

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026, 6:30 P.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN ST., CHESHIRE,
CT 06410**

Present:

Peter Talbot
Jim Jinks
Fiona Pearson
Greg Wolff
Lou Todisco
David Veleber
Don Walsh
Patricia Cramer
Deb Manke

Staff/Guests: Sean Kimball, Town Manager; Andrew Martelli, Assistant Town Manager; Jim Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Jeff Solan, Cheshire Public Schools Superintendent; Emily Taylor, Cheshire Public Schools Chief Operating Officer

Absent: N/A

Peter Talbot opened the public hearing at 6:35 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL.

Noelle Shepard called the roll, and a quorum was present.

2. EXPLANATION OF HEARING PROCEDURE AND AGENDA.

3. READING OF LEGAL NOTICE.

A. Notice of Second Public Hearing - Proposed FY 2026-2027 Operating Budgets.

Noelle Shepard read the legal notice.

4. PRESENTATION ON HEARING SUBJECT.

Deb Manke recused herself from the public hearing presentation.

Dr. Solan provided a brief presentation. He reviewed the net certified staffing changes proposed for FY 2026-2027 as well as how class sizes would increase without new staff. He reviewed the added and reduced positions. There is currently a 2.31 months medical benefits claims reserve as of March 31, 2026.

He reviewed the impact of potential reductions – middle school interscholastic sports, staff desktops, instructional supply, and textbook/software. He further explained that they had to rebid cleaning contract because of change of scope with two new schools. The bids came in about \$270,000 beyond what was budgeted, and they are trying to rework scope.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Deb Manke returned at 6:50 p.m.

Leslie Paier, 103 Cook Hill Road, spoke on the education budget and expressed that people move to town for education. She expressed her opinion that having a low per pupil expense is no longer a compliment.

Julie Barker, 423 Cedar Lane, expressed concern about the proposed tax increase. She explained that much has changed in the classroom and the pressures for students. She asked the Town Council to keep the education budget intact.

Dr. Barbara Masi, 40 Knotter Drive, explained that her research includes study of school budgets especially higher education. She mentioned that the \$300,000 reduction to the Board of Education's request is not a cut but a decrease in an increase. She discussed debt burden for two new schools and expressed her belief that seniors are struggling in Cheshire.

Lisa Duperry, 15 Watch Hill Rd, expressed her support for the Board of Education budget and that she feels the increase is the necessary step to maintain what the town expects. She urged the Town Council to support the budget.

Elizabeth Chueka, 262 Mixville Rd, expressed concern over asking Cheshire staff to do more with less. She mentioned that a lack of funding could result in more expensive outplacement costs. She discussed examples of administrators being creative in cutting costs.

Kristina Veilleux, 128 Elmwood Drive, expressed concern about the staff at the schools. She expressed that they do not have enough money for staffing paraeducators, which puts more strain on special education, classroom teachers, etc.

Katie Deoliveira, 6 Chatham Woods Ct, explained that she chose this community for schools and urged the Town Council to reconsider the proposed cuts and fully fund the BOE budget.

Stephanie Wallace, 51 Dundee Drive, encouraged the Town Council to support the BOE budget without any cuts.

Rich Janczewski, 35 Arrowleaf Ct, urged the Town Council to support the BOE budget as presented and commended Superintendent Solan for an effective and efficient budget.

Yetta Augur, 29 Chantil Circle, introduced herself as the President of the Cheshire Prospect Chamber of Commerce and expressed that the businesses will also feel the tax increase. She mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce Board felt the proposed increase was too high.

Tom Bartley, 60 Brigadoon Drive, expressed his belief that the character of the community may be threatened by these tax increases. He discussed finding a balance between those enjoying benefits of school districts and those not.

Katie Judge, 138 Highland Avenue, explained that she moved back to Cheshire because her kids were thriving in the school district. She expressed support for the schools.

Breina Schain, 62 Hilltop Road, expressed her concern for seniors and for those that live on fixed incomes. She inquired if tiered tax system could be considered.

Mandy Miller, 1293 Half Moon Rd, explained that she is not supportive of the tax increases. She discussed that she looked at data from over ten years, and there are almost the same number of students and \$40 million more funding with 104 new positions. She asked the Town Council to question the feasibility of the new positions requested. She further requested that the 5-year budget projections should be available.

Matt Kurz, 444 Country Club Road, explained that he moved from Wallingford to Cheshire specifically for the schools. He asked the Town Council to fund the schools.

Joseph Bowman, 1389 Notch Road, expressed concern over the proposed cut of the middle school sports program. He mentioned his belief that schools need to be supported and more should be invested.

Brian Paul, 855 Mountain Road, expressed his belief that people move to Cheshire for the community and education. He explained that he feels his children are thriving because of the teachers.

Peter Talbot overviewed letters received from members of the public for the public hearing.

Peter Talbot closed the public hearing at 7:49 p.m.

Attest:

Noelle Shepard, Management Specialist

Comment	Name	Summary
1	Sal Rubano	Objects to proposed mill rate increase
2	Barb Dudek	Support for reinstating Senior Library Associate
3	Brian Lopez	Support for proposed BOE budget
4	Sue Zentek	Opposition to proposed BOE budget increase
5	Allison Barasz	Support for proposed BOE budget
6	Deanne Moore	Support for proposed BOE budget
7	Katie and Fernando De Oliveira	Support for proposed BOE budget
8	Thornton Lockwood	Support for proposed BOE budget, reject \$300,000 reduction in increase
9	Angelina Stackpole	Support for proposed BOE budget, reject \$300,000 reduction in increase
10	Nicholas Franzen	Support for proposed BOE budget
11	Diana Doroghazi	Support for proposed BOE budget
12	Jennifer Zebarth	Support for proposed BOE budget
13	Yollanda London	Support for proposed BOE budget
14	Lauren Grenier	Support for proposed BOE budget
15	Nick Robinette	Support for proposed BOE budget
16	Carlee Brandom	Support for proposed BOE budget
17	Dominic Liuzzi	Opposition to proposed BOE budget, support for \$300,000 reduction in increase
18	Denise Roncari	Support for proposed BOE budget
19	Mary Burnham and John Bestor	Support for proposed BOE budget
20	Paris Godbout	Support for proposed BOE budget

21	Ben Chaback	Support for proposed BOE budget
22	Sarah Iadarola	Support for proposed BOE budget
23	Matt Kurz	Support for proposed BOE budget
24	Tom Ruocco	Concern about the increase in BOE staffing, concern about proposed mill rate, support for selling or demolishing Chapman and Darcey School properties
25	Fredyne Pell	Support for proposed BOE budget, reject \$300,000 reduction in increase
26	Linda Blackburn	Support for finding cost reducing solutions for property tax filing options i.e. online portals for submitting property declarations
27	Leeza Day	Support for proposed BOE budget
28	Megan Albert	Support for proposed BOE budget and opposition to an increase in class sizes
29	Kelly Family	Support for proposed BOE budget
30	Christine Lassen	Support for proposed BOE budget
31	Allison Dibble	Support for proposed BOE budget
32	Sara Tellerico	Support for proposed BOE budget
33	Teja Shidore and Ketan Thakar	Support for proposed BOE budget, reject \$300,000 reduction in increase
34	Matt and Keryn Mills	Support for proposed BOE budget
35	Aimee Sobkowiak	Support for proposed BOE budget

Comment 1:

Hello Cheshire TC,

I'm writing in objection to the proposed General Fund Operating Budget of \$157,489,033, and more specifically to the 8.9% mill rate increase that would be required to support this budget.

