

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL
Informal Budget Presentation - NEW HARTFORD
April 3, 2024 –7:00 p.m.
APPROVED 4.22.2024

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins.

Absent: Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Lisa Fragale(C), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Ms. Kim Crone (N).

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read began the Informal Budget Presentation at 7:04 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 \$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 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 School 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 offered 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 expenditure offsets are reflected in special education, professional and technical services, transportation, and tuition.

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 the 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. A brief discussion followed with questions in regard to the outplacement costs and transportation.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett
Board Clerk



Northwestern Regional School District No. 7
Board of Education's Proposed 2024-2025 Budget
Presented: April 3, 2024

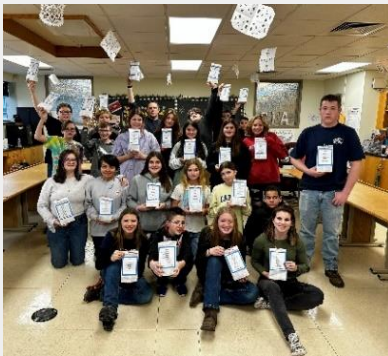
The Pride of the Northwest Corner

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%

• 2024-2025	3.47%	3.78%

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

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

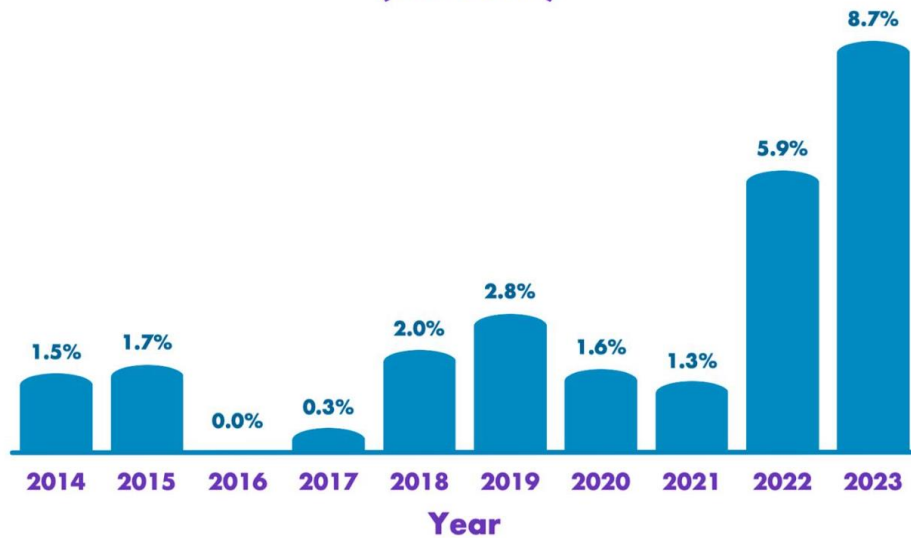
6-Year Average Budget Increase: 2.33%

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:
Northwestern MS	243	7-8	32.3	7.5	78.2
Canton MS	247	7-8	25.2	9.8	62.3
Ellington MS	398	7-8	41.4	9.6	67.4
Oxford MS	410	7-8	41.6	9.9	58.8
Somers MS	304	6-8	33.3	9.1	72.3
Suffield MS	445	6-8	56.5	7.9	66.5
Tolland MS	519	7-8	53.3	9.7	74.4
Reg. 4 MS	238	7-8	26.3	9.0	57.7
Reg. 8 RHAM MS	369	7-8	39.8	9.3	62.3
Reg. 10 Har-Bur MS	653	5-8	72	9.1	75.9



