

Letter: How to Influence Your Child's Educational Experience



To the Editor:

I would like to share with you all important facts about your Easton Board of Finance (BOF). The chart below summarizes the BOF members who fully supported the 4.09% Board of Education (BOE) budget increase and those who did not.

Name	BOF Role	6 Year Term	Supported BOE 2021-2022 Budget 4.09%
Wendy Bowditch	Member	Appointed by Andy K, Paul S, and Michael K. She will be on the November'21 ballot.	 NO
Andy Kachele	Member	11/5/19 to 11/4/25	 NO
Paul Skrtich	Member	11/5/19 to 11/4/25	 NO
Michael Kot	Member	11/7/17 to 11/7/23	 NO
Arthur Laske III	Member	11/3/15 to 11/2/21	 YES
Paul Lindoerfer	Member	11/3/15 to 11/2/21	 YES
Jacqueline Kaufman	Alternate	1/2/17 to 1/2/23	 YES
Ira Kaplan	Alternate	1/2/21 to 1/2/27	 YES
Gregg Saunders	Alternate	1/2/19 to 1/2/25	Not present

Why is this important?

You can directly influence who serves on the BOF by voting in our local elections this November 2021. The school programs and services available to our children are directly affected by how each BOF member votes. If the BOF members do not support the BOE budget request, education programs and resources will be cut.

If you were unable to make the BOF/BOE zoom meeting this past week, I strongly urge you to listen to the replay (link below). From one parent to another, let's help our children get the best possible education. That's why most of us moved to Easton, right? Talk to any parent who has lived here for a while, and they will tell you, the BOF has been cutting funding year after year. We need to change this! If you take the time to watch the BOF/BOE replay, I think you will be as shocked as I was at the comments made by several members.

Please take note of the 6 YEAR term for each member. Do you want a BOF that supports our children's education? If you do, it is CRITICAL that you vote in the local elections in November. Every vote is needed...Know your BOF!

If you are new to this process and need help understanding how it all works, please let me know and I will help. If I don't know the answer, I will help you find someone who does.

I would like to close by thanking those BOF members who believe in the importance of education. Children are the future leaders and we need to invest in them. I also want to thank our BOE and Superintendent for dedicating so much time and effort to give our children the best possible education. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

LINK TO REPLAY: <https://www.facebook.com/EastonCTBOS/videos/1063553970832412>

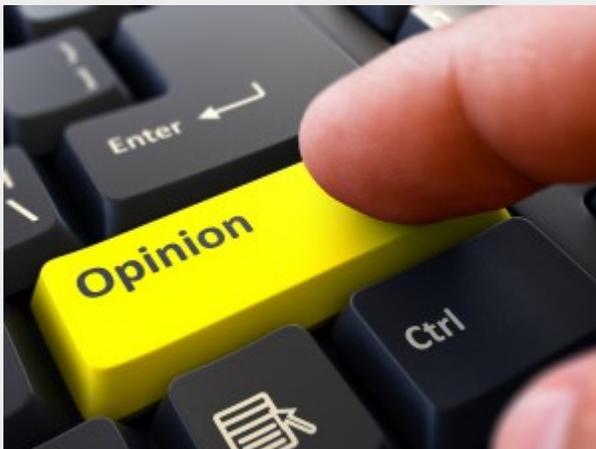
The BOE 4.09% budget increase request included:

- Restoring the HKMS Media Specialist
- Adding a 4th grade teacher at SSES to keep class sizes reasonable.
- Increasing the social worker from part-time to full-time
- Restoring funding for extracurricular activities at HKMS
- Professional learning for our teachers
- New math curriculum at SSES
- New Director of Technology & Digital Learning (split with Redding and ER9)
- Contractual increases and health care increases

