NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

School Committee Summer Retreat

5:00PM

Thursday, August 20, 2026

SC Retreat Agenda
Superintendent's Executive Summary 2025-2026
SC Norms and Procedures
SC Goals January-July 2026
Draft FY28 Budget Timeline
Draft FY28 Budget Planning

Newburyport Public Schools
School Committee & Central Office
Summer Retreat

Thursday, August 20, 2026

NHS Library

5:00 – 8:00PM

Summer Retreat Agenda:

1. School Committee Organizational Procedures and Norms Check In (5:00 - 5:15)
2. 2025-2026 School Year in Review (5:15 - 5:45)
    a. Superintendent Update
    b. SC Discussion and Reflection
3. School Year Goal Setting (5:45 - 6:30)
    a. Review of 2025/26 Goals
    b. SC Discussion on 2026/27 SC Roles and Goals

** Dinner Break (6:30 - 6:45) **

4. 2026-2027 Budget Discussion (6:45 - 7:45)
    - Anticipated funding challenges and budget drivers
    - Overall schedule
    - Outreach/engagement
    - Establishing funding priorities
    - Communication with City Council
5. Wrap-Up (7:45 - 8:00)

Adjourn - 8:00PM

NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Improvement Plan

2025-2027

Executive Summary 2025-2026

August 20, 2026

Newburyport Public Schools...the port where tradition and innovation converge

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE VISION

Our vision is for every child to leave Newburyport Public Schools literate across the disciplines; physically, emotionally & socially well; innovative problem solvers; civically engaged; and prepared for life after graduation.

From the day they enter school as 5 year-olds to the day they graduate, our students are growing and changing.

Across this K-12 pathway, we want to make sure young people can celebrate success, persevere through failure, and create a healthy and hopeful path to their future.

For this reason, we invest in school climate and culture while also analyzing and reflecting on student academic data. We remain focused on our goals while staying flexible so we can respond to changing needs and invest in safe and secure facilities.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS				
Teaching & Learning	Supports	Culture	Operations	Stakeholder
Providing high quality, innovative instruction	Ensuring every child has the supports they need to grow	Creating a culture of belonging	Ensuring highly qualified staff, up to date resources, and safe buildings	Creating a community of active stakeholders

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

Newburyport Public Schools will create an environment where students exceed standards and demonstrate measurable growth across state tested subject areas. Our Portrait of a Graduate goal is to build literacy across all the disciplines. Although the district continues to take many action steps that ensure high quality teaching and learning in every content area, *the priority focus area for our 2025-27 Improvement Plan is on the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of K-12 mathematics and K-8 literacy*.

Goal I: All students will have access to high quality math instruction through implementation of recommendations from District Math Priorities. The District focus area will be on effective implementation of K-5 iReady math program and 6-8 math curriculum and instruction. We will meet achievement targets set by the DESE for the 2026 & 2027 math MCAS for the groups: "all students," "students with disabilities" and "EL/former EL students" (see DESE 2024 Math Accountability Data).

GOAL II: All students will have access to high quality literacy instruction. For the FY26-27 years, we will prioritize K-5 ELA and K-8 writing. We will meet achievement targets set by the DESE for the 2026 & 2027 ELA MCAS in grades 3-8 for the groups: "all students," "students with disabilities" and "EL/former EL students" (see DESE 2024 ELA Accountability Data).

Goal III: The District will use grant funding to increase student engagement by expanding opportunities for educator professional development around developing engaging curricula.

Student Learning Goals (2025-2026)

Completed & Significant Progress

In K–12 mathematics, we completed the review of middle school math resources and will begin a pilot of the EdGems program this fall. At the K–5 levels, we implemented regular grade-level meetings, ensured implementation of fixed K–5 pacing guides, and continued coaching and professional development in math concepts. We continued the implementation of K–5 Math Recovery intervention with the training of all coaches and the use of program materials in grades K–3. Finally, we continued the Grade 8 Algebra I analysis and drafted a K–12 math vertical alignment curriculum document.

