


**BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING – February 13, 2018
WHS Professional Library**

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BY: 

PRESENT: Jeff Rutishauser, Richard Creeth, John Kalamarides, Walter Kress, Stewart Koenigsberg, Peter Balderston

Others Present: Board of Education, Anne Kelly-Lenz, CFO

Meeting Documents (Attached): 1) List of questions submitted by BOF to the BOE and 2) DMC Report on Potential Cost Savings

Call to Order

Chairman Jeff Rutishauser called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Comments Prior to Budget Discussion

BOE Chairman Christine Finkelstein opened the discussion with general comments on behalf of the Board of Education and the budget process for the current year.

Jeff Rutishauser followed with comments on some good developments in the past year including the sharing of CFO and Facilities Manager between the Town and the Board of Ed. He also commented on the improved format and readability of the BOE budget document and the inclusion of two years of projected data that has taken a long time to develop. He also went over several external financial situations adversely affecting Wilton and its residents: 1) Federal Tax Bill including SALT limitation 2) Weak Connecticut State economy 3) State budget woes, 4) Recent municipal cuts proposed by Gov Malloy of \$ 586,000 5) Potential contribution to State Teacher Pension Fund of over \$4 million annually, 6) weak local housing market and 7) minimal Grand List growth, expecting 27 basis points again.

FY19 Budget Discussion

The remaining time was spent discussing various topics of the FY19 Budget:

- Financial Burden on Wilton of “costly new programs”
- Accountability of Wilton Public Schools to Parents
- WPS Budget Comparisons with Ridgefield
- Discussion of Pre-K actual attendance levels and tuition charged/collected
- Legal mandate of Pre-K and applicable Federal Law (IDEA discussion)
- DMC Report – Lack of meaningful implementation to date of cost-saving measures
- High SPED Caseload – potentially “over-identified” with disabilities

At approximately 9:30pm, BOE Chair Christine Finkelstein recommended that the meeting adjourn and resume on the second date of Feb. 21 to finish the questions. Walter made a motion to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 9:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Rutishauser

Minutes have not been reviewed by this Board and may be subject to revision in future minutes.

Questions for BOE-BOF Meetings (Feb 13 & 21)

Financial Burden on Wilton [SK]

Wilton already has among the highest mill rates in the area. Hartford has just recently announced cutting funding to our schools, increasing the burden on the town's taxpayers. Many residents will struggle with non-deductibility of income and real estate taxes. Do you believe that it is fair to them to propose new costly programs for "unmet needs" in this environment?

Examples of non-mandated costly new programs include expansion of pre-K to "typicals", Alternative High School, and any others you can comment on?

Accountability of Wilton Public Schools to the Parents [PB]

What are the 5 or 6 key measures to which the Wilton Board of Education holds itself accountable that are also things that parents use as common comparative metrics when considering a move to a town within our DRG? Can these be assembled in tabular form for distribution before our or at our meeting on Tuesday?

Pre-K Program Issues [JR]

Last year, there was talk of expanding the Pre-K program but there was not any additional FY18 budget for expanding the "typicals" in the program.

- How much did it cost to expand the program?
- Last year, you calculated it would cost an incremental \$17,000 per "typical". Is that what it actually is costing? Is this incremental cost or "fully loaded" cost with overhead added in?
- How many children are in the Pre-K Program this current year? What are the enrollment projections for next year?
- It was represented that WPS would charge (and collect) tuition of \$7,000 per "typical". How many "typical" children are in the program this current school year?
- How much tuition revenue has been collected in 2017-18 school year from "typicals" this year? How much do you budget in the FY19 for tuition? Where is it in your budget (I can't find it)?
- How much is the overall subsidy projected to be in 2017-2018 for the non-state-mandated services?

- How much of the \$ 1.027MM budgeted future spending for pre K is directly attributable to SPED students required to have Pre-K by state laws vs. all other Pre-K costs in the budget? Can you provide detailed analysis?
- What is the response to town's people on why the non-SPED portion is necessary when other Pre-K programs (a.k.a. Nursery Schools like WCDS) are available in town at no cost to the taxpayers?
- Why does Wilton Schools need to compete with Nursery Schools who are already struggling to get students in their programs at a far lower cost than the Pre-K program offered at Miller-Driscoll? Can you justify this expense to Wilton's taxpayers?

Pre-K Program – Claim of “Legal Mandate” [JR]

As to legal requirement, we cannot find in the C.G.S where the Town is legally mandated to provide educational services to children under age 5 in Kindergarten, except those with special needs. Under C.G.S. 10-15, we are legally required to provide educational services for children ages Kindergarten to grade 12 for a minimum of 180 days per year. Under C.G.S. 10-184, parents are legally required to have children from age five through seventeen (inclusive) attend public schools or an alternative. But there appears to be no C.G.S. section (law) that requires Wilton to educate non-SPED children before Kindergarten.

