



# School Committee

## MINUTES OF THE CHELSEA SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 3, 2026

**APPROVED 3-26-26**

The Chelsea School Committee held a special meeting on March 3, 2026, at the Williams School-Band Room 180 Walnut St., Chelsea.

**Members Present:** Mayra Balderas, Katherine Cabral, Claryangeliz Covas Caraballo, Jonathan Gomez-Pereira, Lucia Henriquez, Ana Hernandez, Dr. Sarah Neville, Shawn O'Regan and JAKE Small.

**Also Present:** Superintendent Dr. Almudena G. Abeyta, Chief of Staff & Equity Dr. Aaron Jennings, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tamara Blake-Canty, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Martinello, Chief Academic Officer Adam Deleidi, Innovation, Access, & Opportunity Officer Malik Howshan, Communications Director Michael Sullivan, Chief Finance & Operations Officer Billie Jo Turner, Human Resources Director Christine Lee, and School Committee Clerk Veronica Dyer-Medina.

**The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.**

### Pledge of Allegiance

### Roll Call for Attendance:

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| Mr. Small           | Present |
| Ms. Covas Caraballo | Present |
| Ms. Henriquez       | Present |
| Mr. O'Regan         | Present |
| Ms. Balderas        | Present |
| Dr. Neville         | Late    |
| Ms. Cabral          | Present |
| Ms. Hernandez       | Present |
| Mr. Gomez-Pereira   | Late    |

Having 9 school committee members present, the meeting proceeded.

**Presentations:** Dr. Abeyta along with Chief Finance & Operations Officer Billie Jo Turner presented on a draft budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. Dr. Abeyta addressed the district is going into a budget shortfall of approximately \$8million dollars and that she would not be prepared to show the entire budget at this time. She stated that the budget timeline would be slightly off because of the work still needed to balance the budget shortfall. They also discussed topics the district heard from the listening sessions with staff and parents/guardians. Their [slideshow presentation](#) included the following topics:

- Budget timeline
- Factors influencing FY27 like: enrollment decline, expiration of ESSER funds, SOA offset by enrollment reductions, rising salary expenditures, increased charter school tuition, escalating costs in health care, transportation, & special education tuition costs.
- Expenditure forecast for FY27: salaries & labor steps, employee benefits, facilities, technology costs, professional development, special education costs, supplies, transportation, and utilities.
- Steps to balance the budget: proposed balancing to the budget would be: reduction in approximately 70 school staff, \$1.4 million in PD/Consultants district wide, and \$212 million in extraordinary maintenance.

Dr. Abeyta then opened up the meeting to hear questions. Some common themes were:

- Questions around consultant services and their benefit to the district
- How to make sure budget cuts are proportional at central office
- Prioritizing student facing positions
- Prioritizing PD that has already taken place at middle schools like Open ScienceEd
- Requests for an organizational chart from the district
- Requests for data on HQIM platforms
- Questions around how to request more funding from City and State
- Request for adjusting budget timelines and public hearing date
- Requests to buy more chromebooks
- Questions around admin level cuts

### **New Business:**

At this time **Item #: 26SC10:** Consideration and action to accept a Budget Transfer from various school based extended learning stipend accounts to one district wide extended learning stipend account in the amount of \$318,840 was tabled by Dr. Neville when it was explained by the clerk that the numbers needed to be updated for the vote, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Covas Caraballo-all were in favor of the tabling of this item. Ms. Balderas then motioned and requested a consent vote for the following financial items, and Dr. Neville seconded the motion for a consent vote:

- **Item #: 26SC06:** Consideration and action to accept \$8,000 for SY25-26 from DESE through Salem State University for the Early College Planning Grant.
- **Item #: 26SC07:** Consideration and action to accept \$6,900 for SY2025-2026 from the State Treasurer's Financial Education Innovation Fund.

- **Item #: 26SC08:** Consideration and action to accept an award of \$25,000 in private grant funds to support CPS’ music programming for FY2025-2026.
- **Item #: 26SC09:** Consideration and action to accept an award of up to \$14,000 in private grant funds to support CPS’ Chelsea Virtual Learning Academy for FY2025-2026.
- **Item #: 26SC11:** Consideration and action to accept a Budget Transfer of \$30,000 from Extraordinary Maintenance line in Facilities to a District Contracted Services line.
- **Item #: 26SC12:** Consideration and action to accept \$1,200 for printing expenses for student jerseys in celebration for the World Baseball Classics for CHS students from three donors.

