

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 1, 2023 @ 7:00 P.M.
GROTON SENIOR CENTER – THRIVE55+

Members Present: Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman-Vice Chairperson (Remote), Dean Antipas, William Horgan, Elizabeth Porter, Matthew Shulman, Rita Volkmann (Remote), Beverly Washington (Remote), Jay Weitlauf (Remote)

Also Present: Susan Austin, Phil Piazza, Sam Kilpatrick, Ken Knight

Town Council Present: Juan Melendez-Mayor, Portia Bordelon, Aundré Bumgardner (Remote), Rachael Franco, Bruce Jones, David McBride (Remote), Juliette Parker, John Burt-Town Manager (Remote)

RTM Education Committee Present: Michael Whitney-Chairperson (Remote), Kathy Chase, Thomas Frickman (Remote), James Gustavson, Jill Rusk-Moderator

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board of Education - Chairperson Kim Shepardson Watson called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Town Council - Mayor Juan Melendez called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

RTM Education Committee - Chairperson Michael Whitney called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

II. JOINT MEETING

Mrs. Shepardson Watson gave an overview of the purpose of the Joint Meeting with the Town Council and the RTM Education Committee. As points of clarification, Mrs. Shepardson Watson stated the following:

- That she has referred the non-lapsing funds topic to the Board of Education's Finance/Facilities Committee; the Board of Education is hoping the non-lapsing funds will not come into effect this coming fiscal year to afford the Board time to discuss the pros and cons of this topic
- That the Board had put together several CIPs dealing with the Field House, Concession Stand, Changing Rooms, and Bleachers and acknowledged the hard work of the Field Committee on this subject. Ms. Shepardson Watson wanted to bring this to the town's attention as there are a lot of concerns with these items.

Bruce Jones asked about the Health Insurance Reserve and the OPEB Reserve. Mr. Knight gave an overview of the Health Insurance Reserve and the OPEB Reserve.

Juliette Parker wanted to know if the Board of Education was looking for safety/security grants, as there are a many grants available. Superintendent Austin stated that we are looking into the available grants, and that we have already written the ARPA grant, which includes a safety/security proposal. Ms. Parker also inquired about the categories of Purchase Services and Supplies (300 & 600). Superintendent Austin reviewed the handout (ATTACHMENT #1) that included the district's FY24 CIP requests. Mr. Kilpatrick gave an overview of each request.

Portia Bordelon stated that she felt that Athletics and Enrichment were underfunded. Mrs. Bordelon noted the Athletic Fields has been an ongoing concern and stated that there needs to be a master plan to fix things. Mrs. Bordelon asked what percentage of the Superintendent's budget is going towards closing the Achievement Gaps. Mrs. Bordelon noted the need for funds for the ROTC Program, Reading and Math support, and lunch for all students.

Aundré Bumgardner thanked everyone for coming together to address the Superintendent's proposed budget. He thanked the superintendent for developing a budget that he feels lives within our means and one that will continue to invest in areas that ensures our students will receive incredible instruction from our teachers. He shared that the Governor announced a \$15 million bond allocation for school safety upgrades, which will be made available to schools throughout the state, and he encouraged Groton to pursue the funds. Mr. Bumgardner wanted to know the steps that the school district is taking to ensure that parents are made aware of summer programs that are available to the students.

Superintendent Austin responded that we have had great success with summer programs even before the pandemic because of the multi-million dollar DoDEA grants. We have had Literacy Camps, Math Camps, Writing Camps, and STEM Camps, and in some years, all of these camps happened at once. The camps are free of charge, and transportation and meals are provided. Teachers love teaching in these camps, and students and parents give them rave reviews. Superintendent Austin also noted other opportunities that have been provided such as enrichment and Tree House.

Mr. Bumgardner discussed the Inflation Reduction Act and noted that the governing bodies at tonight's meeting should look into the opportunities that may become available through this Act.

David McBride asked how the Superintendent's budget can be lowered. He noted possible items to reduce the budget such as:

- The Health Insurance Reserve and the OPEB Reserve.
- Reduce the OPEB Reserve by 1 million dollars – funding 100% or above and beyond. Can any of this be used to reduce the budget?
- How many new employees have been added to the budget? Are there any eliminations of employees?

Mike Whitney noted that the Athletic budget for boys and girls should be viewed for its equity. He suggested that the Board should make a strong case regarding equity in the CIPs regarding boys and girls.

James Gustavson addressed the three schools (CB, NEA, and FHS) not receiving free lunch and asked what it costs to have them receive free lunch. The superintendent responded that the board made the decision to pay the cost of reduced lunch for any child who had free or reduced lunch, and the students who can afford to pay for lunch are doing so.

Bruce Jones asked if it would be possible for the Town Council to receive a tour of the Culinary Arts classroom. Superintendent Austin stated that she would arrange the tour.