Before approving an increase of this magnitude, I believe the town should clearly demonstrate that revenue from other sources, such as grand list growth and new development, cannot offset the budget increase. If an increase is ultimately unavoidable, I would strongly encourage the council to consider staggering the adjustment over the next couple of years rather than implementing the full 8.9% increase at once.

As someone who both lives and works in town, I care deeply about the long-term financial health and affordability of our community. An increase of this size has the potential to place financial strain on both longtime residents and those who have recently chosen to make this town their home.

Thank you for taking the time to review my input.

Sal Rubano

Comment 2:

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support in keeping Jared in the SLA tech position at the Cheshire library. If he has taken on a different role then my support would be for a new hire. Since our lives are based on technology and it is easier for generations that came before us to understand, seniors are at a deficit. We experience more questions and frustration when something goes wrong with our computers. Without reliable help at home, not owning an Apple computer that supplies support, and limited computer stores in town, all add to this sense of frustration. In the past I would be able to call the library and make an appointment with the tech department and within a day or two have an appointment with Jared. He was very efficient at fixing any problem.

Our town is proud in what they have done for seniors. The Senior center offers a lot, we have walking trails, a van for transportation, just to mention a few. By opening up the SLA tech position we would just add to our great resources not only for seniors but the entire town .

Please consider.

Barb Dudek

Comment 3:

Dear Town Council

I am a 21 year teacher veteran of Dodd Middle School as well as a former coach of several sports teams and 16 year science division leader. I am also a proud parent of 3 children that have and continue to benefit from the fantastic services that Cheshire Public Schools offer to all children of our town. I apologize for not being able to attend the meeting tonight.

Thank you for giving everyone the opportunity to voice our opinions and thoughts about the upcoming budget and how your decisions will affect Cheshire Public Schools and ultimately the students. I have always recognized that although the education of our children in this town represents the largest percentage of the overall budget it has always been a solid investment because it not only benefits our children but continues to draw families to this wonderful town which ultimately raises property values. It is with my experienced opinion that the budget put forth by Dr. Solan and the BOE should be strongly supported and passed which would provide countless opportunities for our students to grow and mature into productive and respectful citizens that will positively represent Cheshire for years to come. As for specifics related to the BOE budget requests, I can comment most accurately about Dodd Middle School. Throughout my 21 years at Dodd I have witnessed many changes but one key aspect that has never changed is the dedication, and priority placed by the teachers and staff towards making Dodd an excellent place to work and for our students to learn at a high level. Although our demands within the classroom may have increased over the years (Complex thinking, SEL, Technology), our teachers have always risen to the occasion and produced amazing results both on test data and more importantly the respect earned from the parents and public for our efforts. This was very evident with the tremendous growth shown last year on our SBAC and NGSS data. Dodd has routinely requested the addition of basic subject teachers which would allow the school to have 4 full teams rather than having half teams with some teachers teaching multiple subjects or grade levels. We currently have one team that is forced to teach two grade levels which is not the most efficient and productive means for delivering instruction and can negatively affect the students both academically and socially. In my 21 years at Dodd, I found that when having the 4th team for students it more equally and efficiently spreads the students around allowing teachers to focus more on the needs of the students both academically and socially. Unfortunately, Dodd has been requesting the funds necessary for the 4th team for a few years now with no success. The middle school years are crucial for our learners as we prepare them for the rigors of high school and beyond. Dodd Middle School would also seriously benefit from the addition of an extra

administrator to assist with discipline and other matters such as planning for professional development and connecting with teachers and students in the classroom.

I worry about all of these issues because as our town grows, the demands on the teachers of Dodd will only intensify in the coming years which was why I also was a huge proponent of building a new middle school a few years back. What is the district's plan for addressing the soon to be high student enrollment at Dodd? Will we have trailers on the fields in the future? In conclusion, please approve the full budget request from Dr. Solan and the BOE. Dodd as well as all of the Cheshire Public Schools have always shown that we will produce on the investment. As a 21 year Cheshire resident, I would approve of the necessary tax increase to fund the new school budget.

Thank you,

Brian Lopez

44 Guinevere Ridge

Cheshire, CT. 06410

Comment 4:

I've been a resident of Cheshire my entire life and a taxpayer for the past 50 years. The increase to my social security for 2026 was just 2.8%. My kids have long since graduated CHS and live out of town because it's too expensive to buy a house in Cheshire. You'd think after paying taxes for 50 years I'd get some sort of break or reduction in my taxes.

I used to follow the BoE budget closely and attended lots of budget meetings back in the day. Looking up some of the numbers from back then and comparing them to the current budget request was pretty shocking. For example in 2010-11 enrollment was 4782 and the total BoE budget was \$59.9 million. The 2026-27 anticipated enrollment is 4482 yet the total budget request is \$157.5 million. It doesn't make sense that the enrollment will be less yet the total budget is nearly tripled! (You can nitpick my numbers but when doing a google search it seemed there were different numbers in every article I read. Go figure.)

Perhaps you need to reduce staffing and freeze some line items and not request more money in those accounts. Compare what was actually spent in those accounts to what was previously budgeted. I bet you'll see less money was spent in some accounts than the actual budgeted amount. It makes no sense to request even more money in an account if you didn't need it in the previous budget.

In other words, you need to live within your means as many of us taxpayers have to do. Maybe you should reduce that 7.87% increase request by at least half. Even with whatever cuts you make it's still going to be an increase in the budget.

Sue Zentek

King Road

Cheshire, CT

Comment 5:

Dear Town Council:

I am writing to express my strong concern about the proposed cuts to the school budget. I urge you to maintain the current level of funding and avoid reductions that would directly impact our students and the dedicated professionals who support them.

Reducing the number of paraeducators, teachers, and nursing staff will have real and immediate consequences in our schools. Paraeducators play a critical role in supporting students with diverse learning needs, often providing one-on-one or small group assistance that ensures every child has a chance to succeed. My daughter is one of these students, and the paraeducators that support her make a huge difference in her life. The schools are the crown jewel of this town - and I urge you to fully support them in this budget.