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Mr. Small           | Yes |
| Ms. Covas Caraballo | Yes |
| Ms. Henriquez       | Yes |
| Mr. O’Regan         | Yes |
| Ms. Balderas        | Yes |
| Dr. Neville         | Yes |
| Ms. Cabral          | Yes |
| Ms. Hernandez       | Yes |
| Mr. Gomez-Pereira   | Yes |

Having 9 votes in the affirmative, the motions passed.

Chair Hernandez requested a roll call vote for the following item

**Item #: 26SC13:** Consideration and action to approve on the recommendation of the Superintendent an Out-of-State & Overnight Field Trip to the Armory in NYC, New York from March 13-March 14, 2026 for 1 Chelsea High School student with 2 chaperones and 1 parent for student who has qualified for the Nike Indoor Nationals in New York.

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Mr. Small           | Yes |
| Ms. Covas Caraballo | Yes |
| Ms. Henriquez       | Yes |
| Mr. O’Regan         | Yes |

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Ms. Balderas      | Yes |
| Dr. Neville       | Yes |
| Ms. Cabral        | Yes |
| Ms. Hernandez     | Yes |
| Mr. Gomez-Pereira | Yes |

Having 9 votes in the affirmative, the motions passed.

**Item #: 26SC14:** Consideration and action to approve on the recommendation of the Superintendent an Out-of-State Field Trip to Manchester, NH on March 20, 2026 for 12 Chelsea High School students and 3 chaperones for social skill and budget learning for the post graduate classroom.

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Mr. Small           | Yes |
| Ms. Covas Caraballo | Yes |
| Ms. Henriquez       | Yes |
| Mr. O'Regan         | Yes |
| Ms. Balderas        | Yes |
| Dr. Neville         | Yes |
| Ms. Cabral          | Yes |
| Ms. Hernandez       | Yes |
| Mr. Gomez-Pereira   | Yes |

Having 9 votes in the affirmative, the motions passed.

**Adjournment:** At this time Ms. Balderas motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Henriquez seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

Recorded by



Veronica Dyer-Medina

School Committee Clerk

# Strategic Focus and Sustainability Budget 2027

*March 3, 2026  
School Committee Meeting*



# Agenda

- Mission & Strategy
- Budget Development Timeline
- Funding for Public Education
- Factors Influencing FY 2027
- Expenditure Forecast
- Steps to Balance the Budget
- Q & A



# Mission

*Chelsea Public Schools is a gateway school system that welcomes and educates ALL students and families*



# Strategy: Bridge to Success 2.0



# BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

1

## Enrollment - 10/1 Report to DESE

In the Fall, preliminary budget tasks occur including reporting enrollment to DESE which feeds into the state determined foundation (or minimum) budget amt that MUST be spent. The student count and demographics impacts the amt a district gets.

2

## Expenses - Update existing costs for inflation

Consider effects of cost drivers such as programmatic changes, contract rate increases, collective bargaining, health insurance increases, etc.

3

## Revenue - Governor's Budget Released in January

The 10/1 enrollment determines the amt that the state requires us to spend on our students. So 1) how many kids dictates how much must be spent to provide adequate education, 2) who will pay for this. This total min budget is then divided btw state and city funding - who pays?

4

## Balance & Make Critical Decisions (based on feedback)

After determining the shortfall once the revenue and updated expenses are known, we must balance using the feedback from community. LISTEN AND DECIDE

