

To: Darien Board of Selectmen/Darien Board of Finance
From: The Depot Adult Advisory Board
Re: The Depot – Request for Additional Town Funding
Date: March 5, 2012

We hope you will find the following information helpful in your decision to support our request for additional town funding for The Depot—The Darien Youth Center. Included is up-to-date information about our programming, attendance (you will be surprised by the number of Darien youth who benefit from the broad variety of activities offered at The Depot), our financial situation, the student governing board, the adult advisory board and a heartfelt testimonial from a Depot youth. Please take the time to look through everything and hopefully get a better understanding of why The Depot is so important to Darien and, more importantly, to our youth.

With the dissolution of Youth Options, The Depot becomes an even more important organization for the youth of Darien. Since its inception, The Depot has functioned not only as a meeting place for the youth of Darien, but also as the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) and has helped many kids in need over the years. The Depot has wonderful relationships and works closely with The Family Centers in Darien, The Darien Police Department and many social service agencies to which we make referrals as needed. The Depot currently follows the state YSB mandates and will continue to do so as we move forward and handle more responsibility. Through partnerships with Lower Fairfield Regional Action Council (LFRAC) and the Governor's Prevention Partnership's Office of Policy Management, The Depot is at the forefront of prevention practices in Darien. Some of the existing prevention programs The Depot currently sponsors are: Girl's Night Out (GNO) in cooperation with Families in Recovery Program (FIRP) and in partnership with The Darien Police Department: Cop Shop, Citizen Police Academy, and Mom & Pop Shop. In addition, The Depot youth are volunteers for many of the town wide events that we all attend and enjoy.

The Depot continues to successfully fulfill its original vision and mission—to offer a welcoming, judgment-free and safe “home away from home”, while also providing opportunities for personal growth, leadership development and community outreach. Darien's youth are learning to “give back”, to work together and make a positive contribution to our community.

Like many non-profits we are struggling financially, just to keep the doors open. Our annual appeal (town wide mailing) was a disappointment. We are aggressively reaching out to the community at large and have begun a marketing campaign to reeducate the community as to who and what The Depot is. Up and coming fundraising events are The Town Spelling Bee, a spring town wide mailing, a spring cocktail party, and the Senior Graduation Balloons. Additionally, we are working with a grant consultant group that is helping us better address the world of grants.

The Depot is one of Darien's treasured local organizations and thousands of Darien youth (perhaps many of your own children) have enjoyed and benefitted from its existence. We very much appreciate the past and present support from the town. We owe it the increasing youth population to not only keep it going, but also keep it going at its best—and for that, we are asking for additional funding. As you make your decision, please remember how important The Depot is to so many.

Please call if you have any questions or need additional information.

Many thanks,

Adult Advisory Board Officers
Monica Billeter – Co-President
Kelly Lesko – Co-President
Susan Hamill - Development

The Depot **Proposed Adult Advisory Board Structure**

February 2012

Executive Committee

Co-Presidents – oversee the board, especially the fundraising and publicity aspects, court big donors

Co-Vice Presidents – market The Depot—create and implement “new image/message” campaign to educate the community—work with development and publicity

Secretary – record and send out meeting minutes via email

Treasurer – track and report on all expenses and income

Nominating – work with Executive Board to fill next year’s slate

Development – increase corporate support, establish Leadership Club to create an endowment fund and work with grant consultants

Publicity – publicize individual fundraising events through local media, Depot Website, Depot Doings, and Facebook Page, work with co-vice presidents to create new image/message campaign and implement

Board Positions

Web Master – develop and manage Website, Depot Doings and Facebook Page, work with Student Governing Board Media Person

Annual Appeal – design and implement annual appeal (town wide mailing)

Senior Graduation Balloons – publicize, recruit volunteers and implement event

Cocktail Parties – 2 to 3 parties per year – held either at local country club or at private homes—identify and work with the hosts

Spelling Bee – publicize, recruit teams and volunteers and implement event

Student Governing Board Liaison(s) – attend SGB meetings and report back to the board – board members could rotate this weekly responsibility

Grade Reps – Grades 4, 5, 6, 7

Beautification and Building Maintenance—make The Depot more inviting from the outside...paint, landscape and clean up...get storage shed for Depot equipment and supplies in order to create more room inside The Depot for youth activities

The Depot Adult Advisory Board

Fiscal Year July 2011- June 2012

Executive Committee

Co-Presidents: Monica Billiter and Kelly Lesko

Co-Vice Presidents: Lisa Grant and Karen Magnusson

Treasurer: Alicia Conn

Secretary: Debbie McLaren

Development: Susan Hamill

Nominating: Melissa Coughlin

Publicity: Alex Howe and Althea Perley

Family Centers Liaison: Ed Moran

Board Members

Spelling Bee: Andrea McDonald, Cyndy Ashburne, Kim Kernan and Callie Sullivan

Positions to be filled (some of which will come from the members at large):

Web Master

Annual Appeal

Cocktail Parties

Graduation Balloons

Grade Reps: Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7

Beautification and Building Maintenance

Members at Large

Preston Bealle

Lynn Biggart

Tara Cochran

Jennifer Holt

Leslie Kirby

Sydney Maley

Joan Martzolf

Andrea McDonough

Cathy Miller

Bambi Riegal

Sara Lyden Schmidt

Beth Siemers

Program Director: Janice Marzano

Administrative Director: Robin Testa

Ex-Officio: Jayme Stevenson

The Adult Advisory Board of The Depot has changed. We have implemented a two-year obligation and are staffing the Board with people who have children in middle and elementary school, as well as high school to better keep the continuity of The Depot Board consistent with The Depot goals and beliefs.

Student Governing Board, 2011- 2012

Arrix, Julia	321-5956	9		julia.arrix@gmail.com
Arrix, Robby	461-0262	9		rarrix312@aol.com
Barnard, Andrew	655-0343	10		barnards@optonline.net
Bartone, Catie	219-4313	11	Asst. Secy SADD	catiebartone@yahoo.com
Bealle, Jenny	246-5336	11	Co-Pres	jenbealle@yahoo.com
Bidell, Will	979-7433	10	SADD	NYR11william@aol.com
Billeter, Claire	247-3979	9		cmbilleter18@gmail.com
Bolton, Goose	355-0258	10		goosebolton@optonline.net
Brown, Mary	554-9422	9		mbrown5115@aim.com
Cochran, Christian	858-3249	10		chcochran22@gmail.com
Cochran, Colin	858-6911	9		cochran1296@gmail.com
Cornell, Kyle	561-5194	10		kcornell8460@aim.com
Culliton, Claire	979-3431	10	Asst. Treas. SADD	claireculliton@optonline.net
Cush, Maddie	644-8458	9		mcush6589@aim.com
Cush, Phoebe	505-4623	11	Co-Pres SADD	phoeb695@aim.com
D'Torio, Mackenzie	979-2446	9		mac752134@aim.com
Gasparino, Brynn	253-0502	12		bgasparino@darienps.org
Gifford, Kyle	656-2382	10		kgifford@optonline.net
Hamill, Parker	820-9319	11	Vice-Pres SADD	hamill5@hotmail.com
Hannigan, Bridget	858-1284	9		bridgieh33@aol.com
Heaney, Colleen	247-9823	10	SADD	colleenheaney@aol.com
Holt, Sophie	807-0240	9		threemoonsgrl@aol.com
Howe, Nick	981-4357	11		nickhowe@optonline.net
Kindy, Jared	803-8365	12		waldo12@optonline.net
Kirby, Cammie	805-8286	12	Secretary YAT	camalamb13@aol.com
Lattimer, Cammie	505-5746	11	B. Board	camlatt5@aol.com
Lesko, Matt	505-1277	10		MWL76 @me.com
Lincoln, Courtney	505-1006	10	SADD	cml5696@aol.com
Lyden, Caitlin	803-8419	12		lydes024@aol.com
Magnusson, Brad	655-2556	10	YAT	bmagnusson33@yahoo.com
Magnusson, Jon	656-2556	12		jbcmag@optonline.net
Maley, Avery	656-1079	9		shermanmaley@gmail.com
Maley, Andrew	313-3715	12		amaley@darienps.org
Maley, Tyson	656-1079	9		tmaley999@gmail.com
Malvisi, Morgan	524-1718	11	Vice-Pres	morggs3284@aol.com
Martzolf, Drew	656-3255	11		martzolf@optonline.net
McCarthy, Devon	202-2837	12		dnjm1114@yahoo.com
Miller, Craig	722-1599	9		cmiller5115@aol.com
Murphy, Dan	807-3630	10		dmurphy@darienps.org
Naughton, Liam	656-8141	11		lnaughton@darienps.org
Nielsen, Sammy	856-4700	9		scnielsen12@aol.com

Parsley, Allie	662-0408	10		atplenox@yahoo.com
Perley, Althea	559-2061	11	Historian	perleygirl@gmail.com
Perley, Harrison	656-6696	11	Treas.	yankeefreak3@gmail.com
Perticone, Lexie	505-5047	11	B. Board	lperticone1@darienps.org
Renaud, Carly	962-2325	12		crenaud1201@gmail.com
Renaud, Kate	505-8277	10		krenaud22@gmail.com
Riegel, Mollie	656-3630	10	SADD	mriegel@darienps.org
Saggese, Nick	554-9568	10		nick.saggese@gmail.com
Sawitsky, Morgan	561-4228	10		toughconverse@aol.com
Shanahan, Katie	524-3889	10		kshanny12@gmail.com
Stein, Emily	326-1557	10		aecnj@mac.com
Sullivan, Tiger	722-4140	9		tigersullivan@hotmail.com
Swiggett, Bailey	656.2757	11		bswigg@gmail.com
Testa, Sami	943-6379	12	BSC	stesta@darienps.org
Traver, Daniel	803-7544	9		dftraver@gmail.com
Valente, Kellie	570-6988	12	BSC	musicislifeoxox@hotmail.com
Vierling, Lexi	202-2714	9		lexivierling@aol.com
von Schmidt, Jonas	810-7378	9		jonasevgs@aol.com
Waters, Caylee	247-1152	11	SADD	cwaters13@hotmail.com
Wisinski, Eliza	247-5084	10	SADD	elizamt@aol.com
Wright, Samantha	788-0477	11		sgw95@optonline.net

Administrative Goals

To keep abreast of the ever-changing issues of today's youth our Program Director attends the following seminars and lectures in addition to her other tasks to help the Depot achieve its goals.

June 2011

Governors Partnership Conference/Stamford Marriott/Stamford
Teen Center Meeting/Wilton

September 2011

YSB Region 1 meeting/Toquet Hall/Westport
Families in Recovery Program meeting/Stamford
"Assessing and Intervening with Suicidal and Self-Injurious Youth"
Seminar/Western State University/Danbury
Teen Center Meeting/Darien
MMS PTO Meeting/Did the presentation about The Depot
Thriving Youth Connected Community/Depot
DHS PTO

Parent Awareness Meeting
LFCRAC/Sheraton Hotel/Stamford
Kiwanis Lunch x 2/CCD
TOPS Beach Party
DHS Activities Fair

October, 2011

Parent Awareness Meeting
DHS PTO
MMS PTO
YSB training workshop (new reporting)/Middletown
Kiwanis Lunch x 2/CCD
Teen Center Meeting/Westport
Thriving Youth Connected Community/Depot
Liberation Programs Family Dinner/Lib House/Stamford
TOPS/Tokeneke Fair

November, 2011

Parent Awareness mtg.
DHS PTO
MMS PTO
Kiwanis Lunch/CCD x 2
Miss Representation Presentation/Darien Library
Teen Center Meeting/New Canaan
TOPS
308 Bake Sale/DHS x 3
Regional Youth Networking/Depot (SADD chapters/YAT)
TOPS

December, 2011

CYSB Conference (CT Youth Service Bureau)/Hamden - Special presentation on Juvenile Justice

LFCRAC/Sheraton Hotel/Stamford

Liberation Programs Family Dinner/Lib House/Stamford

Teen Center Meeting/Darien

Fun Busters Christmas Party/SHAC

Kiwanis Christmas Luncheon

Liberation House visit/Conflict-Resolution/Stamford

TOPS/Mistletoe Magic

The staff of the depot is as follows:

Program Director: Janice Marzano

Administrative Director: Robin Testa

Staff: John Miceli, Stephanie Calabrese, Matthew Miceli, Ken Martin

After school concession (9hrs/week) Sean Osario, DHS student

Program Director is the only full time position.

We hire police officers at an additional expense to attend all of the big weekend events.

The Depot Programs and Activities

(Updated March 2012)

Student Governing Board (SGB) Weekly Tuesday night meetings

Sports Team Pasta Dinners and **Season-end Awards Banquets**

Team Bonding Movie Nights (we have a HUGE screen/surround sound, etc)

Sports Captains' Dinners - a tradition held seasonally. The Blue Wave Pride Club now sponsors the Captains' Dinners along w/Vavala's Deli.

Theater 308 Reception for the cast and crew after Friday night performance - twice a year.

Bake Sale - SGB runs in the lobby during the shows to pay for the receptions

DHS Big/Little's Ice Cream Social held each year the night before the first day of school at the Depot.

Car Washes - DHS Sports teams/Theater 308/ABC House/St. Luke's Lifeworks

SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) - the Depot sponsors a chapter of this National Organization, which has to date won \$3,000 in contests to promote their cause. We are one of its strongest chapters in the state. They meet each Wednesday SADD - works very closely w/DHS and collaborates on many events. Advisors: Andrea McDonough/Police Officer Mark Cappelli/Janice Marzano. Reports to SADD National and Governor's Prevention Partnership.

AI, JAMS- (Alternate Incarceration - Judicial Administrative Monitoring System) **Many** kids that get arrested from town come to the Depot to do their court ordered community service (as the Depot serves as the Town's Youth Service Bureau). We've sent kids many places in town to help (Kiwans Citrus Sale/Chamber of Commerce/Salvation Army Bell Ringing/Town wide clean-up days, etc. We report to CYSB (CT Youth Service Bureau)

Forensic Health Services (AI)- located in Stamford, this is where court appointed service hours come from. Their PO and the Depot (YSB) monitor kids doing hours through the Depot. Program Director completes all paper work/letter writing/etc. We report to CYSB.

Norwalk Superior Court- similar to above two. Most kids arrested in New Canaan are sent through Norwalk court system. We work w/them also. We report to CYSB on this.

Youth Commission - The Depot plays an active role in implementing some of the Youth Commission's more popular community-wide events (such as the Community Arts Festival, Tilley Pond Regatta, Community Holiday Movie). It is great visibility for the Depot, and the kids love being a part of these activities. The Depot and Youth Commission have a long and solid relationship.

Liberation Programs -Three times a year 15 kids go to Liberation House (in-patient recovery residence). The van picks the kids up at school at 8:45 in the morning, returning them approx 1 pm. The kids attend a morning group meeting, view a conflict/resolution session, participate in role playing with the residents and are served lunch before coming back to school.

Girls Night Out - Two times a month. Open to any high school age girl residing in Darien. This is a program that gathers high school girls to share concerns and to discuss and learn about important topics like nutrition, body image, eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, etc. A highlight to this program is that we include women from Families in Recovery Program (FIRP) in Stamford. Once a month the women from FIRP sit down to dinner w/the girls and then all participate in a group discussion. This collaboration allows for a cross-cultural and social experience that benefits both the women and students involved. Very empowering, very productive. Andrea McDonough works w/us on this program.

Cop Shop - second Tuesday of each month Det. Cappelli/Boccuzzi come to the Depot to discuss teen concerns and share information about the law.

Mom & Pop Shop - first Thursday of each month. Same as Cop Shop but for parents. An informal roundtable discussion of relevant topics concerning parents.

Park, Walk and Talk - Darien police officers regularly come to The Youth Center and play a game of pool, have a bite to eat or just interact with kids, which helps to break down barriers between teens and police.

Police Academy (Darien CSI) - this runs for 6 weeks in January/February each year. MMS students only. Topics such as search and seizure procedures, traffic laws, crime scene technology, etc.

Cops & Kids Adventures - first year we have received \$10,000 grant from JJD/OPM 9 Juvenile Justice Dept/Office of Policy and Management. Cops/kids meet 1-2 times a month--leadership/bonding

The Kiwanis Club - we help them with their citrus sales twice a year. Team up with them for the Salvation Army Bell-ringing during the holiday season. Besides being a mutually beneficial relationship, it's a natural fit for the youth center to partner with the Kiwanis Club because one of their primary goals is to raise funds that provide scholarships for high school seniors. The Kiwanis Club is very supportive of The Depot both personally and financially! The Kiwanis Club benefits from our community service kids!

Sexual Assault and Crisis Education Center - we work very closely with this organization, as they are a wealth of information. Someone comes twice a year to speak at the Student Governing Board meetings. Topics vary, and are always extremely informative and the Depot has referred many students to them over the years.

Chamber of Commerce - The Depot Students face paint and tattoo at the summer sidewalk sales each year. In turn, the Chamber advocates for The Depot to its merchants, and as a result, we've developed further partnerships with many of these. The Chamber of Commerce also benefits from our community service kids.

Atria - The Student Governing Board partners for a "Spring Fling" held each year (at Atria) where the residents/SGB members dance and have a great time. SGB members go early to blow up balloons and bring posters to decorate. Atria supplies cookies, punch and music.

The Depot is the host for:

Kids-in-Crisis Youth Corps - The Youth Corps meets at the Depot once a month, and is comprised of kids from high schools all over Fairfield County. In addition, once a month, the little kids who are staying at the Kids-in-Crisis Shelter in Greenwich come here for a party co-hosted by the Youth Corps and the Depot. Also, in partnership with Kids-in-Crisis, The Depot has recently become a "Safe Place." This national program is designed to give kids a no-questions-asked, safe place to go which will then contact Kids-in-Crisis to help. As of right now, we are the only registered "Safe Place" in town...and actually, we were already doing this!

Safe Rides - a student run organization that is sponsored by the Darien Youth Commission and uses the Depot as its home base. Safe Rides operates with 8-12 students and 1-2 adults every weekend from 10-1:30 am.

Global Girls - local chapter of national organization that fundraises and creates awareness for a school and orphanage in Africa

The Depot Youth Volunteer at local events such as:

Opus Big Rig Gig, Darien Road Race, The Tilly Pond Regatta, Community Arts Festival, Community Holiday Movie, Kiwanis Club Citrus Sale and Salvation Army Bell Ringing, to name a few.

In development

Afterschool 6-week leadership program for 8th graders

Mother/Daughter Nights

Self-Defense Work shops (boys/girls/DHS/MMS)

Summer night program for 7/8th graders

Citizen Police Academy for Adults

*Students are encouraged to bring event and/or program ideas to the Depot, which they do.

Youth Services Provided by The Depot

February 12, 2012

	<u>2009/10</u>	<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12 to date</u>
Referrals*	46	39	28
Court Appointed Community Service**	16	27	27

*The Depot makes referrals to many different places -- to name a few...

Kids In Crisis

Renfrew Center

Hallbrook

Silver Hill Hospital

Family Centers

Wilkens Center

Planned Parenthood

The Center (Center for Sexual Abuse and Education)

Much time and attention is not only given to making the proper referral, but to following up each situation, as well.

**Both the Stamford and Norwalk Superior Courts rely heavily on The Depot to help fulfill many court appointed community service hours. This is done in one of two ways; either providing working hours at The Depot or reaching out to other local organizations in need of volunteers. This takes time, coordination and detailed record keeping.

Needless to say, there is a great need for these services. The Depot feels a great responsibility to the youth of Darien and never has and never will turn their back on anyone in need. However, The Depot is struggling just to keep its doors open and is finding it harder and harder to provide these incredibly important services without any funding.

The Youth of Darien look to The Depot for trusting help and support.

Following is a testimonial of a remarkable, young woman who wanted to share what The Depot has meant to her and how it has changed her life. She is the daughter of an abusive and alcoholic parent living here in Darien.

Growing up, I was always known as the shy, quiet kid. I never raised my hand in class; never approached anyone that I did not know. In fact, I hardly talked at all. However, I can proudly say that through my time in high school, I have deeply matured and become a confident young woman. The majority of this personal growth can be attributed to The Depot. Through Depot organizations such as SADD and GNO, I have learned how to be a leader. The Depot is a place of comfort and security, a place many students, including me, call a second home. I will always treasure The Depot as the place that instilled confidence in me and taught me to truly come out of my shell.

The Noroton Heights Depot

	Actual	Current	Projected	Proposed
	Last Year	Year Budget	This Year	Budget
	Jul '10 - Jun '11	Jul '11 - Jun '12	Jul '11 - Jun '12	Jul '12 - Jun '13
Petty Cash	-13.02	300.00	-200.00	300.00
Cable/Online	1,750.34	2,200.00	1,230.06	1,500.00
Cleaning & Linens	2,415.86	4,100.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Dues & Memberships	422.00	900.00	900.00	900.00
Equipment	759.36	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Merchant Fees	320.24	400.00	200.00	400.00
Minor Maintenance & Repair				
Pest Control Services	790.64	780.00	823.32	780.00
Landscaping	1,700.00	2,000.00	2,512.50	2,000.00
Minor Maintenance & Repair - Other	3,824.13	2,500.00	3,500.00	2,700.00
Total Minor Maintenance & Repair	6,304.77	5,280.00	6,835.82	5,480.00
Insurance	9,824.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	12,000.00
Subscriptions/CDs/Photos	177.84	100.00	100.00	100.00
Miscellaneous				
Educational Materials	0.00	200.00	750.00	200.00
Mileage & phone	572.47	550.00		
Miscellaneous - Other	0.00		0.00	800.00
Total Miscellaneous	572.47	750.00	750.00	1,000.00
Payroll, Taxes & Fringe				
Workers Compensation	2,939.38	3,100.00	2,500.00	2,100.00
Salaries & Withholding				
Assist Directors Compensation	24,514.42	25,000.00	22,652.30	25,000.00
Withholding Tax	21,627.52		14,588.33	
Director's Compensation	59,802.77	76,500.00	37,059.05	55,000.00
Student Payroll	261.61		1,051.73	
Total Salaries & Withholding	106,206.32	101,500.00	75,351.39	80,000.00
Medical Insurance	9,942.93	10,500.00	11,272.91	11,000.00
Employer Tax	9,189.03	8,700.00	6,647.24	6,500.00
Total Payroll, Taxes & Fringe	128,277.66	123,800.00	95,771.53	99,600.00
Payroll Service	2,660.46	2,300.00	2,500.00	2,300.00
Police Services	2,915.49	1,000.00	2,000.00	1,500.00
Postage	553.86	400.00	700.00	800.00
Advertising & Publicity	0.00	0.00	90.00	0.00
Security	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Sewer	607.20	600.00	600.00	600.00
Office Supplies	695.46	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Trash	2,532.17	2,400.00	3,000.00	2,800.00
Utilities	19,255.89	20,600.00	17,396.92	20,000.00
Operating Expenses - Other			0.00	
Total Operating Expenses	184,795.76	182,405.00	151,278.71	159,080.00
Total Expense	209,801.42	196,830.00	193,460.86	195,955.00
Net Ordinary Income	-21,487.64	41.00	2,051.86	31.00
Other Income/Expense				
Other Income				
Void	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net Other Income	-21,487.64	41.00	2,051.86	31.00

The FY July 2010 – June 2011 audit is available for review as needed. If interested in reviewing this document, please contact The Depot (203) 655-0812.

The Noroton Heights Depot

Expense	Actual	Current	Projected	Proposed
	Last Year	Year Budget	This Year	Budget
	Jul '10 - Jun '11	Jul '11 - Jun '12	Jul '11 - Jun '12	Jul '12 - Jun '13
Enhancement Grant Program Exp	2,675.06		2,219.14	
Reconciliation Discrepancies	0.00			
Classes & Programs				
Police & Youth Program (net)			0.00	
Classes & Programs - Other	620.82		500.00	
Total Classes & Programs	620.82	0.00	500.00	0.00
Alternate Use				
4th/5th Grade Party	2,653.59	3,500.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
MMS Event	11.88	1,000.00		1,000.00
Fun Busters	142.00			
Helpers/Chaperones	100.00			
Alternate Use - Other	33.14		1,000.00	
Total Alternate Use	2,940.61	4,500.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
Fundraising Expenses				
Graduation Balloons	317.59			
Town Wide Mailing	3,315.00		6,000.00	
Grant Writing Consultants			10,000.00	20,000.00
Fall /Winter Fund Raiser			6,848.40	
Fundraising Expenses - Other			1,000.00	
Spring/Summer Fund Raiser	0.00			
Total Fundraising Expenses	3,632.59	0.00	23,848.40	20,000.00
Student Expenses				
SADD	2,337.88	300.00	1,682.25	2,400.00
Donations			60.00	
SGB Expenses	984.24	1,000.00		1,000.00
Fundraising				
Depot Wrap-Up	81.89	250.00	0.00	250.00
Car Wash Expenses	181.63	250.00		250.00
Fundraising - Other	526.81		1,000.00	850.00
Total Fundraising	790.33	500.00	1,000.00	1,350.00
Entertainment/Events				
Theater 308	463.39		20.00	
Band Nights	23.76			
Movie Nights	108.55		70.50	
Team Dinners	37.77		50.00	
Other Student Event Expenses	699.98		75.00	
Recreation/Games	218.27		55.00	
Decorations - Student Events	19.95			
Entertainment/Events - Other	4,181.31	3,200.00	3,000.00	3,200.00
Total Entertainment/Events	5,752.98	3,200.00	3,270.50	3,200.00
Concession				
Non-Food items	1,234.70		1,500.00	
Concession - Other	3,012.26	4,925.00	3,425.00	4,925.00
Total Concession	4,246.96	4,925.00	4,925.00	4,925.00
Student Expenses - Other	1,024.19		678.86	
Total Student Expenses	15,136.58	9,925.00	11,614.61	12,875.00
Operating Expenses				
Beautification	32.43	300.00		300.00
Professional Development				
Training	335.00			
Meetings	20.00		1,000.00	
Professional Development - Other	501.90	1,000.00		1,000.00
Total Professional Development	856.90	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Bank Service Charge	194.16	200.00	230.00	200.00
Printing	246.54	150.00	150.00	150.00
Paper Goods & Cleaning Supplies	428.68	700.00	274.38	700.00
Other Taxes	235.00	225.00	250.00	250.00
Professional Fees & Acct'g	2,270.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00

The Noroton Heights Depot

	Actual Last Year Jul '10 - Jun '11	Current Year Budget Jul '11 - Jun '12	Projected This Year Jul '11 - Jun '12	Proposed Budget Jul '12 - Jun '13
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Uncategorized Income	14.22			
In Kind Donations			158.00	
Contributions				
Alternative Use				
4th/5th Grade Party	7,661.00	6,500.00	6,500.00	7,000.00
Middle School Events	1,415.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Alternative Use - Other	6,250.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	5,000.00
Total Alternative Use	15,326.00	13,500.00	13,500.00	14,500.00
Misc contributions	3,040.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	
Contributions - Other	1,500.00			3,000.00
Total Contributions	19,866.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	17,500.00
Fundraisers				
Major Donor Program	0.00	15,725.00		0.00
Graduation Balloons	6,025.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	4,000.00
BEE	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Town Wide Mailing	22,325.00	25,000.00	22,000.00	22,000.00
Fall/Winter (Woodway)	0.00	33,800.00	23,335.00	15,000.00
Spring/Summer				
Games	10.00			
Spring/Summer - Other	13,725.00		7,200.00	
Total Spring/Summer	13,735.00	0.00	7,200.00	0.00
Fundraisers - Other	157.20		2,000.00	8,000.00
Total Fundraisers	42,242.20	82,525.00	62,535.00	54,000.00
Grants				
Enhancement Grant	6,250.00		6,250.00	
Community Fund of Darien - Indl				
CF of Darien - ind (Restricted)	5,000.00			
Total Community Fund of Darien - Indl	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Community Fund of Darien	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
Connecticut	14,411.00	14,411.00	14,411.00	14,411.00
Foundations & Grants	2,000.00			20,000.00
Town of Darien	39,450.00	39,450.00	39,450.00	39,450.00
United Way - Direct	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
United Way - Individual	2,594.26		2,000.00	
Total Grants	94,705.26	78,861.00	87,111.00	98,861.00
Interest Income	1,371.51	2,060.00	959.22	1,000.00
Student Income				
Memberships	130.00	200.00	1,400.00	1,000.00
Events				
Band Night	819.00		1,000.00	
Events - Other	11,888.76	5,800.00	11,000.00	7,700.00
Total Events	12,707.76	5,800.00	12,000.00	7,700.00
Fund Raisers				
SADD	2,628.00		1,500.00	
Theater 308	1,185.50		500.00	
Wrap-up	1,889.00		1,548.00	
Car Wash	4,028.00		2,500.00	
Pinball Machine	10.00		30.00	
Fund Raisers - Other	2,290.55	7,500.00	2,071.50	12,000.00
Total Fund Raisers	12,031.05	7,500.00	8,149.50	12,000.00
Snack Bar				
sales tax	222.68	225.00	200.00	225.00
Snack Bar - Other	3,669.10	3,700.00	3,000.00	3,700.00
Total Snack Bar	3,891.78	3,925.00	3,200.00	3,925.00
Student Income - Other	1,354.00		4,000.00	
Total Student Income	30,114.59	17,425.00	28,749.50	24,625.00
Total Income	188,313.78	196,871.00	195,512.72	195,986.00

[Title Slide] Good Evening. My name is Terrie Van de Graaf, and I live at 61 Echo Drive North. My name is Margot Congdon, and I live at 85 Pembroke Road. We are the co-chairs of the Council of Darien School Parents. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to speak tonight. We are here to speak in support of the Board of Education's recommended budget, a budget that has already gone through a rigorous process of review and rationalization. We would like to begin by thanking the members of the Board of Finance for your careful management of our town finances. [Common Ground slide] We would also like to publicly acknowledge your support of the school children of Darien by fully funding the 2011-12 school budget request, for which we are most grateful. We are fortunate that you appreciate and comprehend the pressures that result from the state's failure to fully reimburse our district for Special Education excess costs, and we commend your outreach to the Board of Ed for regular updates. We are gratified to see your efforts to collaborate with our Board of Ed and Board of Selectmen, and we endorse your collective efforts to consolidate, outsource and share redundant functions and services to find cost savings. We all share some common values in Darien, including a long-term commitment to excellent education. But educational excellence requires a sustained, strategic financial investment. This year's budget funding was an important step, but we still have a lot of ground to make up. [Tonight's Discussion slide] Like it or not, we are dealing with "new realities" in Darien. As a town, we need to face up to these "new realities" and ask ourselves, what investment is needed to both sustain excellent education and support residential real estate values in our community. Tonight, we will discuss the 2012-13 budget, the "new realities" we are confronting, and the investment that is necessary to maintain excellent education in Darien.

[Pie Chart slide] Let's take a look at where we are with a broad overview of the Recommended Budget for 2012-13. The budget for total actual expenses is \$83.8 million dollars. As you can see, Operating Spending and Equipment, about 6% of the budget, end up being the only discretionary portions, as Special Education, contractual obligations and fixed expenses make up the bulk of the budget. [Drivers slide] When we examine the budget drivers, the increase in actual expenses, as seen in the left column, is 3.8%. The district also typically receives revenues that offset the budget expenses, including field fees and summer school revenue, but the biggest revenue offset by far is reimbursement from the state in the form of Special Education excess costs, a negative differential of nearly a million dollars next year. As seen in the right-hand column, this results in the net Board budget increase of 5.3%, or \$4 million dollars. One point seven million dollars is devoted to educational mandates, another 1.6 million dollars is attributable to contractual obligations and fixed expenses. The new curriculum, initiative, mental health professionals, Equipment, Maintenance, Technology and non- Special Education Operating spending together is less than \$700,000. It is really this sum that is up for discussion tonight. Importantly, even if we eliminate this \$700,000 in its entirety, that would leave us with over a 4% increase in the budget over last year.

So, let's talk about these new realities.

[1st New Realities slide]

New Reality No. 1: Town Demographics Have Changed, and the Number of Darien Children in Crisis Has Increased

The majority of Darien taxpayers directly benefit from the quality of the school system, and that number is growing. [2000 – 2010 slide] Our town has the highest percentage of population under the age of 18 in the state of Connecticut, and according to the 2010 Census, a majority of Darien families have children under the age of 18. This is a substantial increase from years ago when the percentage of families with school-aged children was estimated at 40%. From 2000 – 2010, Darien's population increased by 1125 residents, and our school enrollment increased in the same period by 873 students. [Enrollment Trend slide] Over the last 5 and 10 years, Darien's enrollment growth has outpaced all of our neighbors, as young families were drawn to our town. Nearly a quarter of Darien's 20,000 residents are children sitting in our public schools each day. But all taxpayers have a vested interest in the excellence of Darien schools because it is one of the major factors valued by residents and homebuyers. We all need people who consider moving here to be able to look at our schools and believe that their children will have an education at least comparable to the education they would receive in towns like New Canaan, Westport and Greenwich, the towns to which we are often compared.

[Children in Crisis slide]

No discussion of the “new realities” facing our town would be complete without focusing on the main driver of our budget increase: Special Education. An underfunded federal mandate, Special Education is also driven by our collective desire to see that children we care for are given the services they require to learn both in and outside of a typical classroom. Unpredictable, untimely and declining reimbursement from the state has wreaked havoc on our education budgets over the last two years. We have all spent hours debating the additional teacher requested for the High School, the tables and chairs at the Middle School and even the World Language proposal in the Elementary Schools, but as we mentioned, together, these items amount to a fraction of the budget increase for Special Education. It bears noting that we are not alone in this challenge, and school districts across the country are wrestling with the same difficulties. [Declining ECR %’s slide] It is now abundantly clear that we cannot rely on full funding of state Excess Cost Reimbursement. This is perhaps the harshest “new reality” of all, because the state’s default is so large, and the needs of our Special Education population are so great. However, we concur with you that this realization is in fact an opportunity for the District to redouble its efforts to find efficiencies. And here is the good news: we have done just that, and are already managing our Special Education program better and smarter, which you will hear more about in a subsequent speech. We all must recognize, however, that this is only the beginning of our new approach. We must come together as a school district, and as a community, to recognize our Special Education obligations, assess them realistically and fund them adequately. This is the only way that we can assure that the Board of Ed is not put in the unfortunate position of having to transfer funds allocated to regular education to subsidize unpredictable Special Education cost overruns. This has been the root cause of underfunding in the general education classroom, where **BOTH** our Special Education and regular education children come together to learn, and we know that this is a result that you never intended.

[4th New Reality slide]

New Reality No. 4: Top-Notch Education Is a Competitive Advantage

Our Board of Finance has historically been celebrated for its thoughtful prudence on behalf of our residents, and we have all benefitted in the form of relatively low taxes. However, in the face of the “new realities” that we have outlined, we cannot let our collective preference to avoid tax increases drive our decision-making on what we know our children – and our town as a whole – need. [Town Priorities slide] It boils down to property values. With the impending residential property revaluation in October 2013, our property values on average are likely to decline further. New families and other homebuyers will have a vast inventory of homes in numerous towns from which to choose, and continued deferral of essential services and comparable programs for our schools may very well take us off their short list. Cuts to the school budget may ease the pain in the short-term, but ultimately, we **ALL** need people who are looking to move to this area to choose Darien over other towns. As the *New Canaan Darien + Rowayton* magazine so aptly put it in an article in its latest issue, “[c]hildren are our future, and that future’s looking megawatt bright. It’s no secret that the public schools here are nationally ranked. . . . Bottom line: **People move here for the schools alone.**” [Emphasis original, p. 107]. The “new realities” have changed our landscape, and now **THEY** must drive our budgeting decisions.

To illustrate this further, Trumbull, CT, which is ranked 39th in the state in its ability to pay based upon property values and income, has been more profoundly affected by the economic downturn than Darien, with home values plummeting on average over 21% and major shortfalls in its town pension fund, but -- its school system is strong. According to Schooldigger.com, a website that homebuyers, rightly or wrongly, often consult, Trumbull’s schools rank 18th in the state, only four behind Darien. In his budget message to Trumbull’s Board of Finance, First Selectman Timothy Herbst noted that “[w]hile we must govern the Town in a fiscally prudent manner and consider the financial implications this budget will have on our taxpayers, we must also maintain Trumbull’s strong position as a community of choice in the State of Connecticut.” In spite of his town’s significant economic woes, he chose to present a budget that included investment in a new school initiative to enhance the town’s already strong school system in order to maintain, what he termed, Trumbull’s “competitive edge.”

We have heard here in Darien that full funding of the school budget is unsustainable, and that our town can’t afford it. Undoubtedly, there are individual residents for whom this is true, and tax abatement programs and other measures may be appropriate vehicles for ameliorating individual hardship. But as a town, this is not true. [Ability to Pay slide] Darien is ranked third in the state in its ability to pay. It comes down to choices. We



**Board of Finance
Public Hearing**

March 13, 2012

Our Common Ground

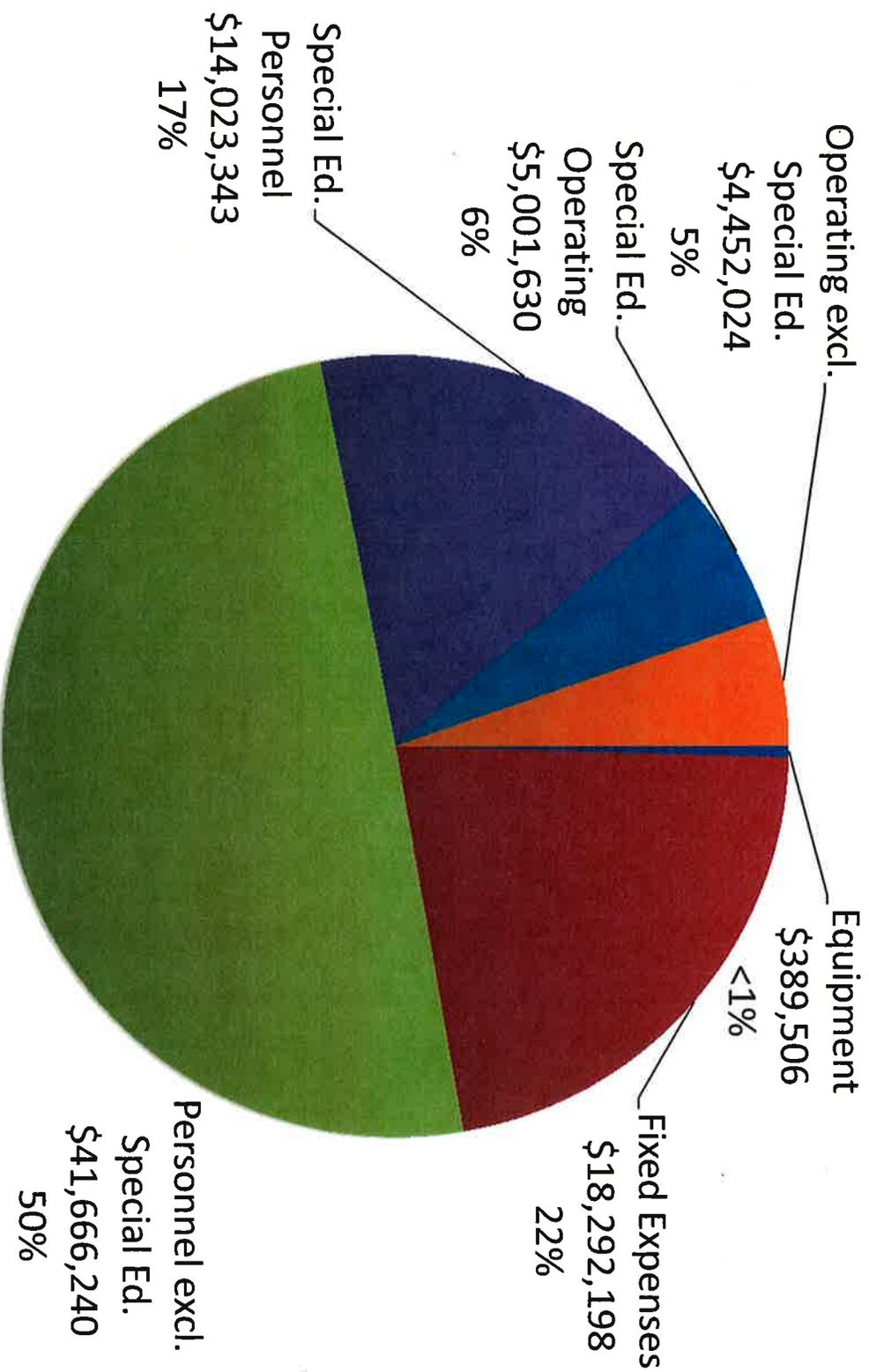
- **Commend funding for current year's budget**
- **Share commitment to excellent education**
- **Applaud collaboration among Town bodies for efficiencies**

Tonight's Discussion

- Recommended Board of Education budget for 2012/2013
- “New Realities”
 - Changes in town demographics and kids in crisis
 - Efficiencies vs. offerings
 - Assessing, managing and funding Special Education
 - Choices and priorities
- Investment in education benefits all tax payers/residents

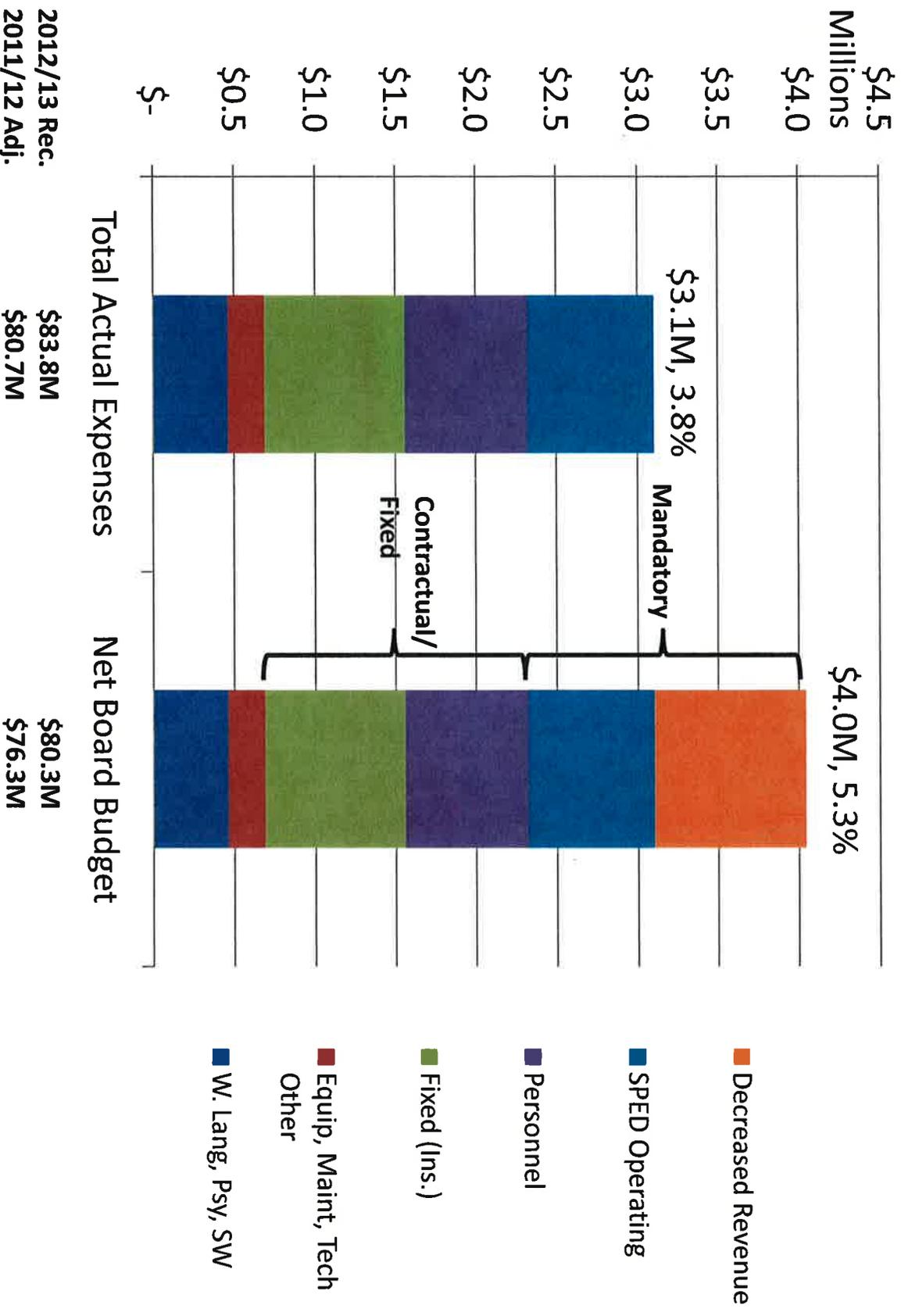
Board of Education 2012-2013 Recommended Budget: \$83.8M

Total Actual Expenses



Drivers of Budget Growth

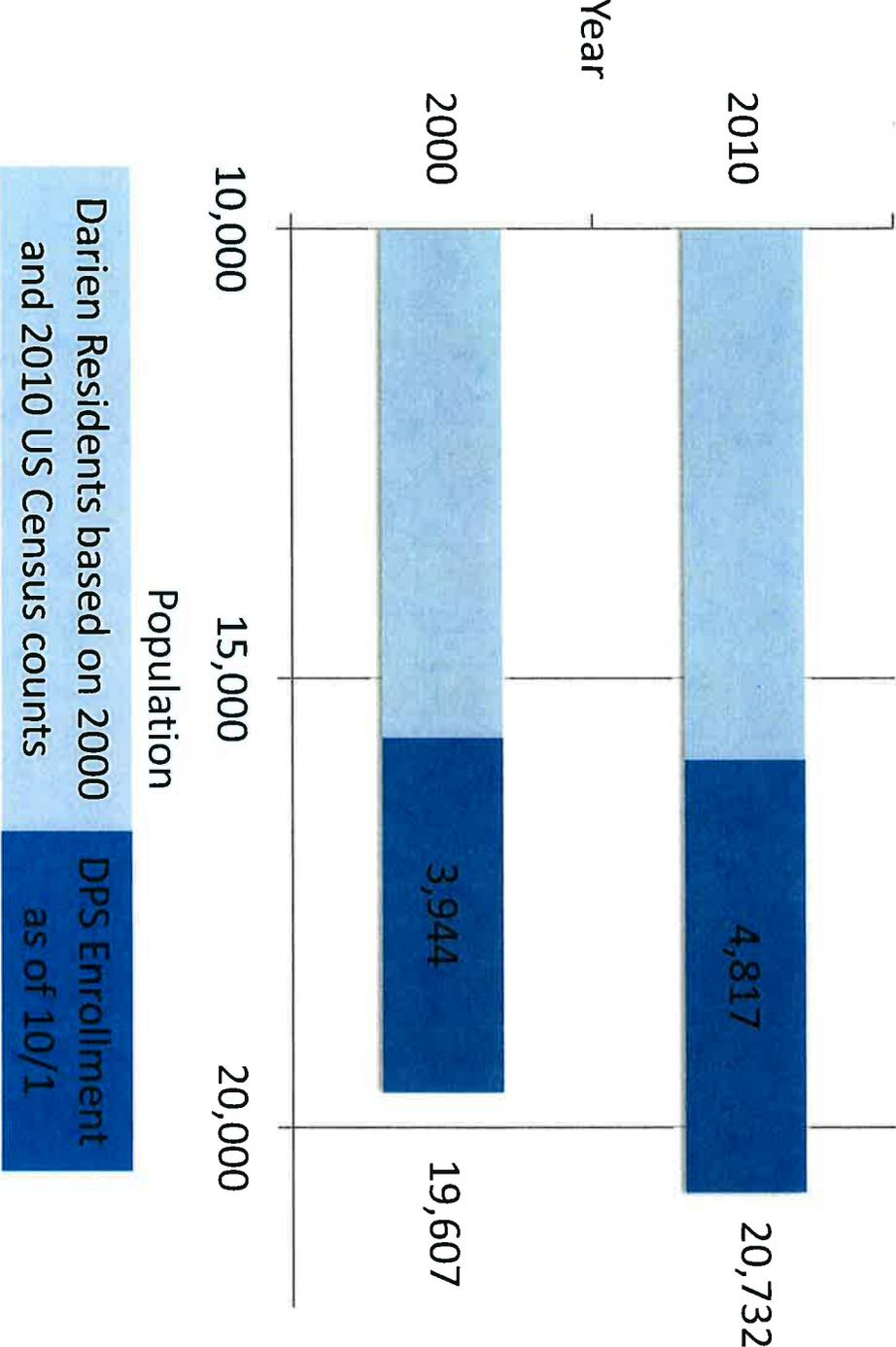
BOE Recommended 2012/13 vs. Adjusted 2011/12



“New Realities”

1. Town demographics have changed and the number of Darien children in crisis has increased

From 2000 to 2010, the number of town residents increased 1125 while enrollment in our schools grew by 873



School District Enrollment Trends

				Growth	Growth
	<u>2001/02</u>	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2011/2012</u>	<u>Past 10 yrs</u>	<u>Past 5 yrs</u>
Darien	3944	4475	4817	22%	8%
Westport	5007	5489	5770	15%	5%
Wilton	4030	4353	4357	8%	<1%
Weston	2367	2569	2516	6%	-2%
New Canaan	3886	4140	4126	6%	<-1%
Ridgefield	5088	5612	5312	4%	-5%
Easton	1077	1154	1056	-2%	-8%
Redding	1233	1276	1193	-3%	-7%

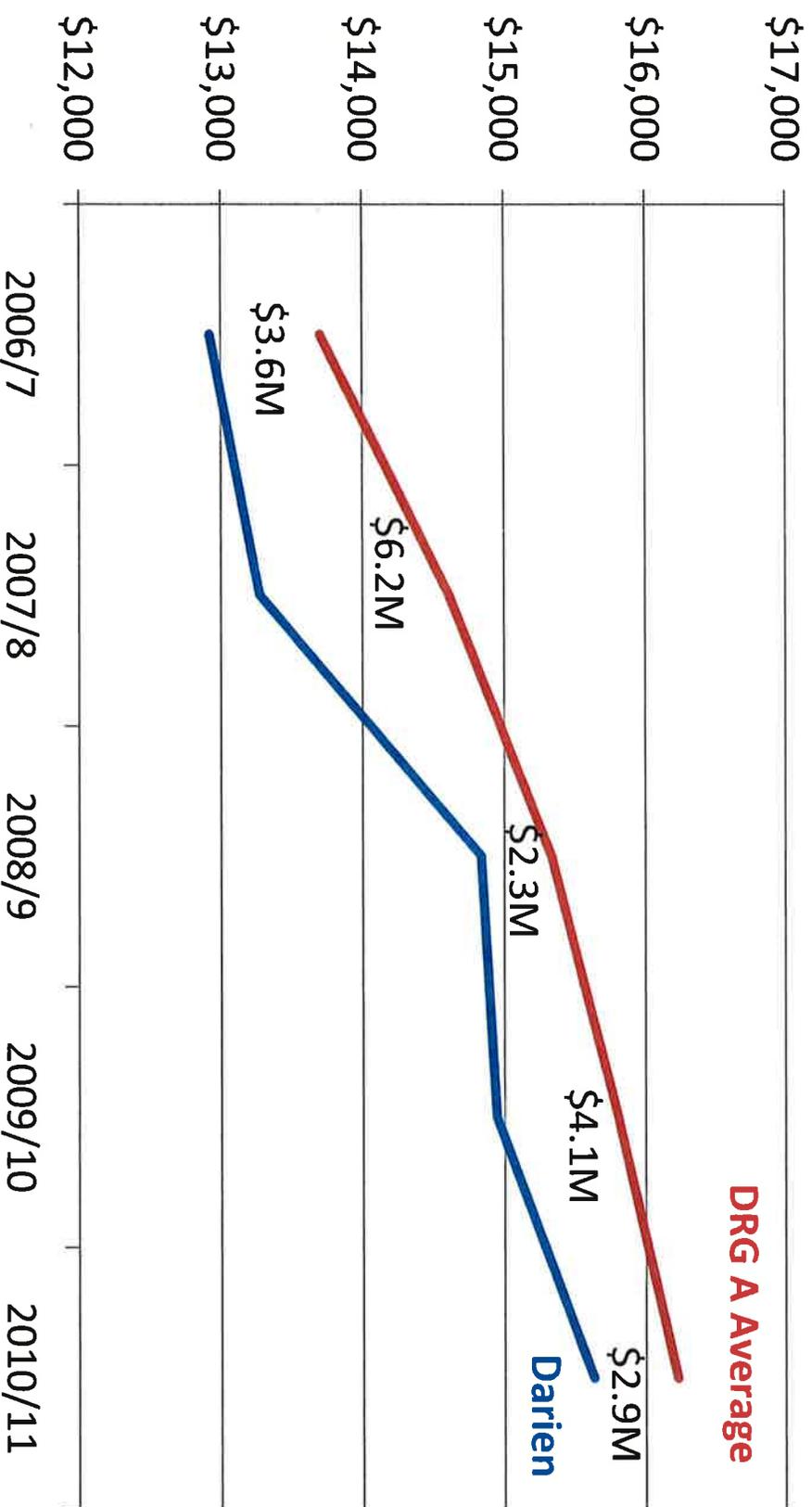
School Children in Crisis

- 24/7 world with complexities and stressors
- Incidence of anxiety/depression, emotional disturbance and substance abuse

“New Realities”

1. Town demographics have changed and the number of Darien children in crisis has increased
2. Part of why we spend less is because we offer less

Per Student Spending: Darien vs. DRG A Average



Differential shown (M) = difference between the average per student spending for Darien and the DRG A average * Darien's enrollment for each year.

World Language Programs Offered in Peer Districts

	Darien	New Canaan	Westport	Wilton	Greenwich
Elementary					
Spanish		✓	✓	✓	✓
Middle School					
French	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spanish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Latin		✓			
Mandarin/Chinese		✓	✓		
High School					
French/Spanish/Latin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mandarin/Chinese	✓	✓	✓		✓
German			✓	✓	✓
Italian			✓		✓
Russian				✓	

Wilton offers Spanish to grades 3, 4 and 5; Greenwich offers French and Spanish to elementary

Where We Are Lagging . . .

- Social Worker and Psychologist Staffing
- Technology
- Professional Development for Teachers
- Classroom Materials

What Have We Deferred?

