

## Marlborough Board of Education FY25 Budget Questions & Answers

1. *When do residents vote on the school budget?*

In a referendum on Tuesday, May 7th, 6:00am-8:00pm, in the MES Community Room.

2. *Is the school budget vote separate from the Town budget vote?*

No, there is one budget which consists of the Town Budget, Marlborough's portion of the RHAM School District budget, and the Marlborough BOE budget.

3. *Are there public hearings ahead of the referendum?*

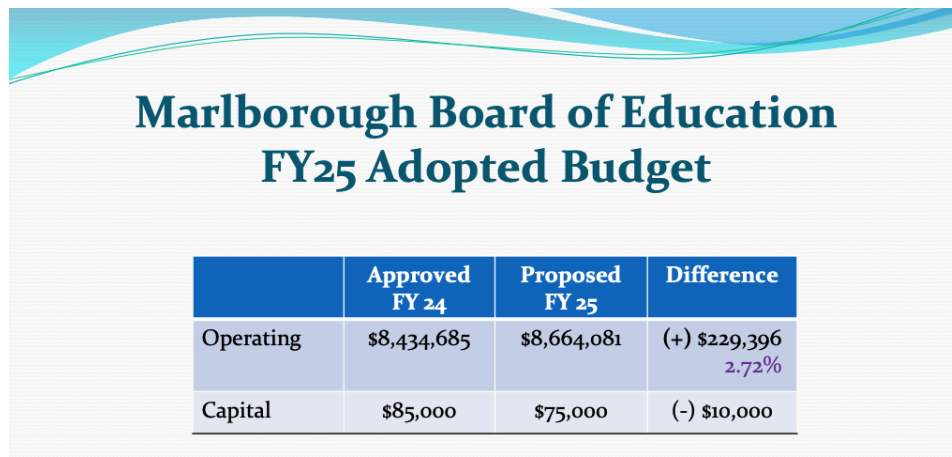
Yes, on April 15th and on May 6th, both at 7:00PM in the MES cafeteria.

4. *What happens if the Town budget does not pass?*

If the budget does not pass, the Town budget and the BOE budget do not pass. Depending upon the number of no votes, it could also impact whether the RHAM budget passes. The Board of Finance would meet to decide upon any actions before a second referendum would be held.

5. *What is the BOE budget increase and how does it compare to other school district budget increases across the state?*

The Board of Education's budget increase of 2.72% was Marlborough's lowest increase in the last four years and one of the lowest in the state. The average school budget increase across the state is 4.81% (Source: CASBO - CT Association of School Business Officers). The school district's Capital Budget of \$75,000 is for maintenance of the building's brick exterior, replacement of identified external doors, and repair of sidewalks.



The graphic features a blue and white wavy header above the title. Below the title is a table with four columns: Category, Approved FY 24, Proposed FY 25, and Difference. The Operating row shows an increase of \$229,396 (2.72%), while the Capital row shows a decrease of \$10,000.

	Approved FY 24	Proposed FY 25	Difference
Operating	\$8,434,685	\$8,664,081	(+) \$229,396 2.72%
Capital	\$85,000	\$75,000	(-) \$10,000

6. *What are some examples of how the budget directly affects students?*

The budget contains the funding needed to achieve aspirational goals for students detailed in the MES Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP). It provides the books and materials teachers and students need, data-informed and research-based early interventions to meet students' learning and behavioral needs, and the investment in the educators who work tirelessly to provide a growth-oriented learning environment for students.

7. *What does return on investment mean?*

MES has demonstrated an excellent return on investment, meaning, comparatively lower per pupil expenditure yet strong outcomes. Examples include the model K-3 Reading program; students exceeding state assessment index scores in literacy, math, and science; award-winning choral, instrumental, and visual arts programs; immersive Spanish instruction in grades K-6; innovative physical education & health experiences, and; a library-media center suited for research, the joy of books, as well as robotics instruction.

