



The Mansfield Public Schools 2026–2027 Proposed Budget Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been developed to provide clarity and transparency throughout the budget process. The questions included in this document were posed by members of the Board of Education during the budget presentation process and reflect thoughtful discussion around key components of the proposed budget. We are sharing these questions and responses with our community to help deepen understanding of the budget’s priorities, drivers, and overall development, and to ensure that stakeholders feel informed and engaged in the process.

Year	Approved Budget	% Increase/ Decrease
2017-2018	\$23,460,160	2.09%
2018-2019	\$23,460,160	0.00%
2019-2020	\$23,637,850	0.76%
2020-2021	\$23,467,540	-0.72%
2021-2022	\$24,006,080	2.29%
2022-2023	\$23,963,290	-0.18%
2023-2024	\$24,801,880	3.50%
2024-2025	\$24,801,880	0.00%
2025-2026	\$25,662,845	3.47%
2026-2027	\$26,470,990*	3.15%

\*Proposed Budget

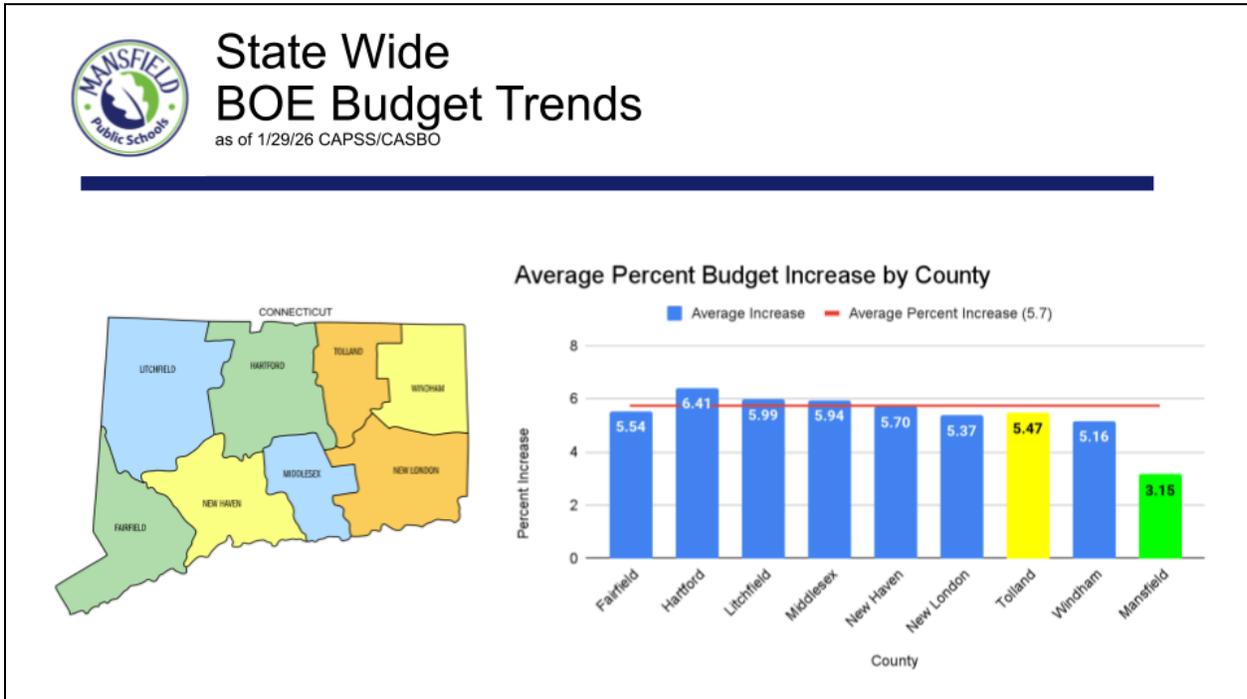
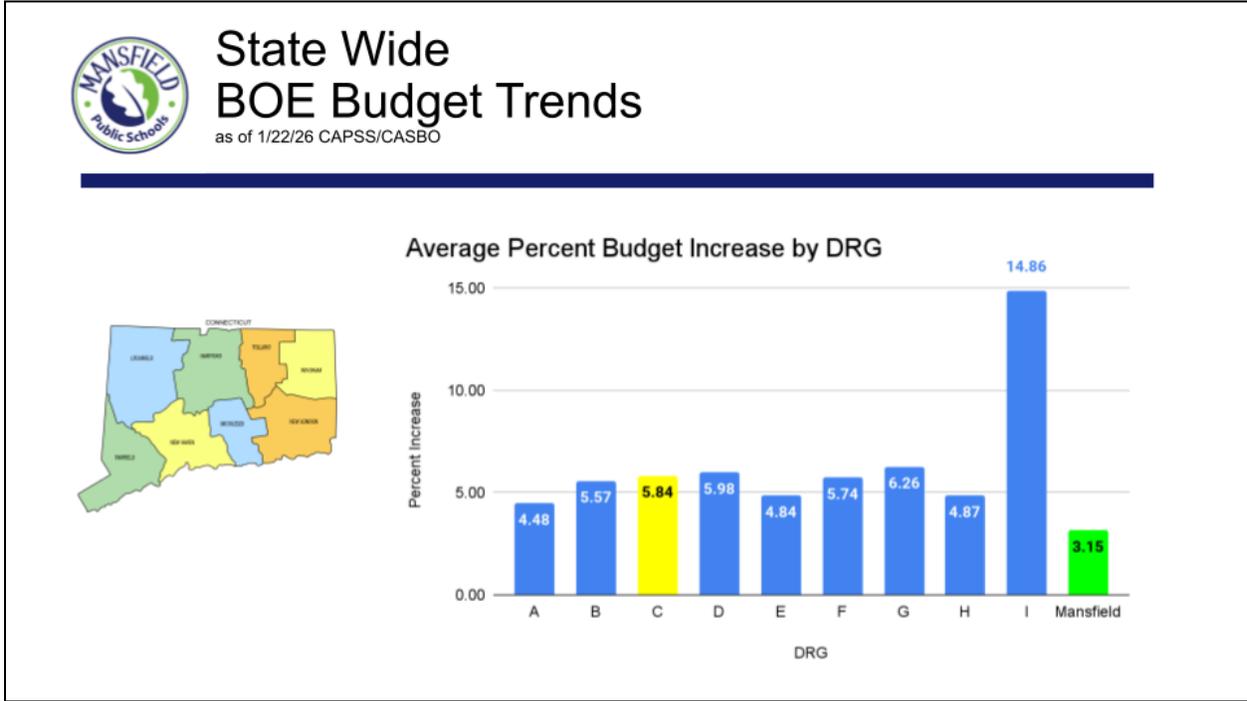
### General Questions

#### **How does this budget increase compare with other years?**

The Mansfield Public Schools Budget has experienced a five year rate of change of 12.8%. Much of the increase is attributed to fixed costs such as negotiated salaries and benefits as well as direct operating expenses. Only 2% of the overall annual budget accounts for books, supplies and equipment. Our budget gain over time is significantly smaller (12.8%,) than the five year rate of inflation which is 24.4% according to the *U.S. Inflation Calculator*. This means that the district has seen a smaller than typical increase compared to that of organizations and people over the same time frame.

**How does this compare to other districts like us?**

Below you will find information pertaining to budget trends across the state.

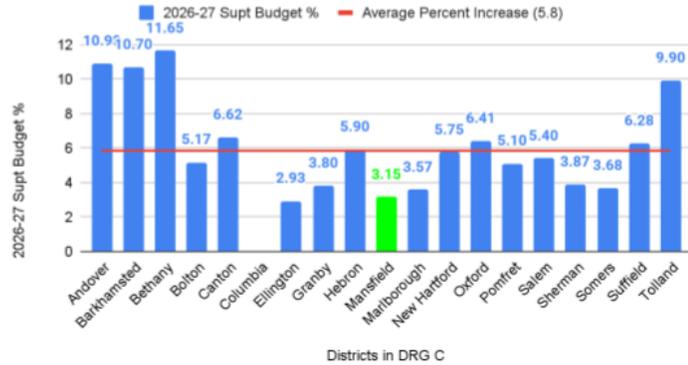
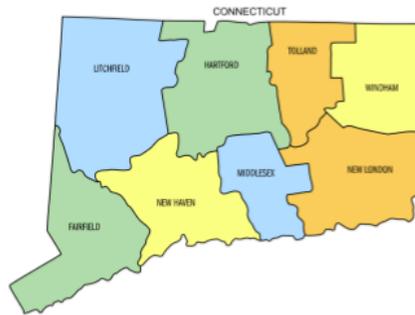




# State Wide BOE Budget Trends

as of 1/29/26 CAPSS/CASBO

## FY27 Percent Increase for Superintendent's Budget



### What are the major cost drivers of the budget?

Major cost drivers include:



## 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

Please share cost savings measures that are part of the 2026-2027 proposed budget.

