



SPECIAL MEETING
JOINT MEETING

WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL
AND
BOARD OF EDUCATION

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.
MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
61 ECHO LAKE RD.
WATERTOWN, CT 06795

1. Call Meeting to Order.
Chairman Jonathan Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call.
PRESENT: Jonathan Ramsay, Chair
Michele McHugh, Vice Chair
Dan Cocchiola
Ken Demirs
Carina Noyd
Robert Retallick
Mary Ann Rosa
Rachael Ryan

ABSENT: Robert Desena

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Raimo, Town Manager
Maria Guerrero, Finance Director
3. Finance Subcommittee
 - a. Review and Discussion of the FY-2026-2027 Watertown Board of Education proposed budget.

Lisa Fekete, Acting Superintendent and Maria Kashuba, Business Manager presented the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Proposal.

Presentation attached

Council questions:

Robert Retallick asked the slide for historical look it shows the 2.17 for health care claims was that truly to cover claims that year? I remember Allison saying there was a lot of sick teachers that year? Whose to say you are going to have a lot of sick teachers the following year, does that money go to the NBR does that stay in that line item?

Lisa Fekete answered it means in that line item that money will be put towards the entirety of the budget and one of the things will be clear when we move through the slides is that the district has operated on a freeze for four years. I believe the former Superintendent knew that it was difficult to come in budget so they froze lines in order to get funds from those lines to fill in the caps.

Maria Kashuba stated without any hesitation I can state that the entire 2.1 million went completely to the health fund in two distinct payments. We gave the first amount that we said to cover the expenses and then we realized quickly before this June 30th close the remaining amount had to be placed in there. I can say very openly it was my recommendation to Allison Villanueva that we need another \$125 thousand but she had put that figure out and she wanted to stay with it so we moved funds from freezes and other benefit lines to make sure that was the only amount that we needed. I think the question that comes in because the MBR was now set with 2.1 million this fiscal year everyone is looking at that as an increase. Yes, technically that was the starting for the NBR set going to be for the following year but that 2.1 million right off the bat just the increase if you had a catastrophic year your insurance claims are probably going up the following year or your insurance is going up we know that it did. We didn't have 2.1 million sitting there is the best way I can explain it.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay started I was going to say the presentation kind of shows that difference.

Lisa Fekete added this slide illustrates in line with that thinking, that 2.1 million served for the majority of the increase with a little more on top of it, moving into FY 26.

Maria Kashuba added that line item that says facilities, equipment and construction that is not Luigi's total, that is the pieces of his he has control over. Utilities we considered those fixed cuts he has no control

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay thanked Ms. Fekete for all her work in the presentation as well as the BOE. The appropriations done in prior years, where are we looking for the current year, I know we have 3 months left until the fiscal year, do we expect any shortfalls, the common areas such as health insurance or special ed or otherwise?

Maria Kashuba answered I look at the lines everyday and I tell the board everyday or every month when I meet with them it is going to be close unless something happens. I am confident we will be able to come in, I have no areas of concerns.

Lisa Fekete answered so this year inheriting a budget is difficult because I didn't do the deep dive that I did to create the next budget. We did find and you will see in your binder many lines that needed to be trued up because we sometimes underestimated. I only released 50 percent; this year we did not freeze. I am hoping we do not have to freeze because schools need some of that money to function. I only released 50% of the budget this year, so far it looks like we will come in.

Mary Ann Rosa stated with regard to your presentation addressing the amounts involved, I will say having listened to every BOE budgets since 1987 this is the best one. You have given us all the information that we need and that is important. We will discuss it whether we can approve it or not but you certainly done the work, thank you.

Dan Cocchiola stated I did some math when you were talking about the out-of-town students who you identified and that was a quarter of a million dollars savings. It is responsible stewardship line by line. The play to pay, the Pre-K earning money, the spend programming, the Special Education programming there is a level of responsibility you are doing here I think what is important here is a bipartisan BOE in having spoken to members of your board, I know you have their support. When you talk about cutting some of these positions that you had to get to this place, a district wide assistant principal and asked what are you losing?

Lisa Fekete answered not that you like cutting anybody but it almost hurts to cut the AP because it is hard to get forward momentum in the area of curriculum and instruction. I did that job for a number of years, the HR and keep everybody a float with teaching and learning that could run the professional learning that can be in the schools, the hardest one to cut that and further cuts will be more challenging.

