



Public Comment Responses Received During the WPS BOE Meeting on 2/8/2021

Below is the public record of public comment responses received during the 2/8/2021 BOE meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - No public comments were received on this item. One test response was received.

DISCUSSION

1. **Health Update** - No public comments were received on this item.
2. **Updated Health and Medical Insurance Review with Board of Education Insurance Consultant, Lockton Companies LLC** - Comments are posted exactly as they have been received.

First and Last Name	Address	Please state your comment/question regarding Updated Health and Medical Insurance Review with Board of Education Insurance Consultant, Lockton Companies LLC.
Natalie-test	Carrignan-test	test
Katie Bloom	Saugatuck Elementary School 170 Riverside Ave Westport CT 06880	I am shocked to hear that in the midst of a pandemic, the board is contemplating changing our insurance. It's disheartening that in the midst of a pandemic, you would change us to a high deductible plan. In such a time of uncertainty, teachers, who have not been untouched by the health and financial hardships of this pandemic, deserve to be able to keep their plan as they are. Teachers have pivoted for you again and again. We've put ourselves and our families at risk. We've even returned in full despite our outcry to stay safely in the hybrid model until we can be vaccinated. We have been largely ignored this year by the BOE. I ask that you listen to us on this and put your teachers above your bottom line at least until this pandemic is behind us. Katie Bloom
John Horrigan Westport Education Assn.	50 Easton Road	Lets be 100% honest this switch will be good for the town but not for the teachers and other staff. This is not magic..the savings will come from greater costs for us. The WEA position is that we should not be making a switch in a pandemic. Is that being considered here? How many times have we been put through this?

3. FY 2021 Second Quarter Financial Report - No public comments were received on this item.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. FY 2022 Proposed Budget of the Superintendent of Schools - Comments are posted exactly as they have been received.

First and Last Name	Address	Please state your comment/question regarding FY 2022 Proposed Budget of the Superintendent of Schools.
John	Test	Test
Lindsay Shurman	88 Kings Highway S	<p>Writing to recommend AGAINST the AP cut at the EI level.If parity is to be achieved we must work up, not to lowest common denominator and reinstate the AP at CES and GFS. Our community has undergone stress, burden and anxiety due to the pandemic. Next year will not be normal. With increases in SpEd and enrollment, our schools need all the support they can. In light of Dr. DiBella's resignation, KHS cannot afford a change like this coupled with a reduction. All decisions re staffing reductions will have negative repercussions. Elementary students the youngest learners and this is where the foundations for success in education and life are built - why jeopardize this? Perhaps look to reserves, MIL rate, Parks & Rec to recoup funds and retain these invaluable members of our schools. Thx</p>
Rosie Curtis	4 Heritage Ct	<p>We understand that this is a very painful process, but I wonder how much of this process hurts our teachers and administrators. Some of the cuts you've proposed include the very people who meet our children eye to eye and who are the good shepherds of our schools. Please take into consideration that we are in a pandemic and we need to protect our school superheroes. They are serving our children, our future generation. Ideally, we need to think of ways we can learn from each other in a meaningful way and make sure we build and equip our talented educators to continue delivering the best educational experience for our children. Thank you and I'd like to express my deepest appreciation for Our prinicipal, Dr DiBella and our administrators at KHS, who continue to put our children first.</p>
Anne Spencer	25 Compo Parkway	<p>SHS staffing cuts, specifically GLAs and/or teachers, seems drastic during an uncharted pandemic recovery. Cutting SHS staff members will cut vital student care and programs/class offerings. Our budget must reflect our responsibility to reach every child in our WPS. GLAs move with our SHS students throughout all four years, reaching all students. The list of duties GLAs accomplish during the day/month/year can't simply be reallocated to other already stretched staff. Additionally, our amazing teachers offer their talent, support and dedication to our kids. If teachers are cut, their programs/classes could be cut, not a goal of the BOE. Our school system must reflect our</p>

