

# **AGENDA – WEDNESDAY, March 27, 2024**

## **REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7 BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Immediately following Second Informal Town Presentation - Norfolk  
6:30 p.m. Botelle School, Cafeteria**

### **Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education Mission Statement:**

We believe the public education is an essential component of a free and democratic society. In a partnership of family, school, community, and local and state government, our mission is to enable all students to meet high standards, make productive choices in their personal lives, contribute to a diverse global society and act as responsible citizens.

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#### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

#### **2.0 PUBLIC PORTION**

- 2.1 Opportunity for Public to Speak on Agenda Items

#### **3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 3.1 March 13, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting
- 3.2 March 20, 2024 First Informal Budget Presentation - Colebrook

#### **4.0 REPORTS**

- 4.1 Superintendent's Report- S. LePage
- 4.2 Director of Finance and Operations- J. Gaskins

#### **5.0 OLD BUSINESS**

- 5.1 Updates
- 5.2 BOE Goals
- 5.3 Board Discussion on 2024-2025 Working Budget

#### **6.0 NEW BUSINESS**

- 6.1 Adoption of Call of Budget Hearing
- 6.2 Adoption of Referendum Question

#### **7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

- 7.1 Updates

#### **8.0 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **9.0 ADJOURNMENT**

Enclosures: March 13, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes  
March 20, 2024 First Informal Town Budget Presentation- Colebrook Minutes  
Adoption of Call of Budget Hearing and Referendum Questions

Next Meeting: April 3, 2024 Third Informal Town Budget Presentation: New Hartford, New Hartford Senior Center, Town Hall 7:00 p.m.  
April 4, 2024 Fourth Informal Town Presentation: Barkhamsted, Barkhamsted Elementary- Cafeteria 7:00 p.m.  
Special BOE Meeting to follow for Adoption of Budget to take to Budget Hearing.  
April 10, 2024 Regular BOE Meeting Library Media Center 6:00 p.m.  
April 22, 2024 Regional Budget Hearing to Adopt Budget to go to District Budget Meeting, NWR7 Little Theater 7:00 p.m.  
April 24, 2024 Regular BOE Meeting Library Media Center 6:00 p.m.  
May 6, 2024 District Budget Meeting NWR7 Little Theater 7:00 p.m.  
May 7, 2024 Referendum

**Members of the public are also welcome to submit comments through [publicinput@nwr7.org](mailto:publicinput@nwr7.org). These emails will be included during the Public Comment portion of the meeting. Thank you.**

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7  
NEWBURY LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**

March 13, 2024 – 6 p.m.

**DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Ms. Lisa Fragale(C), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Superintendent Steven K. LePage, High School Principal Mr. Gary Franklin, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, Student Representatives: Owen Langer and Fiona Leon.

**Absent:** Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read called the Board of Education meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** the February 28, 2024, Board of Education Meeting Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** the March 6, 2024, Board of Education Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

**REPORTS**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT OWEN LANGER**

Mr. Langer began with a winter sports recap, then presented a brief synopsis of the spring sports. Spring sports are starting this coming weekend with practices in softball, baseball and track. The Penguin Plunge for Unified Sports is on Saturday, March 23, 2024. The SAT testing is on April 3, 2024. The High School Band Concert is tonight March 13, 2024. The Mary Poppins Musical will be presented by the theater on the weekend before April break. Mr. Langer updated all on Model UN conferences. The National Foreign Language Honor Society is holding a Top of the Hill Chef competition with the categories of sweet and savory.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT FIONA LEON**

Ms. Leon began with a recap from the swim team. The swim team won the Berkshire League and the regular season league. Six swimmers are moving on to State Opens on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at Yale. The Winter Sports Awards are on Thursday evening, March 14, 2024. At the end of February, NWR7 had National FFA Week. As Mr. Langer expressed, The Penguin Plunge for Unified Sports is happening on March 23, 2024. The students have been raising money at lunch for a teacher to receive a pie in the face on March 14, 2024, because it is PI Day. The marching band will be starting soon for all the Memorial Day parades.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FRAN AMARA

Principal Amara updated all on the transition from 8th to 9th grade. The course selection is almost complete for 9th grade. Amanda Cormier, school counselor, and Thea Davidson, school counselor, have worked diligently to make the selection process as smooth as possible. The nice part of this process is the engagement of the parents in this task. Principal Amara and his team have been gathering data from all of the feeder schools with all the incoming students. Dr. Steve Carvalho has been attending the transition PPT meetings for the students with IEPs and 504 plans. Some specific needs are math. The Middle School will make some teaching adjustments to meet these particular math needs. Principal Amara will visit the Barkhamsted Elementary School to partake in their Professional Development. Jennifer Hurley- Coughlin, the ELA Instructional Leader, will meet with New Hartford's Curriculum Coach, Heather Mathes, to discuss aligning the ELA curriculum in the 5th and 6th grades with the Middle School curriculum. Kindness in Motion kicked off last week with Superintendent LePage creating the video and sending all the information to the students and staff.

## HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GARY FRANKLIN

Principal Franklin explained that, in regards to the SAT testing, the High School, in addition to the preparation that is happening in the classroom, is offering a few math preparation sessions. The AG Compliance Review happened this week, similar to the NEASC but in AG ED. Members visited on March 12th and 13th. They interviewed the administrative team, school counselors, Ag Ed teachers, and the Ag Ed students. The AG Compliance Review team reviewed some feedback at the end of the visit, saying that the team was impressed with how all the students - grades 9-12- spoke to the power of relationships and the caring Ag environment and how all students feel supported. The Ag Ed students expressed how they feel united with the Middle School and High School students.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**Budget Updates:** Superintendent LePage expressed that Mr. Gaskins and the team have been working to answer all the budget questions that were addressed at the last BOE meeting and will share this worksheet with the BOE when completed.

**Newsletter Highlights:** Superintendent LePage expressed he really enjoys completing this newsletter, and expressed that the feedback has been very positive. Many students approach Mr. LePage about the articles in the newsletter, and Superintendent LePage said that the impact has been very optimistic. Ms. Crone expressed that the newsletter is great and makes all that read it feel connected with what is happening at RSD#7.

**Educator Diversity Policy and Requirements:** This policy is developed per the legislative requirements and the BOE needs to approve this plan before submission on March 15, 2024. Brief discussion followed.

## DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

**Budget Updates:** Mr. Gaskins explained the 3 headlines for RSD#7 2024-2025 budget is the increase in special education costs, health insurance renewal, and the State of CT underfunding. Special education currently adds 2% to the RSD#7 budget, the health insurance increase of 10.95% adds another .84% to the RSD#7. These two factors alone increase the budget by 2.84%.

**Update On the Gym Floor:** Mr. Gaskins explained that there was a meeting with the insurance company, the contractor, Superintendent LePage, Principal Franklin, Keith Boyle and the Athletic Director, Fred Williams regarding the concerns on the repairs of the auxiliary gym floor. The contractor is in discussion with the insurance company with how to move forward with the repairs of the gym floor.

**Grants:** Mr. Gaskins expressed that the process began in completing the large Federal and State security grants. Mr. Gaskins explained the grants are very competitive because they are nationwide. The total of these two grants are approximately \$960,000.00. Brief discussion followed.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Budget Discussion:** Superintendent LePage reviewed the questions that were asked at the Budget Workshop on March 6, 2024. He reviewed questions in regard to athletics, project updates, staffing, transportation, and enrollment to name a few. Brief discussion followed.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Approval of the State-Mandated Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

***Legislative Mandate: Public Act 23-167 Section 10 (Effective July 1, 2023)***

*(a) Not later than March 15, 2024, each local and regional board of education shall submit the increasing educator diversity plan described in subsection (a) of section 10-220 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, to the Commissioner of Education for review and approval.*

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** RSD#7 State-Mandated Increasing Educator Diversity Plan, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

### Healthy Food Certification for 7.1.2024 to 6.30.2025

**MOTION** by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE *Participation of Healthy Food Option of HFC*** as presented: pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, **REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7** certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE *Healthy Food Options of HFS*** as presented: **REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7** will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Approval of Highlander Basketball Camp 8.5.2024 to 8.9.2024

**MOTION** by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Kenneson to **APPROVE** the RSD#7 Highlander Basketball Camp on 8.5.24 to 8.9.24, as presented. **AYE:** Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Sexton Read. **MOTION PASSED.**



## OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

## ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION** by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADJOURN** at 7:41 p.m. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None.  
**MOTION PASSED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett  
Board Clerk

# Northwestern Regional School District No. 7

## Educator Diversity Plan

COVER PAGE	
<b>District:</b>	Northwestern Regional School District No. 7
<b>Vision:</b>	Regional School District No. 7 is an organization where our goal is to establish and maintain that the very best, most caring, and most talented educators are serving our students. We acknowledge, respect, and empathize with people of all backgrounds. Our recruitment and retention practices are focused on hiring and retaining diverse educators who will ensure the success of all students.
<b>Theory of Action</b>	If we value educator diversity through our recruitment, hiring, and retention processes, then we will be more likely to increase and support a culturally diverse workforce.
<b>Team Lead:</b>	Steve LePage - Superintendent
<b>Team Members:</b>	Superintendent, Principals, Special Education Supervisor, Middle and High School Administration, Central Office Personnel

# Educator Diversity Plan - Recruitment

RECRUITMENT (GOAL #1)								
Goal	Who Manages the Goal?	Strategies/Key Activities			Indicators of Progress	Resources Required	Risks and Mitigation	Communication/Engagement Efforts
		What?	Who Owns This?	By When?				
Create a system for potential candidates to build an awareness of our district.	Steve LePage - Superintendent	Attend educator diversity recruitment conferences and job fairs sponsored by diverse community organizations or otherwise targeted toward diverse individuals.	Superintendent, Principals, Special Education Supervisor, Middle and High School Administration, Central Office Personnel	Starting 7/1/2024	1. Document the educator diversity recruitment conferences and job fairs that are attended by district administration. 2. Document the number of contacts made at job fairs. 3. Document the number of contacts that submit applications for employment. 4. Document the number of applicants hired.	Superintendent, Principals, Supervisor of Pupil Personnel and Special Education, Middle and High School Administration, Human Resources Personnel will attend job fairs. The District will share informational materials (electronic and print) about Northwestern Regional, including district website information, links to the Highlander Highlights Newsletter, and a link to our employment page.	Due to the size of our NWR7 school district, we have limited openings within our district in any given year. We are also in the process of reducing staff in several areas over the next several years due to shrinking enrollment. There will be times when we attend job fairs with minimal or no current open positions.	The dates and times of job fairs sponsored by diverse community organizations or otherwise targeted toward diverse individuals needs to be communicated and arrangements need to be made for the appropriate administration to attend.



## RECRUITMENT (GOAL #2)

Goal	Who Manages the Goal?	Strategies/Key Activities			Indicators of Progress	Resources Required	Risks and Mitigation	Communication/ Engagement Efforts
		What?	Who Owns This?	By When?				
Expand our applicant pool and attract a more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals to apply for open positions within the school district.	Steve LePage - Superintendent	Attend educator diversity recruitment conferences and job fairs sponsored by diverse community organizations or otherwise targeted toward diverse individuals. State in all employment postings that candidates of diverse backgrounds are highly encouraged to apply.	Superintendent, Principals, Special Education Supervisor, Middle and High School Administration, Central Office Personnel	July 2024	Utilize Frontline to monitor how many of our applicants are racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse.	Add the appropriate language and tracking through the Frontline application which will monitor how many of our applicants are racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse. Add to all employment postings that candidates of diverse backgrounds are highly encouraged to apply.	Due to the size of our school district, NWR7 Schools will not have as many employment opportunities as larger school districts. This will limit the expansion of our applicant pool.	The superintendent's administrative assistant will maintain a list of sites where positions are being posted and will adjust the wording on all postings to include that candidates of diverse backgrounds are highly encouraged to apply. The human resource secretary will add tracking through the Frontline application which will monitor how many of our applicants are racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse.

RECRUITMENT (GOAL #3)								
Goal	Who Manages the Goal?	Strategies/Key Activities			Indicators of Progress	Resources Required	Risks and Mitigation	Communication/ Engagement Efforts
		What?	Who Owns This?	By When?				
Provide our current students with pathways to a career in education.	School Counseling Department	Provide opportunities for students to observe and work with elementary and middle school students within the region. Support high school students in understanding their options on how they can become certified as a Connecticut educator. Offering the "If You Love It, Teach It" UConn ECE Course.	High School Counselors, ECE Course Teacher	Starting 9/1/2024	The high school guidance department will monitor how many of our students pursue a post-secondary degree in education. The administration and school counselors will work to persuade students to consider the UConn ECE Teaching course.	Coordination between the administration, high school counselors and the middle and elementary principals to coordinate job shadow and volunteer opportunities. Training for the high school guidance department on how to track and monitor student career pathway choices through Naviance.	Scheduling conflict and a lack of student transportation could restrict the number of job shadow and volunteer opportunities in our local elementary schools. Since our middle school is on the same campus as our high school, shadows and experiences in the middle school will be much less complicated to arrange.	High school counselors and area principals will need to coordinate job shadow and volunteer opportunities.



# Northwestern Regional School District No. 7

## Educator Diversity Plan - Hiring & Selection

HIRING & SELECTION (GOAL #1)								
Goal	Who Manages the Goal?	Strategies/Key Activities			Indicators of Progress	Resources Required	Risks and Mitigation	Communication / Engagement Efforts
		What?	Who Owns This?	By When?				
Maintain an awareness of application review and interview process bias.	Steve LePage - Superintendent	The District's administration will complete a training module on implicit bias and anti-bias in the hiring process. They will recognize and avoid practices that may result in bias such as considering residence proximity to the district, experience in the surrounding area districts, and referral by current employees as positive attributes of a candidate.	Superintendent, Principals, Special Education Supervisor, Middle and High School Administration, Central Office Personnel	Starting 7/1/2024	As part of the interview process, discuss each candidate and why they were interviewed and/or selected for an interview to reduce possible bias.	Utilize a common interview rating protocol to reduce subjectivity.	Ensure common hiring and selection processes across all school and district positions.	The district's administration will communicate with the interview committee the systems put in place to reduce possible bias.

# Northwestern Regional School District No. 7

## Educator Diversity Plan - Retention

RETENTION (GOAL #1)								
Goal	Who Manages the Goal?	Strategies/Key Activities			Indicators of Progress	Resources Required	Risks and Mitigation	Communication/Engagement Efforts
		What?	Who Owns This?	By When?				
Participate in conversations between school districts with similar educator demographics to discuss retention strategies.	Steve LePage - Superintendent	Participate in group conversation opportunities by pairing diverse hires with veteran diverse educators or with teachers in partnering school districts with similar demographics (Sharon, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Falls Village/Canaan, Salisbury, Region 1, Region 10, Region 14). We are partnering with EdAdvance to host these conversations.	Steve LePage - Superintendent	July 2024	A structure will be in place to connect diverse groups of educators between districts	Collaboration with partner districts to create the conditions under which the conversations can flourish: release time, travel time/reimbursement.	The conversations may need to be held virtually to increase participation and reduce the time commitment required.	EdAdvance will connect with representatives from similar districts to develop a network of opportunities.

RETENTION (GOAL #2)								
Goal	Who Manages the Goal?	Strategies/Key Activities			Indicators of Progress	Resources Required	Risks and Mitigation	Communication/ Engagement Efforts
		What?	Who Owns This?	By When?				
Further develop and sustain a climate and culture in which all educators feel welcomed, valued, and part of the Northwestern Regional Family.	Steve LePage - Superintendent	Pair all new hires with a tenured teacher to support them in their transition into the NWR7, and have administration check in with all new employees on at least a monthly basis.	Superintendent, Principals, Special Education Supervisor, Middle and High School Administration, Central Office Personnel	Current Practice	The Superintendent and the entire administrative team will meet with new faculty members at the beginning of each school year. Building administration will also check in with new faculty members at various times throughout the school year.	We will continue to utilize tenured teachers and our administration to support new employees.	Due to the size of our school district, we may not have tenured teachers in academic areas or grade levels that align to the new employee's content area. Support might have to be offered by individuals in different grade levels and academic departments.	The District's administration will communicate and align the tenured teacher support for all new hires.