In literacy and specialized instruction, we successfully reviewed, piloted, and selected a new K–5 literacy curriculum resource (Fish Tank), initiating district-wide implementation following summer professional development. K–12 writing rubrics were evaluated, and summer professional development on The Writing Revolution and Fish Tank further strengthened writing instruction. Two additional teachers earned certification in the Orton-Gillingham reading program, and we conducted a review and vertical alignment of the curriculum in the PreK–12 Independent Development Center (IDC) programs. To support the rollout and pilot a new approach to intervention, we piloted a two-week Summer Lit Camp. Additionally, middle and high school educators participated in performance-assessment workshops to enhance common assessment rigor.

To support compliance and inclusive practices, all 504 coordinators completed a yearlong training on new regulations and best practices, culminating in an updated District 504 manual in December 2025.

Our PK–3 Playful Learning initiatives made significant progress, with two educators at each grade level developing and implementing playful learning lessons, work that will continue into the 2027–28 school year. In addition, we developed and funded a new special class, The Living Classroom, that brings playful learning and science standards together in an outdoor education special for all K–3 students.

Under the leadership of Principal Wulf, the high school expanded enrollment in pathway programs and initiated the multi-year application process for career technical programs. Supported by a community-wide steering committee, NEF-funded space upgrades, and DESE grants, the high school made significant progress toward developing and implementing a clear vision for CTE programs.

At each grade level, principals supported the facilitation of three annual data-review protocols. Academic data included MCAS, iReady, DIBELS, and common assessments. School culture data included VOCAL, MCIEA School Quality data, attendance, social-emotional metrics. *Teaching & Learning Summary* https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vOvlVhutdegoYx89MXe1_ux0G9b9FmBN/view?usp=drive_link

Continued Focus (2026–2027)

Moving into the upcoming school year, we will focus on implementing the K–5 FishTank ELA program, continuing the vertical alignment of K–12 writing assessments, expanding math professional development and coaching, piloting a middle school math program, and expanding both Math Recovery interventions and performance-based assessment work. To enhance specialized student support, the district engaged an outside consultant to evaluate the districtwide Therapeutic Learning Classrooms (TLC) model, alongside ongoing staff professional development to strengthen TLC programming throughout the 2026–2027 school year. Finally, we remain committed to supporting the growth and expansion of 6–12 Pathways and Chapter 74 programming.

Teaching & Learning Summary 2025-2026 Link:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vOvlVhutdegoYx89MXe1_ux0G9b9FmBN/view?usp=drive_link

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP GOAL

To realize the vision outlined in our *Portrait of a Graduate*, district and school leaders will strengthen instructional leadership by supporting educators in designing and delivering high-impact, student-centered learning experiences. These experiences will foster growth across academic disciplines and promote students' well-being, creativity, collaboration, and civic engagement. By the end of the 2027 school year, we will demonstrate progress through increased educator use of evidence-based planning, collaborative professional dialogue, and student-focused lesson design.

Completed & Significant Progress (2025-2026)

District and school leaders strengthened instructional decision-making by facilitating regular data meetings across all schools, implementing structured grade-level and content-area team meetings, and executing teacher-led monthly discipline meetings (supported by district coaches). District literacy and math coaches facilitated professional development programs (e.g., faculty meetings, professional learning courses) and supported educators in classrooms.

The summer focused on building on this work with courses in areas such as writing, math fluency, and playful learning. In addition, four separate offerings provided teachers with paid time to strengthen their literacy, math and assessment plans. Over 160 summer professional development projects are under way with over 130 educators participating. *Summer Professional Development Link:* https://sites.google.com/newburyport.k12.ma.us/npssummer2026?usp=sharing#h.7fp4bsr2gm0o

In addition, this summer we supported the development and implementation of a Kindergarten Boot Camp program. Three pilot sessions were run and will be evaluated as we return to school in the fall. The POG team and student ambassadors successfully deepened District-wide understanding of the Portrait of a Graduate vision through dedicated faculty meetings and the January professional development program honoring the stories of our "home grown" educators.

