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Academic Learning

We need a full report on college & career counseling support services in the district. BOE 4-11-16

A. A full board presentation is being planned for a future Teaching & Learning Committee meeting.

Can NHPS students at Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) get PE credit for dance or yoga? Students from other district seem be getting credit? BOE 9-15-15

A. While we continue to investigate, other districts typically have more than one credit of PE required for graduation, whereas New Haven only requires one PE credit. Our PE credit does include health education and other components that, as we understand it, are not offered in ECA. However, we do have some high schools that have offered PE credit for students in the dance program. We are currently reviewing our practices, to ensure that we systematically continuing or eliminating the awarding of ECA credits in the district, with an orientation to mastery standards around the underlying learning objectives.

Social Emotional & Physical Growth

What training has been provided in the area of trauma? BOE 5-23-16

A. The trauma coalition is a partnership between United Way, Clifford Beers and New Haven Public Schools that worked to support trauma-informed instruction in high needs, as part of the New Haven – City that Cares initiative. Together, the Trauma Coalition services the following schools: Clinton Avenue, John Martinez, HSC, Truman, Wexler Grant and MBA. Through grant funding from the Dalio Foundation, the coalition also provides each of these schools with additional clinical support as well as trauma focused groups.

In addition, based on the success of this work, the coordinator of school health in conjunction with Clifford Beers have been conducting trauma 101 training across the school district. Thus far the following schools have been provided with trauma 101 lessons: Quinnipiac,
Barnard, Hyde, Ross/Woodward.

Restorative Justice training for teachers and the School Support Facilitators have also touched on aspects of trauma. Various school-level programs have also addressed trauma and provided training to teachers, including partnerships with the Alive Program, meditation providers, and the Ruler program from the Yale Center on Emotional Intelligence.

Lastly, all of our Related Service staff, which include School Social Workers, School Psychologists and School Counselors, all have a background in their own professional training to provide support to students who have experienced trauma.

**How do we assess students with disabilities and students who are disruptive? What role does YouthStat play in this, if any at all?** BOE 10-26-15

A. Referrals to special education can be made by parents, school teams, and in some cases professionals within the medical community. Once it is determined that there is a suspicion of a disability, a multidisciplinary team (parent, teacher, administrator, school psychologist, school social worker, speech and language pathologist) assembles to develop areas which are to be evaluated. This may include and not limited to cognitive, academic, communication skills as well as assessing overall behavioral functioning. Additionally, evaluations include observational data as well as samples of student work. This first evaluation that determines a child is in need of special education is referred to as the Initial Evaluation. Although not required by law, in many cases, students are evaluated every three years beyond the Initial Evaluation. The subsequent evaluations are referred to as Triennial Evaluations. A further explanation of the types of evaluations are as follows:

1. Cognitive-measures a student’s intelligence in a variety of areas(conducted by school psychologist)
2. Communication-assesses students ability to communicate; expressive/receptive language (conducted by speech and language pathologist)
3. Academic-assess specific academic areas including areas of reading and numeracy(conducted by school psychologist and/or special education, general education teacher)
4. Behavioral functioning-assesses internalizing and externalizing behaviors(conducted by school psychologist)
5. Developmental History- focus of child’s development over a period of time to include the child’s health history, developmental miles

**YOUTH STAT:**

As we implement Social Emotional Standards via a multitiered system of support Youthstat is directly involved in this multitiered system. At Tier 1, these are the supports we provide for all students like positive reinforcement via Positive Behavior Intervention or Restorative circles, at Tier 11 and 111, these are the supports we provide for some students. These supports could include counseling, individualized behavior plans, or services provided from Youthstat for specific students.
What supports exist for students who are struggling with drug and alcohol use? BOE 9-28-15

A. The director of Student Services will be doing a board presentation as part of the October 26th Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting that will address the supports we provide students in this area.

Talented Educators

What is the new teacher education program Relay Graduate School of Education (alternative route certification)? BOE 5-23-16

A. The Relay Connecticut Teaching Residency Alternate Route Certification program is in the process of becoming a state accredited program that allows non-certified professionals to earn their certification through a combination of embedded work and seminar learning. The program emphasizes minority recruitment, and is a replication of a successful accreditation program from New York with impressive minority candidate statistics.

The district recently held an informational session where we had approximately 50 individuals interested. We are willing to support 2-5 individuals, with a cost of $250 per candidate for the district.

What is the process to get a stipend? Who gets them? Who approves them? If you want a Where does that money come from? BOE 4-26-16

A. There are a number of different types of part-time payments and stipends that individuals receive for various duties beyond an educator’s specific job function. In recent months, spreadsheets and PDF documents have been provided to the board identifying who receives stipends and the specific funding source. The process for decision making and payments of stipends, which have expanded in recent years, has been similar to that for part-time payments

For stipends paid out of the Teacher Incentive Fund Grant:

The respective members of the Talent Council determine the Selection Committee. The committee members who review the teacher applications include three NHFT representatives, two SAA representatives, and one Talent Office member who serve as a facilitator for the selection process. Once the application window has closed, the Selection Committee for Teachers meets and begins the selection process.