		understanding of the crisis we are in currently and not overlook the possibility of increasing need and responsibility.
Tom Foran	4 Beachside Common	Why can't a town of Westport's means secure the funding necessary to avoid these cuts? Our high quality public schools are why so many live here and fundamental to maintaining property values.
Claudia Shaum & Tami Benanav	11 Poplar Plains Rd / 73 Clapboard Hill	<p>As SHS PTA Presidents, we believe these cuts for the budget should not be actioned:</p> <p>2 Teachers This would create a loss of 4 teachers over 3 years, resulting in increased class sizes (SHS class size is the largest in DRG) and could force reductions in course offerings, which are key to SHS status as a top school and part of what makes SHS special.</p> <p>4 GLAs GLAs perform a critical support role, liaising with 470+ students each, coordinating between them and admins across many topics. The loss has immediate negative impact with responsibilities falling to already overburdened APs.</p> <p>2020 has done extensive harm to students. 2021-22 promises to be even more challenging, academically and social-emotionally. Cutting them would undermine SHS's efforts to support students when they need it most.</p>
Rosie Curtis	4 heritage Ct	I ran out of space! I also want to add my appreciation for our paraprofessionals, teachers and all our special education teachers who often don't get mentioned here for how much they make a difference in our schools.
Dorie Hordon	12 Manitou Road	Disappointing that in a year that has brought instability and diminished educational & extracurricular opportunities for students in Westport, we are considering making significant cuts. Fiscal restraint might make sense in a year when the town has seen revenue loss or declining enrollment, but neither condition applies now. One of the major impacts of the pandemic has been the influx of new families into the town. This has benefited taxpayers by increasing property values, perhaps as much as 25%, but it has also burdened schools with higher enrollment. This is no time to strip the schools of resources, and there is no financial justification for doing so.
Amy Herrera	3 Sandhopper Trail	I would encourage every BOE member to consider Candice's perspective. We need to recognize that this is not a normal budget season. We remain very much in the midst of a pandemic with no guarantee of what the future holds. Resources are critical to supporting our students academic and social emotional needs. If we can take Headcount off the chopping block we have an obligation to do that.

Mary Kay Caricato	27 Juniper Road	<p>In a year that is sure to be even more challenging than usual from both an academic and a social/emotional well-being perspective, cutting 2 teachers and 4 GLAs at Staples would significantly undermine the efforts of the school to provide students of all abilities and backgrounds with robust support. We need to continue to prioritize the student and teacher experience in Westport - this has served us well in the past and is serving us well now and is evidenced by the families flocking to our community to settle down and raise their children.</p>
Elena Caggiano	16 Compo Parkway	<p>As you look at the FY 2022 Budget, I implore you to consider NOT CUTTING any teachers or GLA's from Staples. Our students are suffering socially, emotionally, and academically through the pandemic and hybrid learning. Staples is a large school and can be an impersonal place. Our students will need all of Staples' resources intact for the 2021-22 school year as they transition back into full in person learning. Next year is not the time to pare down essential teachers and staff members who do so much to support students.</p>
Sue Rubin	11 Windy Hill Road	<p>I feel strongly that you should keep all 4 GLA's at Staples. There is no logical way to maintain a personal relationship with students without these positions. To think that 1 GLA can establish the same level of personalization with over 900 students compared to the 450 that they have now is absurd. They do not only track attendance but watch for changes in behavior. There will be fallout and you will diminish your involvement on a daily level which will be reflected in teacher supervision, curriculum work, and daily involvement with students starting as Freshman. Please reconsider this suggested budget cut. Thank you.</p>
David Kirby	49 Clinton Avenue	<p>I am disappointed to hear that a proposed budget cut would eliminate Spanish for grades K-2. Please reconsider! This would be detrimental on a number of levels.</p> <p>First, you would disrupt the progress already made by those Kindergarten or 1st Grade students who have already had 1-2 years of a foreign language.</p> <p>In addition, learning another language at a young age has derivative benefits beyond the language itself, such as fostering creativity, memory, and concentration.</p> <p>Learning about other cultures through language is also critical to building a broader understanding of the world.</p> <p>I am concerned that a few budget dollars are being saved at the cost of early education of young students who have already experienced a gap in their early learning due to COVID.</p>