Northwestern Regional School District No. 7

Superintendent's Proposed 2026-2027 Budget

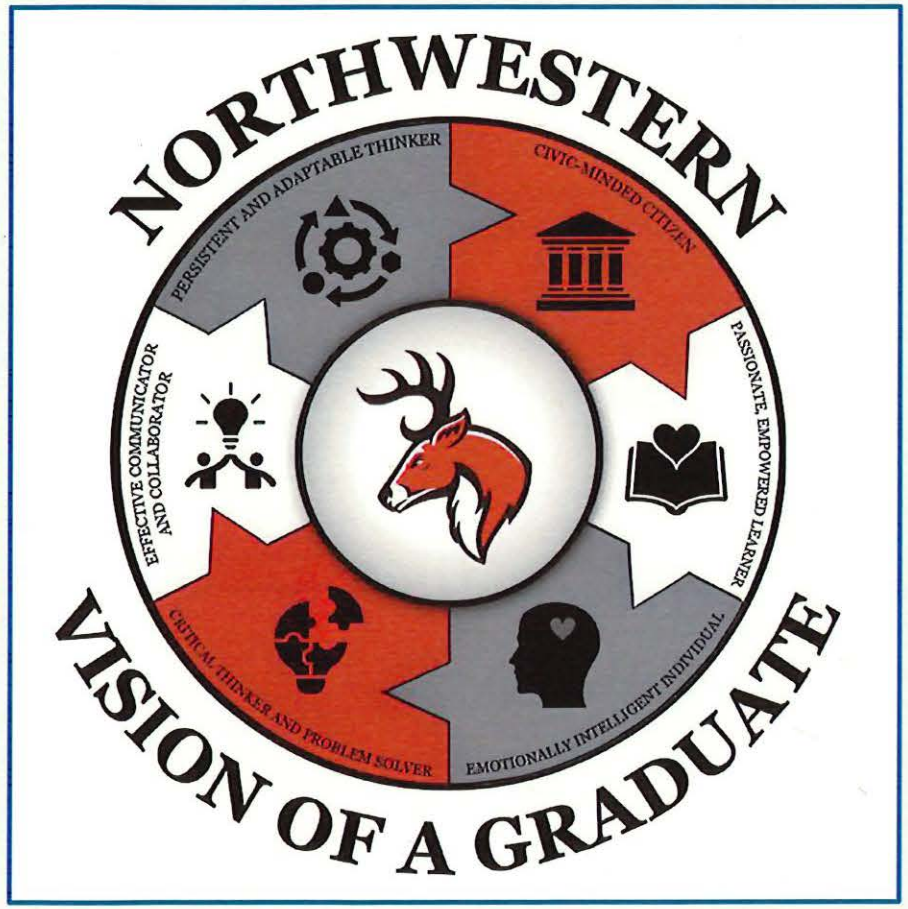
March 4, 2026

The Pride of the Northwest Corner

Budgeting Commitments:

- *To remain transparent and conscientious in our approach to budget development*
- *To request only those resources we believe essential to providing high quality educational programs and services*
- *To model our Vision of the Graduate attributes in budget development and district leadership actions*
- *To ensure that Northwestern Regional School District No. 7 remains a model of excellence*

Northwestern Vision of the Graduate



A Northwestern Regional High School graduate will be a(n):

Effective Communicator and Collaborator
Graduates will demonstrate effective verbal and written communication, as well as other methods of relaying information, that gets a point across, as well as the capability to work with someone to produce or create a product.

Critical Thinker and Problem Solver:
Graduates will be able to objectively analyze and evaluate issues in order to arrive at an informed position and/or conclusion.

Emotionally Intelligent Individual:
Graduates will have the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to be skilled in handling interpersonal relationships judiciously and with kindness and empathy.

Civic-Minded Citizen:
Graduates will understand the idea that one's identity transcends geography or political borders and that as positive leaders, recognize that responsibilities are derived from membership in the broader class of humanity.

Passionate, Empowered Learner:
Graduates will possess an intense desire or enthusiasm for learning, with an emphasis on academic integrity and honesty.

Persistent and Adaptable Thinker:
Graduates will persist in doing something despite difficulty, obstacles, or delay in achieving success, and have the ability to adjust to new conditions.

Board's Proposed Budget: Historical Overview

Year	Budget	Assessment
2020-2021	*2.53%*	*2.49%*
2021-2022	*1.33%*	*0.38%*
2022-2023	*2.45%*	*1.97%*
2023-2024	*2.42%*	*2.79%*
2024-2025	*3.47%*	*3.78%*
2025-2026	*2.29%*	*3.31%*
2026-2027	***2.10%***	***2.12%***

Prior 5-Year Average Budget Increase: 2.39%

Prior 5-Year Average Assessment: 2.45%

Prior 10-Year Average Budget Increase: 2.10%

Prior 10-Year Average Assessment: 2.17%



Budget Drivers: Seeking the Right Balance



Significant Needs/Limited Resources

Special Education Programming

- Outplacement tuition and transportation costs are currently favorable, but can change quickly and significantly impact the budget.
- The state's underfunding of the Excess Cost Grant and flaws in its formula continue to strain town budgets.
- Rising per-pupil costs highlight the need for stronger middle and high school intervention programs to reduce special education identification and long-term costs.

Regular Education Programming

- Medical benefits increased by 12%, continuing a three-year trend of rising costs, though still comparatively low compared with many districts.
- Salaries and benefits make up 67% of the total budget; statewide contract settlements remain high. Staffing has been reduced thoughtfully over the past three years, with additional reductions planned, though the district is nearing its sustainable staffing level.
- Continued investment in tiered academic and behavioral supports is essential, particularly given their strong impact at the middle school level.

Budget Mitigation Efforts

- Reduced 5 top-step teacher positions through a retirement incentive (only 1 being replaced at far lower cost)
- Increased Principal/Department Leader involvement and collaboration to foster transparency and improve efficiency.
- Centralized technology lines to avoid inefficiency and better track resources.
- Filled open positions with high quality educators, at the lowest possible cost.
- Purchased the full suite of ADP Programs to increase efficiency and accuracy in our business and HR processes, ultimately saving the district money.
- Utilized significant State and Federal grant funds to accomplish numerous district improvements and major security system upgrades.

