

Our vision is a professional learning community where instruction invites effort and supports academic rigor for all students and educators.



Guilford Public Schools Focused on Learning

Charting the Course

At their March 5, 2009, Workshop, the Board of Finance voted to move forward the proposed Board of Education budget without further reductions. The Board of Education budget represents a 3.46% increase over the current year's budget. Recognizing the difficult economic times faced by the community, the education budget depicts a decrease in half of the budget line item categories. Supplies and materials reflect a decrease of 9.76%, purchased services 3.81% and capital expenses have been reduced by 31.19%. The increase in the budget is due to negotiated increases in salaries, projected increases in the cost of benefits, and increases in special education tuition costs.

Tom Forcella
Superintendent of Schools

Guilford Education Budget – Focused on Results

Over the last several years the Board of Education has supported changes in the district that would move our schools forward in a methodical way by focusing our efforts on initiatives geared to improve instruction and increase student learning. The Professional Learning Community environment that has been instituted in our schools, along with the adoption of the research-based Principles of Learning, have created a new culture in our schools. Teachers are 1) focused on what students need to learn, 2) the assessment of the intended learning, and 3) the interventions needed for those who are struggling and for those students needing additional challenge. Teachers work in collaborative teams to constantly improve the instruction that will realize high level achievement for all students. As changes were implemented over the last several years, the BOE requested evidence specifically in the area of student achievement that supported our work. As budgets were created, the School Board made decisions based on these results.

We are pleased to say that the results clearly demonstrate progress. The significant changes in culture, curriculum work over the last several years, a significant investment in technology, and the full implementation of a world language program in grades 1-12 has been accomplished without a significant budgetary impact. More importantly, the results listed below further support our direction:

- The Guilford Public Schools rank among the top 10% of all schools in Connecticut on the Connecticut Academic Performance (CAPT).
- Guilford High School was cited by the State of Connecticut as realizing the second highest improvement in test scores compared to the hundreds of high schools in the state.
- Adams Middle School over the last three years ranks above the District Reference Group average scores in all subjects.

- Over the last two years several Guilford High School teachers have been recognized at the State level for their teaching accomplishments in both the Arts and Academics.
- The GHS Math Team took first place in the Shoreline Math League.
- The elementary CMT scores in Guilford continue to be significantly above the State average in all areas – reading, writing and math.
- GHS SAT scores are climbing as are the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses. Over the last ten years, the number has increased by over 100%.
- The number of discipline infractions resulting in suspension has decreased by over 50%.
- The GHS Physics Team has earned national recognition, and our music, art and theater programs have generated similar recognition.

The accomplishments cited above are a few of the more prominent indicators of the success of our school district. Much of the credit for the progress goes directly to those working in our school buildings with the young people of Guilford each day. The teachers, administrators, and support staff all have made a collective commitment to increased student achievement. Fortunately, we have been able to make this progress without a significant impact on the related budgets over the last several years.



To support the contention that change has occurred without placing an exorbitant burden on the Guilford taxpayers, the following data is presented:

- The Yankee Institute for Public Policy, after examining 4th grade test scores, ranked Guilford 17th out of all Connecticut schools with regard to efficiency in educational spending. *As compared to other towns, we do more with less.*
- Guilford ranks 25th out of 169 towns when comparing median family income and other socioeconomic indicators, but ranks 83rd in the State with regard to per pupil spending
- Guilford ranks in the bottom third of the State with regard to spending on school facilities.
- Budget increases for education in Guilford over the last several years have been below the State average.
- Teacher salaries in Guilford rank below the average of comparable towns (DRG B) and in the middle when compared to other shoreline communities.

In conclusion, it is important to continue to move our school district in a positive direction. The work and commitment of the GPS staff has made the difference. The unanimous support of the proposed budget by the BOE and the positive vote of the Board of Finance send a message that education matters in Guilford. Those of us charged with creating budgets will always make every effort to recognize current economic realities while at the same time placing the educational needs of Guilford’s children at the forefront in a cost effective manner.

Change has occurred in our schools without placing an exorbitant burden on the Guilford taxpayers.

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