



Budget Q & A

The following questions were raised during the Board of Education Meeting on February 26, 2026. Some of the questions have been slightly changed to ensure the community gets a full understanding of the topics raised.

Q1BOE: Can you do a quick rundown of the 17 staff members who will work at the Alternative Learning Center? Are there concerns with needing to rush to hire staff for the alternative program?

A1BOE: While the Alternative Learning Center can operate with less staff members than the 17 positions listed below, this number represents approximately half of the staffing structure required to run GEMS. Since the district remains overstaffed, we are not concerned about having to rush to staff. We are, however, planning to roll out a non-certified recruitment plan that will address our challenges related to using contracted services for instructional assistants required for students with special needs.

Alternative Learning Center Staffing 2026-2027	
# of Staff	Position Title
1	Director
1	Executive Admin
1	School Nurse
1	Campus Security
1	Tutor
1	Special Ed Teacher
1	School Counselor
4	Core Teachers
2	Specials Teachers
1	District Wide Psychologist
1	Custodian
2	Food Service Workers housed at Arace



Q2BOE: Can you explain how investing money into the Alternative Program but will be making our money back.

A2BOE: The Alternative Learning Center will naturally slow down the outplacement of Bloomfield students, particularly in grades 6-12 where nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of our outplacements occur. While we have to make the move away from the GEMS grant money, we will soon be able to ensure that district funds are being used to support Bloomfield students only, as the vast majority of the GEMS students currently come from outside districts. Having students supported in district will provide more control over student outcomes and enable the kinds of relationships that help students to succeed.

Q3BOE: Can you confirm that on slide 17, there were 51 new students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) EP's who joined Bloomfield Public Schools this year?

A3BOE: Yes, there were 51 students with IEPs, including those from Birth to Three, who joined BPS this school year. This means that they were not a part of last year's budget projections.

Q4BOE: On page 42 of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget Book, there is an increase in Non-Certified overtime. Can you tell us what goes into that and who determines it?

A4BOE: The district is working hard to control overtime costs. This is not possible when staff are forced to support snow and ice clean up on our campuses, or have to deal with emergencies related to Facilities issues.

Q5BOE: Does the Adult Education budget come directly from our budget?

A5BOE: Adult Education is paid for from both general funds and a grant (\$26,000) which can be found on page 9 of the budget book.

Q6BOE: Can you explain how the district will address our student IT needs?

A6BOE: IT requests have been included in our Five-Year Capital Improvement Project (CIP) requests. We are truly hoping the Town starts to address the infrastructure and equipment needs on a regular and cyclical basis. Previously the IT Department has only relied on surplus funds at the end of the school year, or grants they were able to secure, to make any meaningful



improvements to their department. This has had a profoundly negative impact on our students and our ability to use technology to support student outcomes. (See the Summary CIP Letter)

Q7BOE: Are the Capital Improvement Project request in priority order?

A7BOE: Basically, yes. Some items must be done such as the water main repair, and the water heaters at BHS. The district has routinely put off repairs and maintenance because we have lacked funding and this has an impact on the learning environment for students and staff.

Q8BOE: Can you describe how the Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) funds are disseminated and when and how it can be spent?

A8BOE: ECS funds are sent directly to the Town to offset the costs of running a school system. The total funds have not changed in quite some time which is alarming to many districts and municipalities, as the cost of running schools has jumped significantly. Towns receive a portion of the ECS funds as follows: 25% in October, 25% January and 50% in April. Towns must use the funds to support their schools.

Q9BOE: How does the National School Lunch program work? Do we get reimbursed?

A9BOE: The Food Services Department functions on a separate budget, that is self-sustaining, They are reimbursed for the number of meals (breakfast and lunch) that they serve.

Q10BOE: For the Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School how many of those students are Bloomfield students? Are there any plans to change the signage on schools?

A10BOE: Wintonbury serves approximately 90 students from Bloomfield, or 1/3 their total enrollment.

Q11BOE: The budget book shows there is 2.2 million dollars being used for students going to magnet school which is a significant number of our resources. How are we competitive? How



can we come up with a plan (telling our story)? One thing that is missing from our budget is a social media strategist. How can we invest in a marketing strategist?

A11BOE: The district does not currently have a communications person. We used to have one. Perhaps we can contract with a vendor or tap into the Town's resources, as they have a communications team. We absolutely need to figure out why so many of our students are choosing to leave the Bloomfield Public Schools. I do suspect that the new CREC buildings and their new furniture and equipment is a factor. Bloomfield Public Schools continue to outperform most CREC Magnet Schools as was reviewed in the budget presentation.

