



WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
PROPOSED BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2027



February 3, 2026

Prepared by:

Dr. Fran Roy, Superintendent

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WESTPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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School Committee Chair

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*School Committee
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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Members and Friends of the Westport Community Schools:

Our financial plan for the 2026 - 2027 school year is structured around the five building blocks that emerged from the [Superintendent's entry plan](#): **Community, Human Capital and Operations, Curriculum, Student Support, and Aspirations**. These pillars, which are core to a thriving school community, reflect the voices of our educators, community partners, families, and students who shared their priorities, concerns, and aspirations for our schools.

Through conversations across our district, three areas of strength were consistently affirmed. **Community** pride and personal connections continue to be a hallmark of our district, fostering partnerships that enrich our students' educational experience. Stakeholders praised the dedicated professionals and first-rate facilities under the **Human Capital and Operations** umbrella. And our **Curriculum** is infused with seeds of innovative and experiential learning that are poised to flourish and grow. This budget continues to invest in this foundation.

Looking forward, equally important were the themes that emerged as priorities that came directly from those we serve. This budget proposal strategically advances two areas that need additional investment: **Student Support** and **Aspirations** for college and career success.

The addition of a Student Support Coordinator will enhance our ability to address the comprehensive wellness and academic needs of our students. As students face increasingly complex challenges, this position will coordinate and strengthen the systems and resources necessary to support every child's success. We view this position as a preventive measure to address needs as swiftly as possible.

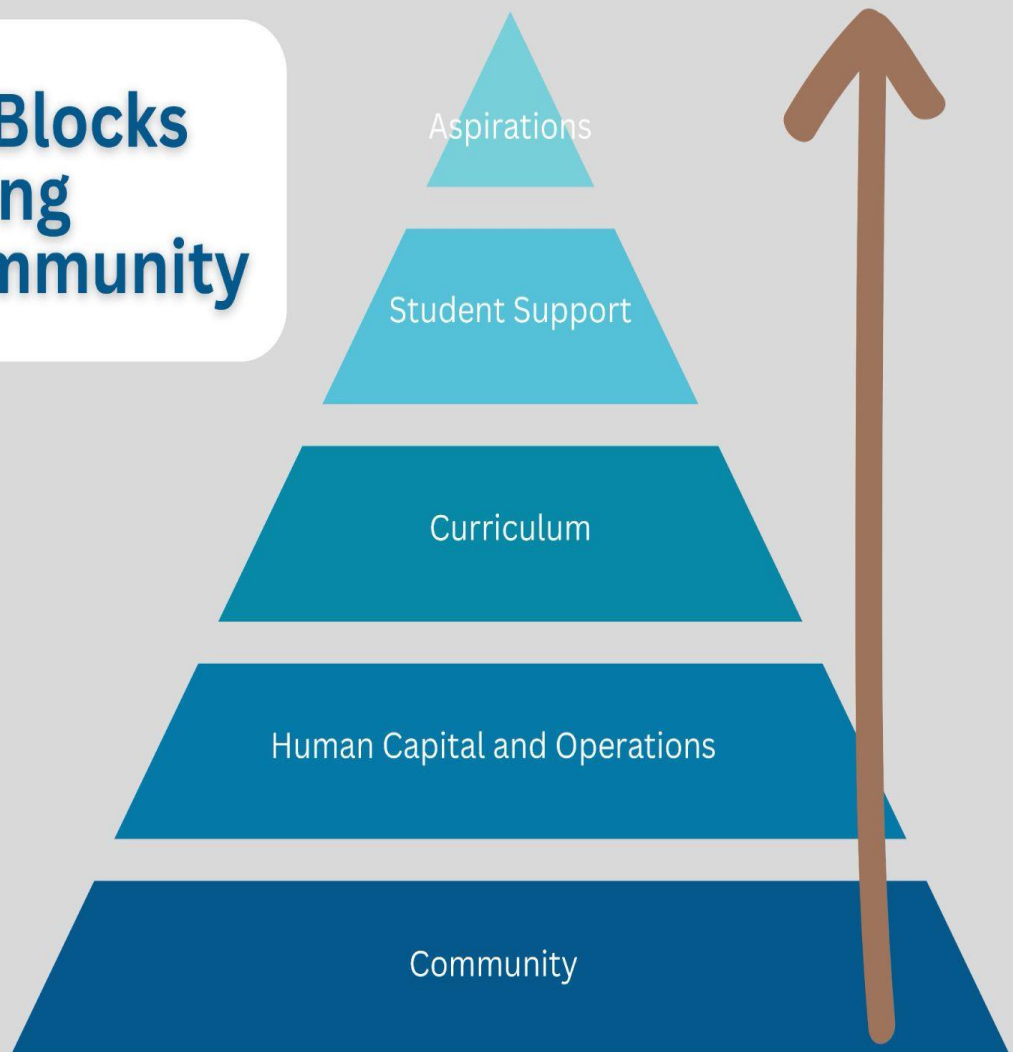
Students themselves, along with parents and community partners, called for greater preparation for life beyond graduation as they envision their futures. In response, we are proposing a Career Pathway Coordinator under our Aspirations pillar. This role will turn our students' aspirations into reality as they gain greater access to post-secondary education and career opportunities, facilitating the transition to future success.