Kathy Chase asked if the repair of the Sewer Line at the high school could be delayed. Mr. Kilpatrick responded that it could not.

Portia Bordelon encouraged the Board to fund food for all students as well as food for athletes after school.

Thomas Frickman asked if all options for the Field House have been considered. Mr. Kilpatrick responded that the Architects provided two options; one option was to completely knock down the building and build as new, and the other option was to add on to that project. Kim Shepardson Watson clarified that the back end of Fitch is part of the Field Committee's plans and that we are gathering information for the Field Committee. Rachael Franco concurred with Kim and stated that the Field Committee is looking at other options as well.

Mr. Frickman addressed the consolidation of the bus routes in the hopes of saving money noting that we have a 10% increase in transportation and a 25% increase in supplies. Superintendent Austin responded that we have the same amount of students and we did not save money.

Kathy Chase addressed the Inflation Reduction Act and asked what can it be used for and how much can we apply for?

Bruce Jones asked about the Grant revenue:

- ARP ESSER Education Funds – when does it end? Superintendent Austin responded that it ends in 2024.
- Does the Board have a plan to absorb the position when the ARPA funds end and when they end will that affect the Board's budget? Superintendent Austin responded that a sustainability plan is in place to address it.

Portia Bordelon asked a clarifying question regarding when have the locker rooms been updated. Mrs. Bordelon asked if the Board has reached out to the State regarding the Sewer Line. Mr. Kilpatrick responded that he had reached out to the State about potential grants. Mrs. Bordelon asked to consider ways to provide funding to the feeder schools regarding sports. Mrs. Bordelon asked the Board to consider ways to have a Color Guard and Fencing at the middle school in the budget.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Board of Education - MOTION: Ackerman, Volkmann; to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

Town Council - MOTION: Melendez, Parker; to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

RTM Education Committee - MOTION: Whitney, Frickman; to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

Groton Public Schools

Joint Budget Meeting

February 1, 2023



Board of Education
Town Council
RTM Education Committee

Mission Statement: Teaching & Learning

BoE Goals: Provide Dynamic Rigorous Curriculum

Ensure Effective and Engaging Instruction

Embrace Excellent Learning Environment

Belief Statement: Cultivate an Environment of Diversity, Equality,
and Inclusiveness



Budget Topics

- Revenues that Support the Town's Budget on Education
- GPS Budget Categories
- Grants that Supplement the Budget (Categorical/Competitive)
- History of GPS Budgets
- Per Pupil Spending Comparison to Other Districts
- Update on Health Reserve & OPEB Reserve Accounts
- Review of CIP Account: Priorities

Program Highlights

- Enhance Literacy, following state legislation on Science of Reading for K-2; GPS curriculum based on Connecticut Core Standards (CCS), Teachers College Reading & Writing Project, including TC phonics and updated Units of Study in Reading and Writing
- Increase rigor and relevance in math instruction K-12 based on CCS
- Amplify GPS Science Curriculum K-12 with Next Generation Science Standards
- Expand The International Baccalaureate Program currently at Fitch High School and Groton Middle School (Middle Years Program, Diploma Program and Careers Program & Pathways)
- Partner with Grasso Tech, which will provide afterschool opportunities in the trades for FHS students to receive credit



