



Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget





Ashland Public Schools

Town Meeting Presentation, May 6, 2026

Jim Adams, Superintendent of Schools



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-  "This budget is personnel-driven — **79% of all costs are salaries and benefits**, reflecting our investment in the educators who serve our students daily."
-  "Our primary fiscal goal this year is **ending the district's reliance on one-time School Choice revolving funds** to cover core operational costs."
-  "We have **two paths forward**. One requires community investment through an override. One does not — but comes with real consequences for programs and staffing."
-  "Every decision in this budget reflects our commitment to **students first** — protecting their classroom experience and support systems."





Jim Adams

Superintendent of Schools

Why This Budget Matters

Personnel-driven budget focused on structural stabilization

PERSONNEL COSTS	TOTAL TRUE OPERATING COST	STUDENTS SERVED	PER-PUPIL SPENDING
79% of total budget	\$48.9M for FY2027	2,818 across 5 schools	\$17,922 ranked 362/396

 Personnel-Driven Budget 79% of all costs are salaries and benefits, reflecting our investment in educators	 End School Choice Reliance Primary goal: end use of one-time funds for core operational costs
 Structural Stabilization Moves \$1.1M in recurring salaries to general operating budget Ensures \$300,000 of annual athletic deficit is accounted for Includes general operating expenses for FY'26-27	 Two Paths Forward Override vs. no override with real consequences for programs

Key Insight: This is a stabilization budget to correct structural funding imbalances, not a growth budget.

Two Budget Paths for FY27



Option 1

6.18% Operational Override

\$47,236,865

↑ \$2.75M Increase over FY26

- 🛡️ **Structural Stabilization:** Secures long-term financial health.
- ✅ Moves **\$1.1M** in recurring salaries to the general operating budget.
- ✅ Fully funds **Athletics (\$300k)**, eliminating the structural deficit.
- ✅ Ends reliance on variable School Choice funds for core operations.

Option 2

3.25% Budget (No Override)

\$45,931,775

↑ \$1.44M Increase over FY26

- ℹ️ Maintains services only in the **short term**.
- ⚠️ Continues high-risk reliance on School Choice funds for salaries & ops.
- ➖ **Athletics Deficit:** \$300k gap remains, forcing program cuts or fee hikes.
- 💀 **Fiscal Cliff:** School Choice funds projected to be depleted by FY28.










Note: Both budget scenarios include the same reduction of 13.2 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions.

Positions Eliminated in ALL Budget Scenarios



Retirements & Non-Filled Positions

Natural Attrition / Unfilled Vacancies




	Business Office (x2) Unfilled Vacancies	2.0
	Facilities Staff Unfilled Vacancy	1.0
	AHS ESP Unfilled Vacancy	1.0
	AHS Science Retirement	1.0
	Mindess Teachers (x3) SPED, Classroom, Specials (Retirements)	3.0
	District Nursing Retirement	1.2
	Warren Teacher Retirement	1.0

Total Attrition

10.2 FTE

Budget Reductions

Programmatic Eliminations

	Director of SEL Administrative Reduction	1.0
	SPED Coordinator Administrative Reduction	1.0
	AMS Spanish (No 6-7) Program Change	1.0

 *These reductions impact programming and administrative capacity but were deemed necessary to meet fiscal constraints.*

