



Regional School District #17

Superintendent's Proposed Budget

2025-2026

(FY26)

February 25, 2025

Regional School District 17

Superintendent Jeffrey Wihbey



Presentation Overview

- Budget Development Priorities
- Core Values, Strategic Operating Plan Priorities, Vision of a Graduate
- FY26 District Achievements and Accomplishments
- FY26 Budget Drivers, Priorities, and Summary
- Budget History
- Next Steps



Budget Development Priorities

The FY26 Proposed Budget represents what is needed to realize the RSD17 Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) whereby all students and staff receive what they need within an environment and system that is built for them to achieve academic, social, and emotional success.

Annual Priorities



1. Capital Improvements of our Elementary Schools of Distinction
2. Health and Safety Enhancements
3. Continuous Improvement of Student Success through our service delivery model
4. Providing relief to the towns of Haddam and Killingworth following generational inflationary pressures



Our Core Values

- Public education is a right
- Every student has potential
- **Quality teaching is essential to learning**
- **Student success is a shared responsibility**
- Alignment and teamwork are powerful
- Critical thinkers make informed decisions
- **School is a safe place**
- Sustainability secures our future

Strategic Priorities

Our four strategic priorities were identified as a result of an extensive year-long process of gathering stakeholder feedback through focus groups, surveys and 1:1 meetings.

- 1. Student Learning & Well-Being**
- 2. Educator & Leadership Development and Capacity**
- 3. Operational Efficiency**
- 4. Enhance District Infrastructure**

Regional School District 17 Vision of the Graduate

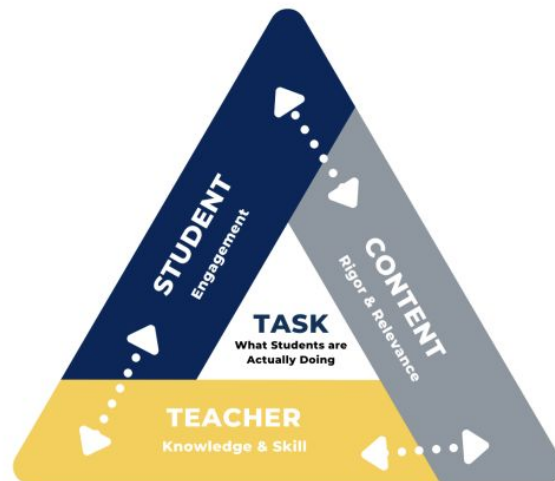


A graduate of the RSD17 School District is a compassionate critical thinker, who collaborates to solve problems, and is prepared to contribute to improving our world.



Regional School District #17 Instructional Vision

RSD17 provides all students with a high-quality education that prepares them for college, career, and citizenship. To achieve this mission, we ensure that every classroom is a place where students are engaged in rigorous and relevant learning tasks, supported by effective and caring teachers, and challenged to meet high expectations. This is our vision of instruction, and it is based on the instructional core framework that emphasizes the interrelatedness of the teacher, the student, and the curriculum around a task. In this document, we describe our instructional vision in detail, and how it aligns with our district goals, standards, and initiatives. Our work in developing this vision incorporated elements of our VoG, SOP, District Values, and Theory of Action, which were created by our teachers and educational leaders. It drives professional reflection, learning, and growth.



Teacher

Teachers create a supportive environment that encourages academic risk-taking and builds positive relationships. Using highly reliable research-based instructional practices aligned to standards, teachers deliver rigorous and relevant instruction. They monitor student understanding, provide timely and constructive feedback, ask a range of questions, facilitate respectful discourse, scaffold, and adjust instruction to optimize student outcomes.

Scaffold: support, adapt, model, guide

Facilitate: lead, assist, accelerate, steer, question, respond, manage

Monitor: analyze data, assess, respond, question, provide feedback, adjust and adapt

Relationships: connect, encourage risk-taking, safe learning environment, provide choice

Student

In RSD17, students plan, question, collaborate, and create to construct meaning within the learning task. Students experiment, take risks, revise their thinking, advocate, and persevere with difficult tasks, exhibiting stamina to deepen their understanding of skills and content. Students take pride in their work and celebrate their own achievements and those of their peers.