Our schools are the foundation of our community. Investing in education is not optional—it is essential. Strong schools support not only academic success, but also the well-being, safety, and future opportunities of our children. Budget decisions should reflect these priorities.

I understand that difficult financial choices must sometimes be made. However, I urge you to consider the long-term costs of reducing support in our schools. The impact on students, families, and educators will far outweigh any short-term savings.

Please prioritize maintaining the current school budget and protecting the staff and services that our children depend on every day.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Allison Barasz

Comment 6:

Hello,

I'm writing to beg you to prioritize our children and their education. Cheshire takes tremendous pride in the high quality of its education programming, but without the proper funding, that will falter.

I've been very displeased with the cuts over the past few years, and to think that we are considering even more cuts is abhorrent. Please do the right thing.

Many thanks,

Deanne Moore

30 Sudol Ct.

Comment 7:

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Katie De Oliveira, and I have been a resident of Cheshire for the past ten years. My husband and I chose this community because of its strong reputation for excellent schools and its commitment to supporting families. We are raising our three children here, who are currently in 7th grade, 4th grade, and 2nd grade at Dodd Middle School and Highland Elementary School.

I am an active member of the school community, serving as co-president of the Highland PTO and as a room parent in my children's classrooms. Through these roles, I see firsthand the dedication of our educators and the needs of our kids.

As Cheshire continues to grow, with new homes and developments clearly designed to welcome families, it is more important than ever to invest in our school system. Increasing enrollment requires increased support, not reduced resources. Families move to Cheshire because of the quality of education. If the education budget continues to be cut, we risk diminishing the very standard that makes this town so desirable.

I am deeply concerned about the significant budget reductions being proposed by both the Board of Education and the town. As kid numbers rise, decreasing the budget while expecting the same level of educational excellence is unrealistic and unfair to our children. Larger class sizes, reduced classroom support, loss of teachers, loss of middle school sports, and the elimination of after-school clubs, to name a few, would be a tremendous setback for our kids and our community.

My family works hard to afford living in Cheshire because we believe in what this town offers. I respectfully ask that the council reconsider the proposed cuts and prioritize maintaining a strong, well-supported education system. Our children deserve the best opportunities we can provide, and preserving the quality of their education is essential to the future of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie and Fernando De Oliveira

Comment 8:

Greetings Cheshire Town Council,

I've lived in Cheshire for almost a decade and have entrusted my three sons to your town's public schools. We have had nothing but good experiences with Cheshire Public Schools (including with our youngest child, who has substantial mental health and learning issues). Please, please, please: reject the proposal to cut the CPS budget by \$300,000. CPS' amazing schools are the reason that families like mine moved to Cheshire in the first place; cutting the budget is like slaying the goose that lays the golden eggs. Don't do it, please.

With best wishes,

Thornton Lockwood (30 Sudol Court, Cheshire, CT)

Comment 9:

Dear Town Council members,

I am a parent of a current and a future Norton Elementary School student. I am an active member of the school community and serve on the school's safety committee. I care deeply about providing an excellent education to all students in town. I have reviewed the March BOE budget presentation and am concerned that further budget cuts will negatively impact the services and quality of education provided. As the group considers the Board of Education's recommended budget for the 26-27 school year I ask that you prioritize high quality education and services and do not further reduce the budget by \$300,000 as recommended by the Town Manager.

Investing in our students' education is one of the biggest draws that convinces families to move to and support Cheshire's growth. We have seen such positive development and change in town as a result of continuous investment in education over the years, and I very strongly feel this should be continued - rather than curtailed. Additionally, it should not be overlooked that investing in our students' education is the single most powerful investment in the public good.

Angelina Stackpole

Comment 10:

Good afternoon,

I am writing to communicate my unequivocal belief that Cheshire Public Schools cannot withstand a budget cut. Indeed the very nature of what Cheshire Public Schools is as an institution lies in the balance.

As a classroom teacher I am a crucial support structure for my students everyday. I culture their learning, I encourage their growth, and I help them build community. There is no way that could happen at the same level with larger class sizes precipitated by budget cuts. It is an educator's privilege and duty to educate students not only in academics but in humanity. What you will take away from classrooms if you cut the budget is exactly that: quality education and humanity.

If you are serious about keeping Cheshire's reputation as an outstanding example of the value of public education then you must continue funding schools. What better investment is there than the people in your community?

Sincerely,

--

Nicholas Franzén

Red Team Science Teacher

Dodd Middle School

Comment 11:

To Whom It May Concern,

I have not been able to come to the BoE meetings for the discussion regarding the upcoming budget, but I wanted to shoot a quick email over to express my concerns. I have three kids in the Cheshire public school system. I have a child at Norton, a child at Dodd, and a child at the High School. My children are typical students in the district. Like most, they need a little help in some subjects and excel in others. I feel if we cut the budget any more my "typical" children are going to be hit the most by the brunt of these cuts. Our town already does more with less. At some point, you prune too much and hit muscle. Imagine what the schools could do for the students with even a per pupil expenditure that is near our peer districts. It is the education system that is the primary driver of people seeking to live in Cheshire. We have to invest in our best asset. I strongly feel that no more cuts should be made and if residents, including myself, have to feel a little more tax burden as a result of this, that is what must be done. Both for our students and the long term success of our town.

Sincerely,

Diana Doroghazi

Comment 12:

Dear Members of the Town Council,

I am writing to you not only as a member of this community, but as a teacher who has the privilege of working with our children each and every day for the last 30 years. I respectfully urge you to support the Board of Education budget as presented and to avoid any further reductions.

It is easy to view a budget as numbers on a page—but in our schools, those numbers have faces, names, and stories. They are the students who walk into our classrooms each morning carrying not only backpacks, but hopes, challenges, and a need to feel safe, supported, and valued. They are children who rely on us for stability, encouragement, and the opportunity to discover who they can become.

In our classrooms, teachers give far more than instruction. We give our time, our energy, and our hearts to ensure every child feels seen and supported. When resources fall short, we quietly fill the gaps ourselves—purchasing books, supplies, and materials out of our own pockets so that no student goes without. We do this willingly because we care deeply about our students, but it is not something that should be relied upon to sustain our schools.

The Board of Education and Superintendent have already made significant and thoughtful reductions to this budget. At this point, additional cuts will not come from efficiencies—they will come directly from the experiences we are able to provide our students. They will mean fewer supports in classrooms, fewer opportunities for individualized attention, and fewer chances for students to fully engage in their education.

I am especially concerned about the impact on special education services. Our most vulnerable learners depend on consistent, high-quality support within their home schools. Reducing these services risks not only failing to meet their needs, but also increasing outplacements—separating students from their peers and community while ultimately creating greater long-term costs.

