



LOGAN JOHNSON
Chairman

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ELIZABETH NORD
Vice Chairmen

BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET HEARING BOE

March 11, 2026

MAURICE BLANCHETTE
DOUGLAS HARDING
DANIEL KEUNE
GOMATHI RAMACHANDRAN

Minutes

Members Present: Logan Johnson, Liz Nord, Dan Keune, Doug Harding, Maurice Blanchette, Gomathi Ramachandran.

Others Present: Laurie Burstein – First Selectman, Matt Reed – Town Administrator, Robert Smith – EVFD, Heather Smith – Resident, Arthur Biryukas – IT, Jennifer Dzen – BOE, Miriam Underwood – BOE, Kerry Socha – BOE Chairman, Angela Moser – BOE, Megan Johnson – BOE, Oliver Barton – Acting Superintendent, Jamie Bouchard – BOS, Tom Palshaw – Resident, Dave Stavens – BOS via zoom, Peggy Busse – Library via zoom.

Call to Order

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Roll Call

All members present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

None came forward.

Budget Hearing – Board of Education FY2026-2027

Jennifer Dzen opened the meeting and thanked the Board. Oliver Barton, Acting Superintendent, then presented the Board of Education's FY2026–2027 budget.

The Superintendent's proposed budget totals \$49,325,751, representing an increase of \$1,404,339 (2.93%) from the previous fiscal year. After additional adjustments, the Board of Education adopted a budget of \$49,274,008, reflecting an increase of \$1,352,596 (2.82%) over the prior year.

The budget focuses on maintaining high-quality instruction, strong student support services, extracurricular opportunities, and a safe and welcoming school environment. District leadership also emphasized careful budgeting and spending, with a focus on reviewing accounts and prioritizing areas that provide the greatest benefit to students.

As part of the budgeting process, the district continued its effort to right-size operational accounts by reviewing general fund accounts to better align spending with current needs. Staffing models were also reviewed and adjusted to support future planning while remaining budget neutral.

During the budget development process, \$966,404 in reductions were made to the Superintendent's original proposal. The Board of Education later approved an additional \$51,743 in reductions across several areas, including transportation, administrative services, travel, and maintenance.

The budget allocation by category includes: salaries (65.88%), medical, dental, and life insurance (13.21%), travel and transportation (6.46%), operational costs (5.48%), other employee costs (4.40%), instructional services and supplies (2.86%), and tuition (1.72%).

Revenue supporting the education budget comes from several sources, including Educational Cost Sharing (ECS), special education revenue, Medicaid reimbursements, Open Choice funding, adult education reimbursements, and private grants or restricted donations. ECS funding is expected to remain flat-funded for FY2027.

Mr. Harding asked about the current budget status. Mr. Barton reported that the department is under a soft freeze.

Mrs. Ramachandran inquired about incoming grants and their potential impact on the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Barton noted there are four grant proposals in progress, which are expected to provide a safety net going forward. Mrs. Dzen added that the team has been attending legislative breakfasts as part of outreach efforts.

Mr. Keune expressed appreciation for the Board's dedication to refining the budget and taking a second look at key items.

A Budget Public Hearing meeting will be held on April 14th.

A copy of the presentation is attached for additional information.

Adjournment

MOVED (BLANCHETTE) SECONDED (HARDING) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Luginbuhl, Recording Secretary

Board of Education's Adopted Budget 2026-2027

Jennifer Dzen, Board of Education, Finance Committee Chair
Oliver Barton, Acting Superintendent
March 11, 2026

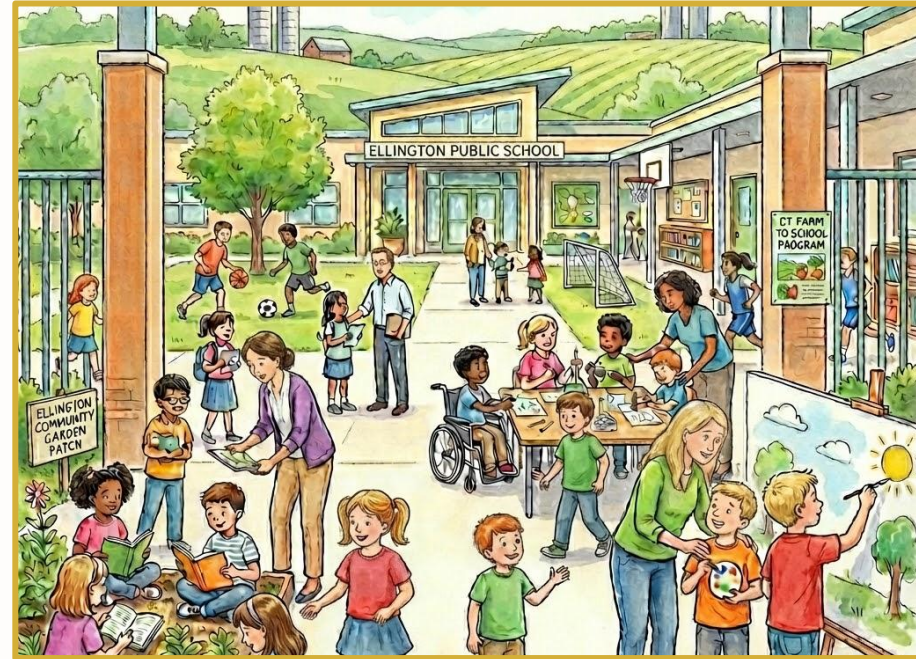


Strategic Priorities



Key Objectives

- ✔ **High Quality Education & Experience**
 - Rigorous and engaging instruction
 - Excellent extracurricular experiences
 - Student support for success
 - Safe and welcoming environment
- ✔ **Budgeting Carefully & Spending Carefully**
 - Evaluating areas that allow for risk
 - Highest return on investment
 - Critical controls and oversight



From the Ground Up

What do we need & what does it cost?

