

Special Meeting of the Region 15 Board of Education February 24, 2026

POMPERAUG REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 15

The mission of Region 15, a collaborative community committed to excellence, is to educate every student to be productive, ethical, and engaged in a global society through proven and innovative learning experiences supported by its strong community whose decision-making is based on the best interest of all students.

Mission Statement, Adopted 9 December 2002; Updated 2009

Special Meeting of the Board of Education

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

7:30 P.M.

Pomperaug High School Media Center

PRESENT: Ms. Sharon Attick (Remote) Mr. Tom Marks
Ms. Shannon Cavallo Mr. Jeff Olsen
Ms. Heather Dwyer Mrs. Heather Rodgers
Mr. John Jenusaitis Dr. Sally Romano
Ms. Marion Manzo, Chairperson Mr. Steve Suriani

PRESENT: Mr. Joshua Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Carrie Chiappetta, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Joe Martino, Director of Finance

Ms. Manzo called the February 24, 2026 Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

There was no report given.

Upon a motion by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Mrs. Rodgers

IT WAS VOTED

“to approve the January 27, 2026 special meeting of the Board of Education minutes” and passed with Ms. Attick, Ms. Cavallo, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, Dr. Romano, and Mr. Suriani voting, “aye”. Mr. Jenusaitis abstained.

Superintendent Smith presented the 2026-2027 Proposed Budget (attachment 1). Board members were given their budget books to review.

Ms. Cavallo reported Finance met on Tuesday, February 24th and topics of discussion included upcoming proposals related to the LMES Roofing Project and needing to separate the solar and roofing costs.

Ms. Sharon Attick reported the committee met on March 5th and the focus of their meeting was on academic achievement. Discussion highlighted potential **SAT prep support**, possibly through:

- After-school paid programs.

Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance

Student Representatives

Approval of Minutes

2026-2027 Superintendent's
Proposed Budget

Finance & Facilities Committee

PTO Advisory

Special Meeting of the Region 15 Board of Education February 24, 2026

- Integration as a high school elective to offset costs parents currently pay independently.
- The next PTO Advisory meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 5 at 9:30 a.m.

Mrs. Rodgers reported the committee has been in negotiations with the PAEP union since November. The next meeting is Wednesday, February 25, 2026.

Negotiations Update

Mr. Suriani reported the current quarter resulted in a 2.3% increase, below policy benchmark of 2.8%.

Pension Committee

Superintendent Smith reported the Region hosted two recent tours at Gainfield and Pomperaug Elementary Schools with State Representatives and Town Officials. There were discussions on process, decisions and costs. The next tour with Middlebury and Southbury Boards of Finance is March 5, 2026 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Gainfield Elementary School. Superintendent Smith commented that the public-facing website demo is nearly ready updates are needed before launch.

GES/PES Building Update

Mr. Marks praised the **PHS College & Career Center**: They hosted a webinar with NYT bestselling author **Jeff Selingo** on colleges/higher education.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Cavallo noted a new local nonprofit focusing on advocacy and engagement for school budgeting.

Ms. Manzo also highlighted the importance of community tours for understanding facility needs and costs.

Ms. Manzo reported on the upcoming CAFE Day on the Hill, March 11th. This is an opportunity for board members to connect with legislators and raise awareness about Region 15 projects.

Upon a motion by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Mrs. Rodgers,
IT WAS VOTED

Motion Made and Passed

“to approve the 2026-2027 Friends Together tuition rates” and passed with Ms. Attick, Ms. Cavallo, Ms. Dwyer, Mr. Jenusaitis, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, Dr. Romano and Mr. Suriani voting “aye”.

Upon a motion by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Mrs. Rodgers,
IT WAS VOTED

Motion Made and Passed

“RESOLVED, that the Pomperaug Regional School District #15 authorizes the Board of Education to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the Solar

Installation at the Long Meadow Elementary School” and passed with Ms. Attick, Ms. Cavallo, Mr. Jenusaitis, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, Dr. Romano and Mr. Suriani voting “aye”. Ms. Dwyer was absent.

Upon a motion by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Mrs. Rodgers,
IT WAS VOTED

“RESOLVED, that the Pomperaug Regional School District #15 building committee is hereby established as the building committee with regard to Solar Installation at the Longmeadow Elementary School. ” and passed with Ms. Attick, Ms. Cavallo, Mr. Jenusaitis, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, Dr. Romano and Mr. Suriani voting “aye”. Ms. Dwyer was absent.