Equally concerning is the potential loss of programs like sports, music, and the arts. These are not extras; they are often the very experiences that help students feel connected, confident, and inspired. For many children, these programs are where they find their voice, their passion, and their sense of belonging.

Our schools have already worked hard to protect what matters most. There is little left to reduce without fundamentally changing the educational experience we offer. Strong schools are not just a point of pride—they are the foundation of a strong, thriving community.

I ask that you look beyond the numbers and consider the children sitting in our classrooms, the teachers supporting them, and the future we are shaping together. Please support the Board of Education budget as presented.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to our community.

Jennifer Zebarth

Comment 13:

Dear Members of the Cheshire Town Council,

Thank you for your service to our community and for the opportunity to share my perspective on the proposed school budget.

My family recently moved to Cheshire, and I want to be direct about one of the primary reasons we chose this town: the schools. We were drawn here because of Cheshire Public Schools' exceptional reputation, and what we have experienced since arriving has exceeded our expectations. Our children's teachers have been available, communicative, and deeply committed. That level of personalization and care does not happen by accident; it is the product of a well-supported system with educators who have the time and resources to invest in each child.

I recently attended the 4th grade recorder concert at my child's school. What struck me was not just the performance itself, but the atmosphere in that room. Children who were engaged, respectful, and genuinely proud of what they had worked toward. As a parent new to this district, I feel grateful that my child has opportunities like this. These experiences build confidence, discipline, and a sense of belonging. They matter.

I urge you to consider what is at stake beyond the classroom. Cheshire's schools are an economic engine for this town, regardless of where one falls on the political spectrum. Research from the National Bureau of Economic Research has found that for every dollar a community spends on public schools, home values increase by approximately \$20, a return that benefits every homeowner and taxpayer in town, not just those with children in the system. Homes in highly rated school districts typically command a premium of 10 to 20 percent over comparable properties in average-performing areas, and among homebuyers ages 30 to 39, nearly half say school quality was a factor in their decision about where to purchase a home. Cheshire's ranking of 8th in the state, achieved while spending at the 121st level is a remarkable story of efficiency. But efficiency has a floor. Cutting further risks the very reputation that drives families to choose Cheshire, fill our neighborhoods, and sustain our tax base.

Research consistently shows that communities that made significant cuts to school funding saw steep declines in student achievement, and the consequences ripple outward into the broader community for years. Cheshire has already made painful sacrifices. According to our superintendent Dr. Jeff Solan this includes 10 paraeducators, three teachers, a nurse, and three clerical positions to arrive at the current budget. A further \$300,000 reduction, on a system this lean and with 225 additional students coming through the door, is not a trim. It is a risk to something that took years to build and could take far longer to restore.

I recognize that budget decisions require difficult tradeoffs, and I respect that the Council has a duty to all residents. But strong schools are not a partisan issue. They are the foundation of a safe, vibrant, and economically healthy community. I ask that you protect this investment in all of our futures.

Respectfully,

Yollanda London

110 Shea Circle

Comment 14:

Dear Members of the Town Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for Dr. Jeffrey Solan's proposed Board of Education budget for the 2026–2027 school year.

Dr. Solan's message to the community clearly reflects a thoughtful and responsible approach to balancing fiscal discipline with the educational needs of Cheshire's students. The proposed budget demonstrates a clear commitment to maintaining the high standard of excellence that our schools are known for, while also making meaningful efforts to economize wherever possible.

Cheshire Public Schools have long provided students with a well-rounded, high-quality educational experience that supports both academic achievement and personal growth. This level of excellence is not accidental—it is the result of careful planning, dedicated staff, and appropriate investment in resources, programs, and student support services. The proposed budget continues to prioritize these essential elements, ensuring that students have access to strong instruction, extracurricular opportunities, and the support systems necessary for success.

At the same time, it is evident that the Board of Education has taken its responsibility to taxpayers seriously. As Dr. Solan noted, significant reductions have already been made this year and next to limit expenditures without substantially impacting services. This reflects a deliberate effort to find efficiencies, streamline operations, and make prudent financial decisions. The proposal strikes a careful balance—preserving what matters most for students while avoiding unnecessary spending.

Further reductions beyond what has already been proposed would risk undermining the very programs and services that make Cheshire's schools exceptional. Cuts at this point would not simply trim excess; they would likely impact classroom experiences, student supports, and opportunities that families rely on.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Town Council to support Dr. Solan's proposed budget. It represents a responsible, student-centered plan that protects educational quality while demonstrating fiscal restraint.

As a parent of three children in Cheshire's public school system, I thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to the students and families of Cheshire.

Sincerely,

Lauren Grenier (Mom to Connor, Lily and Brooklyn)

Comment 15:

Hello,

I am writing you in support of the Superintendent's budget for the coming year and in opposition to any reductions to school funding.

Need it be said that schools are a moral priority? I won't condescend by lingering on that obvious point. However, sometimes people enjoy a civic good so long they fail to appreciate it. As a new resident, let me assure you that CPS is a system of rare quality. The high school curriculum is better than many small colleges! Students with special needs have the support to thrive without being outsourced! Kids flourish here. Please do not take this for granted or doubt how quickly these accomplishments can be undone.

Moreover, the schools are central to the town's reputation and thus a driver of Cheshire's housing market. I lived in Hamden for twelve years and left Spring Glen, as many families are doing. It wasn't the high taxes, but the degraded school system that pushed us out. Cheshire cannot expect to cut school funding and continue to attract educated and affluent residents. Once that erosion of the schools reaches some unknown tipping point, the town housing market will suffer. People will pick up stakes, as we did and as many of my friends from Hamden are doing. This will not benefit tax revenues or the future of Cheshire. A short term budget gain could be a long term loss.

Please, fund our schools. Make them your priority, for the sake of our children and our community.

Best

Nick Robinette

Comment 16:

Dear Members of the Town Council,

I am writing as both a teacher in our district and a parent of two children in our schools. I care deeply about this community and its schools, and I am very concerned about the proposed cuts to the education budget.

In my classroom at Dood Middle School I already see the impact of limited resources every day. I currently have 27 students in one class, and it is increasingly difficult to give each child the attention they deserve. Like many teachers, I also spend my own money on books, supplies, and materials so my students can have a meaningful learning experience. These are not extras. They are the basics of what helps students feel engaged, supported, and successful.

As a parent, these concerns feel even more urgent. One of my children has a disability and depends on access to trained professionals and consistent support throughout the school day. When budgets are reduced, those supports are often stretched thinner or lost. It is hard to put into words what it feels like to worry that your child may not have what they need to learn, grow, and feel understood at school.