Question: notice, wonder, inquire

Plan: goal setting, access information and tools, draft

Advocate: participate, accept feedback, speak up

Collaborate: listen, take turns, contribute, compromise

Create: write, draw, calculate, produce, design, speak

Celebrate: reflect, recognize, compliment

Task

Tasks are rigorous, relevant, engaging and accessible to all students. They provide opportunities for scaffolding, collaboration, and multi-sensory experiences. Open-ended tasks that support choice, risk-taking and inquiry allow students to create, set goals, and self-evaluate.

Relevant: culturally relevant, aligned to standards, relatable, applicable

Accessible: opportunity for all, auditory, kinesthetic, visual, multiple entry points

Rigorous: think critically, build academic stamina, complex, DOK (Depth of Knowledge)

Inquiry: plan, open-ended, investigate, experiment, problem solve, ask questions, evaluate



RSD Value Added



2024-2025 Achievements and Accomplishments

Value added to the HK Community!

Many of the school year 2024-25 accomplishments are directly aligned to the Strategic Operating Plan priorities.



Highlights- Achievements & Accomplishments

01

For a 2nd time in three years, based on achieving in the top 10% of all schools statewide, BES & KES were named as Schools of Distinction by the CT State Dept. of Education

02

HKHS had 17 students receive recognition through all 5 of the College Board's National Recognition Programs totalling 20 awards

03

Both the Boys & Girls Cross Country teams at HKHS won the Class SS State Championship and HK had more All-State Athletes than any other HS in CT

04

HKIS student council demonstrated leadership & compassion by organizing a Thanksgiving Food Drive that helped about 100 families

05

For the third year in a row, RSD17 was able to make a maximum contribution of 2% to the non-lapsing account, accruing a total of \$2.6 million

06

For 2 consecutive years, the HKHS Accountability Index has grown

07

RSD17 significantly decreased student chronic absenteeism to state-leading levels

08

For the third year in a row, RSD17 opened the school year 100% staffed with certified personnel

09

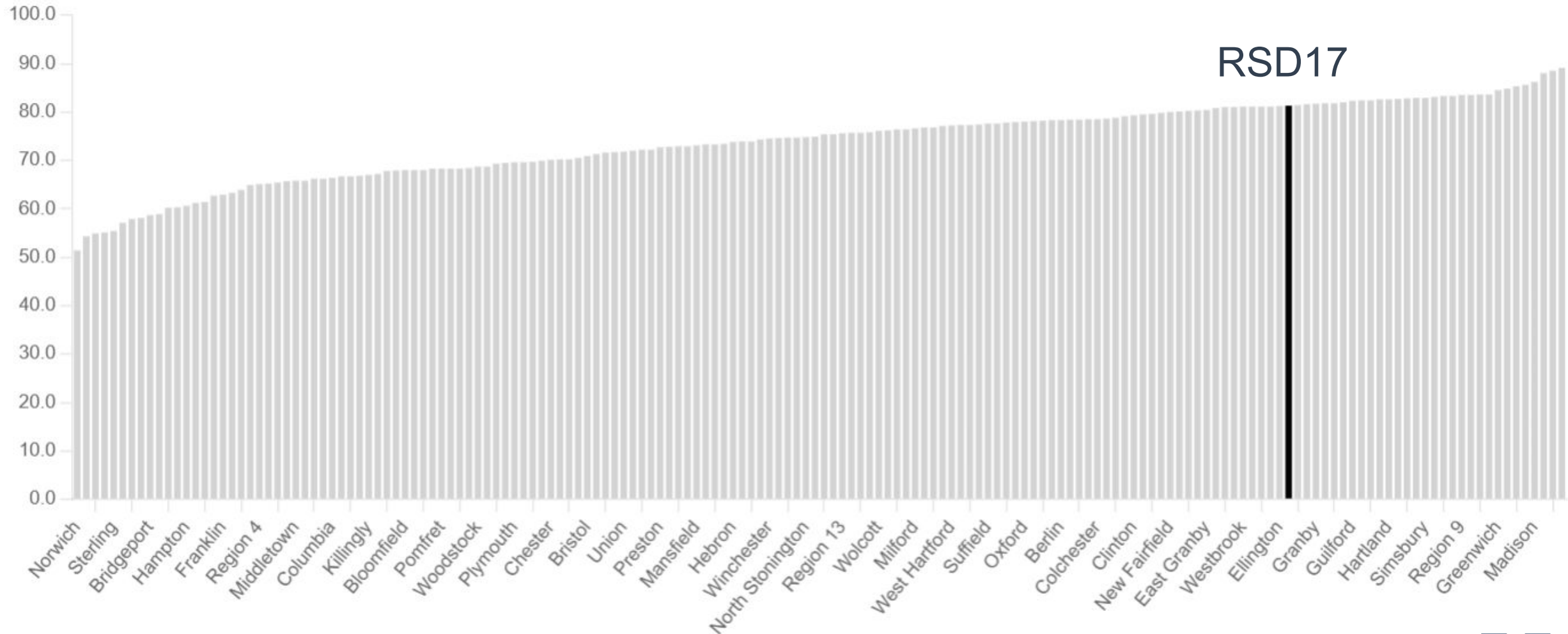
The FY24 external audit was delivered on time with no material weaknesses or adverse findings, and all prior findings were resolved