What C.G.S. legal requirement can be cited that mandates that Wilton must provide schooling for any non-SPED child below the age of five years old? “Best practices”, “inclusive environment” and other aphorisms are all nice but aren't legal mandates.

Please cite C.G.S. section mandating that [Wilton] Public Schools provide such education to non-SPED children below the age of five.

Are other local towns under such “mandate” as well? Can you describe the Pre-K programs at New Canaan, Westport, Darien, Greenwich, Ridgefield, Weston and Redding and how many non-SPED students (“typicals”) they have in their respective Pre-K programs? And what tuitions they charge?

DMC Report – Lack of Implementation [WK]

The findings of the District Management Council Report were published in June 2015. That study was conducted to by a highly qualified consultant hired by the Board of Ed. at the considerable expense of \$200,000. Its objective was to deliver appropriate services in a more effective manner, primarily to benefit the affected students with cost savings as a residual benefit. The report stated that students would NOT be disadvantaged - no negative effects or affects - in applying best practices in the three services: physical therapy, occupational therapy

and speech pathology. It identified total potential annual savings of \$1.97M [Actually may be closer to \$3 million].

Our Board, many citizens and even your own Board member, Glenn Hemmerle, have asked repeatedly for a complete accounting of what has been implemented, what will be implemented, including specific timeframes, and what cannot be implemented and importantly specifics why they can't. Just saying that Wilton is different and it's a complex topic is not acceptable and demeaning to the taxpayers who underwrote this study. The DMC Report indicated that it evaluated 'like communities' and best practices. The slide presented at the January 25 public budget discussion was inadequate and the community is still waiting for an appropriate, detailed, clarifying presentation. **Please provide a date for a public meeting to provide this overdue clarification**

Since this DMC report was issued, we have asked repeatedly what has been implemented of the various cost savings suggestions included in the report. How many of the staffing efficiencies have been implemented? Why hasn't the implementation been pursued more proactively? When will these actions happen?

Has there been any effort to streamline the workflows so that the SPED professionals spend more time in front of children. Please describe efforts to streamline existing work requirements.

While families in Wilton and in State Government are tightening their finances in this Connecticut economy, coupled with punitive federal tax law changes to our town's people, do you believe that it may be time to push even harder to embrace finding areas to cut expenses including the DMC study?

How was this considered in this year's budget. Are there any specific savings targets and time frame to achieve savings? Is there effort underway to adopt principles similar to neighboring towns to decrease over identification and what is the potential savings if our percentages for these programs and per student spending reach local neighbors' levels? Can you provide details?

Special Services Transportation (p.198). [WK]

Please explain \$50k (25%) increase. Is this different than the Out-of-District Placement Transportation Line shown on p. 190? If yes, how so?

Why SPED caseload so high [WK]

Question number 63 from the Board of Education asked why our town's special ed and 504 programs were higher than neighboring towns. The response was "Based on VERY preliminary assessment of this issue I believe that there is evidence that students are being over-identified

with disabilities. While I understand that Wilton's special education department holds a well-deserved reputation for providing appropriate services, the current prevalence rate under both IDEA and 504 is more likely a product of the need for a more robust level of support (particularly at the middle and high school levels) and a more flexible continuum of services to meet student needs so that students and their parents do not feel like special education is the "only game in town" for students to get their individual needs met. As I work with staff at all levels to address comprehensive evaluations, interventions, progress monitoring, and decision-making we will be able to better understand this number and address the needs of our families."

Enrollment Issues [RC]

In the FY18 budget total enrollment is listed at 4,042. The sum of the enrollment for the four schools (MD, CM, MB HS) is 3,907. This leaves 135 students who are in the district but not in any of the four schools. Presumably Special Ed accounts for this. Yet the special Ed enrollment is listed at 536. Presumably this includes students who receive Special Ed services, but are counted in the school enrollment? Could we get a reconciliation of the enrollment numbers so as to understand better the cost per student at each campus and in Special Ed?

Declining Enrollment [SK]

Over the past few years and looking at next year's school budget and beyond, school employee headcount is decreasing at a slower pace than student population and cost per student is increasing beyond the pace of state controlled compensation increases. At the same time, the percentage of non-direct teaching personnel (administrative, coaches, etc.) has increased relative to classroom teachers. How do we assure Wilton taxpayers that we are spending judiciously? What areas would you consider rethinking in order to decrease spending in order to achieve the Board of Finance's spending target?