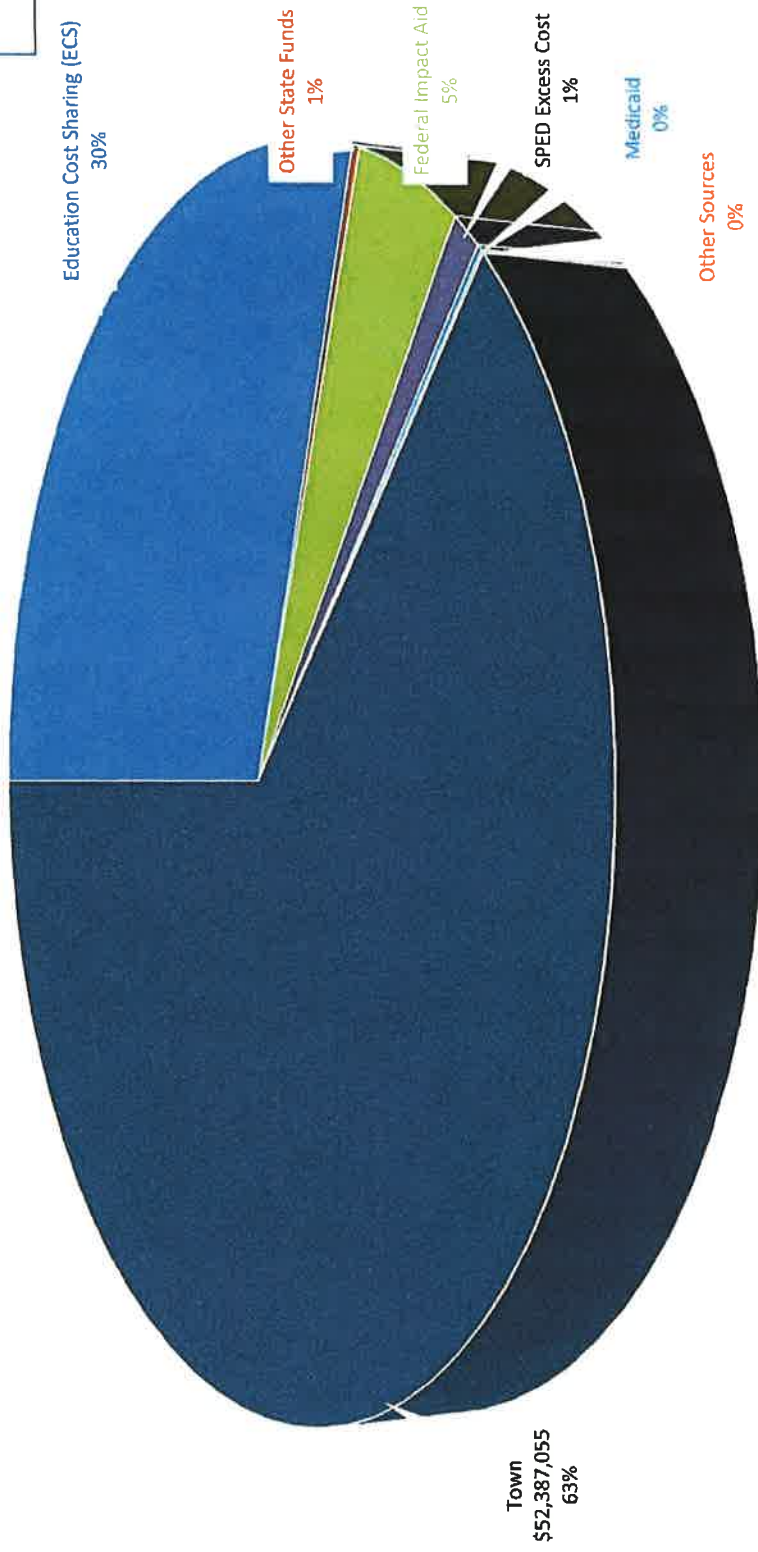
Program Highlights

- Magnify all five elementary magnet schools with community partners
- Retain all curricular & extracurricular programs
- Sustain and continue to upgrade classroom technology, infrastructure, and 1 to 1 computer initiative
- Provide Vocational Program for 18-22 year-olds under IDEA
- Expand high quality Tree House child care program before/after school; 21st century grant expansion into GMS & FHS
- Support School Resource Officers @ FHS & GMS, as well as DARE officer partners at the elementary schools