10

RSD17 was awarded \$21,781 for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Competitive Grant Program

23/24 School Year

Accountability Index: Region 17 vs. All Districts



Rank 31st out of 200
Top 15% in CT



Budget Conditions



RSD17 Annual Enrollment History

FY26 Budget



School Year	Total Students	Haddam Students	Killingworth Students
2020-2021	1852	1123	729
2021-2022	1793	1097	696
2022-2023	1819	1118	701
2023-2024	1772	1069	703
2024-2025	1719	1017	702



Regional Budget Challenges

District	Superintendent Proposed Budget for FY26
Region 4	4.39%
East Lyme	6.99%
Newington	6.98%
Guilford	6.50%
Westbrook	4.61%
Madison	3.03%
Region 13	5.19%
Region 18	7.99%
Windsor Locks	14.98%
Clinton	6.85%
RSD 17	3.70%

Note:

Pandemic-related issues continue, including Inflation and the inability to hire and retain qualified employees.

Increasing annual support to districts is essential in order to avoid a fiscal cliff.

Unfunded Mandates

- ❑ 8 Hours Professional Development (at the expense of instructional time)
- ❑ CT Paid Sick Leave Law
 - Significant implementation and daily monitoring for HR & Finance departments
- ❑ McKinney-Vento transportation
- ❑ DCF Outplacements
- ❑ Homebound Tutoring
- ❑ Title IX
- ❑ State of CT School Climate Policy (Bullying Laws)
- ❑ State of CT Safe School Climate Specialist (Required Position)
- ❑ HVAC Air Quality Assessments & Improvements

School districts and local Boards of Education continue to have to pick up the tab for newly legislated mandates coming from Hartford.

This stretches our capacity and generates newly imposed costs.

FY26 Staffing Priorities



Objective: Determine the required staffing level for the FY26 Budget

- ❑ Achieve the Vision of the Graduate and Strategic Operating Plan goals
- ❑ Maintain programming and offerings
- ❑ Implement program review recommendations
- ❑ Continue the success of our schools





DRG C - SY24

Ratio of Certified Staff to Students

Certified Staff to Students	
Region 12 Shepaug	7.50
Region 8 RHAM	7.60
Bolton	7.78
Region 13 Coginchaug	7.84
Andover Ele.	8.20
Region 4 Valley	8.25
Mansfield Ele. & Mdl	8.34
Region 18 LOL	8.41
Somers	8.45
Region 17	8.72
Region 14 Nonnewaug	8.74
Hebron Ele.	8.93
Suffield	9.07
Canton	9.09
Ellington	9.58
Region 10 Lewis Mills	9.61
Marlborough Ele.	9.82
Oxford	9.86
Tolland	10.17
State of CT	9.56

RSD17

- For every 1 certified staff member there are 8.72 students.
- RSD17 is at the midpoint of DRG C.

