



ASHLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANNUAL BUDGET

2022 - 2023

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Ashland community,

As superintendent of Ashland Public Schools, I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2023 budget. After careful review and assistance from the administrative team, the 2022-23 budget was submitted to the Town of Ashland after approval from the Ashland School Committee.

Our educators, staff and administrators are all justifiably proud of their accomplishments in serving the Ashland community and its students. We are also grateful to continue to be an integral member of the School Building Committee to guide the construction of the new David Mindess Elementary School.

More importantly, I am proud of the district's strategic budgeting and fiscal responsibility presented herein. Our community depends on us to leverage our financial resources and make strategic decisions to help all students succeed. With the tremendous responsibility to educate approximately 3,000 students – many of whom are English language learners or special needs – we continue to be humbled by the community's trust in our dedication to ensuring that our use of public funds serves all members of our community.

While funding challenges may lie ahead for Ashland Public Schools, the entire district and I are committed to empowering every student to be self-motivated, resilient life-long learners. We look forward to another year of hard work as we continue to embrace this challenge and responsibility every day.

Be well,

James E. Adams



468 employees



5 schools



260 FTE teachers



**In-district Cost Per
Student
\$13,691**



**Total State Aid
Funding
\$6,556,124**

ABOUT ASHLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MISSION

We are committed every minute, every hour, every day, to every student.

VISION

The Ashland Public Schools is a forward thinking district that cultivates the academic and social-emotional growth of each student through a supportive, collaborative, innovative and challenging environment. Students will develop into self-motivated, resilient, life-long learners, who embrace their role as responsible contributors to a global community.

CORE VALUES

Safety: We believe in providing safe and supportive learning environments and facilities, which address the varied social, emotional, and health needs of all students and staff.

Responsibility: We believe in the importance of individual and group accountability to make thoughtful, appropriate decisions that produce positive results for all.

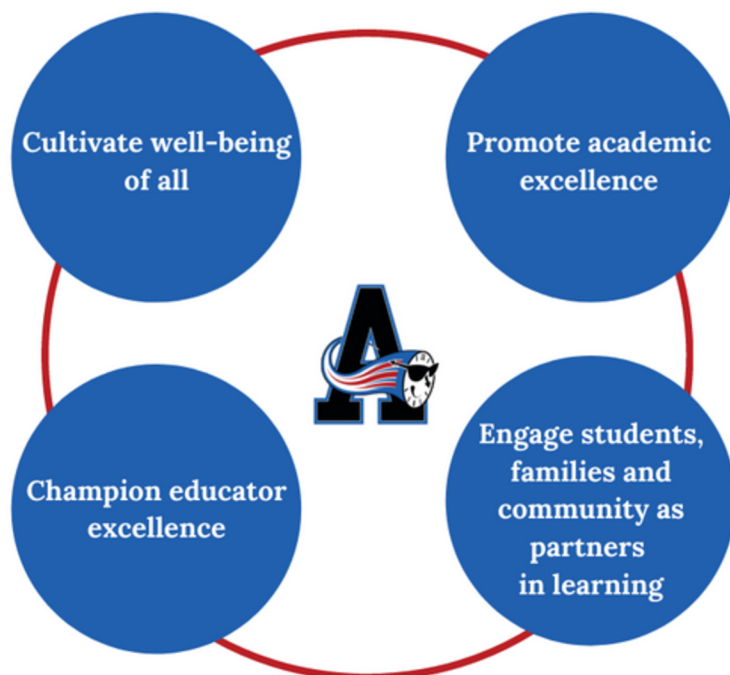
Respect: We believe in the inherent value of all: including oneself, one's peers, and all who are a part of our community and greater global society.

Excellence: We believe as individuals, schools, and a community in the cultivation of an environment in which each member is supported in achieving his/her greatest potential.

Integrity: We believe in making decisions that uphold the values of honesty, decency, and sincerity in all of our actions.

