

# TPS SUPERINTENDENT BULLETIN



*Where Excellence Is Achieved Through Each Individual's Success*



*Equity  
over  
Equality*



*Stimulate and Support  
over  
Rank and Sort*



*Transformative Practice  
over  
Tradition*

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Here for you 860-335-2455

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**SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

**JUNE 20, 2018 - 7:30 PM – Hicks Building, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Council Chambers**

**[CLICK HERE](#) TO SEE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MEETING**

**UPDATE FOR June 18, 2018**

**JUMP TO SCHOOL UPDATES:**

Please **CLICK BELOW** to get the **DIGITAL BACKPACK** information for the listed school:

[BG](#)

[TIS](#)

[TMS](#)

[THS](#)

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<a href="#"><u>Superintendent's Weekly Message/Feature</u></a>	This is the weekly message from the Superintendent. It is usually around some topic related to education and/or the school system.
<a href="#"><u>TPSTV! Tolland Public Schools TV!</u></a>	This section has videos about the great things happening in the Tolland Public Schools!
<a href="#"><u>Breakfast with the Superintendent Dates/Times/Information</u></a>	This section provides information about the upcoming Superintendent's Breakfast. These are open meetings with no agenda in which the public is invited to come ask questions, and engage in conversation, about educationally relevant topics.
<a href="#"><u>Budget Blurb &amp; Budget Information</u></a>	This section provides links and information with regard to the budget of the Tolland Public Schools.
<a href="#"><u>Community Learning Workshops</u></a>	This second provides information about upcoming workshops for the community.
<a href="#"><u>How to Contact the Superintendent</u></a>	This section provides information on the ways to communicate with the Superintendent based on urgency/level of importance.
<a href="#"><u>Job Postings</u></a>	This is a listing of jobs available at this time for the district.
<a href="#"><u>Links</u></a>	These are links provided from community members as well as links that may provide meaningful information.
<a href="#"><u>Mastery Learning</u></a>	This section has a brief synopsis of the Mastery Learning philosophy and plan for the district.
<a href="#"><u>Power School and Unified Classroom</u></a>	This section provides information to guardians and parents about how to access important resources for reviewing their child's grading, scheduling, attendance, and other information.
<a href="#"><u>Social Media Connections and Links</u></a>	This section provides information on the district social media sites.
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*Superintendent Weekly Message*


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**SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**JUNE 20, 2018 - 7:30 PM – Hicks Building, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Council Chambers**

Please consider coming to this important budget meeting. During the evening of June 20<sup>th</sup> the Board of Education continues its discussion from the June 13, 2018 meeting with regard to end of year reconciliation and budget balance. Annually the BOE has a discussion about how to allocate any remaining funds. Please note that the past year and a half (or more) have been very different budget wise as the State budget crisis complicated the situation. While more information will be available at the meeting, please see the information below for a basic synopsis.

Tolland Delayed Referendum – April 11, 2017	The Town Council in an April 11, 2017 meeting resolved to delay a budget referendum.
Summer 2017	End of School Year and Summer 2017 – Not having knowledge of what the final budget situation would be, certified and non-certified staff were subject to a reduction in force. The reductions were made <u>prior to the beginning of the school year</u> and other non-personnel areas of the budget were “frozen” with expenditures requiring central office authorization. Examples of positions reduced included Assistant Principal at the High School, Director of Curriculum, teachers (e.g. eighth grade LA teachers), secretaries, and support staff.
Town Council Special Meeting – September 26, 2017	<b>One month after the start of school, and three months into the fiscal year</b> , the Town Council authorized a ballot for an October 30, 2017 budget referendum that provided for \$38,340,608 for the Board of Education budget. Overall the entire budget increase for the Town was about 2.51%.
Board of Education Meeting – October 30, 2017	The Board of Education in a Special meeting discussed a prioritized list of needed staff and staff position restoration.
State Budget Passage - October 31, 2017	<b>Two months after the start of school, and four months into the fiscal year</b> , the State legislature approves a much more favorable budget. As a result, local elected officials encourage the rejection of the October 30 referendum, and a new budget and referendum are introduced in a Special Meeting of the Town Council (11-1-2017) setting a new referendum for November 14, 2017.
Town Referendum - November 14, 2017	<b>Three months after the start of school, and roughly five months into the fiscal year</b> , Tolland passes a