Motion Made and Passed

Upon a motion by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Mrs. Rodgers,
IT WAS VOTED

“RESOLVED, that the Pomperaug Regional School District #15 hereby authorizes at least the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for Solar Installation at the Longmeadow Elementary School” and passed with Ms. Attick, Ms. Cavallo, Mr. Jenusaitis, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, Dr. Romano and Mr. Suriani voting “aye”. Ms. Dwyer was absent.

Motion Made and Passed

Ms. Manzo announced future meeting dates:

- a. Wednesday, March 4, 2026 Budget Workshop, Pomperaug High School Médica Center, 6:30 p.m.
- b. Thursday, March 5, 2026 Special Meeting of the Board of Education & Boards of Finance from Middlebury and Southbury, GES (tour) 6:00 p.m.
- c. Monday, March 9, 2026 Policy and Curriculum Meeting, Pomperarug High School Media Center, 6:00 p.m.
- d. Monday, March 9, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, Pomperarug High School Media Center, 7:30 p.m. (Bond Presentation)
- e. Wednesday, March 18, 2026 Budget Workshop, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 6:30 p.m.
- f. Monday, March 23, 2026 Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 6:30 p.m.
- g. Monday, March 23, Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 7:30 p.m.
- h. Wednesday, March 25, 2026 Budget Workshop with Boards of Finance from Middlebury and Southbury, 6:30 p.m.

Announcement of Future Meetings

Special Meeting of the Region 15 Board of Education February 24, 2026

- i. Wednesday, March 25, 2026, Public Hearing for the 2026-2027 Region 15 Proposed Superintendent's Budget
- j. Monday, April 6, 2026 Policy & Curriculum Committee Meeting, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 6:00 p.m.
- k. Monday, April 6, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 7:30 p.m. (Adopt Budget)

Upon a motion by Mrs. Rodgers, seconded by Ms. Cavallo
IT WAS VOTED

Executive Session

"to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing Superintendent Smith's mid-year review and to invite Superintendent Smith to attend the meeting" and passed with Ms. Attick, Ms. Cavallo, Mr. Jenusaitis, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, and Mr. Suriani voting "aye". Ms. Dwyer was absent.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Rodgers, seconded Ms. Cavallo
IT WAS VOTED

Adjourn

"to adjourn the February 24, 2026 special meeting of the Board of Education at 10:58 p.m." and passed with Ms. Attick, Ms. Cavallo, Ms. Dwyer, Mr. Jenusaitis, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, Dr. Romano and Mr. Suriani voting "aye".

Date _____

Mr. Tom Marks
Secretary to the Board of Education

Jennifer Meglio
Board Clerk, Region 15 Board of Education

Region 15 Public Schools

2026-2027 Superintendent's Proposed Budget

Presented by
Joshua Smith, Superintendent of Schools
February 2026

Board of Education

Marion Manzo, *Board Chair*
Thomas Marks, *Board Secretary*
Heather Rodgers, *Board Treasurer*
Sharon Attick
Shannon Cavallo
Heather Dwyer
John Jenusatis
Jeff Olsen
Steve Suriani
Sally Romano



MISSION/ VISION

"The mission of Region 15, a collaborative community committed to excellence, is to educate every student to be productive, ethical, and engaged in a global society through proven and innovative learning experiences supported by its strong community whose decision-making is based on the best interest of all students."

Theories of Action

- *If we foster schools that are welcoming and inclusive to all students, then students will feel valued, and better able to access their learning.*
- *If we improve our ability to align assessments to curriculum, improve our data culture, and increase our analysis of student learning, then we will be more equipped to provide meaningful student engagement and increased achievement.*
- *If we embrace communication, transparency, and collaborative relationships within ourselves and the community then we will improve trust and participation in supporting our students.*
- *If we increase and promote access to career pathways, curriculum, and shared instructional experiences then our district will prepare students for the world they will enter after their time with us.*

