

**Syracuse City School District 2017-18 Proposed Budget
Question & Answer
February 27 and March 2, 2017 Public Hearings**

Welcome to the Syracuse City School District 2017-18 Budget online Question & Answer site. We appreciate the community's passionate support for education of the students of the Syracuse City School District.

Charter Schools

Question / Comment: **Concern about how students are enrolled in Charter Schools.**

Answer: The New York State Board of Regents approves the establishment and continued operation of Charter Schools state-wide. There are currently two charter schools in Syracuse – The Syracuse Academy of Science and Southside Academy. In September two new charters have been approved by the Board of Regents to open in Syracuse – a new Syracuse Academy of Science & Citizenship and OnTech High School.

Charter Schools are public schools and therefore are funded by a per pupil tuition rate based on the student's home school district per pupil operating expense. Charter Schools bill the district of residence for students attending charter schools at that district's per pupil tuition rate. Charter schools are also eligible for federal funds that are available to traditional public schools, such as IDEA and Title funds.

The budget for Charter School Tuition that the District will pay to Charter Schools in 2017-18 is estimated at \$26 million dollars – an increase of \$6 million over the current cost (page 17 of the Superintendent's 2017-18 Proposed Budget document). This includes estimated enrollment of students who reside in the City of Syracuse at the four Charter Schools.

There is a proposal in the Governor's budget that would also increase the charter school tuition rate by \$800 per student which could add another \$1.6 million dollars of expense. If this increase is approved by the Senate & Assembly, the additional cost will be included in the District's final adopted 2017-18 budget.

Transportation

Question / Comment: **Clarify amounts noted as Transportation on Page 15 as compared to Page 17**

Question / Comment: **The Transportation Committee recommended additional busing for Pre-K through 12th grade at one mile, why does the proposed budget only include additional busing for students in grades K through 8?**

Question / Comment: **Transporting over 15,000 of 21,000 students in an urban city seems high. With implementation of neighborhood schools fewer students would require transportation.**

Answer: The report on Page 15 is a summary by Department of the 2017-18 Proposed Budget as compared to the current year budget and last year's audited final expenditures. The details supporting the \$2.7 million dollar expenditure are noted on page 33 and include the personnel who work in the Transportation Department.

The report on Page 17 is a summary by object, or category of expense for the same time frame. The amount noted on Page 17 for Transportation Contracts of \$20.8 million is for First Student yellow bus contracts. The amount noted for Centro Student Transportation of \$2.5 million is for high school transportation.

The proposed budget includes \$4.6 million of an increase to the First Student Contracts for transporting K-8 students who live one mile or more from school subject to the state legislature approving a bill to pilot this program and a budget appropriation to fund the added cost. The District has been advised that the chances of getting a bill passed are better as a pilot and for the earlier grade levels first. If successful the District can go back and ask to phase-in high schools in the future.

Advertising

Question / Comment: **Please clarify the \$212,286 for advertising on page 17.**

Answer: Advertising is primarily for two purposes in the school district. The first is to advertise for open positions in the district and for recruiting new hires. This includes items such as posting our vacancies in various educational publications and newspapers as well as placing recruiting advertisements at teaching universities.

The second purpose is for advertising bids and requests for proposals (RFP's). In compliance with general municipal law we advertise bids and RFP's to notify businesses that we are seeking goods and services and we invite them to provide a pricing proposal.

There is an increase over the current year by \$31,600 because the current year budget included some of the recruitment advertising in a contract line so the funds are being reclassified for 2017-18 to the appropriate line.

Below is a link to the District website 2017-18 Proposed Budget.

<http://www.syracusecityschools.com/districtpage.cfm?pageid=7928>