



# Board of Education

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February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

# Agenda

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- 2026-2027 BOE Budget Approval
- Superintendent's Report



# Foundation

Mission

Core Beliefs

Key Drivers

District Development Plan



## Our Mission

It is the **Mission** of the Mansfield Public Schools, in partnership with the Mansfield community, to ensure that each and every child develops the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for civic engagement and personal excellence in learning, life, and work within our local and global community.



## Core Beliefs



**Lead with equity.** We believe that children must be supported to learn and develop in a safe, antiracist environment free from discrimination, bias, and prejudice against all people where conscious efforts and intentional actions ensure equitable opportunities.



**Develop the whole child.** We believe schools have an obligation to teach academic and social skills while nurturing the emotional, physical and behavioral development of all children.



**Ensure active learning.** We believe students learn best when they engage in joy-filled, empowering, intellectually challenging, and personalized experiences that deepen understanding of the world while building academic and social-emotional skills.



**Build partnerships.** We believe engaging families and the community as equal partners is necessary to fulfill the mission and vision of Mansfield Public Schools.



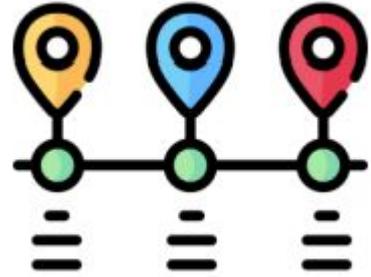
**Prepare global citizens.** We believe schools must develop young people to be stewards of their community, nation, and the larger world around them by instilling the skills needed to contribute to a peaceful society and sustainable world.



**Grow educators.** We believe that providing an environment that allows for inquiry, supports risk taking, provides for continuous learning, and attends to the whole person is as important for educators as it is for students.



# Budget Development November - January



- Review Enrollment Data & Projections
- Build Staffing Models & Potential Schedules/Services
- Examined Expenditures
- Identify Needs Using data
- Research & Gather Critical Information



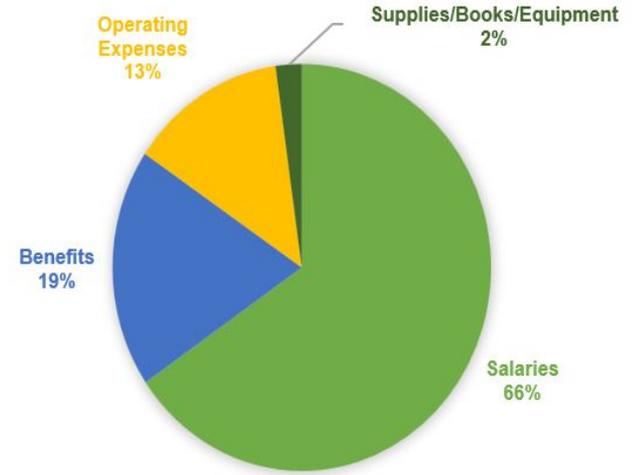
# Budget Update

- Revised Proposed 26-27 District Budget: **\$26,470,990**
- Reduction of \$88,410
- MERS (municipal employee retirement system) estimated contribution budgeted higher than the actual increase
- MBOE projected a 2% increase
- State of CT Actual increase 0.11%





# 2026-2027 Budget p12



- Proposed 26-27 District Budget: **\$26,470,990**
- **3.15%** increase over the current year
- Salaries and benefits increased by \$663,635 and account for 85% of the budget
- Student Transportation is 5% of total budget
- Right Sizing of District given declining enrollment
- Educational supplies make up approximately 1% of the total Supplies/Books/Equipment budget
- The quality and level of Services, Programs, and Supports will remain the same and continue to grow and improve



# 2026-2027 Budget p12

- Salaries and Benefits represent 3.01% (\$663,635) of the overall budget increase
- All other operating expenses represent 0.14% (\$144,510) of the overall budget increase
- Rate of inflation (5 yr cumulative) is 24.4% (2020-2025)

## Budget Change Over Time:

FY 2020-21 \$23,467,540

FY 2026-27 \$26,470,990

**5 year % of Change 12.8%**

Our budget gain over time is significantly smaller than typical price increases that organizations/people have experienced for the same time frame