BLUEPRINT FOR CONTINUOUS STUDENT IMPROVEMENT

The Ashland Public Schools is a forward-thinking district that cultivates the academic and social-emotional growth of each student through a supportive, collaborative, innovative and challenging environment. Students will develop into self-motivated, resilient, life-long learners, who embrace their role as responsible contributors to a global community.



We are committed every minute, every hour, every day, to every student.

IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Cultivate well-being of all

We will ensure student, faculty, and staff well-being by teaching strategies, skills, and competencies necessary to maintain and support social-emotional health.

Promote academic excellence

We will improve achievement for all students by providing individualized, equitable, and challenging opportunities in an environment that fosters growth and skill acquisition for each student.

Engage students, families and community as partners in learning

We will continuously model a district environment based on collaboration, respect, and open lines of communication through partnerships with students, caregivers, community members, businesses, community-based organizations, and educational institutions.

Champion educator excellence

We will attract, develop, and retain highly qualified, passionate educators who are committed to the vision of the Ashland Public Schools.



ASHLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Laurie Tosti
School Committee Chair

Marc Terry
School Committee Vice-Chair

Erin Williams
School Committee Member

Paul Kendall
Mindess School Building Project - SBC Chair

Tina Fitanides
School Committee Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

James E. Adams
Superintendent

Michael A. Caira, Jr.
Assistant Superintendent

Christopher Mathieu
Director of Finance and Operations

Claudia Bennett
Mindess School Principal

Paul Carpenter
Director of Technology

Esmeralda Casas
Media and Communications Director

Jennifer Cutler
Director of Social Emotional Learning

Sara Davidson
Pittaway School Principal

David DiGirolamo
AMS Principal

Stephen Marks
Athletic Director

Jonathan Murray
Director of Public Facilities

Peter Regan
Warren School Principal

Kathy Silva
Director of Student Services

Kelley St. Coeur
AHS Principal



RECOMMENDED BUDGET

As the table below illustrates, the recommended budget for FY'23 totals \$37,919,806, a 4.86% increase over FY'22.

	Preliminary Budget
2021-22 Final	\$36,160,660
2022-23 Preliminary Recommendation	\$37,907,474
Increase	\$1,746,814
% Increase	4.83%

The current budget as presented does not require the reduction or elimination of programs or personnel. The recommended budget includes additional personnel necessary to meet the needs of our students and is aligned with meeting district goals outlined in the Blueprint for Continuous Student Improvement.

The table below shows the FY23 recommendation compared to the previous three years.

Fiscal Year	Total Budget	Dollar Budget Increase	Actual Budget Increase
FY'20	\$33,284,474		
FY'21	\$34,843,573	\$1,559,099	4.68%
FY'22	\$36,160,660	\$1,317,087	3.78%
FY'23	\$37,907,474	\$1,746,814	4.83%



BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

The first step in the annual budget process is for each principal and director to review their respective line items. They analyze how funds were spent, estimate expected enrollment, class size numbers, and review special education and English language learner needs. Due to the pandemic making predictions more challenging this year, administrators reviewed data from more than one year to create a responsible budget. Additionally, we have accounted for known contractual obligations (e.g. special education out-of-district placement, salaries and transportation).

The chart below shows the progression from the final FY'22 budget to the FY'23 recommended budget. The budget represents the budget requirements of the Ashland Public Schools to meet the needs of students.

Budget Action	Budget Impact
Start with FY '22 Final Appropriated Budget	\$36,160,660
Increase in Salaries Due to Contractual Obligations	\$1,151,287
Increase in Student Services	\$482,591
Increase in New Personnel (See Appendix 2)	\$301,929
Increase in General Transportation	\$54,412
Increase in Facilities Expenses	\$86,352
Increase in Curriculum	\$79,800
Other	-\$19,557
ESSER Grant Funds	-\$390,000
FY '23 Superintendent's Recommended Budget	\$37,907,474



BUDGET CATEGORIES

The following table shows the seven major budget categories, with salaries accounting for the biggest expense at 81% of the overall budget, consistent with past years.