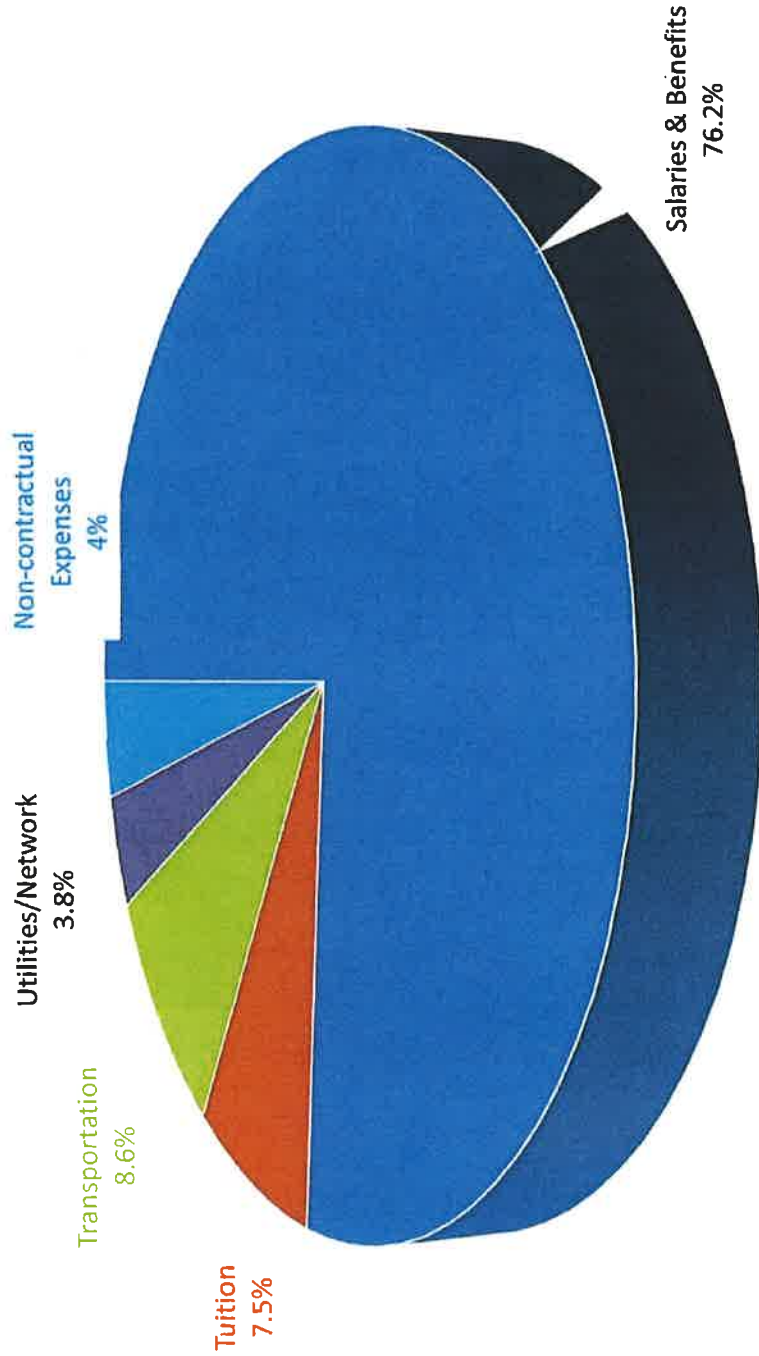
FY24 Town Revenues

Revenue
\$30,711,145
37%



Education Cost Sharing (ECS)	25,040,045
Other State Funds	285,500
Federal Impact Aid	4,094,300
SPED Excess Cost	1,039,000
Medicaid	163,300
Other Sources	<u>89,000</u>
	30,711,145

GPS Budget Categories



Salaries & Benefits	63,304,051	76.2%
Tuition/Contracted Services	6,230,282	7.5%
Transportation	7,114,391	8.6%
Utilities/Ins./Tel/Network/Software Lic.	3,149,606	3.8%
Non-contractual Expenses	3,299,870	4.0%

Superintendent's Proposed Budget

	<u>FY23</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Proposed</u> <u>FY24</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Increase</u> <u>(Decrease)</u>	<u>%</u>
Salaries (100)	51,446,541	52,821,697	1,375,156	2.7%
Benefits (200)	10,039,106	10,482,354	443,248	4.4%
Purchased Services (300)	1,998,859	2,272,180	273,321	13.7%
Property Services (400)	843,380	871,964	28,584	3.4%
Trans, Ins, Comm, Tuition (500)	11,754,659	12,854,359	1,099,700	9.4%
Supplies (600)	2,873,730	3,594,401	720,671	25.1%
Equipment (700)	108,400	101,734	(6,666)	(6.1%)
Dues & Fees (800)	<u>92,596</u>	<u>99,511</u>	<u>6,915</u>	<u>7.5%</u>
Total	79,157,271	83,098,200	3,940,929	4.98%
(100) Contractual pay increases and minimum wage obligations				
(200) 4.6% anticipated increase in insurance claims cost				
(300) Preventative maintenance and inflationary increases				
(400) Inflationary increase				
(500) Increase cost in bus transportation per the contract				
(600) 1% increase to site budgets, inflationary increase in electricity/heating costs				
(700) Reflection of equipment needs of the schools through their site budget				
(800) EdRising & NNDCC				

Board of Education Grants Revenue

	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>FY24 Projected</u>
<u>Categorical Grants</u>		
Federal Education Grants (ESEA)	Annual	1,007,489
Carl Perkins (Vocational Education)	Annual	70,047
School Readiness (Early Childhood)	Annual	532,002
IDEA (Federal Special Education grant)	Annual	1,227,570
Bilingual Education (Bilingual education)	Annual	7,853
DOD Supplemental Impact Grant (Tech. Equip)	Annual	400,000 est
Alliance District	Annual	0
Total Categorical Grants		3,244,961
<u>Competitive Grants</u>		
DoDEA-STEM Grant K-5, 9-12 (STEM grant for military schools)	FY19-23	0
DoDEA-Health/STEM Pathways	FY22-26	183,282
DoDEA-World Language	FY23-27	103,440
Nita M. Lowey 21 st Century Community Learning	FY22-26	59,986
Total Competitive Grants		346,708
<u>Coronavirus Grants</u>		
CARES ACT/ESSER II		0
American Rescue Plan/ESSER III		2,993,880
American Rescue Plan/IDEA		0
ESSER II Special Education Recovery Activities		0
American Rescue Plan ESSER/Homeless Children and Youth		0
Total Coronavirus Grants		2,993,880
Total Grants		6,585,549

