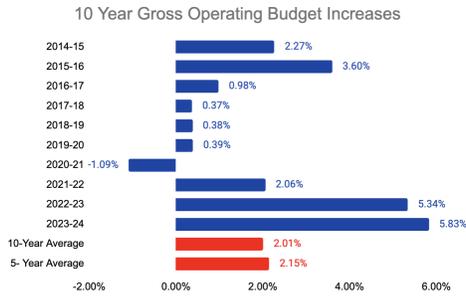


2023/24 RSD 17 Budget Initiates a Long-Term Strategic Plan

On May 2, 2023, the RSD 17 Board of Education 2023/24 School gross budget of



\$47,655,708.22 (or a 5.83% increase over last year's gross budget) will be brought to the towns of Haddam and Killingworth for a referendum vote. After revenue, grants, and fund balances, each town will be assessed: Haddam \$28,439,380 (61.5%) and Killingworth \$17,831,251 (38.5%). Student enrollment as of 10/1/22 is 1,819, a slight increase over the previous year. **Voting will take place from 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the regular voting places.**

This year's budget increases are driven by three factors:

- **Utility and Transportation Inflation - \$1,000,000**
 - Electric/Oil/Diesel/Gas/Propane
 - Transportation
- **Salary and Benefit Increases - \$925,000**
 - Wages
 - Health Insurance and other Benefits
- **Additional Investments aligned with the District's Strategic Plan - \$900,000**
 - Educator and Leadership Professional Development
 - Introduction of new reading program: The Science of Reading
 - New Text Books
 - Special Education Audit/Assessment
 - Additional Speech and Language Pathologist Assistant
 - District-wide Security and Safety Audit/Assessment
 - Full 2% funding of the Capital Fund

From learning loss to learning growth: RSD 17's three-year progress, post COVID-19 has been as follows:

- First, to regain student learning loss associated with COVID-19 (2020/21)
- Secondly, to develop a long-range strategic plan to improve student growth (2021/22)
- Lastly, to make investments in people, processes/structures, and facilities to build the scaffolding or infrastructure to enable our strategic plan (2022/23.)

In next year's budget (2023/24), RSD 17 continues to invest in the strategic plan, while managing excessive inflationary costs; making key investments in the District's buildings, educators, curriculum, student learning, and intervention support.

The Strategic Plan is founded on formal data gathered from the community members at large, parents, students, educators, and administrators, and **calls out four objectives.**

1. Student Learning and Well-Being

- 2. Educator and Leadership Development and Capacity**
- 3. Operational Efficiency**
- 4. Enhance District Infrastructure**

When taxpayers vote at referendum, it is on the gross budget number. When the budget is approved, that gross budget is used by the BoE and the Superintendent to manage all aspects of the District while continuing to attend to needs that develop, such as changes in student needs, personnel or supplies.

The Board of Education, as always, continues to be grateful for the community's support of our school's budget.

A More Detailed Review of the Budget

Utility and Transportation Inflation: Oil, electricity, gasoline, and diesel cost increases represent the balance of this category's increase, totaling \$381,023. While these costs have increased materially since the prior year's budget, the District has locked in prices related to oil and fuel thereby protecting the District from further increases. Transportation increases of \$640,588 are mainly driven by the District's bus contract renewal and Special Education transportation.

Salary and Benefit Increases: Approximately \$925,000 is driven by contractual wages and benefit increases (total wages and benefits represent almost 67% of the overall budget) - this includes a reduction in 16 Full Time Employee (FTE) units. Health benefits alone will increase by 7% next year.

Educator and Leadership Development: The District's ability to deliver quality education for our students is largely dependent on the quality of teaching and learning and our leaders/administrators' ability to support, evaluate and elevate the instruction in each school. RSD 17 will be investing over \$200,000 for development in the following areas: Science of Reading instruction, Highly Reliable Instructional Strategies, and math practices for block schedules.

New Curriculum: The Science of Reading: We will continue to invest in a district-wide reading program that will not only enhance the programs that we already have in place, but will fulfill the new State mandate to have a curriculum aligned to the science of reading. We have budgeted \$128,842.16 for course material, teachers' guides, and professional development to be purchased for grades K-5.

Special Education Audit/Assessment: Special Education is an important part of the District's responsibility to fulfill the needs of our students that are augmented through an individual education plan. To ensure that all of our students have the best opportunity to succeed, we will assess our special education programs for educational fidelity, student impact, and overall effectiveness and efficiency of implementation (\$75,000).

District-wide Security and Safety Audit/Assessment: RSD 17 continues to enhance safety and security on all four campuses. The District, in coordination with a long-range capital plan, will invest \$50,000 in a Security Audit/Assessment on all RSD 17 school buildings.

Grants: To provide students with support beyond district-available resources, the District has applied for and received several grants.

- A \$297,000 Mental Health grant to be used over the next three years to fund a Mental Health Clinician that will be located at HKHS and HKMS.
- A \$64,000 grant to augment the cost of implementing the Science of Reading to be spent over the course of two years to
- A \$16,952 *Federal Perkins Grant* and a \$10,000 *Project Lead the Way/Lockheed Martin Grant* to enhance career and technical courses.

Refund: At the end of every fiscal year, the district typically ends the year with a positive balance remaining in the budget. The unspent Audited Fund Balance is then credited to the following year's town gross budget obligation. The 2021/22 estimated Audited Fund Balance of \$131,000* will be credited to Haddam and Killingworth.

**Note this is an estimated Audited Fund Balance.*

RSD 17 Per Pupil Costs Compared to Other Districts

The 2023/24 budget is a balance between inflationary pressures, contractual obligations, and investments in our student programming. With 70% of the budget made up of fixed costs, the District has managed to keep increases to a minimum through reallocating resources, strategic planning, and thoughtful spending. Through careful budget planning, RSD 17's per pupil expenditure of \$21,536 continues to remain below all but one neighboring town.

Haddam BoE Members - Prem Aithal, Jen Favalora, Shawna Goldfarb, Hamish MacPhail, Corey Roberts, Peter Sonski

Killingworth BoE Members - Lisa Connelly, Joel D'Angelo, Nelson Rivera, Suzanne Sack, Kathy Zandi