Major Budget Category	FY'22 Final Budget	Recommended FY'23 Budget	Incremental Change (\$)	Incremental Change (%)
Professional Salaries	\$25,036,251	\$27,518,704	\$482,453	1.93%
Clerical Salaries	\$937,392	\$1,038,879	\$101,487	10.83%
Other Salaries	\$3,854,999	\$4,171,275	\$316,276	8.20%
Contracted Services	\$6,786,524	\$5,660,171	-\$1,126,353	-16.60%
Supply Lines	\$534,338	\$342,482	-\$191,856	-35.91%
Other Expenses	\$1,121,852	\$1,175,963	\$54,111	4.82%
Revolving Offsets	-\$2,110,696	\$0	\$2,110,696	-100.00%
Expense Total	\$36,160,660	\$37,907,474	\$1,746,814	4.83%

The Ashland School Committee and the Ashland Educators Association have contracts with the following union units: Ashland Teachers, Ashland Nurses, Ashland Education Support Personnel, Ashland Administrative Assistants, and the Ashland Custodians and Maintenance. The budget accounts for anticipated step and lane increases (**Appendix 3**) for FY23 as a condition of these collective bargaining agreements.



STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The Ashland Public Schools continue to see a significant increase in student enrollment. Since June 2017, the Ashland Public Schools has seen an increase in 272 students or approximately 10.60%.

This increase places significant stressors on our district, including space, curricular and staffing needs.

School Year Actuals	K-12	Difference	%
2016-17	2,565	7	0.0%
2017-18	2,636	71	2.8%
2018-19	2,731	95	3.6%
2019-20	2,782	51	1.9%
2020-21	2,705	-77	(-2.8%)
Actual 2021-22*	2,837	142	4.9%

Enrollment Projections					
School Year	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	Total
Proj 2021-22	646	633	696	781	2,756
Proj 2022-23	652	617	686	796	2,751
Proj 2023-24	620	648	658	860	2,786
Proj 2024-25	596	665	652	886	2,799
Proj 2025-26	589	673	635	899	2,796
Proj 2026-27	590	641	668	878	2,777

	Student Enrollment 2020-21	Current Student Enrollment 2021-22	Current Year Difference	% Change
K-12 Student Population	2,705	2,837	132	4.88%
ELL Population	184	249	65	35.3%



PER-PUPIL SPENDING

We compared our per-pupil spending to twenty-five other school districts that met at least one of three criteria:

- a) described on the Department of Education website as being “Like-Districts”
- b) a member of the ACCEPT Collaborative
- c) a member of the Tri-Valley League of which Ashland is a participant

As you can see from the list, Ashland’s spending is below the state average and many other high-performing districts. Ashland ranks 292 out of 318 school districts in per-pupil expenditure.

Once again, the Ashland Public Schools and Ashland High School have been recognized as top performers in the Commonwealth. In 2021, Ashland High School was rated the 33rd best high school by Boston Magazine, which looked at 150 high schools in the Metro Boston area.

DISTRICT	FY20 PER-PUPIL EXPENDITURE
Burlington	\$20,793
Dover-Sherborn	\$20,555
Dedham	\$19,957
Westwood	\$19,402
Bedford	\$18,671
Needham	\$18,165
Foxborough	\$18,084
Ipswich	\$17,878
State average	\$16,963
Millis	\$16,921
Bellingham	\$16,916
Marblehead	\$16,761
Tewksbury	\$16,711
Swampscott	\$16,140
Seekonk	\$16,123
Medfield	\$16,071
Wakefield	\$15,930
Mendon-Upton	\$15,595
Natick	\$15,471
Medway	\$15,325
Norton	\$14,623
Chelmsford	\$14,621
Hopkinton	\$14,346
Holliston	\$13,832
Ashland	\$13,691
Melrose	\$11,857



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education is, without a doubt, the most unpredictable of all school department budget items. Each year, the number, nature and level of service for students with special needs, as defined in the student’s Individualized Education Program, can change dramatically. This interdependent relationship between mandated services, student needs and school budgets means that forecasting special education expenses is a difficult, if not impossible, challenge for school administrators throughout Massachusetts.