Northwestern Middle School



Middle School Points of Pride



Northwestern Middle School

Smarter Balanced Achievement Results

	2021	2022	2023
ELA	58%	62%	68%
Math	34%	50%	61%
NGSS	58%	64%	71%

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 11TH GRADE

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

SAT DATA COMPARATIVE

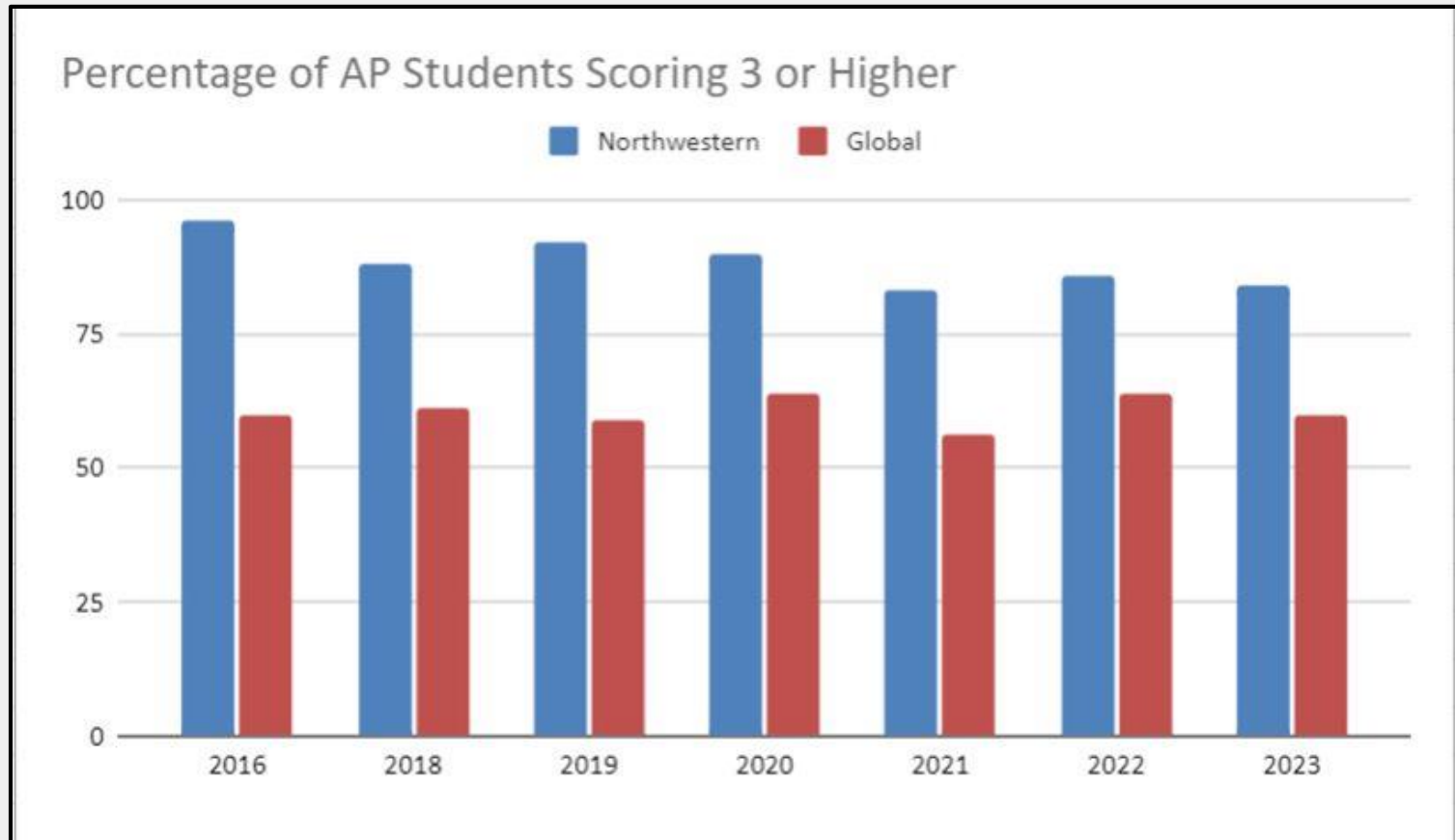
	Ave. Test Score	ERW Score	Math Score
Class of 2024	1060	532	528
Class of 2023	1023	523	500
Class of 2022	1081	546	535

SAT DATA – CLASS OF 2024 STATE COMPARATIVE

Group	Avg. Test Score	ERW Score	Math Score
NWR7 Class of 2024	1060	532	528
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