My other child benefits greatly from extracurricular activities. These opportunities give students a place to belong, to build confidence, and to stay motivated. If these programs are reduced, many students will lose an important connection to school that helps them thrive.

I also think about the bigger picture. I grew up in Cheshire, and I know how much this community values its schools. Our reputation for strong education is one of the reasons families choose to live here. While we may appear to do more with less when it comes to per-pupil spending, that success comes from the dedication of teachers, students, and families who work incredibly hard to make it work. There is a limit to how long that can continue. At some point, the strain will show in larger class sizes, fewer opportunities, and a decline in the quality of education.

I worry about the message these cuts send. Our budget reflects what we value. When education is reduced, it suggests that it is not a priority, and that is difficult for students, families, and educators to hear.

I am asking you to please consider the real impact these decisions will have on children, classrooms, and families. Our schools are one of the most important parts of this community. They deserve to be protected and supported.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carlee Brandom

Comment 17:

Dear Members of the Cheshire Town Council,

I am a Cheshire resident writing to respectfully express my opposition to the Board of Education's proposed budget for the 2026–2027 school year.

My decision to reside in Cheshire was influenced, in part, by the expectation that it would remain an affordable community. However, recent tax increases have raised concerns about long-term affordability. In this context, I was pleased to learn that a proposal has been put forward to reduce the school budget by \$300,000.

Cheshire Public Schools currently rank 121st out of 165 Connecticut districts in per-pupil spending, yet achieve an impressive ranking of 8th in overall performance statewide. This demonstrates a strong ability to deliver high-quality educational outcomes while maintaining relatively modest spending levels. Given this, it appears reasonable to consider modest reductions without significantly compromising educational quality.

I understand that the current proposed budget already reflects staffing reductions, including paraeducators, teachers, a nurse, and clerical positions. While such decisions are difficult, continued evaluation of expenditures may be necessary to ensure the town maintains a balanced and sustainable budget.

It is important to consider the broader impact of municipal spending on all residents. As someone without school-aged children, I believe it is appropriate to carefully assess school funding levels in relation to overall community needs and fiscal responsibility. Thoughtful adjustments to the proposed budget could help alleviate financial pressures on taxpayers.

I respectfully urge the Council to reconsider the Board of Education's recommended budget and pursue appropriate reductions in the interest of long-term fiscal sustainability.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Domenic Liuzzi

71 Soderman Way

Cheshire, CT 06410

Comment 18:

Dear Town Council Members,

I am writing as a long-term resident of Cheshire and a parent who is deeply invested in our community and school district. I have lived in Cheshire for the past nine years, and my husband and I made the deliberate decision to move here because of the excellent school system and the overall safety and quality of life the town provides. We currently have a freshman at Cheshire High School and a fourth grader at Doolittle Elementary School, and as an actively involved parent, I see firsthand the impact our schools have on our students and families.

The proposal to further reduce the education budget is concerning. Cheshire schools already operates efficiently, and additional cuts risk jeopardizing the quality of education our children receive. The strong academic outcomes achieved by the district are not accidental—they are the result of thoughtful investment, dedicated staff, and adequate resources. Continued reductions could undermine these successes and make it increasingly difficult to maintain our current standards, class sizes, and student support.

I strongly urge the Town Council to carefully consider the long-term impact of further budget cuts on students, families, and the community as a whole. Preserving the quality of our schools is essential not only for current families, but also for the future of Cheshire.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Denise Roncari

Comment 19:

To the Members of the Town Council:

We ask that you fully support the school budget as presented. As retired educators, we have been watching school budget presentations for several years now and recognize that this is an arduous process that has serious implications for the students in our community. We know that the school administration does a thorough and honest job enumerating what-they-need in order to maintain an educational experience befitting our students. And we watch how the BOE reviews and amends the Superintendent's budget.

Although we are retired, and funds are tight, the education of our children is one of the most important things a Community can do.

It is our hope that you will take the BOE recommendations and not cut any more funds from the Cheshire Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Mary Burnham and John Bestor

45 Tress Road

Cheshire

Comment 20:

Hello,

My name is Paris Godbout and I live at 35 East Ridge Court. I am writing today because I am unable to attend the Town Council meeting tonight and I'd like to share my support for the proposed Board of Education budget.

In no other town would you see students performing at such high levels for such little per pupil spending. For years, we have slowly removed items from the BOE budget and those costs have been passed on to parents including the cost of a significant amount of school supplies, field trips, and school sports. Citizens may not realize that this not a common occurrence in other towns. Many towns expect these things to be included in their school budgets. The Board of Education has cut as much as is possible without significantly damaging our students' education.

I ask that you please support the budget as presented tonight.

Thank you,

Paris Godbout

Comment 21:

Dear Members of the Town Council,

I am writing to you as a school social worker at Dodd Middle School, a parent of a Doolittle Elementary student, a Cheshire alumnus, and someone who spent 11 years working in another school district prior to coming to Cheshire.

From the moment I began working at Dodd, I immediately felt the difference in this community. Education here is not only valued by educators, but deeply supported by families and the community as a whole. It is a major reason why our schools are so successful. From my professional experience elsewhere, this level of community support is not the norm. It is also a big part of why I chose to return to my hometown to work, and something I am grateful for every day.

At Dodd, we are already operating with limited resources and cannot afford to lose positions or resources. At the same time, student behavioral and emotional needs are increasing in our day-to-day reality. Meeting these needs is placing an increasing strain on our teachers, who are already managing full classrooms and high expectations.

Strong test scores can create the impression that we can continue to do the same or more with fewer resources. From my professional experience, I can tell you that this is not sustainable. Reducing support will lead to staff burnout, the loss of high-quality educators, and ultimately a decline in student success.

I urge you to consider the long-term impact of any reductions to educational resources. Maintaining the strength of our schools requires continued investment in the people who support our students every day.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to the students and families of Cheshire.

Sincerely,

Ben Chaback (pronounced Shay-Back)

129 Laurel Terrace

Cheshire, CT 06410

Comment 22:

Dear members of Cheshire Town Council,

I am a resident of Cheshire, an educator, and a mother of two girls, one of whom will enter Norton Elementary next year as a kindergartener. I am writing to express my support for the Cheshire BOE proposed budget of a 7.54% increase. The primary reason for my family purchasing a home in this town was the reputation and results of its public school district. I was, until recently, unaware of how little is spent per child when compared to similar districts. The BOE budget works to mitigate any exacerbation of the difference between Cheshire and other similar towns. I believe the educators and administrators in charge make sound decisions about how taxpayer funds are allocated to best support Cheshire families, and I am in support of their assessment of the 26-27 school year's needs.