In-District vs. Out-of-District

The Ashland Public Schools is committed to educating all of our students in-district. We believe that, when possible, students are better served being with their peers in an inclusionary setting. Students of all levels benefit from one another, and it reinforces our beliefs that every child can learn and that every child is valued for the uniqueness and gifts they bring to the schools. However, there are times when the district cannot meet the needs of a child, and placement outside of the Ashland Public Schools is warranted.

Because we believe that all students belong in the district, we have created numerous programs over the past three years to meet the needs of our unique learners. Serving students in the district allows us to control the quality of programming and keep our students in their community. An added benefit is the reduction of our out-of-district costs – related transportation costs and tuition costs which are legally mandated and not reimbursable.

As proposed in the budget, we must periodically add personnel and program-related costs to avoid higher-cost options.

Increase in Special Education Out-of-District Students and Cost				
Year	Students	Cost	\$ Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (Decrease)
2017-2018	35	\$2,795,950	\$509,841	-
2018-2019	35	\$2,800,300	\$4,350	0.02%
2019-2020	36	\$3,268,142	\$467,842	16.71%
2020-2021	36	\$3,624,421	\$356,058	10.89%
2021-2022	36	\$3,624,200	(\$221)	0.00%
2022-2023	41	\$3,872,052	\$247,852	6.84%

* Average Per Pupil Cost for an Out of District Student: \$98,584 before Transportation



CIRCUIT BREAKER

When it's not possible to keep a student in-district, schools must rely on state and federal funding to offset out-of-district special education costs.

While funding at the federal level is historically stable, state funding has been subject to major funding fluctuations since its inception.

The Special Education Circuit Breaker is a partial reimbursement by the state to school districts to offset the cost of educating out-of-district students, except for related transportation costs and tuition costs which are legally mandated and not reimbursable.

Special Education Circuit Breaker Reimbursement Formula Out of District Placement (ODP)

Circuit Breaker Funding Formula (Example from 2022)

The reimbursement for ODP is calculated using the following formula as an example:

Ashland's eligible ODP costs: \$2,767,914

Subtract foundation amount: \$1,167,600 (4xs foundation rate of \$11,227 multiplied by 26.0 students)

Eligible claim: \$1,600,314

State reimbursement: 75.44%

Total reimbursement: \$1,207,266

Approximate transportation costs: \$593,032

Total cost to APS after Circuit Breaker reimbursement: \$2,153,680

Per pupil cost after Circuit Breaker reimbursement: \$82,834

**State reimbursement varies year to year.*



REVOLVING ACCOUNTS

The Special Education Circuit Breaker is one of several revolving funds that allow the district to raise revenues from a specific service and use those revenues, without further appropriation, to support the service. These funds are allocated to offset general operating expenses. While incomplete, here is a list of other revolving funds:

School Choice: revenue received for students enrolled in Ashland Public Schools from other MA districts that can be used for any purpose specific to education.

Building rental: fees received for use of Ashland Public School Facilities can only be used to offset building and maintenance expenses.

Transportation: fees received for students who are not required by law to be transported. Only students in grades K-6 and who live more than two miles from their school are entitled to free transportation.

International tuition: revenue received for international students enrolled in the Ashland Public Schools through an agreed-upon contract set forth by the Ashland School Committee. Revenue is used to offset the salaries of counseling staff and English language learner educators.

During the FY23 budget process, the Ashland Public Schools projects to utilize \$2,110,696 of revolving accounts for operating expenses. See **Appendix 1** to see how APS will use these funds over the next two years.

General Fund Offsets	FY '22	FY'23	Increase (Decrease)
Special Education Circuit Breaker	\$1,160,197	\$1,207,266	\$47,069
School Choice	\$500,000	\$452,931	(\$47,069)
Building Rental	\$150,499	\$150,499	\$0
Transportation Fees	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$0
International Tuition	\$-	\$-	\$0
Total	\$2,110,696	\$2,110,696	\$0

In addition to general fund revolving accounts, fees are charged for athletics participation and attendance in the Ashland Pre-School. These funds are not part of the general operating budget but are used to offset expenses occurring in athletics and pre-school.