Declining general enrollment and accelerating growth in the SPED population [WK]

As forecast for years, overall enrollment has declined by 5% over the past two years and is projected to decline by another 1.7% for the '18-'19 year and by 5.1% over the next three years. This is a well-documented and highly reliable dynamic. We hear each year that the number one reason people move to Wilton are for its schools. However, many residents are sending their students to private schools adding to the general decline in enrollment .

1. Please provide details as to the number of students leaving for private schools for each of the past three years and the cited main reasons why since this is a dynamic incongruous with the stated reason why people move to Wilton.
2. Please explain why the cost per pupil is growing at 3.9% next year and 4.4% next year when the primary driver of cost is growing at 3.0% (contractual teacher salary increases).

The number of SPED students is increasing at an accelerating rate growing by 4.3% over the past two years and projected to grow by another 7.1% in 2018-2019 (p.182). Dr. Kevin Smith has repeatedly shared that early intervention should help control this growth. However, the bulk of this growth is occurring in high school – years after the students have been in the Wilton Public Schools. At the January 25th presentation to the community, Dr. Kevin Smith indicated that we have five times as many 504s as the national average, an alarming statistic.

Please provide a detailed explanation as to the primary drivers of the accelerating growth in SPED as the budget to serve these students represents almost one sixth of the total town budget and is a serious risk for increasing taxes.

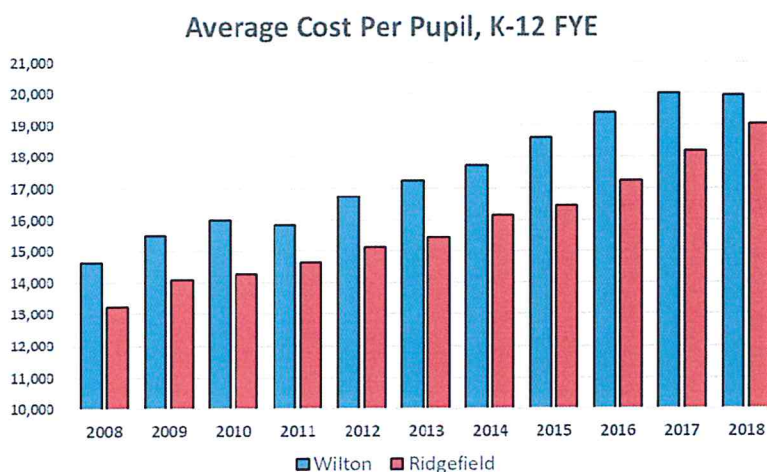
BOE Should Focus on Spending per Student instead of Total Spending [PB]

There is a chart in Dr. Smith's public budget presentation depicting seven selected towns' superintendents' requested total budget increase percentages. Wouldn't the more relevant information be the approved spending per student for the last approved budget?

Based on a quick internet search which yielded the 2016-17 spending, four of those seven towns spent less per student, two towns spent more, but by less than \$200 per student more than Wilton, and only one town, Greenwich, spent ~10% more. I noticed that Ridgefield, which is perhaps more comparable, and spent \$900 less per student was excluded, as was Weston, which spent \$1000 more per student. Are there more recent approved spending per student numbers for all of those towns?

Wilton School Spending Per Pupil compared to Ridgefield Schools [PB]

Ridgefield – which is arguably the most like Wilton in our DRG – has been consistently below Wilton in cost per pupil for the past 10 years. Recently, that gap has narrowed but currently (FY 2017-2018) the difference is approximately \$900 per student.