Process of Selection 2015-2016:
The committee determined a process by which they would follow before discussing the applicants and making recommendations. The process is as follows:

1. Review the number of applicants in each role.
2. Divide the applicants into three groups by school, making sure that each group as close to an equal number of applicants in each group.
3. Assign two members of the selection committee to a group.
4. Two members determine which schools they will call (making it evenly as possible).
5. Members will review all of the applicants in their group.
6. Members will use the cover letter to record information and notes as they read through the applications and call references.
7. After reading through applications, partner members will discuss what came up and larger thoughts and questions will be raised to the selection committee.
8. Selection Committee will reconvene the check in with applications and look at any concerns that came up or other flags.
9. Members will call the principal of the pre-determined schools to inquire about the applicants and about the principal's thoughts on the “fit” of the teacher in the expanded role.
10. If the principal raises questions, the selection committee member will follow up and call other references.

Selection Committee will reconvene and make final recommendations based on applications and references.

What are the qualifications of the newly hired security guards? What are going to be their school assignments? What is the training of the security guards? BOE 4-11-16

A. The newly hired Security Officers will immediately engage in on-the-job training at the high schools with Senior Security Supervisors as well as classroom work to review Standard Operating Procedures and training protocols related to entrance security, lock downs, evacuations, radio calls, escalation protocols, report writing procedures, etc. This will allow for us to flexibly staff other shortage areas. Based on the level of experience of the new employees (which was a large part of the civil service qualification process), we are confident that we will be able to deploy the new staff into assignments very soon after the April recess. Priority of assignments is based on a number of factors including size of school, history of discipline issues, and reported security activities. High schools and alternative schools require additional coverage as a priority as do many of the larger K-8 schools. The additional staff approved by the superintendent will allow for us to have more flexibility to support all schools with some level of security but the numbers will likely not yet allow for complete coverage on a daily basis due to absences, injury, leaves, etc. Ultimately, we need full staffing plus some additional flexibility for coverage similar to the custodial system, which has day and night coverage at every building and a cadre of floaters who can cover vacancies and projects as needed allowing for staffing to need flexibility. Two tasks of the New Security Director will be to review staffing level and assignments along with updating training protocols, each of which will help to build from the fundamentals in place and secure our students, staff and buildings.

Please note that all security officers receive annual training, which includes training by NHPD. This past year, areas of training have included review of Standard Operating
Procedures, Restorative Practices, updates in juvenile law, report writing, OSHA, etc. We are also currently working with the Federal Prosecutors and former NHPS Captain Holly Wasilweski for some additional focused training in June. The new Director candidates have training backgrounds as well and we plan to leverage those skills to engage in further training and site-specific protocol updates as a priority.

**Please provide a list of new positions created this school year.** BOE 3-28-2016

A. In order for new positions to be created, the department or school must submit a request to create the position through the budget office. If funding is available as confirmed by Finance, and if the position is appropriate according to HR, and if the need for the position is justified as confirmed by executive team and superintendent's approval, then the position is approved. For example, positions have been approved for additional classrooms, grants requiring additional staff such as Alliance Co-teachers, Commissioners Network Climate Specialists, and a Behavior Interventionist in the case of Adult Ed. HR works with the school/department to ensure the job description fits the position and salary ranges are appropriate and correct. Once HR has posted the position(s) for the contractual number of days, the school/department sets up interviews. Candidates are interviewed and when a final selection is made, background and reference checks are done and recommendations are sent to HR for final approval to the Superintendent for personnel action and inclusion on the Blue Sheets for Board approval. For all general funds non-certified positions, the process must follow Civil Service guidelines of selecting from a tested, certified list of candidates. For special funds and certified positions, there are no restrictions for hiring other than the contractual agreements and salary steps to be considered for experience and education.

As far as the request for a list of all new positions created this year, we are collating those positions by reviewing all Blue Sheets. This year, we have created new positions for 12-month clerks, teachers, social workers, paraprofessionals, Youth Development Coordinators, security guards, health department staff, and other non-certified roles.

**What is the process for hiring principals? What is the induction program in the district for new employees?** BOE 3-14-16

A. Our typical principal hiring process involves multiple steps, which have been previously presented to the board and can be discussed in detail at a workshop or Teaching and Learning Committee presentation on Talent. Once candidates for principal - and assistant principal - have passed paper screening, we conduct competency-based interviews, in which teams of school and central office administrators, teachers, and parents assess candidates' performance on role-based exercises (e.g., classroom and school walkthroughs, delivering feedback). Candidates who are well-reviewed in this process are forwarded to school-based teams, typically based in the School Planning and Management Teams, which include school teachers, staff, parents, and often students. Those committees make recommendations of strengths and weaknesses of candidates to the Superintendent, who makes final selections and recommendations to the BOE.
What is the plan to fill vacancies? BOE 3-14-16

A. We aggressively work to fill midyear classroom vacancies when they occur, involving school staff, subject area leadership, and the HR department in efforts to identify and recruit appropriate candidates, particularly in shortage area content areas like math, science, and special education. We also use teacher leadership roles and an orientation to school climate and leadership/staff relationships as a way to try to retain teachers. We are working with the Talent Council now to develop more creative solutions to the issue to implement for next year.