RETENTION (GOAL #3)								
Goal	Who Manages the Goal?	Strategies/Key Activities			Indicators of Progress	Resources Required	Risks and Mitigation	Communication/ Engagement Efforts
		What?	Who Owns This?	By When?				
Identify areas for improvement in retaining faculty.	Steve LePage - Superintendent	Survey the certified and non-certified faculty to assess how supported they feel and identify areas for improving retention.	Superintendent, Principals, Special Education Supervisor, Middle and High School Administration, Central Office Personnel	Starting 7/1/2024	The results from the survey that certified and non-certified faculty will complete to assess retention strengths and weaknesses.	Google Form for the retention survey.	Certified and non-certified faculty taking the time to respond to the survey.	Superintendent and Principals will develop the retention survey and share with the administrative team for revisions prior to its release.

March 1, 2024

To: Molly Sexton Read

From: Brendan T. Fritch

Re: Gymnasium use

Dear Chairperson:

Would you please share my request to the Board of Education at the next meeting regarding the use of the gymnasiums for The Highlander Basketball Camp from August 5 to August 9, 2024? The basketball camp, entering consecutive year 34, provides instruction, drills, and games for all boys and girls entering grades 3-8. Approximately 95% of attending campers and staff are from the towns that send students to Regional School District #7.

As in the past, insurance coverage will be provided for the week of camp. The camp offers an opportunity for young boys and girls from each town to work together and build relationships before entering the middle and high school. The camp also provides an opportunity for young people to safely exercise, socialize, and learn about teamwork and sportsmanship along with the skills and knowledge to become better basketball players. Even more so than in the past, these are very important skills for our young people to develop.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brendan T. Fritch

The Highlander Basketball Camp Director  
(860) 480 3722

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7**  
**COLEBROOK TOWN HALL**  
**Informal Budget Presentation - Colebrook**  
March 20, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

**DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Lisa Fragale(C), Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins.

**Absent:** Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read began the Informal Budget Presentation at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENTATION OF RSD#7 PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW 2024-2025**

Ms. Sexton Read began the presentation by reviewing the goals and mission of enabling all students to achieve academic and personal excellence, and stating the budget is for \$24,270,092. This is an increase of \$814,564 and 3.47% over the 2023-2024 Budget.

Ms. Sexton Read discussed the budget drivers are seeking the right balance with the student needs, with limited resources. Budget drivers include significant increases in the Special Education Outplacements, the continued Specialized High School Program Support, the significant increase in the medical benefits renewal and the Athletic Trainer Requirements with new State Mandates in place. Another budget driver is keeping the department level funding increase at 0%, deferring spending on school capital needs, and the one new Ag-Ed teacher request is not included in the budget. There are also teaching position reductions. Ms. Sexton Read reviews the fiscal cliff considerations for RSD#7 which include budget elimination of grant funding as of June 30, 2023.

Ms. Sexton Read discussed the Social Security increases during the last five years have averaged 4.14% compared to the average RSD#7 budget increase of only 2.10% and average assessment of 1.83%. Ms. Sexton Read explained when reviewing the District Reference Groups (DRGs), which are a State classification system that groups local and regional public school districts together based on the similar socioeconomic status of their students, RSD#7 High Schools falls in the 81.3% and the RSD#7 Middle School falls 78.2% in comparison to similar classified area school districts. Ms. Sexton Read presented the Regional School District No. 7's Smarter Balance Achievement results, the range of current expenditures per pupil in the Berkshire League, PSAT and SAT comparative data and the percentage of students with AP scores of 3 or higher. Ms. Sexton Read discussed the current and projected member town enrollment and the changes in average daily membership by town.

Ms. Sexton Read presented how RSD#7 focuses on continued excellence by adding the following courses for 2024-2025: Digital Design Studio, Art Classroom Mentorship, Advanced Personal Finance, Business Classroom Mentorship, UConn ECE: If You Love It, Teach It, Journalism II, Zoology, UConn EMT Training (pending approval) and the History of Rock and Roll. Additions to World Language are Adv. Topics in Italian: Honors Film and Honors Novel. Ag Ed and Tech courses offers for the 2024-2025 school year include Ag Business Management and Fisheries Management.

Ms. Sexton Read provided an Object breakdown overview of the budget increases and decreases in salaries, benefits, purchased professional and technical services, purchased property services, supplies, property, and other objects and debt services. Explanation was provided of the major budget drivers. Excess Cost expenditures offsets reflected in special education, professional and technical services, transportation and tuitions.

Ms. Sexton Read concluded that Regional School District No. 7, the pride of the Northwest Corner, with exceptional teachers, strong administrators and support staff, and outstanding custodial staff, provides a rigorous and comprehensive educational program for all learners, and students that graduate with exceptional academic achievement results. The medical insurance cost increase is 0.84% of the total budget increase, special education & outplacement increases are 2.0% of the total budget increase. Outside of medical insurance and special education outplacement cost increases, RSD#7's total budget increase amounts to only 0.63% (The average contractual increase for all collective bargaining groups is 3.27%). The 0.63% increase over non-negotiable expenses is the result of careful planning, flat-funded or reduced spending in almost all budget accounts, and the reduction of several certified staff members in this budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett  
Board Clerk



**Northwestern Regional School District No. 7**  
**Board of Education's Proposed 2024-2025 Budget**  
**Presented: March 20, 2024**

***The Pride of the Northwest Corner***



# ***Superintendent's Budgeting Commitments:***

***We will:***

- ***remain transparent and conscientious in our approach to budget development***
- ***request and secure the resources we believe essential to educate and support our students and staff***
- ***model our Vision of the Graduate attributes in all budget development practices, and through my leadership practices***
- ***do our very best to ensure that Northwestern Regional School District No. 7 remains a model of excellence in the state and on the national level***

# *Northwestern Vision of the Graduate*



*The Pride of the Northwest Corner*



# Proposed Budget: Historical Overview

<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
• 2019-2020	1.77%	1.54%
• 2020-2021	2.53%	2.49%
• 2021-2022	1.33%	0.38%
• 2022-2023	2.45%	1.97%
• 2023-2024	2.42%	2.79%
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• 2024-2025	3.47%	3.78%

*Prior 5-Year Average Budget Increase: **2.10%***

*Prior 5-Year Average Assessment: **1.83%***

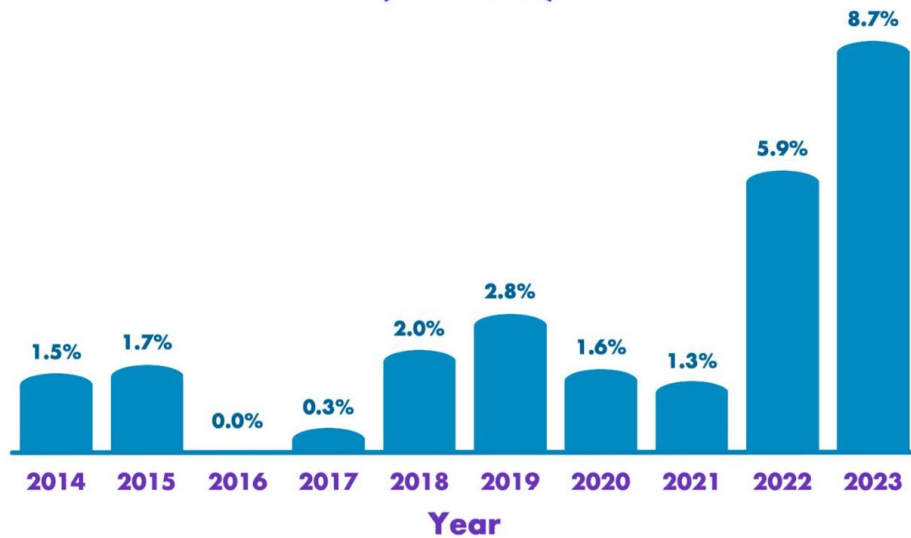
***6-Year Average Budget Increase: 2.33%***

***6-Year Average Assessment: 2.16%***



# Budgeting For Efficiency and Excellence Through Challenging Times

## Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs)



Source: The Social Security Administration

The Motley Fool

Social Security COLA increases from 2019-2023 have averaged 4.14%, compared to NWR7's average budget increase of 2.10%, and assessment increase of 1.83% during the same time period.

