



From the Desk of Superintendent Jeffrey Burt

Budget Priorities: Sustain, Strengthen, and Balance

Part one in a two-part series

On February 26th, I presented a budget to the Board of Education that outlined district priorities to sustain, strengthen, and balance our programming to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our students. First, I will address our commitment to sustaining past progress to support our mission statement: *We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world.* A solid plan for sustained commitment in key strategic areas strengthens our ability to provide educational programs that encourage the skills necessary for 21st century success.

Programming

- The Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3), a partnership of parents, educators, community members, agencies, and businesses working together to provide services and supports to children and their families from birth through age 8.
- Jack Jackter Intermediate School's designation as a HOT (Higher Order Thinking) School, an honor bestowed on *only 7 schools in the state* embracing the connection between learning and arts integration by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. As a HOT school, JJIS is committed to developing students' multiple intelligences by providing them with high-quality arts-infused instruction.
- The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) program at William J. Johnston Middle School: an elective class that focuses on the integration of STEAM, where students are able to apply their skills, knowledge, and creativity to solve relevant real-world problems and explore new ideas.
- Bacon Academy is leading the State in expansion of dual enrollment opportunities and partnerships for students through relationships with UCONN, Three Rivers Community College, Eastern Connecticut State University, and Syracuse University. Bacon Academy students have the highest enrollment of all high schools in the Southeastern Connecticut Region in the College Career Pathways Program, which has given students an incredible advantage for earned credits. The resulting significant cost savings associated with those credits has been of great benefit to the parents and families of Colchester.
- With the support of Congressman Joseph Courtney, Bacon Academy continues to grow its relationship with members of the manufacturing community throughout Connecticut. One relationship is with the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB), which connects potential employees with training and then employment. EWIB has started a new initiative called the Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (YMPI) and has identified Bacon Academy as an ideal candidate for partnership. This program will connect graduating seniors directly with post-secondary employment opportunities in manufacturing.

Facilities and Operations

The proposed budget also honors the town's commitment to enhance district facilities by building capital reserves in a fiscally responsible manner. Maintenance programs and district-wide capital projects are examples of taking pride in the investments already made in our facilities. Sustaining our commitment to the district-wide energy efficiency project will result in continued savings to the district.

Innovative Instruction

With regard to innovative instruction, the budget reflects a commitment to sustaining established Strategic Plan goals of developing educators as leaders in educational innovation. By providing professional learning and growth opportunities for our staff, we are better able as a district to implement the technology and curriculum necessary to meet the goals outlined in Innovation Nation: preparing students for a world that requires them to solve problems, work collaboratively, and communicate effectively. Establishing Teacher Leaders and Technology Integration specialists in each school maximizes the impact of professional learning and institutionalizes the priority to keep teachers on the leading edge of instruction. Simply put, innovative teachers create innovative learners.

I am proud of the priorities established in this proposed budget, and strongly feel that sustaining these initiatives in a fiscally responsible way will continue to expand the educational opportunities for our students. In the next article in this series, I will share the district's budget priorities around strengthening and balancing our programming to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our students.

I invite you to participate in the dialogue at the [Budget Public Hearing to present the Board of Education and Town Budgets](#) to the Board of Finance on April 2, 2019 at 7:00pm in the Town Hall.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey E. Burt
Superintendent of Colchester Public School