- ✓ **Staffing – Models Restructured:**
 - Budget neutral changes
 - Strategic future planning
 - Collaborative and creative solutions
- ✓ **Operations, Supplies – Right-size Accounts**
 - Third year
 - General fund accounts (414)
 - Highest priorities
 - Strategic planning



Superintendent's Proposed Budget 2026-2027

\$1,404,339

Total Dollar Increase

2.93%

Percentage Increase

Total Proposed Budget: \$49,325,751

Board of Education Adopted Budget 2026–2027

\$1,352,596

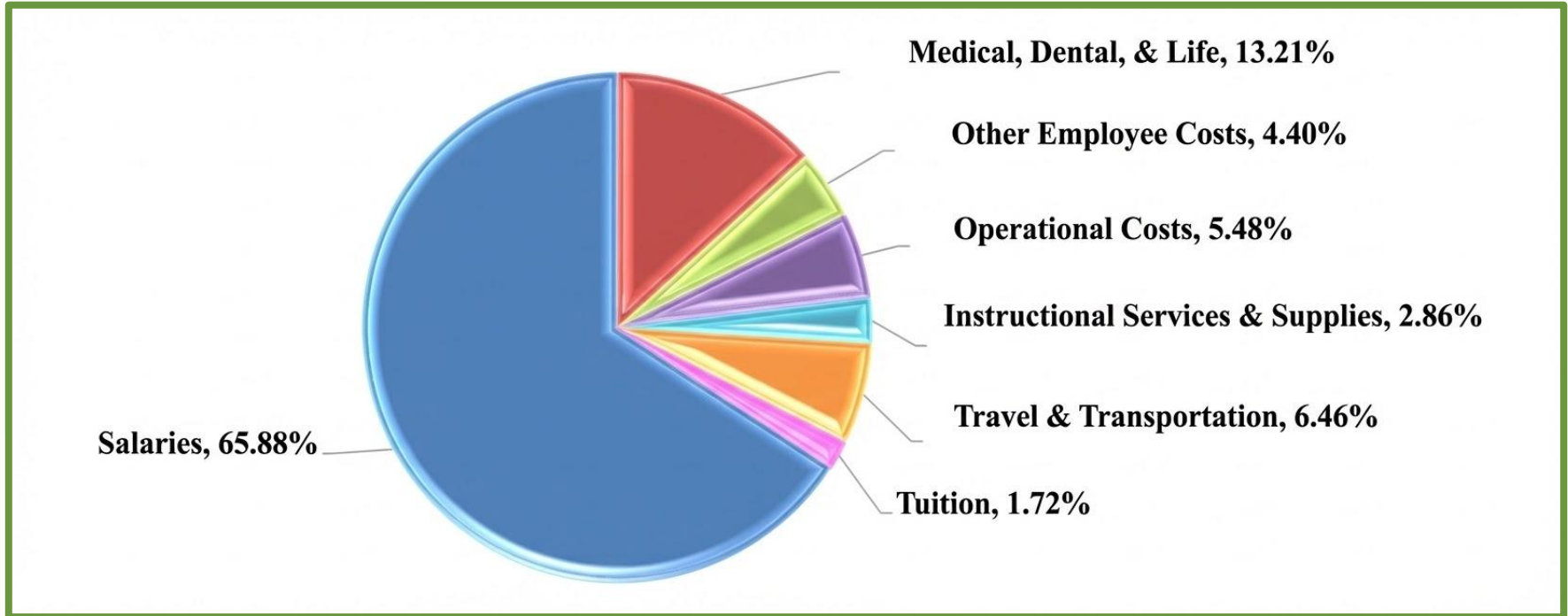
Total Dollar Increase

2.82%

Percentage Increase

Total Proposed Budget: \$49,274,008

Budget Allocation by Category

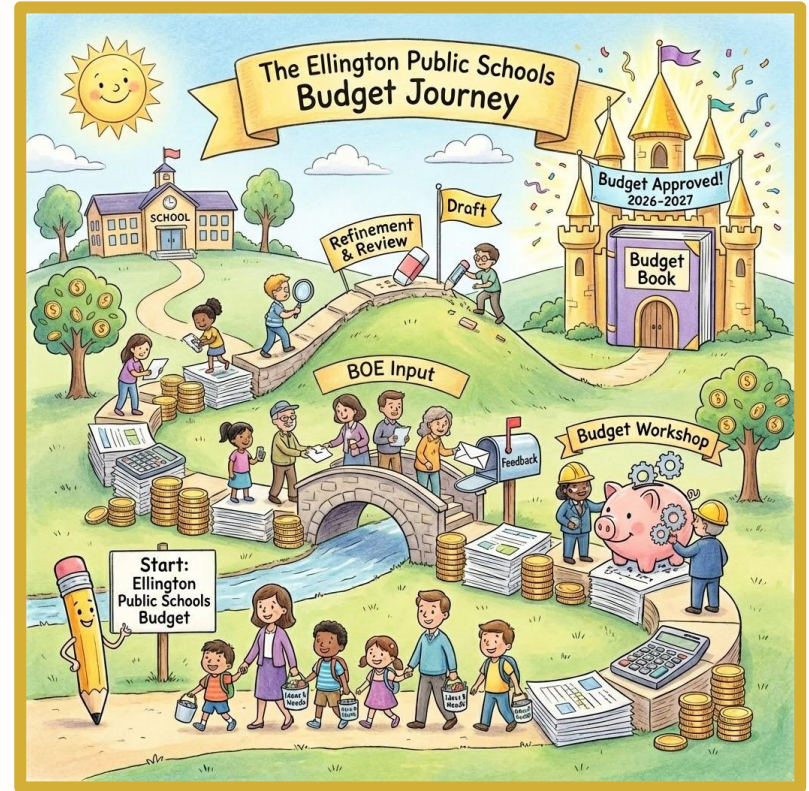


Category definitions can be found on page 14 of the budget book.

From the Start to Today



- ✔ **Superintendent's Proposed with no Cuts**
 - Total: \$50,292,155
 - Increase: \$2,370,743 - 4.95%
 - Doesn't Include Requested Positions
- ✔ **Cuts in Superintendent's Submission**
 - Total: \$966,404
- ✔ **Superintendent Proposed with Cuts**
 - Total: \$49,325,751
 - Increase: \$1,404,339 - 2.93%
 - No Positions Added to General Fund
- ✔ **Board of Education Adopted Cuts**
 - Total: \$51,743
- ✔ **Board of Education Adopted with Cuts**
 - Total: \$49,274,008
 - Increase: \$1,352,596 - 2.82%



Position Requests

Position Request	Estimated (Full Cost)	Addition (No Budget Impact)	Estimated (Cost with Internal Offsets)	Positions Not Approved
Center School Assistant Principal	\$117,207		\$36,652	x
Crystal Lake Special Education Teacher	\$59,981	x	\$0	
Psychologist (.4 Windermere/.6 Center)	\$80,392	x	\$0	
Speech Language Pathologist Assistant (.4 FTE)	\$20,967	x	\$0	
High School Special Education Teacher	\$80,392	x	\$0	
Center School (Convert Two PT Administrative Assistants to One FT)	\$14,997		\$14,997	x
Middle School (BCBA 10 to 16 Hours)	\$16,200		\$16,200	x
Middle School Social Worker	\$80,392		\$80,392	x
Middle School (Guidance Administrative Assistant from 10 to 12 Months)	\$15,503		\$15,503	x
Windermere Behavior Support Teacher	\$80,392		\$80,392	x
Windermere Paraeducator	\$27,970		\$27,970	x
Windermere Special Education Teacher for MAP	\$80,392		\$80,392	x
	\$674,785		\$352,498	

Cuts in Superintendent's Proposed Budget



- ✓ Ellington High School - \$12,445
- ✓ Ellington Middle School - \$7,837
- ✓ Windermere Elementary - \$8,341
- ✓ Crystal Lake Elementary - \$6,104
- ✓ Finance Office Lines - \$387,241
- ✓ Maintenance - \$85,250
- ✓ Educational Services - \$19,243
- ✓ Special Education - \$439,943