Cost savings measures include:



## Cost Savings Strategies p15

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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.

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

Knowing Students - Supporting the Whole Child - Ensuring Deep Learning

What are the proposed staffing changes this year?

Proposed staffing changes include:



## 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

Knowing Students - Supporting the Whole Child - Ensuring Deep Learning

**Overall question: For salary increases this year, is there a large number of staff qualifying/taking step increases?**

The increase in salaries reflects contractual increases for all staff in accordance with their collective bargaining agreements.

**What percentage are state funds in our budget, what percentage federal funding?**

School districts do not receive federal funding to cover general school operating costs. The school budget reflects expenditures only. Districts also do not receive state funding directly to offset these costs. Instead, the State provides Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) funding directly to the Town in the amount of \$13,112,190. These funds help reduce the overall increase in the Town's budget.

Each year, the Mansfield Board of Education (MBOE) adopts and presents a school budget to the Town Council. This presentation represents the Board's funding request to support school operations. The Town Council may approve the budget as presented or request additional reductions. Once approved, the MBOE-adopted budget is incorporated into the overall Town budget.

#### **Budget Book Page 5**

**Please explain .25 teacher.**

It is not a 0.25 teacher. It is a 0.75 music teacher at MES + 0.50 school psych that was shared 50/50 with MMS—a position which is not being filled this year 25/26 and cut from the 26/27 budget.

#### **Budget Book Page 8**

**10 Year enrollment data shows a considerable loss of students from Elementary to Middle School. The lowest loss of students was 34. The highest was 166.**

You are correct. Declining enrollment is the result of lower birth rates which has been a consistent trend across the state. As fewer babies are born, enrollment declines.

In regards to the difference from elementary to middle, this is the result of moving from an elementary school that holds six grade levels of students (prek-4) to a building that hosts only 4 grade levels (Grades 5-8). While it can be viewed as a loss, it is merely a reflection of the total number of students enrolled in six grade level bands (elementary) compared to 4 grade level bands (middle school).

#### **Budget Book Page 11**

**How many Grants did Food Services apply for? How many did the program receive and what was the dollar amount?**

Current grants are reflected on Page 15.

Food Services is a **self funded program** and is **not** reflected in our BOE Budget.

All grants received are the result of our Food Services Director's initiative to pursue competitive grants that will support the program's commitment to provide scratch cooked whole foods for all of their patrons. These grants support both Mansfield Public Schools and E.O.Smith High School.

They receive many of the grants as a result of this unique and collaborative approach.

**2025-26 School Year Grants Received:**

NSL Program – School Equipment (A Federal competitive grant hosted by the state)

Total \$6,087

automatic food slicer, stand mixer (MES/MMS)

**2024-25 School Year Grants Received:**

CT Grown for CT Kids:

Two Year Competitive Grant

\$74,740.58

Funding has supported the following:

- Professional learning for food services team
- Tilt Skillet (MMS)
- Blast Chiller (MES)
- Chef Coats
- Knife Sets

[Cheffannfoundation.org](http://Cheffannfoundation.org) and Whole Kids Fund:

- \$13,500
- This funds three salad bar stations for MPS and Region 19

**Budget Book Page 12**

**What are purchased property services?**

Purchased property services include services related to buildings, grounds, and infrastructure that are provided by outside vendors rather than performed by district employees. Such as: refuse collection, pest control, HVAC maintenance and servicing contracts, elevator inspections and maintenance, fire alarm and sprinkler inspections, boiler inspections and servicing, etc.

**What are examples of other purchased services?**

In a school district budget, Other Purchased Services are services provided by outside individuals, agencies, or companies rather than district employees. Examples include: special education evaluations (psychological, speech/language, OT, PT), legal services (labor, special education, contracts), audit services, architectural and engineering services, professional development consultants and instructional coaches, nursing or medical consulting services, and student transportation.

**Why is there an increase in energy costs for next year? At MMS, there was the installation of solar panels and I believe the HVAC has been renovated. Curious as to the projected increase?**

Last fiscal year we spent \$230,000 on electricity. This is a multi year increase phased in over time to accurately budget for electricity used and the cost of energy continues to go up. While MES is a net zero building, this does not mean that we don't pay for electricity. While we have made upgrades to the MMS HVAC system (Currently in process) and installed solar panels, this does not mean that there will be no increase in cost. This year we have reduced natural gas by \$20,000 and increased electricity by \$50,000 to accurately reflect expenditures.

What are the per-building (MMS and MES) electricity expense figures?

Property Name	6/30/2019	6/30/2020	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024	6/30/2025
Vinton	38,809	33,961	37,171	42,091	37,885	Town	Town
Goodwin	31,880	29,549	33,089	36,408	32,811	Town	Town
Southeast	57,742	51,899	60,853	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Mansfield Elementary	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	31,791	78,206	86,571
Mansfield Middle School	129,632	121,056	121,693	110,132	126,127	121,320	179,124
Usage	258,064	236,466	252,807	188,631	228,614	199,526	265,695

Similar to our residential electric bills, Eversource rates have increased significantly over the last 5 years.

We have achieved significant energy savings with the Mansfield Elementary School building project. It is important to note that net-zero DOES NOT mean no costs associated.

The cost of two buildings is in no way nearing the cost of operating four buildings. Electricity is just one element of our overall energy budget. It is also important to note that by building our new elementary school allows us to contribute to the Town's commitment to sustainability by reducing our need to use fuels such as propane and heating oil

**Please explain the Rate 980 agreement the MES is currently enrolled in.**

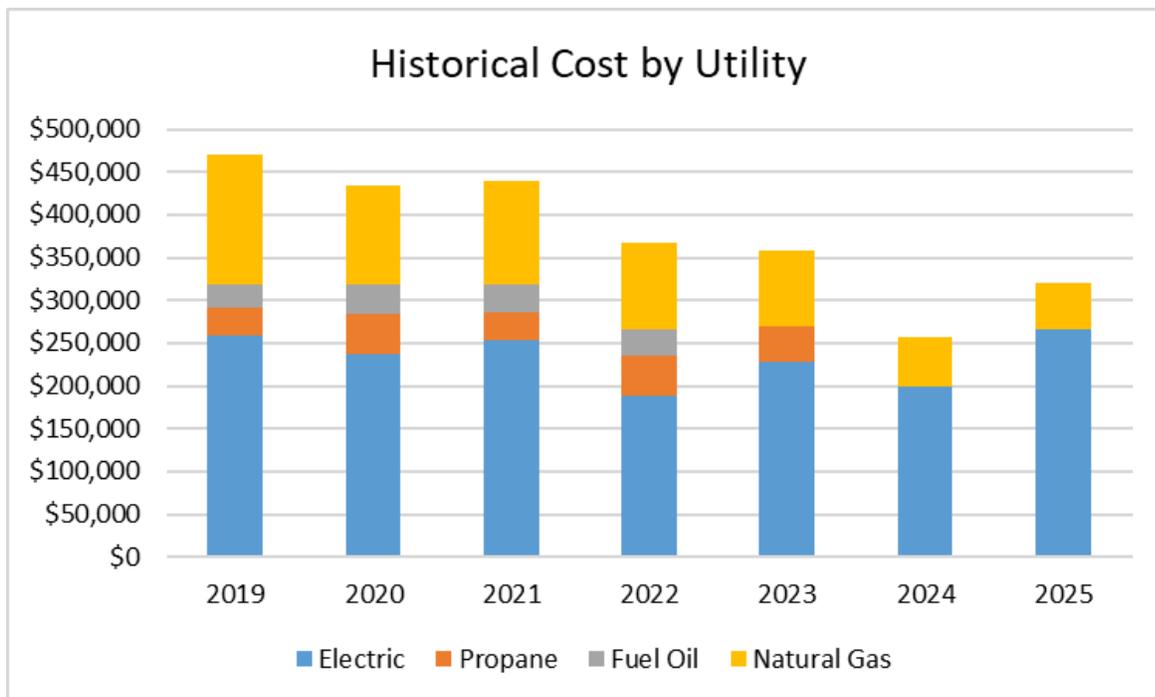
As presented in the joint meeting between the Town Council and Board of Education on January 30, 2025, the Elementary School currently is enrolled in Eversource's Rate 980.