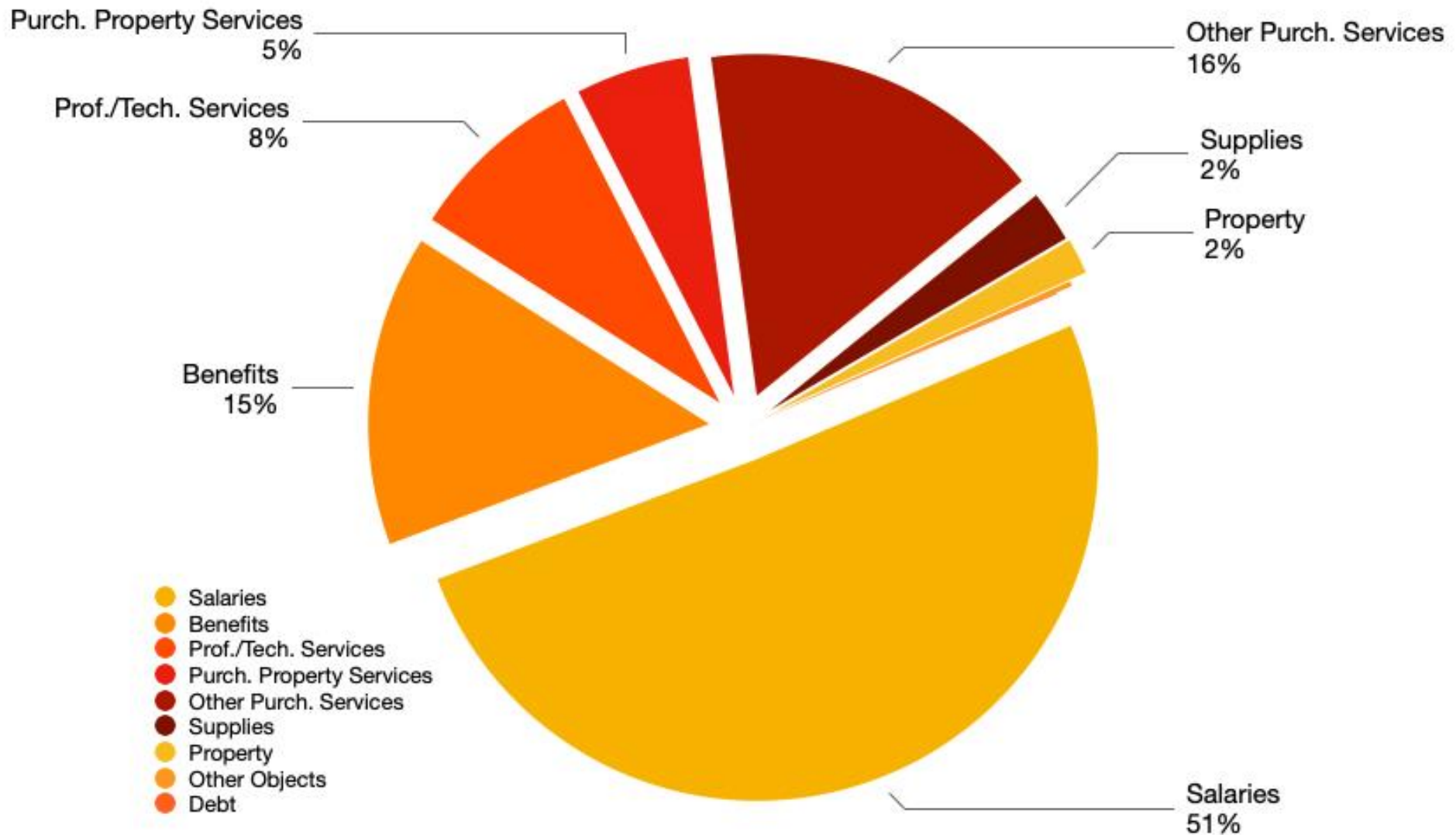
- **Agricultural Education**
 - Ag Business Management
 - Fisheries Management
- **Art**
 - Digital Design Studio
 - Art Classroom Mentorship
- **Business**
 - Advanced Personal Finance
 - Business Classroom Mentorship
- **Education**
 - UConn ECE: If You Love It, Teach It
- **English**
 - Journalism 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 \$50,000 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