Jennifer de Jesus

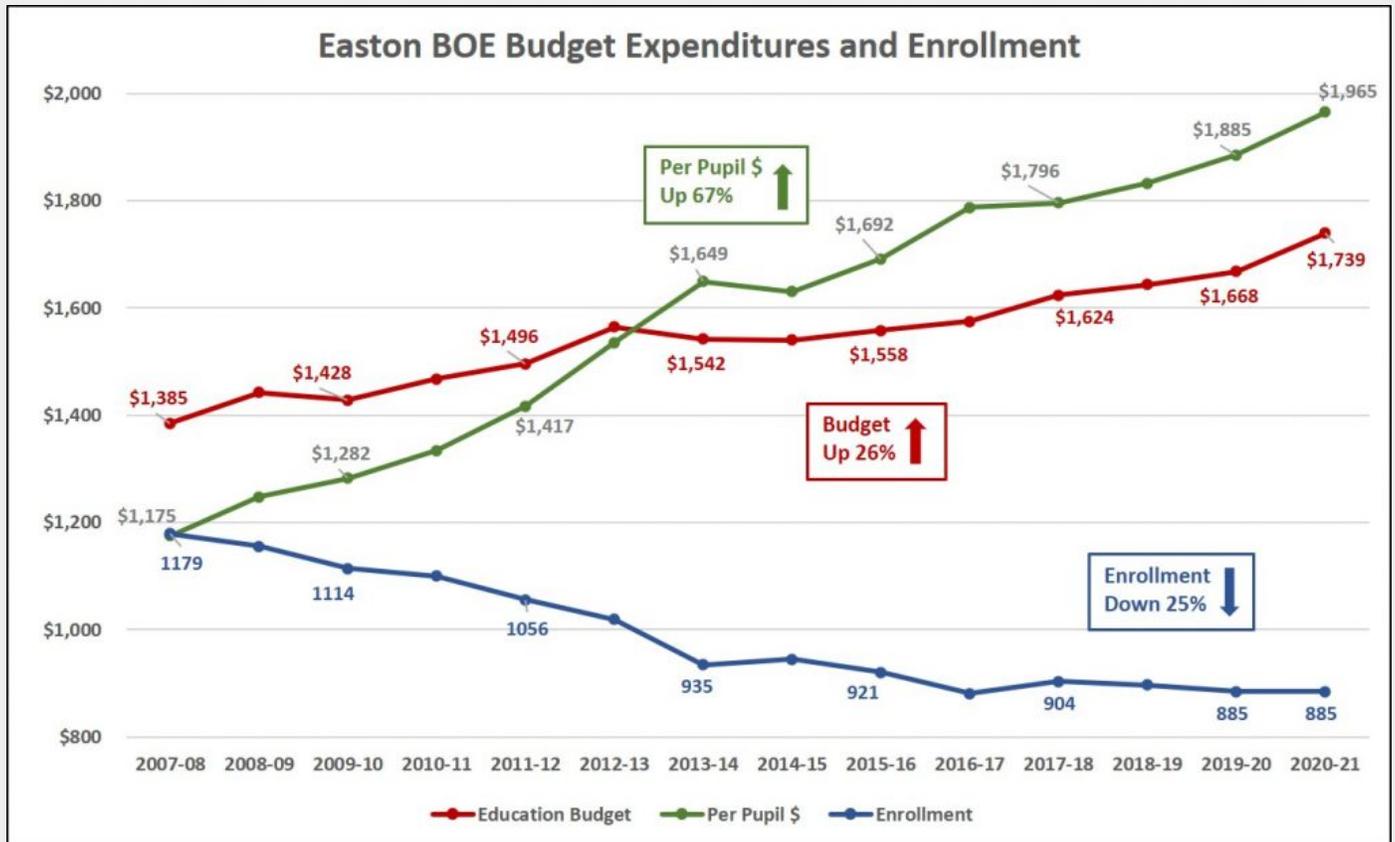
Easton Mom

Easton Board of Education Budget and School Enrollment: A Budget Crisis



If the 2020 Easton Board of Education budget is approved, from 2007 at peak Easton school enrollment through this year, our education budget will have increased by 26%

and per pupil spending by 67%, while student enrollment decreased by 25%. Concurrently, from 2007 to 2018, Easton median household income increased by only 1% (CTData.org). This trend is not sustainable.