Northwestern Middle School









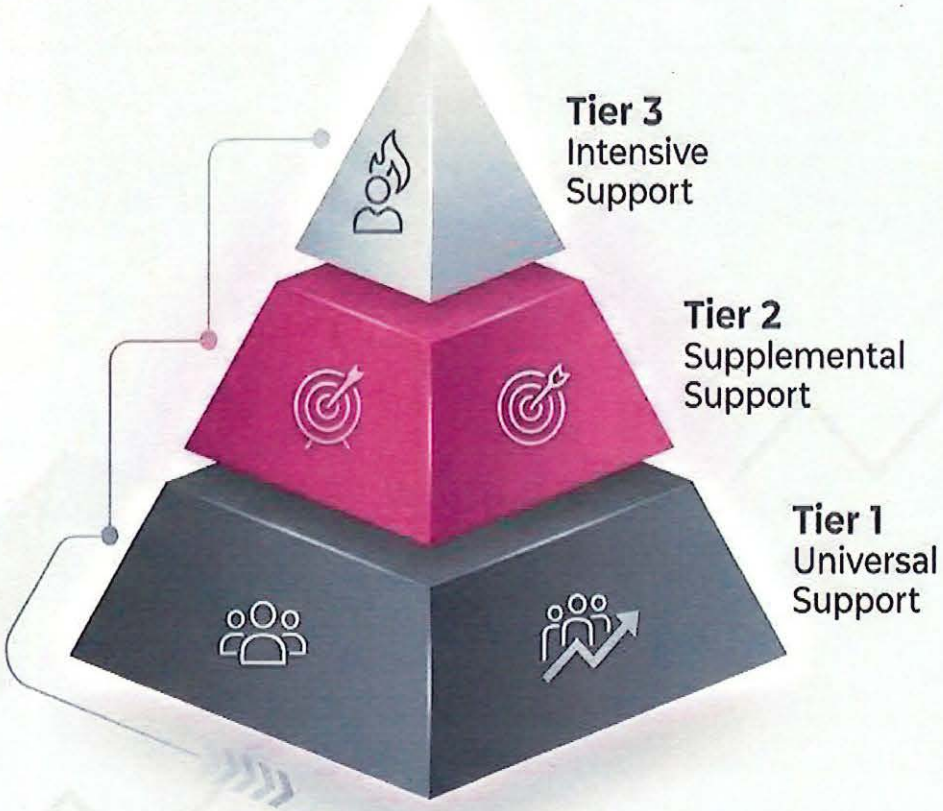








Addressing Middle School Needs

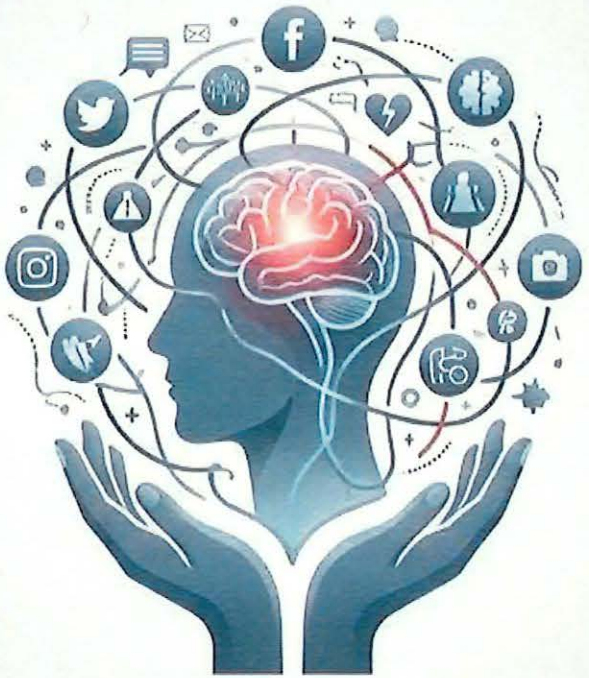


Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

- Math and ELA MTSS Programs are in place and serving students
- Early data indicates that students enrolled in these programs are demonstrating twice as much growth when compared to peers who have not received specialized instruction.
- These programs are critical to ensure ALL students are prepared for the challenges of high school.
- Both programs will continue to evolve, improve, and expand in reach using existing resources.

Mental Health Needs

- Student needs relative to mental health support are increasing each year.
- Social media, increased anxiety and changing societal pressures impact students greatly.
- Outside services are becoming more difficult to access. The school is often serving students at a greater capacity than typical while coordinating outside services.
- Our mental health professionals work each day to navigate complex and sensitive situations.



Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Program (PBIS)

- This approach helps to explicitly teach, model, and reinforce positive behaviors in all school settings.
- The core values selected by our PBIS committee are applicable to everyone within our school setting and will serve students well throughout the journey.
- The consistency in language and expectations helps ensure we are setting every student up for success.
- We have seen very positive results in part due to implementing this program.

HIGHLANDER PRIDE

	INSTRUCTIONAL AREAS	HALLWAYS, LOCKERS, & STAIRWELLS	RESTROOMS AND LOCKER ROOMS	CAFETERIA	ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL
P PERSEVERANCE	• Work through challenges. • Ask questions. • Celebrate achievement.	• Be proud of our school. • Stay focused and avoid distractions.	• Use as intended. • Avoid distractions.	• Wait patiently. • Create a positive, environment.	• Be ready to start/end the day. • Stay alert.
R RESPECT	• Respect adults, other students, and yourself. • Respect the school environment.	• Respect others' space and property. • Respect adults and other students. • Use quiet voices.	• Respect the facilities. • Use quiet voices.	• Respect others' space and property. • Respect adults and other students.	• Be mindful of noise and space. • Respect adults and other students.
I INTEGRITY	• Be honest. • Be proud of your efforts. • Use technology as expected.	• Be trustworthy. • Technology free zone.	• Be trustworthy. • Technology free zone.	• Be trustworthy. • Follow expectations without reminders. • Technology free zone.	• Go directly to auditorium or cafe. • Follow expectations without reminders.
D DEPENDABILITY	• Be present. • Be engaged. • Be prepared.	• Be timely and efficient; detour free. • Be tidy and clean.	• Be timely and efficient. • Be tidy and clean. • Sign in and out; detour free.	• Be tidy and clean. • Use quiet, appropriate voices. • Follow time guidelines.	• Arrive on time. • Wait patiently in designated areas. • Be prepared to leave/enter.
E EMPATHY	• Treat others how you want to be treated. • Allow every voice to be heard.	• Create a positive, welcoming environment. • Use appropriate language.	• Respect others' privacy. • Be discreet.	• Lead with kindness; include others. • No one sits alone.	• Greet others kindly. • Watch for safety of peers.