This budget honors the voices of our community by building on our strengths while investing in the priorities they identified as essential for our students' futures.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this proposal and welcome the opportunity to discuss how these community-driven building blocks will strengthen our district and benefit the larger Westport Community.

What Makes a Thriving School Community?

5 Building Blocks for a Thriving School Community





ABOUT WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Mission

Westport Community Schools' mission is to ensure that our children achieve academic and personal excellence, become lifelong learners and are responsible, productive, and engaged citizens of the world.



302 employees



3 schools



**FY26 Student
Enrollment
1,524**



Vision

Westport Community Schools is an exemplary 21st Century learning community whose graduates are empowered through an engaging, inspiring, and personalized curriculum to meet the challenges of a global, complex and changing world.

Core Values

Safety: We are committed to safe, secure, and supportive schools that foster intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

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.

Westport Community Schools

FY27 Budget Development Timeline



Westport School Committee FY27 Budget Development Timeline

July 9, 2025	School Committee – End of Year Meeting
September 15, 2025	School Committee – Regular Meeting
October 1, 2025	School Committee – Special Meeting/FY27 CIPC
October 8, 2025	School Committee – Regular Meeting
November 5, 2025	School Committee – FY27 Budget Work Session (Athletics, Maintenance & Tech)
November 20, 2025	School Committee – Regular Meeting and FY27 Budget Work Session (Principals)
December 3, 2025	School Committee – FY27 Budget Work Session (Curriculum and SpED)
December 17, 2025	School Committee – FY27 Budget Work Session
January 7, 2026	School Committee – FY27 Budget Work Session
February 3, 2026	Proposed FY27 Budget Presentation to the Finance Committee
February 25, 2026	School Committee – Public Hearing FY27 School Budget
<i>*Must be advertised 7 days prior (MGL 71-38N) to Public Hearing</i>	
March 9, 2026	School Committee – Regular Meeting
April 8, 2026	School Committee – Regular Meeting
May 5, 2026	Annual Town Meeting
May 13, 2026	School Committee – Regular Meeting
June 10, 2026	School Committee – Regular Meeting

- Contact a Westport School Committee Member.
- Email questions and suggestions to mrapoza@westportschools.org.
- Attend the public hearing on the recommended budget.
- Speak at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Westport School Committee.



BUDGET PROCESS



Budget development is a year-round process, and the presentation of the Superintendent's recommended budget represents one important milestone in that ongoing work. The proposed budget is developed with great thought and consideration not only for the absolute needs of the students of Westport but also for the Town's finances.