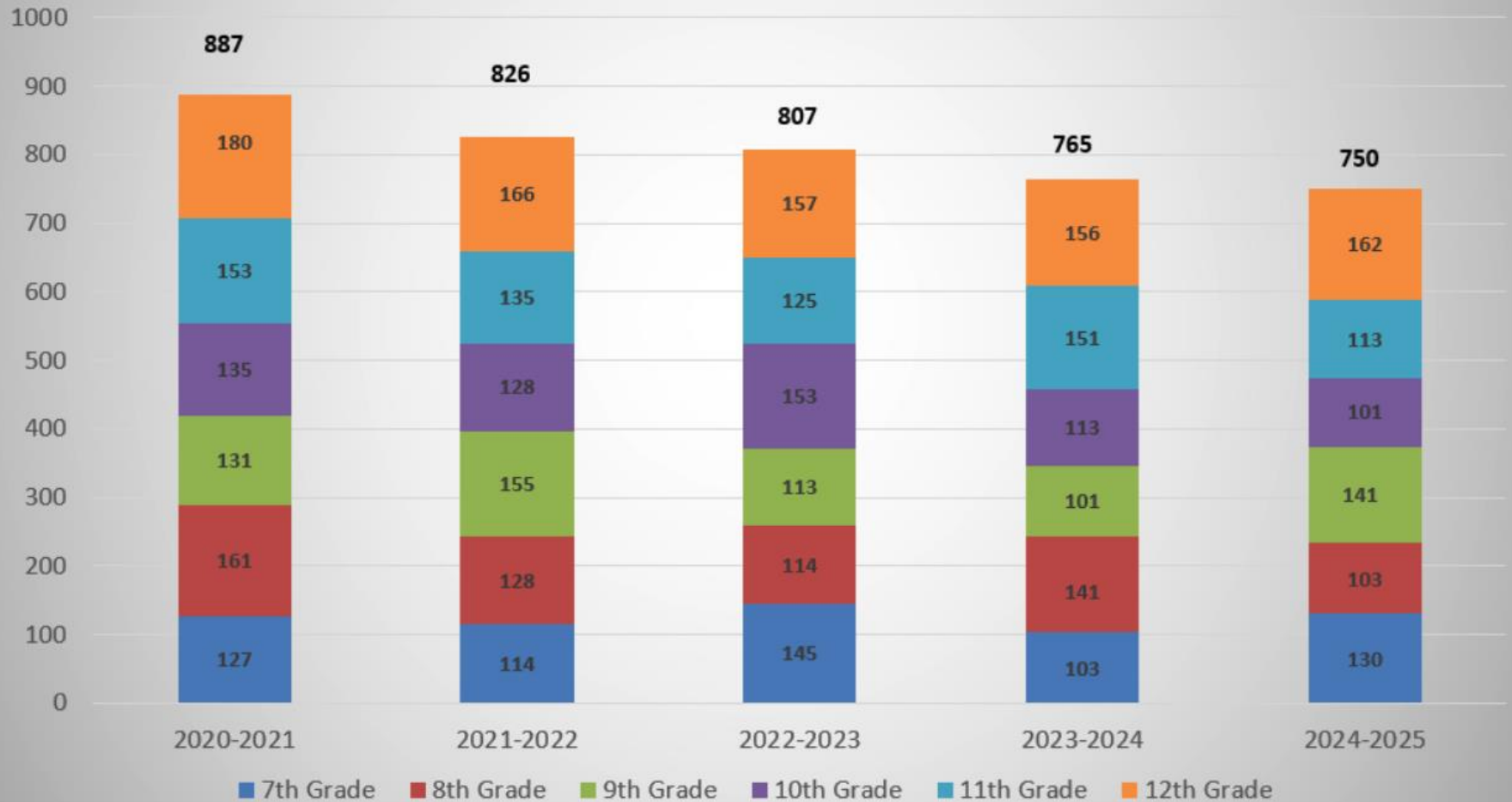
- Districts are reimbursed by the state for the expenses associated with educating special education students with a cost above 4.5x the per pupil expenditure (\$25,453)*. For us, that cost is \$114,539*. If a student's educational costs **do not** reach that threshold, the district pays the full amount.
- 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

