

# Hamden Public Schools Superintendent's 2021-22 Proposed Budget



**Presented to  
the Hamden  
Board of Education  
January 27, 2021**



# **Hamden Public Schools Board of Education Members 2021-2022**

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**Darius Cummings, Student Representative**

Dear Board of Education Members:

It is my privilege to submit the 2021-22 Superintendent's proposed budget. This budget was created with a focus on the district's goals for student achievement, attendance and district-wide equity, while being ever-cognizant of the Town's fiscal challenges. As an advocate for our children, I am pleased to present a budget that will allow us to continue to focus on the academic, social/emotional and physical needs of our students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed enormous difficulties for all aspects of society, and school systems have been extremely challenged to continue to educate their children. I am extremely proud of all that our district has done to support the basic as well as the educational needs of our students in these difficult times. Our educators and other staff have completely changed the way they do things in an effort to keep our community safe and enable learning to continue both in-school and at home. We have worked to provide increased mental health supports for students and families, and helped connect those in need to additional services. With the help of state and federal grants, we have provided hundreds of thousands of meals for children, distributed sufficient PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to all of our buildings, changed our cleaning protocols and upgraded our ventilation systems, increased the amount of technology available to students and staff, and helped families gain home Internet access so that every student is connected.

Because we have maximized all available funding sources, we were able to provide needed improvements to our ventilation and technology infrastructures that will benefit the district for years to come. Grants enabled us to become a "one-to-one" technology district – where every student has a Chromebook or laptop with which to enhance learning both in school and at home. Providing every student with a device and connectivity was previously a financial impossibility for Hamden, but is now something that has reset our expectations for what is essential for our students. This access will help close the digital divide and provide a more equitable education for all of Hamden's students, and allow us to truly provide our students with a 21<sup>st</sup> century education now and in the future.

But, our challenges remain great. The 0% increase to our 2020-21's allocated budget was less than needed for non-discretionary increases and would have resulted in severe cuts to staffing and services. It is only because of pandemic-related funding from federal and state grants that we have been able to keep existing programs and staffing levels intact.

My 2021-22 proposed budget reflects a 3.83% increase over last year's budget. This proposed budget incorporates sound financial practices of fully funding contractual obligations, operational expenses and special education, while continuing to fund our essential equity initiatives and improve our cyber security.

Please note that as in past budgets, this proposal understates the special education account by \$2.2 million in anticipation of State Excess Cost funds. It is important to note that this \$2.2 million is based upon a state formula, which reimburses districts for only a percentage of special education costs (beyond 4.5 times our per pupil expenditure). Therefore, the amount of Excess Costs we actually receive may be higher or lower than what is projected due to unanticipated special education needs and the costs associated with meeting those needs.

Hamden Public Schools is proud of its history of providing a wide range of programs and services to meet the needs of our student population. We will continue to provide excellent and varied opportunities and programs for all Hamden children. We embrace the opportunity to ensure that Hamden Public schools continue to be a leader in closing the achievement gap and ensuring all students achieve to their highest potential. The administration looks forward to responding to questions from the Board of Education and the public as we complete the 2021-22 budget process.

Sincerely,

Jody Ian Goeler, Superintendent

# HPS 2020 Accomplishments

**A brief look at efforts to keep  
Hamden students and staff safe  
and emotionally/physically healthy,  
while continuing our mission of  
educating our students to high levels**



# Health and Safety: COVID-19

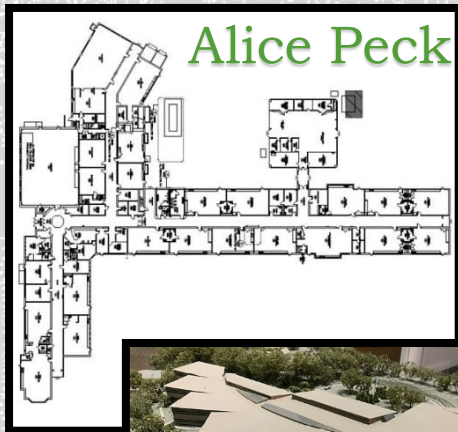
**Health and Safety remain at the forefront of district operations and decisions**



- Purchased and distributed more than \$1 million in PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and technology, and hired a consultant to assist us with meeting CDC ventilation requirements
- Implemented new, more intensive cleaning measures and routines
- Provided hand sanitizer stations throughout all buildings
- Modified classrooms, hallways and other in-school and outdoor areas to allow for social distancing
- Changed schedules to minimize number of people in a school building at a time, minimize contact with others
- Collaborated with First Student Transportation to implement enhanced cleaning, social distancing and other virus mitigation strategies on buses
- Modified food service – packaged meals
- Provided students with individualized instructional supplies for school and home so as not to share materials (3600 filled backpacks)

# Facilities

**In addition to many health and safety improvements related to COVID-19 mitigation, a number of needed improvements have been completed in the past year and more are underway**



- Enhancements made to ventilation systems, including the installation of 2500 CDC approved air filters.
- Made plumbing upgrades, new tile and bathrooms, ceiling tiles at West Woods.
- Teamed with Town of Hamden Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments for district snow removal and landscaping.
- Completed Alice Peck construction project under budget
- Middle School addition approved for state priority application

# Feeding our Students

Many children rely on schools to provide them with breakfast and lunch daily

We immediately made it a priority to find ways to provide food to our students during school closures



Since the initial shutdown on March 12, 2020:

- Served and distributed by pick-up nearly 350,000 meals, including weekends, and over 10,000 meals during the holidays.
- Delivered over 52,900 meals to Hamden families
- Hamden Public Schools Food Distribution, provided by CT Food Bank, has served a total of 106,054 pounds of food.
- Launched the district's first *Fresh Fruit and Vegetables* program
- Enrolled in programs so that ALL Hamden children receive free meals through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- Provided all students with free water bottles every day so they do not have to use school water fountains.