Athletics: user fees and gate receipts are used to offset the cost of the athletic program.

Pre-School: tuition fees for typically-developing students are used to offset program costs.



UNFUNDED REQUESTS

There are legitimate and justifiable needs that have not been included within the recommended budget, due to limited resources and a duty to present a reasonable and sustainable budget to Ashland residents. While some needs may go unfunded, it is crucial to emphasize that the needs remain. If resources become available, the administrative team has determined some areas in which an investment will need to be made:

Henry Warren School (\$180,000)

- 3 classroom teachers to reduce class size

David Mindess School (\$220,000)

- Second developmental program at Mindess (2023-24) would require a special needs teacher and Applied Behavioral Analyst Paraprofessionals (\$100,000)
- Additional third and fourth-grade teachers to meet enrollment needs (\$120,000)

Ashland Middle School (\$448,000)

- Teaching staff to meet enrollment needs
 - Use of ESSER Funds currently but must be absorbed in operating budget

Ashland High School (\$180,000)

- Elective teacher (\$60,000)
- Math and ELA teacher due to demand (\$120,000)
- 0.2 French teacher to increase offering (\$12,000)

Ashland Public Schools (\$1,325,000)

- **Facilities and Maintenance (\$350,000)**
 - District-Custodial and Maintenance Positions
 - Provide staffing to adequately maintain and service our school buildings (\$100,000)
 - Furniture and Equipment Replacement or elimination of fees (e.g. Athletics, School Bus, PreK, etc.) (\$250,000)
- **Instructional Supplies and Programming Needs (\$500,000)**
 - Increases to instructional supply, equipment, and textbook budgets
- **District-Wide Literacy(1) and Math Coaching (2) Positions (\$255,000)**
 - Specialists who provide direct support to teachers
 - Provide direct service and intervention strategies to students
- **Additional Special Education Coordinator Position (\$90,000)**
 - Increased need and ensure 1 coordinator for each school building
- **Increase of related services FTEs to meet increasing demand (OT, SLP, BCBA) (\$75,000)**
- **Adaptive Physical Education Teacher-District Wide (\$55,000)**

Projected Revolving Account Use for Operating Expenses Fiscal Years 2022-2023

School Year 2021-2022	Anticipated July 1, 2021 Beginning Balance	FY '22 Anticipated Revenues	FY '22 Anticipated Expenditures	FY '22 Projected Ending Balance	FY '23 Anticipated Budget Offsets
Circuit Breaker	\$1,116,090	\$1,160,197	\$1,160,197	\$1,116,090	\$1,207,266
Building Rental	\$464,845	\$150,450	\$150,499	\$464,796	\$150,499
International Tuition	\$162,775	\$0	\$0	\$162,775	\$0
School Bus Revolving	\$676,898	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$676,898	\$300,000
School Choice	\$1,891,644	\$270,000	\$500,000	\$1,661,644	\$452,931
	\$4,312,252	\$1,880,647	\$2,110,696	\$4,082,203	\$2,110,696

School Year 2022-2023	Anticipated July 1, 2022 Beginning Balance	FY '23 Anticipated Revenues	FY '23 Anticipated Expenditures	FY '23 Projected Ending Balance	FY '24 Anticipated Budget Offsets
Circuit Breaker	\$1,116,090	\$1,207,266	\$1,207,266	\$1,116,090	\$1,207,266
Building Rental	\$464,796	\$150,450	\$150,499	\$464,747	\$150,499
International Tuition	\$162,775	\$0	\$0	\$162,775	\$0
School Bus Revolving	\$676,898	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$676,898	\$300,000
School Choice	\$1,661,644	\$270,000	\$452,931	\$1,478,713	\$452,931
	\$4,082,203	\$1,927,716	\$2,110,696	\$3,899,223	\$2,110,696



BUDGET REQUESTS

WARREN SCHOOL

.50 to 1.0 FTE Counselor

Increasing from a 0.5 FTE counselor to a 1.0 FTE counselor will support the growing social-emotional learning needs of the diverse student population. The increase will allow each counselor to work with one grade level and remain with the student cohort during the three years at Warren.