Town of Easton Annual Reports only began including the number of school employees in 2011. Since that time the number of employees has gone from 161 to 169, an increase of 5%, while enrollment went from 1100 to 904.

Total # Easton School Employees		Year	Education Budget	Per Pupil \$	Enrollment
Year	Employees	2007-08	\$13,851,882	\$11,749	1179
2010-11	161	2008-09	\$14,419,258	\$12,473	1156
2011-12	159	2009-10	\$14,282,534	\$12,821	1114
2012-13	155	2010-11	\$14,681,549	\$13,347	1100
2013-14	167	2011-12	\$14,962,405	\$14,169	1056
2014-15	169	2012-13	\$15,647,677	\$15,356	1019
2015-16	169	2013-14	\$15,421,810	\$16,494	935
2016-17	169	2014-15	\$15,403,760	\$16,300	945
2017-18	169	2015-16	\$15,581,592	\$16,918	921
% increase	5%	2016-17	\$15,746,880	\$17,874	881
		2017-18	\$16,237,858	\$17,962	904
		2018-19	\$16,440,295	\$18,328	897
		2019-20	\$16,684,000	\$18,852	885
		2020-21	\$17,391,586	\$19,652	885

It is also of note that in the four years since CT began using the Smarter Balanced test, Easton **performance scores** have remained flat, averaging 82.5% in English/Language Arts, with a variation of less than 2 percentage points and 77.9% in math with a variation of .5 percentage points.

While it may be disappointing to see performance scores flat, the Smarter Balance **growth scores**, which measure what percentage of students reach their assigned goal, are concerning. English/Language arts growth scores have dropped by 12% and math growth scores by a whopping 24%. We are in a situation where we are spending significantly more with very little in academic progress to show for it. Easton citizens must insist on more reasonable budgets and better educational results for the money we spend.

Submitted by Sherry L. Harris

On behalf of Citizens for Responsible Government PAC

Sources: Easton Town Annual Reports:

<https://www.eastonct.gov/finance-department/pages/town-annual-reports>; 2018-2019

Town Financial Reports:

<https://www.eastonct.gov/finance-department/pages/financial-statements>; Easton

Enrollment Projections through 2023:

<https://www.er9.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=3283553>; Easton