# Return on Investment

- Mansfield Middle School (MMS) ranked #28 in Best Middle Schools in CT US News & World Reports
- Mansfield Elementary School CSDE School of Distinction for High Performance and High Growth ELA (All Students) and ELA High Growth (High Needs Students)
- Increased CSDE District Accountability Index by more than 6 points
- Increased Overall District Growth in English/Language Arts
- Decreased Student Chronic Absences by over 6 percentage points
- Increased Educator Diversity in Mansfield
- MMS students have the opportunity to earn high school math credits through a dual enrollment agreement with E.O. Smith High School
- Educator selected to participate in the Teaching 250 Convening, hosted by the Center for Civic Education and the National Constitution Center
- MMS First LEGO Robotics teams compete at state championship; one team received 2<sup>nd</sup> place for Core Values
- MMS CT History Day Regional Contest: 2 Outstanding Entry Awards and 3<sup>rd</sup> place Group Performance Award
- Increased number of Teacher Leaders, expanded Staff Leadership Roles
- Multiple teachers presenting at regional and national conferences
- State Teacher of the Year participants, semifinalists, and finalists over multiple recent years
- Increased Field Trips, Enriching Experiences, and After School Activities
- Increased number of students participating in performing groups (strings, orchestra, band, chorus, theater)
- Launched new Full Day Pre-Kindergarten Program
- Continued 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Bicycling Program in partnership with Bike Mansfield & Eastern Highland Health District
- Multiple Grants Awarded to Food Services that support MPS Food Services Field to Tray commitment
- Town of Mansfield Sustainable CT Gold Certification – Adopted MPS Lead with Equity Statement
- Mansfield Elementary School educators featured in an [EdWeek](#) article: *Play-Based Learning Yields More Joy, Higher Scores at This Elementary School, 12/29/2025*





# Budget by Program Total

Proposed 26-27 District Budget: **\$26,470,990**

## General Education (Schools) 44%

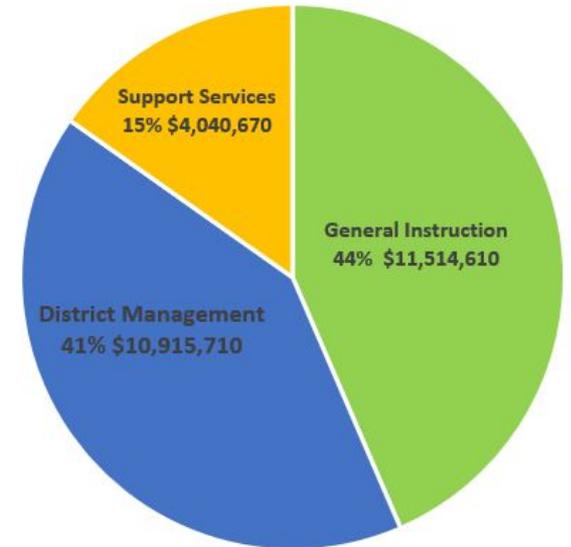
MES, MMS

## District Management (Operations) 41%

Facilities, IT, Transportation, Energy, Curriculum, Professional Learning, Employee Benefits, Teaching/Learning, Superintendent

## Support Services (Student Services) 15%

Special Education, Multilingual Learners, Speech/Language, OT/PT, Mental Health Services, Transportation





# Utilities Usage Comparison

*Has electricity usage been reduced moving to one building?*

	6/30/2021	6/30/2024	6/30/2025
SouthEast, Vinton, Goodwin	125,113 KW		
MES		78,206 KW	86,571 KW

Of Note:

- Usage has decreased moving to one building
- Cost of electricity has increased significantly over time



# MMS Utilities

*Why has electricity usage increased at MMS?*

	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024	6/30/2025
MMS	110,132	126,127	121,320	179,124

Note:

- Solar panels went online Summer 2023
- Cogen plant taken off line Summer 2024
- Increase in electricity usage is due to cogen plant coming offline
- Cost is less than cost of natural gas and ongoing maintenance of the plant



# Budgeted Cost for Electricity

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*Why are the proposed amount, adopted budget, and actual spending for electricity all appear to be exactly the same in the budget book?*

- The district does not pay electric bills directly from the budget line.
- The district pays a **utilities management service** that manages and pays the monthly electric invoices.
- The amount shown in the budget reflects the **district's contribution to the utilities account**, not the exact amount of electricity used that year.