## Social Security Cost-Of-Living Adjustments

Year	COLA	Year	COLA	Year	COLA
1975	8.0	1995	2.6	2015	0.0
1976	6.4	1996	2.9	2016	0.3
1977	5.9	1997	2.1	2017	2.0
1978	6.5	1998	1.3	2018	2.8
1979	9.9	1999	2.5	2019	1.6
1980	14.3	2000	3.5	2020	1.3
1981	11.2	2001	2.6	2021	5.9
1982	7.4	2002	1.4	2022	8.7
1983	3.5	2003	2.1	2023	3.2
1984	3.5	2004	2.7		
1985	3.1	2005	4.1		
1986	1.3	2006	3.3		
1987	4.2	2007	2.3		
1988	4.0	2008	5.8		
1989	4.7	2009	0.0		
1990	5.4	2010	0.0		
1991	3.7	2011	3.6		
1992	3.0	2012	1.7		
1993	2.6	2013	1.5		
1994	2.8	2014	1.7		



# Budget Drivers: Seeking the Right Balance

## *Students Needs/Limited Resources*



### Special Education Programming:

- Significant Increase in Special Education Outplacements
- Continue Specialized Middle and High School Program Support

### Regular Education Programming:

- Significant Increase in Medical Benefits Renewal
- Athletic Trainer

### Budget Mitigation Staffing Reductions:

- Department Level funding increase held at 0%
- Deferred spending on school capital needs
- 1 new Ag-Ed Teacher request removed from the budget
- 3.5 Teaching Position Reductions:
  - 2.6 High School (English and World Language)
  - 0.4 Middle School (World Language)
  - 0.5 Library Media Specialist replaced with 1.0 Current NWR7 Social Studies Teacher (Net result is a .5 reduction of a Certified Teacher)

**TOTAL CERTIFIED STAFF REDUCTIONS = 3.5 FTE (Most near or at the top pay step)**

How do our *State Report Card* Results compare to DRG C High Schools?

School:	Student #	Grades	F.T.E.	F.T.E./Student Ratio	Accountability Index Score:
Northwestern HS	564	9-12	67.6	8.3	81.3
Canton HS	464	9-12	50.0	9.3	81.6
Ellington HS	737	9-12	77.4	9.5	77.4
Oxford HS	527	9-12	51.9	10.2	75.0
Somers HS	384	9-12	57.9	6.6	75.8
Reg. 4 Valley HS	489	9-12	58.0	8.4	75.1
Reg. 8 RHAM HS	819	9-12	92.0	10.6	77.0
Reg. 10 Lewis Mills HS	648	9-12	71.7	9.0	77.0
Reg. 13 Coginchaug HS	359	9-12	49.2	7.3	77.6
Reg. 12 Shepaug HS	494	9-12	59.8	8.3	75.1
<i>The Gilbert School</i>	410	9-12	49.8	8.2	61.3
<i>Reg 1 Housatonic Reg. HS</i>	319	9-12	49	6.5	68.5

# How do our *State Report Card* Results compare to DRG C Middle Schools?

School:	Student #	Grades	F.T.E.	F.T.E./Student Ratio	Accountability Index Score:
<b>Northwestern MS</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>7-8</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>78.2</b>
<b>Canton MS</b>	247	7-8	25.2	9.8	<b>62.3</b>
<b>Ellington MS</b>	398	7-8	41.4	9.6	<b>67.4</b>
<b>Oxford MS</b>	410	7-8	41.6	9.9	<b>58.8</b>
<b>Somers MS</b>	304	6-8	33.3	9.1	<b>72.3</b>
<b>Suffield MS</b>	445	6-8	56.5	7.9	<b>66.5</b>
<b>Tolland MS</b>	519	7-8	53.3	9.7	<b>74.4</b>
<b>Reg. 4 MS</b>	238	7-8	26.3	9.0	<b>57.7</b>
<b>Reg. 8 RHAM MS</b>	369	7-8	39.8	9.3	<b>62.3</b>
<b>Reg. 10 Har-Bur MS</b>	653	5-8	72	9.1	<b>75.9</b>

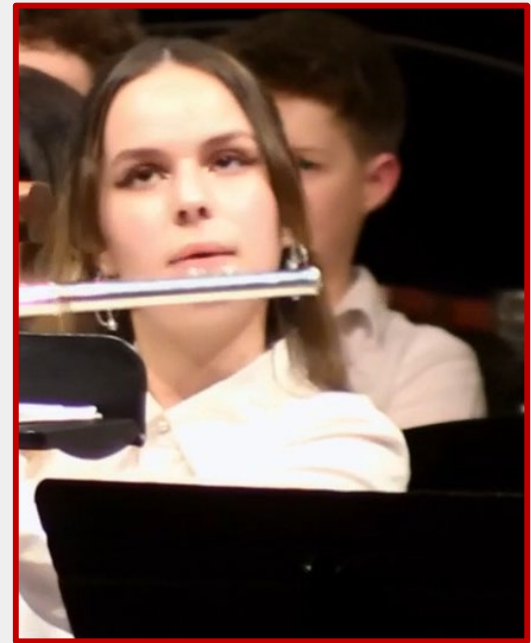


# *Northwestern Middle School*





# Middle School Points of Pride



# Northwestern Middle School

## Smarter Balanced Achievement Results

	2021	2022	2023
<b>ELA</b>	58%	62%	<b>68%</b>
<b>Math</b>	34%	50%	<b>61%</b>
<b>NGSS</b>	58%	64%	<b>71%</b>

Percentage of students that met/exceeded goal

# Our Northwestern MS Students' Satisfaction With Their School

## 9 PASS Factors

1. Feelings about school
2. Perceived learning capability
3. Self-regard as a learner
4. Preparedness for learning
5. Attitudes to teachers
6. General work ethic
7. Confidence in learning
8. Attitudes to attendance
9. Response to curriculum

High satisfaction with their school experience	Students/Cohorts in the 31st - 100th percentile
Moderate satisfaction with their school experience	Students/Cohorts in the 21st - 30th percentile
Low moderate satisfaction with their school experience	Students/Cohorts in the 6th - 20th percentile
Low satisfaction with their school experience	Students/Cohorts in the lowest 5% of responses

## Fall 2023 Overall:

Factor	Feelings about school	Perceived learning capability	Self-regard as a learner	Preparedness for learning	Attitudes to teachers	General work ethic	Confidence in learning	Attitudes to attendance	Response to curriculum demands
Percentile score	62.1	56.3	60.0	46.3	57.9	64.6	55.3	49.6	51.9



# Go Highlanders!





# PSAT COMPARATIVE 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

	Total Students	Mean Score	Mean ERW Score	Mean Math Score
Class of 2025	153	971	494	477
<b>Class of 2024</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1016</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>499</b>
Class of 2023	144	983	503	480