We are also beginning work on projected vacancies for next year, as teachers inform us they are retiring or resigning. As vacancies occur, we post and fill the high needs, shortage areas as soon as the qualified candidates accept the offers – this year for math, special education, science, and library media specialists. For all other vacancies that occur such as elementary, coaches and non-shortage areas, we post for internal candidates, per the contractual agreement with NHFT and allow for existing teachers looking to transfer internally through the application and interview process. We will also have to make allowances for teachers from schools that are turning around and making work rule changes to apply for any vacant positions. These teachers will need to be placed if they do not find their own placements. Once all internal candidates have been placed, we can move to external postings in the case of the non-shortage areas.

Why do we need to continue to pay a consultant from the PEP/TIF Grant when we have a Talent Office? BOE 11-9-15

A. The Teacher Incentive Fund Grant is unique in that there are only 63 school districts in the nation that receive funding. The practice of consultants working with grantees is not a new one both here in New Haven with other grants and with TIF grants. There are grants within the district that contract individuals/agencies to assist in implementation and compliance. Outside eyes looking at the work we are doing is extremely beneficial for the following reasons:

- It keeps us focused on the goals and objectives of the grant, which is monitored by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement. Often times having someone from the outside looking in provides a different perspective to the work especially as the work involves managing change.

- Specifically, the Fairview Agency has expertise in Performance Based Compensation Models and Human Capital Management Systems through past and present contracts across the nation. They act as connective tissue to other districts that may have struggled with similar opportunities and challenges in the development of Talent strategies and implementation of their grants.

- The Talent Office has been in existence for one year of the four-year grant. The Fairview Agency facilitated this work for the first three years of the grant, it is important to have historical perspective from the first three years of the grant. In anticipation of the strategic work needed to sustain the grant, this type of technical assistance was specifically written into the grant and Fairview’s work is designed to taper off over time.
**Why do we have a contract with Teach For America? How much of a fee do we pay for each TFA “Corps Member”? How does this arrangement benefit New Haven children? BOE 10-26-15**

A. Teach For America (TFA) has proven to be a viable partner in our efforts to attract, develop, recognize and retain a diverse pool of talented educators, including high quality teachers, school leaders, by cultivating a culture and systems of professional excellence that support growth and collaboration. There is a strong commitment from TFA to collaborate and support the curriculum and work here in New Haven for our students, staffing at schools with higher turnover rates. There has also been an effort to staff schools with more than one vacancy with Core Members in an effort to provide New Haven with a partner/team approach to the support new teachers require. TFA, in addition to the mentors New Haven provides new teachers teachers, provides executive coaches of their own who support teachers on site, work with building administrators and supervisors to give each teacher the individual support needed. Individual support plans are developed for each teacher to be successful in their induction years.

Teach for America is a key part of New Haven Public Schools Recruitment efforts. NHPS has been successful in hiring educators in the teacher shortage areas such as Math and Science. All teachers are evaluated through TEVAL with a shared goal.

The current agreement with Teach for America has been fiscally sound as the district has been successful in filling teacher vacancies with a swift turnaround time over the last several years especially in the shortage areas and ability to hire students coming from the NHPS system as you can see from the chart showing NHPS resident retention. To view chart, click here.

**What are we doing to support the new teachers in the district Talent Plan? BOE 9-15-15**

A. The responsibility of this work lies across the entire district with building leaders to supervisor and everyone who works with teachers. The Talent Office is responsible for coordinating this professional development so that it is coherent and aligned. The district has a professional development calendar, which outlines many of the professional development sessions offered to all teachers.

**What are the qualifications of substitute teachers? BOE 9-15-15**

A. Minimally, substitute teachers need a bachelor’s’ degree to work in NHPS.

**What are we doing about teacher attendance? BOE 9-15-15**

A. Plans were started last year to monitor and address both exemplary and problematic teacher attendance. Those plans are being deepened this year to take a comprehensive
approach to address teacher attendance that involves a number of people from the Data Office, Talent Office, Principals and leadership of the SAA and NHFT.

Why is it that some employees have had parttime hours limited in this school year? BOE 9-15-15

A. Going into this school year, 3144 and 884 have required that we hold to long-time limitations on part-time work, that have been loosely enforced in the past. Specifically, we must limit the number of part-time hours that full time staff have in addition to their base hours – if they are working those hours, they must be paid overtime whether or not the duties actually are additional hours of the same work. The change *is* disruptive, and limits the opportunities available to valued employees, but it is a requirement of the relevant union contracts.