NORTHWESTERN HIGHLANDER PRIDE

P PERSEVERANCE	**PERSEVERANCE** is sticking with something, even when it is hard or takes a long time. It means not giving up when things get tough--whether it's solving a hard problem, learning a new skill, or working through a challenge with a positive attitude.
R RESPECT	**RESPECT** is treating people, places, and things with care and consideration-even if they are different from you. It means listening when others speak, using kind words, valuing different opinions, taking care of school property, and treating others the way you want to be treated--in person and online.
I INTEGRITY	**INTEGRITY** is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. It means being honest, taking responsibility for your actions, and making good choices--not just to avoid trouble, but because it's the right thing to do.
D DEPENDABILITY	**DEPENDABILITY** is being reliable--doing what you say you'll do and showing up when you're needed. It means others can count on you to be on time, follow through on responsibilities, and be prepared--whether it's for class, a group project, or helping a friend.
E EMPATHY	**EMPATHY** is understanding how someone else feels and showing that you care. It means listening, being kind, and thinking about things from another person's point of view--even if their experience is different from yours.







Highlander Proud!













Northwestern High School

Rigorous and Expanded Opportunities

A Wide Variety of Courses Support The Whole Student and Their Potential Career Pathway - Pathway Development will be a focal point of our ongoing district improvement efforts.

- **Agricultural Education**
  - Aquaculture
  - Greenhouse & Nursery Production
  - Exotic and Endangered Animal Science
- **Art**
  - Digital Design Studio
  - Art Classroom Mentorship
- **Business**
  - Advanced Personal Finance
  - Business Classroom Mentorship
- **Education**
  - UConn ECE: If You Love It, Teach It
- **English**
  - Journalism II
- **PE/Wellness**
  - UConn ECE: Exercise and Wellness for Everyone
- **Science**
  - Zoology
  - UConn EMT Training
  - Astronomy
- **Social Studies**
  - History of Rock and Roll

Summary of Northwestern's AP test performance from 2018-2025

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of AP Classes Offered	12	11	11	11	13	13	14	14
Total AP Students	102	115	108	99	106	83	93	98
Number of Exams	164	183	175	161	168	137	166	172
% of Total AP Tests with Score of 3+	88%	90%	90%	83%	86%	84%	84%	84%

2025 AP Scores: NWR7 Average at Goal (3+)

- AP US History: 100%
- AP US Gov. and Politics: 100%
- AP European History: 100%
- AP Eng. lang and Comp: 100%
- AP Eng. Lit and Comp: 100%
- AP Calculus AB: 80%
- AP Calculus BC: 100%
- AP Environmental: 75%
- AP Biology: 80%
- AP Computer Science: 81%
- AP Statistics: 100%
- AP Chemistry: 67%
- AP Psychology: 67%
- AP Physics: 100%

- **9 UConn Early College Experience (Dual Enrollment) Courses Offered**
- **87 Students Currently Enrolled in UConn Courses at Northwestern**
- **Hundreds of College Credits Earned While in High School**
- **Hundreds of Thousands Saved in College Tuition**

PSAT COMPARATIVE 11TH GRADE

	Mean Score	Mean ERW Score	Mean Math Score
Class of 2026	1001	506	495
Class of 2025	**971**	**494**	**477**
Class of 2024	1016	517	499

(October 2023)

Cohort Growth

(Spring 2024)

SAT DATA COMPARATIVE

	Ave. Test Score	ERW Score	Math Score
Class of 2025	**1020** +49	**521** +27	**499** +22
Class of 2024	1060	532	528
Class of 2023	1023	523	500

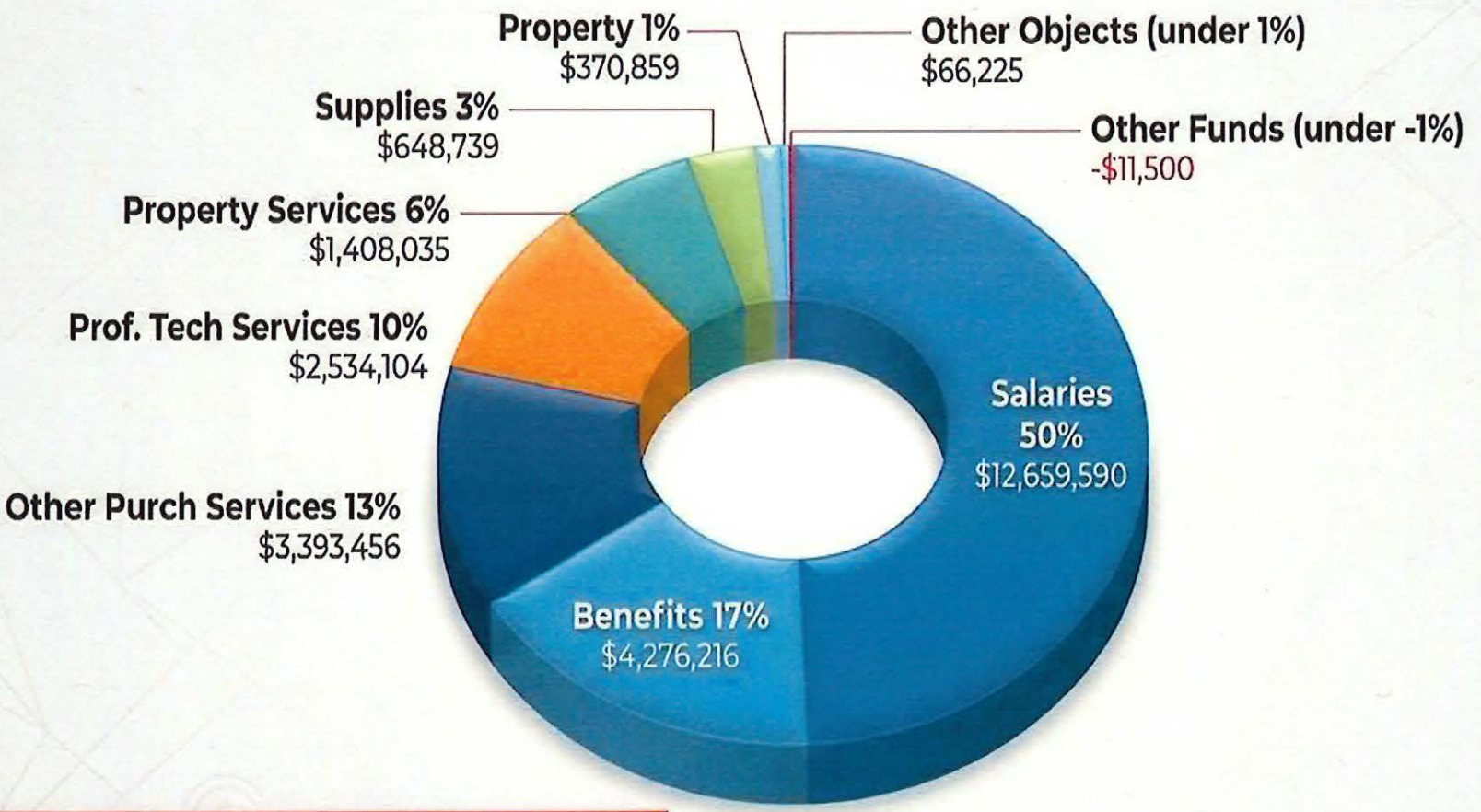
SAT DATA – CLASS OF 2025 STATE COMPARATIVE