History of GPS Budgets

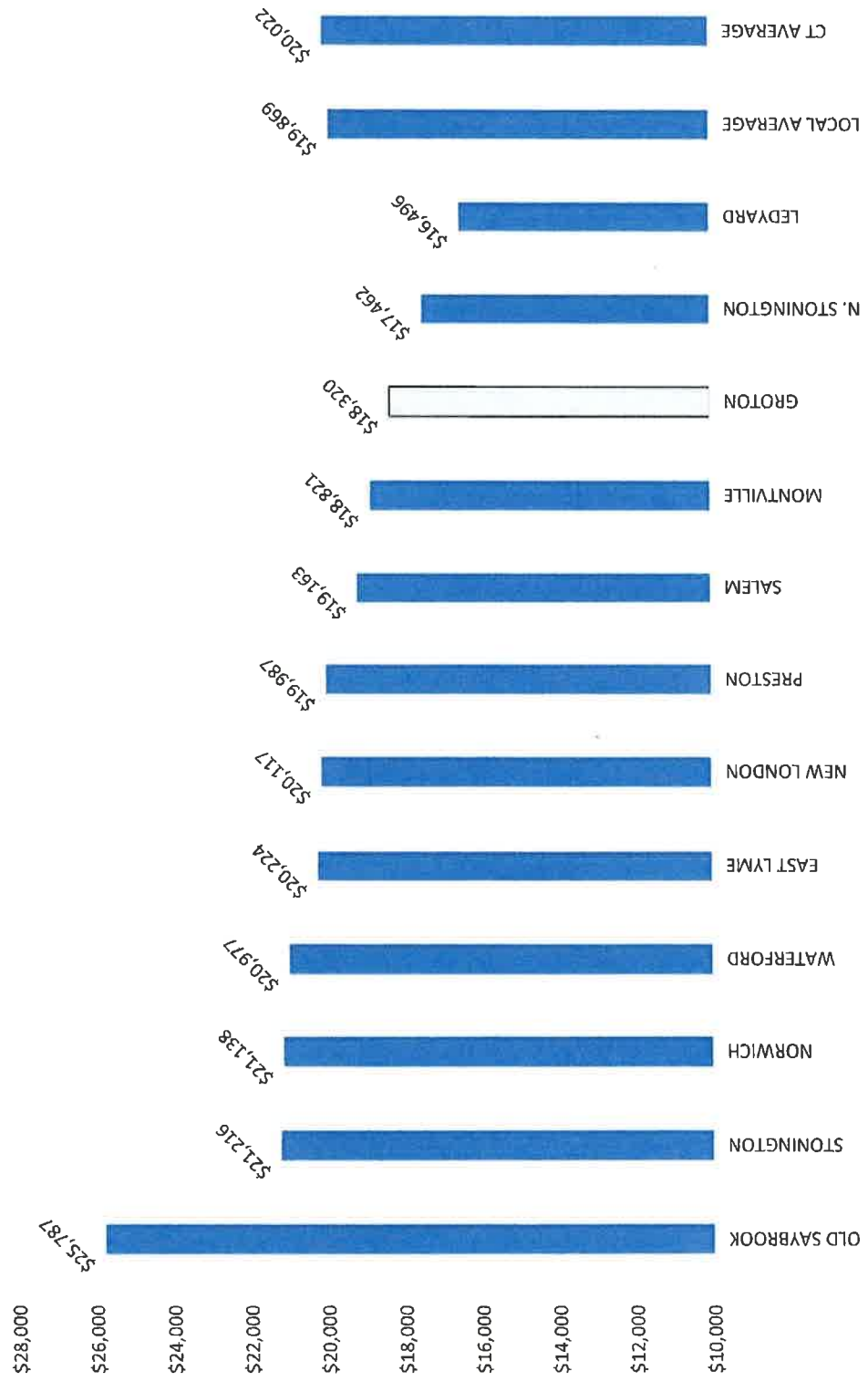
<u>School Year</u>	<u>Budget Total</u>	<u>Inc/(Decr)</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
FY2016-2017	76,468,239	(262,000)	(0.34%)
FY2017-2018	76,468,239	-	0.00%
FY2018-2019	76,485,922	17,683	0.02%
FY2019-2020	77,438,090	952,168	1.24%
FY2020-2021	77,438,090	-	0.00%
FY2021-2022	77,438,090	-	0.00%
FY2022-2023	79,157,271	1,719,181	2.22%
		Seven Year Average	0.50%

Expenditure per Pupil (NCEP per CSDE)