If a customer applied to interconnect a project without participation in Eversource's Renewable Energy Solutions programs, then the project would be interconnecting and billing on Rate 980. Customers on Rate 980 Alt-B are charged for all electricity imported from the grid. Separately, they are credited for any solar production exported to the grid. Note the imports/exports are NOT netted on a monthly basis. The credits for production exported to the grid are calculated at

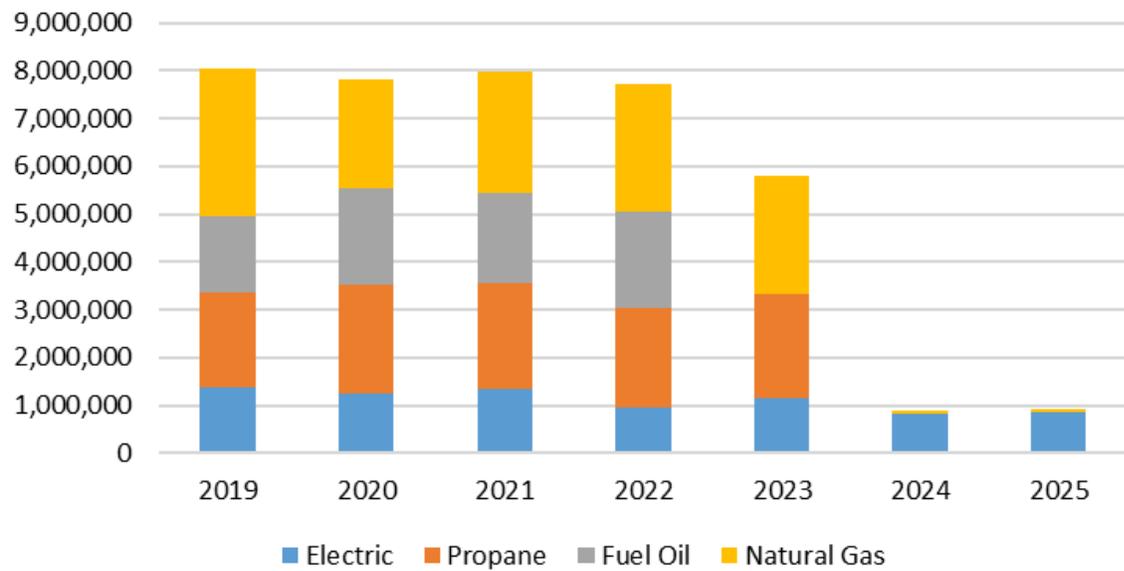
a price per kWh near the wholesale rate. This is typically less than the full retail supply & delivery rates the customer would be charged for the electricity they consume from the grid.

Eversource's Renewable Energy Solution programs involve selling renewable energy credits (REC). One of the main goals in building our new Elementary School was to become a net-zero certified facility. In order to count the renewable energy generation toward our net zero goal, RECs must be retained or retired. If you have not retained or retired the RECs associated with your onsite renewable energy system, other projects may be claiming the RECs from your project toward their own zero energy goals. This policy is put in place to prevent double counting of renewable generation by both the owner of the RECs and the owner or lessor of the generation system.

**Energy Expenditures Historic Cost per school:  
Historical Cost by Utility:**

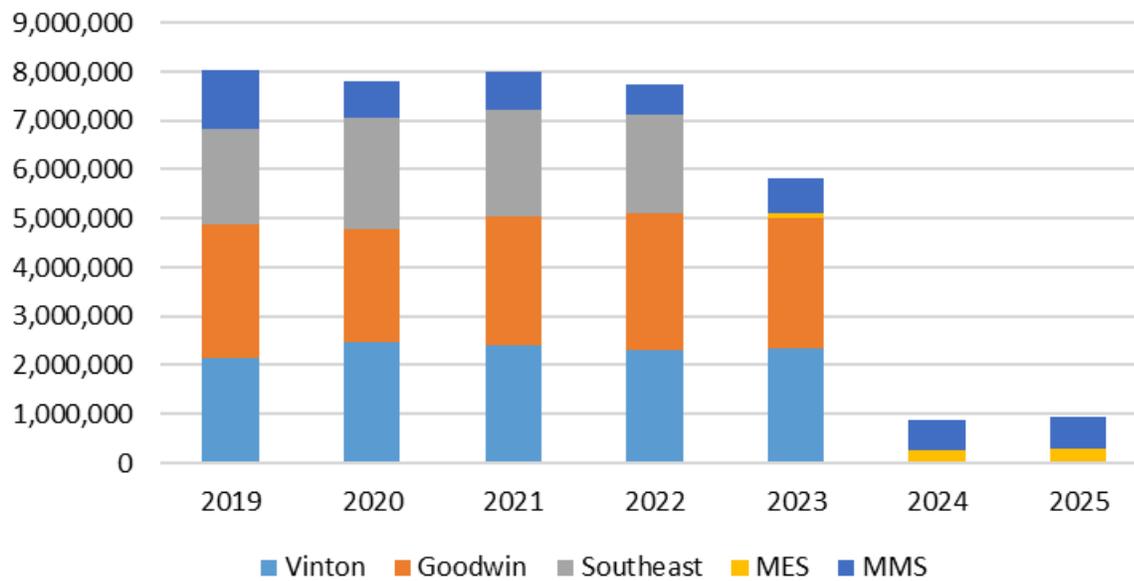


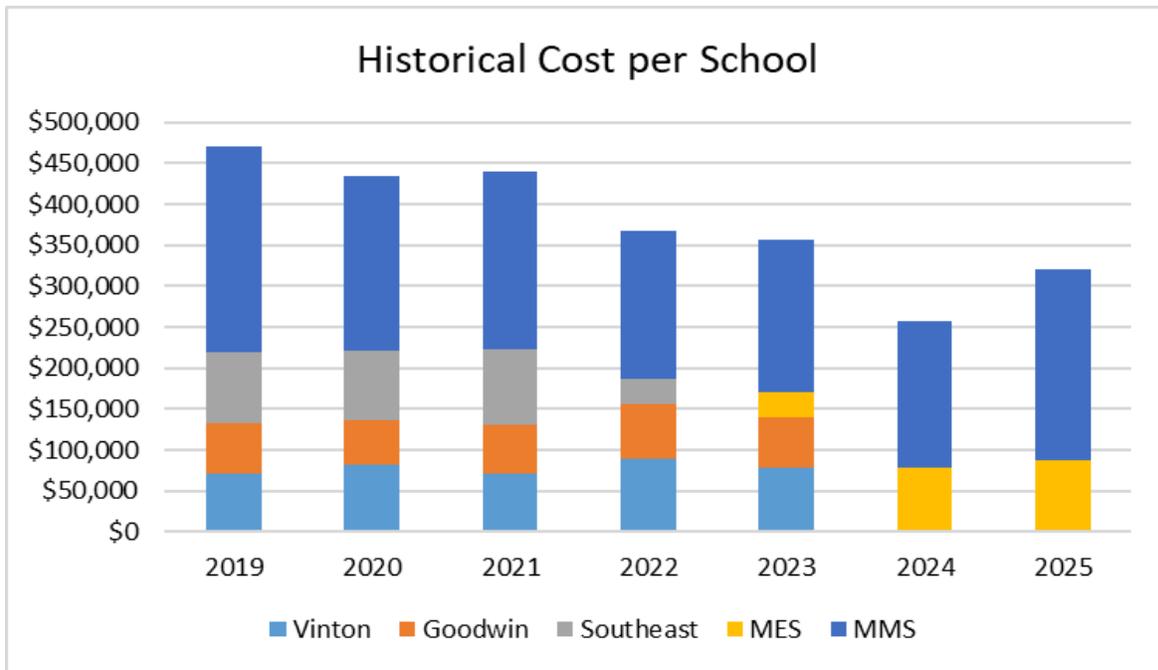
### Historic Usage by Utility



### Historical Usage by School:

### Usage by School





In 2024, a comparison was done of the cost of 3 elementary schools vs the cost of 1 - using usage from 2021 projected at 2024 rates. You will note significant energy savings were identified:

<b>FY21 Elementary School activity at FY24 rates</b>	
<b>Electric</b>	
Vinton	\$ 59,126
Goodwin	\$ 54,178
Southeast	\$ 91,099
<b>Natural Gas</b>	
Goodwin	\$ 24,636
<b>Oil</b>	
Southeast	\$ 46,339
<b>Propane</b>	
Vinton	\$ 40,433
	<u>\$ 315,810</u>
<b>FY2024 Elementary School activity at FY24 rates</b>	<u><u>\$ 78,206</u></u>

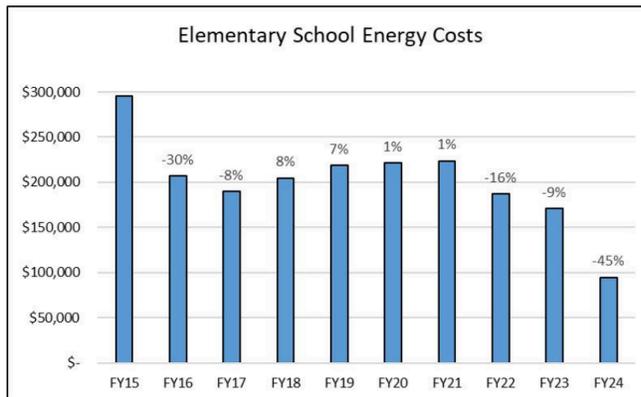
# Energy Costs



## Total Costs by Fiscal-year

- Includes only elementary buildings
- Southeast offline (FY23)
- Vinton and Goodwin removed from total upon creation of new school (FY24)
- **Overall decrease from FY15 (10 years ago) is 67.93%**

**Note:** This is actual cost.  
No adjustment for inflation has been included.



For more information please refer to the presentation that was provided at the joint meeting of the Town Council and Board of Education on January 30, 2025:

[https://www.mansfieldct.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/\\_01302025-16175](https://www.mansfieldct.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_01302025-16175)

## **Budget Book Page 14**

**Is the 6.48% increase in pupil cost due to the increase in salaries and insurance primarily? I know there is a reduction in pupils and staff this year, so just seeing why this is so high compared to the overall increase.**

The per pupil cost has been adjusted based upon actual enrollment numbers in the 2025-26 SY. The updated projected percentage of increase is 4.16%. This increase is lower than the 2025-26 SY per pupil cost increase of 6.45%. Per pupil cost is purely a calculation based on PK-8 enrollment.

Per pupil cost is calculated by dividing the overall final proposed budget amount of \$26,470,990 by the projected total number of students next year. The 26-27 enrollment projections have the district at approximately 930 students. To achieve the per pupil cost, you divide \$26,470,990 by 930 students which equals \$28,463 per pupil expenditure. Of note, this is an initial per pupil estimate and will adjust based on our final enrollment count when we begin the new school year. As a comparison, our enrollment currently is 948 students. If our enrollment were to stay at the same level, the per pupil cost would be \$27,922 (a decrease of \$540) next year.

While enrollment declines, fixed costs (Salaries, benefits, operating expenses such as heating, transportation, facilities/maintenance) account for 98% of our budget. Fixed costs are present whether our enrollment is 920 or 1200.

**Is the budget increase primarily due to contracted salaries and benefits?**

Our overall budget increase this year is \$808,145 Of this overall increase, negotiated salaries and benefits account for \$663,635. So yes, the increase is primarily due to negotiated salaries and benefits for all bargaining units.

**To reduce cost can we share staff with other districts?**

Our staff are 1.0FTEs working full schedules. As shared last Thursday, we decreased staffing where appropriate based on enrollment. To reduce staffing any further would mean we are cutting programming. We have an overall operating expense increase of \$144,510.

**Where are primary outplacements this time?**

We currently have 3 students outplaced. Two are at Natchaug Green Valley. The outplacements are dictated by student need.

**This could be a discussion another time, however, I was curious how the tuition and transportation works for students that are outplaced and when the district has been supportive of this type of recommendation.**

The tuition and transportation is covered by the district. We review student needs through the PPT process. We have been successfully able to create in-house programs where appropriate. The decision to outplace is made by the Planning and Placement Team and are the result of thoughtful consideration with the best interest of the student at the center of these discussions.

**Budget Book Page 15**

**Regarding the decreased dollar amount for tutors, does the District still have the same number.**

Reduction in dollar amount reflects a reduction in the amount of time these staff are needed (not necessarily less staff). These are hourly positions that we schedule to meet our support needs.

Last year at MES, tutors were removed from the budget. A restructuring of WIN block and the overall intervention model allowed us to think about where, when and how intervention services were provided by full-time staff and classroom teachers. The reduction that you see this year at MMS reflects a refinement of the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model and how intervention services are provided. Through this work we see that we need less support from the tutors. As a reminder, this was an additional post COVID add-on to provide short term additional support and is intended to phase out over time.

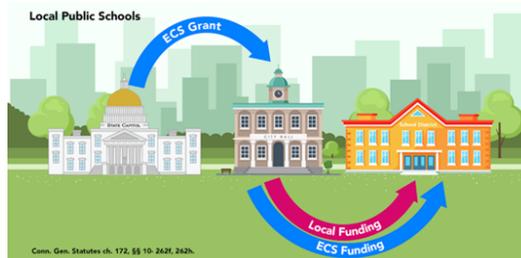
**Please explain the ECS Grants. How much and where can it be used?**

This is a grant that is provided to the town which is why it is not reflected in the chart on page 15. It should be noted this funding source is very different from IDEA or our Title grants which are provided directly to the BOE.

An **Education Cost Sharing (ECS)** grant is a state-funded program, primarily in Connecticut, designed to equalize public school funding by sending more aid to poorer districts, considering student needs (like poverty, English learners) and town wealth (property taxes, resident income). This large equalization grant ensures less wealthy towns can provide better education, with complex formulas adjusting amounts annually based on updated data and legislative changes, often including caps and supplemental aid for specific districts like Alliance Districts.

At the end of the day the TOWN and taxpayers are the ones funding the cost of educating our students. The ECS grant is provided to the town to help mitigate the cost of providing quality

education to residents. The cost of educating students would be highly skewed if we net ECS with the BOE expenditures. The practice of allocating ECS funds to the town is standard across communities. I have included a graphic below.



ECS Funds from the state are distributed directly to the town. They are then used to offset the cost of funding the schools. Mansfield will receive \$13,112,190 in ECS funds in the 2026-27 budget year. The funds received offset the cost of the Mansfield Public Schools proposed budget. This year our proposed budget is \$26,470,990\* (Note reduced number due to additional savings in MERS identified on 1/20/26 by Finance). Once the ECS funds received are applied towards the budget, the cost to the taxpayer is \$13,358,800. This reduces our per pupil cost to \$14,354.30 per student.

### **Budget Book Pages 17/18**

**With Kinder projections, do you have information from the private preschools in our area of how many students are anticipated including those enrolled in Pre-K? Also, how many from Pre-K are moving forward as you have students 3-5 in Pre-k now. I was curious as I know the intention is to remove a FTE Kindergarten teacher, but I was unsure how many additional students would be expected to attend in addition to those already enrolled.**

A: We are in the process of gathering this information right now.

B: Current Prek 4 student count: 37 students. As of today's date, 37 students will roll up to kindergarten.

C: We anticipate that enrollment will likely land between 75-85 students in kindergarten. We have staffing models that can reasonably support programming with 5 teachers at the K level.

**Spanish - Were there 3 teachers and now we have 2 or are we going from 2 to 1 teacher?**

2025-26 Staffing at MES:

1.0FTE Multilingual teacher

1.0FTE Spanish Teachers

In late August, our Multilingual Learner (ML) teacher resigned. Through thoughtful restructuring and reimagining of the schedule, we were able to transition one of our Spanish teachers into the ML position and realign the Spanish schedule to ensure that all students continue to receive consistent programming supported by a 1.0 FTE Spanish teacher. This staffing allows for students in K-4 to receive Spanish instruction that is in alignment with other Essential Arts like STEM, Library, Music, and Art. As a result, we believe it is reasonable to recommend continuing this staffing and scheduling model for the 2026–27 school year.

**Is the tech integration position a "new position?"**

No. This position was introduced in the 2025-2026 budget year. During the current year, the MMS 0.5 FTE enrichment teacher has also supported the district through an additional 0.5 FTE Tech Integration role. While we recognized from the outset that this was not a perfect model, it provided an opportunity to reimagine and better understand the instructional needs for both enrichment and technology integration.

Over the course of the year, the demand for STEM enrichment has grown significantly. As a result, we are recommending that the STEM enrichment position be restored to 1.0 FTE. The 0.5 FTE Tech Integrationist position, which supports the entire district, will continue to be maintained as already included in the budget.

**What is the enhancing student achievement deduction?**

Great question: Several years ago we received a donation from an outside non-profit that was identified to be used for enriching experiences. Those funds were placed in a 270 account that is able to be used over time. Each year we have used a small portion of those funds to offset costs within the budget. Eventually, these funds will be depleted and we will have to absorb the costs within the budget.

**Why are MBOE guidelines N/A for Pre-K?**

MBOE has never had guidelines per say which is likely a by product of former half day Programs operating in three smaller schools. Our practice is to keep these class sizes closer to 15 students. Each room is staffed by one teacher and two paraeducators or more depending on individual student needs.

Proposed 2026-2027 staffing reductions:

2026-27 Reductions	FTE
MES- Kindergarten	1.0
MES- 3rd Grade	1.0
MES- Spanish	1.0
MMS/MES-School Psychologist	1.0
MMS- Administrative Assistant	1.0

Reductions are the result of right sizing due to enrollment.

K enrollment projected to be 75-85 students which equates to five K-teachers (we currently have six).

Grade 3 enrollment will be 84 students which means that we will need five grade 3 teachers (we currently have six).

Spanish reduction rationale: In late August, our Multilingual Learner (ML) teacher resigned. Through thoughtful restructuring and reimagining of the schedule, we were able to transition one of our Spanish teachers into the ML position and realign the Spanish schedule to ensure that all students continue to receive consistent programming supported by a 1.0 FTE Spanish teacher. This staffing allows for students in K-4 to receive Spanish instruction that is with other Essential Arts like STEM, Library, Music, and Art.

MMS/MES School Psychologist - The person in that position left in April of last year. Again through restructuring as well as the addition of a social worker at each school, all of our needs are met.

**Do our first grade classes have teacher aides working in each of their classrooms? If not, why not?**

First grade classrooms do not each have a dedicated paraeducator. Instead, one paraeducator is assigned to the first-grade team and provides classroom support to all five classrooms based on a schedule collaboratively developed by the team. This model allows support to be targeted where and when it is most needed throughout the day. In addition, other paraeducator staff and support service providers are assigned to first grade to work with small groups of students, based on identified student needs. This layered approach ensures that students receive appropriate support while allowing staffing resources to be used flexibly and effectively across the grade.

#### **Budget Book Page 25**

**Is tutoring happening at MES?**

No, last year at MES, tutors were removed from the budget. A restructuring of WIN block and the overall intervention model allowed us to think about where, when and how intervention services were provided by full-time staff and classroom teachers. The reduction that you see this year at MMS reflects a refinement of the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model and how intervention services are provided. Through this work we see that we need less support from the tutors. As a reminder, this was an additional post COVID add-on to provide short term additional support and is intended to phase out over time.

#### **Budget Book Page 26**

**It was mentioned that identification for our Pre-K program has improved because of Birth to Three. Could you please explain further as Birth to Three has been around for a long time?**

Birth to three identification practices have improved significantly over time. This means more families are receiving early identification and intervention services. As a result, we are holding more PPTs for three year olds to determine eligibility. For reference, you may remember in last week's presentation, that we shared that we currently have 23 three-year olds with individualized education plans. Students come to our program at age 3yrs if the PPT determines that the student requires comprehensive supports and services. The Birth-to-Three transition process includes a transition meeting where the school team visits the family at their home. A referral for a special education evaluation is then completed by our school team. We must determine whether a child is eligible for special education before their 3rd birthday.

**Mansfield was a leader in the Pre-K program. I am aware there have been changes in the program. Does the program still include non-identified children?**

Yes, our non-identified participants are our four year old students. This occurs through a lottery system as we have a limited number of seats.

**How many students were admitted to preK through the lottery this year.? Please describe how the lottery system for PreK works.**

The total number of students admitted via lottery during the 25-26 year was 26 students.

We provided a presentation to the BOE regarding how the lottery works on March 6, 2025. Here is the [link to the meeting](#). The *presentation begins at the 42:30* mark and the *lottery explanation begins at the 48:03* mark.

**How many staff (certified and uncertified) are assigned to PreK?**

Three certified staff members and six non-certified staff members support three classrooms.

**I am aware that we are not required to provide PreK and Kindergarten. Should we consider reducing programming as a cost savings measure?**

School districts are legally required to provide preschool programming for all three and four year old children who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Mansfield Public Schools, with the support of the Mansfield Board of Education, has also made it a practice to offer additional preschool slots for typically developing peers as part of the district's preschool program.

School districts are also legally required to provide Kindergarten programming.

See CT State Statute [C.G.S. § 10-15 and § 10-15c](#), requires districts to provide Kindergarten and PreK programming.

**Proposed PreK expense: \$490,280 proposed, reflects an over 7% increase from actual cost two years ago (account 612040, p. 19) can you explain why?**

In comparing PreK budget for the 2024-2025 year to the proposed 2026-2027 year reflect the following increases and decreases:

- The primary increase in this budget is due to negotiated salaries and benefits for certified and non-certified staff which is an overall increase of \$47,050 over three years (3 certified and 6 non-certified staff). This is an increase of \$15,683.33 annually for 9 staff members.
- Food line reduced from \$5000 in 24-25 to \$0 in 26-27
- Non-Cap Furniture line reduced from \$1000 in 24-25 to \$0 in 26-27
- Content specific instructional supplies have been reduced from \$5,500 in 24-25 to \$3600 in 26-27
- Overall reduction of the three above mentioned lines is \$7,900.
- Preschool grant deduction has only seen a decrease of \$900 over three years which is impressive.

You will notice that in the 2024-25 year this budget incurred a 9.9% increase compared to the proposed 0.3% increase this year.

## **Budget Book Page 27**

**MMS - there was a significant increase for content specific supplies - has there been a new program that has been implemented?**

Great question, the answer is no. You will notice that the overall budget increase remains zero. This is a move of funds in an effort to reduce lines in the overall budget. Funds were moved from the textbook line as textbooks are no longer purchased. The print materials purchased are tradebooks and would be charged to this line. Additionally, a small portion of funds was moved up from the reference book line to accurately reflect how funds are spent.

**Supply purchasing. When I worked at UCONN, we had to purchase supplies from certain vendors. Is this the case for the district as well? Or are you able to use Amazon, etc? (Not that this impacts what I think is needed, moreso just a question as I was curious about your flexibility).**

We purchase from a variety of vendors including Amazon. When purchasing supplies we look for quality and competitive price. Many of our supplies (pencils, paper, etc.) are purchased in large quantities from School Supply vendors.

**How has literacy instruction changed since the Science of Reading mandate?**

At the elementary level we have redesigned the reading program commencing in PreK. Students receive *Foundations* and *Heggerty* instruction that focuses on letter identification, sound, and letter formation. *Heggerty* teaches eight phonemic awareness skills: rhyme, onset fluency, phoneme isolation, blending, segmenting, adding, deleting, and substituting.

In Kindergarten, students continue to engage in phonics and phonemic awareness instruction using *Foundations* (30 minutes daily) and *Heggerty*. Additionally, students receive an additional 60 minutes of reading and writing instruction each day. All students participate in an additional 30 minutes each day of WIN block instruction. This time of day is designed to provide students the targeted instruction needed based on the review of the students academic areas for growth. The time allotted for ELA instruction is aligned with best practices. Furthermore, ELA skills are embedded across all content areas and integrated into the instructional program across the day. Students practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills throughout their day during math, science, intentional play, and beyond. Yes, we have increased time, and targeted instruction to meet all students' literacy needs. In grades K-5 teachers use *Benchmark Advance* (One of the state approved programs) as the core resource for reading instruction.

**With a focus on ensuring that all students are on grade level for reading by Third grade, should we institute a Grade 3 Plus for students to give them time to mature and improve skills?**

We are not entirely clear what is meant by a "Grade 3 Plus," but it appears this may suggest grade retention or an additional year at the same grade level. While the goal of giving students more time to build skills is understandable, research generally shows that retention alone does not improve long-term academic outcomes and can negatively impact students' confidence and sense of belonging. Educational research more strongly supports providing targeted academic interventions, individualized instruction, and early supports rather than repeating a grade.

## **Should we eliminate Spanish at MES and use that time to concentrate on reading and related English-language skills?**

We appreciate the focus on strengthening students' reading and English-language skills, as literacy development remains a top priority. At the same time, we would caution against making one-size-fits-all program decisions. Research shows that world language instruction at the elementary level supports cognitive flexibility, cultural awareness, and can positively support overall language development, including literacy skills. Our goal is to provide a well-rounded educational experience while continuing to strengthen core academic skills.

## **Please describe literacy instruction at MMS.**

We share the goal of improving student outcomes and preparing all students for future success. Over the past two years, Mansfield Middle School has implemented several targeted changes to address learning gaps in English Language Arts.

In Grade 5, the district adopted Benchmark Advance to align with the Kindergarten through Grade 4 literacy program. Benchmark Advance follows a research-based scope and sequence that systematically builds skills through ongoing spiral review. The program emphasizes explicit, direct instruction and provides students with opportunities to apply new learning to rigorous, grade-level texts.

In Grades 6–8, the middle school implemented EL Education as its core literacy program. This comprehensive, knowledge-building curriculum is designed to strengthen students' reading, writing, and critical thinking skills while promoting meaningful engagement with content and real-world connections.

Additionally, the middle school increased daily reading and writing instructional time from 40 minutes to 60 minutes. Increasing instructional time allows for deeper learning, additional practice, and more targeted support for students.

While we recognize that no single approach guarantees that every student will meet all performance goals, these strategic, research-based improvements are designed to strengthen literacy outcomes and support continued student growth.

When looking at our ELA achievement data as compared to the state of CT, we continue to see that our students outperform the state as well as most districts of comparable size/demographic. Data trends have shown continual growth year over year since a dip post-covid.

## **US News Best CT Middle Schools: Return on Investment (p. 10)**

MMS is listed as No. 28 in that report; enrollment figure is from 2023?  
(<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/middle-schools/connecticut>)

Data is based on the 2021–2022, 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 school years.

### **Budget Book Page 28**

**Is the instructional software new for MES?**

No, this program (Dreambox ) has been used in the primary grades for several years. Previously it was budgeted from another line.

### **Budget Book Page 29**

**With such a focus on STEM, I was surprised there was not an increase for science this year. Can you share why this is? (Not a complaint, but just ensuring that the program has what it needs to continue to grow)**

Thank you for thinking about this. Based on a review of programming needs, we feel the proposed budget accurately reflects our needs for the year ahead.

**Is the consistent budget due to all the equipment/opportunities that have been purchased in the past (i.e. VR systems?)**

The consistent budget does account for program materials we have purchased in the past and we continue to find ways to acquire new program supplies. Some supplies are consumable and replaced annually while others are not.

### **Budget Book Page 32**

**MES - what is the increase in program services?**

This increase reflects costs associated with in-house field trips/visiting programs. These funds were moved from another budget line to accurately reflect their use.

### **Budget Book Page 33**

**Curious - What field trips are being offered at this time? How much does the PTO contribute to these trips?**

MES

Field trips align to their yearlong immersive experiences through the Journeys in Learning. Typically there is an in-house field trip in the fall and a field trip off campus in the spring.

Examples include: Mansfield Hollow and the Mansfield Hollow Dam, Goodwin Forest, Connecticut River Museum, Mystic Aquarium, Dinosaur State park.

PTO Contribution- sometimes they will support snacks but the district supports costs associated with entry fees and transportation

MMS

Field trips align with curricular programming. Examples include Boston, CT Science Museum, Boston Science Museum, State Capitol, Benton, Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School Planetarium,

MMSA contribution- does offer support. Last year the support was approximately \$2,000 across the grade levels. This is supported through their grant funding opportunities.

**With increases in transportation costs, how are you able to keep the budget lines consistent this year?**

We have a 5 year contract for transportation and budget field trips accordingly. You will notice that there is a \$5,000 offset using the Enhancing Student Achievement fund. In some cases, families incur a cost to cover part of the expense.

**Are field studies/trips offered for each grade level?**

Yes

**For MES and MMS, please explain Enhancing Student Achievement Deduction.**

Great question: Several years ago we received a donation from an outside non-profit that was identified to be used for enriching experiences. Those funds were placed in a 270 account that is able to be used over time. Each year we have used a small portion of those funds to offset costs within the budget. Eventually, these funds will be depleted and we will have to absorb the costs within the budget.

**I see that there is more of a push for in house experiences. Is this true? Do we have the same number of trips that there used to be or has this changed since 2019/2020.**

Trips align to grade level curriculum. In the past, typically students attended one field trip out. Now, students attend one field trip out and we are working to add in the in-house "field study to us" experience as well. Doing so we have been able to make a more robust learning journey experience for our students. MES is unique in that we have so many wonderful opportunities right in our back yard. Additionally, we take many nearby trips that are no cost...hike in the hollow, walk to the library- these are meaningful and important trips but are not in the budget as they are no cost.

#### **Budget Book Page 34**

**Are 2 School Counselors enough for the population at MMS?**

Thank you for asking. Yes, MMS has two school counselors, one social worker, one school psychologist and a behavior Tech. So we are well supported with Tiers of support.

#### **Budget Book Page 35**

**What are the contracted services?**

Contracted services cover the cost of presenters that we bring such as Internet Safety Concepts, Fire Prevention presentations, Good Decisions materials and support.

**Why does MMS have Contracted Services?**

Contracted services have already been there. Contracted services cover the cost of presenters that we bring such as Internet Safety Concepts, Fire Prevention presentations, Good Decisions materials and support.

## **Budget Book Page 36**

### **Why the differences in program services?**

At the middle school, there are often a larger number of subscription services due to the age band of students accessing materials. At MMS, the program services line reflects the combining of several lines that were formally separated out.

At MES, funds from the programme services line were moved to program services in the principal's office to support school wide events.

### **Are we replacing periodicals because they are now out of date and have inaccurate information?**

Reference books and periodicals support curriculum-aligned instruction and research by providing students and staff with access to authoritative, up-to-date informational resources across subject areas. Many of these have an annual recurring cost for subscriptions to newspapers, student magazines, and online magazines. The bulk of the cost is for e-subscriptions.

### **What is non-capitalized equipment? Do you have examples?**

Non-capitalized equipment includes items, such as technology or furniture, that typically cost less than \$5,000. In the past, purchases have included new microphones for the library and performing arts as well as replacement of speakers. For FY27, the increase is due to consolidation of budget lines where the "Educational Equipment" is being combined with the "Non-Capitalized Equipment".

### **Will One School ~ One Read ever return?**

Programs evolve with interest and new staff. I am not sure, but will share your inquiry.

## **Budget Book Page 39**

### **Explain Other Rental.**

This line has supported the grade 4 ice skating event. The PE team is considering other potential opportunities for students across the building as well.

## **Budget Book Page 41**

### **How many classes and students per class. Breakdown for each languages taught. Does grading differ from non-world language classes? Which language needs audiovisual?**

MES students in Grades K-4 receive Spanish instruction that is in alignment with other Essential Arts like STEM, Library, Music, and Art

By grade 6, students select a language that they remain in for three years.

Students in grades 6-8 participate in three classes of their selected language over a six day rotational schedule. All of our staff are full time employees. A portion of their schedule is used to provide ML support and instruction to our multilingual learners.

Some students do not take a world language. In collaboration with the student and their family, a decision may be made to utilize that time within the student's schedule to provide additional services for reading, writing, or math.

Many scheduling considerations are factored into creating sections including class size, schedule needs for music ensemble lessons, etc.)

#### Spanish

Grade 5: 2 sections, 26 students (rotation for trimester 2)

Grade 6: 2 sections, 23 students

Grade 7: 2 sections, 31 students

Grade 8: 2 sections, 32 students

#### French

Grade 5: 2 sections, 22 students (rotation for trimester 2)

Grade 6: 2 sections, 26 students

Grade 7: 2 sections, 22 students

Grade 8: 1 section, 13 students

#### Latin

Grade 5: 2 sections, 26 students (rotation for trimester 2)

Grade 6: 2 sections, 25

Grade 7: 2 sections, 18

Grade 8: 2 sections, 27

\*Students in Grade 5 rotate by trimester to explore each world language offering, prior to selecting their preferred choices for grade 6

Grading does not differ from other middle school classes.