It is our current reality that students have greater needs than ever, and if Cheshire can offer robust programming for its pupils, it will continue to attract and retain high quality educators, while also providing sufficient services in-district. This is always true for special education, but the logic extends to content areas like art, music, and foreign language. These areas are too often viewed as superfluous, and yet they are the areas that I believe are most powerful in bringing students to high levels of creative thought, problem solving, communication, collaboration, all while being highly experiential and stimulating.

I have had the good fortune to witness the success of the CHS music department in several arenas. The Cheshire High School stand band and front line were top-notch at a recent football game I attended. I even heard a recent graduation ceremony from the bike path, and the musicianship is clearly that of students who have been well-nurtured since elementary beginning band/orchestra. I have also had the privilege of seeing Greg Bell's choirs up close as their choral accompanist for several seasonal concerts. Not only do these ensembles perform high-quality repertoire, but the culture of the group is one that has been fostered by music educators who value artistic expression, critical thinking, and shared success. None of this is possible without the investment made in CHS teachers as well as their many colleagues, K-8.

If my children cannot access age- and pedagogically-appropriate programs like band, choir, and orchestra, or if my children cannot access early introduction to foreign language, we cut out both the floor and the ceiling. This, at a time when it is more important than ever to teach our children about global citizenship, is ill-advised to say the least. Further cuts to the education budget make this dangerously close to a reality that I did not envision when I planned to raise a family in Cheshire.

I am supportive of Dr. Solan's assessment of budgetary trends in recent years and the direction he sees for this town and for my own children. Please adopt the 7.54% budget increase.

Thank you,

Sarah G. Iadarola

Comment 23:

Good evening,

My name is Matt Kurz & I have a daughter named Georgia who's in kindergarten at Highland Elementary.

We moved our family from Wallingford to Cheshire in 2024 specifically because of these schools. That was a deliberate financial and personal decision. We bought a more expensive house, we pay higher taxes, and we did it because I believed this community invests in its kids.

I'm asking you to protect that investment tomorrow night. Not just for Georgia, but for every homeowner and taxpayer in this town. Here's why this budget matters:

1. Property values. Research from the National Bureau of Economic Research shows every \$1 increase in per-pupil spending generates roughly \$20 in aggregate property value. Cutting school budgets doesn't save money, it erodes the value of every home in Cheshire.
2. Academic outcomes are directly tied to funding. A 10% increase in per-pupil spending is associated with a 3–5 point rise in graduation rates. Cuts produce measurable declines. This is not theoretical; districts that cut after the 2008 recession saw steep drops in student achievement that took years to recover.
3. Staffing is the mechanism. Smaller class sizes, experienced teachers, and low turnover are the specific factors most strongly linked to student success. Those are the first things cut when budgets shrink.
4. People move here for this. I did. Families research school ratings before they buy homes. The moment Cheshire's numbers start slipping, you lose that competitive edge, and you don't get it back quickly.

I didn't move here so Georgia could attend underfunded schools. I moved here because Cheshire set a higher standard. As a taxpayer and voter I ask that fund these schools and keep that promise to the families who chose this town.

Thank you.

Matt Kurz

444 Country Club Rd

Cheshire, CT 06410

Comment 24:

Hi Peter,

Hope you are well. I will not be able to attend any meetings next week so I am writing this letter that I ask you to cascade to the council and enter into the record for the public hearing on April 15th.

I did some historical research to see if I could uncover any trends that may be contributing to the increases in our budget request in more recent years. I was able to go back as far as 2013 and found a BOE budget request book from a friend who kept his budget copies over the years. I used that as a starting point.

In that year the BOE requested a 3% increase and was granted an increase of 1.93%. At that time, the enrollment was 4,668 students, and we had staffing levels of 609 positions. The budget request was \$63,190,000, representing a cost per pupil of \$13,336. Staffing of classroom teachers stood at 146 teachers.

Today the numbers are not so promising., The request is for \$100,149,000 and an increase of 7.5%. Enrollment is lower at 4,377 students, representing a cost per pupil of \$22,880. But the real cost that I can see is in the staffing levels, with 826 reported positions in the education department. We have increased staffing by over 200 positions since 2013, while seeing enrollment drop by approximately 300 students since that time. And it's not so much on the number of classroom teachers; which stands at 168 in the current budget. When you factor in the rising cost of healthcare and medical benefits for that many employees one can see plainly why the budget has increased so dramatically.

On the town side the staffing numbers are more promising. In 2013 the town reported 270 positions, while today that number stands at 278. The number of police officers for example has remained constant at 48 police officers today compared to 49 in 2013, and that's during a phase when we are approving a lot of new residential units; compared to a shrinking school system whose staffing has exploded since that same year.

The council and BOE needs to take a serious look at staffing; namely at the BOE We have grown exponentially in employment while shrinking in enrollment. The taxpayer is hard pressed to afford these staffing levels while the enrollment is in decline.

Overall, in the past 3 budget cycles, the increases in the mill rate have been significant. This year the request is for 8.9%, for 25/26, the approved budget was an increase of 8.3%. In the revaluation 24/25 year, taxes rose 5%.

Before then the tax increases were modest. On page 39 of the 26/27 proposed budget, these are the reported increases in the mill rate:

23/24 - 2.24%

22/23 - 1.78%

21/22 - 1.51%

Clearly the council needs to do a better job of scaling back spending and reducing the mill rate. Raising the mill rate at 8% per year is unsustainable and frankly is a more recent phenomena. I hope this year will be a little different and we can get back to the place where modest increases were the norm.

Some folks are asking and talking about the new north end development and the revenue it will generate. We won't see the full scope of revenue until after 2028, when we satisfy our agreement with the developer to pay back infrastructure cost. From there we may see about 4 million a year in revenue. Just putting that into perspective, the increase in the year's budget alone is over 11 million dollars. We literally need 3 of those developments just to cover the increase in this year's budget. It may sound nice to have new grand list growth, but it's of no avail if we raise the mill rate by 8% per year.

One other suggestion I'd like to make concerns Darcey and Chapman Schools. During the debate and study conducted by the school modernization committee, we were assured that closing Darcey and Chapman would be instrumental in helping to save costs that could be applied to the new school project. That time is now upon us. The Council should make arrangements to sell or demolish these properties to save resources and realize the net savings as discussed during the school project debate. I did see a notation on this subject in the budget to develop a plan for these buildings and hope the town will dispense of these properties as soon as possible. It's time to downsize and this is a perfect opportunity to do so.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Ruocco

6 North Pond Road

Comment 25:

Dear Mr. Talbot,

I am a Cheshire resident and writing to ask for your support of the Board of Education's recommended budget for the 2026-27 school year. I am a proud parent of two grown children who graduated from the Cheshire school system.

Our family chose Cheshire in large part because of the quality of its public schools, and we have seen firsthand why that reputation is deserved. I am aware class size has grown and there are clearly not enough para professionals for children with special needs which causes teacher burnout and disruption for the students.

I was concerned to learn that a proposal is on the table to reduce the school budget by \$300,000. While that may seem modest as a percentage, our district already ranks 121st out of 165 Connecticut school districts in per pupil spending, yet we perform 8th in the state. That is a remarkable achievement, but it means there is very little room left to cut without real consequences for our children and our community.

Cheshire has already reduced 10 paraeducators, three teachers, a nurse, and three clerical positions to reach the current proposed budget. Further reductions would likely mean larger class sizes, fewer programs, or both at a time when enrollment is growing by 225 students.

Strong schools are not just good for our children — they are good for all of Cheshire. They protect our property values, attract families and businesses to our town, and define the character of our community. This is an investment worth protecting in all of our futures.

I respectfully urge you to support the Board of Education's recommended budget in full. Thank you for your service and for listening to our community.

Sincerely,

Fredyne Pell

20 Soderman Way

Comment 26:



Dear Esteemed Members of the Cheshire Town Council,

I would first like to apologize for the delay in submitting this letter. Today marked the close of my 23rd tax season—by far one of the most challenging in my 28 years of tax preparation—and it coincided with your budget meetings.

The purpose of my letter is to express my appreciation to the Council and to Town Manager Sean Kimball for your continued efforts to move the Town of Cheshire toward more innovative processes and technologies.

When I began preparing taxes in the 1980s, the tools of the trade were number-two pencils, four-column pads, and federal tax booklets. Monthly tax code updates arrived by mail, and the highlight of the day was winning the coin toss to see who would escape to the post office with hundreds of large envelopes.

Today's tax season looks entirely different: online software that performs calculations and houses the tax code, secure portals filled with PDFs, and electronic filing that never requires leaving the office. This year, both the IRS and the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services expanded electronic payment capabilities in response to ongoing mail and bank fraud—all at a fraction of the cost of traditional methods.

The same opportunities now exist for property tax administration. When I opened my practice in 2003, assessor's declaration booklets came in large envelopes that included folded goldenrod return envelope. Today, more than 100 towns in Connecticut have adopted online portals for businesses to submit property declarations directly. I prepare declarations for clients across multiple towns, and each year more municipalities transition to these systems. They save time, postage, and paper while providing faster, more accurate results for governing bodies.

I encourage the Town Council to continue moving toward these sustainable, cost-reducing solutions. Modernizing property tax filing options would support efficiency, reduce waste, and meet the expectations of a growing population of young entrepreneurs and business owners who rely on digital accessibility.

In closing, thank you for your service to the Town of Cheshire and for your willingness to explore better alternatives for the business community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Linda H. Blackburn", followed by a horizontal line.

Linda H. Blackburn, CPA
SBAS, LLC
90 Williams Rd

Comment 27:

Dear Town Council Members,

I am writing to you as a parent of two children at Doolittle Elementary and the current PTA President.

I am deeply concerned about the proposal to further reduce the education budget. Our schools have already absorbed significant reductions, and additional cuts will inevitably have a detrimental impact on our classrooms. **Our students and teachers should not continue to carry the burden of these budget constraints.**

The strong outcomes and supportive environments we value in Cheshire are the result of consistent investment. Further cuts risk undoing this progress and placing undue strain on our already limited resources.

I respectfully ask you to consider the cumulative impact of these decisions. Our students and teachers deserve your support rather than being asked to do more with less each year.

Thank you for your time and your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Leeza Day

Comment 28:

Dear Members of the Town Council,

I'm writing as a middle school teacher here in Cheshire to share my concerns about the proposed school budget cuts. Right now, my classes are already around 25 students. We do everything we can to support each child, but an increase in class size would make it even more challenging to meet everyone's needs as well as we'd like. If the budget is reduced and class sizes grow, it will only become harder. Last year, I had smaller classes, and I noticed a real difference. Students were more focused, showed a stronger work ethic, and overall behavior improved, as fewer students meant more attention for each individual. It also allowed more time for one-on-one and small group support tailored to each student.

Middle school is such an important time for students, both academically and socially. Smaller class sizes truly make a difference. They allow us to give more individual attention, adjust our instruction, and build the kind of relationships that help students feel supported and successful. I know there are many factors to consider when making budget decisions, but I hope you'll keep the impact on students and classrooms in mind. Increasing class sizes would have a real effect on the quality of education we're able to provide.

Thank you for your time and for considering this perspective.

Sincerely,

Megan Albert

Dodd Middle School

Grade 8 Math - Red Team

Comment 30:

Dear Members of the Cheshire Town Council,

We are Cheshire residents and parents writing to ask for your support of the Board of Education's recommended budget for the 2026-27 school year.

Our family chose Cheshire in large part because of the quality of its public schools, and we have seen firsthand why that reputation is deserved. We have had great teachers like Mrs. Vitello, Mr. Rigali and Mrs. Hanson at Chapman who have gone above and beyond for our kids. We have seen the joy teacher coached Dodd sports have brought to middle school students both on the team and as spectators.

We were concerned to learn that a proposal is on the table to reduce the school budget by \$300,000. While that may seem modest as a percentage, our district already ranks 121st out of 165 Connecticut school districts in per pupil spending, yet we perform 8th in the state. That is an extraordinary result, but it means there is very little room left to cut without real consequences for our children and our community.

Cheshire has already reduced 10 paraeducators, three teachers, a nurse, and three clerical positions to reach the current proposed budget. We have already seen the disappointing cut of 6th grade Spanish which was a disappointment for our son currently in 6th grade when his brother was able to start Spanish then. Further reductions would likely mean larger class sizes, fewer programs, or both at a time when enrollment is growing by 225 students.

Strong schools are not just good for our children — they are good for all of Cheshire. They protect our property values, attract families and businesses to our town, and define the character of our community. This is an investment worth protecting in all of our futures.

We respectfully urge you to support the Board of Education's recommended budget in full. Thank you for your service and for listening to our community.

Sincerely,

Christine and Tim Lassen

162 Nob Hill Rd

Comment 31:

To all whom may be involved,

To say that I am disappointed and frustrated with the proposed budget reductions would be an understatement. Cheshire's high performances in academics, sports, and extracurricular activities are part of what makes this town a wonderful place to raise a family. The years we have been here, raising our children and having them both grow into the school system have been welcoming and supported. We believed so much so in the school system that we voted yes, to expand Norton School and build Barnum Elementary. That yes, was knowingly adding more financial strain to an already difficult state of the world. But it was worth it, knowing that my kids futures, and future classes will benefit from this. We want to live in a society where children are taught to think and thrive. By funding education, we are doing that, and there will never be a question about supporting education.