Finally, all NPS educators participated in a half-day program on artificial intelligence run by the Day of AI. This program was followed up with an advisory group to begin to draft guidance for the district in the area of artificial intelligence.

Continued Focus (2026–2027)

Leadership will continue facilitating annual vertical content-based discussions led by teacher leaders, refining data-driven planning protocols, and maintaining collaborative PD structures to support high-impact instructional delivery.

PROFESSIONAL CULTURE GOAL

Our goal is to create a school learning environment where every student, parent/guardian and staff member can proudly say, “I belong here.” Students who feel connected to school have both high attendance and high participation rates. In addition to measuring our impact on attendance, we will also continue to create opportunities for students to engage with school outside of the classroom through extracurricular activities, internship opportunities, and community partnerships.

Our District Improvement plan also prioritizes building a supportive and enriching community for our staff. We are committed to creating collaborative partnerships with our district unions (Newburyport Teachers Association, Instructional Assistants Union, and AFSCME).

Completed & Significant Progress (2025-2026)

Through sustained funding for the District Attendance Supervisor and building-level Attendance Response Teams, NPS achieved a marked reduction in chronic absenteeism across all grade levels. Partnering with the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA, formerly ECP), we completed year two of climate and culture surveys for staff, administration, and students.

Continued Focus (2026–2027)

In the 2026–2027 school year, we will launch the parent/guardian survey to establish a full three-year baseline to populate our public data dashboard. We will also continue funding building-specific climate work and expanding extracurricular, internship, and community engagement options for students.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL

The District will pursue a number of strategies to ensure families feel connected to the NPS vision and school operations.

Completed & Significant Progress (2025–2026)

NPS enhanced accessibility and transparency by modernizing school websites, optimizing family communication channels, and meeting state and federal security standards. Active community partnerships were sustained with the Newburyport Education Foundation (NEF), PTOs, the Human Rights Commission, and Recreation & Youth Services. Community engagement was further strengthened through the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), which convened five meetings to host an administrator meet-and-greet forum as well as parent and guardian trainings on sensory integration, mental health, mediation, and parent rights. Additionally, the Superintendent's Advisory Council provided monthly feedback on budget and strategy, while the newly established ad hoc Artificial Intelligence Subcommittee successfully developed District AI guidelines.

Continued Focus (2026–2027)

Key priorities include evaluating new communication and social media tools to streamline family outreach, continuing the AI Subcommittee's work, and maintaining strong collaborative ties with local community partners.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS GOAL

The District will ensure every student and staff member is able to learn in a safe and secure environment.

Completed & Significant Progress (2025–2026)

Fiscal operations remained robust through the Director of Finance and Operations' entry plan execution, FY26 budget management, and development of the FY27 budget. To maximize operational efficiency, the district instituted monthly meetings with regional special education directors to identify cost-sharing opportunities for specialized programming, staffing, and transportation. Major capital and facility projects were completed or scheduled for completion by September, including MSBA Nock-Molin and High School roofing projects, district technology infrastructure upgrades, and NEF-supported improvements to the NHS Media Lab, College & Career Center, and music and engineering spaces. The district also pursued approximately $3.4 million in competitive grant funding to advance District Improvement Plan priorities, including CTE and career pathways, outdoor and experiential learning, world languages, and college and career readiness. Additionally, the Human Resources Department maintained full staffing, led recruitment and onboarding procedures, managed state licensure compliance, oversaw personnel matters, fostered collaborative labor partnerships, and successfully launched and managed the district's staff daycare program.

Continued Focus (2026–2027)

Operations will focus on FY28 budget development, capital improvements, and the expansion of early childhood care alongside related Chapter 74 programming. The district will continue to pursue grant opportunities to advance strategic priorities and expand programming while minimizing the impact on the operating budget. Long-term planning will center on establishing additional Chapter 74 programs in Multimedia Broadcasting, Advanced Manufacturing, Health Assisting, and Programming & Web Development. To further optimize operational efficiencies, leadership will collaborate with North Shore superintendents and directors to facilitate the creation of a centralized regional transportation model.

