

January 27, 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff,

Thank you to those of you who came out to vote on January 7th on the Latimer Lane School project referendum. Voting was similar across all 4 polling districts, and the additional appropriation passed with 84% of the vote. Over the past several weeks, the footings for the north portion of the project have been poured and the foundation walls are quickly coming together. To the south end of the building, the interior of the original grade 3 wing has been demolished and the site is being prepared for the creation of the south courtyard and performance area, as well as the numerous additional classroom and intervention spaces. For photos of the project, please follow [@LatimerLaneSchool](#) on Instagram.

The Simsbury Public Schools [2021-22 District Annual Report](#) is now accessible on the district website. The Annual Report addresses the Board of Education 5-year goals and the work of the district to meet those goals. The 2022-23 Strategic School Plans are also posted on each school website under the Documents & Links tab.

We are now in full swing with our budget season, and it is timely to provide updates as to how things are trending and where we stand in the budget development process. On January 17, the Board of Finance facilitated a tri-board meeting inclusive of the Board of Education, Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. During this meeting I had an opportunity to [present important factors](#) that will be impacting budgetary costs.

Budget Themes and Priorities for 2023-2024 include the following:

- Market driven increases in operational costs;
- Market driven increases in contractual obligations;
- Responding to enrollment driven staffing needs in both general education and special education;
- Responding to various facility and maintenance needs.

The inflationary challenges we hear about both locally and nationally are a significant factor and challenge in budgeting for next year. Our contractual obligations, which are the largest driver in the annual budget, represent a 4% increase over last year's operating cost. Increases in areas such as transportation services and utilities represent an additional .44% increase. Insurance obligation estimates, our second largest driver in the budget, were shared at this meeting as well. While there may be some level of flexibility, the current estimate for insurance is an additional 2% increase.

At our Board of Education meeting on January 24th, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan provided a comprehensive review of [district enrollment and staffing](#). I encourage you to take a moment to flip through the presentation as it provides both an important historical review and a look ahead as to what our staffing priorities and considerations are moving forward in the budget process.

Please consider attending the upcoming SHS production of Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical, the story of an extraordinary girl who dares to take a stand and change her own destiny. The show dates are February 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, and 12. [Tickets can be purchased on the Music & Performing Arts website.](#) The show is rated PG. Tickets can only be purchased online.

I hope that your New Year is off to a great start. I will continue to keep you updated as we move forward in our budget development.

Sincerely,

Matt Curtis
Superintendent of Schools