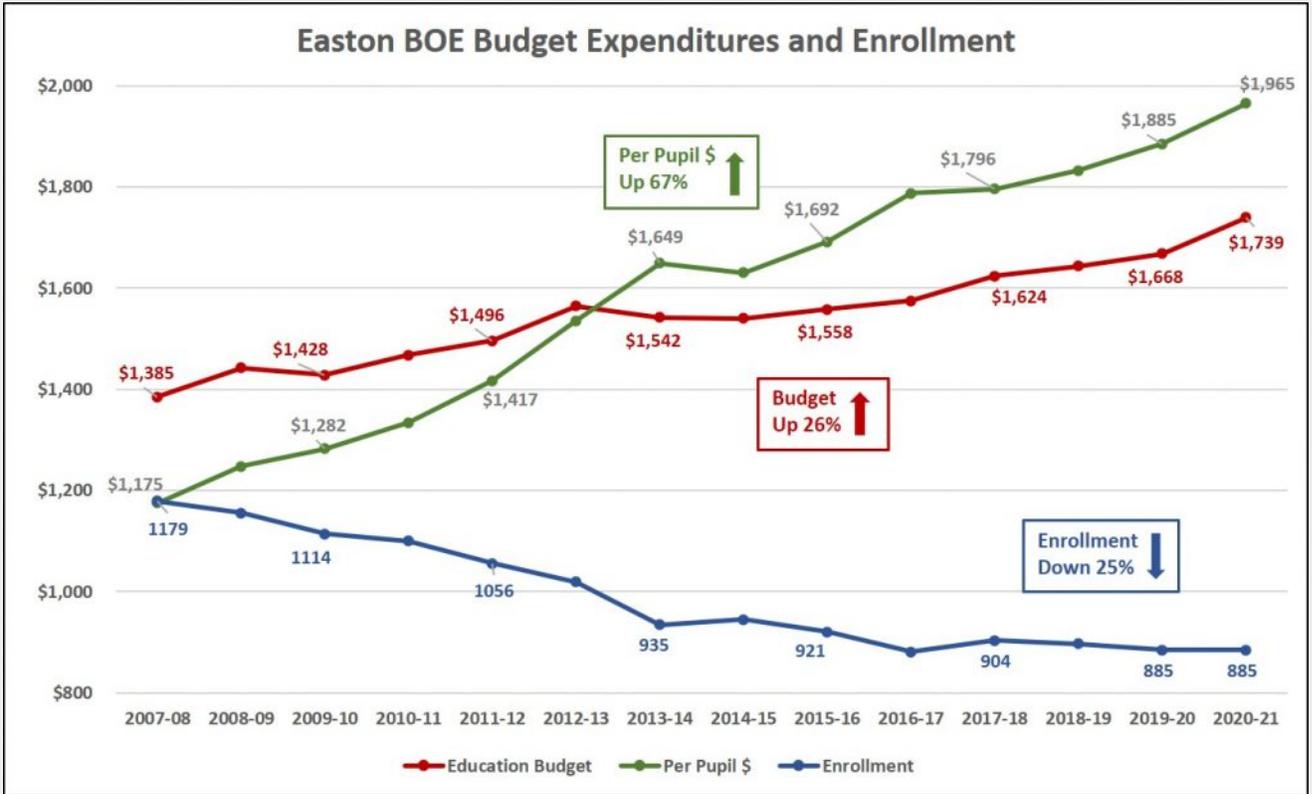
Enrollment Projections through 2026:

<https://www.er9.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=3283555>; Connecticut

Report Cards at Edsight.ct.gov:

http://edsight.ct.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest?_program=/CTDOE/EdSight/Release/Reporting/Public/Reports/StoredProcesses/ConnecticutReportCard&_district=Easton+School+District&_school=+&_select=Submit.

Citizens for Responsible Government (CRG) was founded by Easton resident Bud Jennings over 30 years ago and is the oldest PAC in CT. For many years the group acted as a tax watchdog. In more recent years the mission has broadened, and CRG works to protect and sustain the traditional processes of Easton governance, the Town Meeting, by raising awareness regarding important town issues. To see our most recent publication, Important Easton Issues, visit our website at <https://www.eastoneye.org/> .



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Easton School Board Chairman Explains Budget Drivers



The Easton Board of Education presented its school budget for the 2020-21 school year to the Board of Finance in March. The BOE is requesting an increase of \$707,586, which represents a growth of 4.24% over last year. The goals of the BOE were on full display as Superintendent Dr. Tom McMorrان and Board Chairman Jeff Parker moved through a power point presentation outlining the needs of our district. They included:

- **Addition of a kindergarten teacher and a para-professional** as we plan for the projected increase in students from 82 this year to 94 in '20-'21. Currently our kindergarten classes have 20-21 students spread over 4 sections. Without creating an additional class, our totals would be 23-24 students which is considerably above established norms for children in this age group.
- **Addition of a .4 social worker.** This is driven by student need and we continue to witness greater stress and anxiety among our children
- **Addition of 1 special education para-professional** to provide support to our new Special Education initiative known as Junior Bridges.
- **The Board would also like to restore 2 cuts** made last year that were not in the best interest of our children.
 - **Media Specialist at HKMS.** We have a media/library containing hundreds of thousands of dollars in hardware, software and library books that is closed 30-40% of the time. This must be corrected.
 - **Extra-curricular activities at HKMS.** A very important part of the middle school experience. It allows students to connect with each other in positive ways under the watchful eye of their teachers

These additions to staff and restoration of a lost position are valuable components of our educational offerings. Their costs are added to the contractual obligations in both salary

and medical expense the district has with its teachers, para-professionals, custodians, administrators and central office staff.