FY25 Staffing Adjustments Related to Program Needs & Enrollment



Certified Staff Net Change: +1.4 FTE

New positions

- 1.0 Reading Coach, KES
- 0.4 Math Coach HKIS
- 1.0 Sped/DLP, HKIMS
- 1.0 Math Interventionist HKHS
- .5 Reading Interventionist HKHS
- .5 School Climate HKHS

Reductions

- Attrition

Non-Certified Staff Net Change: +0.5 FTE

New positions

- +0.5 Comptroller
- +1.0 Security, HKMS

FY 25/26 Budget & Historical Information



FY24 (23-24)

Certified Staff: -5.0 FTE

Non-Certified Staff: -9.0 FTE

FY25 (24-25)

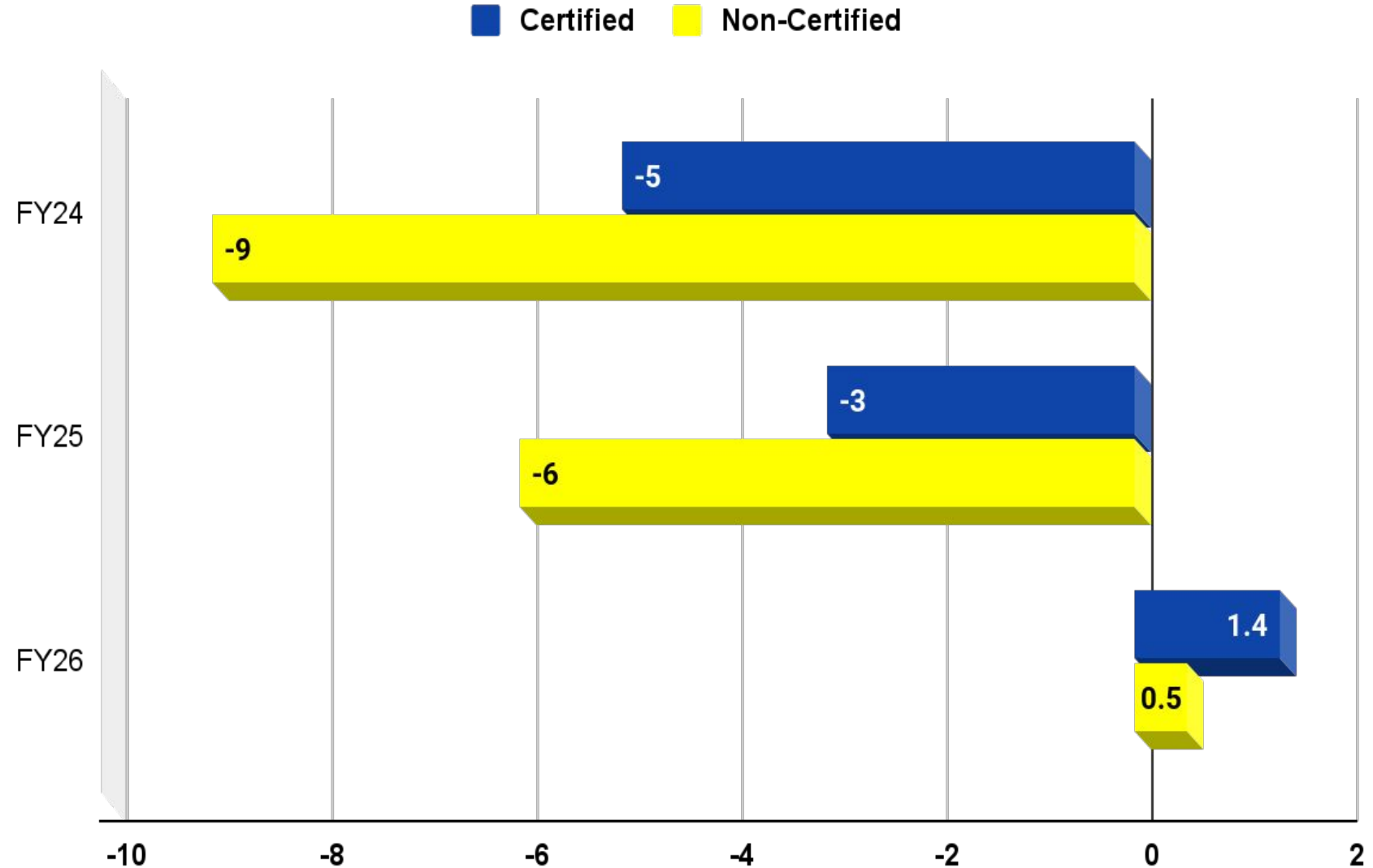
Certified Staff: -3.0 FTE

Non-Certified Staff: -6.0 FTE

FY26 (25-26)