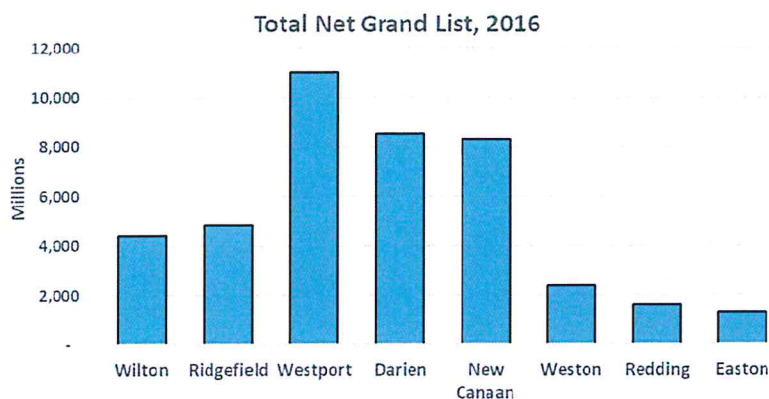
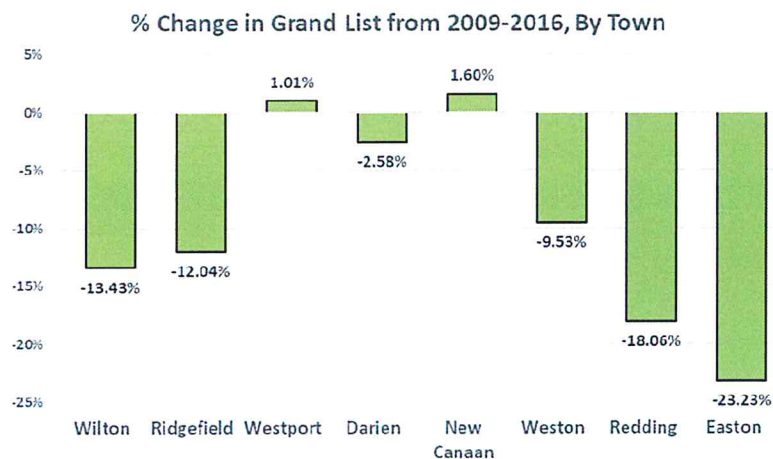


Were Wilton able to reduce its per student spending levels by half of this difference, the FY 2019 Wilton school budget would be DOWN over 2%.

Why can't we educate our children at an equivalent cost per pupil as Ridgefield?

WPS Competition within the DRG [PB]

In this day and age, schools within our DRG must compete for families with students. Over the past 8 years, public school enrolment has declined nationwide, and Wilton is no exception. Since FY 2009, enrollment in WPS has dropped by approximately -8.1% and this decline is expected to continue for the next 3-4 years at least. Attracting students to Wilton is made doubly hard when competing against the shoreline towns in our DRG (Westport, Fairfield, Darien) as we do not have mainline trains offering a shorter commute, the shore, greater commercial real estate base to help keep mil rates down, etc. Sadly, since 2009, our Grand List remains over 13% below its high water mark in 2009:



Alternative High School Necessary? [WK]

In the February 7 online Wilton Bulletin, the Alternative High School article received very negative public comments including fiscal irresponsibility, and criticism of added internal teacher training while “dragging down instruction.” Comments also criticize the \$500,000 cost for an estimated 15 to 17 students. If this is actually a cost saver due to insourcing, where is the savings budgeted? The public comments also suggested that the likely needed supervisory resources and overhead were not included in that estimate, suggesting that costs would be higher. Can you provide detail? Is there any legal requirement to add this program for non-SPED students? Is this the right environment to increase optional spending without finding other areas to cut?

There was discussion of having the Alternative High School be a regional school, inviting other participants once up and operating. Given that our neighboring towns (New Canaan, Darien and Westport in particular) have much larger financial resources (much higher Grand Lists) than Wilton, we should have them initiate this and pay for the start-up costs and when operating, then we in Wilton contribute our students to their program rather than relatively poor Wilton footing the bill and the start-up costs on this risky venture? Why should Wilton always pick up the tab?

Please provide details for the Tier 1 potential spend of \$500k for high school students with “anxiety?” Is this state mandated? What is the root cause of “anxiety?”

Alternative High School – Potential Cost Savings [JK]

What are the projected savings from adding an Alternative High School and cutting back on out-of-district placement and transportation?

Future Staffing Projection Flat [RC]

I was disappointed that the second and third year [budget] projections seemed to receive little attention. Specifically, as best as I could see, headcount remained unchanged in years two and three despite declining enrollment. With Salaries and benefits comprising 78% of the budget, the only way to constrain costs is to try keep headcount aligned with declining enrollment to the extent possible. Why was headcount left flat despite falling enrollment?

Spending Priorities – Conferences and Consulting [SK]

Costs for Training & Conferences (code 3221) are budgeted to increase 18%, by \$65,707 to \$424,021, and is projected to increase over the multi year budget from \$288,971 to \$487,302, a 69% increase.....with a decreasing student and teacher population. Tuition reimbursement is

also up 50% this year to \$100,000. This massive increase also appears to run counter to the stated benefits of having made significant investments in non-teaching academic coaches. While education is different, in private industry conference costs would be among the first areas cut in considering budget constraints.

Another area which most businesses would curtail in difficult times is general consulting costs.... contract services (code 3310) which is budgeted for an 8.5% increase to \$2.7 million... Which appears to exclude contract fees for legal, leases, computer assistance, technical, etc. The broader question is how trade-offs are considered, and why increase discretionary costs so significantly while decreasing teaching materials such as books? Spending on training & conferences exceeds the total spending on textbooks and library materials... is it because e-books are much cheaper and more broadly used which allows for these cuts?