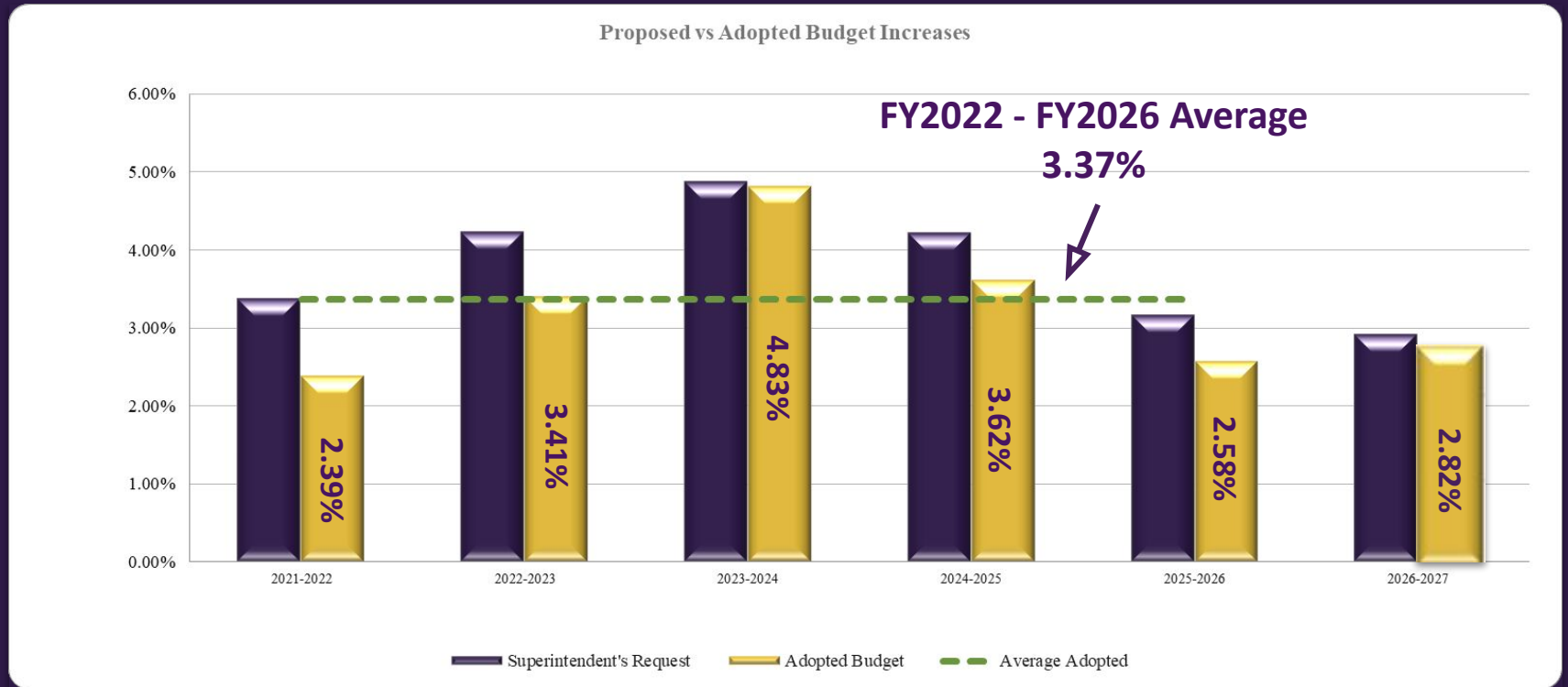


Cut in Board of Education's Adopted Budget

- ✔ Certified Salaries - \$4,193
- ✔ Retirement - \$6,800
- ✔ Student Transportation - \$15,000
- ✔ Administrative Services - \$13,750
- ✔ Travel - \$3,500
- ✔ Workers Compensation - \$5,000
- ✔ Repairs & Maintenance Services - \$3,500