What is the process for getting back to people who apply for jobs? BOE 8-24-15

A. Currently, the process is inconsistent and we will work to bring consistency across the entire organization with respect to how we handle these matters. All applications are accepted electronically through Applitrack. Applitrack will generate an email response to all applicants who submit an online application informing them that the school district is in receipt of their application. Communication after that point is the responsibility of the hiring manager. We will establish the expectation that candidates who are interviewed receive a communication once applicants have been accepted, and we will consider the possibility of communicating with all applicants who have applied as well.

What information has and will be provided to the Public and the Board regarding the TIF/PEP grant? BOE 8-24-15

A. Last spring, we assembled initial information based on a FOIA request – a renewed request was filed last week with the materials described below. A presentation on the TIF/PEP grant happened on August 17, 2015, as part of the new Finance & Operations (F&O) reporting structure. This presentation assembled materials the Superintendent had provided previously to the board, as well as additional materials. Follow up questions from that meeting were added to the set of materials and made available at the Finance & Operations meeting on August 28, 2015. The full binder of board materials on the TIF/PEP grant has been presented to Daisy Gonzalez, F&O Committee Chairperson. Another binder is available in the Talent Office. Additional copies of the binder have been given to the SAA and the NHFT as they are members of the Talent Council. Additional copies of the binder, or of sections of the binder, can be made available to board members or members of the public if requested. The contents for the binder and a listing of the most recently asked questions and their answers are attached.
Portfolio of Schools

What is happening for the 11th graders at Hillhouse – who came in when the school was one school and are now a part of different academies – and desire to do joint activities with their friends in other academies? BOE 9-28-15

A. The building leaders are working with the students throughout the campus in different forums to engage and hear from them about cross school activities, including mentorship, dances, and graduation. In particular, they are allowing the students to collaborate on the development of campus-wide social activities that are meaningful in the lives of high school students, while maintaining the strengths of the smaller and more personalized academies.

What are the course offerings for the students on the Hillhouse campus? Are students permitted to be a teacher’s assistant (TA)? BOE 9-28-15

A. This 2015-2016 academic school year, students within the SMART, LPSH, and IDEA Academy require a full course load of 8 academic classes. The majority of CCR students require full course load of 8 academic classes to meet graduation requirements as well.

Approximately 50 students have been identified as needing fewer than 8 academic classes to meet requirements for graduation. Therefore, seniors who require fewer than 8 academic classes during the school day have been scheduled to be apart of service learning and/or released early from school.

Service learning hours will count as community service hours required for graduation. Due to the number of students involved in service learning, students were not offered to be teacher assistant assignments this academic year.

For more information related to Hillhouse’s course offerings and course catalogue, please see the campus website www.hillhousecampus.org as the source of information pertaining to the academic program.

Can you please look at the transfer process to Adult Education? BOE 9-15-15

A. We are implementing a process that will involve a central office final review of records of students who are desiring to withdraw from NHPS and enroll at Adult Education. Since these withdrawals count as dropouts against the school system, we are going to do everything possible to encourage these students to remain in NHPS to earn their diploma.

What is the communication plan for Hillhouse? BOE 8-24-15

A. The building leaders have prepared an outline of the campus communication plan. That plan is attached and includes both a letter from the Superintendent, and on-going meetings
Family & Community

**What is the difference between a dean and security officer? How do they work together? Who evaluates them? BOE 3-14-2016**

A. Security officers are a specific title in 884, uniformed and charged with the security of the buildings, including both external and internal threats to security. A dean is an informal title, often used to describe staff in various full-or part-time positions who typically focus exclusively on the behavior and climate of the students. We believe both titles are important areas of development, to ensure best practice both in physical security and youth development, respectively and with some overlap.

For further detail on Security Officers, the Security Department’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) area available through the link below. Rita Worthy in the Security Department can provide a hard copy. She can be reached via email at rita.worthy@nhboe.net or you can print directly from the link. The SOPs include a great deal of helpful information including, but not limited to, the role of Security Personnel (including copies of relevant job descriptions), Bomb Threats, Patrol Procedures and Active Shooter (Lockdown Protocol/Code Red).


**How many kids have been expelled this year? What is the district process with respect to the expulsions? Outplacements? Are the hearings happening within 10 days? Where are we with Restorative Practices? What is it? Absenteeism...what's happening? What's happening with students coming out of detention & incarceration? BOE 3-14-16**

A. Materials for chronic absenteeism and expulsions have been included in the board packets. A more in-depth presentation on restorative practices and student engagement is being planned for a future BOE meeting.

**Clarification is needed regarding YouthStat. If it is the premier service, how are the other programs being integrated? BOE 2-22-2016**

A. School based programs are the established course of action in dealing with disengaged youth. YouthStat is only implemented after school based interventions are deemed to not have worked.