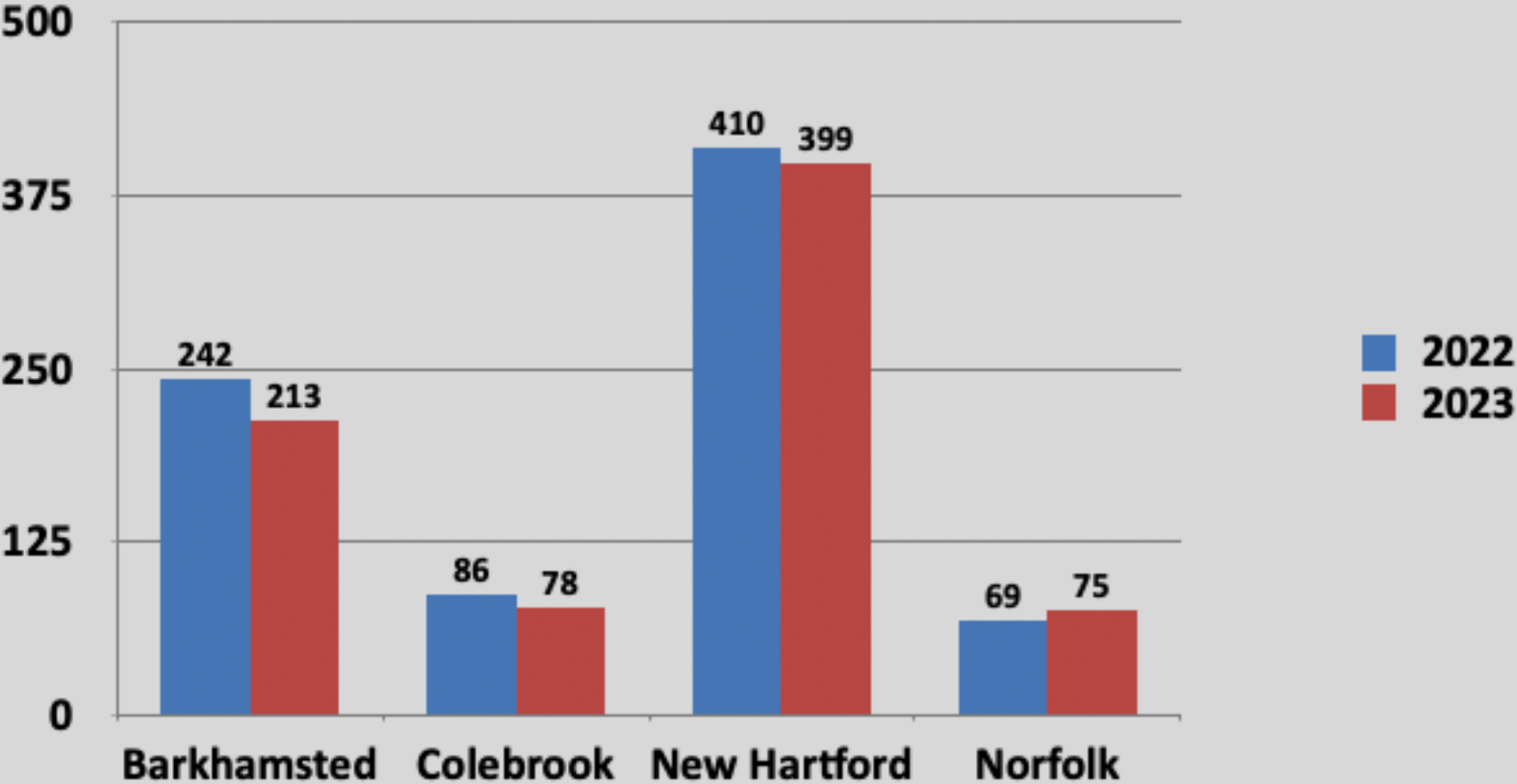
Straight Line ADM – Member Towns

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

HTA: 19

Total: 842

