$49,602,162 <b>2.87% increase</b> or \$1,384,529
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# 2009-10 Budget Line Reductions by Object Code

61110 Supervision	- .82%	(\$19,202)
62004 Life/LTD/Medicare B Insurance	- 6.21%	(\$18,457)
63120 Instruct Program Improvement	- 7.06%	(\$ 1,878)
63130 Pupil Services	- 3.74%	(\$ 5,250)
63193 Technical Services	-12.96%	(\$46,717)
63194 Data Processing	-10.42%	(\$12,481)
64100 Electricity	- 1.22%	(\$10,580)
64300 Repairs & Maint-Buildings	- 1.80%	(\$ 2,750)
64310 Repairs & Maint-Equipment	- 1.23%	(\$2,340)
64420 Rental Lease-Equipment	-23.85%	(\$69,938)
64600 Maintenance Supplies	- 1.72%	(\$ 2,520)
64610 Cleaning Supplies	- 1.24%	(\$ 1,840)
64700 Heat Energy	- 6.82%	(\$41,500)
65800 Staff Travel & Conferences	-19.37%	(\$12,655)
65110 Non-Reimb Pupil Transportation	-20.77%	(\$ 7,893)
65220 Transportation Supplies	- 1.68%	(\$ 1,800)

(Continued)

## 2009-10 Budget Line Reductions by Object Code

66400 Communication Services	- 6.42%	(\$15,983)
66600 Advertising	- 23.79%	(\$15,249)
66610 Printing & Binding	- 23.78%	(\$6,401)
67110 Instructional Services	- 14.36%	(\$60,790)
67200 Textbooks	- 39.34%	(\$126,752)
67900 Other A-V Media	- 18.78%	(\$1,640)
67904 Office Supplies	- 11.71%	(\$4,837)
68200 Building Improvements	- 29.47%	(\$25,900)
68300 New Equipment-Instructional	- 83.36%	(\$108,233)
68310 New Equipment-Non-Instructional	- 50.00%	(\$5,000)
68320 Replacement Equip-Instructional	- 19.46%	(\$2,073)
68330 Replacement Equip-Non-Instructional	- 29.20%	<u>(\$17,525)</u>
	Total	(\$648,184)

## Cost Savings & Actions Taken to Reduce Budget to 3.88%

## 2009-10 Budget Adjustments from 3.88% to 3.41% Budget

<u>Object</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>Adjustment +/-</u>	<u>Reason</u>
61110	Supervision	(34,309)	Personnel Adjustments-Contract
61112	Certified	113,308	Personnel Adjustments-Grants
61120	Non-Certified Permanent	(174,140)	Personnel Adjustments-Contract/Grants
62002	Retirement	74,779	Final Actuarial Projection
62003	Health Insurance	(439,982)	Final Insurance Renewal
62005	Worker's Compensation	(8,906)	Final Insurance Renewal
64310	Repairs & Maint-Equip	8,000	Athletic Bus Repairs
65100	Reim Pupil Transportation	(37,700)	Magnet School Trans Reimb
66700	Pupil Tuition	271,400	Hartford Magnet Schools
67200	Textbooks	5,000	World Language Textbooks
67902	Conf & Meeting Supplies	(2,000)	Meeting Supplies
	Total	(224,551)	

## 2009-10 Adjustments to Reduce Budget to 2.87%

<u>Object</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>Adjustment +/-</u>	<u>Comment</u>
61110	Supervision	(100,000)	One Administrator
61112	Certified	(3,090)	One Department Leader Stipend
61120	Non-Certified Permanent	(47,000)	One Custodial Vacancy
61120	Technology Support	(50,000)	Reorganization
61130	Non-Certified Temporary	(20,000)	Energy Management
65100	Reim Pupil Transportation	(40,561)	Reduction of one bus
	Total	(260,651)	

2009-2010  
Recommended Education Budget  
Development Summary

2009-10 Recommended Budget as of 3/10/2009 Superintendent's Salary Freeze	\$49,597,131 <b>2.86% increase</b> or \$1,379,498
2009-10 Recommended Budget as of 3/10/2009 Cabinet Salary Freeze	\$49,590,389 <b>2.85% increase</b> or \$1,372,756

# Budget Scenario

<u>2008-09 Adopted Budget</u>	<u>2009-10 Proposed Budget</u>	<u>Dollar Increase</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>
\$48,217,633	\$49,590,389	\$1,372,756	2.85%
\$48,217,633	\$48,217,633	<u>\$0</u>	0.00%
		\$1,372,756	

Decreasing the budget from a 2.85% to a 0% increase is equal to the average salary of 25 full-time teachers.

Staff reductions would need to be made across all bargaining units.

# Wethersfield Public Schools Employee Residents

# Employee Categories 26

Total # Wethersfield Resident 425

Total # of Employees 725

# Budget Comparisons by District

	<b>2008-09 Adopted <u>Budget</u></b>	<b>2009-10 Proposed <u>Budget</u></b>	<b>2009-10 Budget Dollar <u>Increase</u></b>	<b>2009-10 Budget Percent <u>Increase</u></b>
Berlin	\$35,817,521	\$37,013,325	\$1,195,804	3.34%
Cromwell	\$24,927,222	\$25,675,038	\$747,816	3.00%
Newington	\$55,872,142	\$58,080,219	\$2,208,077	3.95%
Rocky Hill	\$27,192,227	\$28,541,391	\$1,349,164	4.96%
Wethersfield	\$48,217,633	\$49,590,389	\$1,372,756	2.85%

# Education Budget Request

- Maintains Recommended Class Size
- Maintains Current Programming
- Maintains Core Services
- Reductions in all other Areas focusing on Non-Personnel Cuts
- Future Reductions could include:  
Transportation, Insurance, Fuel, other Benefits

# Striving for Continuous Improvement

In the midst of this crisis, we must stay mindful of the larger goal of closing the achievement gap and striving to provide the most appropriate education to all of Wethersfield's children.

# Wethersfield Public Schools

## Commitment to:

- Providing a quality education at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.
- Ensuring “rigor and success for every student” through effective budgeting and resource management.

# Budget Timeline

- Town Public Hearing  
April 20, 2009
- Town Council Budget Adoption  
Not Later Than May 15, 2009