

Questions from Board Members February 10, 2014

1. What is the average salary for teachers in Stafford?

The two charts below indicate the average 2012-2013 salary for Stafford teachers in comparison to other districts (Connecticut Education Association). The chart on the left references our District Reference Group (DRG) while the chart on the right references districts in Tolland County.

Average - DRG F		
TOWN	12-13	RANK
WINDSOR LOCKS	\$72,720	1
ENFIELD	\$72,533	2
MONTVILLE	\$71,084	3
SEYMOUR	\$69,410	4
EAST WINDSOR	\$68,823	5
WOLCOTT	\$66,821	6
PLAINVILLE	\$66,176	7
GRISWOLD	\$65,974	8
NORTH CANAAN	\$65,638	9
CANTERBURY	\$65,064	10
STAFFORD	\$64,212	11
PLYMOUTH	\$63,821	12
THOMPSON	\$59,258	13
VOLUNTOWN	\$58,503	14
STERLING	\$56,914	15
REGION 11	\$56,754	16
SPRAGUE	\$53,699	17

Average - Tolland County			
TOWN	DRG	12-13	RANK
MANSFIELD	C	\$72,103	1
REGION 19	C	\$70,985	2
COLUMBIA	C	\$70,307	3
ELLINGTON	C	\$69,481	4
TOLLAND	C	\$68,503	5
BOLTON	C	\$66,997	6
SOMERS	C	\$66,764	7
VERNON	G	\$66,458	8
HEBRON	C	\$66,365	9
WILLINGTON	E	\$65,166	10
STAFFORD	F	\$64,212	11
COVENTRY	E	\$64,168	12
ANDOVER	C	\$64,055	13
UNION	E	\$62,115	14
REGION 08	C	\$61,448	15

2. Can the district reduce or eliminate prekindergarten?

With the exception of providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), school districts are not mandated to provide prekindergarten programs. However, the provision of universal preschool has been the focus of the federal government for a number of years and is currently on our Governor's agenda.

Prior to the 2013-2014 school year, Stafford Public Schools provided universal free prekindergarten to three- and four-year-old children. At its regularly-scheduled meeting on

October 24, 2011, the BOE directed the Superintendent to form a steering committee for the purpose of determining if a fee should be charged for preschool and if so, how such a fee should be determined. As a result of that directive, a committee was established. It was comprised of representatives from the following stakeholder groups: Head Start parents and staff, PK parents and staff, K parents and staff, Family Resource Center staff, Department of Children & Families, Board of Education, Board of Finance, Board of Selectman, PTO, Stafford Early Education Council (SEEC), Principals and Pupil Services staff.

The committee met on January 12 and, again, on February 9, 2012, in the Community Room of the Stafford Public Library. As a result of their work, the Preschool Steering Committee recommended that the Stafford Board of Education continue to provide a free universal preschool program for a number of reasons, which were reported to the full Board on February 27, 2012 (Please see attached memorandum.).

With the proposal to implement full-day kindergarten in 2013-2014, however, Administration sought ways to mitigate the anticipated cost. As a result, it was determined that universal free preschool could no longer be provided by the district. Rather, preschool would be available to four-year-old children and three-year-old children eligible under IDEA, Head Start, and School Readiness. In addition, the district charged a tuition fee of \$60 per month (\$600/year). If parents/guardians wanted to be considered for reduced tuition (50%) or a tuition exemption, they were required to complete a Sliding Tuition Charge Determination form. The district utilized the USDA Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free and Reduced Lunch to determine eligibility for free or reduced tuition. Parents/guardians of prekindergarten-eligible children have been notified that the tuition fee will likely increase for the 2014-2015 school year, the exact amount of which will be determined as we progress through the budget process.

Of the 100 students currently enrolled in prekindergarten this year, the table below indicates the number eligible for tuition exemption, reduced tuition and those that pay full tuition. It is important to note that 31/35 of the slots at West Stafford School are mandated by our grant participation (Head Start and School Readiness) and do not pay tuition. A portion of staff members' salaries is funded through these grants.

School	Staffordville School	West Stafford School
Free Tuition	11	35
Reduced Tuition	3	3
Full Tuition	37	11
Tuition Fees Collected	\$23,100	\$7,500