The process begins in earnest in late fall, when each principal and director, along with their leadership teams, review their school or department's unique needs and consider recommendations from their PTO's, staff, school councils, and other community stakeholders. They analyze prior-year expenditures, projected enrollment, and anticipated class sizes. In addition, they project increased costs related to special education services and multilingual learners. Principals and directors also estimate expenses for known contractual obligations, such as out-of-district placements, cost-of-living adjustments, building and maintenance needs and transportation costs, using a combination of historical data and informed projections. The Superintendent, in turn, vets the school and departmental budgets for alignment with district priorities and conducts a line-by-line review to identify potential efficiencies.

Throughout this process, the School Committee works collaboratively with the administration, the Board of Selectmen, and the Finance Committee to ensure the District's requests fit thoughtfully into the town budget.

The School Committee reserves the right to make changes, modifications, or additions to the budget to meet the best interests of all students.



Student Enrollment Trends



Westport Community Schools population has remained relatively stable for the last three years.

In-District School Year Actuals	Pk - 12	Difference	%
2020-2021	1,355	-63	-4.64%
2021-2022	1,430	75	5.24%
2022-2023	1,446	16	1.10%
2023-2024	1,506	60	3.98%
2024-2025	1,515	9	.006%
2025-2026*	1,511	-4	-.01%

* Enrollment data as of October 1, 2025

Projection

School Year	Pk- K	1-4	5-8	9-12	Total
2025-26	173	465	489	387	1514
2026-27	171	463	485	412	1531
2027-28	174	456	471	411	1512

Special Education

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
In-District	244	259	286	324	329	294
Out of District	12	18	16	13	12	13

*SY 26 Students with Disabilities Rate is 20.1% for WCS and 21.1% for the State

WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

FY27 Proposed Budget

FY27 PROPOSED BUDGET

The FY27 proposed budget was developed in the best interest of all students. Line items were carefully reviewed by the Superintendent, including maintenance services that must be contracted with licensed professionals. The Special Education Department reviewed out-of-district placements, factoring in tuition increases and the medical needs of our most fragile students.

The budget also addresses growing athletic program needs, increased service demands due to class size growth, and rising social-emotional student needs. In addition, positions and job responsibilities are being reorganized to improve efficiency and alignment with district priorities.

FY26 Approved Budget	\$23,734,943
Contractual Increases	\$762,173
Supply Costs Increases	\$38,496
Special Education Increases	\$77,662
Maintenance & Custodial Increases	\$97,458
Technology Increases	\$81,000
Athletics & Activities Increases	\$33,600
Service Delivery Increases	\$135,000
FY27 Preliminary Budget	\$24,960,332





RECOMMENDED FY27 BUDGET



As the table below illustrates, the recommended Budget for **FY27** totals **\$24,960,332**.

Final FY26 Budget	\$23,734,943
Proposed FY27	\$24,960,332
Increase (\$)	\$1,225,389

It is important to note that the operating budget does not include funds obtained through federal, state, or private grants. These grants provide resources to support programming and services beyond what the operational budget can cover, enabling the district to meet the evolving needs of our students.