# SAT DATA COMPARATIVE

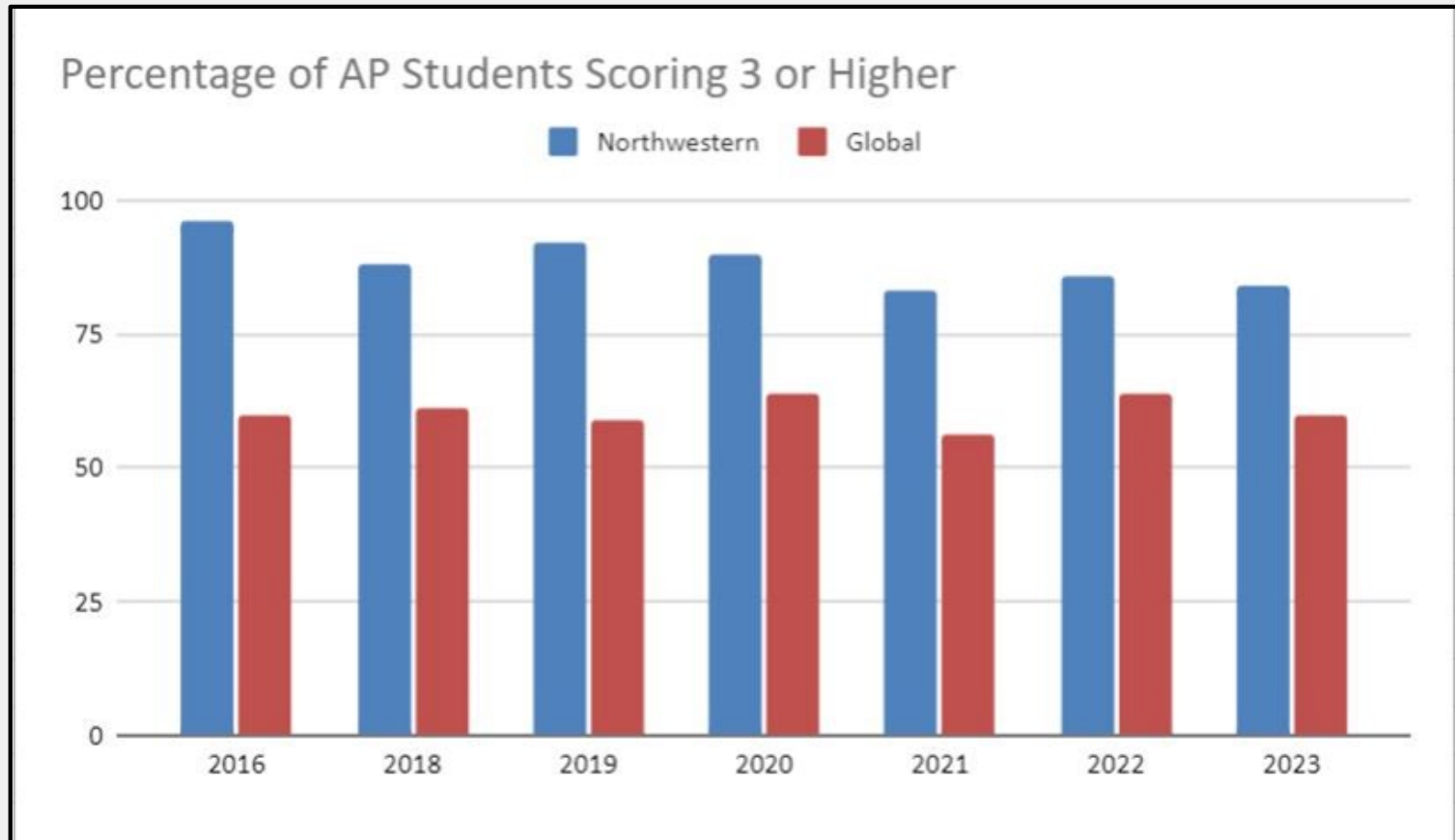
	Ave. Test Score	ERW Score	Math Score
<b>Class of 2024</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>528</b>
Class of 2023	1023	523	500
Class of 2022	1081	546	535

## SAT DATA – CLASS OF 2024 STATE COMPARATIVE

Group	Avg. Test Score	ERW Score	Math Score
<b>NWR7 Class of 2024</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>528</b>
NWR7 Class of 2023	1023	523	500
State of CT	975	493	482

# Percentage of AP Students Scoring 3 or Higher

*83 Northwestern students took 137 AP exams*



- *12 UConn ECE Courses will also be offered next year!*
- *58 Students Currently enrolled in UConn Courses*

# Northwestern High School



Exemplary High Performance

# Northwestern High School

*focused on expanded opportunities and excellence*

## Additional Course Offerings

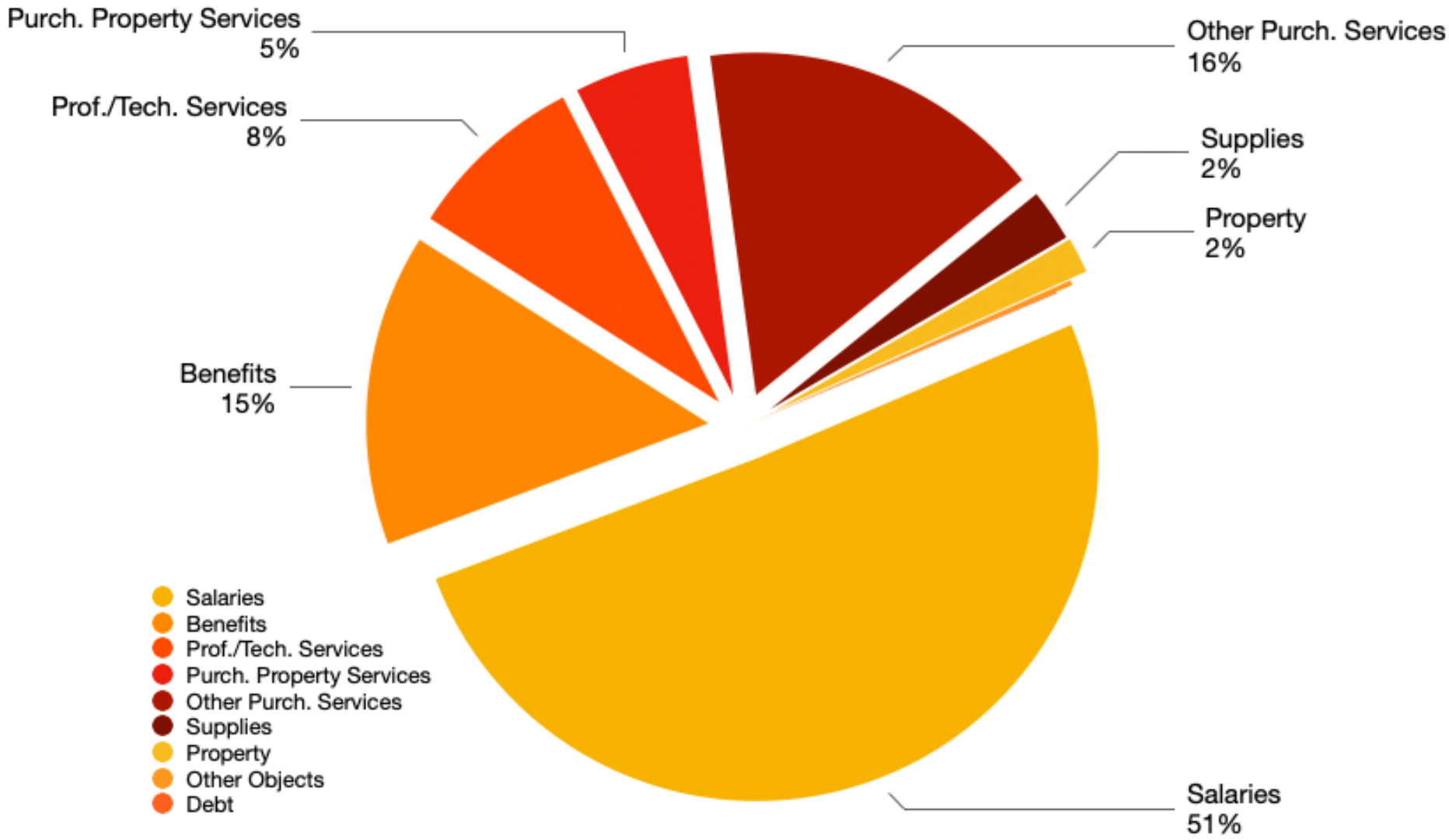
- **Agricultural Education**
  - Ag Business Management
  - Fisheries Management
- **Art**
  - Digital Design Studio
  - Art Classroom Mentorship
- **Business**
  - Advanced Personal Finance
  - Business Classroom Mentorship
- **Education**
  - UConn ECE: If You Love It, Teach It
- **English**
  - Journalism II
- **PE/Wellness**
  - UConn ECE: Exercise and Wellness for Everyone
- **Science**
  - Zoology
  - UConn EMT Training (pending approval)
- **Social Studies**
  - History of Rock and Roll
- **World Language**
  - Adv. Topics in Italian: Honors Film
  - Adv. Topics in Italian: Honors Novel



# Budget Overview

# Object Breakdown

**\$24,270,092**



\*Values above are rounded to the nearest

# 100

## Salaries

### Increase of \$223,156 or 1.85%

#### **Increases:**

- Contractual Salary Increases
- New Athletic Trainer +1.0 FTE (Offset by reduction in Contracted Services)
- Increase .50 FTE Library Media Specialist

#### **Budget Mitigation Actions:**

- Reduce 2 Teachers from H.S. English
- Reduce 1 Teacher from H.S./M.S. World Language
- Reduce 1 Teacher from H.S. Social Studies
- Reduce .05 Bookkeeping Asst. (reduced hours)
- School Based Mental Health Grant used to fund SEL/Academic Support in MS and HS
- Any new personnel requests were denied (including 1.0 Agriscience teacher)

