

Board of Education Meeting
March 23, 2026 6:30 PM
Middletown High School Library
200 LaRosa Lane, Middletown, CT 06457
DRAFT

Board Members Present: Kelly Bee, Chris Cardella, Sheila Daniels, Rakim Grant, Deborah Kleckowski, Dean Krupa, Harold Panciera and Kim Riordan

Council Members Present: Ava Hart, Grady Faulkner, Janette Blackwell, Kelly Sweeney, Shanay Fulton, Leslie Spatola (6:54), Mayor Nocera

Virtual - Vinny Loffredo, Linda Salafia

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Daniels called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

II. Opening Remarks

Ms. Daniels led the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Addley welcomed the Common Council members, Board Members, members of the public and staff for attending the meeting. Ms. Blackwell thanked the board for hosting the meeting. The council will be hosting a workshop on April 20th where any additional questions will be answered. Mayor Nocera shared that the city is working very hard on the budget. He will release a copy on March 31st. At that point the Common Council will deliberate the budget.

III. Common Council Budget Workshop

Ms. Blackwell shared that many questions were answered by Dr. Addley and Ms. Forbes. She asked for clarification on the question asking how Middletown compares to the DRG, the state and other Alliance districts. Dr. Addley shared that Middletown's per pupil is \$25,070. It is 1.18 times the Alliance District average. Food costs, Special Education paraprofessional support, arts, nurses and support services are the major factors in the DRG number. Mr. Griswold addressed the question regarding the improvement in absenteeism. Ms. Fulton asked if the family home visits attributed to the improvement. Dr. Addley shared that the responsibilities of the Family Engagement Liaisons will be provided within the schools. Ms. Blackwell asked about the outplacement services for students and building capacity within the district for these services. Dr. Addley shared that based on student needs it is not always possible to have the services in house. Mr. Loffredo asked about the services that ACES provides. Ms. Spaulding and Dr. Addley shared that MPS does use ACES for several services including PPT decisions. Following were questions regarding the DATTCO contract, fees for preschool, redistricting and legal services. Ms. Hart asked Dr. Addley to explain the 12 staff cuts in the proposed budget. He

shared the job titles and a brief explanation for the cuts. Ms. Blackwell asked how the district can provide education to parents on how to access resources. Dr. Addley shared that the district continues to work closely and collaborate with a number of community partners and organizations to provide valuable education and support resources to families and parents. The district will continue to look for opportunities to expand its reach to offer more support, work alongside more organizations and help more families throughout the city.

Common Council Members and Mayor Nocera left the meeting.

IV. Public Comment

Ms. Nyah Brightwell, 272 East St. Ms. Wrightwell shared that teachers should not be cut. She suggested that students be consulted. She also discussed the pay of the teachers.

Ms. Sigrid Atherton, 116 Bretton Rd. Ms Atherton shared that there is a misrepresentation of the STEM teacher position. She also discussed the proposed cut of 6th grade Spanish.

Andrew Burkey, student at MHS. Mr. Burkey shared his experience in the STEM program. He asked the board to reconsider the cuts.

Ms. Elizabeth Reed, teacher at MPS. Ms. Reed thanked the board members for responding to emails and reaching out for more information. She clarified that a 5 year financial commitment is not required. She also addressed the test scores of the Lawrence students.

Ms. Christine Jones, 165 Lincoln St. Ms. Jones spoke of the TAG program. She spoke of how families were moving into the neighborhood to have their children attend Macdonough.

Mr. Aaron Jones, 165 Lincoln St. Mr. Jones spoke of the STEM and TAG program. He discussed the value of these programs and the teachers.

Ms. Roberta Downer, MHS teacher and MFT president. Ms. Downer asked that decisions be grounded in student needs. She spoke of the supports needed for students and the barriers that removing these would cause. She also spoke about the plan for moving students from Farm Hill to Macdonough.

Mr. Cesar Gonzalez, teacher at MHS. Mr. Gonzalez shared his own experience as a high school student. He spoke about cuts to staff, which would negatively impact the students and staff being about to give quality individualized education to students. He spoke of the benefits for small class sizes.

Ms. Kaitlynn Styles, teacher at MHS. Ms. Styles spoke about the staff cuts and the limited opportunities that would lead students to. Lower class sizes lead to more opportunities for teachers to provide individualized instruction and connection with students. She asked board members to consider what matters.

Ms. Briz Garcia, Family Engagement Liaison. Ms. Garcia shared that eliminating the FEL's will greatly affect students and families. Ms. Garcia shared that she has assisted at 9 schools. She shared that transferring the work is not sustainable. She gave an example of a family that she assisted and the impact that it had.

Brooke Carta, President of AFSCME 1467. Ms. Carta shared that there is a pattern of eliminating positions throughout the district. She gave an example of the staff members that make a day successful and the importance of their work. She stated that eliminating positions does not eliminate the work.

Mr. Christopher Darby, teacher at MHS. Mr. Darby discussed the per pupil expenditure. He also stated the ECS has been flat for 13 years. He stated the priorities of the district should be people, positions then programs.

V. BOE Budget Workshop

Dr. Addley reviewed the enrollment and class sizes for grade 9 after the changes with the budget. He reviewed the 6th grade model for intervention. He reviewed the 7th and 8th grade model. He also shared a comparative slide for administrative salaries in Middletown versus other towns.

Mr. Cardella asked for clarification on the future of the STEM teacher position. Dr. Addley explained that the STEM rooms will be used by many teachers within the building. Ms. Forbes shared an example at Beman Middle School. He also asked if surrounding districts offer Spanish in 6th grade. Dr. Addley stated it is mixed and he will follow up with the data. Mr. Cardella followed up with a question for legal fees and current open positions.

Mr. Grant spoke of the district asking for less during a time when students need more support. He would like the Board to vote for an increased budget to cover student needs.

On Friday, March 27 5:30PM at Central Office The BOE will vote on the budget.

VI. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:05 by Mr. Cardella, second by Ms. Kleckowski