Review of School Committee Operating Principles and Norms of Interaction

Item	What is SC doing well?	What needs work?
1. Represent the needs and interests of all students in the district, striving to represent common interests rather than factions. We will make decisions that are best for students in all cases: all means all.		
2. Exercise leadership in vision, planning, policy making, evaluation, and advocacy on behalf of the students and district, not in managing the day-to-day operations of the district.		
3. We will communicate positively about other school committee members, staff, and the system. As advocates for Newburyport Public Schools and public education, we readily accept our roles promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our success.		
4. Conduct its business through a set agenda. Emerging items will be addressed in subsequent meetings through agenda items, with the exception of items that are time sensitive or require urgent attention.		
5. Provide full disclosure. Each member will provide input, encouragement, express concerns and positions rather than withhold information from other members. When a school committee member feels that there has not been full disclosure, an objective process for revisiting the issue will be used.		
6. Maintain an open environment where each member is empowered to freely express opinions, concerns, and ideas. School committee members will engage in active listening to clarify and restate discussions in order to strive for full understanding. We will provide continuing education opportunities and support to each other, striving to build trusting relationships.		
7. Keep an open mind and accept that they can change their opinions by recognizing that they are not locked into their initial stated positions.		
8. Make decisions on information and not on personalities. School committee members will act with the best information available at the time considering data, the superintendent's recommendations, proposals, and suggestions. School committee members will strive to make the best decisions at the time, without waiting for the perfect decision.		

Item	What is SC doing well?	What needs work?
9. Debate the issues, not one another. The school committee will engage in critical and creative thinking, expecting all school committee members to freely offer differing points of view as part of the discussion, prior to making a school committee decision.		
10. Be clear about, and stay true to, the role of the school committee. Not take unilateral action. A committee member's authority is derived through the majority of the school committee acting as a whole during an open public meeting. We will reach decisions by consensus, and individual members will publicly abide by those decisions, speaking with one voice, once a vote is taken. We will recognize a single official "voice" of the school committee.		
11. Attend meetings on time and well prepared to discuss issues on the agenda, and will be prepared to make decisions, striving for efficient decision making.		
12. Strive to have no surprises for the committee or superintendent. Surprises will be the exception. All members will provide and receive the same information in a timely manner.		
13. Respect all persons presenting to the school committee.		
14. Follow the chain of command and direct others to do the same. Personnel complaints and concerns will be directed to the superintendent.		
15. Review and revise operating principles, as needed, as part of the school committee's self-evaluation.		
16. Recognize that all communications created and received to our district email accounts are public documents, unless a specific statutory exemption applies.		
17. Refrain from reading or sending electronic communications, and remain off of all social media platforms during meetings, in the interest of transparency.		

School Committee Goals for January to July 2026

Description	Recommended Action	Desired Outcomes
Establish regular line of communication with City Council and District families and students	● SC Finance Subcommittee to host joint budget mtg with CC Finance Committee ● Mayor to include SC items in updates to CC ● SC Vice Chair to discuss with CC President whether to designate a SC/CC liaison from each body ● Distribute SC newsletter to CC members ● SC to send representatives to CC meetings we think are critical ● District/families/students – TBD	● Improved understanding between CC and SC ● Increased awareness about District initiatives, goals ● Increased participation in budget process

Support continued improvement in academic performance across the district	● Teaching and Learning Subcommittee to coordinate with staff to identify areas of weakness and strategies for improvement
	● SC to work with staff to set annual performance goals and measures of success for academic performance
		● Report out from Teaching and Learning Subcommittee
		● Related budget recommendations from Superintendent
		● Regular report outs on academic goals and assessments:
		  ● School Improvement Plan with MCAS presentation in fall
		  ● Mid-year presentation in January/February on progress
		  ● End of year review