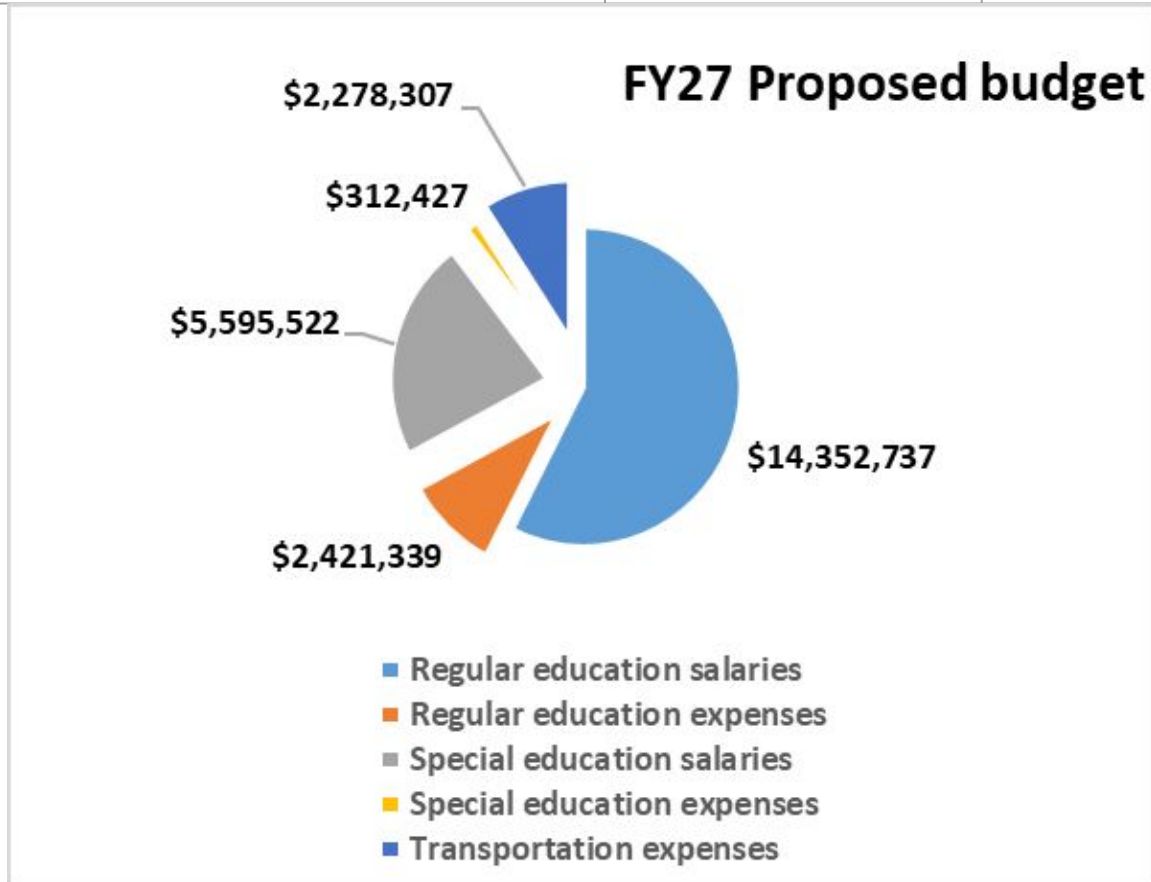
SCHOOL BUDGET FY24-FY27

	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	% of FY26
ACCOUNTS	EXPENDED	EXPENDED	APPROVED	PROPOSED	26/27
ADMINISTRATIVE SALARIES & EXPENSES	748,389	820,839	912,982	932,919	2.2%
INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES & EXPENSES	15,160,013	16,030,223	17,066,945	18,040,335	5.7%
SUPPORT SALARIES & EXPENSES	2,713,432	3,178,165	3,097,379	3,274,144	5.7%
BUILDING & MAINT. SALARIES & EXPENSES	2,139,194	2,086,316	2,316,141	2,424,876	4.7%
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT	80,528	20,000	20,000	20,000	0%
CIVIC SALARIES & EXPENSES	32,097	37,250	37,250	37,250	0%
ACQUISITION/ IMPROV. EXPENSES	2,600	0	0	0	0%
SPECIAL NEEDS TUITION	553,480	478,414	284,246	230,808	-18.8%
TOTAL	21,429,733	22,651,207	23,734,943	24,960,332	5.2%



SCHOOL BUDGET FY26-27

	FY26 Approved	FY27 Proposed
Regular education salaries	\$13,712,562	\$14,352,737
Regular education expenses	\$2,172,100	\$2,421,339
Special education salaries	\$5,327,775	\$5,595,522
Special education expenses	\$362,265	\$312,427
Transportation expenses	\$2,160,241	\$2,278,307
	\$23,734,943	\$24,960,332
Difference from previous FY	\$1,083,736	\$1,225,389
Percentage difference from previous year	4.8%	5.2%



Salaries	\$19,948,259	84%
Expenses	\$5,012,073	16%
FY27 Budget	\$24,960,332	



SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM



FREE AND REDUCED FY21 - FY26

Fiscal Year	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Enrollment	1355	1430	1446	1506	1515	1511
Percentage	33%	29%	37%	39%	36%	38%
# of Low Income students	447	415	535	587	545	574

ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFYING

A student from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty income threshold is eligible for **free lunch**. A student from a household with an income between 130 percent and up to 185 percent of the poverty threshold is eligible for **reduced price lunch**.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/applying-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals>



PER-PUPIL EXPENDITURE SPENDING

We compare our per-pupil spending to other school districts that are described on the Department of Education website as being “Like-Districts.”