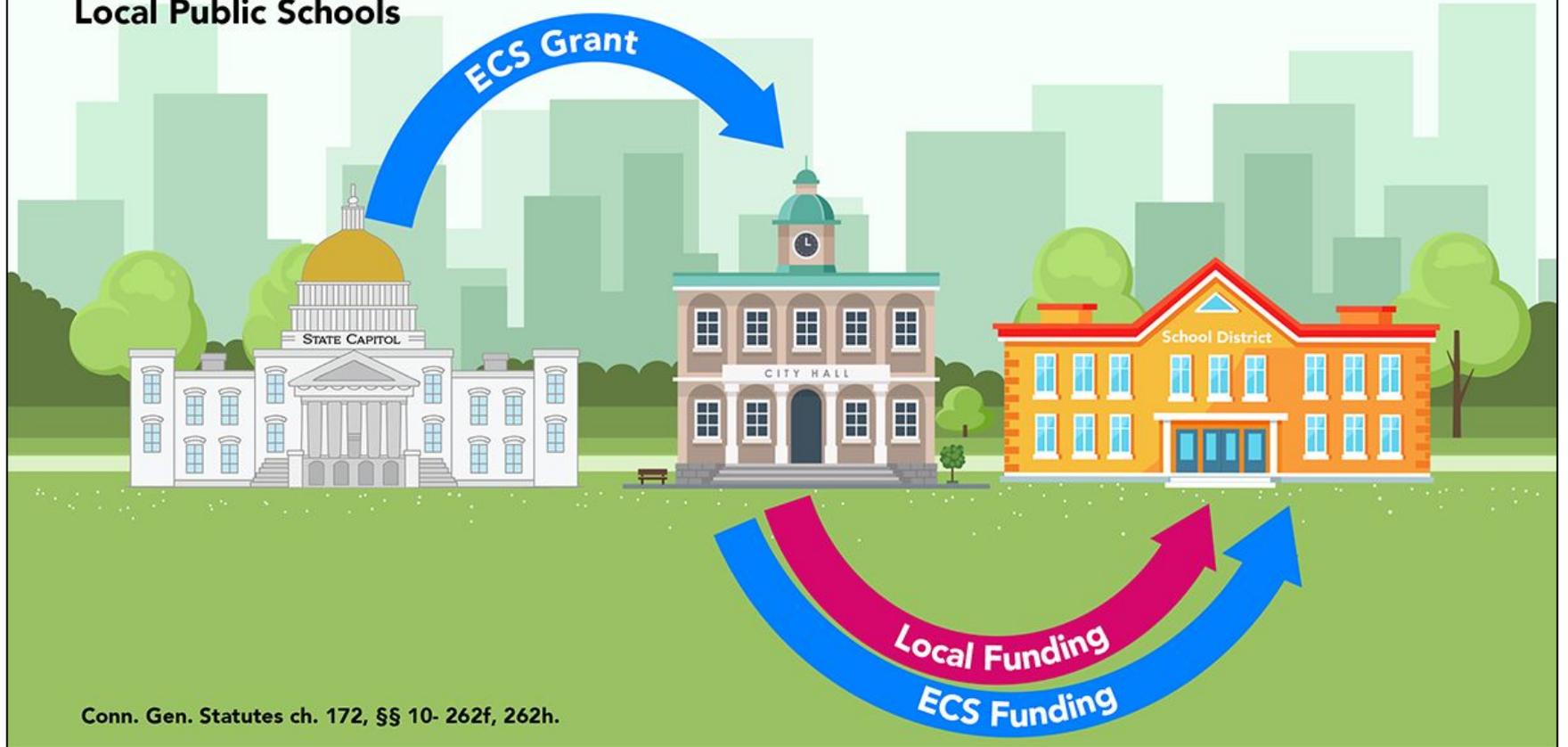
# Budgeted Cost for Electricity

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- The BOE Electrical budget was significantly reduced in FY23 and FY24 without adequate follow-up on actual usage.
- Proposed, adopted, and actual amounts match because the district contributes the adopted amount to the utilities account, while the management service pays the variable monthly bills.

**District Goal:** to better align budget contributions with actual utility usage.

## Local Public Schools



Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 172, §§ 10- 262f, 262h.



# Educational Cost Sharing

ECS Dollars go directly to the Town of Mansfield to offset the cost of funding the schools. Mansfield receives **\$13,112,190**



**IMPORTANT** - the taxpayer does not pay the whole cost of our budget.



Our Current budget of \$26,470,990 is offset by the ECS funds received.