**What are we doing to address chronic absenteeism? BOE 11-9-15**

A. Attendance is a top priority of NHPS. Chronic Absenteeism is addressed through the office of Youth Family and Community Engagement (YFCE) via the following focus areas and activities
O Generate and act on absenteeism data. Prioritize the development of early warning prevention and intervention systems that identify students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent before they miss enough school that it is nearly impossible for them to catch up. Ensure coordinated systems of support, within schools and community for students who are chronically absent. Ensure regular school-based attendance committee meetings that focus on individual student intervention needs and student responses to interventions.

O Create and deploy positive messages and measures. Focus on developing positive messages for youth and families as well as implementing supportive engagement strategies. These include mentoring, counseling support, and creating safe and supportive school climates to improve students' attendance at, connection to, and success in school.

O Focus communities on addressing chronic absenteeism. Launch community initiatives to raise public awareness about the causes and effects of chronic absenteeism, including awareness among families and youth. Prioritize, school and district-wide campaign – Attendance Matters. Engage within communities and across sectors to conduct root-cause analyses of local absenteeism trends. Implement evidence-based strategies and programs such as Youth Stat that effectively engage and support students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent.

O Ensure responsibility across sectors. Regularly communicate that chronic absenteeism is a problem that affects the whole community, not just those students who are chronically absent and their families. Ensure NHPS, health, Housing Authority, justice system, faith-based communities and others are working together to ensure shared accountability within and across sectors to successfully address the local, underlying causes of chronic absenteeism.

Resource Stewardship

What is happening with recycling in our schools? BOE 3-14-16

A. The Board of Education continues to collaborate with the City of New Haven on our waste disposal and single stream recycling. This means that we recycle whatever is collected by schools in single-stream recycling. In the past the Facilities department has piloted efforts at various schools to engage in more defined recycling with separation of elements (cardboard, paper, food waste, etc.). Generally those programs have not been sustainable for a number of reasons including but not limited to adjustments in the recycling market and reimbursements rates, public works capacity, and sustained partnerships/programs within the schools. Recommitment to the single stream recycling protocols and/or more focused pilots would be welcome by the Facilities Department and both Facilities and Public Works would be happy to collaborate with interested schools.
The women’s bathroom in the Field House is not being kept up - sinks not working, etc... 
BOE 2-22-16

Facilities are maintained through a proactive district-wide life cycle and stewardship maintenance system. This plan works hand in glove with the School Construction Program and Capital program. Hillhouse and the Athletic Field House have experienced a number of maintenance and life cycle repair items, which are processed through the work order system. This is an online system, which both Facilities team members and School leadership can access to both enter work order and track progress thereof. In the case of the particular question regarding the women’s room at the field house a work order was submitted related to plumbing and counter issues as a result of damage/disrepair during a permitted event. Elements of the facility were temporarily off line until repairs were completed within days. The winter sports season is the prime scheduling time for the Field House with thousand of participants and athletes coming through its doors on a daily basis. This level of use creates its practical maintenance and repair problems but bathrooms and common area issues as well as and safety issues are prioritized. Examples of more significant life-cycle replacement and major repair that are planned and undertaken in recent years include but are not limited to, Field House track and floor resurfacing, gym floor replacement, external and internal LED light replacement, major painting program throughout school for academies, academy themed lab construction, computer lab construction, purchase of lap top carts and mobile devices and classroom projection boards, HVAC repairs and boiler replacement, Bowen Field project and others. Additional HVAC repairs and system replacement is in progress along with science room upgrades and IT Wi-Fi enhancement across the building.

What are we doing to ensure that all students who need wellness testing are tested? BOE 2-22-16

The New Haven Public School exceeds all applicable standards on testing for health related issues for all students. Through School nurses, School Based Health Clinics, School Psychologists, Social Workers, School Health Assistants, Special Education staff and a variety of community and contract partners, NHPS strives to serve the whole child in an effort to allow for each student to reach his or her potential.

Who made the decision to purchase refurbished computers? BOE 2-22- 16

A. Technology purchases are a joint effort managed through the IT Department with close contact with Curriculum and Schools. Over recent years, those bonds have been strengthened through successful rollouts of Commissioner’s Network Schools, which have infused targeted technology upgrades to meet student and staff needs. The IT department is device agnostic but seeks to collaborate with schools to find the right devices that match up with their needs and goals. The District maintains thousands of devices including but not limited to desktops, laptops, tablets, Chromebooks, smart boards and projectors, Wi-Fi in all buildings, servers, student information and budgeting systems, security, phones, etc. Given budget challenges, the IT Department and Schools have leveraged a variety of resources, grants and programs to enhance and upgrade IT. Refurbished computers have been one means of getting more devices (3 times as many for the same dollar) for certain uses, while new devices or specifically designed computers may be more appropriate for another need.
When the District was taxed with performing SBAC testing, the IT Department worked closely with all schools to develop testing plans. With time and resources short the Department leveraged funds from grants, capital and other sources to purchase a blend of devices including new and refurbished as well as upgrading the Wi-Fi in all schools. The result was that the District was able to successfully complete the test, which was a major accomplishment. Lessons learned from that process demonstrated that refurbished laptops were not a sustainable and reliable investment, as the battery life simply did not allow for optimal use. Thus, our revised purchasing protocols no longer include such devices. While cost effective, they simply did not meet the need. The other lesson learned was, we need to commit considerably more resources to IT in the form of devices, staffing support and training. That priority is reflective in the budget requests of both schools and the District as a whole. Comparatively speaking, New Haven has been able to stretch the dollar and rely on creative staff to expand our IT footprint considerably. More is required but in order for that to be sustainable and replicable more funds and staff and focus to cost effective and sustainable planning is as well. We have a firm foundation and we are primed to expand with appropriate support.