	budget at referendum that <i>“keeps the expenditure level of the BOE the same as the prior fiscal year...”</i> This brought the education budget back to \$39,333,948.
Governor Malloy Announces what become deemed “holdbacks” to cover for lapses in the State budget - November 17, 2018	Concerns about these holdbacks stretched into June as in the June 12 <sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting Mr. Werbner <i>“provided an update on the hold-back funds. There is a question regarding getting reimbursed, which is being looked into. He will keep the Council Posted.”</i> I confirmed with Mr. Werbner this was with respect to the Educational Cost Sharing grants of \$870,000.
November – December*: A State budget discussion was taking place, and given the potentially devastating “holdbacks” from Governor Malloy, municipalities sought options, including reducing school system budgets so long as the reduction <i>“shall not exceed the amount of the decrease in equalization aid grants made to the municipality.”</i>	Municipalities typically limited in doing so by 10-262h would be allowed adjust budgets by roughly the amount of the holdback. This meant there was <i>uncertainty</i> with respect to the funds. The state did finally take action to allow municipalities this option but as noted in the February 13, 2018 minutes of the Town Council, <u>this allowance did not include Tolland. This was because to be eligible to do so a Town would have had to adopt the Town budget “prior to the adoption of the state budget.”</u> In addition, it was still unclear how the holdbacks would affect budgets, and <i>which</i> grants could be reduced, curtailed, or changed could make a big difference. For instance the reimbursement rate for special education is never provided at the level that is technically supposed to be required. These changes can impact the education budget regardless of decisions made by local elected bodies.
Early December (following Nov 29 Joint Meeting) – to Town Council Meeting of February 13, 2018	<b>– four months after the start of school and more than half-way through the fiscal year</b> , it became clearer what the respective legislative bodies in Tolland had determined and were allowed to do, and what options the State would allow as these were discussed in public session. At that time (February) supplemental tax bills were discussed but a decision was made to wait until <i>“they will know for certain if there are any further adjustments by the State in this fiscal year, whether the State Legislature takes any action to address the holdbacks and whether at the end of the fiscal year there are expenditure savings or revenue increases.”</i> In the related motion of the meeting of that night (February 13, 2018) there <i>remained</i> some fear that State holdbacks would yet impact both the Town and the Education budget: <i>“WHEREAS the holdback will drastically affect the budget of the Town of Tolland as</i>

	<i>well as the budget of the Board of Education;”</i>
April – June, 2018 – Hiring begins	The hiring process consists of an internal posting period, external posting period, initial interview period, performance task/sample lesson period, and a final interview component. The school district has started this process.

**Information and meetings**

Starting with January 1, 2018

BOE Monthly Financial Reports <i>Note: Monthly reports provided in the first BOE meeting of each month contain forty categories with descriptions, ranges, encumbrances, and balances. Aside from the period in which there was not a settled budget these have been in place before and after that time (including dates listed to the right). These include the available balance.</i>	February 14, 2018 March 14, 2018 April 11, 2018 May 9, 2018 June 13, 2018
Town Council Meeting – February 13, 2018	Town Council resolved that “whereas the holdback will drastically affect the budget of the Town of Tolland as well as the budget of the Board of Education” it is resolved that the Town will “wait till the end of the fiscal year to reconcile accounts.”
BOE Meeting – February 14, 2018	Capital items that were not funded were discussed. This meeting followed the Town Council meeting of February 13 <sup>th</sup> described in the previous section. The available budget balance was reported in this meeting to be \$2,765,047. Capital projects that could be addressed through end of year funds were identified and Superintendent Willett stated “ <b>there are a tremendous number of preventative projects that can take up available dollars.</b> ”
Town Council Special Meeting – Annual Budget Presentation – April 23, 2018	<i>“April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 - Dr. Willett spoke. He said they are currently at \$2.3m. They usually do have an unencumbered balance at this point. This year some factors were different, such as the budget not being approved until November 2017. That has put the District behind in the allocation process. The budget was frozen a number of times to be conservative...There are a number of factors as to why it is at \$2.3m now. He expects there will be an adjustment at some point.”</i>
BOE Finance and Facilities Meeting – May 7, 2018	End of year balanced discussed and minutes stated “the BOE budget may have a sizeable unspent balance at the end of the fiscal year.”