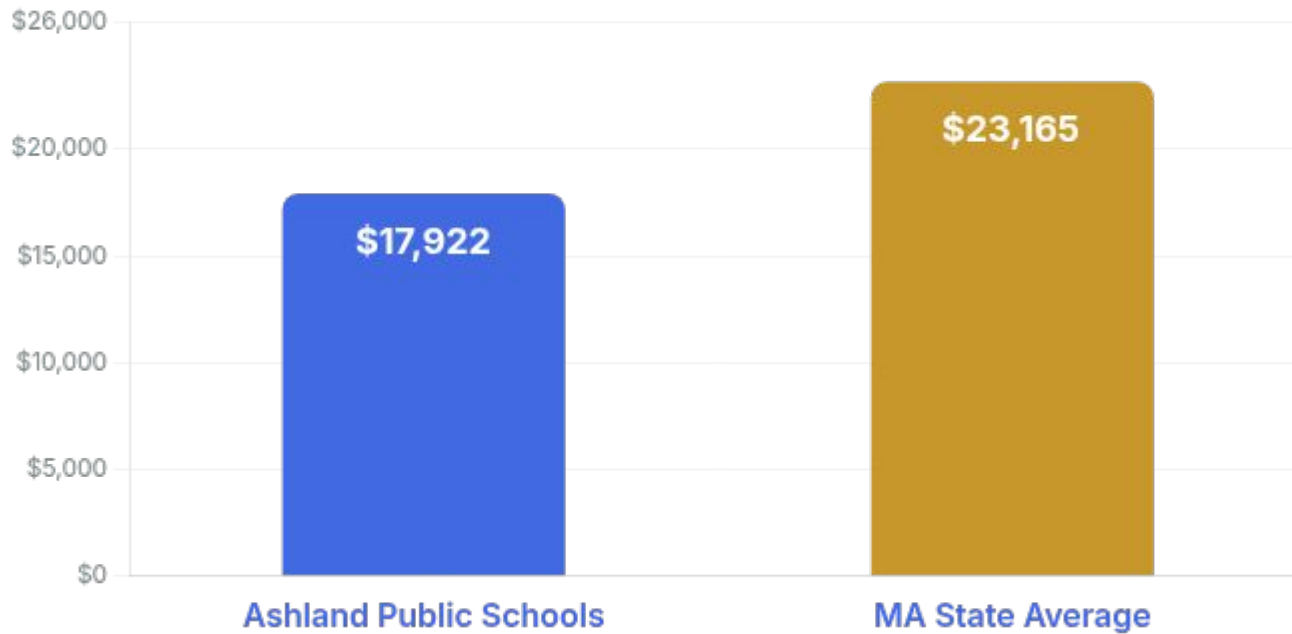
Total Reductions

3.0 FTE

Per-Pupil Spending — Where Does Ashland Stand?



Spending Comparison (FY24 Data)



State Ranking

362nd

Out of 396 Massachusetts Districts



Funding Gap

-\$5,243

Per Student vs. State Average



Ashland is doing **more with less** — but without structural correction, this gap will continue to widen.



127

Students Served In-District

Benefits of In-District Programming

- ✓ Allows students to remain in their community with peers.
- ✓ Maintains vital connections to local resources and families.
- ✓ Provides high-quality, specialized instruction at a fraction of out-of-district costs.



COST AVOIDANCE

Estimated Annual Savings

\$10.7 Million

By investing in our own programs, Ashland saves taxpayers millions annually compared to tuition and transportation for private out-of-district placements.



Reduction Warning: SPED Coordinator (1.0 FTE)

Eliminating this position increases the caseload burden on remaining staff, creating significant risks for program coordination, IEP compliance, and service delivery quality.

Capital Investment Needs

Funding Context



Separate Appropriation Required

Capital needs are **NOT included** in the operating budget. These projects require separate Town Meeting appropriation or debt exclusion votes.



Federal Grants Limitations

While the district receives ~\$323k in Federal Grants (Title I-IV), these funds support targeted professional development and salaries. They **cannot** replace general fund obligations or fund capital projects.



Infrastructure Impact

Deferring these capital investments creates long-term liability for the town. The facility and technology needs (\$7.4M) are critical for maintaining safe and effective learning environments.

Project / Investment Area	Estimated Cost
AHS Roof Replacement Critical facility preservation	\$3,600,000
AMS Turf Field Replacement due to end of lifecycle	\$1,300,000
AHS Turf Field Replacement due to end of lifecycle	\$1,300,000
Literacy Program Materials District-wide curriculum update	\$900,000
Facility & Technology Needs Comprehensive infrastructure updates	\$7,413,655
TOTAL CAPITAL NEEDS	\$14,513,655

Summary — Two Paths Forward







Option 1

Override Budget (6.18%)

\$47,236,865

↑ \$2.75M Increase over FY26





-  **Structural Stability:** Creates a sustainable financial foundation.
-  **Athletics:** Fully funded within operating budget.
-  **School Choice:** Freed up for strategic capital needs.
-  **Long-Term:** Sustainable path with reduced future risk.

Option 2

3.25% Budget (No Override)

\$45,931,775

↑ \$1.44M Increase over FY26

-  **Short-Term:** Maintains services briefly but ignores structural issues.
-  **Athletics:** \$300k structural deficit remains unresolved.
-  **School Choice:** Projected to be fully depleted by FY28.
-  **Risk:** High probability of deeper cuts in future cycles.