Cell phone use in schools	Presentation from staff on progress with feedback from students ad teachers	School Committee to adjust policy (as needed)
Focus on creating a supportive school learning environment for all students	Review outcomes from MA Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA) Quality Measures surveys	Report out from MCIEA

Description	Recommended Action	Desired Outcomes
Provide opportunities for elevating student voice	Vice Chair to work with Superintendent to identify opportunities for more regular engagement with students, such as: ● Increase interactions with student rep to SC ● Work with Student Council ● Create opportunities for dialogue with students in schools	Regular communication lines between SC and student representatives
District AI practices/policies	Form Superintendent Advisory Committee to seek input from school staff, students, and parents/guardians, and experts to inform development of AI policies and practices in schools.	Report out to School Committee
Evaluate ways to improve safety for school arrival and dismissal	Form SC Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for: ● Managing pick-up/drop-off traffic ● Improving circulation around schools ● Policy guidance for district to support Safer Routes to School practices ● Help with communication re: safety	Report out to School Committee

Newburyport Public Schools

FY2028 Budget & Capital Plan Development Timeline

****ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE****

Legend: * = City Budget Milestones, SC = School Committee, CC = City Council, CIP = Capital Improvement Program

Date(s)	Milestone
8/17/2026-8/25/2026	*Authorized Capital Project Status Review with Dept Heads & Project Managers
8/20/2026	SC Summer Retreat - FY28 Budget Planning & Review Budget Timeline
8/26/2026	SC Business Meeting - FY28 Budget Timeline Approved
9/9/2026	SC Business Meeting - 5-year School CIP Presentation 📊
9/16/2026	*Capital Project Request Guidance to Departments
9/23/2026	SC Business Meeting - 5-year School CIP Approved ✅
10/13/2026	*Capital Request Forms due to Mayor's Office
10/14/2026	SC Business Meeting - Budget planning update (if needed)
10/15/2026	Budget guidelines and materials sent to budget holders 📄
10/28/2026	SC Business Meeting - Discuss Topics/Agenda for Budget Listening Session
11/9/2026	FY28 Budget Listening Session 🗣️ & SC Business Meeting
11/12/2026	Initial budget requests due to Superintendent
11/16/2026-11/20/2026	Central Office Leadership Team meets with budget holders to review FY27 requests
11/17/2026	*Joint Budget Meeting (Mayor, SC, CC) 🤝
11/23/2026	SC Business Meeting - Budget development update (if needed)
December 2026	Initial Draft Budget Reviewed with Leadership Team
12/9/2026	SC Business Meeting - Initial Draft Budget Presentation 📝
January 2027	*Mayor Submits 5-year CIP to City Council
1/13/2027	SC Business Meeting - Updated Draft Budget Presentation 📝
1/27/2027	SC Business Meeting/Retreat
2/10/2027	SC Business Meeting - Superintendent's Recommended Budget Presentation 📊
2/24/2027	SC Business Meeting - Revised Budget Presentation (if needed) 📊
3/4/2027	Joint Fincom Meeting (SC, CC) 🤝- Placeholder date
3/10/2027	SC Business Meeting - Public Hearing on Budget 📢
3/24/2027	SC Business Meeting - Adoption of FY27 Budget ✅
4/13/2027	School Committee FY27 Budget Submitted to Mayor (per Sec 6.3)
4/26/2027	*Mayor's Proposed FY27 Budget Submitted to City Council
April–June 2027	*CC Budget Workshops 🏛️
June 2027	*Final Citywide Budget Adoption ✅

Revised 7/23/2026

FY28 Budget Planning

- Draft City Budget Timeline:
  - Capital Plan: Projects will be due to the Mayor's Office in October, with the full CIP submitted to the City Council in January 2027.
  - Budget: The Mayor's budget proposal will be submitted to the City Council on 4/26/27. The School Committee would need to adopt the school budget no later than 4/13/27.

Charter Section 6.3 (relevant excerpt):
The school budget, as adopted by the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor at least ten days before the submission of the proposed operating budget to the city council. The mayor shall notify the school committee of the date by which the proposed budget of the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor. The mayor and the superintendent of schools shall coordinate the dates and times of the school committee's budget process under the General Laws.