Per Pupil Expenditures, All Funds: Per pupil expenditures are calculated by dividing a district's operating costs by its average pupil membership (FTEs), including in-district expenditures per pupil and total expenditures per pupil, which includes in-district and out-of-district spending and enrollment.

District	FY23 Per-pupil In-district Spending	FY24 Per-pupil In-district Spending
Westport	\$19,014	\$18,361
Carver	\$19,248	\$20,750
Dartmouth	\$18,365	\$19,335
Fairhaven	\$16,788	\$18,260
Seekonk	\$19,429	\$20,245
Somerset	\$19,353	\$20,176
Swansea	\$16,710	\$17,967
Wareham	\$22,877	Not recorded
State Average	\$21,886	\$23,165



Historical Requests



Fiscal Year	Requested Budget	Approved Budget	% Recd Over Prior Year	CUTS/ Amount NOT Recv	% of Cuts
FY19	\$18,208,235	\$18,132,644	2.35%	\$75,591	0.42%
FY20	\$18,781,131	\$18,781,131	3.58%	\$0	0.00%
FY21	\$19,597,562	\$19,096,102	1.68%	\$501,460	2.56%
FY22	\$20,299,930	\$19,935,683	4.40%	\$364,247	1.79%
FY23	\$20,699,320	\$20,335,369	2.00%	\$363,951	1.76%
FY24	\$21,706,159	\$21,435,162	5.41%	\$270,997	1.25%
FY25	\$23,097,568	\$22,651,207	5.70%	\$446,361	1.93%
FY26	\$24,960,332	\$24,960,332	4.80%	\$0	0%
Total Cut FY18-FY26				\$2,022,607	

Free Cash FY21 - FY25

Free Cash	Free cash amount
FY21	\$150,000
FY22	\$440,000
FY23	\$300,000
FY24	\$500,252
FY25	\$652,125
FY26	\$480,000
<i>FY27 requesting</i>	<i>\$480,000</i>
Total free cash FY21-FY26	\$2,522,377 not including FY27 request

Title I, Title II, and Title IV funds supplement the General Education budget by supporting districtwide instructional programs, staffing, professional development, and student supports that benefit all students, not solely low-income populations. These grants enhance existing services rather than supplant local funding.

Title I: Improving Basic Programs

Title I funds provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps through the following goals:

1. Strengthen the core program
2. Elevate the quality of instruction
3. Involve families in their children's education
4. Support key district and school improvement initiatives

Title II: Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching & Leading

Program Purpose:

1. To increase student achievement consistent with challenging state standards
2. To improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders
3. To increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who effectively improve student academic achievement in schools
4. Provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals and other school leaders

Title IV: Build Student Capacity—Socially, Technical, and Academically

Title IV provides funds to build capacity and ensure that all students have access to a high-quality educational experience.

1. Support well-rounded educational opportunities
2. Support safe and healthy students
3. Support effective use of technology