Group	Avg. Test Score	ERW Score	Math Score
NWR7 Class of 2025	**1020**	**521**	**499**
State of CT	962	491	471

Big Picture and Fine Detail.



2026-2027 Budget by Object



Budget Total $25,345,724

* Values above are rounded to the nearest whole.

100 Salaries
Increase of $50,856 or .40%

Increases:

- Contractual Salary Increases - Teachers (settled), Administrators (settled), Educational Assistants (April 2026)

Budget Mitigation Factors/Actions:

- **Reduction of 4 Certified Positions (Successful Retirement Incentive)**
- Replace One Retiring Teacher With a More Novice (lower salary) Teacher

200 Benefits
Increase of $368,098 or 9.42%

Increases:

- Medical Health Insurance Renewal: 12.0% increase for 26/27 (Increased 11.8% in 25/26)
- Dental 6.97% Increase
- TSA, SEP, 403b Increase of 4% Reflective of Contractual Obligations

Budget Mitigation Factors/Actions:

- Retirement Incentive Savings
- Life Insurance Renewal at 0%
- Unemployment Reduced 33.33% (-$5,000)
- Workers' Compensation Insurance Reduced 9.47% (-$8,556)

300 Professional/Technical Services
Increase of $226,813 or 9.83%

Increases:

- Shared Services Assessment Increase 3.45%
- Sp. Ed. Professional Technical Services: Increase 10.74% ($95,466)
- Technical Services/Data Processing: Increased 256.90% ($80,000 for New Upgraded and Integrated Technology for Payroll, Time and Attendance, Absence Tracking, Benefits and Business Operations)
- Audit: Increase 15.32% ($5,692). Increases Have Outpaced Budget.
- Instructional Technology: Increase 12.01% ($11,208)

Budget Mitigation Factors/Actions:

- Excess Cost Offsets Significantly Underfunded by the State
- Excess Cost Grant Applied: $45,000
  - $20,000 to Offset Shared Services Expenditures
  - $25,000 to Offset Special Education Professional and Technical Services

400 Property Services
Increase of $38,777 or 2.83%

Budget Factors:

- Most Accounts Held to 0%
- Repair Equipment - Computers: Increase of 13.05% ($15,761)
  - Adjusted to Closer Approximate Actual Expenditures
- Snow Removal/Ice Management Increase of 9.28% ($5,105)

500

Other Purchased Services
Decrease of -$203,334 or -5.65%

Increases:

- State Tech. Transportation: Increase 33.61% ($79,761)

Budget Mitigation Factors/Actions:

- Transportation – Special Education: Decrease 17.61% (-$99,570)
- Tuition – Special Education: Decrease 16.83% (-$198,492)
- Excess Cost Grant Applied: $242,000
  - $25,000 to Offset Special Education Transportation
  - $217,000 to Offset Special Education Outplacements

600

Supplies
Increase of $35,404 or 5.77%

Increases:

- Teaching Supplies - Science: Increase 189.69% ($16,370)
- Teaching Supplies - Computers: Increase 22.55% ($2,300)
- All Teaching Supplies: Net Increase 16.29% ($20,754)
- Grounds, In-House: Increase 66.67% ($4,000)
- Textbooks, Social Studies HS: Increase 66.67% ($3,000)

700 Property

$0 Increase/Decrease or 0%

- Zero Shifts Between Accounts Net a Zero Impact
- The Capital Outlay Account ($200,000) Remains Here for Future Bonding Expenses.

