

**Montclair Public Schools  
Budget Proposal 2014-15  
Frequently Asked Questions 1.0**

1. Is this calendar of budget meetings different from previous years?

No, the number and type of budget meetings this year are exactly the same as the number and type of budget meetings last year.

2. Is the number and cost of Central Services staffing greater than the number and salary costs in 2011-12?

The number of Central Services staff has increased by two positions since 2011-12. The additional positions include: the Supervisor of Professional Development and a secretarial position for the new Director of Technology. The Supervisor of Professional Development is needed to support school-level and on-going professional development required by the new teacher evaluation process. The secretary in technology will allow us to better organize and therefore meet the technology needs of the eleven schools we serve.

In addition, the four core content leads in academics spend 50% of their time at MHS supporting each core subject department and completing observations with the high school leadership team. All academic and talent central service staff complete observations and regularly support our school staff.

The cost of Central Service professional staff has actually decreased since 2011-12.

3. Are we prepared to fund the technology needs to administer the new PARCC assessments next year?

Yes. As you heard in tonight's presentation, most of the funding for the district-wide technology improvements in 2014-2015 will come from capital, not operational, funds. We have approximately \$500k earmarked in a bond ordinance and another \$500k earmarked from Capital Reserves. In addition there is \$200k in the operating budget for technology costs other than salaries. We believe about half of this will fund the increased internet speed and increased Wi-Fi coverage while the other portion will be used to update the operating systems and devices we have in our schools.

4. Will this budget deliver on promised facility upgrades at MHS for 2014-15?

Yes, we will be able to fund several significant upgrades as identified by the facilities survey many of our students, teachers and parents completed. We will use grant funds applied for and received from the New Jersey School Development Authority to repair the amphitheater bridges, upgrade barrier-free ramps and entryways, upgrade heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment and renovate the men's and women's bathrooms near the cafeteria. In addition, we are designating \$150,000 to fund enhancements to the cafeteria including ceiling and floor renovations, painting, the creation of charging stations for wireless devices and new furniture to support multiple uses of the space.

5. Was \$490,000 dollars spent on common assessments?

No. The district allocated \$490,000 to compensate our teachers for the development of curriculum, which included four common assessments for sixty-nine courses. This means a little less than \$8,000 was allocated for curriculum that covered a full-year school course/subject. Each curriculum document included the new Common Core State Standards prioritized and divided into units of study with defined learning objectives, essential questions and a set of four common assessments. These documents were designed to help all of our teachers better understand the requirements of the new standards by clearly articulating learning targets and included assessments to help teachers understand the increased requirements for problem solving and critical thinking.

6. Is the district spending large sums of money to re-write the assessments?

No. Based on the feedback we heard from our teachers, we have been holding professional development sessions to make informed adjustments to our curriculum unit learning objectives, the order of those learning objectives and the assessment questions for unit three. Our teachers have expressed great appreciation for these sessions that demonstrate our respect for their concerns and their ideas for improvement.

The cost of these sessions is approximately \$85.00 per teacher which is the cost for a substitute for one day.

7. Has the district been spending more money on consultants in the last few years?

Consultants are used by a variety of departments in our system. The chart below helps to illustrate the fluctuation of these costs by department.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Pupil Services	416,736.66	549,594.87	1,153,727.43	990,500.00	1,230,500.00
Academics	34,811.60	216,245.01	284,778.40	152,000.00	109,700.00
Facilities & Equipment Repairs	1,326,074.92	1,572,765.51	1,435,540.70	1,143,029.00	1,102,188.00
Attorney	138,272.19	166,773.88	345,330.69	200,000.00	220,000.00
Architect & Auditor	70,580.00	120,755.00	188,548.00	60,000.00	95,000.00
Technology Repairs	128,117.45	141,082.15	153,778.71	132,000.00	132,000.00
Transportation	63,607.45	74,343.01	64,812.85	62,646.00	69,391.00
Cops in School	102,517.80	101,608.07	102,184.05	108,612.00	111,870.00
Talent Development Dept	-	1,500.00	4,010.00	16,500.00	17,000.00
Guidance Support	68.00	1,457.56	7,996.00	3,200.00	3,200.00
District Management Council		125,000.00			
Commencement Program	12,711.09	13,413.99	20,506.98	22,500.00	22,964.00
Athletics	13,892.75	18,114.30	26,098.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
Adult School	316,761.18	363,440.21	340,649.19	350,751.00	350,751.00
Total	<u>2,624,151.09</u>	<u>3,466,093.56</u>	<u>4,127,961.00</u>	<u>3,256,738.00</u>	<u>3,479,564.00</u>
Change		841,942.47	661,867.44	(871,223.00)	222,826.00

Who are the consultants hired this year, 2013-2014, by the Superintendent, Academic, Business and Talent offices?