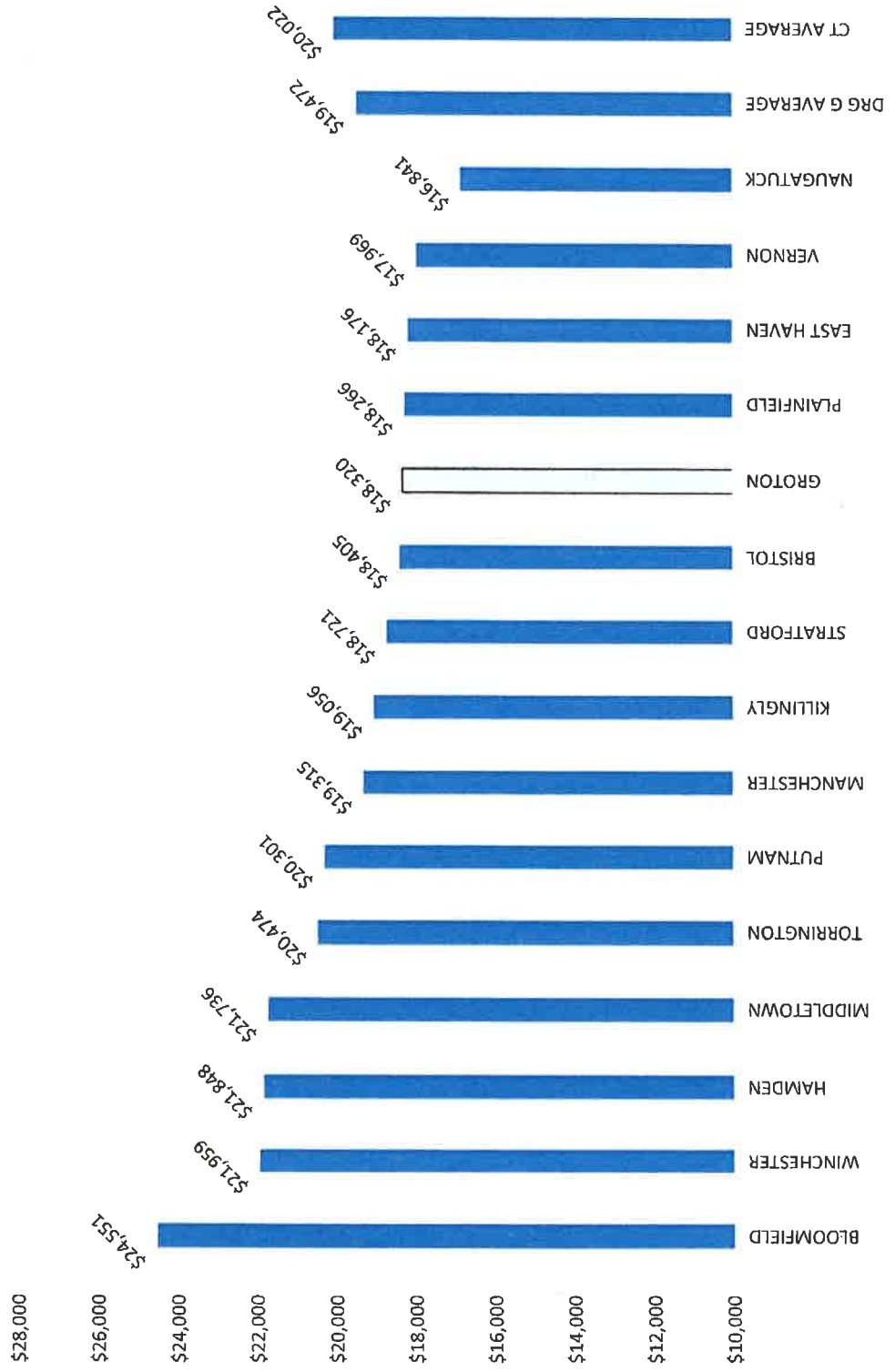
<u>School Year</u>	<u>Groton</u>	<u>CT Avg</u>	<u>Variance</u>
FY2016-2017	\$15,812.77	\$16,564.06	\$(751.30)
FY2017-2018	\$16,207.50	\$16,988.40	\$(780.90)
FY2018-2019	\$16,304.32	\$17,438.69	\$(1,134.37)
FY2019-2020	\$16,476.84	\$17,747.88	\$(1,271.04)
FY2020-2021	\$17,692.91	\$19,011.22	\$(1,318.31)
FY2021-2022	\$18,319.73	\$20,021.80	\$(1,702.07)
FY2022-2023 estimate*	\$17,906.36	Not yet available	

