



## ***Education Committee - Board of Representatives***

Megan Cottrell, Chair

Ramya Shaw, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Thursday, December 1, 2022  
**Time:** 6:00 pm  
**Place:** *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Education Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Cottrell, Vice Chair Shaw, and Committee Member Reps. Di Costanzo, Mays, Pierre-Louis, and Pollack. Absent was Rep. Jean-Louis. Also in attendance were Reps. Goldberg, Stella, and Walston; Kevin McCarthy, BOE Director of Facilities; Ryan Fealey, BOE Director of Finance; Dr. Tamu Lucero, BOE Superintendent; Joseph Kennedy, BOE Safety, Compliance & Employee Relations Manager; Tim Shaw, Police Chief; Cindy Grafstein, BOE/City Joint Facilities Officer; BOE Members: Michael Hyman, Becky Hamman, Versha Munshi-South, Lisa Butler; and two members of the public.

Chair Cottrell called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
11. E31.010	REVIEW; Recent Safety Improvements in Stamford Public Schools. 11/09/22 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell	<b>Report Made</b>

Dr. Lucero stated that we have a top notch Police Department in Stamford that supports Stamford schools. Many departments within the BOE and the City work together for school safety.

Mr. Kennedy gave an update on school safety measures:

- There is a multi-layered approach to safety in the schools. The upgrades include changes in policy, training, and physical equipment.
- There was active-shooter training with staff before the start of this school year. There will further training with school staff to understand what is expected of them in an emergency. Staff will meet with the command structure of the special response team and be able to get further information.
- Procedures regarding lockdown, shelter in place, secure school, and evacuations have standards set by the State to which every school district has to adhere.
- Over the summer camera systems were either installed or improved using grant funding. Every school will eventually have cameras. All school buildings have been wired for camera expansion in the future.
- Some schools' front entrances have been fortified. The goal is for every schools to be fortified. This is an extensive project and will take some time to complete.

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<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:00:15

- Mr. McCarthy is spearheading the employee card reader access. The project is going well.

There was discussion. Some points included:

- There should be public sessions with parents regarding safety training and protocols. Dr. Lucero will reach out to the Parent Teacher Council (PTO).
- Traffic safety issues at drop off and pick up need to be addressed.
- Pedestrian safety is very important. This has to be looked at site by site with collaboration with the Transportation Bureau and Engineering Dept.
- A database or report that could be accessed would be helpful to see what has been done and what is being worked on at each school.
- Every school has a safety committee which is made up of staff and parents. By State law the committees have to meet at least quarterly, some schools have been meeting more frequently.
- Chair Cottrell stated she recently went to KT Murphy and the improved security at the entrance was very good.
- There has been added security manpower.
- The recent swatting incident at Stamford High highlighted deficiencies that were able to be addressed right away.
- A security audit needs to be done in the schools to spot check issues that require work. The bigger the school, the more issues there will be.

<sup>22</sup>. [E31.011](#) REVIEW; BOE FY23-24 Budget.  
11/09/22 - Submitted by Rep. Stella

**Report Made**

Mr. Fealey reviewed the [attached presentation](#) in detail.

Some points brought up during discussion:

- Dr. Lucero and Mr. Fealey are developing a five-year staffing master plan, similar to the facilities master plan, since the majority of the BOE budget is spent on people. They are trying to determine what is the right amount of staff to have in the district. This will be very helpful so the budget is not a surprise when it comes to the BOF and BOR every year, where it then gets cut.
- Biggest impact of bringing special education students back into the district is the reduction of cost of transportation of previously getting them to/from services. Out of district costs are very high. State does provide some funding for special education.
- Important to pay attention to what is going on at the state level. Need to advocate at the State level to get additional funding.
- BOE is heading into a difficult period financially as it is coming towards the end of federal COVID funding. Federal funding was \$33 million for a three-year period. We are in the second year, and the funds will expire next year. Next year will be challenging as we get to the expiration of those funds.
- We do not want to wait to the last minute to come to the BOF and BOR. Need to position BOE to be in a better position.
- Strong emotional and psychological support is needed for students. It is important not to eliminate the additional social workers that have been put on staff.

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<sup>2</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:32:55

- In comparison to other municipalities in Connecticut, Stamford spends lower than many other municipalities per student.
- In recent years the percentage of out of district students has decreased. It is too early to determine if this is a trend or if this is COVID related.
- Excess costs are special education costs that are reimbursed by the State. The State formula has been changed to now take into account town wealth, which will be a disadvantage for Stamford. It is difficult to analyze special education costs since it is not known for sure how much money will be reimbursed from the State.
- The level of services needed for special education students widely varies.
- Stamford has a much higher number of English language learners compared to other municipalities.
- Stamford transportation costs are very high.
- Now that employee insurance is part of a State plan, about \$2 million has been saved this year.
- Special education costs have gone up 5.18 percent, and insurance costs have gone up by 10.5 percent. The overall BOE budget has grown modestly. We need to take away from other things to make up for these special education and insurance costs.
- It is important that all students are connected to some sort of career path, whether that means college first, or going directly to a career upon graduation.

Chair Cottrell adjourned the meeting at 7:19 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Megan Cottrell, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).