**What is the district doing with the Alliance and Title I carryover funds that were not spent?** BOE 11-9-15

A. At the outset, it is important to understand why the funds were not spent. As the district transitions to greater planning, transparency, and predictability in its budget, during FY2015 the primary focus was the General Fund. The Mayor, the Board of Alders, and our own Board of Education emphasized the importance of continued balance in the General Fund. Ongoing General Fund reporting to the BOE and BOA and the positive fiscal close reflect the success of this focus. However, our discipline on the General Fund meant that fewer resources were needed from the Special Funds than had occurred traditionally, and the unspent resources were carried over to this fiscal year.

It is important that all available resources, including special funds and carry-over funds, are planned and spent effectively on behalf of New Haven Public School students. This year, we are focused on Special Funds, including Alliance and Title I. the Finance & Operations committee is hearing presentations on each major special fund category, and building tools to track projections for all funding types, not just the general fund. The carry-over resources in Alliance ($1.7M) and Title I ($1.9) are an important opportunity to fund one-time expenses that reflect the District Priorities, including the initiatives suggested by the mayor and incorporated into our recent School Change 2.0.10 plans. We are also planning for adjusted investments with the basic FY2016 grants, to be sure we utilize the resources available in a thoughtful and effective way aligned to 2.0.10.

**Why did magnet seats go unfilled and has the district lost funds due to not having these seats filled?** BOE 11-9-15

A. Starting SY 13-14, the district’s magnet enrollment has been tied to the $37.2 million cap set by the Ct State Department of Education. Our enrollment plan to meet this target included an increase in New Haven students attending Magnets, and depended on all schools meeting
their enrollment targets. Unfortunately, a handful of schools did not meet those targets, which resulted in an overall enrollment funding gap. As the board knows, we had explicitly made magnet school budgets dependent on hitting enrollment targets, so we are considering appropriate budget adjustments now.

In addition, in late September, seats became available due to district-wide efforts to identify “no-show” students. The initiative was a concerted effort between central office depts. including Youth and Family Engagement (truancy workers) and school staff, collaborating to determine the whereabouts of students with consecutive absences. This resulted in a cleaner register than historically provided to the state on October 1st, and enabled the placement of additional New Haven students placed just after October 1st (approx. 40 students). Plans are underway to ensure that the “no-show” process concludes earlier in the school year to ensure October 1 enrollment counts are at capacity at all schools.

It is important to note that if the State’s funding scale was consistent between New Haven and Hartford, particularly as between funding for suburban and New Haven students, the same enrollment patterns would have yielded an improved financial outcomes would be improved. The District plans to address this concern with State Department of Education officials.

**How and when are school elevator certificates checked and updated? BOE 10-26-15**

A. The Facilities Department maintains a file with all of the elevator certificates of operation at 54 Ferry Street. The file is updated as the state performs the inspections and the Board of Education pays the required fees. The original certificate is copied and distributed to the Building Managers who then put the certificate into the elevator at each respective school/location. The originals are maintained in a file at facilities at 654 Ferry Street. All of our elevators have been inspected by the state and they meet the requirements of Sec.29-195 and they are safe for operation. Custodial Supervisors are in the process of ensuring we have the most current certificate(s) are posted in all the elevators throughout the district. Note that our on-call Elevator contract is available to assist with regard to any issues that should come up during an inspection as well as regular scheduled maintenance and repair. New elevators still under warranty are tracked to make sure the warranty is enforced as needed and when appropriate. All elevators within the District, including Hillhouse are compliant with inspections.

The state requirements are as follows:

Sec. 29-195. (Formerly Sec. 19-414). Inspection by the department. Each elevator or escalator shall be thoroughly inspected by a department elevator inspector at least once each eighteen months, except elevators located in private residences shall be inspected upon the request of the owner. More frequent inspections of any elevator or escalator shall be made if the condition thereof indicates that additional inspections are necessary or desirable.