800 Other Objects

Increase of $4,381 or 7.08%

- General Increases in Dues and Fees

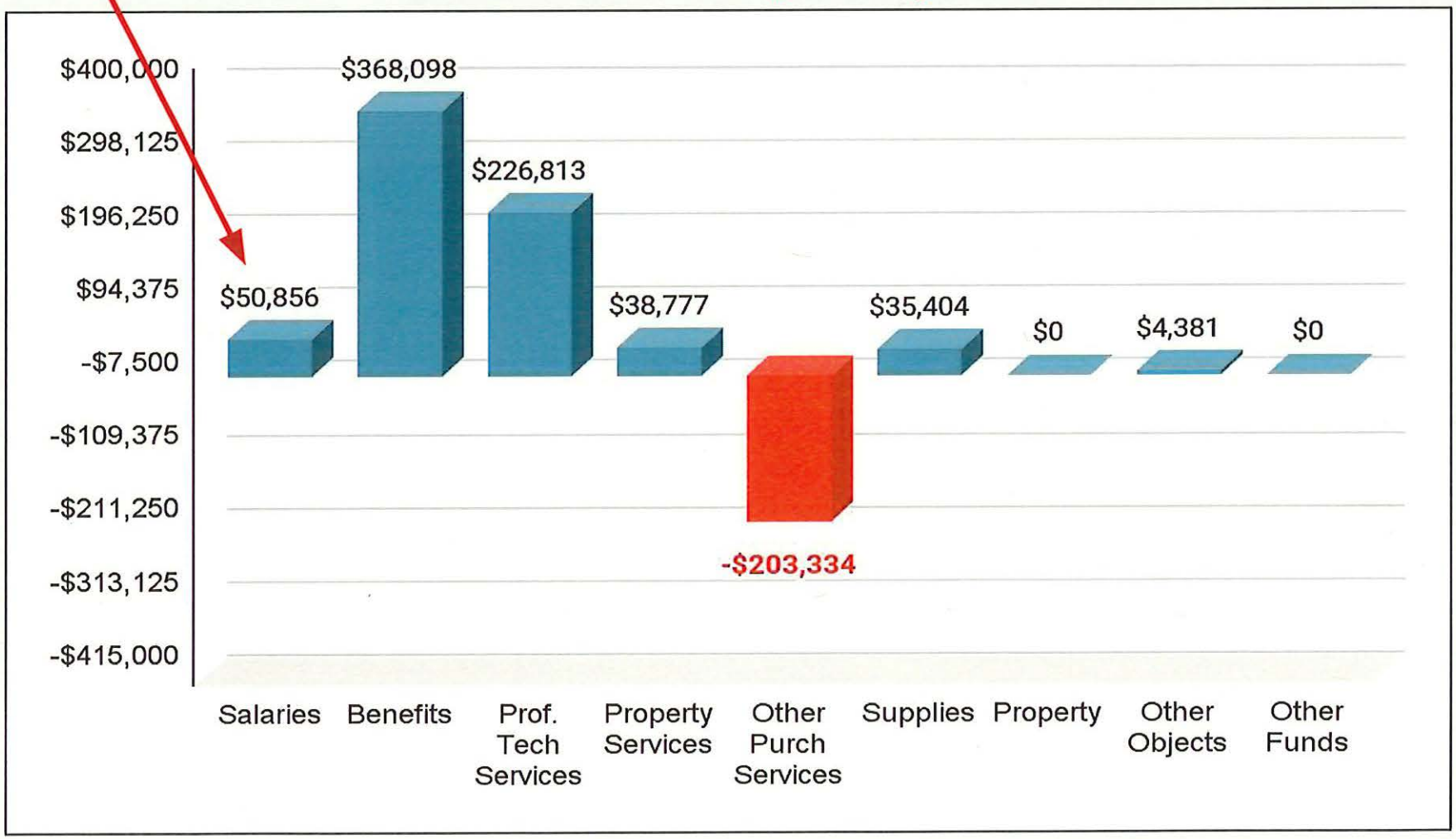
900 Other Funds

$0 Increase/Decrease or 0%

- Level funded - No Anticipated Change in Gate Receipts.

Salary increases would have been close to $500,000 if not for the retirement incentive.

2026-2027 Proposed Budget Increase of $520,995



Excess Cost Expenditure Offset

Code	Description	2025-2026	2026-2027
325	Shared Services	$22,539	$20,000
326	Professional/Tech Services	$25,000	$25,000
511	Transportation-Special Education	$25,000	$25,000
562	Tuitions – Special Education (H.S. & M.S.)	$238,508	$217,000
	TOTAL	$311,047	$287,000

The state reimburses districts for special education costs exceeding 4.5x the per-pupil expenditure ($32,705* next year), meaning the district pays the full amount until costs surpass $147,173*.

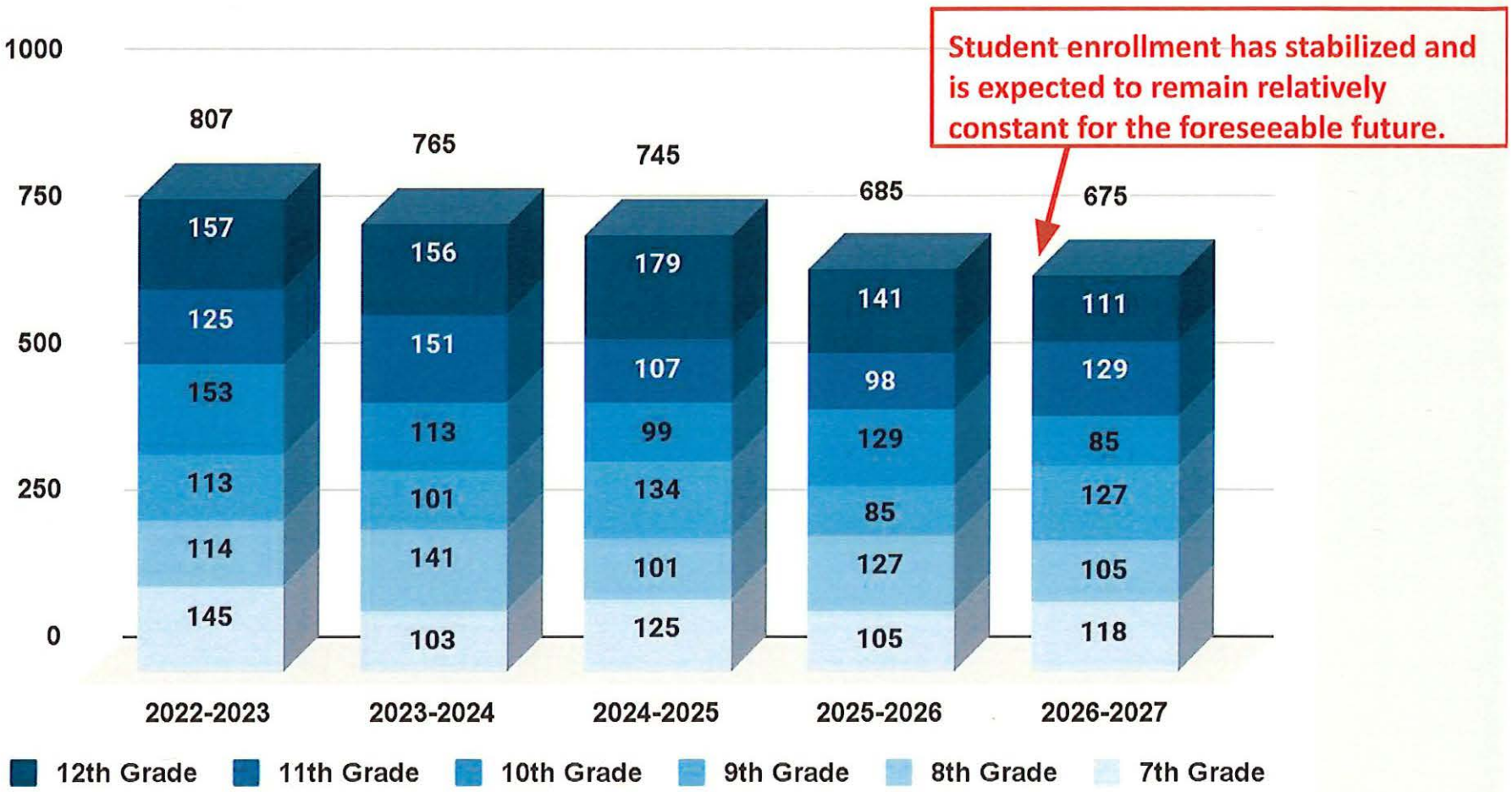
Based on the State distribution formula, Northwestern should receive 88% of excess costs back. This grant has consistently been underfunded due to flat appropriations and ever-rising costs.