Q12BOE: Responsive classroom is the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) model the district is using, K-8. Is there a model for the high school?

A12BOE: There is a middle school model to deliver the responsive classroom strategies through an Advisory block, or meeting. There are ways that the Advisory Model can be connected to the high school. Having common language and procedures and a way of thinking about student behavior is an important part of improving school climate and culture and connecting the dots between our schools.

Q13BOE: What happens if we don't get the full amount of 4.75%?

A13BOE: We will naturally have some resignations, but if we do not reach the full 1.7 million, we will be forced to take away from other areas within the budget. This has been the strategy that the district has been relying on and its quite disruptive to students and staff. Since school systems are not legally permitted to spend more than their allocated budgets, we could be forced to lay off employees, something Dr. Youngberg is desperately trying to avoid.



Q14BOE: Do we have any unfunded state mandates right now?

A14BOE: Yes, the state currently has a large list of unfunded mandates. CAPSS, the Superintendent's organization, has been trying to address these concerns as our budgets do not provide additional spending to meet these mandates.



Revised Inventory
of State Mandates P

Q15BOE: Can you explain the significant increase under bucket 13 for Computer Equipment?

A15BOE: We initially budgeted \$16,364 for new computer equipment for both years. However, during the 2025-2026 fiscal year, we had to make a budget transfer decrease of \$15,852 in order to allocate funds for essential cybersecurity software. Because of the budget transfer in fiscal year 2025-2026, there is a significant increase for 2026-2027.

Budget Q & A

The following questions have been shared by Community Members via email:

Q1: The FY2026-2027 Superintendent's Proposed Budget explicitly claims (under "District Accomplishments") that the BOE transitioned to MUNIS Financials as of July 1, 2025, eliminating the reconciliation process with the Town. However, Town Finance Director Darrell Hill stated on the public record on February 17, 2026, that the BOE is *not* utilizing MUNIS for all transactions. Which statement is factually accurate? Is the BOE fully integrated into MUNIS for all general ledger, accounts payable, and purchasing functions as the budget book claims, or did the administration publish inaccurate compliance metrics to the public?

A1: Both statements are factually accurate. The district has indeed moved to the Financials module in Munis which includes General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Budgeting and General Revenues. However, the migration process is multi-layered and the district must still move to the Human Resources module which includes HR, Benefits and Payroll. This is expected to occur by January, 2027. Upon arriving to the district in December of 2024, Dr.



Youngberg was told that the Munis migration had been put off for approximately a decade. She was, therefore, excited to report that the district had accomplished the Financials migration which is why it was published in the budget book.

Q2: What specific renewal or actuarial assumptions were used in projecting the increase in Health Insurance? Is this based on carrier notification, historical claims experience, or projected trend assumptions? Additionally, what cost containment strategies are being considered to manage volatility in future years?

A2: The health insurance projections are based on historical claims data and provided to the district through our Brown & Brown broker. The district will continue to explore opportunities to reduce benefits costs in our bargaining unit negotiations.

Q3: The executive summary references anticipated savings from resignations and retirements. How many FTEs does this represent? Are these positions expected to be replaced at comparable cost, replaced at lower cost, or eliminated? Has this assumption been evaluated for risk if projected attrition does not materialize as anticipated?

A3: As noted on pages 39 & 41 of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget Book, we have listed a reduction of \$1,195,517 under certified staff and \$512,364 under non-certified staff with a total anticipated reduction of \$1,707,881. These would be positions we are not expecting to fill as we are working to right size the district staffing structure for approximately 1750 students. Since we cannot predict who might be resigning from the organization, we use an average salary and benefits cost to determine the number of staff members we are working to reduce. Currently we use \$100,000 for certified staff and \$55,000 for non-certified staff. This would translate to approximately 12 certified staff members and 9 non-certified staff. However, the district remains focused on reaching the 1.7 million dollars in savings so we would reevaluate total reductions with each resignation received. School systems are not legally permitted to spend more than their allocated budgets. Therefore, if we fell short on the 1.7 million in staffing reductions we would be forced to lay off employees, something Dr. Youngberg is desperately trying to avoid.

Q4: Operations & Maintenance: Can you clarify what portion of this increase reflects deferred maintenance or one-time projects versus ongoing operational growth? Are these expenditures expected to become part of the structural baseline?



