

FY27 Budget FAQs

April 8, 2026

1. Why is investment in strong building administrative teams critical to the student experience?

Building administrators (principals and assistant principals) are “front line” educators working directly with students, staff and parents/guardians every day. With over 2100 students and 380+ staff, building administrators provide supervision, problem-solving, and strategic planning to help NPS students grow and learn in a safe and supportive environment.

NPS has four schools. PK-8 schools have principals and assistant principals. At NHS, there is also a Dean who provides additional support for the increased programs and needs of high school students:

- *Newburyport High School*: 3 administrators; Principal, Associate Principal, Dean of Specialized Programs (745 students)
- *Edward G Molin & Rupert A Nock Middle Schools*: 4 administrators; 2 Principals, 2 Assistant Principals (792 students)
- *Francis T. Bresnahan School*: 2 administrators; Principal, Assistant Principal (567 students)
- District Enrollment 2,100 students 9 administrators

Principals and their assistants ensure students and staff have the skills and resources needed for success including:

- Daily Operations, Supervision, Safety & Security: Developing, overseeing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe school day (e.g., supervising arrival, dismissal, recess and lunch; creating and practicing safety plans; coordinating with facilities management)
- Staff Supervision & Evaluation: Principals and their assistants directly supervise the building faculty and staff. The legal requirements of teacher supervision include observations, evaluations and instructional feedback. Through the supervision process, principals support NPS in developing a strong and effective educational staff. On average building administrators evaluate 20-30 staff members.
- Maintaining a Highly Qualified Workforce: Principals and their assistants lead the hiring of staff; ensure daily substitutes; and support HR-related issues that arise.

- Leading Teaching & Learning: Principals and their assistants work actively with the District Teaching & Learning team to provide professional development and oversee curriculum, instruction and assessment. Through planning and facilitating faculty meetings, leading instructional leadership teams and overseeing multi-tiered instruction, our principal teams are directly involved in every aspect of student learning.
- Providing Student Support: Principals are responsible for all discipline-related concerns including completing complex bullying and harassment investigations. In addition, they oversee student support teams, intervention planning, and provide direct support to parents/guardians.
- Strategic & Budget Planning: Principals are responsible for their school budgets and coordinate with district, school and community stakeholders to create School Improvement Plans.
- School Culture and Community: Finally, building administrative teams work collaboratively with students and staff to elevate student voice and create opportunities for all stakeholders to feel positively connected with the school.

2. How is the district prioritizing areas for cuts?

- The 4.0% Threshold: If funding from the City falls below a 4% increase from FY26, we will move from "trimming" to "programmatic impact." We will not cut programs in their entirety, but we may have to trim them back to meet the City allocation expectations.
- Class Size: We have already reduced two elementary positions based on enrollment numbers and we have a class size that is manageable. Moving from an elementary class size of 20 - 22 to 23-26 students would significantly change the dynamic of that elementary class.
- Physical Size of Molin Classrooms: There are some physical classroom constraints at the Molin Upper Elementary School. Some classrooms could not fit 24 - 25 students and continue to maintain an elementary classroom format.
- Athletics, Music, Performing Arts & World Language Programs: We have spent a decade building back robust athletics, music, performing arts and world language programs. Reducing these programs would be a last resort.

3. Why is there an assumption of 3.5% increase for non-union salaries?

- Market Adjustment: The budget reflects a 3% base increase, plus a selected market adjustment for a few administrative positions to remain competitive with neighboring districts.
- Leadership Pipeline: Currently, the per-diem pay of some teachers is higher than that of our administrators. To develop leadership capacity from within, we cannot ask our best teachers to take a pay cut to move into administration.

4. Why is there a decrease in the preschool line (\$43K)?

- Staffing Turnover: While the FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) remains stable, the cost reduction is the result of a retirement. We are replacing a long-term, top-step veteran salary with a lower-step entry salary.

5. Why are substitute teacher costs reduced?

- Projected Reductions: We have reduced this line item based on current usage projections.
- Risk Management: Because we deal with people, unexpected FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) situations or spikes in absences may require us to use other line items to cover these costs if the projection is exceeded.

6. Why is there a proposed reduction in the high school art/virtual high school?

- Enrollment Driven: This slight reduction is based specifically on current student enrollment numbers and interest in those specific elective areas at this time. It is a data-driven "right-sizing" not a programmatic elimination.

7. Why does NHS Athletics show an increase in coaches salaries (\$36,215)?

- Contractual Obligations: The budget reflects Year 2 of the collective bargaining agreement, which includes negotiated salary increases for the existing coaching staff.

8. School Choice Fund Balance

- The FY27 budget relies on projected fund balances and anticipated FY27 receipts from School Choice, Circuit Breaker, and other revolving funds to help offset current cost pressures.
- School Choice is projected to end FY26 with \$970,487 and Circuit Breaker with \$319,555; both funds are then used significantly in FY27, supported by anticipated FY27 receipts. Projected FY27 remaining balances are \$621,526 for School Choice and \$69,555 for Circuit Breaker.
- These funds are being used strategically, but not fully exhausted, so the district retains some capacity to manage unexpected costs and budget pressures in FY28.