What baffles me, is the turn of events after gaining the vote to expand and build the elementary schools. It feels as if the rug has been pulled out from under us. The redistricting process has been a whirlwind, with numerous surveys to get the public opinion, but not really sure if our voices actually hold weight, plus changing start/end times leaving parents scrambling to figure out child care. But in all of the chaos, we were promised the same level of education. The same, if not better, resources, including smaller class sizes. No longer would the schools be beyond capacity, creating a safer space for teachers and students. Particularly at Highland, I'm sure the art teachers would love to have their classroom back.

But here I am today, feeling as if that vote was just a ploy to line the pockets of builders. I sit here now reviewing a budget that tells me class sizes will potentially not be smaller, that special education services will be cut, and that after school sports for the Middle School and the Freshman in High School may be no more.

On top of the new schools and redistricting, we were told to our faces, that all of the new housing builds were necessary, because every build was the potential for new families coming in. I've lost count of how many builds there are, whether it's apartments, townhouses, or million dollar houses replacing apple trees. I'm curious to know, if those potential numbers of new students has been factored into this budget, and if the class sizes really will decrease. But I am more curious how this influx of property taxes from the new builds and new shopping center isn't partially being used towards the education budget.

Now I know there are going to be loud voices out there, voices who have already raised their children, in support of these cuts. Voices who I would think, would want children to keep busy. Because bored children are not something they want running through the streets, causing trouble, when they could be at school-sanctioned soccer practice. When kids have something to do and are

being held accountable by coaches and leaders, they become better human beings. Citing a 2024 study from Afterschool Alliance, a highly credible non-profit, notes "The hours after school can be a time of infinite opportunities for young people, but they can also be a time of vulnerability. The hours between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. are the peak hours when youth are the victims of crime and commit crimes."

By removing activities for such a vulnerable age group, you are effectively opening a can of worms that could have irreparable effects. You are leaving parents out to dry, when they relied on those programs in place of after care, giving them time to get home from work.

But most of all, those loud voices may think they are taking away benefits from just a bunch of kids, that it will somehow won't affect them, and keep a little more money in their bank accounts. But every child right now has the ability to grow into something more, especially when given the right tools. If you take away funding, you might take away the future of the doctor who might diagnose your illness, or police officer who will swear in to protect you. It's trickles down to every aspect of society, whether the voices believe that or not.

I'll leave you with one final quote from author John Green. I never thought in my time living in Cheshire that this quote would pop into my head, given how highly ranked Cheshire is. But that status is dwindling fast. So here it is:

"Public education does not exist for the benefit of students or the benefit of their parents. It exists for the benefit of the social order.

We have discovered as a species that it is useful to have an educated population. You do not need to be a student or have a child who is a student to benefit from public education. Every second of every day of your life, you benefit from public education.

So let me explain why I like to pay taxes for schools, even though I don't personally have a kid in school: It's because I don't like living in a country with a bunch of stupid people."

— John Green

<https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/The-Latest-Research-on-the-Impact-of-Afterschool-and-Summer-Programs-2024.pdf>

Thank you for your time,

Allison Dibble

Cheshire Resident, and Mom of 2.

Comment 32:

Dear Town Council Members,

As a resident of Cheshire invested in our community, especially with regard to our children and schools, I'm concerned about the upcoming budget cycle. I have lived in Cheshire for almost nine years now, and I am a parent with six children across four different Cheshire schools (CHS, Dodd, Chapman, and Darcey). I am actively involved with all the schools' PTAs and have seen the positive impact our schools have for students. However, I'm concerned about possible reductions to our town's education budget.

Our Board of Education has already recommended cuts to the education budget; any further reductions made by the Town Council will jeopardize the quality of education all of our children are receiving. Cheshire Public Schools already operates with a fiscally conservative budget compared to other comparable school districts. Additional cuts would jeopardize the quality education we expect from our schools, risking class sizes and a shortage of teachers, limiting academic resources and enrichment, and student support services.

I recognize that we are all faced with an uncertain economic climate and a desire to be fiscally prudent. However, I also know that a quality education comes at a price, but it is a positive investment directly tied to our present, as well as the future. Please carefully consider the long-term impact of budget cuts on students, families, and the community as a whole. Maintaining the quality of a Cheshire education is essential for the future of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Tellerico

Comment 33:

Dear Members of the Cheshire Town Council,

We are Cheshire residents and parents, writing this email to request for your support of the Board of Education's recommended budget for 2026-27 school year.

The quality of our public schools is one of the reasons why Cheshire is considered as one of the best residential towns attracting families and businesses and protecting property values.

We were concerned when we found out that a proposal is on the table to reduce the school budget by \$300,000. To our knowledge, Cheshire has already reduced some staff to reach the current proposed budget. Further reductions might have an impact on class sizes, offered programs etc. which could be detrimental for our school system.

We respectfully urge you to support the Board of Education's recommended budget in full. Thank you for your service and listening to our concerns.

Sincerely ,

Teja Shidore and Ketan Thakar

Residents at Reserve at Stonebridge Crossing

Cheshire

Comment 34:

To whom it may concern;

We were unable to attend the town meeting today, but wanted to share our strong opinion that the School budget should be approved with relatively few changes. While we recognize that this may result in a substantial increase in property taxes, this is an investment in the children of Cheshire and our town's future. Based on comparable numbers, our school is running at an extremely efficient capacity, and cuts would likely jeopardize the incredible reputation our town currently has.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Matt and Keryn Mills

30 Frances Ct

Comment 35:

Dear Town Council Members,

I am writing as a long-term resident of Cheshire, a board member of multiple PTAs in town, and a parent who is deeply invested in our community and school district. I have lived in Cheshire for the past eight years, my choice to move to Cheshire was a very deliberate one due to the excellent school system and the overall safety and quality of life the town provides. My husband and I currently have a freshman at Cheshire High School, a seventh grader at Dodd, a third grader at Norton and a son in pre-k 4 at Darcey, and as a very actively involved parent, I see firsthand the impact our schools have on our students and families.

The proposal to further reduce the budget proposed by the BOE is concerning. Cheshire schools already operate efficiently, and additional cuts risk jeopardizing the quality of education our children receive. The strong academic outcomes achieved by the district are not accidental—they are the result of thoughtful investment, dedicated staff, and nearly adequate resources. I do believe that the BOE budget could actually be bolstered to even better provide opportunity in both Arts and STEM for all of Cheshires students. Given that Cheshire is one of the fastest, if not the fastest, growing municipality in Connecticut paired with one of the lowest per pupil expenditures, continued reductions could undermine these successes and make it increasingly difficult to maintain our current standards, class sizes, and student support.

I strongly urge the Town Council to carefully consider the long-term impact of further budget cuts on students, families, and the community as a whole. Preserving the quality of our schools is essential not only for current families, but also for the future of Cheshire.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aimee Sobkowiak

104 Hickory Lane