**A FEW KEY POINTS WITH REGARD TO EOY BALANCE**

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**The Budget Conundrum**

- Budget balance challenge was inevitable with such a late passage of the budget in Tolland (November 14, 2018) and subsequent discussions and concerns (holdbacks).
- If the budget had not been restored to a \$39,333,948 and had instead been in the range of \$38M, this could have resulted in a lower starting point for the 2018-2019 budget and impact staffing. What was decided for the 2017-2018 budget greatly impacted the process for 2018-2019. A decision made for one year in this case was inexorably tied to the other.
- In light of this, in February unfunded *capital* projects were presented to the BOE that needed attention (February 14, 2018 BOE meeting: G5) in the financial report “there are a tremendous number of preventative projects that can take up” available dollars. The Finance and Facilities committee had reported there would be a “sizable year-end balance” and at least four months of spreadsheets provided to the public and BOE showed it. Every year at the end of the year there is a review of end of year projects and funds.
- What occurred this year was a scenario created by the late approval of the budget, uncertainty with regard to the impact of the holdbacks, and ultimately a *responsible* approach to spending and protecting a reasonable budget for 2018-2019 that provides for the necessary staff and programs. The available balance was the result of having less time to execute actions than was necessary (losing more than half of the fiscal year), conservative “freezes” and protection of the Town’s and School’s assets in light of the possible holdbacks, and what would *inevitably* be a higher end of year balance when staffing impacts would not truly be seen in the budget until 2018-2019.
- The hiring process takes months and is typically comprised of an internal posting period, external posting period, initial interview period, performance task/sample lesson interview period, and a final interview. Given the situation came to some local resolution around February this would put the school district in April/May/June for postings and interviews - which is exactly what is happening.
- The conundrum was that if a budget was sought that can fulfill the resources and staffing needed, it would have to be built off of the \$39,333,948 figure for 2017-2018. The risk in doing so during this tumultuous budget year was that by the time hiring became executable, funds would likely be remaining in the 2017-2018 year. These funds will be needed for the staffing costs of the hires for 2018-2019 budget as it was built off of the 0% increase 2017-2018 number (\$39,333,948). Hiring has already begun.

It is not unusual to have some end of year funds if one is approaching the budget responsibly – if an opportunity to pay less for something arises, or circumstances change, a responsible person attempt to save funds if possible. This end of year resolution process is only different from previous years in that the amount remaining is higher for the reasons illustrated.

**SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

**JUNE 20, 2018 - 7:30 PM – Hicks Building, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Council Chambers**

**PLEASE JOIN US – DECISIONS MADE TONIGHT COULD EFFECT THE TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR MANY YEARS TO COME**

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IMPORTANT



Asbestos Abatement Notification  
- [Click Here](#)

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2017-2018 CALENDAR CHANGES



- **The last day of school is June 22, 2018 and is an early release.**
  - July 11 and August 8 Board of Education meetings cancelled.
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**A NOTE FROM FOOD SERVICE**



sandwiches • salads • fruits • milk

**Free Summer Meals!**  
**Comidas de Verano Gratis!**

**Kids and teens 18 and under**  
**Niños y adolescentes de 18 años y menos**

**EHC!** **NOKID HUNGRY** **CSDE**  
EAT HEALTHY CONNECTICUT SHARE OUR RESOURCES CONNECTICUT  
Helping Kids Eat Right Making Our State Healthier Making a Difference

FOR SITES NEAR YOU, CALL/LLAME **211**  
TEXT **CTmeals** TO **877877**  
**www.CTSummerMeals.org**

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

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*Tolland Public Schools TV!*

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<http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=891651&pageId=42643379>

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*BREAKFAST WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT*

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**All done for 2017-2018. Thank you for attending, and see you next year!**

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*BUDGET BLURB*

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**BUDGET INFO ON THE WEB:**



[http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/board\\_of\\_education/budget](http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/board_of_education/budget)

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*HOW TO CONTACT THE SUPERINTENDENT:*