# 200

## Benefits

### Increase of \$209,028 or 6.20%

#### **Increases:**

- Medical Health Insurance Renewal: 10.95%

#### **Budget Mitigation Actions:**

- Reduced benefits for 3 staff members
- Life Insurance Renewal at 0%
- Unemployment Renewal at 0%
- Workers' Compensation Insurance Renewal at 0%



# **300 Professional/Technical Services**

## **Increase of \$7,311 or .36%**

### **Increases:**

- Medical Advisor Increase
- Shared Services Assessment up 3%

### **Budget Mitigation Actions:**

- Many accounts held to current funding levels
- Reduction in Contracted Services (Athletic Trainer)
- Use of \$30,000 in Excess Cost Grant to offset Special Education expenditures through Shared Services
- Use of \$60,000 in Excess Cost Grant to offset Special Education Professional and Technical Services

# **400 Property Services**

## **Increase of \$1,230 or 0.09%**

### **Account Factors:**

- Most accounts held to 0%
- Energy, Fuel, and Utilities Adjustments
- Snow Removal/Ice Management Increase

**500**

# **Other Purchased Services**

## **Increase of \$383,574 or 10.70%**

### **Increases:**

- Additional Special Education Outplacements Increase the Tuition and Transportation Costs
- Rising Special Education Costs

### **Budget Mitigation Actions:**

- Most accounts held to 0% increase
- Excess Cost Offset for Special Education Transportation \$53,800
- Excess Cost Offset for Special Education Outplacements \$420,000

**600**

# **Supplies**

## **Decrease of -\$1,970 or -0.33%**

### **Increases:**

- Library Supplies, Building Maintenance Supplies

### **Budget Mitigation Actions:**

- Departments held to 0% increase (reallocations within Department)
- Textbooks Reduced

**700**

## **Property**

**Decrease of -\$6,921 or -1.66%**

### **Decreases:**

- Reduced Instructional Equipment Replacements
- Reduced Special Education Capital Outlay

**800**

## **Other Objects**

**Decrease of -\$844 or -1.44%**

- No new borrowing since 2012
- Adjustments to Dues/Fees

**900**

**Other Funds**

**\$0 or 0%**

**No New Borrowing**

- No changes

# 2024-2025 Proposed Budget Increase of \$814,564



# Excess Cost Expenditure Offset

Code	Description	2023-2024	2024-2025
325	Shared Services	\$30,000	\$30,000
326	Professional/Tech Services	\$55,000	\$50,000
511	Transportation-Special Education	\$55,000	\$53,800
562	Tuitions – Special Education (H.S. & M.S.)	\$257,000	\$420,000
	TOTAL	\$397,000	\$553,800

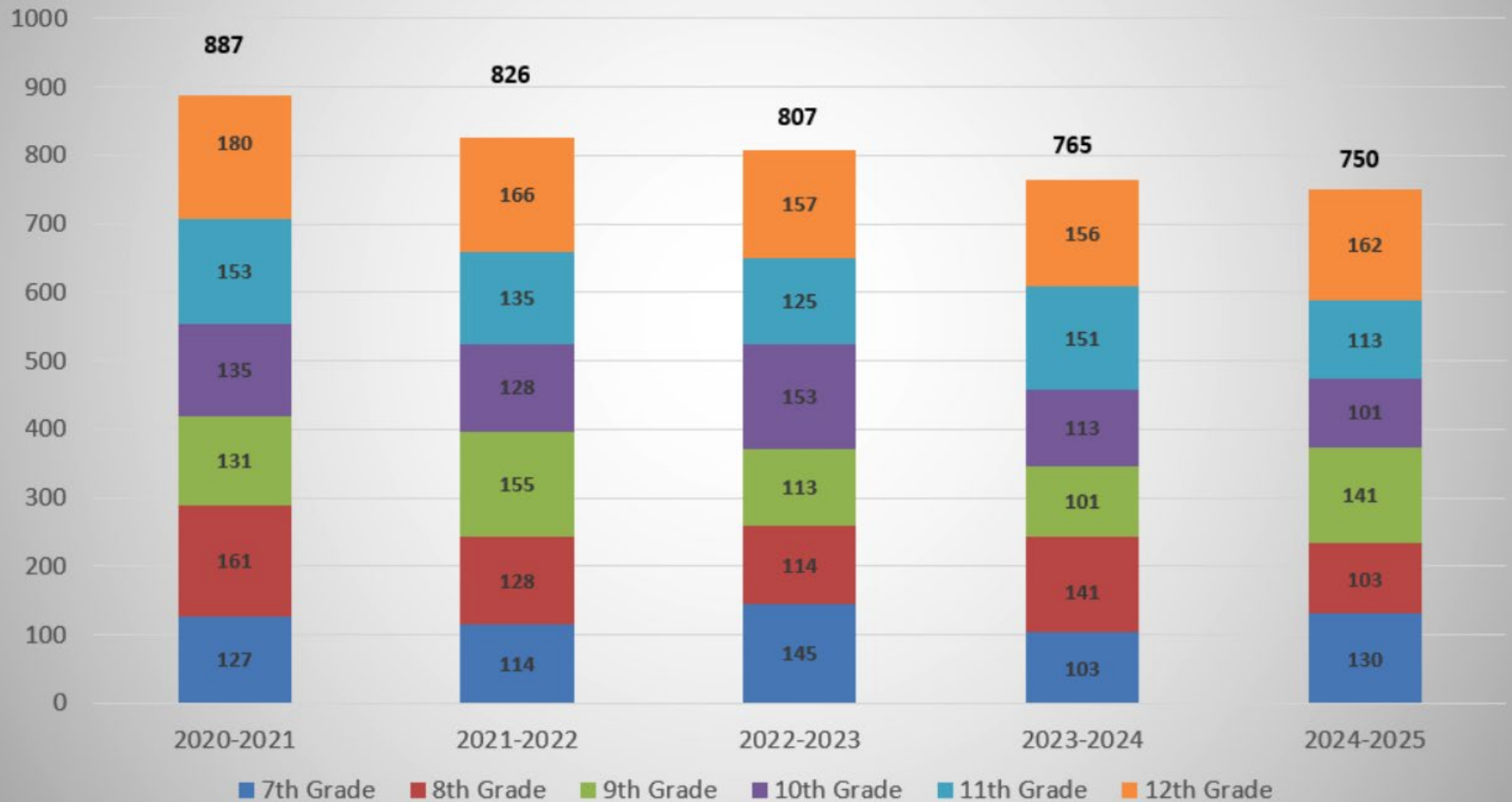
- Districts are reimbursed by the state for the expenses associated with educating special education students with a cost above 4.5x the per pupil expenditure (\$25,453)\*. For us, that cost is \$114,539\*. If a student's educational costs **do not** reach that threshold, the district pays the full amount.
- The state covers **a percentage of the amount in excess of \$114,539**. New legislation decreased the reimbursement percentage for our district to 88% of excess cost; **however, the Appropriations Committee habitually underfunds this critical grant.**
- **The Board adjusted the originally budgeted 82% in excess cost grant offsets to 71% based on newly released state information regarding this year's reimbursement rate of 71%, and the full expectation of ongoing underfunding of this account.**

# Revenues & Assessments

Description	2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Estimated	Difference
Tuition-Regular	\$657,150	\$540,480	(\$116,670)
Tuition-Special Ed	\$0	\$0	\$0
Tuition – Ag Ed	\$354,796	\$185,979	(\$168,817)
Rental Income	\$7,500	\$10,500	\$3,000
Interest Income	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0
Sprint Contract	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ag Ed Grant	<u>\$624,480</u>	<u>\$793,500</u>	<u>\$169,020</u>
<u>Subtotal Revenues</u>	<u>\$1,658,926</u>	<u>\$1,545,459</u>	<u>(\$113,467)</u>
Budget Variance	\$688,578	\$819,700	\$131,122
<u>Subtotal with Offset</u>	<u>\$2,347,504</u>	<u>\$2,365,159</u>	<u>\$17,655</u>
Budget	\$23,455,528	\$24,270,092	\$814,564
<u>Assessments</u> (Budget minus Subtotal with offset)	\$21,108,024	\$21,904,933	\$796,909