3. Can the district reduce or eliminate kindergarten?

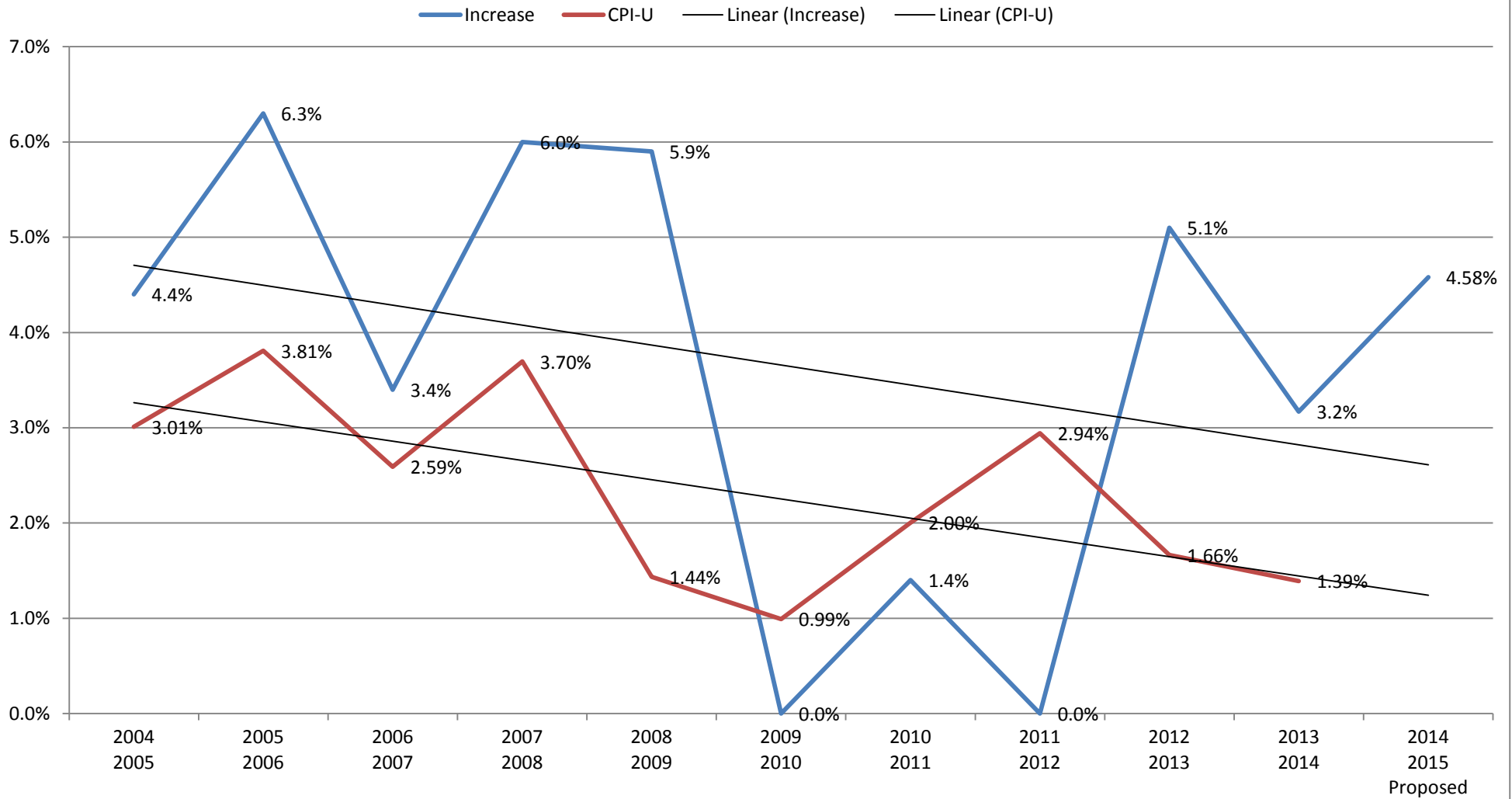
Per Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184, “parents and guardians are obligated to assure that children attend school starting at age five unless they personally appear at the school district office and sign an option form exercising their right not have their children attend school.” A priority of the Board of Education during the 2013-2014 budget development process, full-day kindergarten was implemented in the current school year.

4. How do our budget increases compare to the CPI (Consumer Price Index)?

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. The CPI reflects spending patterns for each of two population groups: all urban consumers and urban wage earners and clerical workers. The all urban consumer group represents about 87 percent of the total U.S. population. The CPI frequently is called a cost-of-living index, but it differs in important ways from a complete cost-of-living measure. A cost-of-living index would measure changes over time in the amount that consumers need to spend to reach a certain utility level or standard of living. Both the CPI and a cost-of-living index would reflect changes in the prices of goods and services, such as food and clothing, which are directly purchased in the marketplace; but a complete cost-of-living index would go beyond this role to also take into account changes in other governmental or environmental factors that affect consumers' well-being. It is very difficult to determine the proper treatment of public goods, such as safety and education, and other broad concerns, such as health, water quality, and crime, that would constitute a complete cost-of-living framework (Retrieved February 6, 2014, from <http://stats.bls.gov/cpi/cpifaq.htm>) Additional information on the CPI can be found at the following US Department of Labor website: <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpifaq.htm>.

The attached graph shows the increases for the Board of Education budget from the 2004-2005 fiscal year through the 2014-2015 fiscal year. In addition, the graph includes the percent change in the CPI-U (Consumer Price Index for all Urban Communities). The CPI figures for 2013-2014 include only the first 6 months of the fiscal year (July – December) as no 2014 CPI information is available.

Budget Increases 2004 - 2015



Increase	4.4%	6.3%	3.4%	6.0%	5.9%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	5.1%	3.2%	4.58%
CPI-U	3.01%	3.81%	2.59%	3.70%	1.44%	0.99%	2.00%	2.94%	1.66%	1.39%	
Budget	\$19,804,040	\$21,101,421	\$21,816,856	\$23,119,511	\$24,488,362	\$24,488,805	\$24,830,913	\$24,830,913	\$26,104,054	\$26,932,401	\$28,165,776