Proposed vs Adopted Budget Increases



Historical Spending Trends



Average Spending Increase Over Time Including FY2027 Board of Education Adopted

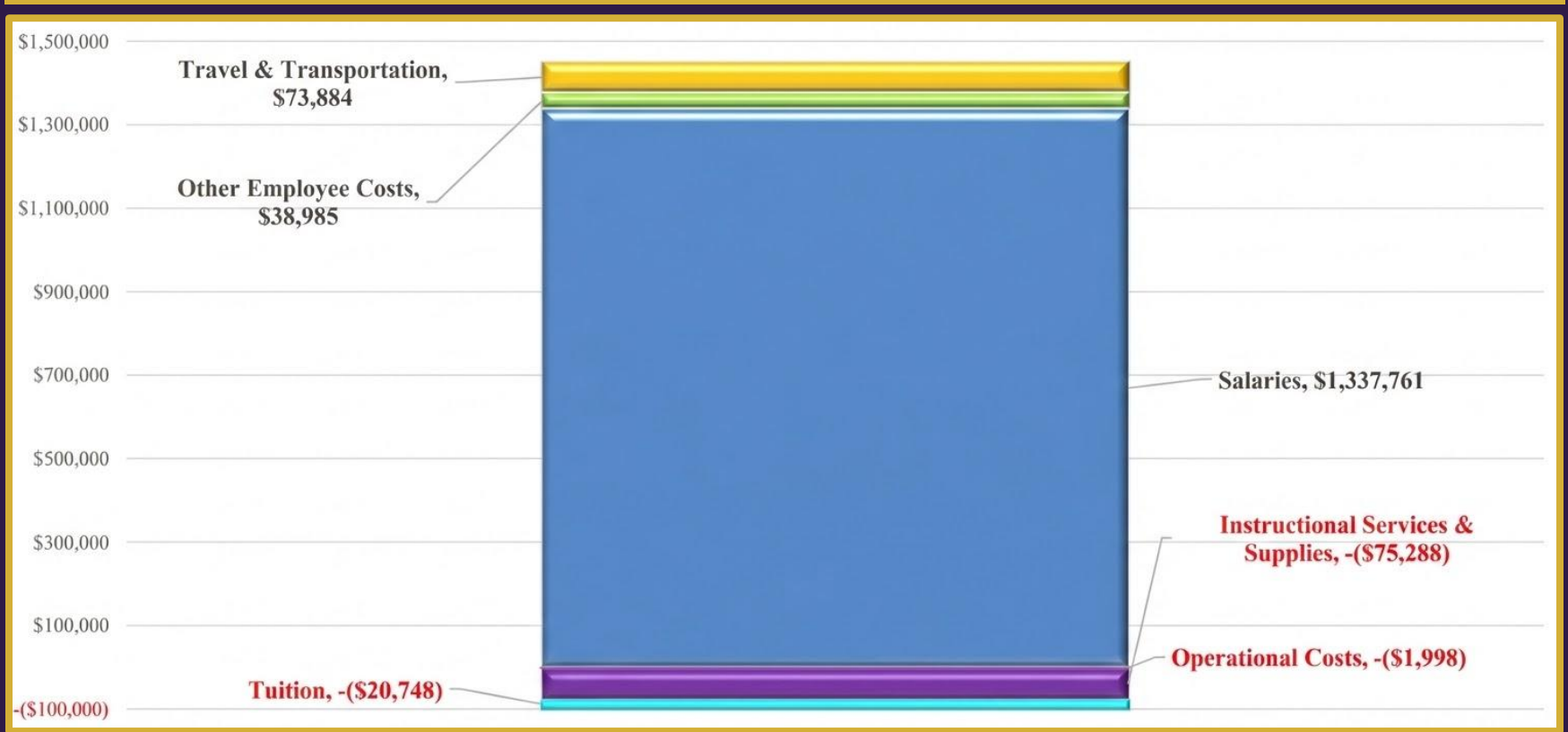
3.45%

Last 5 Years Average

3.16%

Last 10 Years Average

Major Drivers of the Increase – \$1,352,596

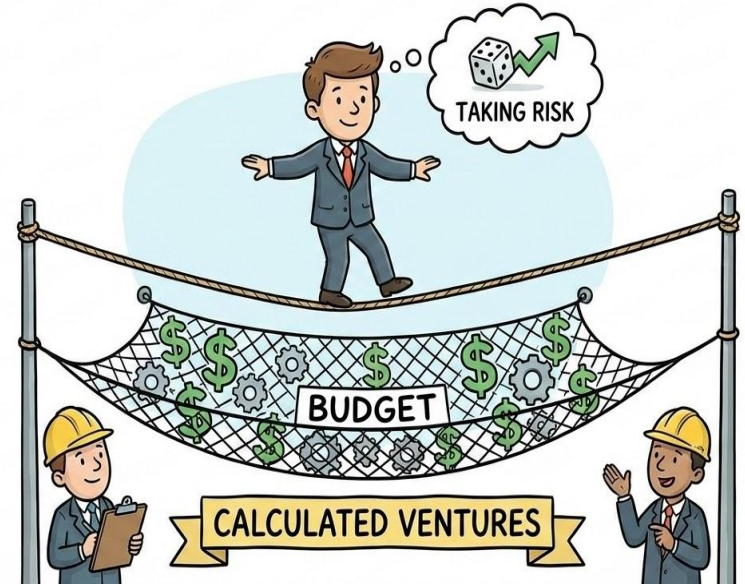


Areas of Risk



- ✓ Reduction to Certified Salaries - \$104,193
- ✓ 0% Increase to Medical and Dental
- ✓ Utilities Based on Current Year Costs
- ✓ Windermere Electric Reduction - \$20,000
- ✓ Reduction of Unanticipated Outplacement