*Hamden was recognized by the CT Commissioner of Agriculture and End Hunger Connecticut for our meal distribution efforts.*



# Striving towards Equity in HPS

**Curriculum, material selection, classroom practices and interactions with students and staff are all being discussed and modified to promote greater equity throughout the district**



- **Curriculum and assessment** - reviewing and revising curriculum and assessments to increase cultural sensitivity and diversity
- **Structures** - examining and changing, as necessary, structures relating to grading, leveling, course assignments and other factors to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve high levels
- **Resources and Materials** - significant efforts to add books and other instructional sources that include more diverse authors and viewpoints and eliminate others that are culturally inappropriate. Every student provided with a tech device and Internet connectivity
- **Professional development** - ongoing professional development and coaching from expert consultants to promote inclusivity in all aspects of school life
- **Community Collaborative Efforts** - Board, district and community committees to explore equity issues and create plans for achieving greater equity
- **Minority Recruitment, Hiring and Retention** - many efforts to create a diverse staff that is more representative of our community



# Engaging Students

**A variety of efforts made by teachers and other staff to increase engagement of students and their families**



- Teachers building relationships with students through individual online connections
- Videos produced by staff from various schools and departments to increase student interest and connection to schools
- Weekly student recognition awards
- Conferences with families of students with attendance issues to discuss ways to engage students and create plans for success
- Efforts to address student emotional wellness and relationship building among peers
- Whole-school enrichment activities over Zoom
- Weekly team meetings at schools/departments to discuss needs of students and families, particularly of those students who are not engaged
- Virtual extra-curricular activities
- Help for families in accessing community supports

# Advancing Learning

**With fewer hours of live-instruction and many students learning remotely, curriculum and instructional methods had to change to address student needs**



- Curriculum revised to focus on power standards
- Professional development on using technology tools in remote and hybrid instruction, implementing equitable teaching practices, promoting social/emotional wellness
- Lesson-related hands-on materials regularly distributed to students for at-home experiments, mathematics manipulatives and other units of study
- Libraries remain open for book exchange, including curbside pick up for remote learners. eBooks were also purchased to improve student access to reading material
- Most vulnerable students provided maximum in-school instruction during Fall/Winter closing
- Regular contact with remote students and families by teachers and administrators
- Learning interventions implemented, particularly in English/language arts and mathematics, by Literacy, Math and SRBI specialists

# Supporting Families with Before and After School Care

- HPS partnerships with Hamden YMCA and Right at School are helping approximately 300 families with:
  - Before and Aftercare solutions for the earlier school dismissal times
  - Full Day Distance Learning support. Students in remote learning are in small groups, with quiet spaces for virtual class meetings and school work





# **Proposed Budget: Background Information and Budget Summary**



# Student Enrollment Changes

Year (October 1)	Total Enrollment	Free/ Reduced		ELL		Spec. Ed.	
		# of students	% of students	# of students	% of students	# of students	% of students
<b>2018-19</b>	5336	2530	47%	343	6%	896	17%
<b>2019-20</b>	5408	2689	50%	348	6%	917	17%
<b>2020-21</b>	5327	N/A	N/A	303	6%	928	18%

Total enrollment is expected to rise significantly once COVID-19 concerns are lessened or eliminated:

- Kindergarten enrollment in 2020-21 was approximately 120 students fewer than in typical years.
- A number of parents elected to homeschool their children during COVID-19.

# Tenets – Proposed Budget

## **The proposed budget incorporates the following:**

- Provides for safety of students and staff
- Focuses on resources to achieve district goals in achievement, attendance and equity
- Fully funds contractual obligations and other non-discretionary items, including special education costs
- Strategically shifts staff to better support expected learning-loss during COVID-19
- Maintains levels of programming and services to students, and keeps class sizes below contractual limits
- Continues to use all available grant funds to minimize expenditures from LEA budget, as allowable



# Budget Proposal

2019-20 Adopted Budget	\$89,394,925	2.05% increase
2020-21 Adopted Budget	\$89,395,925	0% increase
2021-22 Proposed Budget *	\$92,820,405	3.83% increase

\* As in previous years, the proposed budget is underfunded (by \$2.2 million this year) in anticipation of Excess Cost special education reimbursement which the Board of Education expects to receive from the State of Connecticut.

# Budget History

Adopted Budget	Amount	% Increase
2016-2017	\$84,008,995	1.06%
2017-2018	\$84,500,000	0.58%*
2018-2019	\$87,600,000	3.67%
2019-2020	\$89,394,925	2.05%
2020-2021	\$89,394,925	0%

\* \$300,000 moved from operating to capital budget

# Summary

- The proposed budget for 2021-2022 is \$92,820,405
- This reflects a \$3,425,480 increase (3.83%) over 2020-21 budget
- This increase assumes the use of additional state and federal grant funds when allowable
- This proposed budget:
  - Fully-funds actual operational expenses
  - Maintains contractual obligations
  - Supports BOE Goals around achievement, equity and attendance
  - Includes no new positions