* Calculated from budget using actual FY23 enrollment

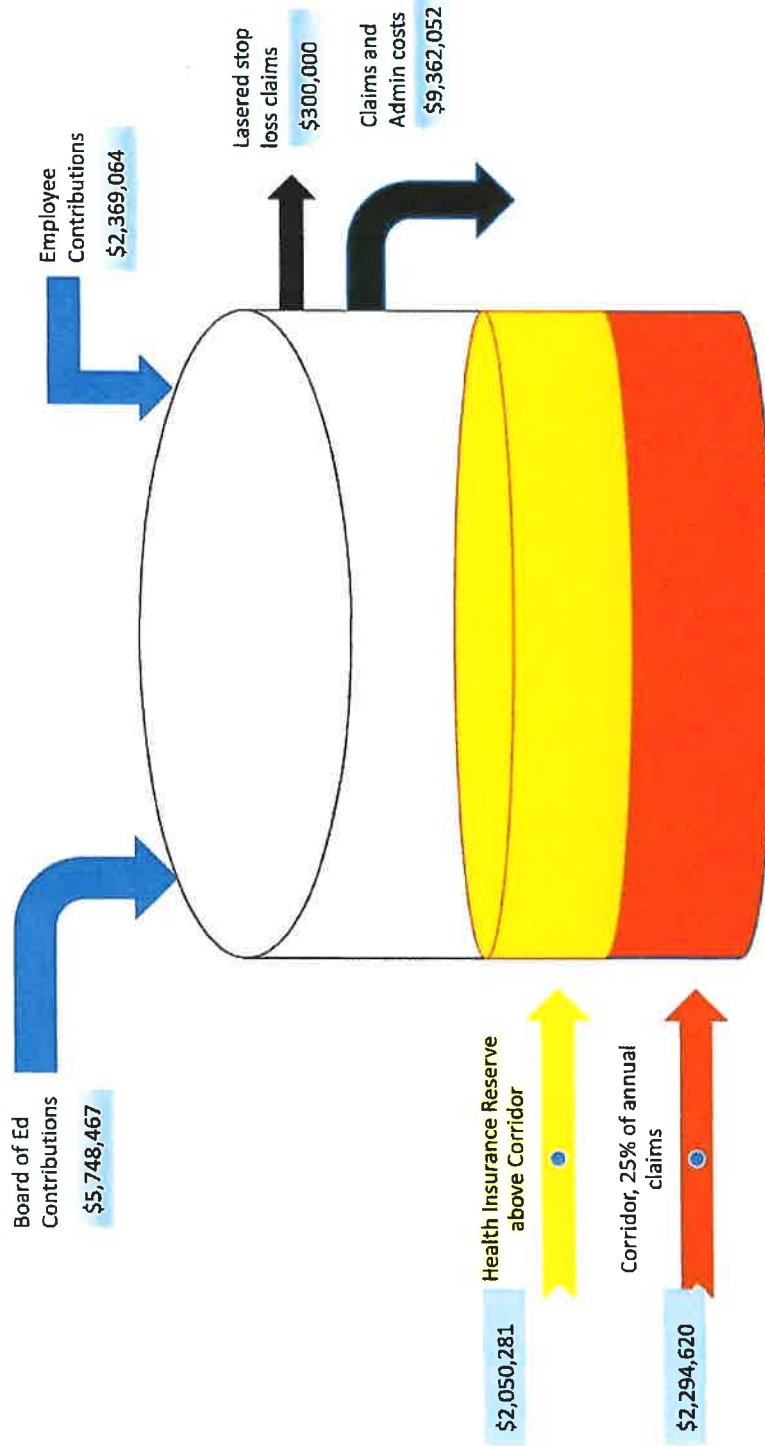
2021-22 Average Cost per Student (Local Districts)



2021-22 Average Cost per Student (District Reference Group G)

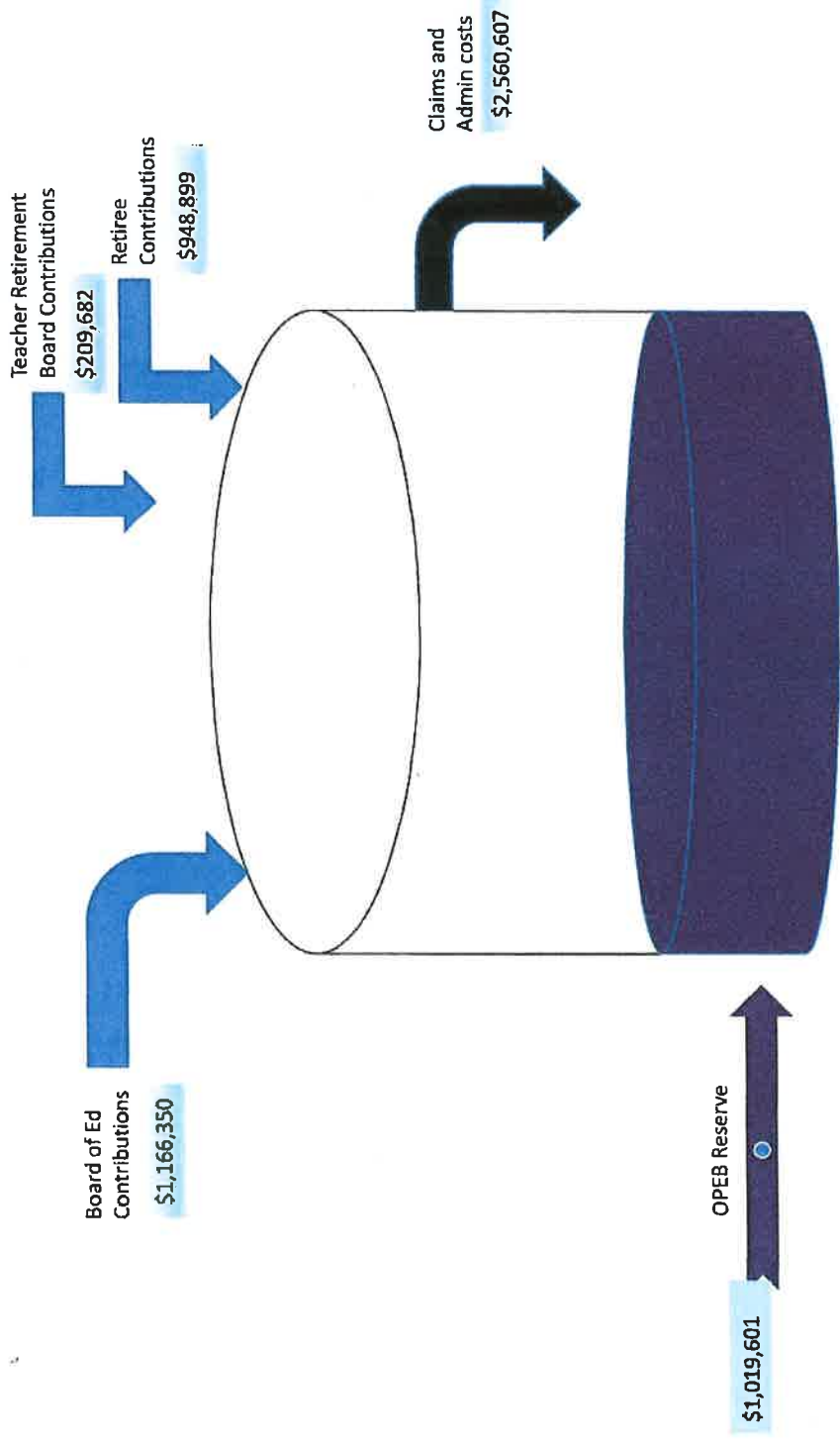


FY23 HEALTH INSURANCE RESERVE



1/3/2023

FY23 Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) RESERVE



1/3/2023

CAPITAL PROJECTS - FYE 2024 (000)

FYE 2024 TO FYE 2029

PROJECT SUMMARY (000)

5) EDUCATION	SOURCE	FYE 2024	FYE 2025	FYE 2026	FYE 2027	FYE 2028	FYE 2029	TOTAL COST
A) FITCH HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FACILITIES	C	280	0	0	0	0	0	280
B) FITCH HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOUSE	C	15490	0	0	0	0	0	15490
C) NORTHEAST ACADEMY AIR QUALITY	C	0	250	250	250	250	0	1000
D) FITCH HIGH & BARNUM SCHOOLS HVAC UPGRADES	C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E) FITCH HIGH SCHOOL CULINARY ARTS	C	600	0	0	0	0	0	600
F) SECURITY CAMERAS	C	245	0	0	0	0	0	245
G) DISTRICT SAFETY & SECURITY	C	150	0	0	0	0	0	150
H) FITCH HIGH SCHOOL BLEACHERS	C	1700	0	0	0	0	0	1700
TOTAL	C	18465	250	250	250	250	0	19465
Capital Reserve Fund	C	18465	250	250	250	250	0	19465
General Obligation Bonds	G	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	O	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECT DETAIL						
PROJECT PROJECT NAME Fitch High School Sewer Line Repair	ACTIVITY/DEPARTMENT SECTION NUMBER AND TITLE					
DESCRIPTION/PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION After a recent CCTV inspection, it has been determined that an area of the original high school built in 1954 has inaccessible sewer lines that have deteriorated. Lines were clogged and also leaking into tunnel spaces and under concrete slabs. The estimated cost to make the necessary repairs is \$75,000. Requested for FYE 24 are funds (\$75,000) to make the repairs.						
RECOMMENDED FINANCING (000)						
Source of Funds	Estimated Funding by Year					Total Estimated Cost
	FYE2024	FYE2025	FYE2026	FYE2027	FYE2028	
A. Planning and Engineering						
B. Land and Right of Way						
C. Construction	75					75
D. Equipment						
E. Other Costs						
Total		75				75
*Funding	(C) Capital Reserve Fund	(G) General Obligation Bonds	(O) Other			