5

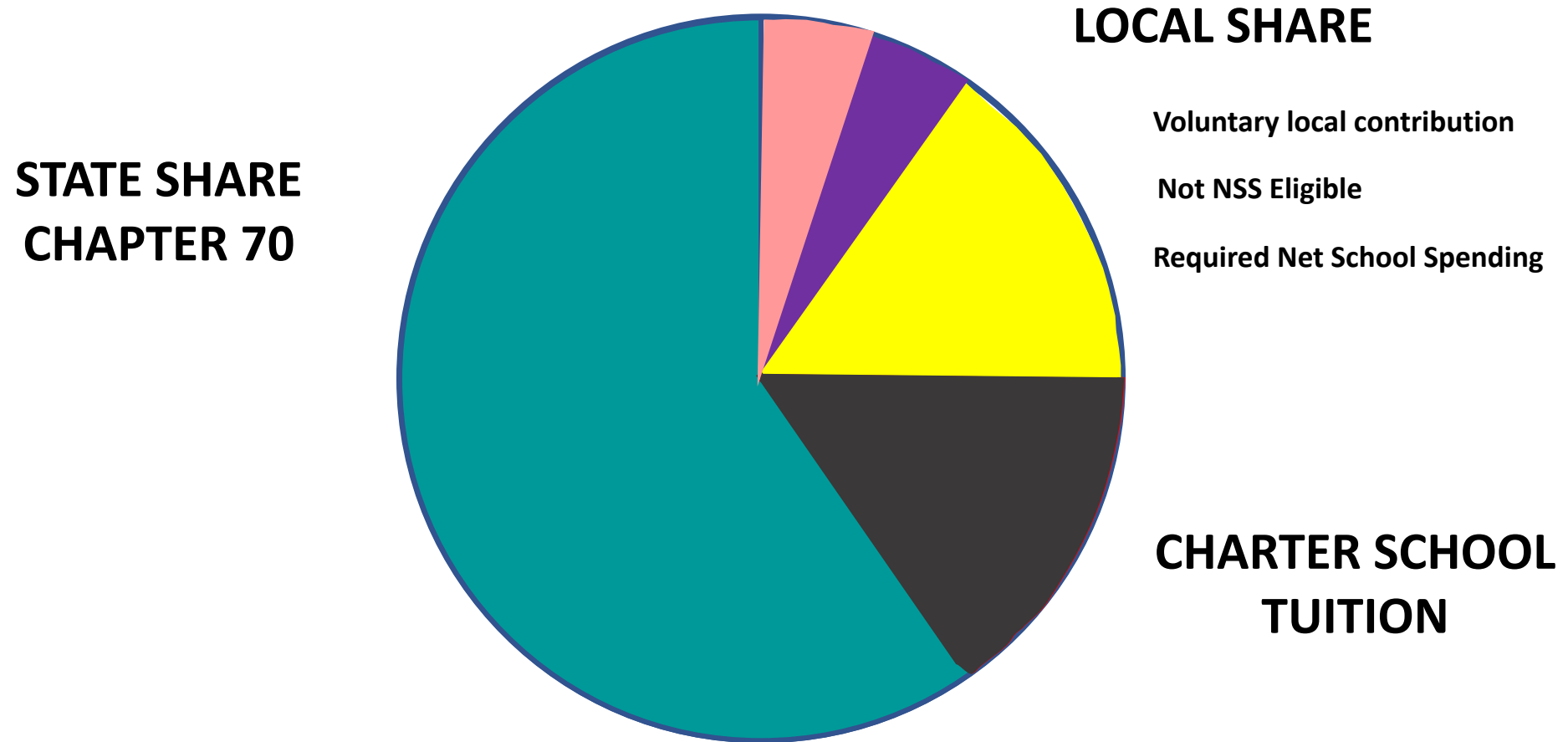
## Approve and Vote

We must get approval from SC to submit to City



# Foundation Budget in Action

## FOUNDATION BUDGET COSTS

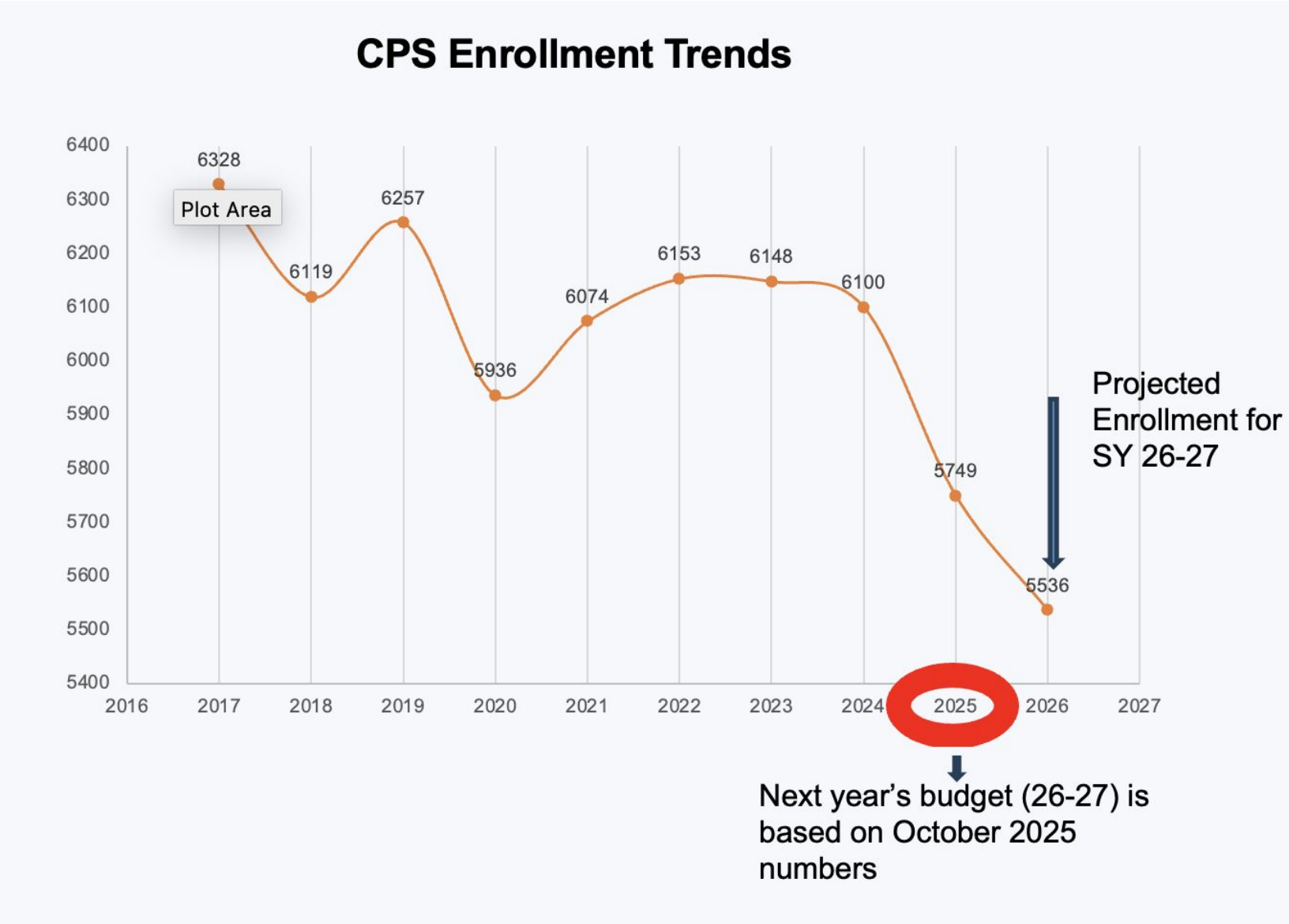


## **Factors Influencing Budget FY 2027**

*Both a Reduction in Revenue with Rising Costs*

- **Enrollment declined by 350 students**
- Expiration of ESSER funding
- Student Opportunity Act funding offset by enrollment reductions
- Rising salary expenditures
- Increasing charter school tuition obligations
- Escalating health insurance costs
- Higher transportation expenses
- Growing special education tuition costs

# Enrollment Trends



# Expenditure Breakdown (FY2027)

- Salaries / Labor (step increases + COLA)
- Employee Benefits (Placeholder Only)
- Facilities (non-labor)
- Info Technology (non-labor) (Must annually update devices)
- Professional Development
- Special Education (other than labor - significant need)
- Supplies / Books / Equip
- Transportation
- Utilities (Paid by Schools)