Sec. 29-196. (Formerly Sec. 19-415). Issuance of certificate of operation; fees; renewal. As soon as the department approves any new, relocated or altered elevator or escalator as being fit for operation, it shall issue to the owner a certificate of operation for a capacity and speed
specified in the inspector’s report. The fee for the certificate first issued shall be two hundred fifty dollars. Such certificate shall be posted conspicuously in the car or cage or on the platform of the elevator or escalator and shall be valid for twelve months. Thereafter, the certificate shall be renewed every two years upon receipt of the renewal fee of two hundred forty dollars, except that elevators located in private residences shall not be subject to said renewal requirement. No fee shall be required of the state or any agency of the state. No elevator or escalator may be lawfully operated without such certificate.

What is the choice and enrollment process in the district? BOE 10-13-15

A. Extensive materials are available on-line describing the choice and enrollment process for the district. The superintendent and staff are eager for the Choice and Enrollment Office to do a board presentation regarding the entire process, and will work with the President and the Governance Team to schedule that presentation.

Why are students being pulled from the magnet school wait list after October 1st? BOE 10-13-15

A. The district believes that it is important that seats in our schools, particularly our Magnet Schools, are as fully utilized as possible. Significant efforts occurred in order to enroll students before October 1st, but where seats remain open because of no-shows, declinations, or departures, we believe it is still appropriate to place students.

Note that An interdepartmental initiative to identify “no-show” students was fully implemented this September. IT, Youth & Family Engagement (truancy workers), Evaluation, Assessment & Research and Choice & Enrollment departments collaborated with school staff to identify students with consecutive absences and to determine their whereabouts. The initiative was very successful as evidenced by the number of students reported as moved outside the district, enrolled in other private or public school choices, and a decrease in number of students identified as whereabouts unknown. These efforts lead to a number of magnet seats becoming available in September.

Superintendent Harries charged the Office of Choice & Enrollment Office that task of ensuring that magnet seats were maximized for New Haven students. In our effort to ensure this priority was met, magnet seats were filled in the early October. We will continue efforts to ensure that no-shows are identified as early as possible, and seats are filled as early as possible.

How are we going to compete without computers in the classrooms? 10-13-15

A. We do have computers in the classrooms and throughout the district in labs, resource rooms, offices and all division, and have invested in computers in recent years. However, there is also no question that increased focus and investment into the IT systems as well as added human capital is required for consideration. Through the planning and work of the IT
Department over the last few years and with the leveraging of various sources of revenue (School Construction, Capital funds, ERATE, SBAC grant, Commissioners Network, Alliance, Title I, etc.) a core set of technology systems has been firmly set as the technology foundation. We are launching a process to assess the functionality and inventory of that capacity in each school, and to compare that to an ideal technology package. Consistent with the Mayor’s plan, we will focus that inventory, assessment, and investment first on those schools with the greatest need. Smart technology growth and expansion from this foundation through the updated technology plan provides a clear path to the next layer of technology investment for the District which aligns with industry standards, best practices and life-cycle sustainability. Collaboration and interconnectedness of School plans (SIPS) and District Plan (DIP) which specifically include and budget for technology in a sustainable, replicable and cost effective manner with clear alignment to curricular and operation goals remains the key focus of this work.

**How do we end the school year with carry over money in the Alliance Grant?** BOE 10-13-15

A. Through 2015, the Alliance grant had been provided to NHPS for three years, and in all years we’ve had carryover balances, which are allowable and have no cap in the statute. However, the FY15 carryover was the largest NHPS has ever had at $1.7M (please note that $2.6M was an early estimate from the Spring, before the fiscal year close, and has been incorrectly reported as the final number). There are a number of reasons for this $1.7M in carryover, but the three most significant are:

1. Specific line items in the grant were significantly underspent, such as Teachers ($780K), Health Insurance ($452K), and Other Contractual Services ($242K). Part of the reason is that other grants (such as TIF and MSAP) were ramping-up their spending and had programmatic overlap with the priority areas of Alliance – in effect, we were able to absorb costs onto other grants.

2. This was intentional. With a $4M increase to Alliance in FY15, we wanted to be sure we implemented programs responsibility and effectively. Instead of rushing to spend in the late Spring, we opted to rely on our legal right to take more time to spend these funds.

3. This grant has four areas as mandates for expenditure: Academics, Talent, Climate, and Operations / School Portfolio and all investments have to be incremental and supplemental. With that specific focus, we were limited in the ways we could spend this grant. This is a common feature of grants (specific expenditure allowances) and the main reason carryover is so commonplace. An analog example is Title 1, which can only be used at our 20-25 lowest income schools, and where we regularly have annual carryovers of $1.5M.

**What is the choice and enrollment process in the district?** BOE 9-28-15

A. The director of the Choice and Enrollment Office will be doing a board presentation regarding the entire process. All questions will be answered during that presentation.
**The bathrooms are falling apart at HSC.**  BOE 9-28-15

A. Although the HSC building is an older and somewhat limited facility, we have made capital investment into the facility the last couple of years through Commissioner Network/State funds and other Capital. The parking lot was repaved, the exterior of building painted, windows to the front of building replaced, some IT investment and other items including sign out front, etc. We are now working on renovating the ECAT space to be a multipurpose room to serve as a courtroom for HSC’s justice theme, meeting room, assembly area, etc. These are all dramatic improvements and significant investment and planning with the school.