Spending Priorities – Books Purchase [JK]

In the Board of Education's Q & A, several references were made to the lack of funds for library books (code 6411, budgeted at a total of \$61,398, down 2%), and textbooks (code 6410 budgeted at \$327,632, down 12%), and increases were recommended in the tiered additions.

Why put off the purchase of new books and media materials for the libraries rather than cutting back on personnel if there seems to be a cap on the total budget?

Administration Overhead Staffing [RC]

Despite gently declining enrollment in recent years and continuing projections of declining enrollments going forward, the number of administrative staff barely changes. Has the administration taken an in-depth look at each administrative position and determined

- a. Is the position necessary?
- b. Can it be shared with other campuses?
- c. Is it possible to consider a regional resource.

General Staffing [SK]

Along the lines of question 92 in the January 2018 Board of Education's Q & A, could you provide those materials to us ahead of our meeting? (question 92: Thank you for all the staffing information included in the budget documents. Is it possible to provide a simplified overview of staffing increases and decreases, divided into certified and non-certified, for the past 3 – 4 years? A summary chart something like below (of course use format and categories you think work best). District totals and also by site if possible. Brief explanations would help me see the impacts on staffing from programs, priorities, strategies, enrollment, cost-saving measures, reorganization, etc).

Administration Cost Increases – Need Explanation [WK – formerly SK]

- p.15. Why are Miller Driscoll Administrators receiving a 4.9% raise next year?
- p.44. Why are Cider Mill Administrators receiving a 3.2%% raise next year?
- p.96. Why are Middlebrook Administrators receiving a 4.0% raise next year?

By comparison, the High School Administrators increase is just 2.5% and the teachers receive 3.0% increase

Instructional Coaching [RC]

I was impressed by the positive feedback on the coaching program, particularly from the Principals of MD, CM and the HS. Now that we are in the third year of this program and its considerable expense, do we have any metrics by which we can measure its success? Does the administration expect the size of the coaching team to increase or decrease as the program matures?

Value of Coaching relative to disappointing performance results [WK]

We are spending \$1.58M on Instructional Coaching. On Jan 16, there was a WHS meeting for parents regarding the math department and new teaching methods. Many parents are very concerned and upset and spoke up that their children are having to teach themselves and are beyond frustration. It is demoralizing. One parent was told by one of the coaches that the foundation of math learning is failure. Students are frustrated, disillusioned, demoralized, and in need of private tutors.

From the Feb. 2 Good Morning Wilton “The math curriculum is an example of something where we rushed into it, without the support, and it was thrown at us at a similar time of the year, and we’re suffering for that and I don’t want to see that happen again, where our kids are struggling because we didn’t give the staff the support they needed when we literally threw a new curriculum at them,” said Laura Schwemm. That was echoed by Finkelstein: “We’re still suffering the fallout of a poorly implemented math curriculum, we have hundreds of kids who are paying the price.”

Taxpayers are having to pay for poor curriculum choices, poor implementation, or poor teaching, especially in math where we see an increase in the students testing below grade level.

1. Who is accountable for this and what is the Board of Ed.’s recommended solution beyond hiring more consultants and coaches?
2. Instructional Program Improvement (p.203) Why is this +\$176k? (up 16.7%)

Budget Report Format Request for future

Please add page numbers for reference from hard copies and % increases (or decreases) on summary pages for forecasts.

Summary of Potential Savings Per Year -- DMC Report

Although the DMC Report is relatively short, it is laid out in a way that can be confusing to follow the embedded cost savings implications of the recommendations. To answer the oft-asked question of how much potential annual savings are included in the report, this paper uses actual screenshots of the report along with page references to allow the reader to cross-reference to the source document if necessary.

Cost per SPED Staff (Page 13)

Much of the DMC report talks about SPED FTE's. However, there is only one section on page 13 where there is a fully-loaded SPED staff calculation:

Current Investment in Supports for Struggling Students

K-5 Level Only

Role	FTE	Average salaries & benefits	Total investment
General Education Paraprofessionals	14.5	\$53,000	\$768,500
Special Education Teachers	15.0	\$122,000	\$1,830,000
Reading Teachers	3.2	\$122,000	\$390,400
Reading Consultants	10.5	\$122,000	\$1,281,000
Total	93.2		\$4,269,900

For the purposes of the remaining cost savings, this fully-loaded cost per SPED professional will be used even though the other SPED specialists are likely to be of higher cost than this amount (e.g., psychologists).