Please see the chart below.

#### 2013-14 Consultant Services

Consultant	Services Description	Amount
<b>Big Picture Learning</b>	Professional Services - MHS	\$ 37,700.00
<b>Montclair Historical Society</b>	Professional/Education Services	\$ 1,260.00
<b>Michael K. Marshall</b>	Professional/Education Services	\$ 400.00
<b>Arlene O'Connell</b>	Professional Services - School Level	\$ 400.00
<b>Educational Data Services</b>	Other Professional/Technical Services	\$ 13,280.00
<b>Communications</b>	Other Professional/Technical Services	\$ 15,000.00
<b>Skyward, Inc</b>	Technical Services/Data Processing Services	\$ 15,912.55
<b>KEF Performing Arts Consultants</b>	Other Professional/Technical Services	\$ 7,200.00
<b>Nisivoccia, LLP</b>	Other Professional/Technical Services	\$ 62,500.00
<b>TV34 - BOE Taping</b>	Other Professional/Technical Services	\$ 400.00
<b>Summit Management Solutions</b>	Other Professional/Technical Services	\$ 82,430.00
<b>Filebank, Inc.</b>	Technical Services/Data Processing Services	\$ 10,000.00
<b>Organyk Consulting - Website programming</b>	Technical Services/Data Processing Services	\$ 1,550.00
<b>Edu-Met Interactive Systems</b>	Data Processing Services	\$ 51,015.00
<b>IBIS Network-website administration</b>	Data Processing Services	\$ 35,940.00
<b>Marinus Partners, LLC.</b>	Technical Services	\$ 72,500.00
<b>NJSBA</b>	Technical Services/Data Processing Services	\$ 2,500.00
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 409,987.55</b>

8. Have the Dean positions at the schools been eliminated?

No, the Dean positions have been moved to a different budget line in the 2014-2015 budget proposal.

9. Are Aides being reduced?

All of our MEA contracted aides will have positions next year.

Due to the inherent fluctuation of district needs for paraprofessional support, all paraprofessional positions required during this school year were filled with long-term substitutes. Therefore, the elimination of the building resource aide positions (2.5 positions) or any realized staffing efficiencies will not result in a decrease in our current number of contracted paraprofessionals.

10. Does Montclair purchase fewer textbooks than most or all Essex County K-12 school systems?

No. In 2011 the district spent more on textbooks than just two other K-12 school districts but in 2012 we spent more than six other districts and more than seven in 2013 of the twelve, K-12 school districts in Essex County.

11. Has the average class size changed significantly in the last five years?

No. The average class size has been between 24 and 25 students over the past five years.

12. Does the proposed budget significantly increase staff devoted to technology services?

No. In 2011-12 we had 4.5 positions in the technology department and we propose 5.5 for 2014-15. The additional position is a secretary for the new Director of Technology. In addition, we increased the salary for the Director but have decreased the salary for the network administrator position which is currently vacant.

13. We have heard that the MEA contract included increases in salary at 2.85%, 2.7% and 2.5% but what was "given back" in negotiations for those increases?

The MEA agreed to two more additional professional development days and agreed to an increase in the PPO co-pay from \$20 to \$30 (emer. room from \$35 to \$100); POS co-pay from \$10 to \$25 (emer. Room from \$35 to \$100).

In addition, as of June 28, 2011, the State instituted the requirement that all public employees, dependent on the salary of the employee and the health benefit premium cost for that employee, contribute to their health plan.

Each employee is required to make health benefit contributions the GREATER of 1.5% of their salary OR a percentage of the health benefit premium. The percentage of the health benefit premium depends on whether the employee has single, employee/spouse, parent/child or family coverage and also on that particular employee's salary and which phase in year they are currently in.

14. Will we have a quality K-5 World Language program with the increased number of World Language teachers supported by this budget?

The additional 4.5 World Language teachers will allow our K-5 students to have instruction in World Language two or three times per week.

15. Is the starting teacher salary for Montclair Public School's competitive?

Yes. Montclair's starting salary is above average compared to most of our neighboring districts.