NAVIGATING RISK WITHIN A BUDGET



Medical Self-Insurance Fund

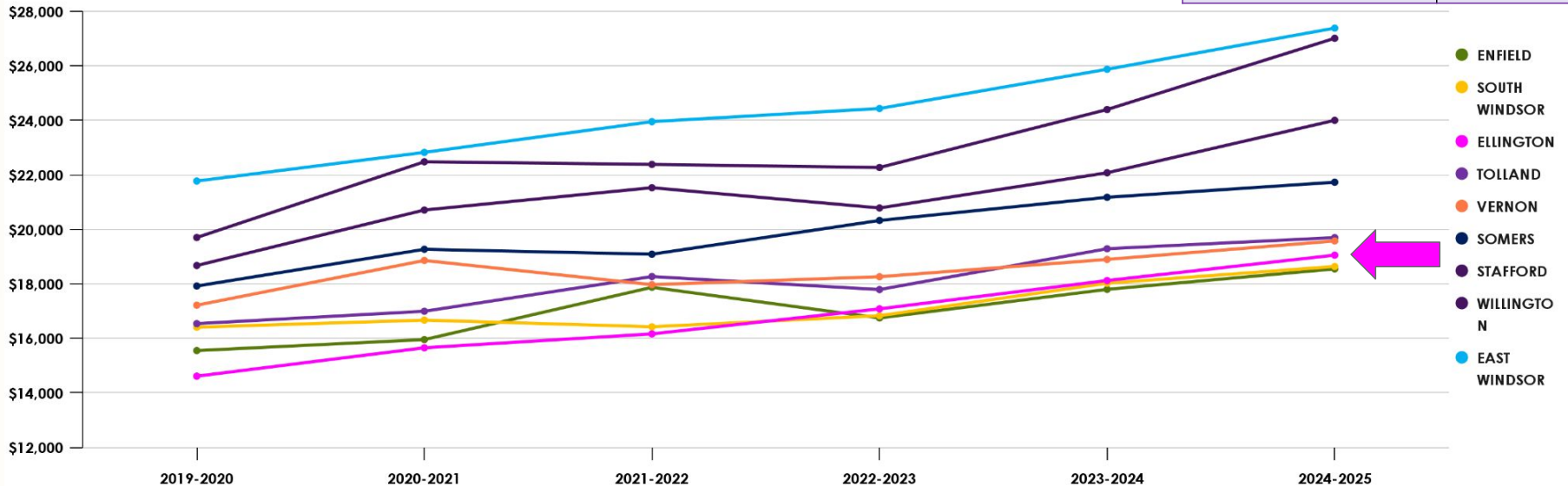


Category	Budget	Source
2025-2026 Opening Fund Balance	\$2,100,559	Audit
2025-2026 Estimated Revenues	\$7,452,188	EPS Estimate
2025-2026 Estimated Claims & Administrative Costs	\$7,501,857	Brown & Brown Est. (12/25)
2025-2026 Est. Ending Balance	\$2,050,890	
2026-2027 Estimated Revenues	\$7,452,188	EPS Estimate
2026-2027 Estimated Claims & Administrative Costs	\$7,891,880	Brown & Brown Est. (12/25)
2026-2027 Est. Ending Balance	\$1,611,198	

Per Pupil Spending FY 2020-2025

ENFIELD	\$18,548
SOUTH WINDSOR	\$18,637
ELLINGTON	\$19,052
VERNON	\$19,573
TOLLAND	\$19,697
SOMERS	\$21,729
STAFFORD	\$24,001
WILLINGTON	\$27,013
EAST WINDSOR	\$27,386