Certified Staff: +1.4 FTE

Non-Certified Staff: +0.5 FTE



Facility Usage



Requests:

- FY23 Requests: 2,579
- FY24 Requests: 2,750
- FY25 Requests: 5,008 (as of 2/20/25)

**Consistent usage of school and athletic facilities by Town residents, youth programs, organizations, agencies, etc.*

Impact on Maintenance & Operations

- Higher wear and tear on facilities
- More frequent repairs required
- increased cost of field management
- Increased workload for custodial and maintenance staff
- Increased demand on electricity, water, HVAC, etc.
- Rising maintenance costs
- Equipment damage and/or replacement

Recouping Minimal Cost

- Minimal reimbursement for custodial costs
 - No charges for electricity, HVAC, pool chemicals, custodial supplies, equipment usage fees, etc.

RSD17 12-Year Net Budget History



Year	Net Budget	% Increase	Consumer Price Index Increase
FY14	\$37,886,402	0.0%	1.6%
FY15	\$39,072,521	3.1%	0.1%
FY16	\$40,367,279	3.3%	1.3%
FY17	\$40,840,279	1.2%	2.3%
FY18	\$41,112,981	0.7%	2.4%
FY19	\$41,492,642	0.9%	1.8%
FY20	\$41,408,053	-0.2%	1.2%
FY21	\$40,773,479	-1.5%	4.7%
FY22	\$41,483,193	1.7%	8.0%
FY23	\$43,850,160	5.7%	4.1%
FY24	\$46,401,124	5.82%	3.5%
FY14-FY24	Change	20.72%	31.00%
FY25	\$48,727,715	4.99%	
FY26	\$50,489,988	3.62%	

Mitigations - Fiscal Responsibility



INITIAL FY26 BUDGET REQUESTS	\$54,777,206
1ST ROUND REDUCTIONS (Initial budget meeting w/ school leadership)	\$798,230
BUDGET TOTAL	\$53,978,976
2ND ROUND REDUCTIONS (Business Office)	\$1,933,687
BUDGET TOTAL	\$52,045,289
3RD ROUND REDUCTIONS (Cabinet-Level)	\$385,000
BUDGET TOTAL	\$51,660,289

Financials



FY26 Budget Drivers

\$38,724,014 or **74.96%**
of FY26 Proposed
Budget

Health Insurance

- 10.52% annual increase
- 16.01% of FY26 Proposed Budget
- Increase in Premiums based on previous FY claims and experience rating