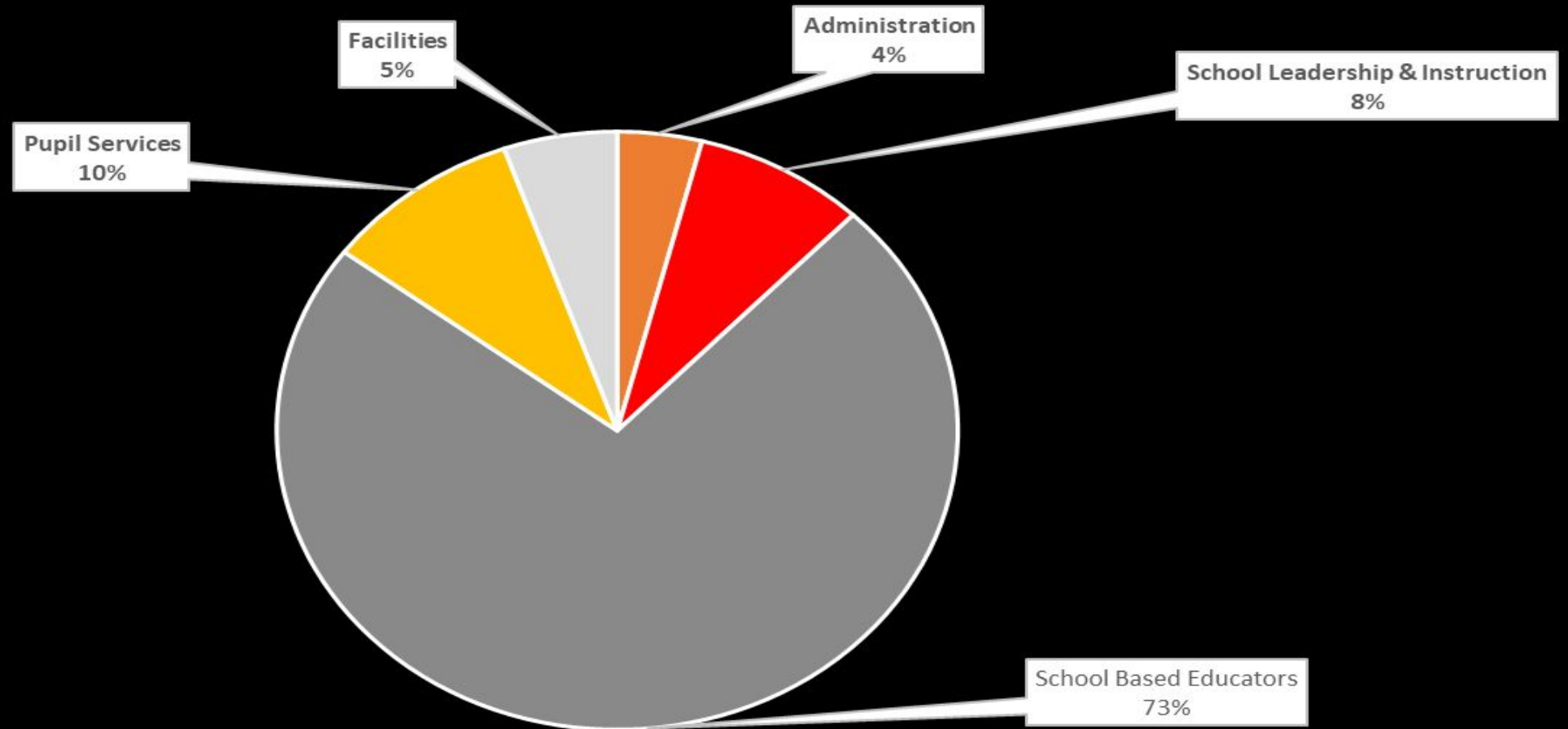
# Baseline Expenditure Forecast

| Item                                   | Jan to Feb 2026 Preliminary | Feb to March 2026 Balancing | Deficit Increase   |  |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Staff Costs: Steps, COLA               | \$6,700,000                 | \$6,980,000                 | \$280,000          | Recent raises: COA/Step & Lane Increases   |
| Staff Costs" Healthcare, Pension, etc. | \$1,200,000                 | \$1,970,000                 | \$770,000          | Rate for health increase not available yet so est only; need to increase for unemployment cost rise after cuts; less reduction in health coverage than anticipated |
| Special Ed Tuition Increase            | \$2,500,000                 | \$2,800,000                 | \$300,000          | # of students current year plus trend projection for next yr   |
| Transportation                         | \$500,000                   | \$500,000                   |                    | Rate increases included by change in stud need could cause more increases; DESE working on this issue  |
| Utilities, insurance, subs             | \$750,000                   | \$750,000                   |                    | Contractual increases reflected for utilities and subs   |
| <b>Shortfall Before Revenue</b>        | <b>\$11,650,000</b>         | <b>\$13,000,000</b>         | <b>\$1,350,000</b> | <b>Shortfall for Level Service Before Revenue Increase</b>   |
| Governor's Budget                      | -\$2,388,000                | -\$2,388,000                |                    | Ch 70 Inc + Req Min Contribution Inc for City  |
| Above Min. Contribution (City)         | -\$2,000,000                | -\$2,000,000                |                    | Superintendent/City Manager agreement  |
| <b>Shortfall After Revenue</b>         | <b>-\$7,270,000</b>         | <b>-\$8,612,000</b>         |                    | <b>Shortfall after Increase to Revenue</b>   |

# Staffing is 80% of Budget

Where are the people??