Per Pupil Spending in Neighboring Districts
FY 2020-2025



Per Pupil Spend Vs. Test Scores



Per Pupil Spend vs Accountability Index
2024-2025



Comparative Spending Analysis



In 2024-2025 Ellington would have needed to

\$10,171,368

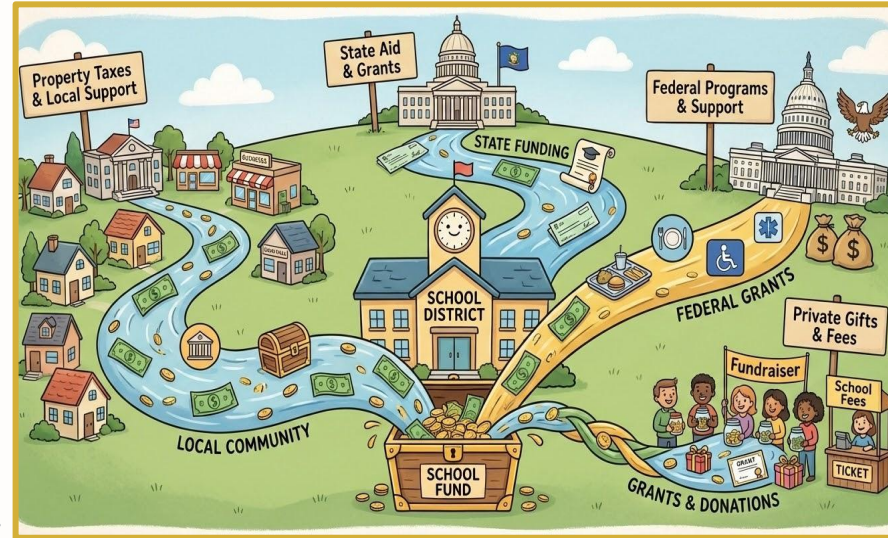
Additional to Reach the State Median Per Pupil Amount

Revenue Sources



Key Revenue Streams

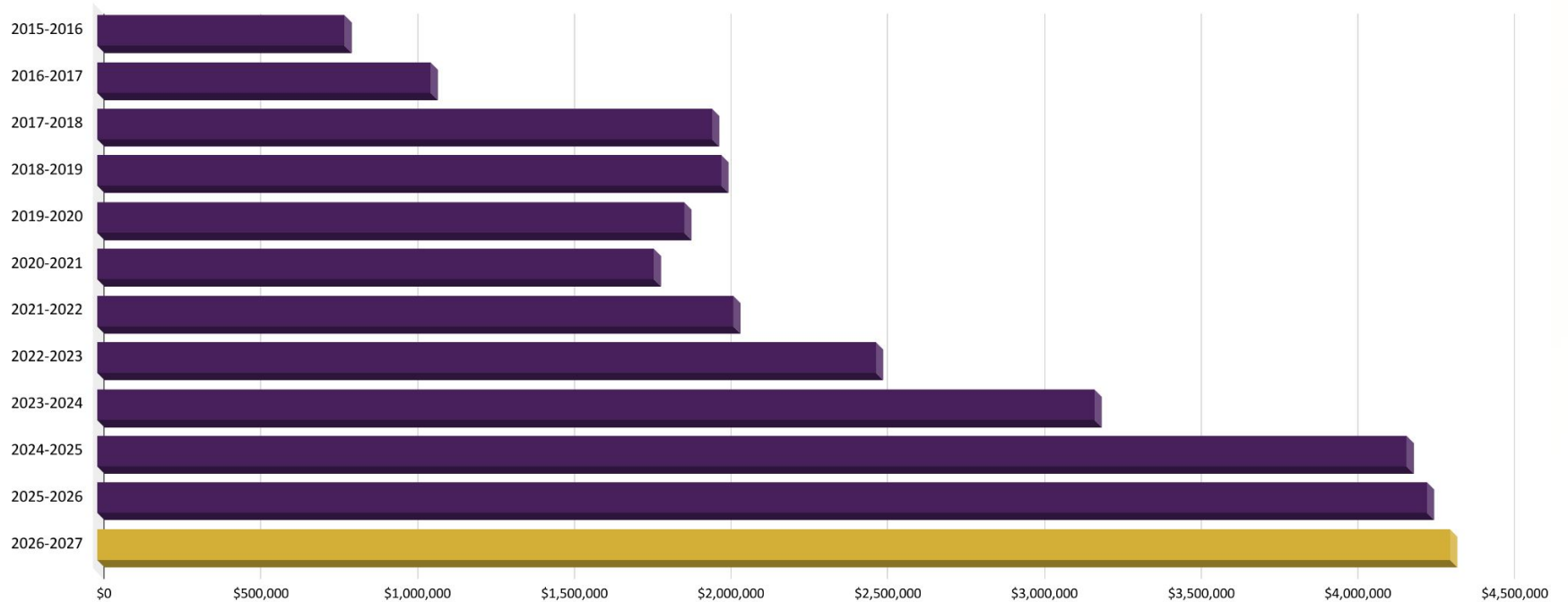
- ✔ Educational Cost Sharing (ECS): Flat Funded for FY 2027.
- ✔ Adult Ed: Reimbursements for eligible services.
- ✔ Open Choice: Funding based on Choice student.
- ✔ Special Revenue Account: Tuition from BASES program.
- ✔ Medicaid: Reimbursements for eligible services.
- ✔ Private Grants & Restricted Donations: EDU Innovate, Etc.



Projected Revenues 2026-2027



Total Revenues by Year



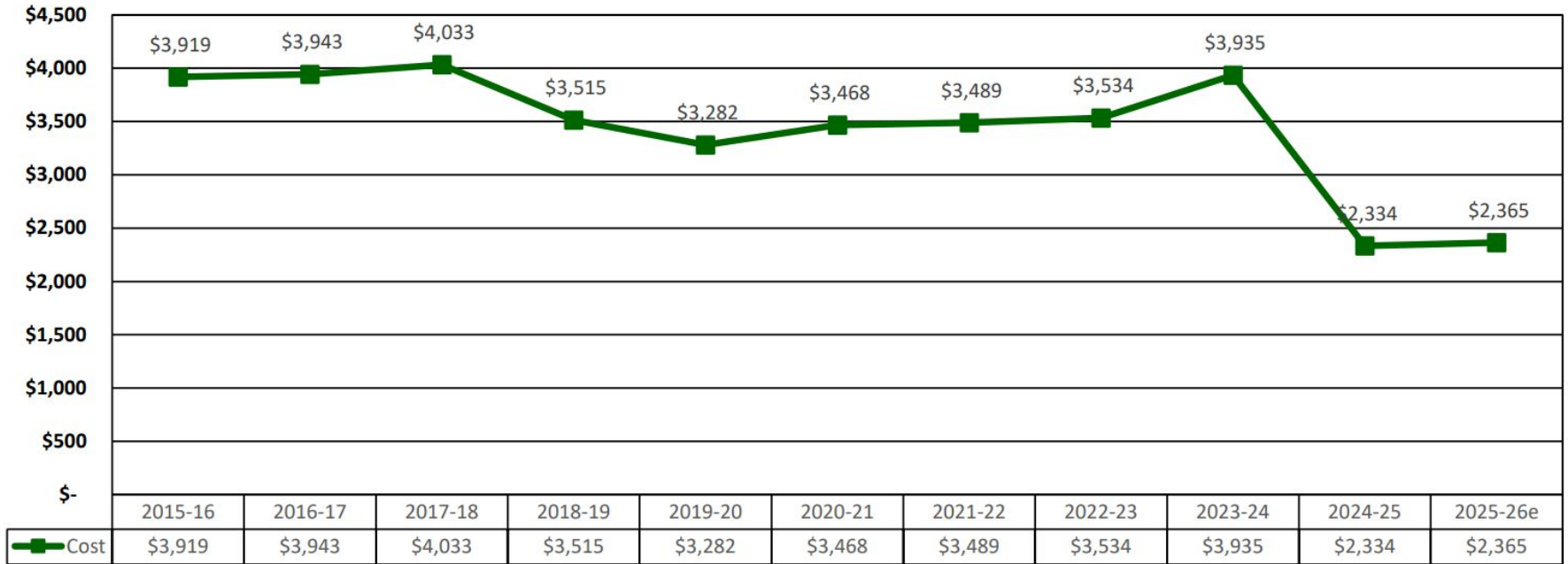
Projected Revenues 2026-2027



	2024-2025	2025-2026		2026-2027
	Actual	2025-2026	Estimated	2026-2027
Revenue Source	Revenue	Appropriated	Actuals	Proposed
EDUCATION COST SHARING (ECS)	\$10,350,893	\$10,206,354	\$10,341,646	\$10,341,646
ADULT ED	\$26,151	\$26,151	\$20,831	\$20,831
MISCELLANEOUS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUBTOTAL – TOWN REVENUE	\$10,377,044	\$10,232,505	\$10,362,477	\$10,362,477
PRE-KINDERGARTEN	\$273,924	\$328,336	\$318,773	\$338,186
SPECIAL EDUCATION REVENUE ACCOUNT	\$2,791,479	\$2,691,714	\$2,256,294	\$2,745,548
MEDICAID (SPECIAL REVENUE)	\$60,271	\$70,936	\$60,000	\$71,646
OPEN CHOICE ATTENDANCE FUNDS	\$1,050,117	\$1,030,000	\$1,040,000	\$1,040,000
OPEN CHOICE ADDITIONAL FUNDING	\$136,500	\$213,000	\$200,000	\$213,000