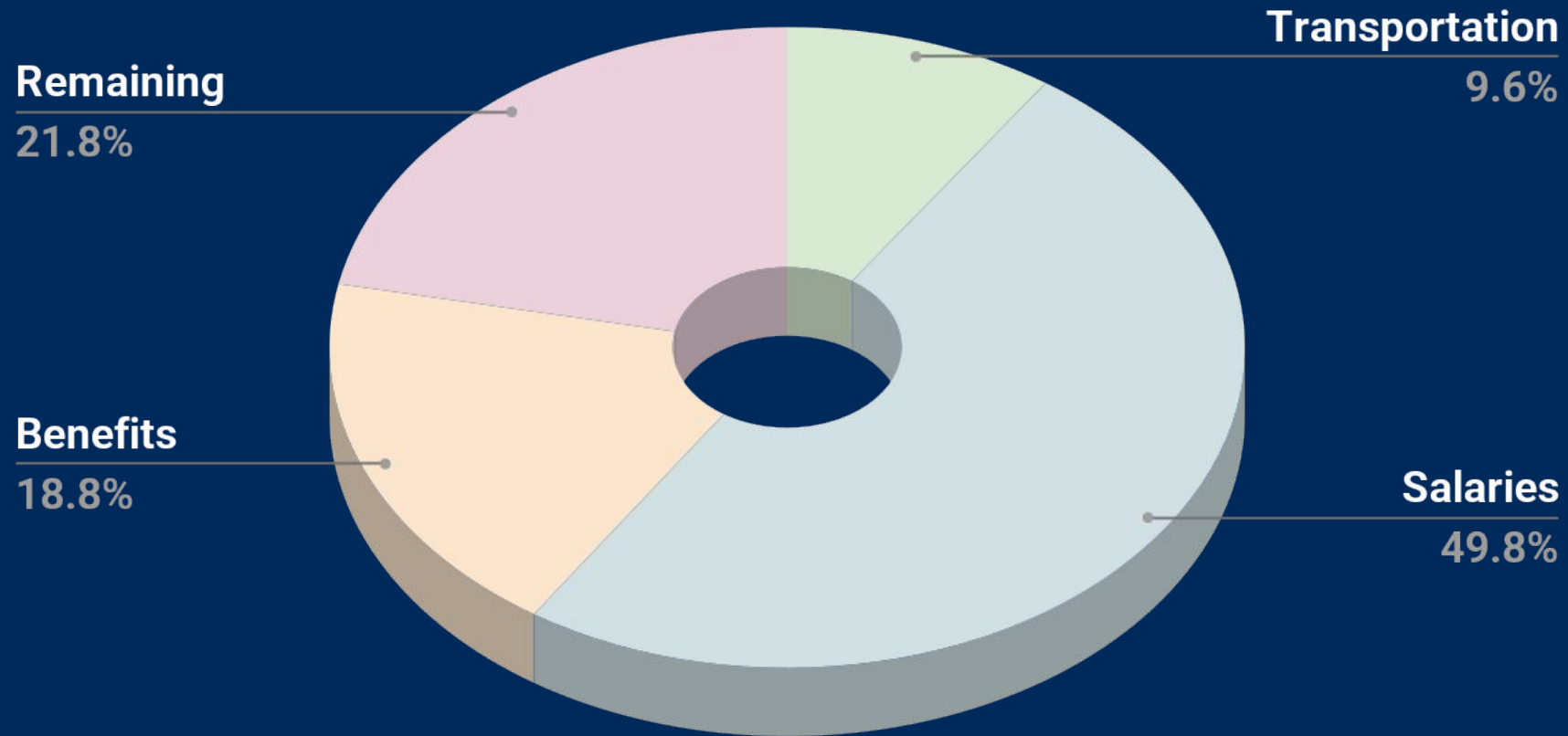
Wages

- 6.53% annual increase (steps and percentage)
- 49.77% of FY26 Proposed Budget
- Contractual obligations to hire and retain qualified educational staff

Transportation

- 10.23% annual increase
- 9.18% of FY26 Proposed Budget
- Contract Year 3 of 3
- 5% increase in FY26, plus additional buses and routes required

FY26 Budget Drivers = 74.77% of FY26 Budget





Budget Summary Expenses

- Aligns with strategic operating priorities
- Ensures fiscal responsibility
- Commitment to transparency and accountability
- Spending aligns with educational and operational needs

FY25 Adopted Budget	\$49,818,029
FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget	\$51,660,289
Variance	\$1,842,260
Change %	3.70%



Budget Summary Revenue

- Non-Assessment Revenue is **not guaranteed** but rather an estimate of anticipated revenue.
- Largest component of Non-Assessment Revenue is SEECG (Special Education Excess Cost Grant), which is paid at **88%** and **underfunded** by the State of Connecticut.
 - State of CT historically funds this grant at ~**67%**

FY25 Adopted Revenue Budget	\$1,254,078
FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget	\$1,170,301
Variance	(\$114,827)
Change %	-8.94%

Budget Summary

Net Budget & Assessments

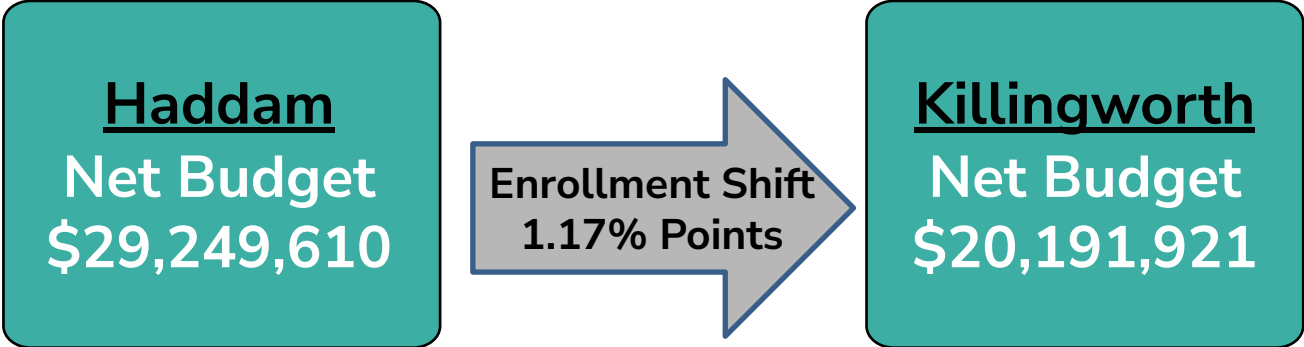
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Variance	\$1,842,260
Change %	3.70%