We budgeted 69% in the current year. Due to the state's pattern of underfunding, the proposed 2026-2027 budget only projects a 70% reimbursement.

Revenues & Assessments

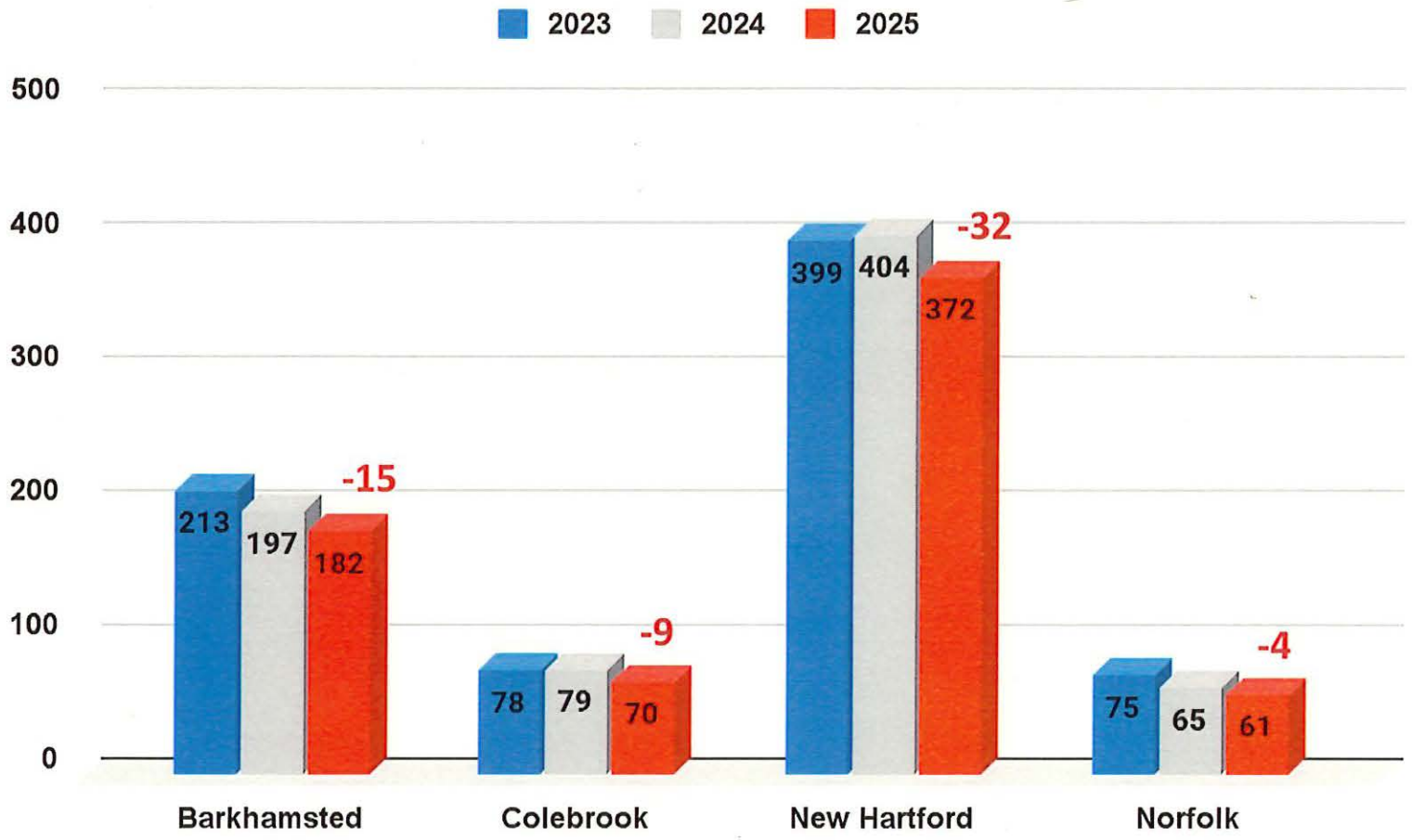
Description	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Estimated	Difference
Tuition-Regular	$436,185	**$425,165**	**($11,020)**
Tuition-Special Ed	$0	$0	$0
Tuition – Ag Ed	$237,420	**$225,549**	**($11,871)**
Rental Income	$10,500	$12,500	$2,000
Interest Income	$15,000	$18,000	$3,000
Ag Ed Grant	$752,706	$762,090	$9,384
Subtotal Revenues	*$1,451,811*	***$1,443,304***	***($8,507)***
Budget Variance	$743,654	$793,828	$50,174
Subtotal with Offset	$2,195,465	**$2,237,132**	**$41,667**
Budget	$24,824,729	**$25,345,724**	**$520,995**
Assessments (Budget minus Subtotal with offset)	$22,629,264	**$23,108,592**	**$479,328**