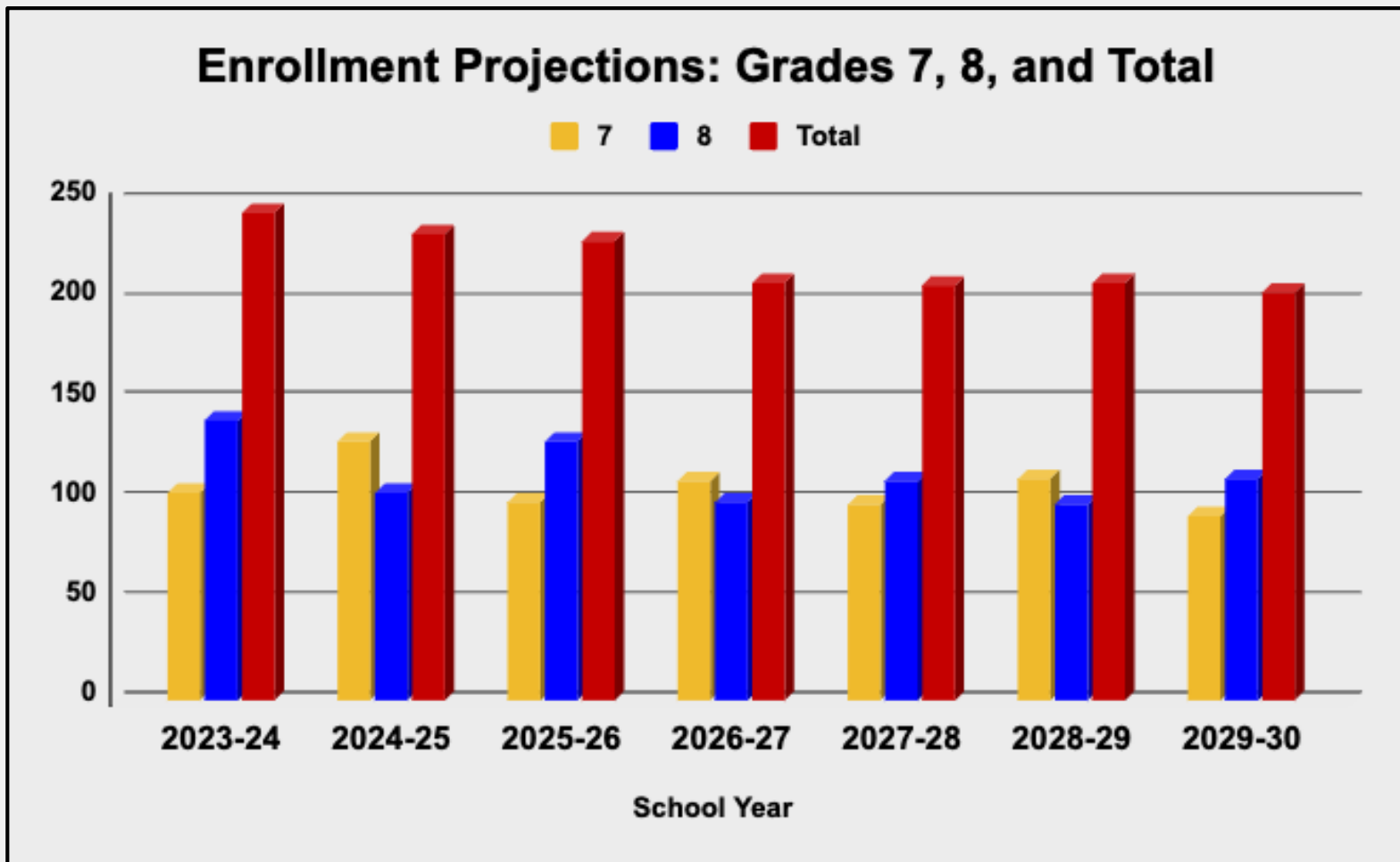
Our member town students are joined by Agricultural Education and tuition paying students from: Winsted, Hartland, Torrington, Canton, and Granby.