F/S	Federal & State GRANT SUMMARY	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
F	SPED 94-142	378,476	382,731	409,191	430,428	442,390	449,446
F	SPED Early Childhood	17,149	17,254	17,869	18,040	18,200	18,323
F	Title I (305)	217,684	239,671	281,966	265,847	263,829	318,423
F	Title IIA Teacher Quality (PD)	41,661	43,824	45,473	39,136	41,489	48,685
F	Title IV	16,078	14,808	17,149	20,662	19,288	18,522
S	Rural Aid	18,465	22,850	31,548	77,723	117,204	97,629
F	Math Acceleration Academics			68,110	65,616		
S	Hate Crime Prevention			43,235	40,120		
S	Genocide Education			12,760	8,310		
S	Tech/HVAC UpGrades-Earmark			410,000	100,000		175,000
F	Financial Ed-Credit for Life			2,500	3,200		
F	Cell Phone Use				14,175		
F	Expanding HQ Inst. Math				13,000		
F	MyCAP Planning Grant				5,500	8,000	
S	ASOST Summer					25,000	
S	Innovation Career Pathways					14,070	75,000
S	Safe & Supportive Schools					10,000	10,000
F	Sped. Program Improvement				16,726		
F	SEL & Mental Health				148,750		
F	Northeast Food for Schools/Project Bread				9,815	3,000	
F	ESSER II			698,900			
F	ESSER III			1,607,934			
F	Mass Grad			23,000			
	Total Grants	689,513	721,138	3,682,795	1,277,048	962,470	1,211,028



SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



Special Education students by schools

Total school enrollment: 1511

Total students receiving IEP services: 294

Macomber School: 20

Elementary School: 84

Middle High School: 190

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
In-District	244	259	286	324	329	294
Out of District	12	18	16	13	12	13

**SY 26 Students with Disabilities Rate is 20.1% for WCS and 21.1% for the State*





REVOLVING ACCOUNTS



Preschool: Tuition fees are used to offset program costs.

Use of school property: Fees received for use of Westport Community School facilities can only be used to offset building and maintenance expenses.

Athletics: User fees and gate receipts are used to offset the cost of the athletic program. In addition to general fund revolving accounts, fees are charged for athletics participation and attendance. These funds are not part of the general operating budget, but are used to offset expenses incurred by those departments.

Out of School Time: Fees received for students who attend the Out of School Time program of which can only be used to offset the Out of School time program. The program is offered to students in grades K-4. Students in the program can also qualify for subsidized vouchers through the People Acting in Community Endeavors Program (P.A.C.E). These vouchers are offered to low-income families that may be eligible for additional assistance with childcare.

School Choice: Revenue received for students enrolled in Westport Community Schools from other MA districts that can be used for any purpose specific to education.

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.

School Lunch: A Massachusetts school lunch revolving fund is a specialized, self-sustaining account authorized by state law that holds revenues (such as federal/state reimbursements and meal payments) specifically for food service operations. These funds operate outside the general fund, allowing school districts to spend money on food services without further appropriation, ensuring all revenue is used only for program improvement or operation.



PROJECTED USE OF REVOLVING ACCOUNTS

FISCAL YEAR 2025 & 2026



	FY24 Balance 12/31/2023	FY25 Balance 12/31/2024	FY26 Balance 12/31/2025
Preschool Revolving	\$117,870	\$37,230	\$128,096
Use of School Property	\$3,507	\$9,693	\$9,912
Reimbursement Lost Supplies/Materials	\$2,312	\$2,440	\$7,861
Student Athletic & Activities	\$50,212	\$37,751	\$42,075
Continuing Ed/Out of School time	\$75,949	\$70,456	\$44,452
Insurance Claims	\$54	\$0	\$0
School Choice	\$5,933	\$86,687	\$192,915
Scholarship	\$13,046	\$11,596	\$11,219
Transportation (student fees)	\$14,009	\$21,167	\$27,461
School Lunch	\$269,644	\$219,632	\$122,723
Total revolving accounts	\$552,536	\$496,652	\$583,274

Athletic fees = \$175 Transportation fees = \$200



CIRCUIT BREAKER REIMBURSEMENT - RECEIVED SPED OUT OF DISTRICT TUITION & TRANSPORTATION

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. While funding at the federal level is historically stable, state funding has been subject to major funding fluctuations since its inception. Thus, the **state reimbursement** percentage for the following formula varies year to year.

The circuit breaker provides reimbursement for all high cost special education pupils regardless of the type of their placement.