PRIVATE GRANTS & RESTRICTED DONATIONS	\$19,126	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
SUBTOTAL – BOARD OF EDUCATION REVENUE	\$4,331,417	\$4,353,986	\$3,895,067	\$4,428,380
	\$14,708,461	\$14,586,491	\$14,257,544	\$14,790,857

Est. Cost Per IEP – General Fund

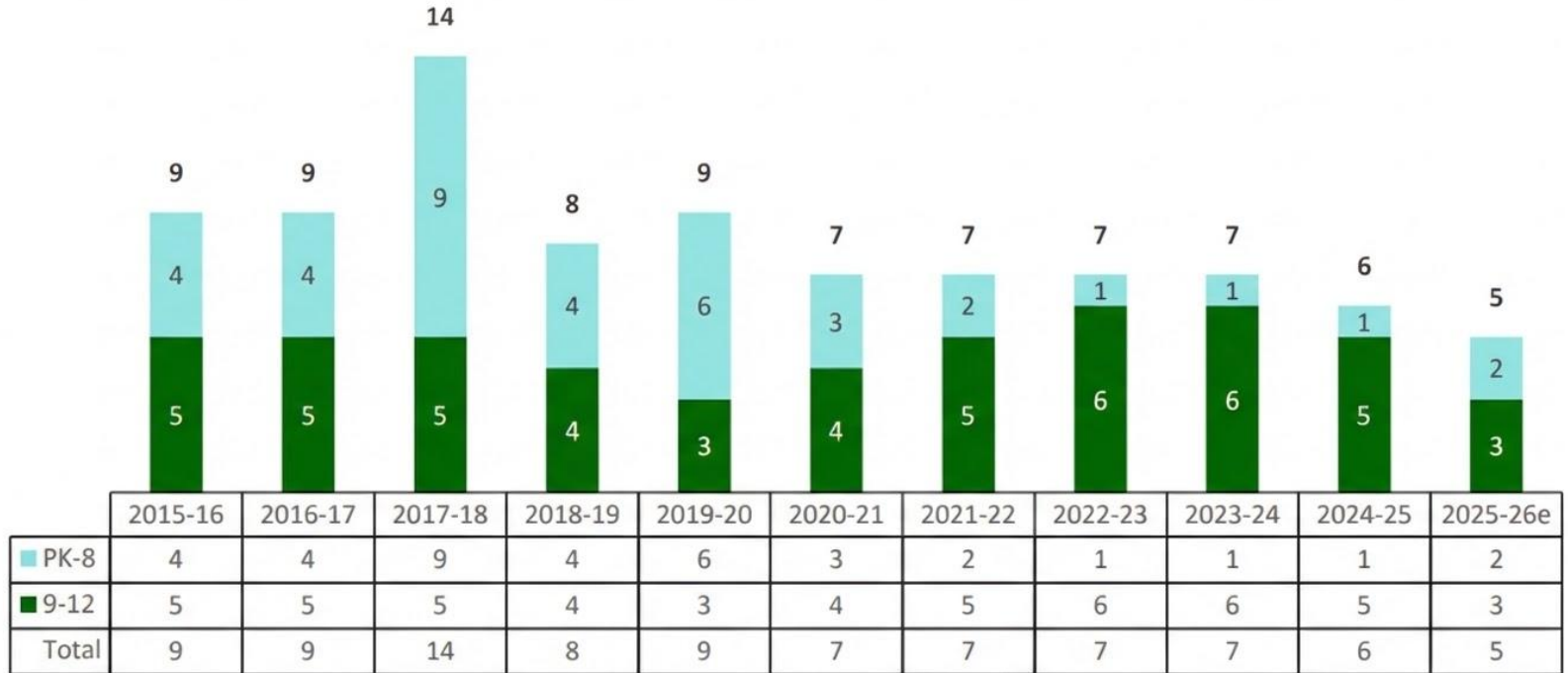
Average Cost per IEP (Excluding Fringe Benefits)



General Fund Special Education Cost, Including the Cost of Outplacements

Total Outplacement FY 2016– 2026

Total Outplaced Students



Moving Forward



- ✓ April 14 - Budget Public Hearing
- ✓ April 16 - Budget Deliberations
- ✓ April 21 - Budget Deliberations (if Needed)
- ✓ May 7 - Budget Presentation (Senior Center)
- ✓ May 12 - Annual Town Budget Meeting
- ✓ May 19 - BOF (Unless Referred to Referendum)
- ✓ May 26 - Budget Referendum (Tentative)



Thank You