AV is used by the department audio-centric materials or video/documentaries

**Spanish - I am having a difficult time wrapping my head around the position changes.**

**a) What is the role of the ML teacher vs. Spanish teacher?**

The Spanish teacher provides classroom instruction. The elementary Spanish model combines lessons on culture and language. This year the structure of the schedule changes the model of how Spanish instruction is delivered. In prior years students received Spanish instruction two times for 15 minutes a session. This model was based on the FLES model that provides 15-20 minutes of Spanish instruction multiple times per week. There is no research that demonstrates that this has had any strong impact on language acquisition over time. We shifted the model to better align to the number of minutes students participate in the other essential arts (PE, Music, Art, STEM) classes. This action was taken to better align the overall master schedule as well as make the pace less frenetic for our Spanish teacher. This year students K-4 receive 60 minutes of Spanish instruction over a 6 day rotation. In prior years students grades 2-3 received 30 minutes of instruction over a 5 day rotation and grade 4 received 45 minutes over a 5 day rotation. Students in K and grade 1 did not have Spanish instruction. The ability to create

a schedule that allows more students access and opportunity while essentially keeping total minutes constant is the result of being in one school building.

Multilingual teachers play an important role in helping students succeed in school. They help students understand lessons by connecting new learning to the languages students already know while also building strong English skills. The teacher in this position supports students through small group instruction as well as through “push in” to the classroom. The teacher focuses on creating a learning experience where students feel respected and confident. They also help families communicate with schools and work with other teachers to make sure students are supported and challenged. Our multilingual teacher helps students fully take part in learning and reach their goals. Our current ML caseload at MES is large enough that we dedicated one FTE position to supporting these students.

**Has Spanish time been reduced? I think now that we have switched from a 5 day to a 6 day rotation, I have not taken the time to figure out how much Spanish there was in the prior schedule vs. the newer schedule and if this is less, more or the same as students used to have when we had three schools?**

**c) Is the change taxing on the Spanish teacher? I want to make sure this teacher is not overwhelmed as the only teacher providing Spanish instruction for all students.**

The number of minutes by grade may have been slightly adjusted to allow more grade levels access. As for the teacher, the pace is reduced as they are not transitioning classes every 15 minutes. Also of note, last year our ML caseload was much higher which necessitated that both Spanish teachers also supported ML instruction in addition to our dedicated ML teacher. This year one ML teacher supports our ML students while our Spanish teacher only provides Spanish instruction.

#### **Budget Book Page 42**

**With an increase in the amount of after-school programming at MES, can you explain why an increase to the line items was not recommended? This seems like a very successful program, so I am surprised at the difference in requests between MES and MMS at this time.**

MES after school program

The cost of this program is being offset by the enhancing student achievement fund. Additionally we are still in the building phase and the budget proposed reflects the cost associated with compensating staff who operate program offerings.

MMS after school program

This program historically operates between 20-25 programs each quarter with 200 - 250 students participating per quarter. And as such there is an increased cost associated with compensating staff.

### **Budget Book Page 43**

**With transportation costs increasing overall, there was no increase in this line item and the cost is lower than 23-24 and 24-25. Can you explain the reasoning behind this monetary request for that line item? Once again, just surprised it is not more.**

The proposed budget reflects the actual cost of transportation. The reduction over time reflects a reduced number of athletic events and/or shared cost of transportation that may occur when shuttling teams.

### **Budget Book Page 44**

**Please explain the Tier 1 Deduction.**

The Title I deduction simple indicates that we deduct a portion of the staff members salary from the Title finding that we receive. Title I funding is a Federal grant program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that provides financial assistance to states and school districts with high percentages of low-income children to improve academic achievement and opportunity. This funding is meant to supplement so we are able to apply a portion of the cost to this grant.

### **Budget Book Page 45**

**Why has pupil transportation been added for summer learning this year?**

The inclusion of per pupil cost is to accurately reflect the cost of transportation. In the past it was budgeted within student support services. It made sense to move the cost to where it best aligns within the budget.

**Not commenting on food for students, just curious about the increase and why MES doesn't have the same line item.**

All children receive a snack. Snacks are covered out of the instructional supply line at MES.

### **Budget Book Page 46**

**What are the team leader stipends being used for? This is a new line item for MMS.**

This was formally budgeted under other salaries. This year we created a new line to be consistent across both buildings. Team leaders/stipends support the work of the building compensating lead teachers from each team who serve as "gradelevel/department leads"; these stipends for additional work are outlined in the teacher contract.

**Are teachers getting the supplies they need? MES and MMS seem unbalanced.**

Absolutely! And thank you for asking. MMS tends to be more departmentalized and the instructional supplies they purchase tend to come out of the content specific instructional supply lines.

**Do classroom teachers get money to buy things for their classrooms? I'm thinking Teaching devices, classroom libraries, and/or any items to enhance their teaching style?**

Yes, budgeted funds are in place to ensure that classroom teachers have the materials and resources they need to support effective instruction. These needs are addressed through multiple funding sources.

The Central Services supply line supports general classroom materials used for daily instruction, such as pencils, paper, glue, and other consumable supplies. Teaching devices, instructional technology, and software are planned purchases supported through the Information and Technology budget (see page 53) and, when appropriate, through content-specific budgets. Our IT team meets regularly with instructional teams to understand their needs and proactively plan resources and support.

Classroom libraries are also supported through a combination of the ELA budget, Central Services, and other funding sources as needed. All planned purchases are aligned to grade-level curriculum and instructional goals to ensure resources directly enhance teaching and learning.

#### **Budget Book Page 47**

**Is the reduction in administration at MMS going from three to two staff in the front office?**

Correct, MMS reduced from 4 staff to three. This reflects a reduction of 1.0FTE administrative assistant which reflects a cost savings.

#### **Building Project**

**With regard to all the sound mitigating discussion at MES, who is paying for the acoustic panels and installation? Will there be a follow-up measurement regarding sound levels when everything has been installed?**

The building project is responsible for covering the cost of the sound panels. There is the intent to conduct follow-up testing through a separate third party, and that procurement and cost is also scheduled to be run through the project.

**How many Teacher Leaders per school? What do they do? Do they each receive the same stipend? Who determines the amount of stipends?**

Each building has 10-12 Team Leaders. Teacher leaders attend weekly meetings beyond their contractual day and take a leadership role in making building-wide decisions and disseminating information to their teams. They are a conduit of communication and action that supports the overall functioning of the school. This cost is part of the teachers' bargaining unit negotiated contract. Teacher Leader stipends are the same for all members of the bargaining unit per contract.

**Please explain the MES Food line. Please explain the MMS Food line.**

Both of these lines cover the cost of providing light snacks and refreshments during professional learning days and dinner when hiring committees are engaged in lengthy interview sessions. Difference in amount reflects different staffing numbers and needs MES has more staff.

## **Budget Book Page 48**

### **How many coaches and interventionists support literacy and math instruction across the district?**

At the district level we have one ELA and one Math Consultant whose responsibilities include oversight of program implementation PK-8, coordination support for ELA/Math intervention services K-8, serve as lead coach to ELA/Math teachers across the district, and attend to district level and school level needs.

MES benefits from the services of two Literacy and one Math Coach/Interventionists. These individuals provide coaching to teachers and provide direct intervention to students. Additionally, there are three highly qualified and trained paraeducators who support ELA and Math intervention at the elementary school.

MMS has one Literacy Coach who coaches teachers, provides writing intervention, and supports ELA programming across the school. Additionally the middle school has one reading and one math academic support teacher.

Each school provides all students with 30 minutes daily personalized instruction through WIN Block.

## **Budget Book Page 49**

### **What are the Program Services?**

- Program services are those items needed to support the operation of a school district.
- The program services in this line are used for HR expenses. This includes renewal of Frontline (our attendance and employee recruitment platform), use of CT-REAP (for posting certified staff openings), Accident insurance, and HR training.

### **What are the audit expenses?**

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and state law requirements for annual audits of school district expenditures. Every local or regional school district must have its financial records and transactions audited annually by an independent certified public accountant (CPA). This requirement comes from the Municipal Auditing Act, which covers municipalities and entities like school districts and applies to the entire financial statements, not just federal or state grants. This line is budgeted to pay for the audit completed by an independent provider of auditing services.

**Just to clarify - all the salaries and wages are for teachers in the district? Or is this personnel for BOE?**

Salaries and wages: The salary and wage line on page 49 represents the contingency fund for contracts to be negotiated this spring for 26/27: Custodians/Maintenance/Cafeteria Contract, Paraeducator Contract, non-union salaries for Singletons/Superintendent, and MERS (non-certified retirement funding) as we have not received the rates from the State yet. Last year was lower because we only had Singletons and the Admin. Assistant Contract to negotiate.