Known FY28 Cost Assumptions

- Three unions with contracts that run through FY28
  - Newburyport Teachers Association
    - 3% COLA/Adjustment + Step/Lane Changes
  - Newburyport Instructional Assistants Union
    - 3% COLA/Adjustment + Step Changes
  - AFSCME Union
    - 4% COLA/Adjustment + Step Changes
- Non-union staff
  - Based on existing personnel contracts
- Service Contracts
  - Utilities: Constellation Energy contract expires Nov. 28, 2026
  - Regular Transportation: FY25–27 contract with two 1-year extensions (FY28–29); 2.4% increase for FY28
  - Food Services: FY23 contract with four 1-year extensions (FY24–27); will go out to bid during the 2026-27 school year; self-supporting program
- Special Education Pricing
  - Assuming a 2.5% increase for initial FY28 budget planning
  - Prices set by the Massachusetts Operational Services Division (OSD)

FY28 Budget Projection

Source of Funds

Source	FY27 Budget	FY28 Budget	$ Change	% Change
City Appropriation	**40,844,765**	**43,013,260**	**2,168,495**	**5.31%**
Circuit Breaker Program	2,600,000	2,650,000	50,000	1.92%
School Choice	2,093,901	1,750,000	(343,901)	-16.42%
IDEA Grants	623,000	621,000	(2,000)	-0.32%
ESSA (Title I-A/D, II-A, IV-A) Grants	125,000	116,000	(9,000)	-7.20%
1:1 Program	95,000	95,000	0	0.00%
Athletics	361,034	400,000	38,966	10.79%
International/Other Tuition	100,000	125,000	25,000	25.00%
Preschool Tuition	190,000	230,000	40,000	21.05%
Food Services	53,250	53,250	0	0.00%
Transportation	265,000	250,000	(15,000)	-5.66%
Total	**47,350,950**	**49,303,510**	**1,952,560**	**4.12%**

Use of Funds

Major Category	FY27 Budget	FY28 Budget	$ Change	% Change
Personnel	34,155,644	35,741,695	1,586,050	4.64%
Non-Personnel	13,195,306	13,561,816	366,510	2.78%
Total	**47,350,950**	**49,303,510**	**1,952,560**	**4.12%**

This preliminary projection is intended to establish an early planning baseline. It reflects current staffing, known contractual rates, and preliminary expenditure and revenue assumptions.

FY28 Planning Scenarios

City Approp. Increase	City Appropriation	Preliminary Budget Gap
5.31%	$43,013,260	$0
5.00%	$42,887,003	$126,257
4.50%	$42,682,779	$330,481
4.00%	$42,478,556	$534,705
3.50%	$42,274,332	$738,929
3.00%	$42,070,108	$943,153
2.50%	$41,865,884	$1,147,376

Each **0.5 percentage point** reduction in the City appropriation increase creates approximately **$204,000** of additional budget pressure.

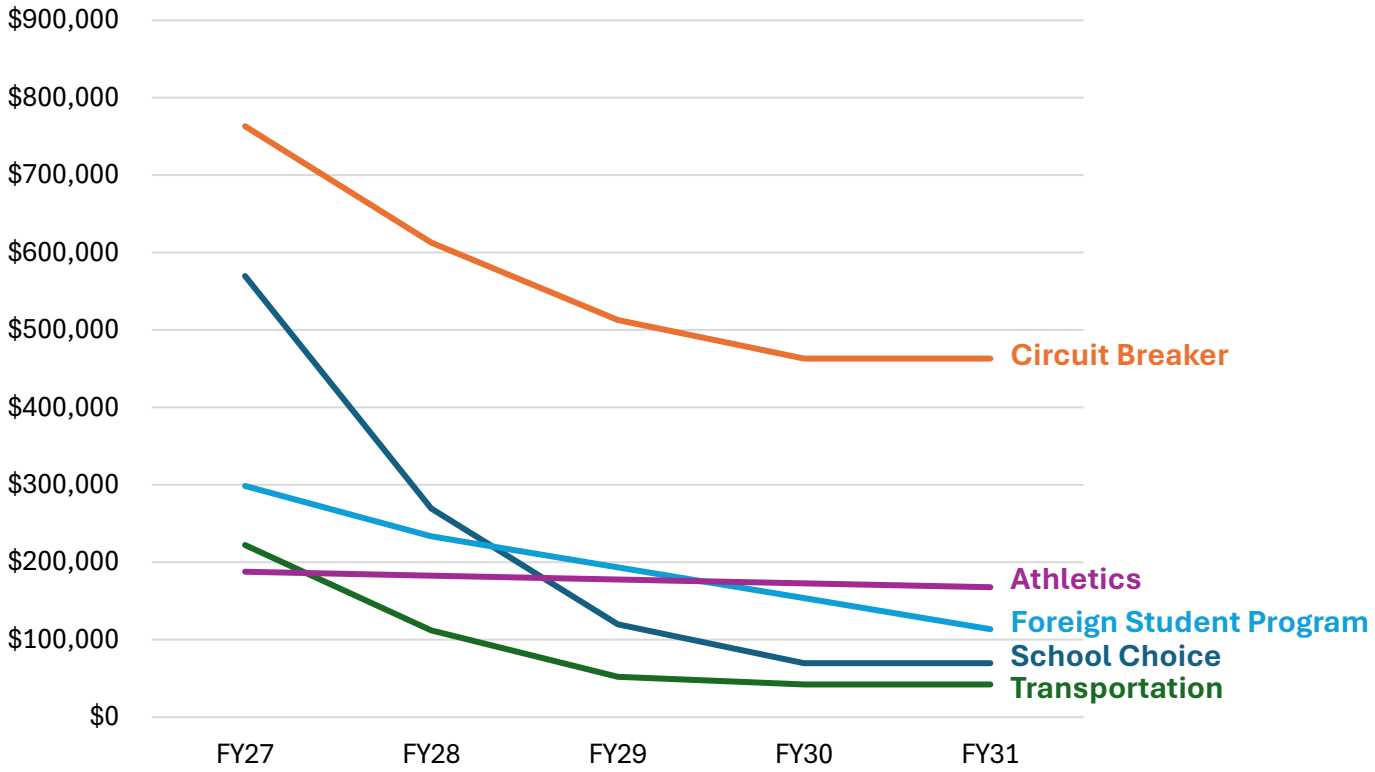
FY28 Revolving & Special Revenue Funds

Fund	FY27 Projected Balance	FY28 Budget Use	FY28 Est. Receipts	Net Change in Balance	FY28 Projected Balance
School Choice	$569,710	$1,750,000	$1,450,000	($300,000)	$269,710
Circuit Breaker	$763,099	$2,650,000	$2,500,000	($150,000)	$613,099
Transportation	$222,259	$250,000	$140,000	($110,000)	$112,259
Athletics	$187,813	$400,000	$395,000	($5,000)	$182,813
Foreign Student Program	$298,605	$125,000	$60,000	($65,000)	$233,605
Preschool Tuition	$93,643	$230,000	$215,000	($15,000)	$78,643
1:1 Program	$152,692	$95,000	$95,000	$0	$152,692

Planned FY28 draw on accumulated balances: **$645,000**

Five-Year Projected Ending Balances: Major Revolving & Special Revenue Funds

Projected balances reflect amounts remaining after annual receipts and budgeted uses.



Fund	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
School Choice	$569,710	$269,710	$119,710	$69,710	$69,710
Circuit Breaker	$763,099	$613,099	$513,099	$463,099	$463,099
Transportation	$222,259	$112,259	$52,259	$42,259	$42,259
Foreign Student Program	$298,605	$233,605	$193,605	$153,605	$113,605
Athletics	$187,813	$182,813	$177,813	$172,813	$167,813