.60 to 1.0 FTE ELL Teacher

Currently, there are 88 ELL students at Warren. To meet the recommended minutes of English language instruction, as outlined by DESE, we recommend increasing the 0.6 FTE ELL position to 1.0 FTE.

1:1 Nurse

This position will allow for monitoring and maintenance of student health throughout the school day.

MINDESS SCHOOL

Special education teacher

The number of students requiring specialized programming in our autism/developmental program is growing. We currently have six students in the program, and we anticipate having 12 students in 2022-23. Given the intensity of need of the students, we need to divide this program into two classrooms.

ASHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

.60 to 1.0 FTE Nurse

The middle school student population has increased steadily over the past five years. During the 2021-22 school year, the middle school's student population reached 700, increasing the number of student visits to the nurse's office during the day. In addition to increased visits, the middle school has also seen a rise in the level of student need and care.

ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher-Reading Certification

There are 21 students on IEP's graduating or leaving AHS with the class of 2022. In comparison, there are 43 students in the class of 2026 on IEP's. Currently, each inclusion teacher has 25-27 students assigned, compared to an average of 12-18 per liaison in similar districts. We desperately need a special educator certified in an OG or Wilson reading program.



BUDGET REQUESTS

1.0 FTE ELL Teacher

With the rise in non-English speaking students, the teacher has increased the number of support and direct English instruction courses taught, and the number of push-in classes has increased too. Given these factors and the high school schedule, one teacher cannot deliver recommended services for 40 ELL students.

DISTRICT-WIDE

Data Specialist

Each year, the number of state and federal data report requirements increases. Data entry duties currently are spread across various departments and staff members. With no central repository, data accuracy may become compromised, and details may be omitted. With an increasing demand for current and accurate building-level and district-wide data, hiring a data specialist is crucial. The dedicated district-wide data specialist will focus on best practices and oversee data input to ensure our data is clean and accurate. Additionally, they will provide data analysis and recognize trends to assist the administration in making data-driven decisions and ensure the district receives all eligible state and federal funding.

Director of English Language Learners

Currently, the director of student services oversees both special education and ELL. Per regulations, any district with over 100 ELL students must have an identified director of English language learning. APS is now at nearly 250 ELL students. The recently completed tiered focus monitoring review also highlights the need for creating this new position to oversee the education of ELLs, monitor compliance and move forward on ELL initiatives, which is unmanageable with our current staffing levels.

Special Education Contracted Services

Because of student profiles and a rise in non-English speaking students, we need the following contracted services: translations, low incidence specialized consultation (teacher of the deaf, teacher for visual impairment, mobility specialist, APE, home assessments), temporary staffing needs, and bilingual evaluations.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Dyslexia Screening Tool K-3; \$25,000
- 3-year Envisions Math K-5; \$47,500 (\$95K for 3-year service paid over two years)
- Merv 13 Filters, \$36,000



KEY TERMS

Professional and Clerical Salaries

include anticipated step and lane increases, as well as new requested positions.

Step Increase

an automatic bump in pay for adding a year of experience in the school district. The steps are outlined in a pre-existing salary scale

Lane Increase

a raise earned for education coursework

Contracted Services

contract-based services for equipment repair, transportation, maintenance, legal fees, as well as out-of-district special education costs

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

a program to ensure students who require special education services to maximize their learning have their individualized learning needs met in the least restrictive environment possible

Orton-Gillingham Program

an evidence-based reading program used over 80 years for students who struggle with reading in a one-to-one or small group setting

Wilson Reading Program

a researched-based, tiered system instructional program started in 1985 to help struggling readers, most widely used with upper elementary students, middle-schoolers and high-schoolers

English Language Learners (ELL)

students whose primary language is not English and who are not yet proficient in English who receive support at each school, with services focused on their English language acquisition, literacy development, and academic achievement



ASHLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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