#### **Budget Book Page 50**

**Does a \$22,000 increase (about 30%) from 23-24 actual to 26-27 proposed warrant a fresh look at the number of copiers we have?**

The IT Director and Director of Finance review copier usage on a regular basis. We are not proposing any changes at this time.

#### **Budget Book Page 51**

**Why is curriculum development much lower this year?**

- A commitment was made to reduce this line once we completed the roll out of new curricular programs.

**Why is team leader and stipends also listed here. I thought this was included in the last section?**

- These are stipends for Teacher Leaders that complete district level work beyond the school day. These staff apply to be part of a group that work on district level initiatives such as report card revisions, student led conversation and celebrations, curriculum updates. It is a different level of work and time commitment beyond the school day.

**How often do you bring in outside people for PD? Do you collect feedback from teachers on PD?**

- Regardless of PL we push out surveys to gain staff feedback. Based on feedback, we make adjustments to future PL sessions to best meet staff needs.

Yes we bring in presenters to work with staff:

- 10/24 Ron Berger - Director of EL Education worked with us for the day
- 2025 multiple sessions Kate England to support PBIS/Restorative practices
- 10/25 & 11/25 Sandra Silva Enos to support educators in growing skills to support ML learners

**Budget Book Page 52**

**MERS is retirement, yes?**

Correct, for non-certified employees.

**How were you able to reduce the Medicare Trust fund?**

The amount listed was the recommended contribution based on the review conducted by the town's actuary.

**Budget Book Page 53**

**You had indicated a decrease in repair costs by \$5000 - I did not see that reflected - was this done prior to the proposed amount?**

- That is a carryover in the narrative from last year (we decreased it by \$5,000 last year and have continued it at that reduced level for next year as well). Also, the IT budget has seen a decrease in the educational equipment line in recent years vs. historical levels as recently as the 23-24 fiscal year. We continue to work with Finance and the Town Council to support the equipment needs through an annual capital project request (pg. 16).

**Question re: staffing. This year you currently have 1.5 FTE for IT yes? The difference will be that there will be 1.5 FTE ONLY for IT vs. this year the .5 FTE was also doing enrichment?**

- Technology integrationist positions are currently staffed at 1.5 FTE. The plan is to continue to staff this at 1.5 FTE next year.
- We have proposed to restore the enrichment position to a 1.0 FTE position next year. Enrichment will see a 0.5 staffing increase. Additionally there are additional staff within this department that support town and school I.T. operations and as such are reflected on the town side budget. The director (Jaime Russell) is a shared position between MS, Town and Region 19 and as such we pay a portion of his salary

**Budget Book Page 54**

**There has been a significant increase in overtime in the past two years. What accounts for this?**

Overtime is actually down from past years. See chart below. A lot of this is subject to the weather and when storm events occur. We also had some significant vacancies over the past few years which resulted in necessary overtime.

Description	Amounts - FY23 Actual	Amounts - FY24 Actual	Amounts - FY25 Actual	Amounts - FY26 Budgeted	Amounts - FY27 In Progress
Overtime - Straight Time	4,350	5,081	4,495	6,000	6,000
Overtime - Double Time	725	11,078	4,462	3,000	3,000
Overtime - Time and One Half	38,386	41,177	18,690	47,440	47,440

**There is a stark difference in building maintenance pricing between the two schools - is this just due to the age of the schools?**

Yes, the difference reflects addressing maintenance needs for an older building as well as gradually budgeting for a much newer building.

**How many facilities employees are there at this time? Do they fall under BOE or Town?**

Director of Facilities (1) – 100% Town

Deputy Director of Facilities (1) – 100% BOE

Custodial Supervisor (1) – 50% BOE 50% Town

Administrative Assistant (1) – 60% BOE and 40% Town

Custodians for schools 9.5 BOE 4.5 Town

Maintainers 3.25 BOE 1.75 Town

**If some maintenance personnel also work at other town locations, is their wage-and-benefit package divided among cost centers?**

Yes. Any maintenance personnel are allocated based on actual locations worked.

### **Budget Book Page 55**

**Thank you for your negotiations in this area!**

**Where does the reimbursement come from?**

The reimbursement is what we get back from Regional School District 19. The buses are run in 3 tiers for both the morning and afternoon. The buses go to E.O. Smith, then to MMS, then to MES. To streamline billing and to save funds for both MPS and RSD19, the bills for monthly home to school transportation comes to MPS. We then get reimbursed by RSD19 for their portion of home to school transportation.

**Why is preschool transportation listed separately this year? Was that pulled from the OT line?**

The preschool transportation line is new this year, and is being taken out of the Regular Transportation line. This was done to show the cost of the early dismissal buses used for those students attending the Half Day PK program at MES. The OT line was fully reduced as MPS is no longer required to pay for overtime to the drivers starting with the 2026-2027 school year contract.

## **Budget Book Page 56**

**Can you tell me the number of positions that are under your office?**

- Superintendent, Director of HR, Operations Manager, Administrative Assistants (3)
- All of these positions are reflected in the Org chart far left column (dark blue).
- Note - Director of Student Support Services is budgeted out of the support services program budget.

**What is the non-certified position?**

- Operations Manager

**Why is there no longer a need for system support on the bottom line - was that just moved up to the other line above?**

- System support was moved to one line these funds support our student database management systems (i.e. Powerschool and periphery related services.)

## **Budget Book Page 57**

**How does the magnet school process work? Students apply and then if they get accepted, Mansfield is required to cost share the tuition? Does Mansfield have to agree to send the student?**

Students are able to apply for placement at a magnet school. Should they attend a magnet school, Mansfield Public Schools is responsible for paying the tuition for the student to attend that school (CGS 10-264I(k)(1)). Since this is magnet school/Open Choice placement, there is no agreement required by the district. This is the choice of the student and family.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Budget Book Page 59**

#### **Can you tell me the relationship with Oak Grove?**

- As the local education agency, we are responsible for assessing students that are brought up through the referral process. Students who might be eligible are considered parentally placed private school students (PPPS). They do not receive the same amount of services as they would if they were in a public school. A service plan would be created to outline what services the student would receive.
- IDEA accounts for students who are PPPS. There is a certain amount of funding from IDEA that is set aside for private schools in our area if they have a student who qualifies for a service plan. For the past several years, Oak Grove has used the funds to support building their intervention skills in the area of reading.
- Yes, we are required by law to provide for medical/nursing services for the center and the State reimburses us for 50%. Oak Grove contracts and pays for the service and we reimburse them. This is reimbursement for medical services required by law.

#### **What are professional and tech services?**

- In terms of Health Services, professional and technical services refers to expenses for mandated testing (e.g. vision, hearing).
- Expenses for yearly training (BLS certification), costs for software is also included in this area. We also pay for our medical consultant from this line. We use this line for maintenance of health equipment.

### **Budget Book Page 61**

#### **What is the Excess Cost Grant?**

- The Excess Cost Grant is an entitlement grant (the district does not need to submit a traditional grant application to receive the funds) designed to help local and regional school districts pay for very high-cost special education services for individual students. The reimbursement is based on a formula which requires a high threshold for reimbursement. The reimbursement rate only comes in if the expenditure is 4.5 times the Net Current Expenditures per Pupil (NCEP). For example, if the NCEPI cost was \$20,000 and the expenditure at the private school was \$120,000. The district could seek reimbursement for \$30,000 (  $4.5 \times \$20,000 = 90,000$ ,  $\$120,000 - \$90,000 = \$30,000$ ).

**Where is the special education reserve fund? Is this something that has been built over time?**

- Yes this fund is built up over time and is used to pay unanticipated special education costs. A healthy fund balance is approximately \$500,000 which is maintained in the 270 special education reserve fund.

**Budget Book Page 63**

**How many SLPs vs. SLPAs are currently in the district at this time?**

We have three Speech and Language Pathologists district wide. Two are at MES and one is at MMS. There is one Speech and Language Pathologist Assistant and she is at MES.

**Is assistive technology part of non-capitalized equipment?**

I have typically funded assistive technology under hardware or under instructional supplies. We have also used grant funding.

**For AAC devices, are those purchased by the district or loaned out from agencies like NEAT?**

We have purchased devices through grant funding. We also trial a device for some time and then discuss the option for families to obtain a device through their insurance. This allows the family to keep the device but the district continues to update and program the device. We have primarily used the Eastconn lending library to trial devices. I have explored obtaining technology from NEAT and will continue to do so if the need arises.