- **Operating**
 - New and replacement textbooks
 - Science equipment
 - Consumable textbooks, literacy libraries
 - Classroom reference materials
 - Professional development
 - Repairs to machines and equipment
- **Equipment**
 - Classroom furniture
 - Cafeteria tables and chairs
 - New and replacement technology
- **Infrastructure Maintenance**

Gifts Accepted by Darien Board of Education

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Parent Teacher Organizations	\$214,687	\$45,654	\$45,269	\$174,540	\$138,400
Darien Foundation for Tech & Comm	\$70,000	\$66,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$14,265
Blue Wave Booster Club	\$31,391	\$68,389	\$17,896	\$26,122	\$20,505
Misc. Athletics	\$0	\$10,389	\$16,000	\$82,902	\$62,694
Music	\$0	\$2,646	\$0	\$3,675	\$91,225
Other	<u>\$2,500</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$9,845</u>	<u>\$2,985</u>	<u>\$13,296</u>
	\$318,578	\$193,078	\$104,010	\$310,224	\$340,385

Notes:

Turf baseball field also donated to BOE, \$680,000 December 2006
 2009/2010 and 2010/11 numbers include all donations to the BOE, including those under \$5000 and portable lights
 2010/2011 Music donation includes individual donations as well as \$15,000 from Darien Foundation for T & C

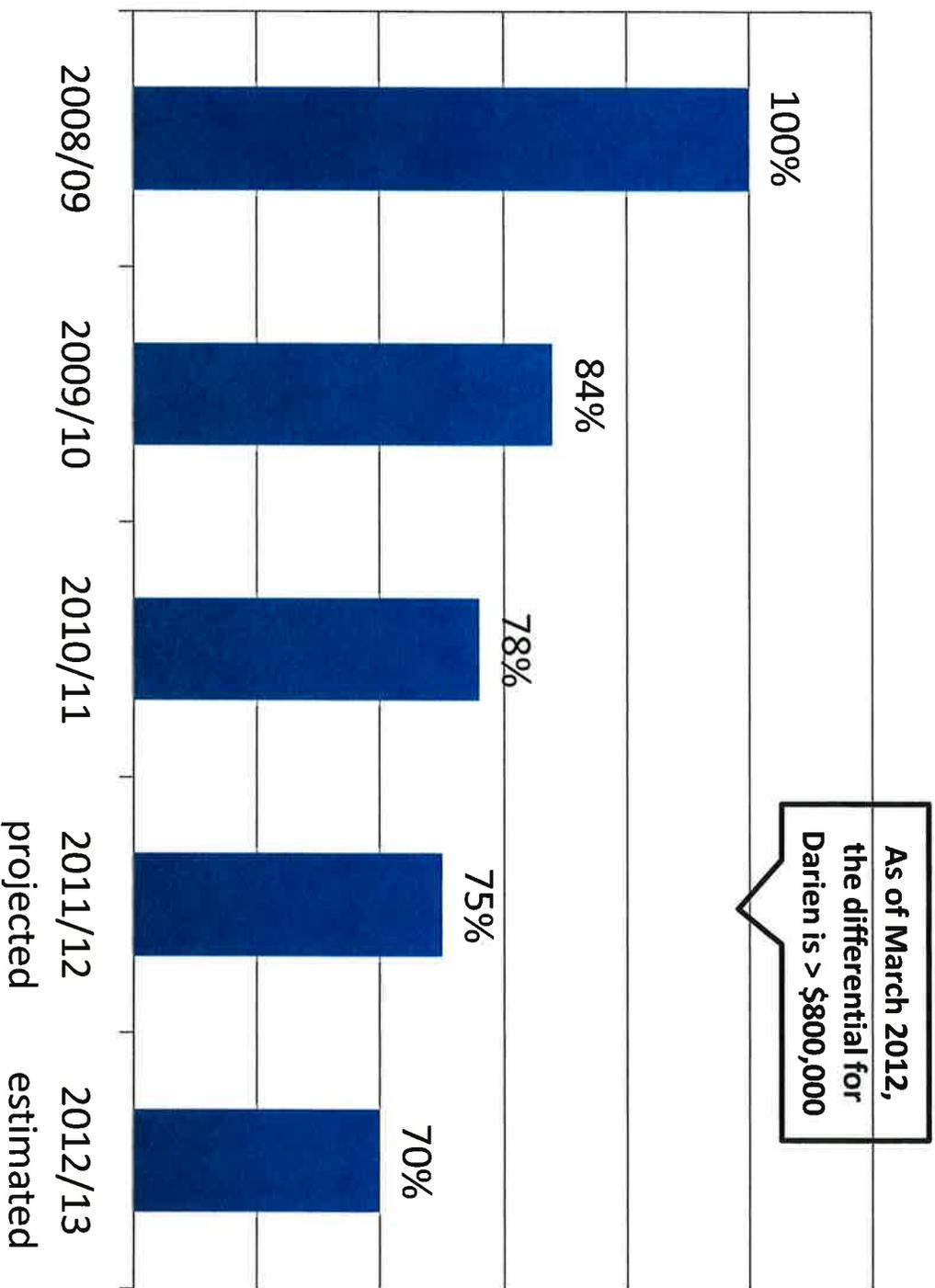
During 2011/12 significant donations to the BOE include authorization for Blue Wave Booster Club to fund raise \$100,000 for DHS fitness room renovation and community donations of approximately \$40,000 in funds, goods and services for school gardens at all elementary schools.

“New Realities”

1. Town demographics have changed and the number of Darien children in crisis has increased
2. Part of why we spend less is because we offer less
3. Special education costs are unpredictable, state reimbursement is declining and Darien must make up the difference

The portion of Special Education Excess Costs Reimbursed by the State of CT has declined since the economic downturn

Reimbursement as a % of Eligible Excess Costs



“New Realities”

1. Town demographics have changed and the number of Darien children in crisis has increased
2. Part of why we spend less is because we offer less
3. Special education costs are unpredictable, state reimbursement is declining and Darien must make up the difference
4. Top notch education is a competitive advantage

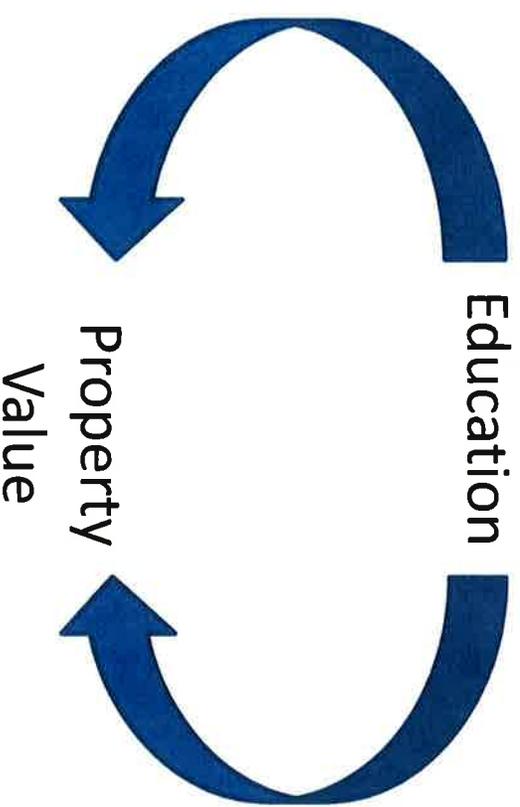
Top notch education is a competitive advantage

- Community of choice
- Staying on the short list
- Property value

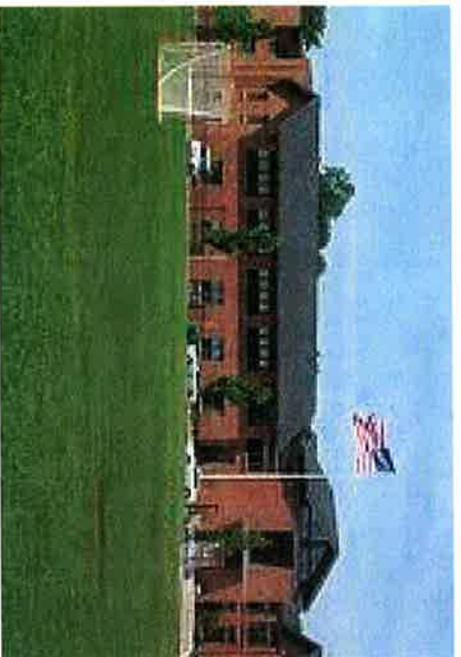
Example: Trumbull investing in schools to maintain competitive edge

If we have the ability to pay, let's make the choice to invest

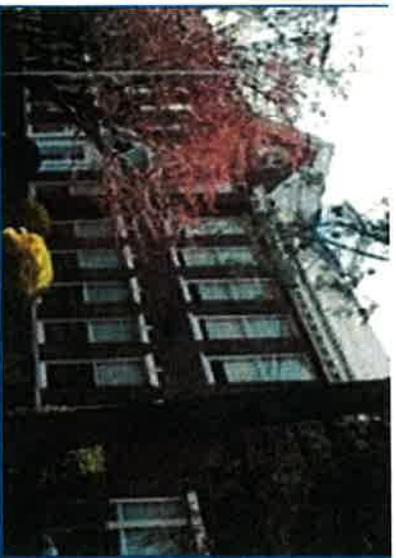
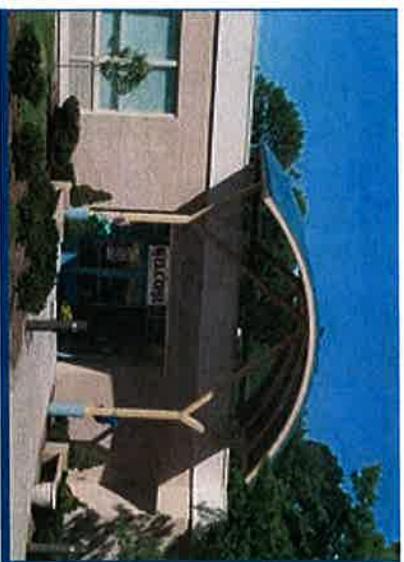
Ability To Pay State Ranking	CT Town
1	Greenwich
2	New Canaan
3	Darien
4	Westport
5	Weston
6	Wilton
...	
39	Trumbull



Source: CT Dept. of Education. Ability to Pay rank is based on 2011 Adjusted Equalized Net Grand List per Capita.



**Darien BOE
Recommended
2012/13 Budget**



My name is Laura Grozier. I live at 25 Leeuward Road and have 3 children, one a recent graduate of DHS, one who is in school out the district and a freshman at DHS. I am the Special Education budget representative for the CDSP.

Tonight I'm speaking in support of RC 24, Special Education. On behalf of the CDSP, I want to thank the Board of Finance for supporting a quality education for all our students and for fully funding the Board of Education's budget request for the last two years. We appreciate the extraordinary effort that you have made to understand special education and to improve collaboration with the Board of Education, and your actions are a clear step in the right direction.

The special education budget is characterized by a level of unpredictability and volatility not found in the budgets of other areas of education. As you know, special education is a federal mandate. The applicable laws were enacted to protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community, children with special needs. Some children in special education have minor learning issues, others have more severe needs and require more intensive support and services, which in some cases necessitates out of district placement to receive the education to which they are entitled. Regardless, our district is legally required to provide for all children with special needs in our district. The services we are legally obligated and financially responsible for providing are specified in each child's Individual Education Plan, or IEP, without regard to the cost of those services identified in the IEP.

This year's experience demonstrates perfectly the volatility and unpredictability that I mentioned. For the 2011/12 school year, the District projected for 562 special education students. By October 1st the actual number of children needing special services had climbed to 622. Since then, another 10 students have required special education to address their needs. These numbers included 19 new kindergartners who reported to school with IEPs who did not attend Darien pre-schools, some who didn't attend pre-school at all. A number of these students have significant needs, causing them to be immediately placed in the Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) at Ox Ridge School, which is unprecedented. Between September and today, 17 DHS students have been out-placed, either by family or court order, to short-term psychiatric hospitals or substance abuse programs. Six elementary school students have been out-placed for emotional and social issues. By law, the district must assume responsibility for their education until they return to school. More of our students have either been identified through SRBI/PPT or private evaluations validated by our district. Not even the best-laid plans by our Administrators could have prepared them for this startling enrollment increase.