Dan Cocchiola stated the para positions I know potentially through nutrition the job functions, where are you going to build those job functions?

Lisa Fekete answered that is another place where I am assuming risk because there could be IUP of students that require an increase in para support and I do think when looking historically, we started off with a number for paras that did grow the needs might have changed. To start the things, it should not impact the student the variance the way we have it because it was about the efficient schedule. How you play it into clusters and classes.

Dan Cocchiola stated you mentioned the 40% lunch and I think the DURG is 30 we well exceed our like districts and that is pretty meaningful. Our town has some extraordinary needs having support is critically important for us.

Lisa Fekete answered that is one of our unanticipated costs, is the cost we have to pay for students that can't afford lunch. That was one of the cuts from last budget I think it was 40 thousand dollars. If I am not mistaken built into the budget to cover that. We are very lucky we have the angel fund and some people donate to offset some of that.

Maria Kashuba added its important for people to understand that any deficit there is the lunch balances fall on us. We have to hand over the check to Emily to cover balances. It's important to note that it is the typical middle-class story if you are below the poverty level you get assistance but those people in the middle just miss the cut off when lunch balances come in.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh stated great presentation, on your nutrition slide you get almost one million dollars in nutrition but is there a plan, 9 months from now if none of these people leave and now you are one million dollars over budget.

Lisa Fekete answered if people don't leave then there will be rips and that will be refunded. You will be able to clearly see you continue through and we have talked about financial reporting to the Town Council and to the board this year and what that could look like a little bit more transparency. Those positions are not fake cuts the end of leaving through resignation or retirement there will be rips.

Maria Kashuba added I also handle most of the severance, the pensions and all that, there are people asking for benefit calculations. We do already have some and it does happen every year. There is an aging out population and I think life is getting tougher and tougher people retire more and more.

Lisa Fekete stated people that choose to go someplace else you are not cutting a person; it is never easy for anybody. To come into budget those positions need to be eliminated. If you don't get enough retirees or resignation there will be some rips with people. You can take the positions from the place you can absorb whatever that loss is, unfortunately, there would be some rips.

Carina Noyd asked is there some sort of financial assistance available for city kids who qualify for free lunch?

Maria Kashuba answered yes, we would not to ever turn a child away for that, children never go away without lunch.

Carina Noyd stated on one of your slides for out of district placements the request was for \$158,000 was much lower than what I anticipated, does that not reflect transportation?

Maria Kashuba stated on a cost benefit analysis I think I did transportation separately but it was an average it could range any where to below that or well above that.

Carina Noyd asked on the ECE funds that come back into our town budget, I would like a better understand of what that reflected? Within our budget, the angel fund that you mentioned for kids on the cusp could help with some free and reduced lunch. I would love to see on the town side some communication about that.

Mark Raimo added that historically that is reflected in our revenue when we go through the budget, I will point it out to you.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay asked you mentioned reduced lunch and are there additional grants solely based on our higher percentage that meet the criteria?

Lisa Fekete answered unfortunately our percentage is not enough to make it free, we are shy of that.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay asked even outside of food are there any other aspects of where they might look at that are for other types of grants?

Lisa Fekete answered we do all our own grant writing, me and some of the other cabinet members. One of the hardest things about grants are it's like the great abyss out there, ones that you actually qualify for. Dan gave me the idea why not hire somebody on a commission basis. Which I thought was a very smart idea. We applied for every competitive grant we are aware of we qualify for.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay asked about the 2-year grants, that you are applying for 75 percent will that not that put us in the hole dealing with the budget next year?

Lisa Fekete answered yes.

Maria Kushuba added some of them overlap, the next grant kicks in before the end of that one.

Lisa Fekete added typically it's been 50/50 this year we did 75/25.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay stated I know there has been a handful of grants, do you know how much of those 2-year grants is the 75 percent?

Lisa Fekete answered I believe it is title one and the IDEA grant, I would be happy to get that number to you?

Rachael Ryan stated outstanding and very helpful and asked on the enrollment for the grades, I notice the 9th grade is significantly larger at 190, the 10th grade 166, the 11th is 180 and 12th is 171. Is it sort of normal that grades vary that way?

Lisa Fekete answered we have bubble years and that is one of the reasons why I was able to capture a teacher's salary we had a big bubble year at elementary and they went on and warped in those other sections.

Rachael Ryan asked it not an indication of a larger trend?

Lisa Fekete answered when you look at the projections, our enrollment appears very stable.

Dan Cocchiola stated in October the state passed affordable housing law that puts us in a position where I think others on this panel may understand the law better than. It puts us in a position where we may be subject to affordable housing coming into town at a faster rate than has happened.

Lisa Fekete answered right now we are very stable enrollment wise.

Rachael Ryan asked you used the term assumed risk and this to me seems this is the best possible budget without a lot of wiggle room is that fair to say?

Lisa Fekete answered the assumption of risk if we don't get the tuition that is one place and then there is special education which is unpredictable. I feel like the remainder of the lines really tried to give an accurate picture of what they are coming in at.

Robert Retallick stated great presentation, thank you.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay stated I know on the Town Council side a handle full of years now we talked about either hiring a consultant or putting a committee together to look at efficiencies on the town side how things overlap with the BOE, would the BOE be open to some sort of a committee, the Town Council and the board members to dive into that. It might be just getting suggestions and then hiring a consultant. In the past we even allocated funds to look at where we can save monies being wasted and that never made that next step with the shared services, would you be okay with that?

Lisa Fekete answered I can't speak for the board per say. I think knowledge is always good, why not explore those avenues. Working with Mark this year I feel we work very well together, why not look into it, to either say it is viable or not.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay stated this is technically a joint Town Council and BOE meeting does anyone from the board have anything additional to say?

BOE Chairman Karim Belica stated I would say knowledge is power having that information on hand is efficient where we can save money. Certainly, some things can and cannot be done. I think having those truths out there will calm some people in our community to understand what is going on. We have people on our Town Council and BOE when you get this information we are learning as we go. Evolving and having our community helps with better decision making especially when it comes for referendum and other town wide decisions.

Vice Chair Jason Malagutti stated I agree with the Chairman also I think any collaboration for our town showing our community that we are working together. To resonate what Mary Ann said the seven years I serve on the board I understood everything. They have done a great job going through it. We want you to walk away fully knowledgeable and our effort is welcome.

4. Adjournment

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Jonathan Ramsay : to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Ramsay, Chair
Watertown Town Council

Approved: _____
Susan King, Clerk

Watertown Public Schools FY 2027 Budget Proposal



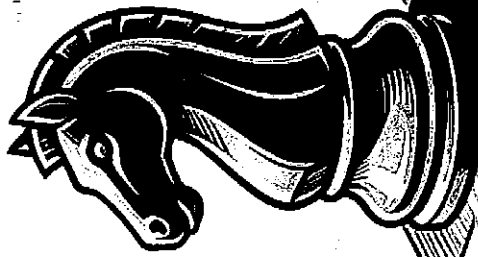
Lisa M. Fekete
Acting Superintendent of Schools
February 23, 2026

Please Note The Following, as of 3/16/26

- A mathematical error has been corrected on slides 5, 8, 10 & 31. (The same calculation error was on multiple slides.)
- The chart on slide 45 has been clarified.
- Contractual obligations noted on slides 20, 29 & 30 reflect the application of excess cost, but do not reflect any other anticipated grants. Anticipated grant funds are transparently reflected on slide 58 and has been deducted to reflect the final proposed increase as shown on slide 62.
- The final proposed increase amount & percentage on slide 62 has been corrected to reflect the final budget amounts submitted to the town.

**“To look ahead,
it pays to look
backwards.”**

– Maurice Ashley, chess
grandmaster, on retrograde analysis
and problem solving.



Rising Costs & Budget Challenges

Impacting Critical Areas:
Maintenance, Staffing, Curriculum
& Professional Development

Rising costs and unfunded mandates have historically posed ongoing challenges for our town and district, making it increasingly difficult to advance organizational priorities beyond maintaining compliance and basic operations. Core budget drivers—such as utilities, insurance, transportation, contractual salary obligations, and special education costs—continue to escalate, resulting in significant reductions to other critical areas including maintenance and facilities, staffing, curriculum and instruction, and professional development.