A4: As indicated in the narrative provided on page 55 of the Superintendent’s Proposed Budget Book, the majority of the expenditures listed on pgs. 55 & 56 represent ongoing costs to the district (supplies, materials and utilities), as well as general maintenance that falls short of the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) threshold. Since the district previously relied on the 1% Set Aside account to cover these maintenance costs, we have estimated the impact of that account no longer being available to the school system.

Q5: Has a net financial impact analysis been completed quantifying projected savings as it relates to the GEMS Strategic School Realignment, as well as any offsetting costs associated with the realignment?

A5: The opening of the Alternative Learning Center on the GEMS campus stands to have positive financial implications for the district as it relates to reducing the number of students the district supports through Out of District Special Education Placements. Since the Planning & Placement Team (PPT) is a legally binding process that is used to make out of district placement decisions, as well as the decisions to bring students back to district, we cannot predict at this time exactly which students will benefit from the Alternative Learning Center. Through the internal changes that are being made to our special education programs and structures, as well as the opening of the Alternative Learning Center, Dr. Youngberg’s goal is to save \$400,000-\$500,000 in tuition annually, while simultaneously ensuring student outcomes. This can be achieved through reducing the number of outplacements, returning outplaced students to district and/or generating tuition from other districts.

Budget Year	Out of District Sp. Education Total # of Students	Net Projected Costs
2026-2027	198	6,081,387
2025-2026	179	5,619,650
2024-2025	204	5,684,947
2023-2024	215	5,660,783
2022-2023	136	3,650,475
2021-2022	102	2,546,642
2020-2021	118	3,171,970



Since programming costs will be associated with individual students attending the ALC, it is difficult to generate specific budget needs at this time. Utilizing the GEMS campus does, however, allow for previously purchased materials (such as Chromebooks and Smart Boards) to be utilized by Bloomfield students in other school locations.

Q6: Why is the Board of Education operating with a digital footprint that actively restricts public oversight, especially when compared to the transparency standards maintained by the Town Council? When will the BOE rectify this to comply with the spirit and letter of state sunshine laws?

A6: I am not aware of the Board of Education operating in a manner that restricts public oversight. I would need more information to respond to this question.

Q7: The proposed budget heavily relies on an anticipated \$1.7 million in staff resignations and retirements to achieve its stated 4.75% increase, and simultaneously relies on those same unconfirmed exits to subsidize health insurance costs. What is the contingency plan if this massive attrition fails to materialize? Furthermore, with special revenue fund grants decreasing by over \$2.7 million, what is the exact, quantified Return on Investment (ROI) for the district's grant writer position?

A7: As previously stated in Question #3, school systems are not legally permitted to spend more than their allocated budgets. Therefore, if we fell short on the 1.7 million in staffing reductions we would be forced to lay off employees, something Dr. Youngberg is desperately trying to avoid. I am unable to make a calculation of the ROI for the Grant Writing position, as that position was not filled when she retired last school year. Our current leadership team has taken on the management of grant responsibilities. We did notice, however, that this position is inadvertently referenced on page 42 of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget Book. We plan to make that correction in the Board Approved Budget document.



Q8: The district's proposed \$56.9 million budget spread across a shrinking enrollment of just 1,744 students pushes the gross per-pupil cost to over \$32,600. Despite this astronomical spending, the academic performance index is failing state targets (63.3 vs. target 75), the math index is critically low (43.4), and chronic absenteeism among high-needs high school students sits at 44.1%. How does the administration justify this extreme per-pupil cost when it fails to translate into classroom success?

A8: The district acknowledges that there is much work to be done with regards to ensuring student outcomes and we have already embarked on an impressive number of transformative improvements efforts since Dr. Youngberg took over in December of 2024. Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered in its current form as it is riddled with inaccurate information as it relates to the per pupil expenditures and performance index references. As a district, we continue to outperform the CREC Magnet Schools that many of our families choose to attend.

Q9: Given the active lawsuits against the BOE and ongoing parental concerns regarding unaddressed bullying and campus climate, why is there no contingency or liability escrow line item in the BOE budget? If the BOE's legal costs or settlements exceed the \$190,983 budgeted for Property & Liability insurance, does the administration expect the municipal taxpayers to absorb the unbudgeted financial fallout?

A9: School systems do not traditionally have contingency funds or liability escrow lines in their budgets. They instead rely on the protections of the insurance policies provided through CIRMA, or the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency.