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## **School District Officials 'Predict' Increased Spending, Slight Enrollment Declines in Next 5 Years**

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Five years from now, in the 2021-2022 school year, there will be 21 fewer students in Darien Public Schools and the school district budget will have increased by just over 20 percent.

That's according to a planning document presented to the Board of Education and up for discussion at Tuesday night's regular board meeting. The meeting is expected to be broadcast later (not live) by Darien TV79.

The document isn't a hard prediction, but a tool for planning purposes, as Michael Feeney, director of finance and operations, pointed out in a Nov. 20 memorandum.

### **Enrollment**

Here are the enrollment projections, which don't include substantial overall increases, despite the planned

construction of new housing developments in town. (Those developments in downtown Darien and downtown Noroton Heights are meant to appeal to adults without children.)

All enrollment figures for this school year are as of Oct. 1:

- **District-wide enrollment:** 4,781 (2017-2018) — 4,760 (2022-2023) — ***DOWN 21***
- **Darien High School:** 1,378 (17-18 school year), 1,364 (22-23 school year) — ***DOWN 14***
- **Middlesex Middle School:** 1,123 (17-18 school year), 1,088 (22-23 school year) — ***DOWN 35***
- **Elementary Schools** (including Early Learning Program children): 2,280 (17-18 school year), 2,308 (22-23 school year) — ***UP 28***

#### Spending

District spending: \$99,796,858 (2017-2018 fiscal year); \$120,366,329 (2022-2023 fiscal year)

District revenue: \$3,924,082 (17-18 fiscal year); \$4,244,667 (22-23 fiscal year)

Net budget to be submitted to town officials: \$95,874,766: \$115,921,662 (22-23 fiscal year)

#### **Feeney's Caveat**

It's a document based on information known to district officials as of this month and the forecast can be expected to change, Feeney said in the memorandum:

The reader should remember that a forecast is somewhat of a painting of the future, which is based on a snap shot of today that has been adjusted to reflect all known activities of the future along with certain assumptions and predictions of what may happen.

In other words, it is a living document that becomes outdated once any additional information has come to light, which may introduce new known events or changes in assumptions for the future. As such, the five-year forecast is a good planning tool at best and will change periodically as updated information becomes available.