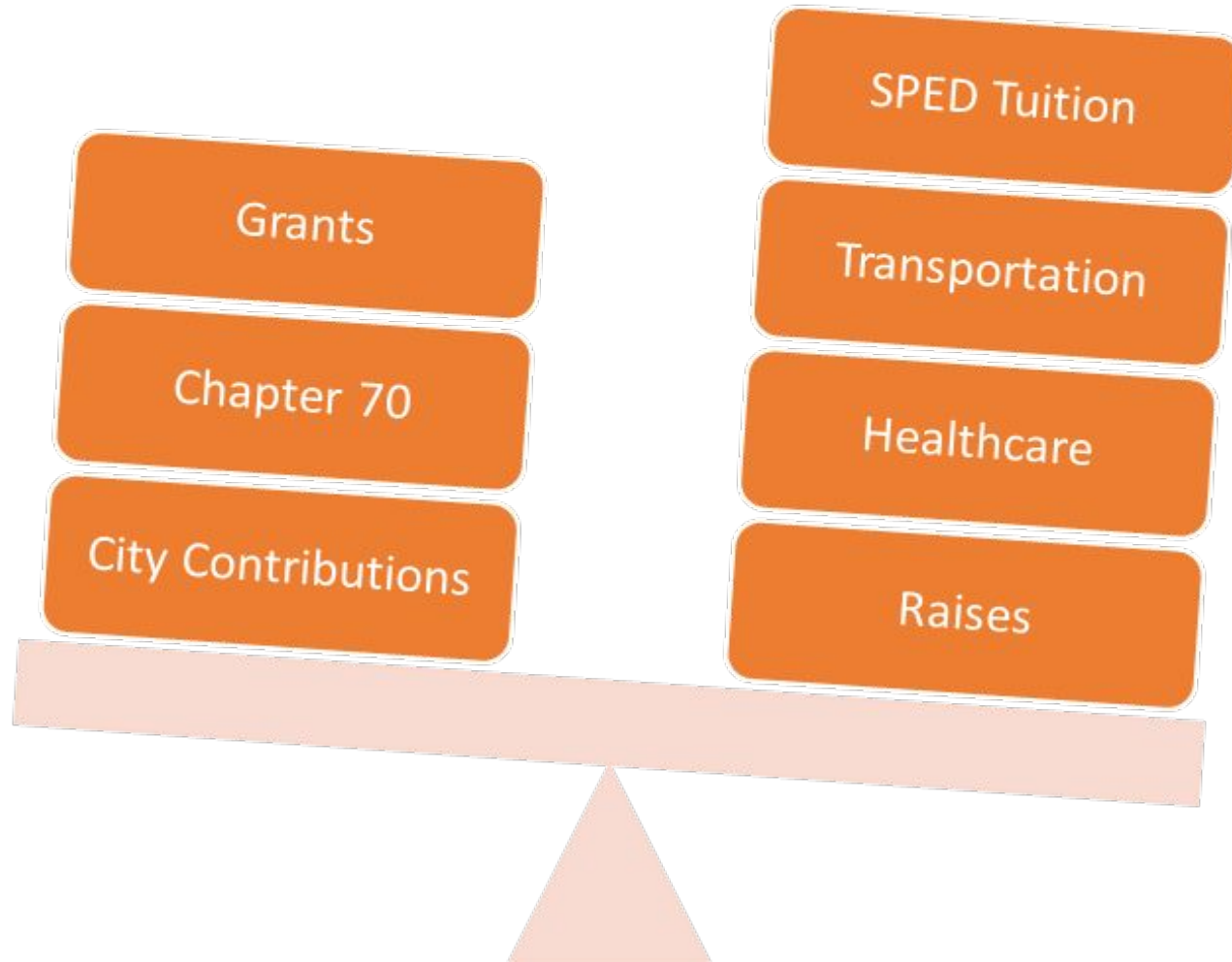
## Salaries



Revenue Sources  
the Same Just Not  
Enough

Inflationary Costs  
Outpacing our  
Increases

**BALANCE**



# What We Heard from Our Listening Sessions

## Important to Keep/Protect

### From Educators

Positions closest to children  
Special Education staff  
Mental Health Supports

### From Parents

PreK  
ParentSquare  
Extended Learning  
Family Liaisons  
Special Education Support  
Mental Health Supports  
Caminos Program