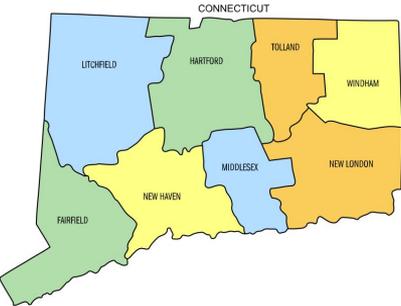
Cost to the taxpayer is \$13,358,800

This reduces the per pupil cost to \$14,364

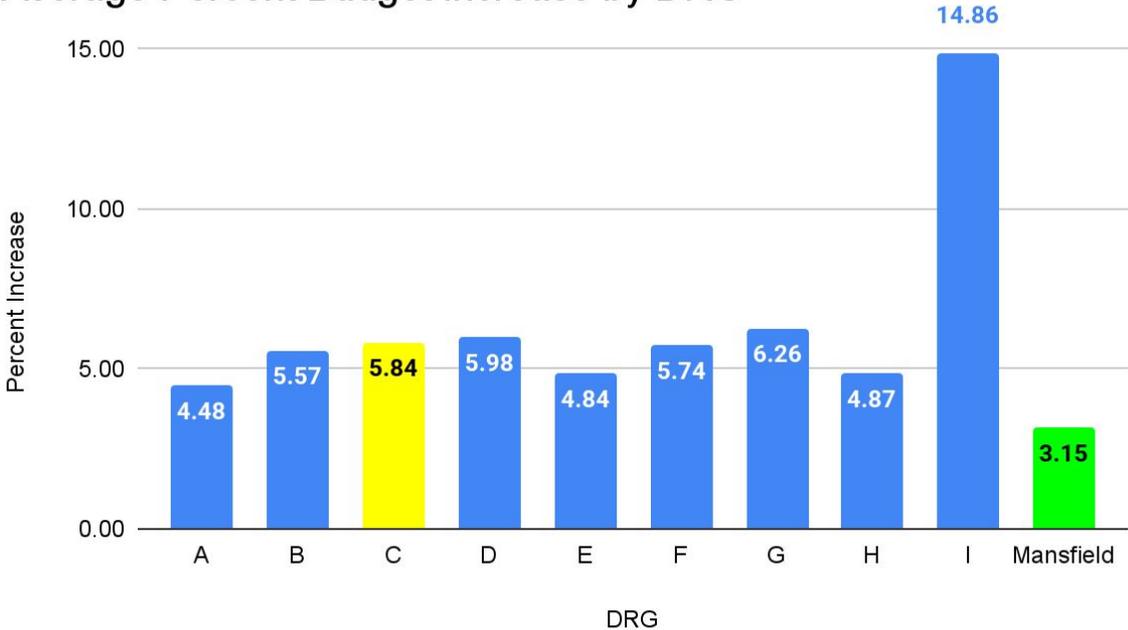


# State Wide BOE Budget Trends

as of 1/22/26 CAPSS/CASBO



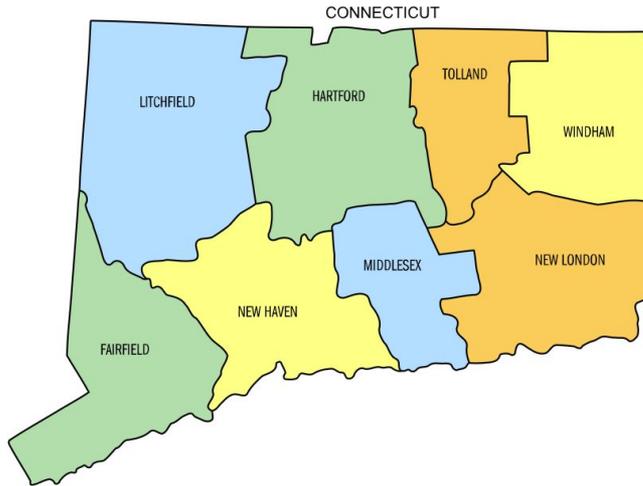
### Average Percent Budget Increase by DRG



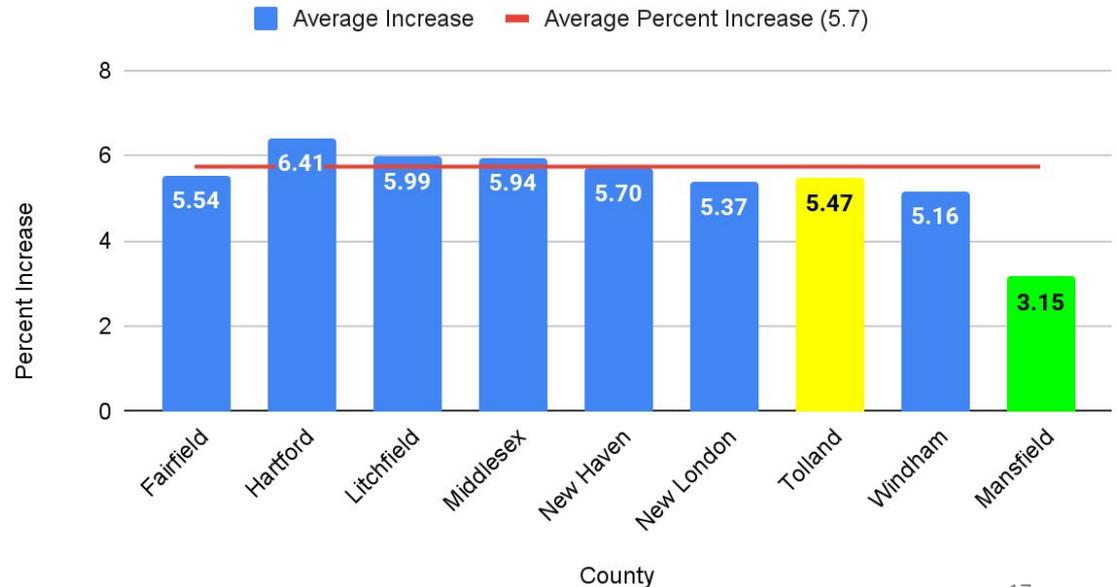


# State Wide BOE Budget Trends

as of 1/29/26 CAPSS/CASBO



## Average Percent Budget Increase by County

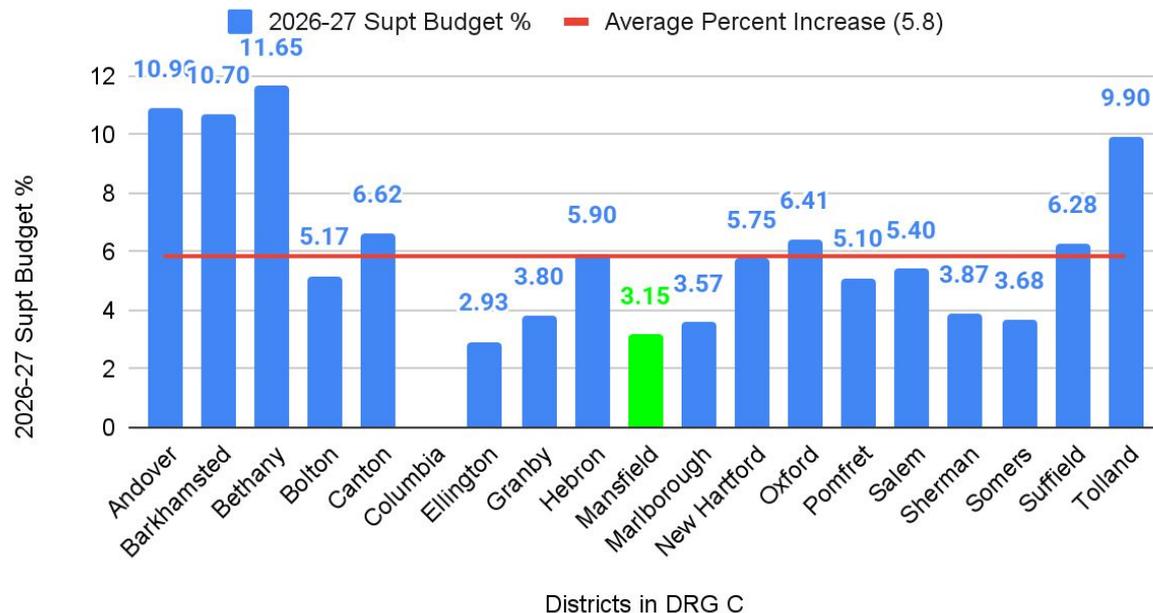
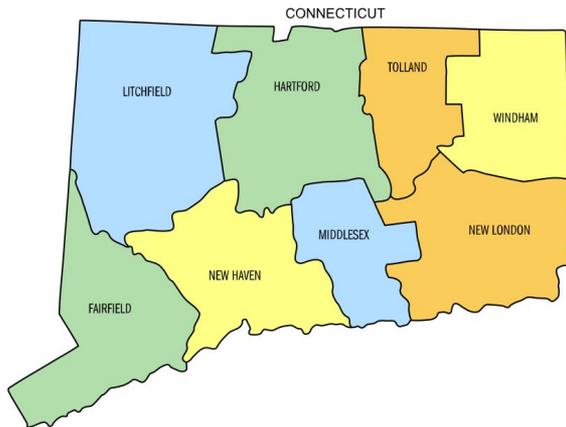




# State Wide BOE Budget Trends

as of 1/29/26 CAPSS/CASBO

## FY27 Percent Increase for Superintendent's Budget





# Budget Drivers p14

Major cost drivers include obligated salaries and benefits that represent 85% or \$22,343,470 of the proposed budget. Student transportation costs are 5% of the budget.

- Negotiated Salary Agreements
- Energy & Building Maintenance
- Inflation
- Contracted Services
- Special Education

Major Cost Drivers	Increased By
Salaries	\$398,515
Health Insurance	\$289,360
Energy Cost	\$32,000
Outplacement Tuition	\$57,600
Building Monitoring Services	\$8,195
Building Maintenance	\$10,925



# Cost Savings Strategies p15

During the budget building process, factors such as enrollment, consolidation, and attrition are utilized as mitigating strategies while ensuring the quality of programs, services, performance, and innovation are maintained and/or increased. Mansfield leaders continued to “right size” the district, following Board of Education class size guidelines, aligning master schedules to best utilize staff, and looking for appropriate reductions or savings in consumable supplies. In addition, the budget strategically uses entitled federal and state grants (see below) as well as reoccurring fund balances to appropriately offset increases.

<b>Major Cost Savings</b>	<b>Decreased By</b>
Staffing	\$447,769
OT Regular Transportation	\$25,000
MERS	\$118,370
Curriculum Development	\$15,000
Tutors	\$22,500



# Staffing p17-18

- Enrollment
- BOE Class Size Guidelines
- Scheduling Efficiencies
- Retirements/Attrition
- Needs/Data

Staffing is a major driver in the district budget and is adjusted each year to meet the goals of the district, reflect the needs of students/staff, and reflect enrollment. The 26-27 staffing plan acknowledges decreased student enrollment by reducing two classroom positions while maintaining BOE Class size guidelines. Proposed staffing increases include two non-certified positions. These roles are designed to provide direct student support and enhance instructional and operational capacity across the district.

The following certified staff FTE (full time equivalency) positions are recommended reductions:

- 1.0 FTE Kindergarten Teacher
- 1.0 FTE 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher
- 1.0 FTE Spanish Teacher
- 1.0 FTE School Psychologist

The following certified FTE position is a recommended staffing increase:

- 0.5 FTE Enrichment

**Summary of Proposed Certified Changes:**

- Reduce 4.0 FTE Certified Staff
- Add 0.5 FTE Certified Staff
- Net -3.5 FTE Certified Staff

The following non-certified staff FTE position is a recommended reduction:

- 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant

The following non-certified FTE positions are recommended staffing increases:

- 2.0 FTE Paraeducators

**Summary of Proposed Non-Certified Changes:**

- Reduce 1.0 FTE Non-Certified Staff
- Add 2.0 FTE Non-Certified Staff
- Net +1.0 FTE Non-Certified Staff



# Proposed Changes

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## Summary of Proposed Certified Changes:

- 4.0 FTE Certified Staff
- +0.5 FTE Certified Staff

**Net -3.5 FTE Certified Staff**

## Summary of Proposed Non-Certified Changes:

- 1.0 FTE Non-Certified Staff
- + 2.0 FTE Non-Certified Staff

**Net +1.0 FTE Non-Certified Staff**



# Projected Enrollment & Staff Reductions

	PreK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	45	85	88	76	84	114	122	111	104	101	930
<b>Average Class Size</b>	15	17	17.6	15.2	16.8	19	20.3	22.2	20.8	20.2	
<b>Number of Homerooms</b>	3	5	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	
<b>BOE Guidelines</b>	N/A	14-18	14-18	14-18	14-18	16-20	21-23	21-23	21-23	21-23	

Projected Average Class Size (based on 1/2/26 enrollment)

<b>Proposed 26-27 FTE Reduction</b>
<b>25-26 FTE Reduction</b>
<b>24-25 FTE Reduction</b>



# Our Budget Proposal is...

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Bold in Vision

Responsive in Action

Adaptable in Design

Responsible in Practice





The budget is not just a financial document, but a **values statement**

—one that reflects our commitment to educating, supporting, and preparing **EACH** and **EVERY** child for success.

# Mansfield Public Schools School Climate Plan

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February 12, 2026

# Our Mission

It is the **Mission** of the Mansfield Public Schools, in partnership with the Mansfield community, to ensure that each and every child develops the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for civic engagement and personal excellence in learning, life, and work within our local and global community.





# Connecticut School Climate Policy Overview

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- State-required framework under Public Act 23-167
- Required implementation beginning July 1, 2025
- Establishes expectations for safe, inclusive, and supportive school environments
- Aligns with Connecticut School Climate Standards



# Purpose of the Policy

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- Support academic, social, and emotional success for all students
- Promote student voice, belonging, and engagement
- Prevent and effectively respond to bullying, harassment, and challenging behaviors
- Strengthen relationships across the school community



# Continuous Improvement Framework

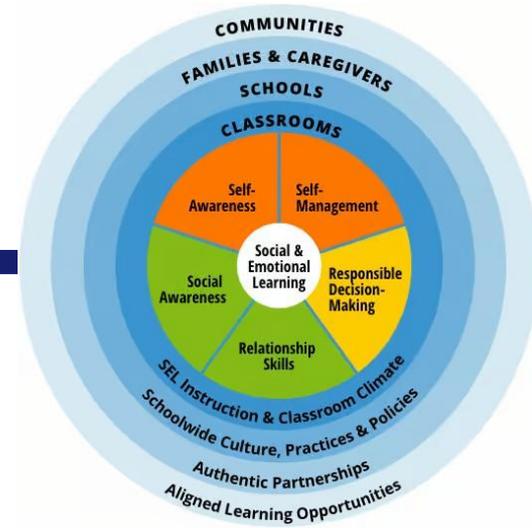
- Planning and preparation
- Evaluation using data and feedback
- Action planning and goal setting
- Implementation and ongoing monitoring
- Emphasizes long-term, sustainable improvement





# Focus on Prevention and Student Support

- Emphasizes social-emotional learning
- Promotes restorative practices that build accountability and repair relationships
- Supports early identification and intervention for challenging behaviors
- Encourages inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments





# School Climate Legislation Components

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School climate legislation, effective July 1, 2025, inclusive of Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Sec. 10- 222aa–Sec. 10-222jj, establishes the following necessary components:

- BOE School Climate Policy
- District-level School Climate Coordinator
- School Climate Survey
- School Climate Improvement Plan
- Training Requirements
- Restorative Practices Response Policy
- Challenging Behavior Reporting Form
- Challenging Behavior Investigation Form
- Challenging Behavior Response Process Notification Forms



# Policy Adoption

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Mansfield Public Schools adopted updated policies to strengthen district commitment to safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.

- [Connecticut School Climate Policy](#)
- [Restorative Practices Policy](#)

\*\*New policies replace our former bullying and safe school climate policies, aligning our practices with updated state requirements and a restorative, prevention-focused approach.