The 2011/12 budget included \$2 million for out-placement to private schools for students whose needs cannot be met by our district, yet our actual expense is \$2.9 million, plus the associated transportation costs. The number of out-placed students rose from 35 in 2010/11 to 41 today. Most of these private placements,

\$2.5 million, were reached through a Planning and Placement Team meeting, whose participants agreed that the out-of-district placement was in the best interest of the child. The rest resulted from settlements, which carried with them the associated legal costs. It might come as a surprise to some that our responsibility for our special education students extends until they turn 21, so for students who exit our high school at 18, we provide vocational training.

As a result, our district, through no fault of its own, finds itself struggling to live within a budget bears no resemblance to the reality of educating 632 special education students – 70 more than budgeted for – each with varying needs, diagnoses and legally binding individual education plans. The financial responsibility is significant and, as you have heard, poses challenges that have been exacerbated over the past several years by a further tightening of our budget and a dramatic reduction in excess cost reimbursement from the state.

Not surprisingly, with 70 additional students, \$900,000 in out of district placements and a corresponding \$922,000 reduction in state reimbursement, the district is carrying a deficit in the special education account. This is frustrating news. However, we do not want that almost inevitable outcome to obfuscate the important improvements and efficiencies that were made in special education in our district this year. Before I discuss what the Board of Education is requesting, let me take a moment and outline the actions taken by the administration, under Dr. Falcone's leadership, and the results they have achieved.

The district has improved its management of "what we know", enabling us to better accommodate the unpredictable. District-wide, all IEPs have been reviewed and commonalities in specified services by grade and school identified. This has led to several modifications to how students are placed in classrooms and resources allocated that enabled the district to accommodate 60 students new to the special education department this past fall. No additional funds were requested, no additional staff hired. The significance of this achievement cannot be emphasized enough.

The district has worked to contain special education costs within the RC. The realignment of resources already mentioned allowed for the elimination of 7 paraprofessionals and the redeployment of 1.4 FTE's special education teachers to help meet the needs of the 60 additional special education students this fall. The district reduced its contracted services budget by 30% by bringing Applied Behavior Analysis consultants in-house, giving us the added benefit of greater control over their hours, travel time, scheduling and quantity of output.

As of March 1st, all but \$122,000 of the special education budget deficit has been covered within RC 24 and through savings and reductions in non-pupil related budget items outside of special education.

On behalf of the CDSP I want to extend our gratitude to the Board for its expressed willingness to fund the balance of the deficit from the special education contingency fund. Doing so allows the Board of Education to end the year with a balanced budget, and more importantly, keeps the operating budget for regular education intact and available to fund materials and programs for all our students through the end of the school year.

Now I'd like to turn the discussion to the special education budget for the 2012/2013 school year.

We can expect the challenges we faced with the current school year budget will persist into the 2012/2013 school year. And we can expect that these challenges will once again put pressure on the budget.

While well meaning suggestions are coming from many sources, the ultimate responsibility for the education of our students rests with our administrators, who are working diligently to simultaneously streamline special education delivery while continuing to raise the bar on the academic performance of these children. Two weeks ago, Dr. Falcone presented data that showed increasing test scores in special education, evidence that ground is being gained on both fronts.

We ask you to acknowledge the volatility and unpredictability that is inherent in this RC that is different from all others. To be aware of, and plan for, the changes that take place that are beyond the control of the district, and to work collaboratively with the Board of Education to address them. To recognize that there is simply no silver bullet solution, but through a concerted effort on the part of the administration, Boards of Education and Finance, we can successfully meet our legal, financial and moral obligations to our special education students while maintaining the level of regular education funding as approved.

We agree with you that funding must be intentional. If the Board of Education intends to fund certain line items outside of RC 24, then we must all work together to find a process to protect that funding, even in the face of exogenous shocks to the special education budget.

Thank you.



2012/2013 SPECIAL EDUCATION BUDGET

Good evening. My name is Patty McCormick and I live at 441 Hoyt Street and my children attend Ox Ridge Elementary School.

I am the budget representative for Ox Ridge, but tonight I am speaking on behalf of all our schools in support of the addition of one psychologist, to be shared by Darien High School and Middlesex, and one social worker for our five elementary schools. These positions are included in RC 24, Special Education, yet the need is driven by a significant increase in the number of general education students, across all grades, experiencing emotional and behavioral issues that negatively affect their ability to learn.

A chronically late student now refuses to attend school. A sudden outburst by an elementary school student interrupts learning, and quickly escalates to books being thrown and a classroom of frightened children. A substance abuse problem can no longer be hidden, as the student's grades plummet and behavior becomes erratic. A sudden tragedy floods a school with grief stricken students in need of support and reassurance. These examples are representative of what is happening across our country, our state, our community and in our schools.

Our children live in a much different world than the one we grew up in. Access and exposure to information is 24/7 and inescapable. Pressure to excel, intense. The media holds up an increasingly unrealistic body image as the ideal. Our children fear falling short of expectations, and of not doing as well as their financially successful parents. For perhaps the first time in our country's history, our children are legitimately concerned for their future. Its no wonder they are reaching their breaking point.

A recent U.S. Surgeon General Report pegs the incidences of childhood anxiety, depression and other mental health and behavioral issues at 4 million. Substance abuse continues to increase, and according to CDC statistics, 24% of high school students reported episodic heavy or binge drinking. The National Institute on Media and the Family reports that at age 13, 53% of American girls are "unhappy with their bodies", a number that grows to 78% by the time girls reach 17, putting them at risk of an eating disorder. I could go on.

The Child Guidance Center reports a 37% increase in crisis specific calls from Darien between July 1st and December 31st, the first two quarters of its 2012 fiscal year. For the full fiscal year 2011, Child Guidance handled 33 crisis calls from Darien and helped 85 children deal with issues such as depression, suicidal ideation, behavioral issues, physical and substance abuse.

We are not alone. In fiscal year 2011, Child Guidance received 110 crisis calls from Greenwich, 18 from New Canaan and 291 from Stamford. Child Guidance provided treatment services to 2,027 students, and of these students, the number who reported a history of prior psychiatric hospitalization increased by 115%, the number who were

There is little room in the psychologist's day to do more, and the unanticipated crisis situations that erupt and require immediate, emergency interventions and support place added pressure on their time. The new psychologist will complete eligibility and triennial evaluations so the existing psychologists can dedicate more time for counseling, social skills groups, and deal with the growing number of students in crisis.

Commenting on the earlier mentioned U.S. Surgeon General report, Dr. Jeff Bostic, director of school psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital and assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School had this to say, "We live in a time when we should be the happiest that we've ever been in human history, but we're not. We live in a complicated society where kids have 500 channels of television, most of which get their attention by scaring them, and we, as human beings, weren't made to be jacked-up all the time. School is also a very complicated place now. Kids are being told they're not going to have a good quality of life if they don't do every little thing exactly right. They're scared to death, and therefore, rates of depression and anxiety are up."

The time is now to install professionals in our schools whose specific expertise is best suited for dealing with the growing number of our students who are in crisis.

Thank you.

Good evening. My name is Jennifer Montanaro and I live at 7 Miles Road I have two children in the Darien Public School System; one in Hindley and one in Middlesex. I am currently serving as the Budget Representative of Hindley.

I'm speaking this evening on behalf of the elementary school budget representatives, PTO co-chairs and elementary school communities who are in full support of the proposed 2013 school budget.

Before I begin, on behalf of our students and our elementary school community, I would like to thank the Board of Finance for standing by us during these difficult economic times. We recognize the dedication, time and thoughtful evaluation you've shown; all of which has enabled our board of education to sustain a quality education in our schools. Tonight we are here to ask for your continued support and commitment.

The definition of a quality education changes over time, but regardless there are certain expectations we have for our schools and the educational opportunities they offer our students. We expect our schools to prepare our children to live and succeed in a global society. We expect them to provide for the very basic school needs, such as tables and chairs. And we expect that the materials our students need to learn will be provided for in their classrooms. Funding to meet some of these expectations is included in the Board of Education Recommended budget and I will discuss each of these requests in turn.

For the past 7 years we have discussed the merits of introducing a world language program in our elementary schools. There have been numerous presentations, accompanied by research, which demonstrate the added value of foreign language learning on test scores. How language learning improves overall mental development, promotes listening and comprehension skills. How language learning has a positive impact on communication skills, and enables our young students to become better thinkers, problem solvers as well as develop a heightened global awareness.

The introduction of a world language program at our elementary schools is the number one district goal. From the outset, the objective of the Board of Education approved world language program has been to lay the foundation for later language learning, assist students in acquiring the basic skills that lead to proficiency and fluency, and to become confident and enthusiastic language learners.

It seems that every adult in Darien has an opinion about the language program because nearly all of us have been language learners, speak a foreign language, and even lived in a non English speaking country. The one thing we all agree upon is that we need world language in our elementary schools. Some residents want an immersion program while others are completely opposed. Some have a certain number of times per week in mind and will accept nothing less. It is unlikely there ever will be public consensus about what program is exactly right, and if we wait for consensus to implement a program, it will never happen. More of our children will

graduate from elementary school without the boost that exposure to a foreign language early in life will give them.

In spite of all of our differences we are actually standing on common ground. The proposed world language program introduces language instruction to our schools, a curriculum addition that is universally supported. It provides for exposure at an age when children are more likely to develop a natural sounding, native like accent, a skill that later in life will be indicative of a higher level of language proficiency and fluency. It builds a foundation for the language learning opportunities that lie ahead in our secondary schools. In summary, it achieves all the objectives set by the administration and approved by the Board for this program.

There are additional benefits. It keeps intact the current schedule at our schools, including the literacy and math blocks, two cornerstones of our elementary education program. The economics of the program, relative to other contemplated options, make it an appealing choice for our district and align with our community's dual commitment to excellent education delivered in a fiscally prudent manner, and we ask you to approve a budget that will allow this program to move forward.

Now let's discuss the basics, tables and chairs. I'm going to state the obvious – tables and chairs are used daily in our classrooms, are a necessary part of running a school, and with the passage of time, need to be replaced. The funds included in the equipment lines of several of our elementary schools will allow us to do just that –replace desks, cafeteria tables and chairs that have exceeded their useful life and are rapidly becoming a safety issue.

The same point holds true for classroom materials. For the past several years, parents have filled the gap between public funding and the needs of our schools. Our PTO's contribute \$100 per pupil to fund enrichment programs that enhance our diverse classroom studies, field trips, teaching supplies, and unmet building and classroom needs. Major gifts aside, our elementary PTO's will contribute \$234,000 this year to our children's education. As parents, we have done our share, and we expect the education budget to cover the rest.

Over the past several years, our efforts have focused on sustaining an excellent education in our schools. That message remains true today, however, in addition to sustaining what we've built in our elementary schools, the budget seeks to make an additional investment in our children. Our peer towns continually reevaluate and reinvest in world languages, in smaller class sizes, in textbooks and classroom libraries. Darien must do the same.

Tonight, I ask for your continued support of our schools, and that you fully fund the 2012/2013 budget as presented by the Board of Education. Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this budget, and your continued commitment to our children.