## Areas We Can Do Potentially do Without

### From Educators

Consultants for Professional Development (i.e. nationally recognized professionals)  
Reduce District Administration  
Contracted Services (i.e. Alongside App)

### From Parents

Transportation (is it necessary?)  
Consultants (but weren't specific)

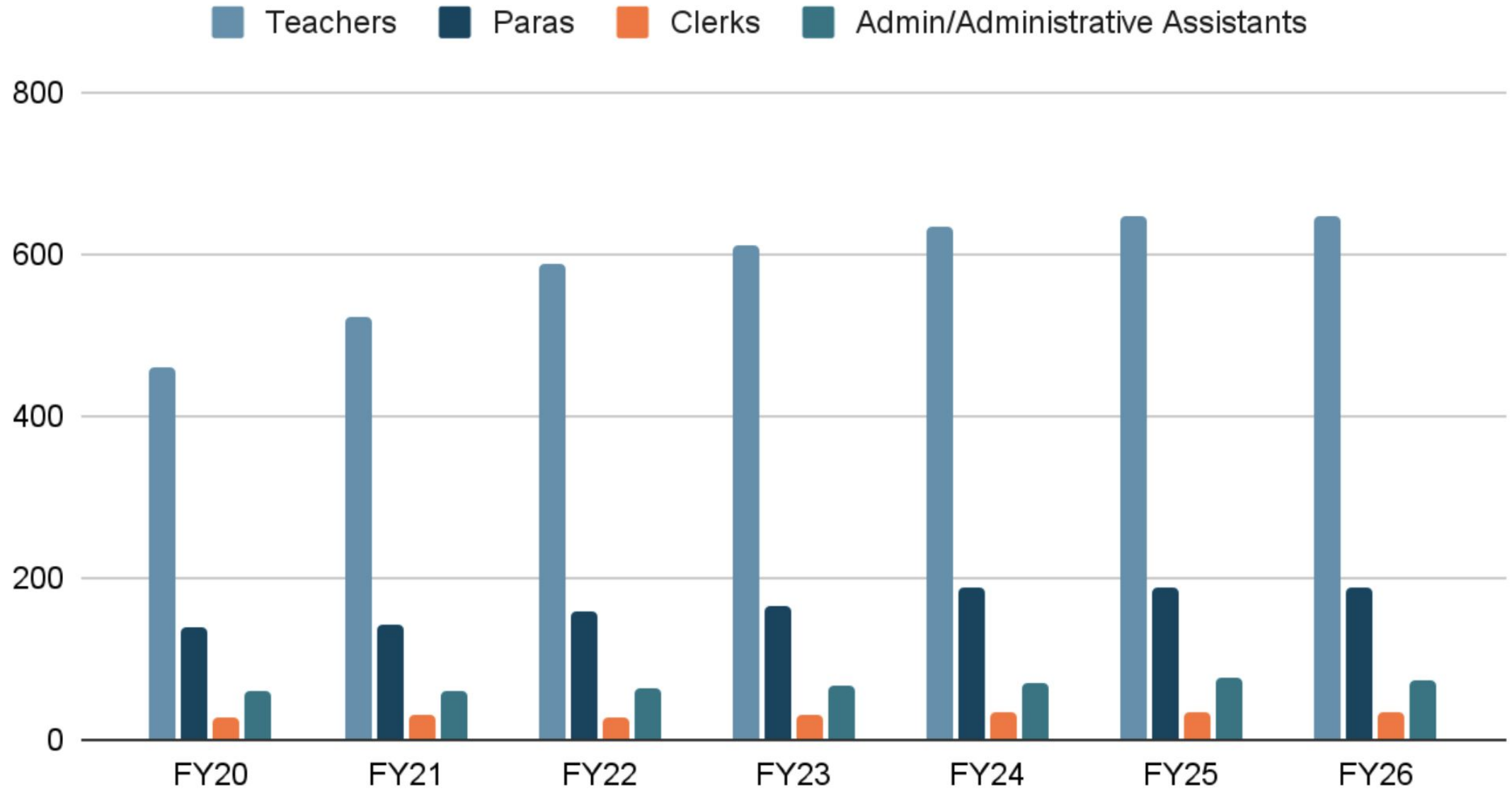
# Increases in School Based Positions from 2021-2026