Initial review of HSC bathrooms, conducted after the issue was raised at the board, showed that the bathrooms were damaged by vandalism the Thursday before the board meeting. That damage was reported on the same day it was discovered in the school and a work order entered. Replacement partitions are being ordered for the ones that have been ripped off the wall from the hinges. We have referred this matter to HSC leadership for proactive planning to hopefully avoid recurrence.

**Are we using refurbished computers?**  BOE 9-15-15

A. Yes. Over the last several years, the BOE has strategically approved the purchase of both new and refurbished computers and laptops, as well as building wireless networks in all schools, investing substantial resources in enhancing the computer power available to students. Refurbished desktops have been a component of that expansion – they cost about a third of that for new computers, allowing the district to purchase three times the amount of devices. All devices are capable of internet access and running all core systems and curricular programs. The IT Director, Chief Operating Officer, and many other senior staff use refurbished desktops without incident. Schools and IT have noted issues with refurbished laptop battery life and have moved away from using them. The IT department is in the midst of a school-by-school assessment of technology and technological capacity, and a deeper discussion of the IT Department’s core services and budget is appropriate for the Finance & Operations Committee meeting of the Board as we consider the most appropriate means of funding effective and sustainable technology systems for the District.

**What information has been provided regarding minority contract hiring?**  BOE 8-24-15

A. Given the Board’s input, we have created a regular reporting system at the Finance & Operations Committee. The schedule is attached and is available on our website. It includes our minority contracting reporting once a month. In addition, the way that data is presented has been simplified and clarified, for both the Finance & Operations and the Citywide Building Committees, which has that data presented at the Finance & Operations committee meetings and is available to Daisy Gonzalez, Committee Chairperson.
Miscellaneous

*Communication regarding the candidate forum was poor. How is communication handled from the student council advisors to the student councils and the broader student community in their respective schools?* BOE 3-28-2016

A. In general, second year implementation of the student elections was much smoother and more engaged than the first year. The date for the Candidate Forum was sent to principals, assistant principals and student council advisors on February 4th. It was shared in-person with the Student Cabinet on March 8th, where they were given time to discuss a plan for how to raise awareness in their schools; and details were emailed directly to Student Cabinet members, principals, assistant principals, and student council advisors on March 15th asking that each school send a delegation of 5-10 students & invite their journalism clubs or newspapers who might be interested in reporting. We did record the forum. The tape was posted on our website and sent to schools with other election information.

It is worth noting that we do not have a district-level listserv that reaches students’ district-issued email addresses directly. This may be something worth exploring to support schools in creating cultures of communicating with students via their district-issued email addresses.

*The Board requests budget sheets by school?* BOE 2-22-2016

A. Materials were provided to the Board electronically on Friday March 4th, and will be mailed today with the packet. In addition, the materials are posted online and can be found by following this link: [http://www.nhps.net/sites/default/files/FY17_Budget_Presentation_031016v3Board3-10-16.pdf](http://www.nhps.net/sites/default/files/FY17_Budget_Presentation_031016v3Board3-10-16.pdf)

*What is the opt out form for families who do not want their personal information shared with charter networks [or other organizations/agencies who request this information from the school district]?* BOE 10-13-15

A. We currently have a district-wide process for families who want to opt out of having their child’s information shared with the military for purposes of military recruiting. We are in the process of standardizing and expanding that process - using PowerSchools - to include providing an option for parents who want to opt out of having their information shared for school recruitment purposes, including charter and career tech school networks, and ensuring that process can start with school orientation packets. In the meantime, parents can fill out forms in the Choice and Enrollment office in order to opt out of any school recruitment efforts.
Who is going to ensure that the Mayor’s 10 point education plan is being implemented?  
BOE 10-13-15

A. The district is responsible for implementing the plan, and specific staff are being assigned to each plank of the plan. The Mayor’s 10-point plan fits naturally into School Change 2.0 – the initiatives are reinforcing, and ownership will be consistent with the existing priorities and organization of the Public Schools.

What is the opt out form for families who do not want their personal information shared with charter networks [or other organizations/agencies who request this information from the school district]? BOE 9-28-15

A. We currently have a process for families who want to opt out of having their child's information shared with the military. We are looking into ways to standardize and expand that process - using PowerSchools - to include providing an option for parents who want to opt out of having their information shared with charter networks.

Provide synopsis of what is happening in the career trajectory vein, and in courses on personal finance, interviewing, and resumes. BOE 9-15-2015

A. One of our new directors of instruction will be leading the career pathways work in our district and will be doing a presentation during an upcoming Board of Education meeting. Most of our high schools offer courses where career preparation topics are covered. This is also addressed within some schools’ advisory programs, advisory programs, or part of some schools’ after school programs.