Total includes magnet schools and outplacements.

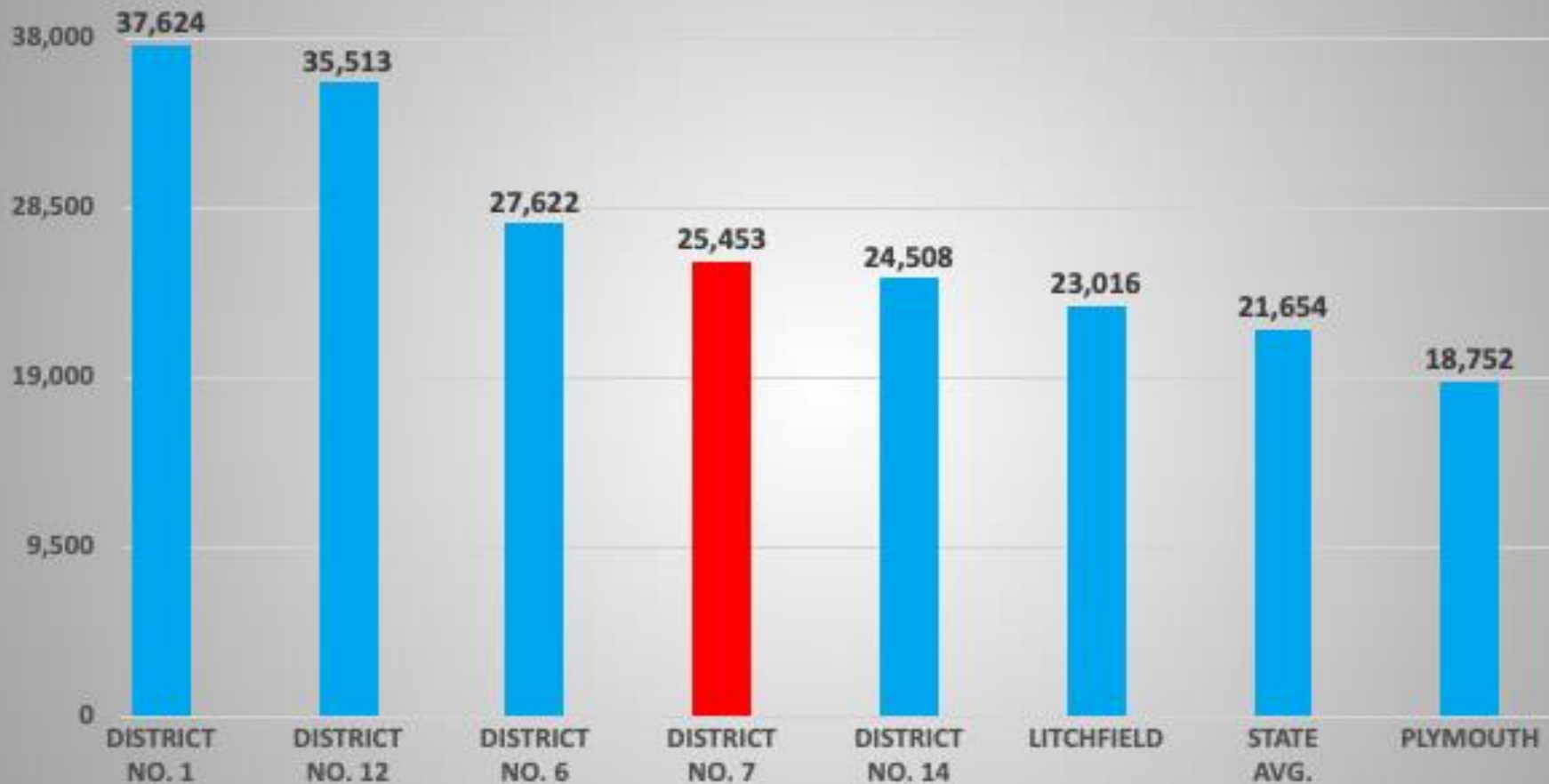
Middle School Enrollment Outlook

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

Thank You for Your Support!