FY25 Net Assessment Allocation to Towns	\$47,472,444
FY26 Proposed Net Assessment Allocation to Towns less FY24 Fund Balance	\$49,441,531
Variance	\$1,969,087
Change % Net Assessment	4.15%

*This is the second year in a row Haddam enrollment has **decreased** and Killingworth enrollment has **increased**, affecting the Net Assessment to both Towns.

Refund of FY24 Fund Balance = \$1,048,457

*2nd year in a row our towns are receiving over \$1M



Salaries (Existing)

- Contractual salary increases per bargaining agreements and/or GWI.

Group	FY25	FY26
Administrators- HKAA	2.5%	2.5% plus step
Teachers-HKEA	2.75 % plus step	2.75% plus step
Support Services (Paras, Secretaries, Food Services, Misc)	2.75%	2.75%
Nurses	Negotiations In Process Contract Exp 6/30/24	5% or minimum hourly rate (whichever is higher)
Custodians- MEUI	2.5%	Negotiations
Non-Bargaining Unit Staff	2.5% w/ 0.5% merit incentive	~2.75%

FY25 Adopted Budget	\$24,136,403
FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget	\$25,711,981
Variance	\$1,575,578
Change %	6.53%

3.05%

Percentage of
Total Budget Increase



Health Insurance (Premiums)

- RSD17 participates in the Eastern CT Health and Medical Cooperative (ECHMC)
- ECHMC advised of an estimated premium increase of 11%
- Carried at .5% to hit budget target- optimistic of favorable rate setting outcome.

Medical Insurance Employee Cost Shares

Group	FY24	FY25	FY26
Administrators- HKAA	24.5%	24.5%	24.5%
Teachers-HKEA	24%	24%	24.5%
Support Services (Paras, Secretaries, Food Services, Misc)	Not Finalized Contract Exp 6/30/23	23.5%	24%
Nurses	24%	Negotiations In Process- Contract Exp 6/30/24	24%
Custodians- MEUI	23%	24%	Negotiations
Non-Bargaining Unit Staff	24.5%	24.5%	TBD

FY25 Adopted Budget	\$7,482,706
FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget	\$8,270,000
Variance	\$787,294
Change %	10.52%

1.52%

Percentage of
Total Budget Increase



Transportation (of Students)

- Current in-district transportation contract expires 6/30/26
- FY26 - 5% Contractual Annual Increase
- MS & HS Athletics Transportation
- Increase to Special Education Transportation
 - 18-22 Program
 - ESY (Extended School Year)
 - Specialty Transportation
 - PreK
 - Vinal/Vo-Ag
 - Internships

FY25 Adopted Budget	\$4,302,029
FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget	\$4,742,033
Variance	\$440,004
Change %	10.23%

.85%

Percentage of
Total Budget Increase

SPED Tuition (Out-of-District Costs)

- Total Tuition are Object Codes 560 & 561
- Covers costs for SPED services for HK resident students attending magnet or other schools through School Choice, and outplaced students (attending either private or out-of-district schools per IEP)

FY26

Tuition Public = \$1,133,371

Tuition NonPublic = \$2,150,000

FY25 Adopted Budget	\$2,985,345
FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget	\$3,283,371
Variance	\$298,029
Change %	9.98%

.58%

Percentage of
Total Budget Increase



Utilities (Electricity)

- New supply contract in place for Kwh rates
- LED Loan Payback continues

FY25 Adopted Budget	\$1,068,846
FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget	\$1,108,255
Variance	\$39,409
Change %	3.69%

.08%

Percentage of
Total Budget Increase

Strategy

Non-Lapsing Fund

- Shifting RSD17 strategy to reduce taxpayer burden with a focus on utilizing the Non-Lapsing Fund to offset capital improvements primarily focused on health and safety.
- Ensures projects in Capital Priority List are planned and built using built up reserves.