| Positions              | FY 2020                  | FY2021     | FY2022        | FY2023        | FY2024        | FY2025        | FY2026        | Change                       |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Teacher Unit           | 460.0                    | 524.0      | 586.7         | 609.4         | 643.4         | 645.4         | 645.4         | 185.4+<br>(40.2%)            |
| Paraprofessionals      | 138.0                    | 142.0      | 158.0         | 165.0         | 187.0         | 187.0         | 187.0         | 49.0+<br>(35.5%)             |
| Clerks (School Based)  | 20.5                     | 21.0       | 21.0          | 21.0          | 24.0          | 24.0          | 24.0          | 3.5+<br>(17.1%)              |
| Clerks (District-wide) | 8.5                      | 9.0        | 8.0           | 9.0           | 10.0          | 10.0          | 10.0          | 1.5+<br>(17.6%)              |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>627</b><br>(baseline) | <b>675</b> | <b>773.70</b> | <b>804.40</b> | <b>864.40</b> | <b>864.40</b> | <b>864.40</b> | <b>239.4+</b><br><b>38%+</b> |

# Increase of District Positions from 2021-2026

| Positions   | FY2020                  | FY2021      | FY2022      | FY2023      | FY2024      | FY2025      | FY2026      | Change<br>(FY20-26)          |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Superintendent's Office<br>Superintendent (1)<br>/Assistant Superintendents(2)<br>CAO (1) Exec Assistant (1)<br>Communications (1)<br>Chief of Staff/(1)<br>SDP Coordinator | 6                       | 6           | 8           | 8           | 8           | 7           | 7           | 1                            |
| MLE Department  | 1.5                     | 1.5         | 1.5         | 2.5         | 3.5         | 3.5         | 3.5         | 2                            |
| Wellness/Student Support<br>(Admin only)  | 2                       | 2           | 2           | 2           | 3           | 4           | 3           | 1                            |
| Curriculum & Instruction &<br>Assessment, Extended<br>Learning, Early College, AVID   | 5                       | 5           | 6           | 6           | 6           | 9           | 8           | 3                            |
| Special Education & Admin<br>Asst (Admin only)  | 4                       | 4           | 5           | 6           | 6           | 6           | 6           | 2                            |
| Human Resources   | 4                       | 5           | 5           | 5           | 7           | 8           | 6           | 2                            |
| Business Office (Includes CFO<br>and staff)   | 13                      | 13          | 13          | 13          | 13          | 13          | 13          | 0                            |
| IT (Includes director & staff)  | 10                      | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 0                            |
| Buildings and Grounds<br>(Includes all directors)   | 5                       | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 0                            |
| Parent Information Center &<br>MKV (Includes Director and<br>Staff)   | 9                       | 9           | 9           | 9           | 9           | 10          | 10          | 1                            |
| School Health/Nurses<br>(Director)  | 1                       | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0                            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>60.5</b><br>baseline | <b>60.5</b> | <b>64.5</b> | <b>66.5</b> | <b>69.5</b> | <b>76.5</b> | <b>72.5</b> | <b>12+</b><br><b>(20.2%)</b> |

# Teachers, Paras, Clerks and Admin/Administrative Assistants




# How We Will Balance the Budget?

| Item   | Amount                |
|--|-----------------------|
| School Staff (70 FTE)                          | \$7,000,000.00        |
| District                                       | \$1,400,000.00        |
| -Professional Development<br>Consultants/Staff |                       |
| -Extraordinary Maintenance                     | \$ 212,000.00         |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>\$8,612,000.00</b> |



# Budget Timeline



 **Thursday, March 12**

 **6:30 p.m.**  
 *City Hall*

 **Thursday, March 19**

 **6:00 p.m.**  
 *Virtual Meeting*

 **Thursday, March 26**

 **7:00 p.m.**  
 *City Hall*