Kindergarten Paraprofessionals Potential Savings (Page 14)

Properly staffed, there is a potential paraprofessional savings of **\$371,000 per year**:

Additionally, research indicates that paraprofessionals are not effective in raising the academic achievement of students. Nationwide, many districts have moved away from the use of general education paraprofessionals and reduced the use of special education paraprofessionals. For districts that do have general education paraprofessionals, their main role is Kindergarten classroom support. Although no nationwide benchmarking exists, the most common pattern is districts nationwide often have one general education paraprofessional per Kindergarten classroom or a half time paraprofessional per classroom, while others choose to only have the Kindergarten teacher present. If Wilton Public Schools were to place an average of 0.5 FTE general education paraprofessionals in Kindergarten classrooms, Wilton Public Schools would need approximately 7.5 FTE general education paraprofessionals². This is a potential savings of 7.0 FTE or \$371,000.

Psychologist Staffing Potential Savings (Page 21)

Currently Wilton spends *four times the national average per IEP*. If Wilton just achieves parity with national average, the potential savings is 5.6 FTE @ \$122,000 per professional for a total of **\$683,200 of potential annual savings**.

Psychologist Staffing in Comparison to National Average¹

	Wilton Public Schools	National Avg.
Total Psychologist Staffing (FTE)	10.5	2.6
Estimated Person Days Per Evaluation	5.8	1.5

Closely managing the evaluation process, and the additional indirect responsibilities requested of psychologists can free up time for direct counseling services to students. National research indicates that on average, the evaluation/IEP process takes 1.5 days. If the current evaluation process were examined and streamlined to align with national averages, it could repurpose the equivalent of 5.6 FTE of psychologists for counseling students.

Providing More Psychologist Time for Counseling

Illustrative

	Current	Possible
FTE	10.5	10.5
Total Evaluations Per Year	233	233
Estimated Person Days Per Evaluation	5.8	1.5
Days of Counseling Per FTE	50	147
Increase in Counseling Services Multiple	-	2.9
Additional Counseling Services Possible (FTE)	-	5.6

Social Workers Potential Savings (Page 22)

Currently Social Workers “spend 37% of their time directly supporting students.” By streamlining responsibilities, these social workers could spend potentially 75% of their time in direct support of students.

Potential savings of 1.6 FTE @ \$122,000 per professional totals **\$195,200 of potential savings per year.**

Social Worker Activities

Activity	% Time Spent
Counseling / crisis intervention	37%
Total Direct Service	37%

IEP writing / Paperwork	11%
Attend meeting (PPT)	10%
IEP testing / assessment	8%
Total Due Process	29%

Collaboration with colleagues	7%
Assigned school duties (i.e. bus duty, lunch duty, etc.)	6%
Agency coordination of supports and services	5%
Parent communication	5%
Attend meeting (other than PPT)	5%
Personal lunch	4%
Planning / materials preparation	2%
Student observation	1%
Under/over reported	0%
Total Other Indirect Service	34%

- On average, a social worker is spends 37% of their time directly supporting students.
- Social workers dedicate 29% of their week to the IEP process.

By streamlining the current responsibilities and processes so that the primary responsibility of social workers is supporting students 75% of their contracted time each week, Wilton Public Schools could gain the equivalent of an additional 1.6 FTE dedicated to counseling.

Additional Counseling Days Gained by Increasing Direct Service

Current Social Worker FTE	4.3
Current % Direct Service	37%
Target % Direct Service	75%
Additional Counseling Services Possible	1.6 FTE

Counselors Potential Savings (Page 24)

The report highlighted that Wilton is below national averages on counselors spending direct time with students. The direct time spent with students with grades K-8 students is recommended to be 75% of their time and with students grade 9-12 is recommended to be 50% of their time.

Potential savings of 4.2 FTE @ \$122,000 per professional totals **\$512,400 of potential savings per year.**

Some districts target for a counselor to spend 75% of their time with students at the K-8 level and 50% of their time with students at the high school level. By streamlining and reprioritizing the current responsibilities and processes of counselors, Wilton Public Schools could gain an equivalent additional 4.2 FTE dedicated to counseling.

Additional Counseling Days Gained by Increasing Direct Service

Current K-8 Counselor FTE	6.0
Current % Direct Service	33%
Target % Direct Service	75%
Additional Counseling Services Possible	2.5 FTE

Current High School Counselor FTE	7.0
Current % Direct Service	26%
Target % Direct Service	50%
Additional Counseling Services Possible	1.7 FTE

Speech Pathologists Potential Savings (Pages 26 & 29)

Of the thirteen (13) speech pathologists in the study, they spend from 28% to 63% of their time directly serving students. The DMC study outlined two different strategy recommendations to streamline and reduce the time away from students.