Beginning Fund Balance as of 7/1/24	\$1,616,644
Less: Expenditures or Encumbrances	TBD
FY25 Estimated Contribution (2%)	\$996,360
Projected YE Unallocated Balance	\$2,614,938



Strategy A

Non-Lapsing Fund

- Not fund projects in Operating Budget
- Utilize Non-Lapsing for all Capital Improvement Projects
 - Reduce Object Codes
 - 720 - Building Improvements
 - 721 - Capital Reserve
 - 730 - Equipment
 - 734 - Tech Related Hardware
 - 831 - Bond Principal
 - 832 - Bond Interest

Projected YE Unallocated Balance	\$2,614,938
Less: FY26 Projects removed/reduced from Operating Budget	\$1,493,169
FY26 Non-Lapsing Contribution	\$200,000
Projected FY26 YE Unallocated Balance	\$1,321,769

- Maintains 3.70% increase
- Funds scheduled capital projects



Strategy B

Non-Lapsing Fund

- Without shifting capital costs to the non-lapsing fund, the impact will be significant to the taxpayers
 - FY26 Bond Principal and Interest Payment = \$893,500
 - Bond Principal and Interest payments continue through FY30

831 - Bond, Principal	\$730,000
832 - Bond, Interest	\$163,500
Addition to Operating Budget	\$893,500
Original FY26 Budget	\$51,660,289
Original FY26 Percentage Increase	3.70%
*New Total to FY26 Budget	\$52,553,783
*Budget Increase	5.49% increase

Strategy C

Non-Lapsing Fund

- Debt Service paid from FY26 Operating Budget
- Operating Budget decreased by shifting materials and equipment to Non-Lapsing
- Neutral Impact to FY26 Budget
 - Utilize Non-Lapsing for all Capital Improvement Projects & Equipment
 - Does not utilize non-lapsing for capital bond payments
- Maintains 3.70% budget increase

Transfer Debt Service to Operating Budget	\$893,500
Shift GF Materials and Equipment to Non-Lapsing	-\$893,500
Total Non-Lapsing Expenditures	\$1,493,169
Budget Increase	3.70%



3 Year Budget Look Ahead

FY26

\$51,660,289

**Increase of
\$1,842,260**

**or
3.70%**

FY27

\$53,950,999

**Increase of
\$2,290,710**

**or
3.75%**

FY28

\$55,915,500

**Increase of
\$2,415,000**

**or
4.51%**



RSD 17 Community Pride

The 2024-25 Proposed Budget represents what is needed to realize the RSD17 Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) whereby all students and staff receive what they need within an environment and system that is built for them to achieve academic, social, and emotional success.



The quality of education offered by RSD17 plays a critical role in defining our community, its property values, quality of life, and the life opportunities of our school children. It enables children growing up with all the benefits of a small town to be prepared for success in the world.

I look forward to building on the accomplishments of 2023-24.





In Closing

RSD 17 Community Pride



Strategic Investments In our Schools

We have enjoyed many successes together!

People want to live here

They return here

Our schools are the “Ties that Bind” us together



Budget Meetings and Process

Date	Time	Activity	Location
February 25, 2025	6:00 PM	Superintendent's Budget Presentation	HKHS Auditorium
February 25, 2025	Directly Following	Board Workshop	HKHS Community Room/Lower Media
March 4, 2025	6:00 PM	Joint Meeting on Budget with Towns	HKIMS Cafeteria
March 4, 2025	Directly Following	Budget Workshop	HKMS Library Media Center
March 11, 2025	6:00 PM	Budget Workshop	HKHS Community Room/Lower Media
March 18, 2025	6:00 PM	Community Input on Budget	HKHS Auditorium
March 25, 2025	6:00 PM	Budget Workshop	HKHS Community Room/Lower Media
April 1, 2025	6:00 PM	Annual Hearing and Special Meeting of the BoE to Adopt the 2025/2026 BoE Budget	HKHS Auditorium
May 5, 2025	6:30 PM	Annual Meeting	HKHS Community Room/Lower Media
May 6, 2025		RSD#17 Budget Referendum	Regular voting locations



Thank you