### State Profile and Performance Report DRG C Per Pupil Expenditure (2022-2023)

District	Per Pupil Exp.	District	Per Pupil Exp.
Comwall (K-8)	\$33,824	New Hartford (PreK-6)	\$20,891
RSD 12	\$29,022	Canton	\$20,770
Essex (PreK-6)	\$27,650	Bolton	\$20,685
RSD 04	\$27,347	Somers	\$20,674
RSD 13	\$27,232	Pomfret	\$20,554
RSD 07	\$25,464	Salem (PreK-8)	\$20,212
Sherman (PreK-8)	\$25,082	Oxford	\$20,026
Mansfield (PreK-8)	\$24,767	Columbia (PreK-8)	\$19,937
RSD 18	\$24,303	Suffield	\$19,675
RSD 17	\$24,145	RSD 10	\$19,343
Andover (PreK-6)	\$22,832	Hebron (PreK-6)	\$18,902
RSD 14	\$22,796	Bethany	\$18,782
RSD 08	\$22,687	Tolland	\$18,686
Barkhamsted (PreK-6)	\$22,595	<b>Marlborough (PreK-6)</b>	<b>\$18,319</b>
RSD 19	\$21,115	Ellington	\$17,833

Source: <https://public-edsight.ct.gov/overview/per-pupil-expenditures-by-function>

8. *Does the Marlborough BOE budget include surplus funds from the prior year to offset its budget increase?*

No, the BOE is not able to apply surplus funds in this manner like the Town and a regional school district can. The BOE operating budget represents actual anticipated expenditures.

9. *What are the drivers of the budget increase?*

Contractually bargained wage increases and medical benefits are drivers. Additional cost drivers include increased prices (per economic factors) for transportation, fuel, electricity, and supplies.

10. *How is the BOE able to have a 2.72% increase when the average school budget increase across the state is 4.81%?*

In addition to a continual analysis of spending efficiencies, there are two major cost decreases in this budget to offset increases:

- (1) Teacher Retirements: While the overall number of class sections is the same as what was budgeted in FY24, two teachers at the top of the salary scale are retiring and their replacements are budgeted at a lower step on the salary schedule which yields savings.
- (2) There are no out-of-district special needs school placements budgeted for next year (compared to 1-2 over the past several years). The school district's ongoing investments in its Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) program and effective related services staffing allows children to be effectively served according to their Individualized Education Plans in their home school without having to send children out to specialized schools which can cost upwards of \$150,000+ per student for tuition and transportation.

11. *Why are retiring teacher positions being replaced?*

The number of class sections (number of teachers) is based upon enrollment, class sizes, and student needs. If the two retiring teachers were not replaced, the integrated special needs preschool class would be too large to effectively provide early intervention to meet the needs of the youngest learners and class size would be too large in other grades where there remains the need for post-pandemic learning recovery.

**Investments for Students: Class Size**

Grade	2023-24 # Sections	2024-25 Projected Enrollment	2024-25 Projected # Sections	2024-25 Projected Class Size	Budgeted Sections Change
PreK	1	40	2		+1
K	4	54	3	18	-1
1	4	52	3	17.3	-1
2	4	57	3	19	-1
3	3	70	4	17.5	+1
4	3	56	3	18.7	0
5	3	67	4	16.8	+1
6	3	57	3	19	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>25</b>	Avg. K-6 Class Size <b>18</b>	0

**Class Size Guidelines**  
 Grades K-1 15-18 students; Grades 2-4 18-23 students; Grades 5-6 20-25 students

K-6 (-1) PreK (+1)
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12. *What is the status of school enrollment?*

Enrollment has been steady for the past few years at approximately 455 prek - grade 6 students. The district uses NESDEC as well as students-in-seats for enrollment projections. NESDEC prepares hundreds of enrollment projections each year for school districts throughout New England. These ten-year projections are designed to provide up-to-date enrollment information for planning and allocation of resources. The current projection shows an increase of 94 students (17%) over the next ten years, not including any impacts on school enrollment tied to potential multi-unit housing construction.