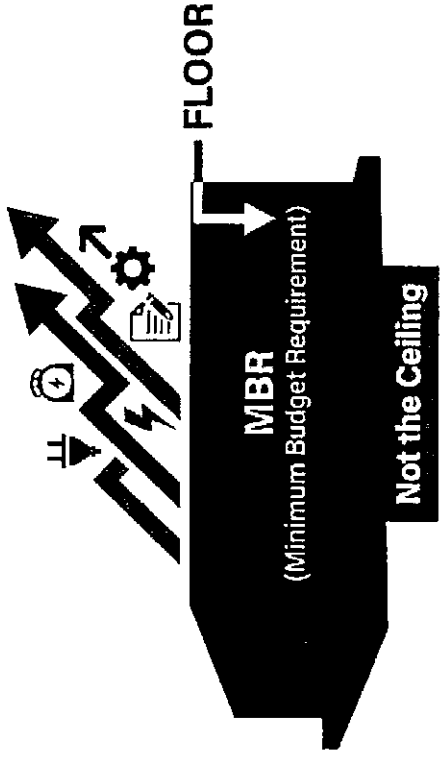


Historical Look at Budget Increases & Drivers

Increases	FY 23 Freeze 9/2/22	FY 24 Freeze 12/8/23	FY 25 Freeze 7/1/24	FY 26
Requested \$	\$2,459,575	\$3,907,631	\$2,148,833	\$4,421,364 BOE Cut to: \$3,793,862
Requested %	5.11%	7.81%	3.98%	7.99% BOE Cut to 6.86%
Adopted \$	\$1,959,575	\$3,907,631	\$1,348,833	\$123,549
% from Adopted Budget	4.07%	7.81%	6.52%	4.15%
Appropriation	\$ 2,707,066 (Special Education)	\$0	\$ 2,170,314 (Health Claims)	—
% With Appropriation	—	2.28% (With Appropriation)	—	.21% (With Appropriation)
Final Budget (MBR)	\$52,756,504	\$53,957,069	\$57,476,216	

Understanding MBR & Appropriations

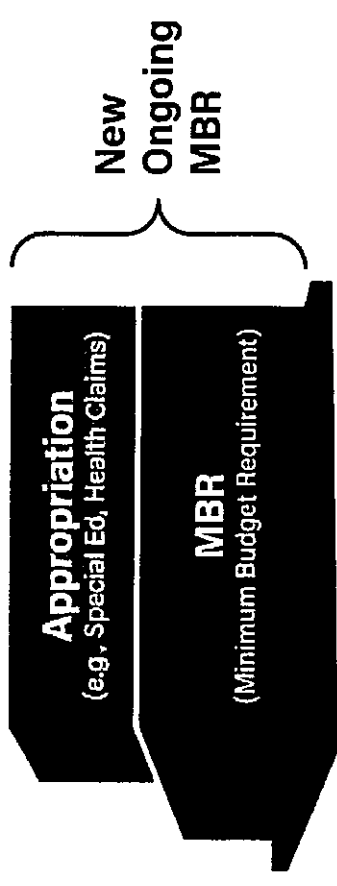
MBR: The Foundation



Minimum amount a town must spend on education each year. Based on previous fiscal year's final budget. Falling below can result in penalties.

If regular budget increases do not keep pace with fixed cost growth, the district may need to reduce programs, materials, or staffing.