# Straight Line ADM – Member Towns

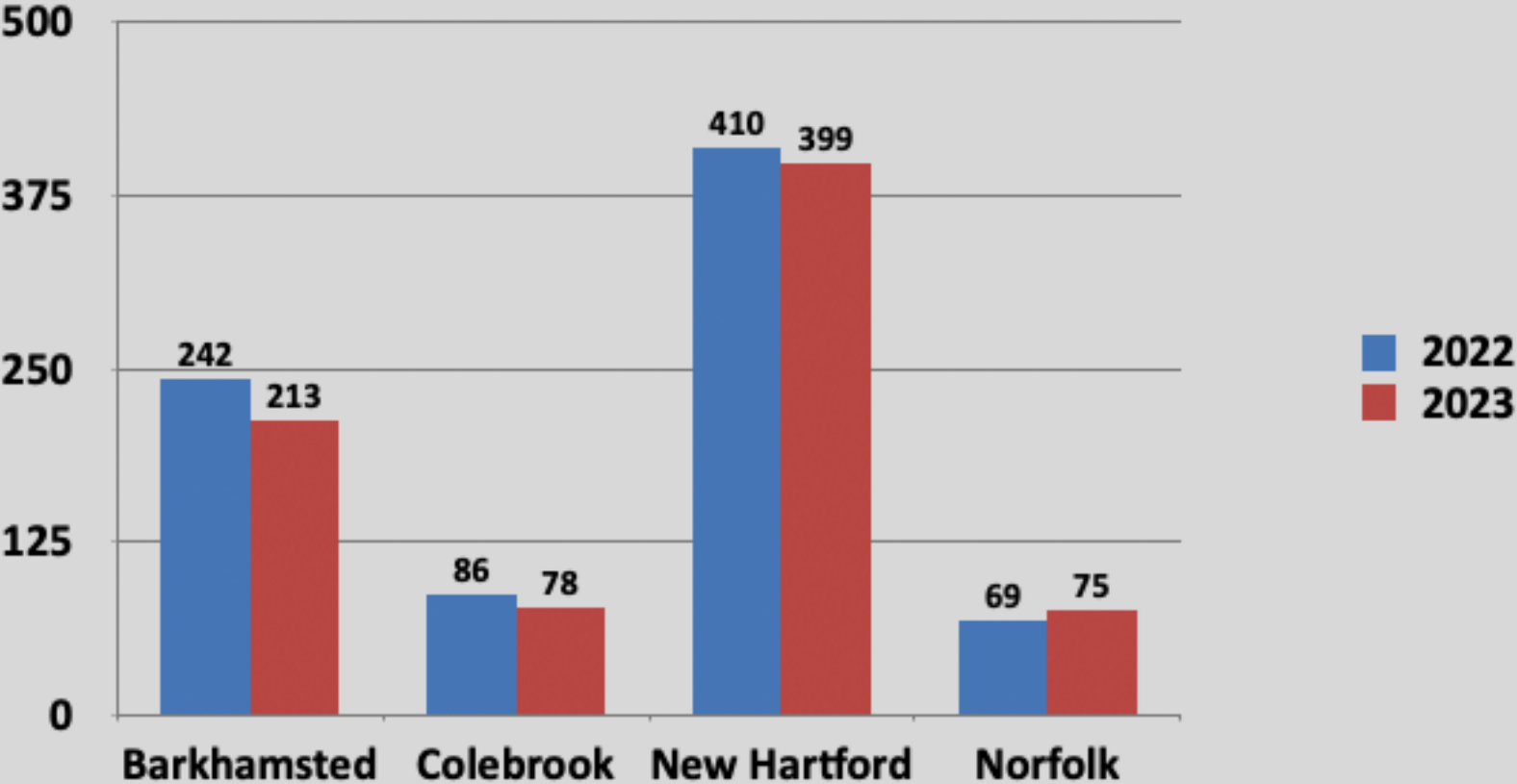
## Current and Projected



\*Based on Oct. 1, 2023



# Change in Average Daily Membership By Town



\* Based on October 1, 2023 CSDE

# A Look at Total District Enrollment

October 1, 2023

Grade 7:	108
Grade 8:	145
Grade 9:	116
Grade 10:	132
Grade 11:	176
Grade 12:	146
<u>HTA:</u>	<u>19</u>

Our member town students are joined by Agricultural Education and tuition paying students from: Winsted, Hartland, Torrington, Canton, and Granby.

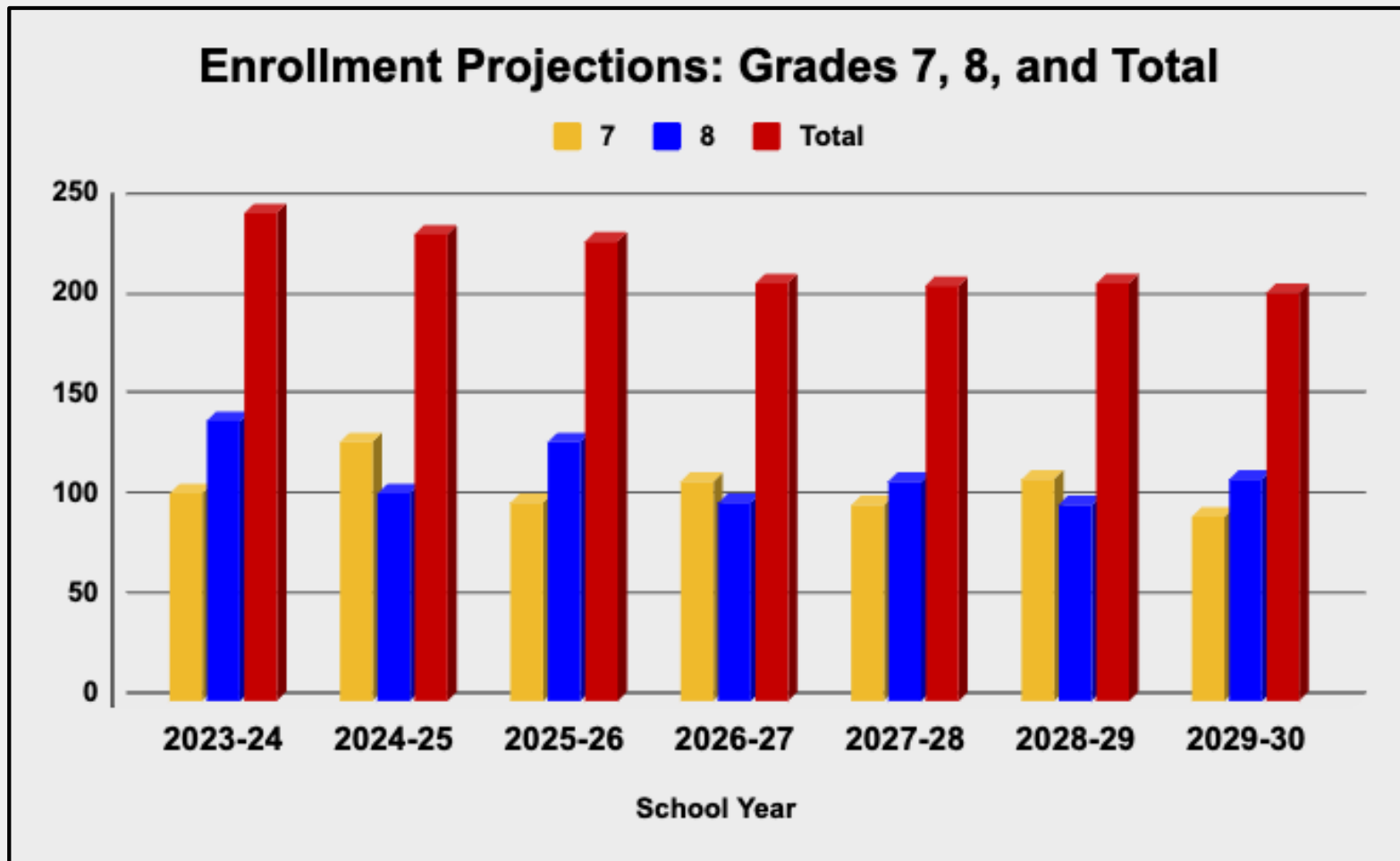
Total includes magnet schools and outplacements.