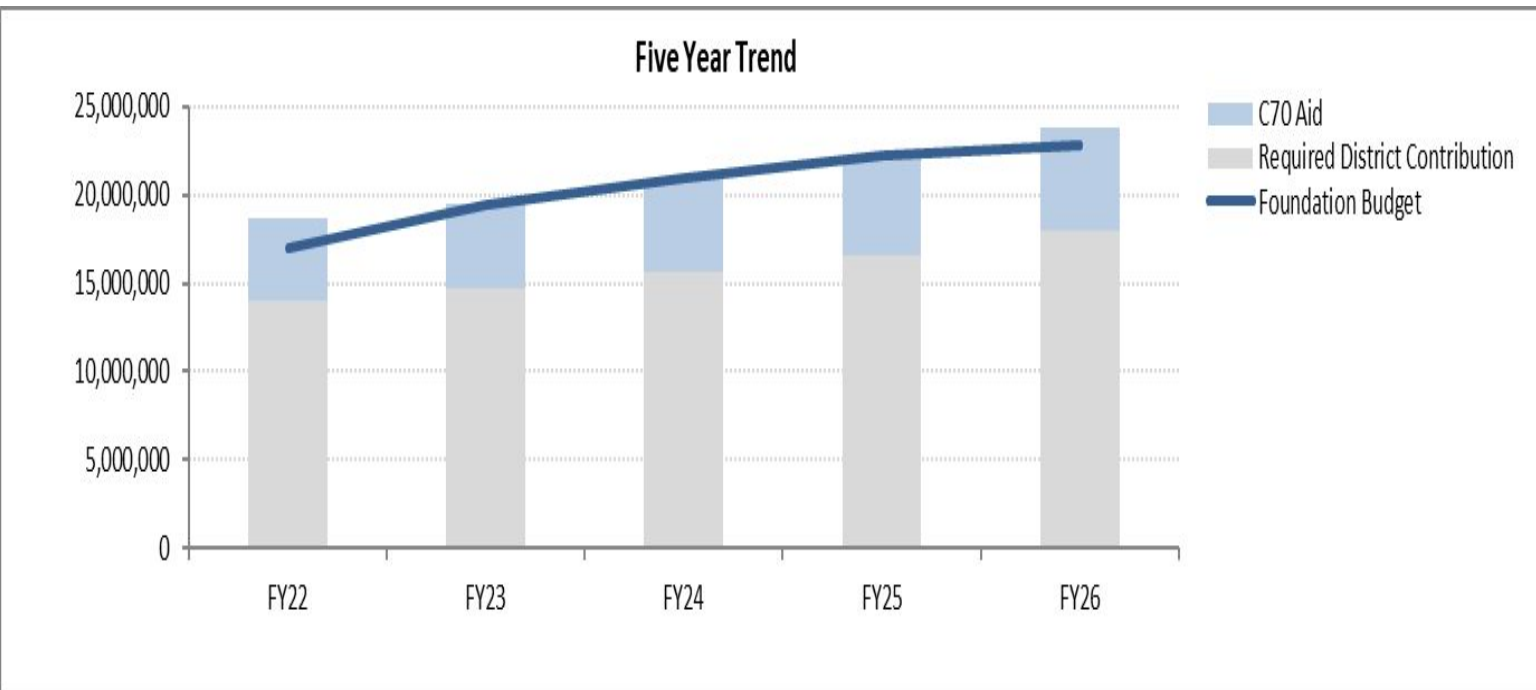
	FY23 Recv'd in FY24	FY24 Recv'd in FY25	FY25 Recv'd in FY26
Students	13	12	10
Eligible claim expenses	\$1,888,001*	\$1,841,470*	\$1,888,158*
Foundation limit cap	(\$618,675)	(\$594,792)	(\$524,190)
Net claim for reimbursement	\$1,269,326	\$1,246,678	\$1,363,968
Circuit Breaker reimbursement rec'd	\$888,988 (70%)	\$935,009 (75%)	\$964,529 (71%)
Actual % recv'd of total costs	47%*	51%*	51%*