R15 Portrait of a Learner



Empowered Learner

- Adaptable, Resilient, Growth-Minded, Self-Directed



Innovative Problem-Solver

- Solution-focused, Analytical, Creative, Innovative



Ethical Contributor

- Globally-minded, Inclusive, Community-minded, Courageous



Productive Collaborator

- Team-oriented, Open-minded, Dependable, Supportive



Effective Communicator

- Audience-aware, Perceptive, Responsive, Expressive

THANK YOU

District Office Administrators & Staff
Building Administrators
Instructional Leaders & Teachers
Building and Support Staff
Board of Education Members





Strong Return on Investment

- 🎓 **High School Graduation Rates:** Among the highest 4-year graduation rates in the state
- 🏆 **Music Awards:** PHS Theatre Department received five awards and 17 nominations at the 2025 HALO Awards
- ✅ **College Acceptance Rate:** On average students apply to 6 schools and are accepted at more than 5, an 85% acceptance rate

🚗 Electric car club is now competing with a carbon fiber frame and had best finish last year.

🤖 Robotics Club Advanced past the state level.

👩 We now have multiple levels of culinary classes and have begun offering catering services.

🏃 Athletic success at regional and state levels.

Examples of Region 15 Success

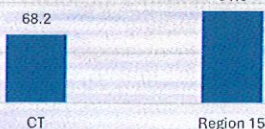
Advanced Placement Exams:

In CT of those that take the exam 68.2% achieve a 3+
In Region 15 that rate is 91.8%

3+ Based on Total number of high school students:

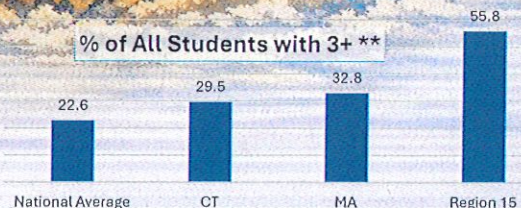
National Average is 22.6% of high school students
MA leads the nation at 32.8%
CT is 29.5%
R15: 55.8%

3+ of Participants



*Each student is counted once, regardless of how many AP tests are taken.
** Percent calculated based on total number of students in high school.

% of All Students with 3+ **



Where have our graduates gone over the past couple of years?

Tier 1 – Ultra-selective

Harvard, Stanford, MIT, Columbia, Duke, UPenn, Yale

Tier 2 – Highly selective

Carleton, Georgetown, UC Santa Barbara, Holy Cross, Emory, Boston College, BU

Tier 3 – Selective

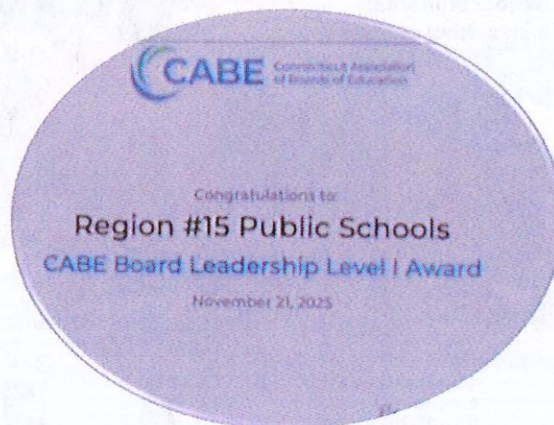
Clemson, Bentley, Clark, Fordham, Ithaca, Hofstra, Syracuse, Providence

Tier 4 – Broad admission

Adelphi, Merrimack, Roger Williams, Seton Hall, Sacred Heart, Niagara, Quinnipiac, Culinary Institute of America,

As the cost of college and universities have increased, decisions on where to attend include many additional factors. In-state incentives like, the 2.75 gpa auto acceptance and free community college tuition, students and families have new alternatives to traditional choices that will force us to rethink how we define post graduate success.

Region 15 Board of Education Honored With The *Connecticut Association of Board of Education (CABE)* *Board Recognition Award for a Second Year in a Row*



Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26

BUDGET PRIORITIES:

As we enter the process of budget development with an eye towards fiscal responsibility, it is crucial to keep sight of our mission. ***We must preserve the communities' expectation of a quality education and the trust they provide in us.***



Provide the community with a school system that supports our Mission Statement, Theories of Action, POL and the quality educational system they require of us



Provide educators with the resources, supports, and training necessary to deliver quality instruction and continued growth.



Deliver a clear, accurate, and transparent budget to inform decisions and create confidence in the process.



Balancing current needs with deferred expenses and address state funding reductions



Respect the fiscal impact to all residents and the investment our towns make to our success.

Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26

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SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET

- Addresses staffing and instructional needs
- Maintains programs and class size norms
- Responds to instruction needs of students and programs
- Manages cost increases and minimizes deferred costs
- Acknowledges current labor and inflationary pressures

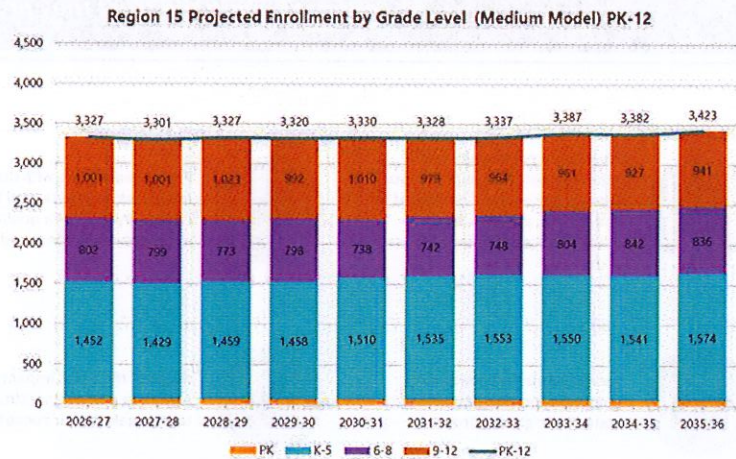
Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26

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Enrollment Projections (Medium Model)

- Medium projections revised downward to account for two successive small kindergarten classes and reduced in-migration from stagnant housing market.
- Elementary (K-5) enrollment is projected to grow modestly, reaching 1,500 students by 2030-31 before stabilizing at between 1,500 and 1,600 students.
- Middle school (6-8) enrollment is projected to decrease to a low of 738 students in 2030-31 before rebounding to over 840 students by 2034-35.
- High school (9-12) enrollment is projected to stay relatively stable through 2030-31 before declining over the final years of the projections, reaching a low of 927 students in 2034-35.



Pomperaug Regional School District 15
Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26

K-5 DISTRICT CLASS AVERAGES

Current 2025-2026 Class Size Averages						Projected 2026-2027 Class Size Averages					
Grade	PES	GES	LMES	MES	District Avg	Grade	PES	GES	LMES	MES	District Avg
K	13.8	17.0	18.3	15.0	16.0	K	15.5	17.0	18.3	15.3	16.3
1	17.3	15.7	15.5	16.0	16.1	1	17.7	18.0	18.3	16.0	17.5
2	15	18.7	16.2	15.0	16.2	2	18.0	16.0	15.8	16.3	16.5
3	18.5	19.7	22.0	14.0	18.6	3	15.5	19.0	20.0	15.7	17.6
4	20.7	19.0	21.0	20.0	20.2	4	18.3	20.3	16.8	14.3	17.4
5	16.0	18.0	17.0	16.7	16.9	5	16.0	18.7	21.6	20.0	19.1
School Avg	16.7	18.0	18.2	16.1	17.3	School Avg	16.7	18.2	18.6	16.3	17.5

Net zero FTE Change

Budget object	2025-26	2026-27	Yr to Yr	% Change	% of Total	% of Total Increase
Category	Adopted	Proposed	Change \$	Change %	2026-27	% Increase overall
Salaries	\$51,677,053	\$53,722,929	\$2,045,876	3.96%	54.35%	2.18%
Benefits	\$17,706,455	\$19,633,180	\$1,926,725	10.88%	19.86%	2.05%
Instructional	\$4,421,299	\$4,576,837	\$155,538	3.52%	4.63%	0.17%
Non-Instructional	\$1,097,488	\$1,143,869	\$46,381	4.23%	1.16%	0.05%
Transportation	\$6,582,556	\$7,064,824	\$482,268	7.33%	7.15%	0.51%
Facilities	\$4,513,909	\$4,508,088	-\$5,821	-0.13%	4.56%	-0.01%
Tuition	\$6,192,925	\$6,518,655	\$325,730	5.26%	6.59%	0.35%
Debt	\$1,681,872	\$1,681,872	\$0	0.00%	1.70%	0.00%
Total Gross Budget	\$93,873,558	\$98,850,254	\$4,976,696	5.30%		5.30%
Revenue	\$3,096,034	\$3,096,034	\$0	0.00%		
Proposed Net Total	\$90,777,524	\$95,754,220	\$4,976,696			5.48%

Impact to towns is based on the 5.3% gross budget amount

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Revenue Sources

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025	2025-26	2026-27	
REVENUE BUDGET	ADOPTED	ADOPTED	ADOPTED	ADOPTED	ADOPTED	PROPOSED	ADM 10/1/2025
TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY	\$25,002,444	\$26,234,266	\$28,509,280	\$29,516,061	\$31,191,430	\$ 31,720,500	Increase of \$529,070 34.36%
TOWN OF SOUTHURRY	\$49,792,022	\$51,509,793	\$53,858,679	\$57,650,446	\$59,586,094	\$ 64,033,720	Increase of \$4,447,626 65.64%
TOTAL FROM TOWNS	\$74,794,466	\$77,744,059	\$82,367,959	\$87,166,506	\$90,777,524	\$ 95,754,220	
TUITION - PRE K	\$170,000	\$170,000	\$170,000	\$170,000	\$150,000	\$ 150,000	
INVESTMENT INCOME				\$75,000	\$280,000	\$ 320,000	Bank Interest earned from Webster Bank and STIF
PAY FOR PLAY SPORTS	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$ 180,000	
PAY FOR PLAY MS MUSIC	\$15,250	\$15,250	\$15,250	\$15,250	\$15,250	\$ 15,250	
PHS PARKING	\$40,000	\$31,600	\$31,600	\$31,600	\$31,600	\$ 31,600	Parking revenue based on \$100 fee
FACILITY RENTAL		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$ 20,000	
TOTAL LOCAL SOURCES	\$405,250	\$406,850	\$406,850	\$481,850	\$ 676,850.00	\$ 716,850	
MAGNET TRANS GRANT	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$ 27,000	
EXCESS COST GRANT	\$1,551,724	2,026,724	\$2,937,407	\$2,190,111	\$2,086,535	\$ 2,046,535	Excess Cost decreased based on State projections
AGENCY PLACED GRANT	\$132,480	\$132,480	\$158,719	\$301,785	\$304,749	\$ 304,749	
ADULT ED GRANT	\$900	\$900	\$900	\$900	\$900	\$ 900	
TOTAL STATE SOURCES	\$1,712,104	\$2,187,104	\$3,124,026	\$2,519,797	\$2,419,184	\$ 2,379,184	
Total Revenue from Local & Stat	\$2,132,354	\$2,593,954	\$3,530,876	\$3,001,647	\$ 3,096,034.00	\$ 3,096,034	
Total Gross Budget	\$76,926,820	\$80,338,013	\$85,898,835	\$90,168,153	\$94,048,558	\$ 98,850,254	

Budget Development and Impact of Three Key Drivers

- Bus Contract = 0.5%
- Salary Agreements = 2%
- Employee Benefits = 2.08 %

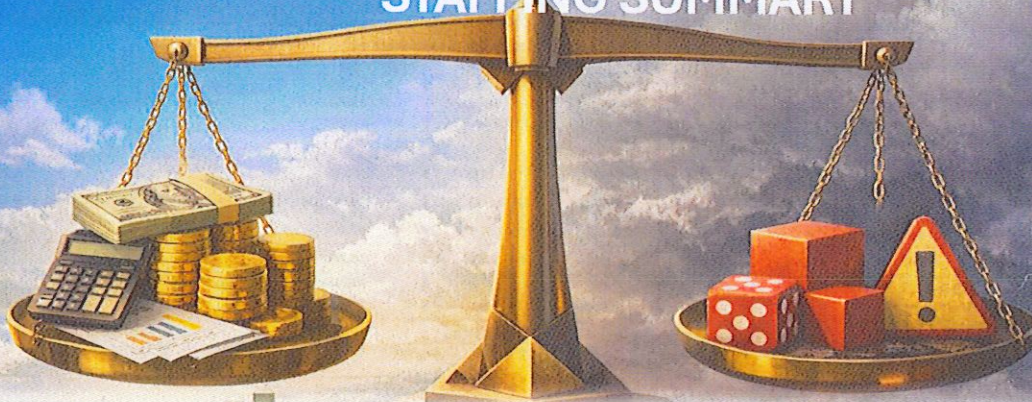
All collective bargaining contracts were negotiated and adjusted to address market comparisons, current labor demands, and included representatives from both towns.

The transportation contract was impacted by the same factors and unanimously approved by the Board of Education.

All other increases account for only 0.72% of budget



STAFFING SUMMARY



Certified Positions: There are no net staffing additions.

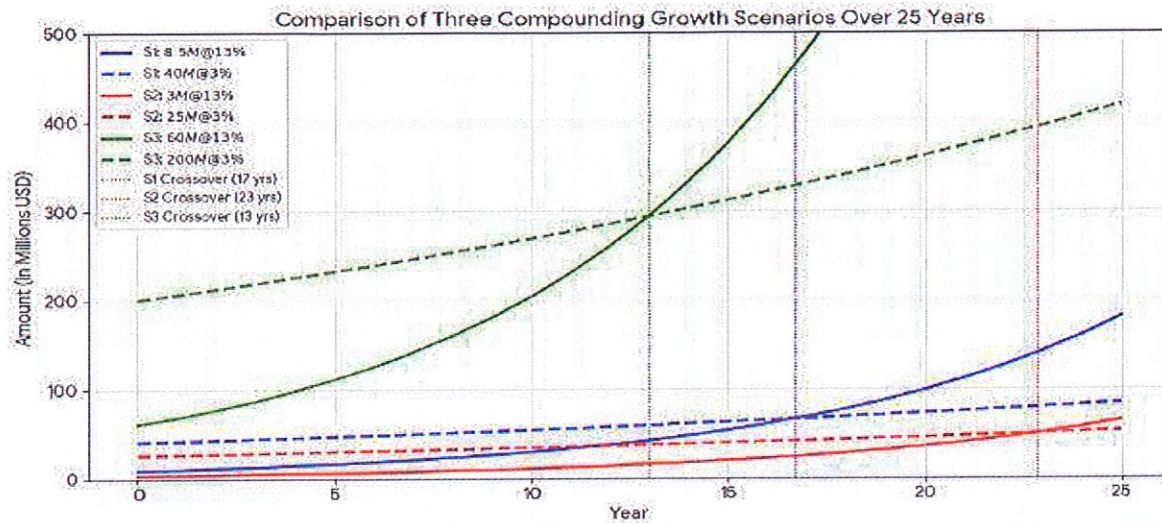
- K-5: Any changes will be enrollment driven, adjusted within each school, and maintain class size norms:
 - Reallocate Net total elementary = 0 FTE
 - Reallocate 1 open FTE at PHS to a Social Worker Position net FTE 0

Non-Certified Positions: no new additions: **Net Budgeted Staffing Change: 0**

Budgeted Salary Lines: Salary lines adjusted to account for open paraeducator positions and certified staffing turn over.

- This budget does hedge 4 paraeducator positions. Over the past two years we have had consistent paraeducator openings: \$200,000
- Reduction based historic salary on actuals: \$350,000

Total Salary Line Reductions: \$550,000



Comparison of Salary Account and Medical Accounts in Educational Budgets over time

The intersection is when the annual cost for medical insurance will exceed the budgeted salary costs. Assuming trends continue at their current rate.

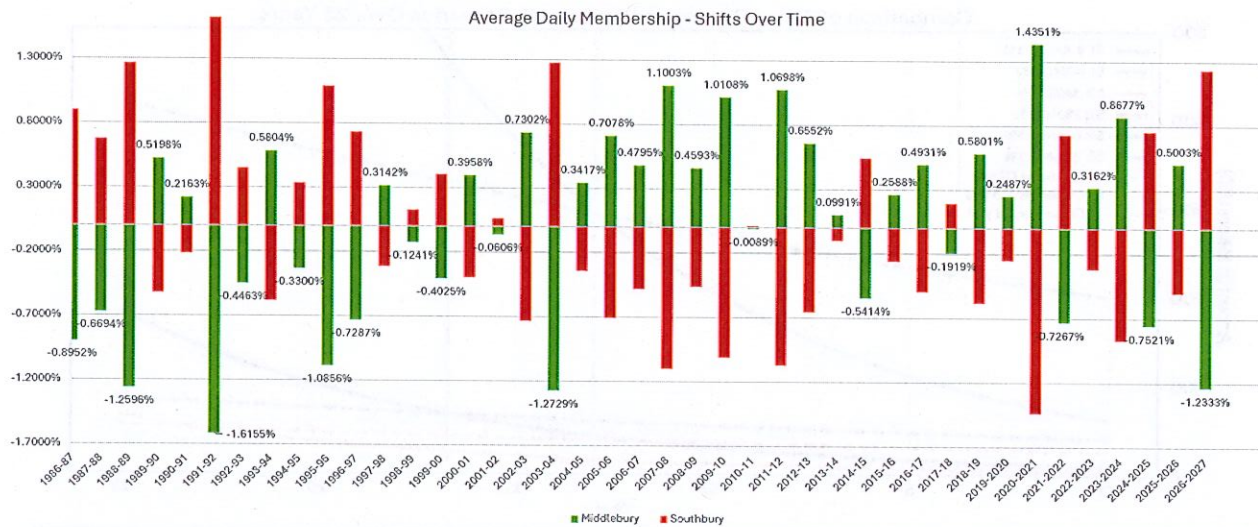
Scenario	Starting Amount Insurance (A1)	Growth Rate (A1)	Starting Amount Salaries (A2)	Growth Rate (A2)	Crossover Year (A1 > A2)
1 Midsize district	\$8.5 Million	13%	\$40 Million	3%	17 Years
2 Small District	\$3 Million	13%	\$25 Million	3%	23 Years
3 Large District	\$60 Million	13%	\$200 Million	3%	13 Years

BUDGET TOTALS BY COMMUNITY

	2025-26 Adopted	2026-27 Proposed	% Increase
Total School Budget Gross	\$90,777,524	\$95,754,220	5.30%
Total Revenue	\$3,096,034	\$3,096,034	
Total School Budget	\$93,873,558	\$98,850,254	5.48%

Town Breakdown based on the 5.3%

	2026-2027 Proposed	Percent Distribution	Dollar Increase	Percent Increase
Middlebury	\$31,720,500	33.13%	\$529,070	1.69%
Southbury	\$64,033,720	66.87%	\$4,447,626	7.46%



Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26



Gate Fees:

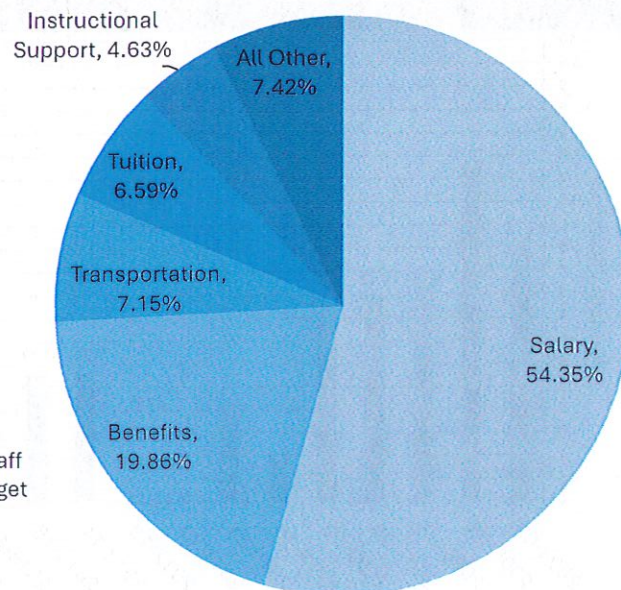
- Last year, the Board and Region assessed the use of gate fees to cover referees and other event-related expenses. This budget allocates \$50,000 to cover professional service costs for most events, effectively eliminating gate fees for all but a select few larger events.
- The budget does not make any adjustments to pay to play.

Summary:

- Adjustments to medical and salary projections brought the initial costs down by about 1%.
- No additional programming or initiatives helped mitigate inflationary pressures.
- Pension is now at 73% funded, contribution remains flat but does not increase as we have done the past few years.
- Current proposed budget protects and retains instructional supplies, class size and student-centered resources.
 - Expands literacy support, decodables, classroom resources
 - Maintains and expands support for Mathematics instruction
- Protects ability to manage long term debt obligations
- 3 object codes account for 4.74% of the 5.3% increase
 - Salaries, Benefits, Transportation

BUDGET SUMMARY

Percent of total budget of selected objects:



- We are a service provider, our work depends on our staff
- On average staffing comprises 74% of the annual budget
- Salary increases are all within market averages
- All Other includes debt service, utilities, maintenance

Utilities, Transportation, Technology and Pension

Utilities and Natural Gas

- Costs remain flat due to natural gas conversion, reduced public benefit fee, and sunset of energy efficiency leases.

Diesel and Fuel Oil

- Reduction of \$20,000 based on rate lock

Pension and Internal Audit

- Continues our current pension contribution
- Preserves \$15,000 to continue internal audit process

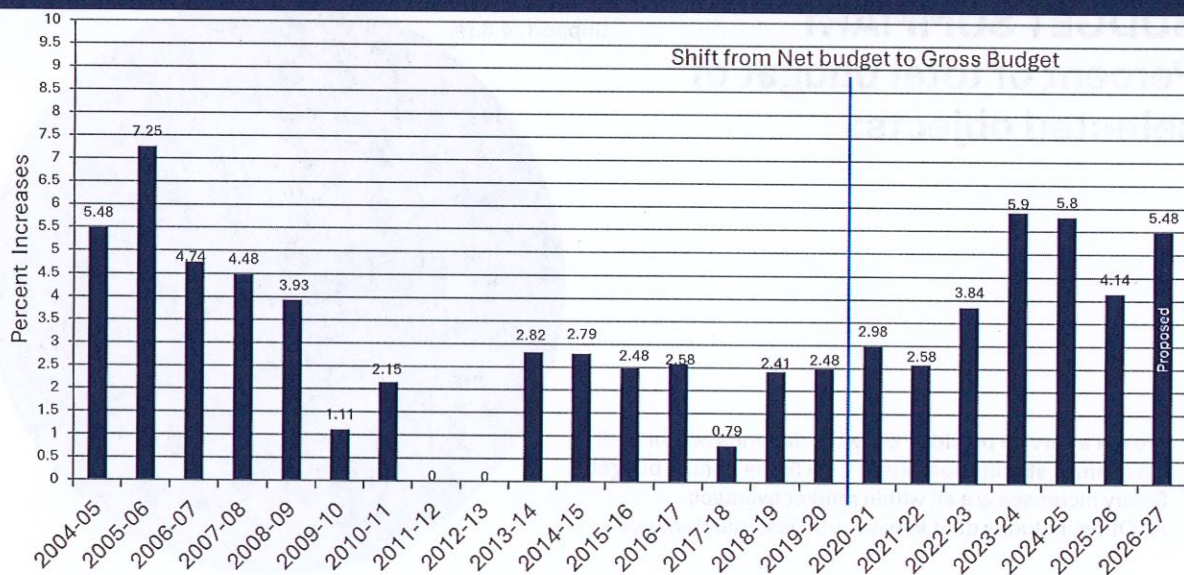
Technology Lease

- Increase to replace aging network equipment: \$40,000

Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26

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Board Approved Budget Increases by Percent:



Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26

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Review of the budget schedule updated

Wednesday, March 4th Budget Workshop beginning at 6:30 at PHS Media Center

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Elementary Schools K-5
- Middle Schools 6-8
- Pomperaug High School
- Athletics

Wednesday, March 18th Budget Workshop beginning at 6:30 pm at PHS Media Center

- Pupil Services
- Capital Plan

Wednesday, March 25th Budget Workshop & Public Hearing beginning at 6:30 pm at PHS Media Center

- Southbury & Middlebury Boards of Finance Discussion
- Public Hearing immediately following

Monday, April 6th Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 pm at PHS Media Center

- Board adopts 2026-2027 Budget

Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/2026

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NEXT STEPS

- Questions from Board members can be submitted to the Superintendent's office over the next few weeks
- All budget presentations will be posted on the district website: www.region15.org/budget
- Along with presentation, a list of questions and answers will also be developed and available on the website
- Thank you again to all those that contributed to the development of this proposed budget and tonight's presentation
- Any questions?

Presented to the R15 Board of Education 2/23/26

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