# School Climate Leadership Structure

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## **District Level**

- School Climate Coordinator provides oversight and ensures implementation: Dr. Shamim Patwa

## **School Level**

- School Climate Specialist leads prevention and response efforts: Larry Barlow, Principal (MMS) and Kate McCoy, Principal (MES)
- School Climate Committee with representation from staff, students, and families via MES PTO and MMSA



# Role of Data and Community Voice

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- Annual climate surveys for students, staff, and families
- Survey results guide improvement planning
- Multiple data sources used including discipline, attendance, and student support data
- Ensures stakeholder engagement in decision making



# School Climate Improvement Plans

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- Required for each school annually
- Developed using survey data and stakeholder input
- Outlines strategies for prevention, intervention, and support
- Integrated with broader school and district improvement efforts



[MES School Climate Plan](#)

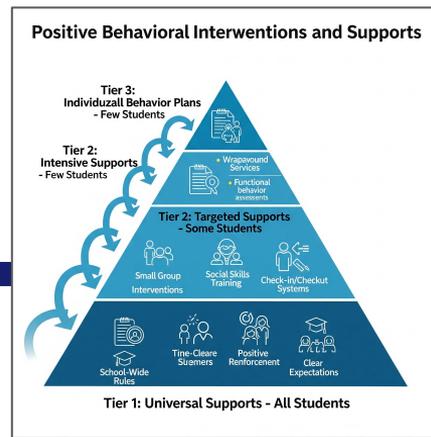


[MMS School Climate Plan](#)



# Professional Learning

- Staff training in social-emotional learning
- Training in restorative and evidence-based practices including PBIS
- Ongoing technical assistance and professional development
- Builds staff capacity to support positive school environments





# Accountability and Resources

- District responsibility to allocate funding and resources
- Ongoing monitoring of climate indicators and outcomes
- Required alignment with state standards
- Focus on sustainability and continuous growth





# Return on Investment

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- Increased student engagement and sense of belonging
- Improved school safety and climate
- Stronger partnerships with families and community
- Enhanced academic and social outcomes for students





# Operations Manager

## Supporting the Whole District

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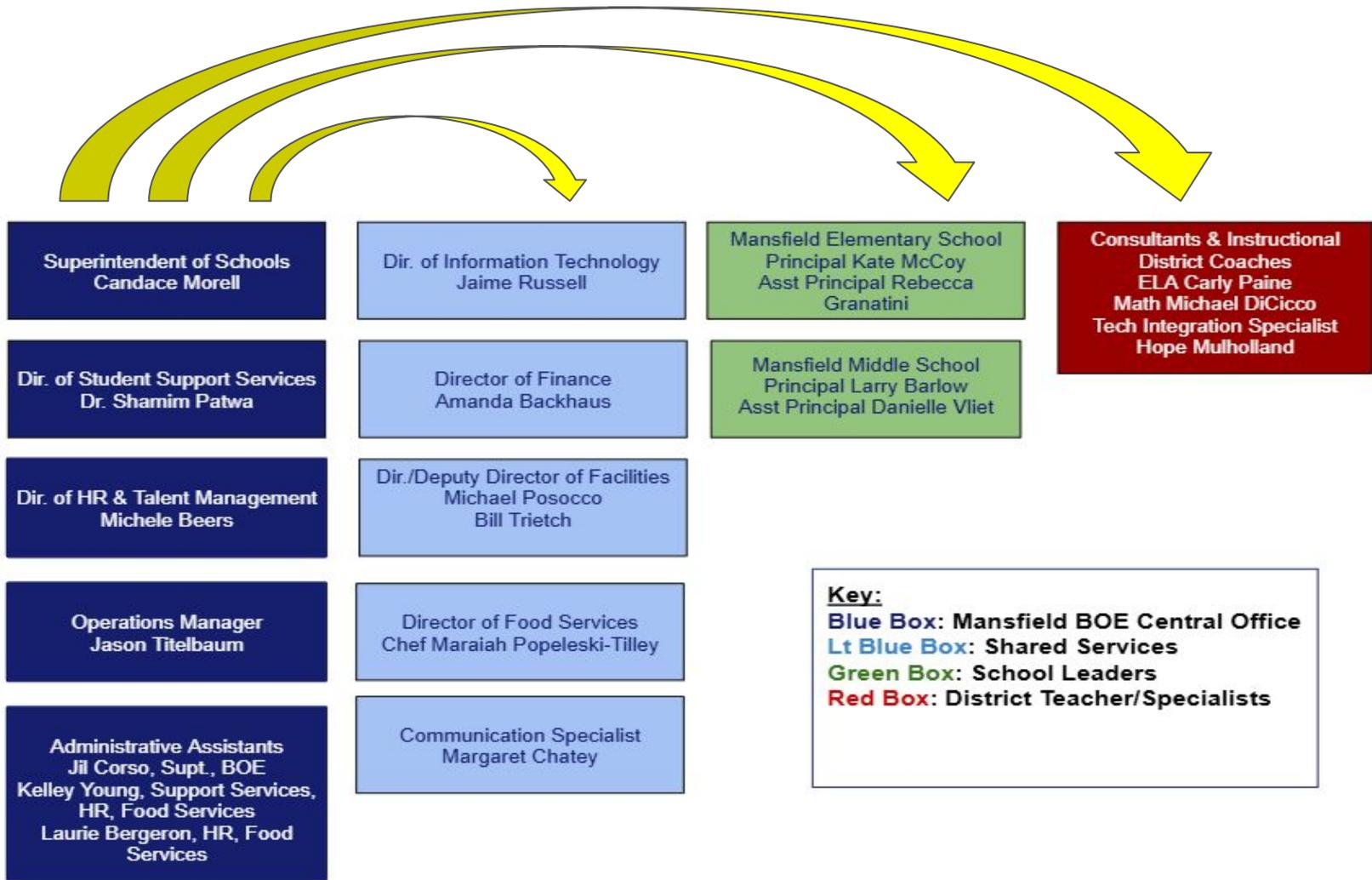


# Role of the Operations Manager

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Position developed in Summer 2025 with the goal of:

- Supporting the business operations of the school district by managing non-instructional functions, services, and staff
- Ensuring efficient daily operations, strong internal controls, and responsible budget management across all district departments
- Strengthening business policies, budgeting, procurement, and operations to ensure equity, accountability, and responsible resource use
- Serving as collaborative thought partner and strategic leader through aligned communication, project oversight, and effective fiscal resource management





# Supporting the Whole District: District Operations

- Create streamlined procedures for schools to ensure consistency
  - Field Trip Request
  - School Safety and Security Plans
  - School and District Climate
  - Student Registration
  - Yearly Student Data Verification
- Support Director of Human Resources and Talent Management on staff training requirements
- Assist with state Grant submissions

Superintendent of Schools  
Candace Morell

Dir. of Student Support Services  
Dr. Shamim Patwa

Dir. of HR & Talent Management  
Michele Beers



# Supporting the Whole District: School Operations

- Provide relevant, timely data to instructional Coaches to inform instructional decision-making.
- Serve as supporting administrator as needed in schools
  - Assist with arrival and dismissal
- Serve as District Test Administrator for high stakes testing (SBAC, NGSS)
- Coordinate and refine registration processes for schools

Mansfield Elementary School  
Principal Kate McCoy  
Asst Principal Rebecca  
Granatini

Mansfield Middle School  
Principal Larry Barlow  
Asst Principal Danielle Vliet

Consultants & Instructional  
District Coaches  
ELA Carly Paine  
Math Michael DiCicco  
Tech Integration Specialist  
Hope Mulholland



# Supporting the Whole District: Transportation

- Analyzes transportation routes to optimize efficiency and align services with student needs.
- Review of monthly invoices for accuracy and compliance
- Manages communication of transportation adjustments
  - Road closures
  - UConn Events





# Supporting the Whole District: Information Technology

- Support implementation of Student Information System
  - Use of PowerSchool
  - Streamline online Registration process
  - Creation of online forms for student data review
  - Provide training to new staff on systems associated with PowerSchool
- Support families with MyView Zonar App
- Assume all data reporting requirements for various state reports for students / schools
- Coordinate set up of Canyon Creek for Family Conferencing
- Active member of the Data Dashboard Support Team
- Supporting collection and compiling of data

Dir. of Information Technology  
Jaime Russell

Director of Finance  
Amanda Backhaus

Dir./Deputy Director of Facilities  
Michael Posocco  
Bill Trietch

Director of Food Services  
Chef Mariah Popeleski-Tilley



# Supporting the Whole District: Finance

- Manages all educational grants to ensure proper spending and full compliance with grant requirements
- Tracks all MPS accounts and reviews school and district purchases in Munis to ensure accurate alignment with budget lines
- Provides support to staff with Munis (reports, account setup, etc.)
- Supports the budget development process

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Chef Maraiiah Popeleski-Tilley



# Supporting the Whole District: Facilities

- Participates in project meetings to track progress and ensure tasks are completed on schedule
  - MMS Entrance
  - MMS Cafeteria
- Represents Mansfield Public Schools and advocates for school and family needs at Local Traffic Authority meetings
  - Installation of improved school zone signage (MES)
- Coordinates with schools and Facilities to address building needs
  - Monthly Maintenance Meetings
  - Summer Planning
- Supports the development of Capital Improvement Project Plan

Dir. of Information Technology  
Jaime Russell

Director of Finance  
Amanda Backhaus

Dir./Deputy Director of Facilities  
Michael Posocco  
Bill Trietch

Director of Food Services  
Chef Mariah Popeleski-Tilley



# Supporting the Whole District: Food Services

- Provide support in data submissions as required by State of Connecticut Dept Of Education and USDA
- Created inventory tracking system for MES, MMS, and E.O. Smith purchases
- Supports monitoring spending to ensure revenue is properly allocated in Munis
- Assists with tracking compliance on:
  - CSDE Administrative Review for the Child Nutrition Programs (school breakfast & lunch)
  - Grants
    - CT Grown for CT Kids
  - CT Fresh Ed Compass: Regional Farm to School Data Collection

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