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Please take a look at the link below for some of the best ways to get an answer, meeting, or something else:

[http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/DistrictOffices/superintendent\\_s\\_corner/superintendent\\_wille\\_tts\\_page/c o n t a c t m e/](http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/DistrictOffices/superintendent_s_corner/superintendent_wille_tts_page/c o n t a c t m e/)

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*Job Postings*

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**Job Openings**

**We are seeking a BCBA and a Behavioral Intervention Specialist at Tolland Middle Schools**

**For more information and to apply visit our website at**

**[www.tolland.k12.ct.us](http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us)**

**District Offices/Human Resources/Employment Opportunities**

**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

Do you like to see children play? Do you enjoy laughter? Do you like to have fun? The Tolland Family Resource Center is looking to add to its wonderful staff.

We are hiring a **Behavior Assistant** for our summer camp. HS diploma and experience with young children with behavioral challenges required. Experience with de-escalation techniques a must. Training in behavioral and physical management or willingness to be trained is required.

The hourly rate is between \$15.00 - \$20.00 per hour based on experience and training.

We are seeking **Aides for our Before and After School Care Program** at Birch Grove Primary and Tolland Intermediate School from 7:00 -8:30 am and/or 3:15-6:00 pm. The hourly rate of pay is \$10.10. For more information, contact Carol Hiller at (860) 870-6885 or (860) 870-6750

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*Links*

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[Tolland Youth Football & Cheerleading Information](#)

[Tolland Conservation Commission's Town Wide Photo Contest](#)

[Town of Tolland-Single Stream Recycling Information](#)

[Put "Local On Your Tray" direct from the farm!](#)

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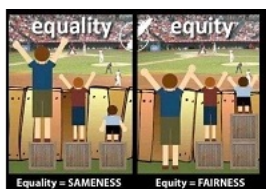
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*Mastery Learning Information*

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The districts core values of providing individualized attention to a student's needs, supporting a student and their family, and providing a transformational experience leading to continual growth are all crucial aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> century education in the literature, and espoused by the State of Connecticut (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2767&q=336508>).

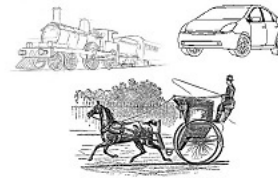
As Tolland competes with magnets and charters, and seeks to draw more students to its own programs and pathways of study, Mastery Learning practices will support those endeavors as it is grounded in contemporary philosophy and research. For an overview of 21<sup>st</sup> century educational philosophy, research, and practice please see the information below:



*Equity*  
over  
*Equality*



*Stimulate and Support*  
over  
*Rank and Sort*



*Transformative Practice*  
over  
*Tradition*

### Equity over Equality

Educational professionals that practice mastery learning recognize that different students have different needs. This necessitates providing each learner with what is uniquely required for that person's success. While equality implies *sameness*, equity implies *fairness*. Equity is about making sure people get access to the same *opportunity*. Advantage, opportunity, and privilege associated with socioeconomic, racial, cultural, or historical factors can impact learning. It is the mission of all educators to do our best to provide each learner with opportunities to succeed that transcend disadvantage.

### Stimulate and Support over Rank and Sort

Educational professionals that practice mastery learning recognize that students do not come to school having experienced the same level of preparation and opportunity. As a result institutional **ranking and sorting** can inadvertently stigmatize, de-motivate, and perpetuate the trajectory the initial limitations on opportunity created. Educators try to help students overcome this, and institutions have to be structured so student success is less reliant on the individual heroics of some educators, and more on *systematic* and consistent *processes and practices* of the institution that provide the greatest opportunities for restorative justice, productive habits, and academic success.

Standardized assessments beyond those used as universal screens (assessments given to all learners for the purpose of providing specialized assistance), or those that can be used to impact instruction (progress monitoring), should be carefully evaluated for their usefulness in the process of educating children. The

objective should always be to benefit the child, and to do no harm. For instance, if poverty correlates significantly with lower state standardized test performance, how many times is it necessary to report to a disadvantaged child and family that they are performing poorly before institutional processes are put in place to address the challenge? In other words, some standardized tests tell us what we already know – and in the process jeopardizes the confidence and self-concept of the learner. Instead, assessment focused on *progress monitoring* over one-shot standardized assessments, provide the most useful and actionable information for improving the performance of all students.