Straight Line ADM - Member Towns



** Based on October 1, 2025*

Change in October 1 ADM by Town (2023-2025)



** Based on October 1, 2025 CSDE*

A Look at Total District Enrollment

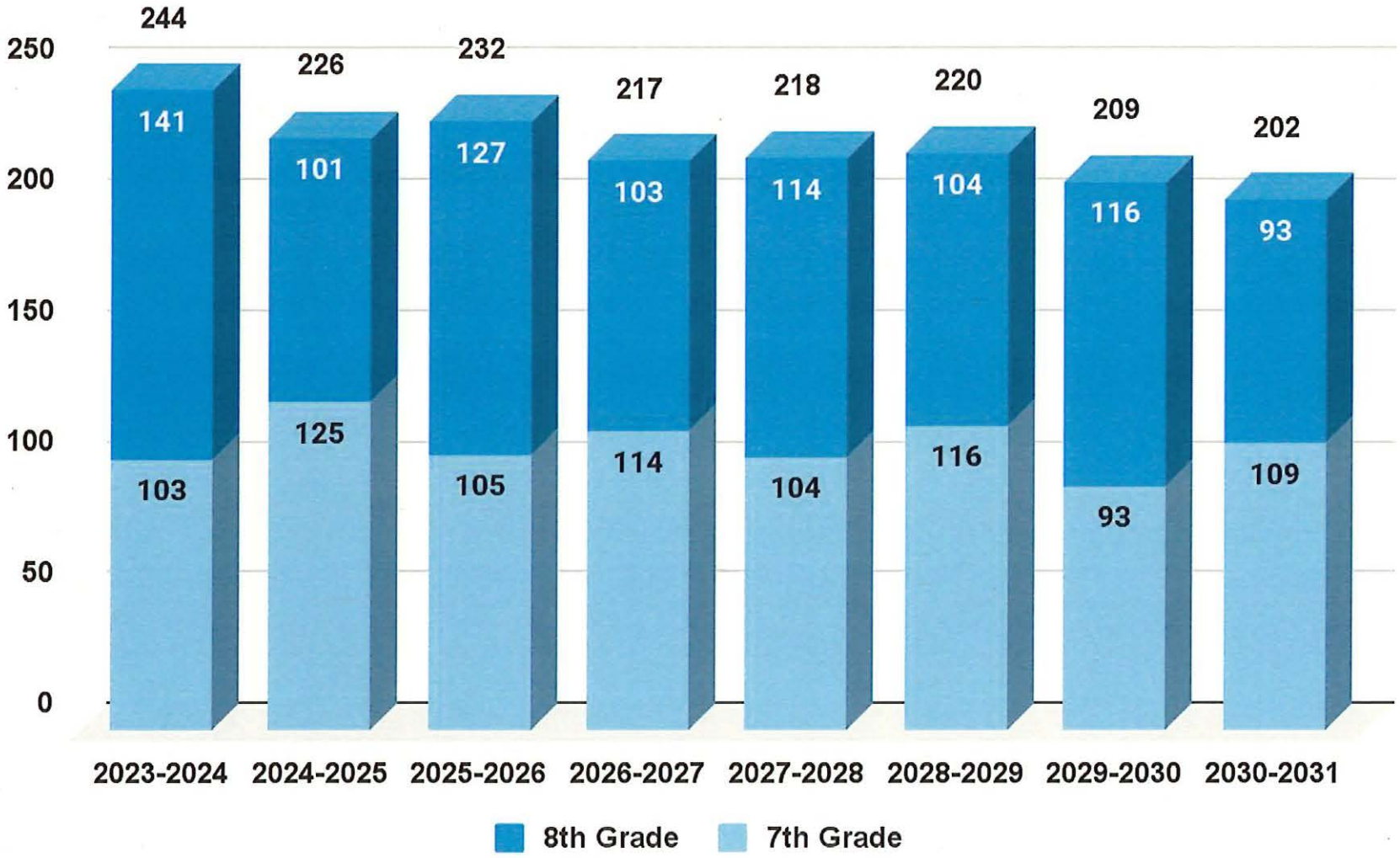
October 1, 2025

Grade 7:	106
Grade 8:	129
Grade 9:	111
Grade 10:	147
Grade 11:	116
Grade 12:	144
HTA:	18
Total:	771

Our member town students are joined by Agricultural Education and tuition paying students from: Avon, Canton, Granby, Hartland, Plymouth, Torrington, and Winsted.

Total includes out of district magnet schools (4) and outplacements (7).

Middle School Enrollment Outlook



Range of Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil
Berkshire League *



Source CSDE 01/2026

Budget Highlights Summary

2025-2026 Budget: $24,824,729
2026-2027 Budget: $25,345,724

Total increase: $520,995 (2.10%)