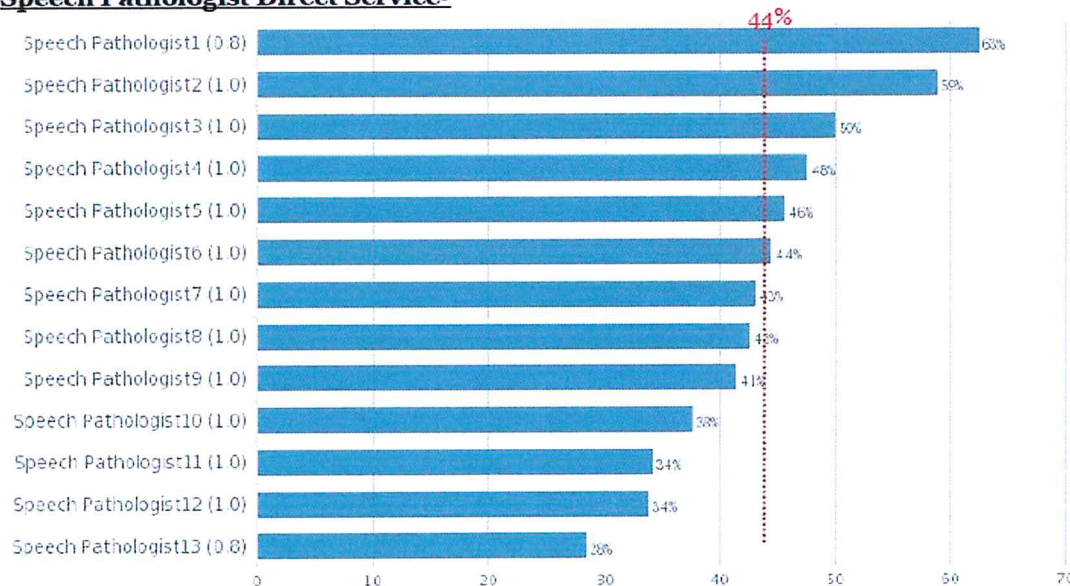
Depending on the strategy chosen, the potential Speech Pathologists savings ranged from \$575,000 up to \$817,000 per year, as outlined on page 29:

- By adjusting speech pathologists staffing levels to those of similar per pupil spending communities, Wilton Public Schools could repurpose approximately \$575,000.
- As an alternative, by increasing the average direct service time of all speech pathologists from 44% to 75% and increasing the average group size from 1.6 to 2.0 students, Wilton Public Schools could realize approximately \$817,000 that could be used towards other initiatives.

5a. Speech Pathologists

Speech and language pathologists are an important component of many student's IEPs. They spend time working directly with students while also participating in evaluations, report writing, and data analysis.

Speech Pathologist Direct Service³



The average speech pathologist spends 44% of their time during the week with students and serves 23 students. In some districts a speech pathologist is expected to spend 75% of their time with students with a typical caseload of over 50 students.

The low caseload in Wilton Public Schools is a consequence of much time in meetings and doing paperwork, coupled with providing much service 1:1. Speech therapists provide 63% of their services 1:1. Staff discussed that student grouping typically only happens when students share a classroom and similar area of need.

Research published by The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) revealed that an effective teaching environment can be created with 2 students per teacher if the disability is severe and 3 students to 1 teacher for more typical needs. The research warns against groups of more than 5 students.²²

Occupational Therapists Potential Savings (Pages 27 & 29)

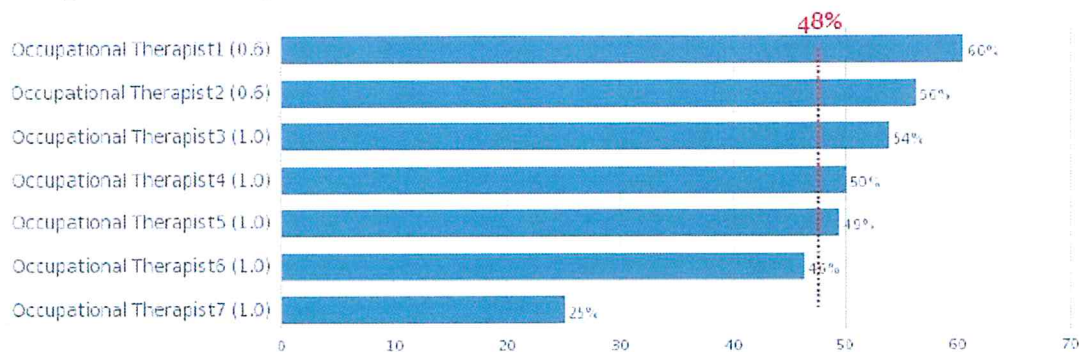
Similar to Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists are spending only 48% of their time in direct support of students. By streamlining their efforts, **the potential annual savings is \$410,000 per year.**

- By adjusting occupational therapist staffing levels to those of similar communities, Wilton Public Schools could free approximately \$410,000.