Total:	842
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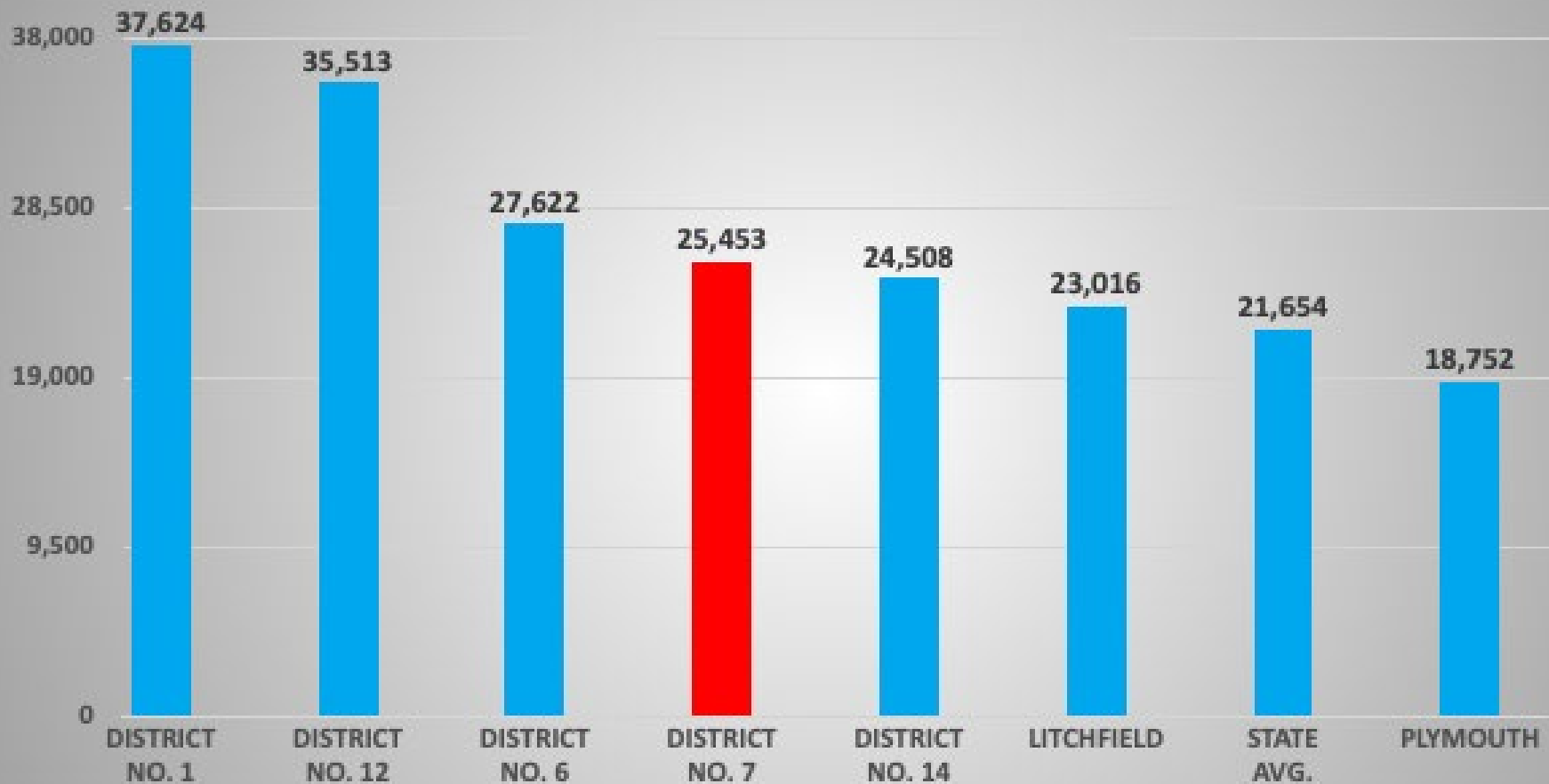
# Middle School Enrollment Outlook

Grade	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
7	104	130	100	110	98	112	93
8	141	104	130	100	110	98	112
Total:	245	234	230	210	208	210	205

\*Oct. 2023



## Range of Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil Berkshire League\*



\*Data for Gilbert Unavailable  
Source: CSDE 3/19/2024



# 2024-25 Assessment Explanation

Budget 24/25	\$24,270,092	3.47%
Revenue	\$1,545,459	(6.84%)
Assessment Offset	\$819,700	19.04%
NET ASSESSMENT	\$21,904,933	3.78%

# Historical Perspective on Assessments

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5 Year Average
Barkhamsted	-0.84%	5.24%	0.01%	0.65%	-3.66%	0.28%
Colebrook	2.49%	4.01%	8.37%	2.79%	-0.70%	3.39%
New Hartford	7.44%	-2.12%	1.20%	3.69%	6.55%	3.35%
Norfolk	-12.02%	-5.41%	6.43%	5.26%	18.95%	2.64%
Total Assessment Increase:	2.49%	0.38%	1.97%	2.79%	3.78%	2.28%
Average of Total Assessment Increase ~ 2.28%						
Total Expenditure Increase:	2.53%	1.33%	2.45%	2.42%	3.47%	2.44%
5-Year Average of Total Expenditure Increases ~ 2.44%						

## In Summary...

- Regional School District No. 7 provides a rigorous and comprehensive educational program for all learners.
- We know and care about all of our students, and helping to prepare them for a successful and rewarding life is our top priority.
- We develop strong and meaningful relationships between faculty, staff, and the student body.
- We hire and retain extraordinary teachers and support staff who work alongside strong, experienced administrators.
- Northwestern High School seniors graduate with exceptional experiences and are well prepared for their future.
- Our students demonstrate excellence across all disciplines, including our Agriscience program, and in the fine and performing arts.
- RSD7 develops and supports high performing student athletic programs and athletes across all sports.
- Our school community values kindness and is focused on the emotional well-being of all.
- We provide a high-value, high-quality education and enjoy overwhelming community support.
- RSD7's per pupil expenditures are in the midrange of the Berkshire League with exceptional academic results.
- We would like to thank our facilities team for taking such good care of our buildings and grounds.

***Regional School District No. 7***  
***The Pride of the Northwest Corner***



# Budget Highlights Summary



2023-2024 Budget: **\$23,455,528**

2024-2025 Budget: **\$24,270,092**

Total Budget Increase: **\$814,564**

Percentage Increase: **3.47%**

- *Medical Insurance Cost Increase = **0.84% of our total budget increase***
- *Special Education & Outplacement Increases = **2.0% of our total budget increase***
- ***Outside of medical insurance and special education outplacement cost increases, our total budget increase amounts to only 0.63%***

*(The average contractual increase for all collective bargaining groups is **3.27%**)*

***Our 0.63% increase over non-negotiable expenses is the result of careful planning, flat-funded or reduced spending in almost all budget accounts, and the reduction of several certified staff members in this budget.***





# District Budget Meeting

**MAY 6, 2024**

**NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL SCHOOL**

**Dr. Roberta Ohotnicky Little Theater**

**7:00 PM**



## BUDGET REFERENDUM

**MAY 7, 2024**

**Town Polling Locations**

**Hours may vary by town**

**For budget details, visit:**

**[www.nwr7.com](http://www.nwr7.com)**

**Thank You for Your Support!**



## **ADOPTION OF CALL OF BUDGET HEARING**

**MOTION:** for adoption of call of budget hearing as presented by Ms. Sexton Read, “The electors and those entitled to vote in town meetings in the towns of Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford and Norfolk, Connecticut are hereby notified and warned that a district hearing for the Regional School District No. 7 will be held on Monday, April 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Roberta S. Ohotnicky Little Theatre of the high school building, at which meeting the proposed budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 will be presented. Any person may recommend the inclusion or deletion of expenditures at such meeting. The Annual Meeting of said District will be held on Monday, May 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.”

## **DECISION OF REFERENDUM**

### **ADOPTION OF BUDGET TO TAKE TO BUDGET HEARING ON APRIL 22, 2024**

**MOTION:** for adoption of the RSD#7 2024-2025 Budget to take to the Annual District Budget Hearing on April 22, 2024 with a 3.47% increase.

Ms. Sexton Read “The Board of Education adopts the RSD#7 2024-2025 Budget to take to the Annual District Budget Hearing on April 22, 2024 with a 3.47% increase.”

## **ADOPTION OF REFERENDUM QUESTION**

**MOTION:** to adopt the referendum questions, “Shall the Regional School District No. 7 Annual Budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 be accepted?”

“Yes”    Vote is for approval.

“No”    Vote is for disapproval.