Good evening. My name is Amy Howe. I live at 21 Lynn Court and have three children. I have two daughters, a sophomore at the high school and an 8th grader at Middlesex. My son is in the 4th grade at Holmes School. I am one the budget representatives for Darien High School

On behalf of the DHS and Middlesex communities, I would like to thank the Board for its past support. While we certainly have been challenged by the current economic climate, both schools have maintained an excellent reputation throughout the state.

The students of Darien High School and Middlesex Middle School have given our town much to be proud of. The Class of 2011 had the highest SAT scores in the state. DHS students have also had much success when sitting for AP exams. AP exams are scored by a committee and exams are assigned a number ranging from 1 through 5 where 5 reflects the highest grade attainable. In 2010, 75% of students sitting through the AP exam scored a 4 or better. In 2011, that percentage rose to an impressive 81%. Middlesex Middle School has ranked top ten in the state for CMT scores every year since the 2005-2006 school year and has actually come in first twice during that same time period.

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on how our board of education's recommended budget for the 2012-2013 school year is a sound financial investment for our students and our town. The Board of Education's budget for the high school and middle school simply allow the schools to maintain their current academic standards and maintain their facilities. There are no additional programs or new building projects.

The number of students attending DHS has increased by 8.5% from 2008 school year to the upcoming 2012-2013 school year. The Board of Education has included an additional FTE at Darien High School just to maintain the recommended guidelines for class sizes. This guideline is 18 to 22 students per class. And while Mr. Haron and his team have done an excellent job with distribution of class sizes, right now there are 15 classes over 25 students, clearly beyond the class size guidelines. Next year the high school is expecting an increase of 34 students. This guideline will not be met at DHS if another FTE is not added at the high school.

Another way to analyze this data is to look at the teacher to student ratio. In 2008, DHS had 82.39 teachers for every 1,000 students. This current school year, we have 80.02 teachers for every 1,000 students, representing a 3% reduction since 2008. Without this one additional FTE, we will be down to 78.01 teachers per 1,000 students – a reduction of 5.3% since 2008. It is also worth noting that the cost associated with FTE increase at DHS is more than completely offset by the 1.25 FTE reduction at the MMS due to a drop in their anticipated enrollment.

The Board Of Ed recommended budget fully funds the superintendent's requested professional development at Middlesex. The Middlesex community has seen first hand the transformative effects of professional development on student learning and engagement. The adoption of the workshop model and science inquiry approach in our classrooms are the direct result of out-of-district professional development. As Dr. Boccanfuso has stated, "We have to continue to invest and grow our teachers so that they can stretch our students

further. Our teachers are the ones instructing our students. It is imperative that they continue to learn, grow, and stay current in their fields.” Building and maintaining a high-quality teaching staff requires an investment in professional development. Every dollar invested in outside professional development pays off, as teachers who return share their learning with their colleagues. Appropriately funding professional development allows our teachers to attend out of district programs that cannot be replicated in-district. It speaks volumes about the value we place on our teachers furthering their skills and building on their knowledge. Most important, it will be an investment that pays off for our students.

Other investments in the middle school are important to the maintenance of the facility. We cannot continue to defer spending on the basic needs of the school. Over 1,000 students a year attend Middlesex. The current cafeteria tables and chairs are over 10 years old. 1,000 students a year over 10 years equals a lot of wear and tear. The tables have been repeatedly welded and repaired to such an extent that it is growing increasingly challenging to keep them functional and safe for the students who use them every day. This year marks Dr. Boccanfuso’s 26th anniversary at Middlesex Middle School. When approached by the Middlesex Parents’ Association about an event to celebrate this milestone, true to form she asked them not to make a fuss. Instead, she asked the MPA for tables and chairs for the cafeteria. The Middlesex Parents’ Association has gifted thousands of dollars of items, including most recently a new auditorium stage, computers, musical instruments and music stands, bulletin boards, a kiln, 32 three legged stools and two sets of shelves. The MPA is proud to gift items that support and enhance the learning

environment. However, cafeteria tables and chairs are expected and necessary to the daily functioning of the school, and as such, are the responsibility of the district.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to address roof at Middlesex. Original to the building, the slate roof dates back to 1937. It is 75 years old and is in need of replacement. While we understand that \$750,000 is a large expense, opting for the slate roof will not only maintain the architectural integrity of the building but more importantly the slate will last far longer than an asphalt roof. We hope this project will be funded this year and work be completed before school re-opens in the fall. Thank you for your time.

Hi. My name is Kat McKay and I am a junior at Darien High School. I would like to speak as a member of the student population of DHS tonight, and ask that the Board of Finance fully support the Board of Education budget. In years past the Board of Finance has been able to provide important funding for the public schools, and I thank you for that. But it is equally necessary that you continue to support the Board of Ed, so that the level of education we've come to appreciate and expect in Darien Public Schools remains as high as it is today.

Conceivably, if the Board of Ed budget is not fully funded, Darien High School may not receive the additional teacher headcount it is seeking. This could increase class sizes. Both educators and students understand that bigger classes cause a less beneficial classroom experience, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the individual attention awarded to each student would lessen. Teachers would have to grade more tests and papers, which would likely increase the time it takes for them to be returned- something that I've noticed seriously impacts a student's ability to do well in a class. On another hand, many teachers award a grade for participation. The more kids in the classroom, the more difficult it is to participate. Instead of contributing to intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking discussions, students would be forced to compete with one another just to talk. The detrimental repercussions of this are clear.

I enjoy my classes and I enjoy school. I do not know if I would have such a high opinion of Darien High School if my classes were crammed with more students. I hope the Board of Finance takes into account what I've mentioned here tonight and chooses to support the Board of Education budget in full. Thank you.

Ellie Bauman
218 Old Kings Highway South

YAT Speech BOF Meeting

My name is Ellie Bauman and I am a junior at the high school. I am also a member of the Youth Asset Team, which allows me to become familiar with the many problems Darien High School students encounter every day. The dynamics of our high school leave students with academic, athletic, social and domestic pressure. At one of our recent bi-weekly meetings we began talking about the prospect of having a new psychologist join the high school staff. We unanimously agreed on the benefits of this addition.

I could list numerous events where I envision psychology either preventing a negative outcome or helping after a tragic event. Earlier this year I was involved in a cyber-bullying incident where things were being said via text message and email using my name. When this finally came to my attention I was completely overwhelmed. It led to problems at school, and became a distraction for many students including myself as I began junior year. All though I was extremely lucky to have the support of my parents, the Darien police, the administration and guidance, I would have been appreciated having the opportunity to speak with a psychologist in order to focus on sorting out my feelings in a situation where I felt powerless.

I believe this addition would not only affect the students who met with the psychologist but would in turn positively affect the entire school atmosphere. The issues at DHS are interconnected through a web of student interaction. This connection is what makes our school strong but this also means that each student's attitude, actions, and involvement affect a wide variety of people including their teachers, friends and classmates, weather this effect is positive or negative. More guidance and support is the perfect ingredient that will guarantee the spread

of positive energy in our school. The psychologist is valuable to even if they only met with one student because not only will it improve that one student's life which is important enough, but it will improve the lives of people that surround them. Therefore I would like to stress the importance and impact of adding another psychologist to the Darien High school Community.

Addition of a school psychologist

Hi, My name is T.T. Pollio and I live at 73 Fitch Ave. Psychologists are a key mechanism in helping a school run, especially one as large as DHS. With a population of around 13 hundred students two psychologists just cannot handle the volume of students that we have. Not to mention that DHS and the Darien public school district has a phenomenal special education program, giving families the trust that they need to send their children into the DPS special education program. The population of ALL students enrolled in DHS regardless if they are in a special education program, alternate learning program or are taking 4 AP classes their senior year, every single student is benefiting from the addition of a psychologist. Adding just one more psychologist to the DHS team is a very a worthy investment. There are so many kids in this school struggling with issues that most of cannot even fathom, let alone keeping them inside, not having someone knowing how to help them to talk to. The need for the addition of a school psychologist is one of the most genuine needs that this school needs at the moment. The school has been spending all their time and effort on preparing for the upcoming NEASC visit and making DHS have the perfect surface image for when the evaluators come, but isn't it more beneficial to the school to work on creating a wholesome student body, where, as students we are exemplary on the surface and on the inside rather than just making us look like students that we are not. The addition of another school psychologist would allow our DHS students to deal with the issues that they are harboring inside with no one to talk to and be the whole hearted DHS students that we were raised to be. The school psychologists are supposed to be able to make DHS a welcoming and comforting learning environment for the special education students as well as be able to help all students with issues such as divorce, death and addiction. Students have a hard time grasping and processing such issues and with many of them having their roots planted at home many students do not feel comfortable enough to talk to their parents about such issues. With the school psychologists always being busy they are impossible to be reached by the student who needs them the most. Along with being challenging to reach, many students do not know that we have a psychologist or if they know we have one, they do not know how to get in contact with them if the need presented its self. Just the presence of one more psychologist would make an immense difference and we are already on the right track to success with the new psychologist intern!!

Marguerite Morgan
3 Searles Road, Darien CT

I'm Marguerite Morgan and I'm a senior at the Darien High School. I'm one of the co-chairs of the Youth Asset Team, a branch of the Thriving Youth Task Force dedicated to improving assets in the community. As a Darien High School student I not only understand but also experience myself the pressure and stress that comes with living in Darien. Our schools are known to be some of the best there are and our community has the reputation of producing successful men and women that go on to reputable colleges and high-paying jobs. However, like most of you know, these advantages come with a price. What many don't realize though is the magnitude of this price youth pay to live in such a high-achieving town.

The sources of stress vary among students; some feel pressure from the intense athletics, others from academics, and others from their families. Darien is known for its strong sports teams and the athletes work hard to maintain their winning streaks. As students reach sophomore and junior year, the recruiting process begins and pressure to commit to colleges with strong athletics fills the air with an undeniable stench. The athletes who once competed on the same team are now competing against each other for spots on the same college teams. A friend of mine went through this process last year and was completely emotionally unstable. As a strong athlete, she felt as if she was expected by her family, her teammates, her coaches, and her schoolmates to commit to an athletically amazing school. I watched as the pressure ate away at her day after day. Having someone to talk to during this stressful time period could potentially be the exact support an unhappy athlete needs to choose their own path instead of the one pre-selected for them by the expectations of our town.

Although athletics are definitely a large source of stress for DHS students, I would say the dominant source comes from academics. Many DHS students have an idea ingrained in their minds that getting straight A's and taking all AP and Honors courses is the only way one can be successful in life. Many students refuse to accept anything less than that high-achieving academic track. However, the question then becomes how far are these students willing to go to achieve a perfect GPA? I know many people who are willing to risk their physical and mental health to keep up with this unattainable dream of being 'the perfect student.' One of my friends drinks large cups of coffee to stay up until 3:00 in the morning almost every night doing homework and studying for tests. Everyday she comes to school looking exhausted and unhappy. Others are willing to risk academic integrity to get the A on their next test. Some even turn to drugs such as Aderol even though these medications are not prescribed to them. These students reach a point where receiving any grade lower than an A- becomes reason for an emotional breakdown and a feeling of self-hatred. Our town has unintentionally become a breeding ground for these high-strung individuals that will sacrifice their health to fit the unachievable mold.

Although there are many healthy and happy students at the high school, the number of depressed and anxious DHS students seems to increase each year as expectations rise higher and higher. Access to social workers that can steer students towards healthy decisions and feelings is vital in such a high-pressure town.