### Transformative Practice over Tradition

Educational professionals that practice mastery learning question current assessment traditions, and seek to transform teaching and assessment with a focus on practices that have the greatest chance of increasing student agency, ownership, reflection, and motivation of students towards their own learning and development. Mastery learning is recognized as a crucial aspect of SRBI (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=322020>) supports, and as such practitioners take into consideration developmental level and cognitive considerations of students when delivering instruction, remediation, and methods of encouraging habit change. It is the process of doing things because they work for students, not simply continuing “traditional” practices because it is what has always been done.

### Areas of *emphasis* for Tolland

1. All forms of assessment are standards-based and criterion-referenced, and success is defined by the achievement of expected standards, not relative measures of performance or student-to-student comparisons.
2. Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process, and formative-assessment results are used to inform instructional adjustments, teaching practices, and academic support.
3. Summative assessments evaluate learning achievement, and summative assessments results record a student’s level of mastery at a specific point in time.
4. Academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance and class participation, which are also monitored and reported.
5. Academic grades communicate learning progress and achievement to students and families, and grades are used to facilitate and improve the learning process.
6. Students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected standards.

### Resources

- [District Mastery Learning Plan](#)



## Some Readings

- Guskey, Thomas: *On Your Mark - Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting*
- Dueck, Myron: *Grading Smarter, Not Harder - Assessment Strategies that Motivate Kids and Help Them Learn*
- Wormelli, Richard: *Fair Isn't Always Equal - Assessing and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*

## Links

- [Center for Collaborative Education](#)
- [The Great Schools Partnership](#)
- [State of Connecticut Resources - Mastery Learning](#)
- [League of Innovative Schools](#)

## K-5 assessment standards



For parents and community members interested in the Tolland Public School  
K-5 assessment standards, please see the:  
[Standards-Based Assessment Information Guide](#)

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**POWERSCHOOL UNIFIED CLASSROOM**  
**Expanding information opportunities for parents and students!**



Dear Parents and Students,

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, we upgraded the parent and student portal access to the new Unified Classroom. If you access your student's information with the mobile app, there are NO changes. If you use a desktop/laptop, then you will need to create your new Unified Classroom account. (If you have never created an account, please contact us, and we will be happy to help you. (860-870-6818 x10804)

**Parents**

If you already have an account follow the steps below.

<https://tollandschools.powerschool.com/public/home.html>

1. Click on Parent Sign In
2. Create PowerSchool ID
3. Enter your current login information
4. Next
5. Continue
6. Enter your email (which will now be your username)
7. Create a password
8. Click create

Below is a quick video that demonstrates how to set up your account/move to the new Unified Classroom dashboard. Watch Part 2 of the video if you already have a PowerSchool account.

<https://vimeo.com/227826452/6c02bab055>

**Students**

<https://tollandschools.powerschool.com/public/home.html>

1. Click student sign in
2. Click 'Forgot password' option, enter in your school email (ex. [JohnDoe54321@tolland.k12.ct.us](mailto:JohnDoe54321@tolland.k12.ct.us)) and send request. Go to your school email – there will be a link to click in the email that will send you to a reset password page.

Please feel free to contact the Educational Technology office with any log in issues or questions.  
(860) 870-6818 x10804

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*Social Media Connections and Links*

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**CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK:**



[www.facebook.com/tollandpublicschools](http://www.facebook.com/tollandpublicschools)

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**FOLLOW SUPERINTENDENT WILLETT ON TWITTER:**



Search for:

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Or

[Superint. Willett](#)

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*Volunteer Information*

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## **VOLUNTEERING**



We would love to have you come and volunteer at the Tolland Public Schools!

Thank you for all you do for the Tolland Public Schools. Please contact the Central Office with any questions. For those already volunteering, and those new to the game, the BOE will now do background checks every three school years. If you will be volunteering for the first time in the upcoming school year, please complete the [online form under Quick Links](#). After you have submitted your application, please call 860-870-6850 extension 1 to provide your social security number. You can check with the school secretaries to verify your status.

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*Other Information*

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