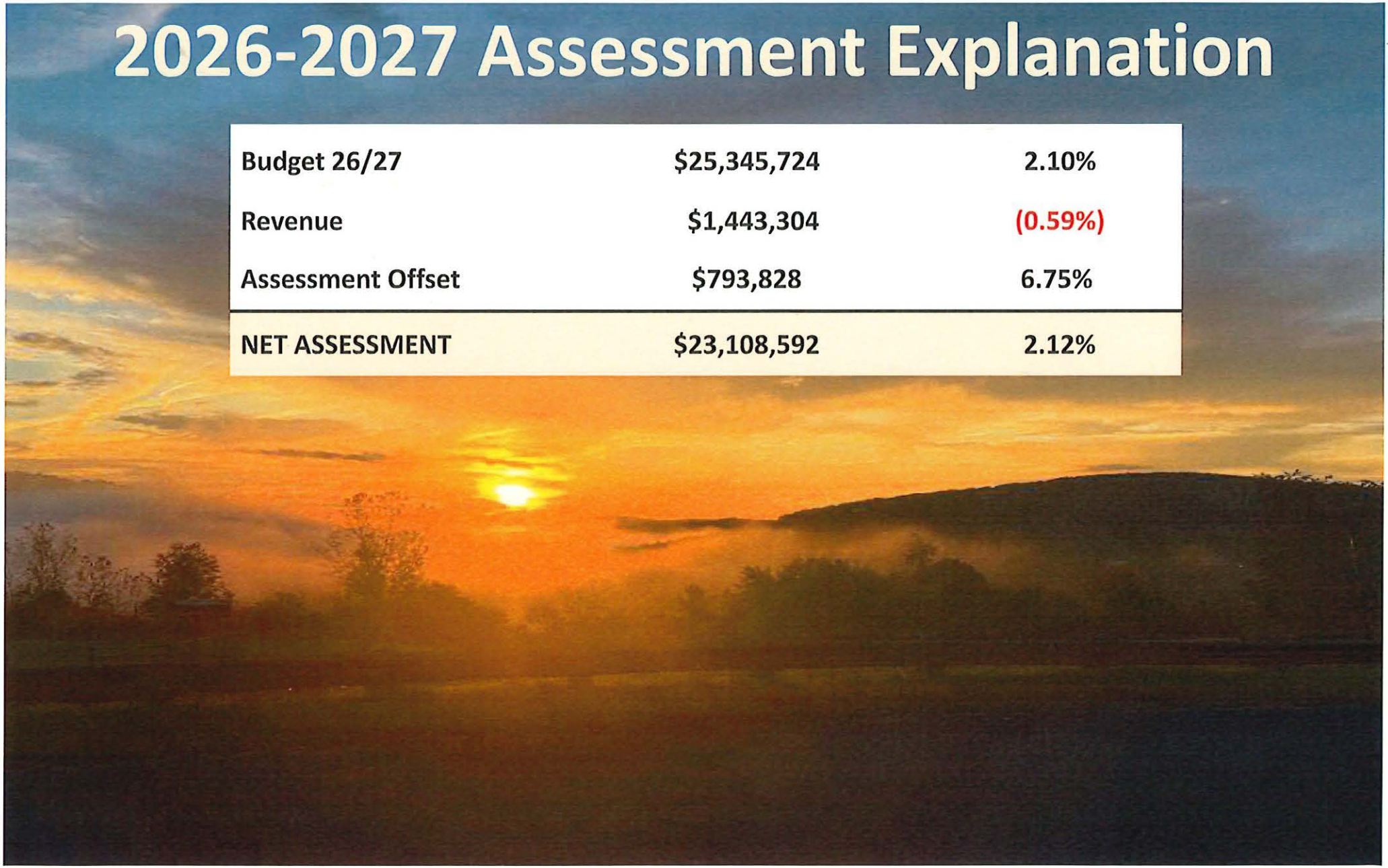
Salary & Benefits Increases: $418,954 ($50,856 Salary, $368,098 Benefits)

All Other Accounts Increases: $102,041

Contractual Benefit Cost Increases of $368,098 = 1.48% of the Total Budget Increase.

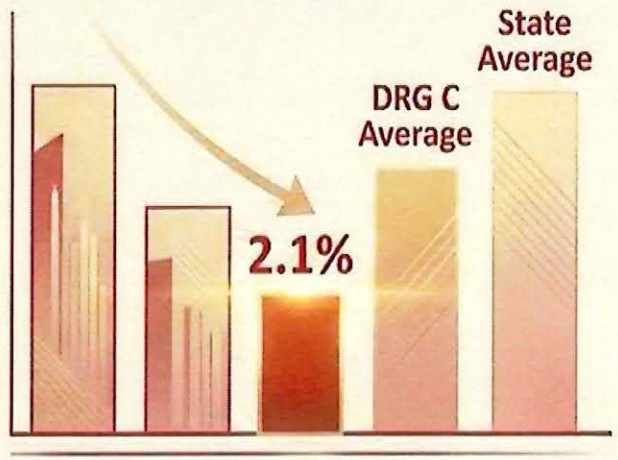
All other Components of Our Budget = 0.62% of the Total Budget Increase.

2026-2027 Assessment Explanation



Budget 26/27	$25,345,724	2.10%
Revenue	$1,443,304	(0.59%)
Assessment Offset	$793,828	6.75%
NET ASSESSMENT	$23,108,592	2.12%

Region 7's proposed budget at 2.1% is the Lowest in DRG C, and currently the 3rd lowest in the entire state!



Historical Perspective on Assessments

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	5 Year Average
Barkhamsted	0.01%	0.65%	-3.66%	-1.89%	**2.62%**	**0.45%**
Colebrook	**8.37%**	2.79%	-0.70%	7.36%	-1.54%	**3.26%**
New Hartford	1.20%	3.69%	6.55%	**7.41%**	2.27%	**4.22%**
Norfolk	6.43%	5.26%	**18.95%**	-7.97%	4.11%	**5.36%**
Total Assessment Increase:	1.97%	2.79%	3.78%	3.31%	2.12%	**2.79%**
5-Year Average of Total Assessment Increase ~ 2.79%						
Total Expenditure Increase:	2.45%	2.42%	3.47%	2.29%	2.10%	**2.55%**
5-Year Average of Total Expenditure Increases ~ 2.55%						









Regional School District No. 7 is a carefully and caringly led school district.

We strive to make a positive impact in our students' lives by ensuring a high quality, well-rounded educational and extracurricular experience for every student.

Supportive and caring relationships are at the core of our positive Northwestern culture.

Our programs allow every student to learn, grow, and develop into the young adults they aspire to become.

Northwestern graduates are well prepared for whatever opportunity they wish to pursue on their life journey after NWR7.







Celebrating the successful end of a memorable Northwestern Regional journey. Let the next adventure begin!



Planning For Northwestern's Future

A committee of 16 regional representatives engaged in a comprehensive District Strategic Planning process that ultimately identified 4 priority areas of focus/strategies for our district.

1. **Develop the organizational capacity and support structures required to coordinate and align the systems improvements called for in this plan.**
2. **Define durable learning and the concurrent assessment parameters for the Vision of the Graduate.**
3. **Integrate Vision of a Graduate and Durable Learning into curriculum and instruction improvements systems that support authentic learning pathways.**
4. **Meaningfully engage the Board and community throughout the process to ensure district-wide coherence and long-term alignment of focus.**

District Budget Meeting

MAY 4, 2026
NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL SCHOOL
Dr. Roberta Ohotnicky Little Theater
7:00 PM

Budget Referendum

MAY 5, 2026
Town Polling Locations
Hours may vary by town

For budget details, visit:
www.nwr7.com
(Select: Board of Education-Budget)

Thank You for Your Support!