## Enrollment Projections

Birth Year	Births		School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	K-6	PK-6
2018	49		2023-24	35	52	58	70	56	67	57	56	416	451
2019	49		2024-25	40	54	52	57	70	56	67	57	413	453
2020	71		2025-26	40	85	54	52	57	70	56	67	441	481
2021	59	(prov.)	2026-27	40	71	85	54	52	57	70	56	445	485
2022	62	(prov.)	2027-28	40	74	71	85	54	52	57	70	463	503
2023	58	(est.)	2028-29	40	70	74	71	85	54	52	57	463	503
2024	60	(est.)	2029-30	40	72	70	74	71	85	54	52	478	518
2025	62	(est.)	2030-31	40	74	72	70	74	71	85	54	500	540
2026	60	(est.)	2031-32	40	72	74	72	70	74	71	85	518	558
2027	60	(est.)	2032-33	40	73	72	74	72	70	74	71	506	546
2028	60	(est.)	2033-34	40	72	73	72	74	72	70	74	507	547

Note: NESDEC enrollment projections used for PreK and incoming K; current actual K-5 enrollment rolled forward for grades 1-6.

13. *How does the administrative structure of the Marlborough school district compare to other school systems?*

A school's success is highly influenced by the effectiveness of its school leaders. The district is appropriately staffed compared to other school districts. There are two full-time building administrators - a structure which has been in place for 43 years, and a half-time Superintendent (which was reduced from a full-time position 15 years ago). The half-time Superintendent's salary is less than half of full-time Superintendents in the region. The building administrators' regionally competitive wages are negotiated through collective bargaining. With both current building administrators retiring, the positions have been successfully filled for next year with veteran school leaders who will function as co-administrators as they share in the supervision and evaluation of 70 staff, oversee the implementation of instructional programs, monitor every child's academic progress, engage with students and families, and effectively lead and manage the wide range of grades within the school.

This budget includes the return of an up-to-half-time Pupil Services Director to work in collaboration with the school administration on special education management (specialized and complex student needs, grant management, program oversight, legal matters). Districts typically have at least one full-time Pupil Services administrator and often additional supervisors.

The district was able to return a much-needed facilities position and did so in a cost-efficient manner by combining oversight of both facilities and technology into one position (vs. what is typically 3-5 full-time positions in other school districts).

Unlike typical school districts, Marlborough does not have a Director of Curriculum nor a Human Resources Director - it is the Superintendent in collaboration with the building administrators who absorb these responsibilities.

14. *Why is 90% of the ongoing cost of the full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) in the BOE budget vs. the Town budget as is typically the case?*

The school district felt strongly that as part of the overall safety and security plan for students and staff, an active-duty police officer within the town’s Public Safety Department was needed. While an SRO is a town employee assigned to the school, in order to have this request fulfilled by the Town, the BOE agreed to include the bulk of the cost in its budget.

15. *Do you still have pandemic recovery funds coming in and are there grants that the district receives or competitively applies for?*

Grants help to reduce operating budget costs. The district proactively applies for grants including those that fully fund all instructional technology. The district received a state pandemic recovery grant to support specialized behavioral programming. Other than that, no, there are no incoming or ongoing pandemic funds.

## Grants Which Support District Needs

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT	EXAMPLES OF USE
Title I 7/23-6/25	\$19,320	Portion of a Curriculum Specialist’s salary
Title II 7/23-6/25	\$6,412	Purchased Professional and Technical Services (professional development & training and substitutes)
Title IV 7/23-6/25	\$10,000	Curriculum Materials & After School Clubs
IDEA Section 611 7/23-6/25	\$113,094	0.4 FTE of two (2) teachers (0.8 FTE total) & specialized equipment
IDEA Section 619 (PreK) 7/23-6/25	\$5,096	Supplies/technology/assessment
REAP 7/23-6/25	\$38,694	Instructional Hardware & Software; consultant services
PEGPETIA 07/23-06/24	\$82,390	Instructional Hardware & Software
CSDE Grant 7/23-6/26	\$65,744	Registered Behavioral Technicians (2) [100% FY24 & FY25; 70% FY26]

16. *Where can I find out more information about the school district and the school budget?*

The school district website [www.marlbrough.k12.ct.us](http://www.marlbrough.k12.ct.us) is an informative resource including budget documents (under Budget tab), collective bargaining agreements (under District/Business Office), recorded BOE meetings (under District/Board of Education, meeting agendas and minutes), and program information (under District/Curriculum and Instruction.)