* Actual reimbursement percentage received of expenses

CHAPTER 70 FUNDING

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27 preliminary
C70 AID	\$4,559,462	\$4,603,592	\$4,696,172	\$5,249,170	\$5,595,902	\$5,829,452	\$5,945,702
Enrollment	1,493	1,471	1,543	1,560	1,595	1,557	
	<i>Min. Aid</i>	<i>Min. Aid</i>	<i>Min. Aid</i>	<i>No longer min. aid</i>	<i>No longer min. aid</i>	<i>No longer min. aid</i>	



Chapter 70 funding in Massachusetts

Chapter 70 funding is the state money Massachusetts gives to cities and towns to help pay for public schools and make sure every community can provide a basic, fair level of education.

- It helps equalize school funding so wealthier and poorer communities can educate students at similar levels.
- The amount each district gets depends on student enrollment, student needs, and how much the community can afford to contribute locally.



CHAPTER 70 FUNDING

In Massachusetts K-12 public education, *foundation enrollment* and *regular (actual) school enrollment* are two different ways of counting students — and they serve different purposes. Here’s how they differ:

What “Foundation Enrollment” Means: Foundation enrollment is a *legal/financial count* of students used by the state for school funding under the Chapter 70 school finance formula. It determines how much money a school district is expected to spend (the “foundation budget”) and how much state aid it should receive.

Key features:

It’s based on the number of students a district is *financially responsible for* on October 1 each year.

- All students for whom a district must pay (including some students attending charters or other districts if the home district pays tuition) are counted.
- Counts toward the *foundation budget* include specific categories such as preschool, kindergarten (half and full-day), elementary, middle, high school, and vocational.
- Pre-schoolers and half-day kindergarteners count as 0.5 in the calculation.
- It’s a standardized count used to figure state aid entitlements, not necessarily the exact headcount in classrooms. In other words: *foundation enrollment is used for budgeting and state funding calculations.*

CHAPTER 70 FUNDING

What “Regular School Enrollment” Means: Regular enrollment (sometimes called “actual enrollment” or simply the *enrollment count*) is the number of students actually enrolled and attending school in a district or school at a given point in time.

Key features:

It usually reflects the *actual headcount of students* currently enrolled in classes for a school year.

This number can differ slightly from the foundation count if students enroll after the October 1 snapshot, leave before that date, or are counted differently for funding purposes.

It is the figure you often see reported on school dashboards or state education data profiles. In other words: *actual enrollment tells you how many students are physically enrolled in school, whereas foundation enrollment tells the state how many students to base funding formulas on.*

Here’s why the distinction exists:

- Foundation Enrollment → financial/legal use. It feeds into the *Chapter 70 education funding formula*, determining things like the foundation budget and state aid entitlements.
- Actual Enrollment → operational use. It’s used by schools and districts to plan staffing, classrooms, programs, and report enrollment data publicly.
- Because foundation enrollment is based on a specific date and includes students for whom a district has financial responsibility (even if attending elsewhere), its count can differ slightly from day-to-day enrollment figures in a school.



What do we want for our students?



	Aspirations: Hopes and Dreams for the Future
Theme	Strengths
Post-Secondary Readiness and Life Pathways	- Stakeholders want students to graduate with a clear vision and multiple pathways to success, including a plan for the future, not just a diploma. - Stakeholders identified a goal of increasing pathways and opportunities beyond traditional college pathways.
Build Confident, Engaged and Service Oriented Learners	- Stakeholders envisioned students who are excited about learning, confident in their abilities, and curious about the world. - Stakeholders also highlighted helping students understand their unique gifts, and developing voice and agency. - Stakeholders hope students develop lifelong connections to Westport, give back to the community, and foster a sense of community pride.

Promising Futures

Jada Thurston - Electric Boat 2025



Photo by Richard W. Dionne Jr., The Shorelines “Training for Life in Westport” by Ted Hayes, December 16, 2025

<https://www.eastbayri.com/stories/training-for-life-in-westport,136350>



Tess Silvia - Simmons University for Physical Therapy 2025



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