5b. Occupational Therapists

Much like speech pathologists, occupational therapists provide very important services to students with disabilities, and also have other responsibilities.

Occupational Therapist Direct Service



- The average occupational therapist spends 48% of their time with students.

Physical Therapists Potential Savings (Pages 28 & 29)

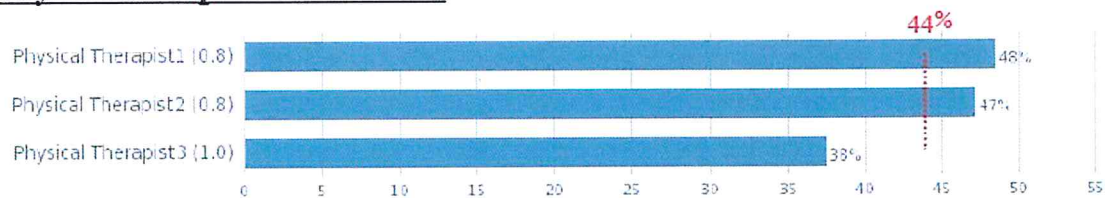
Physical Therapists only spend 44% of their time in direct service to students. While no number of FTE potential savings is mentioned in the DMC report, the mentioned **potential dollar savings is \$168,000 per year.**

- By adjusting physical therapist staffing levels to those of similar communities, Wilton Public Schools could repurpose approximately \$168,000.

5c. Physical Therapists

Physical therapists have quite similar schedules to those of occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists. The 2.6 FTE of physical therapists in the district provide an average of 44% direct service to students, with practitioners ranging from below 38% to 48%.

Physical Therapist Direct Service



- The average physical therapist spends 44% of their time with students.

Potential Savings for Special Education Teachers (Page 31)

The section on potential time and cost savings for Recommendation #6 does not have any total FTE or total annual potential savings from the streamlining of SPED teachers. So, without metrics, one can only speculate the potential savings of SPED teachers as a whole.

Special Education Teacher Activities

Activity	% Time Spent
Student instruction or support	42%
Total Direct Service	42%
IEP writing / Paperwork	14%
Planning / materials preparation	8%
Attend meeting (PPT)	5%
Attend meeting (other than PPT)	5%
Personal lunch	4%
Collaboration with colleagues	4%
Parent communication	3%
IEP testing / assessment	3%
Assigned school duties (i.e. bus duty, lunch duty, etc.)	2%
Conducting or scoring academic assessments	2%
Professional development	1%
Creating / Monitoring academic initiatives	0%
Student observation	0%
Travel	0%
Under/over reported	7%
Total Indirect Service	58%

- On average, special education teachers spend 42% of their time directly supporting students.
- 14% of the work week is dedicated to IEP writing and paperwork.
- 10% of their week is spent in meetings.

It is possible to calculate the potential savings per SPED FTE . Assuming the SPED teacher spends 42% of their time directly working with students today and the expected amount is 75% of their time with students, then the potential savings per SPED teacher is (75% less 42% =)33% potential improvement @ \$122,000 per SPED Teacher, or a potential annual savings per SPED teacher of \$40,260 rounded down to **annual cost savings of \$40,000 per SPED Teacher** .

If this potential savings only applies to 10 SPED Teachers, the potential annual savings would be \$400,000. If it applies to 20 SPED Teachers, the potential annual savings would be \$800,000.

Since there are probably many SPED Teachers that this might apply to, the potential savings could be substantial but, without knowing the exact number of SPED Teacher FTE, it is impossible to calculate the potential savings.

TOTAL POTENTIAL ANNUAL SAVINGS

Kindergarten Paraprofessionals	\$ 371,000
Psychologists	\$ 683,200
Social Workers	\$ 195,200
Counselors	\$ 512,400
Speech Pathologists	\$517,000-\$817,000
Occupational Therapists	\$ 410,000
Physical Therapists	\$ 168,000
Potential Annual Savings	\$ 2,856,800 -\$ 3,156,800
Add: SPED Teachers	\$40,000/teacher