Appropriations: Building the Base



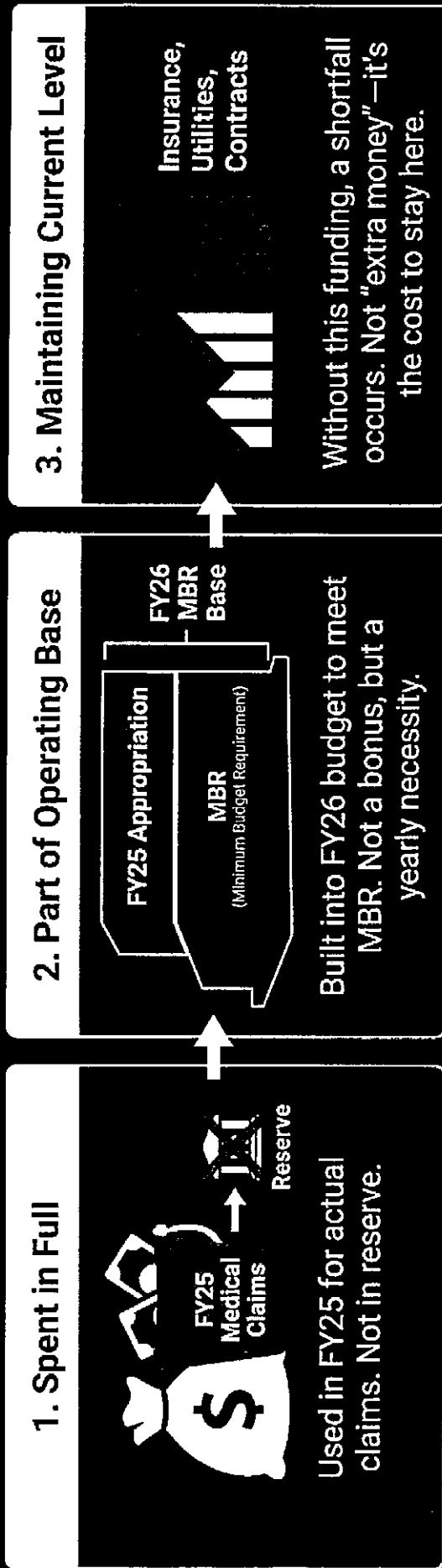
Additional funds requested after budget approval are **ADDED** to the MBR. Represents recognition of ongoing financial need, not a one-time fix.

Question on the FY 25 Appropriation for Medical Claims

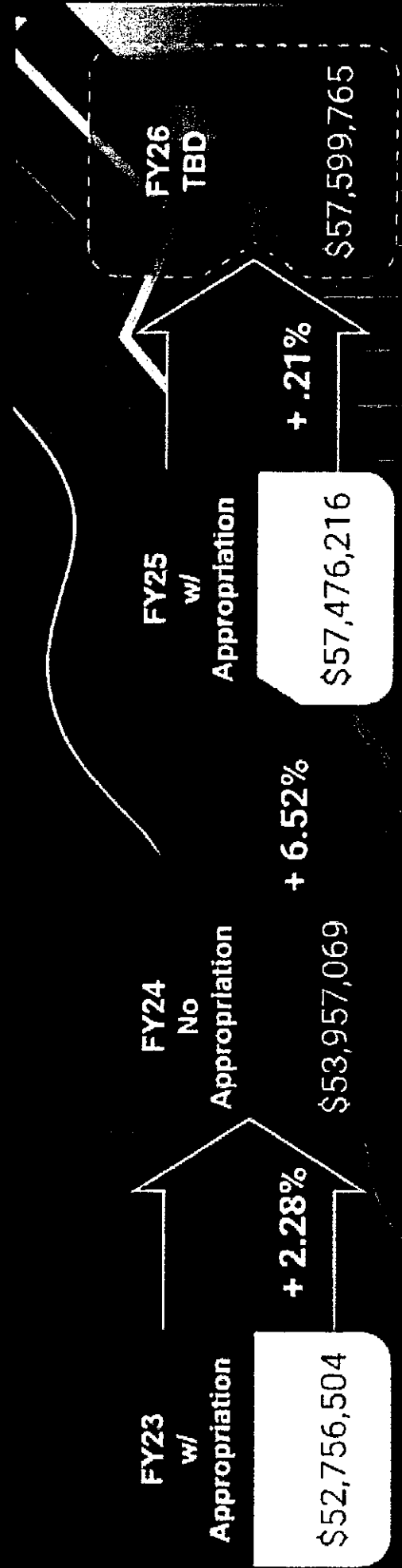


Question: Because the Town provided the Board of Education with an appropriation of \$2,170,314 in FY25, doesn't that imply the BOE should have those additional funds available in FY26 and FY27 to offset other costs?

Response:



Summary of Budget Increases



Over this four year snapshot, two of the three finalized fiscal years required an appropriation in order to cover operating costs.



If FY 27 is not fully funded, it would make it difficult to maintain even current resource levels after the .21% increase for FY 26.

Increase from FY 25 to FY 26

FY 25 Adopted

\$55,305,902

+ Appropriation

\$2,170,314

Total FY 25 Budget
with Appropriation

\$57,476,216

FY 26 Adopted
Budget

\$57,599,765

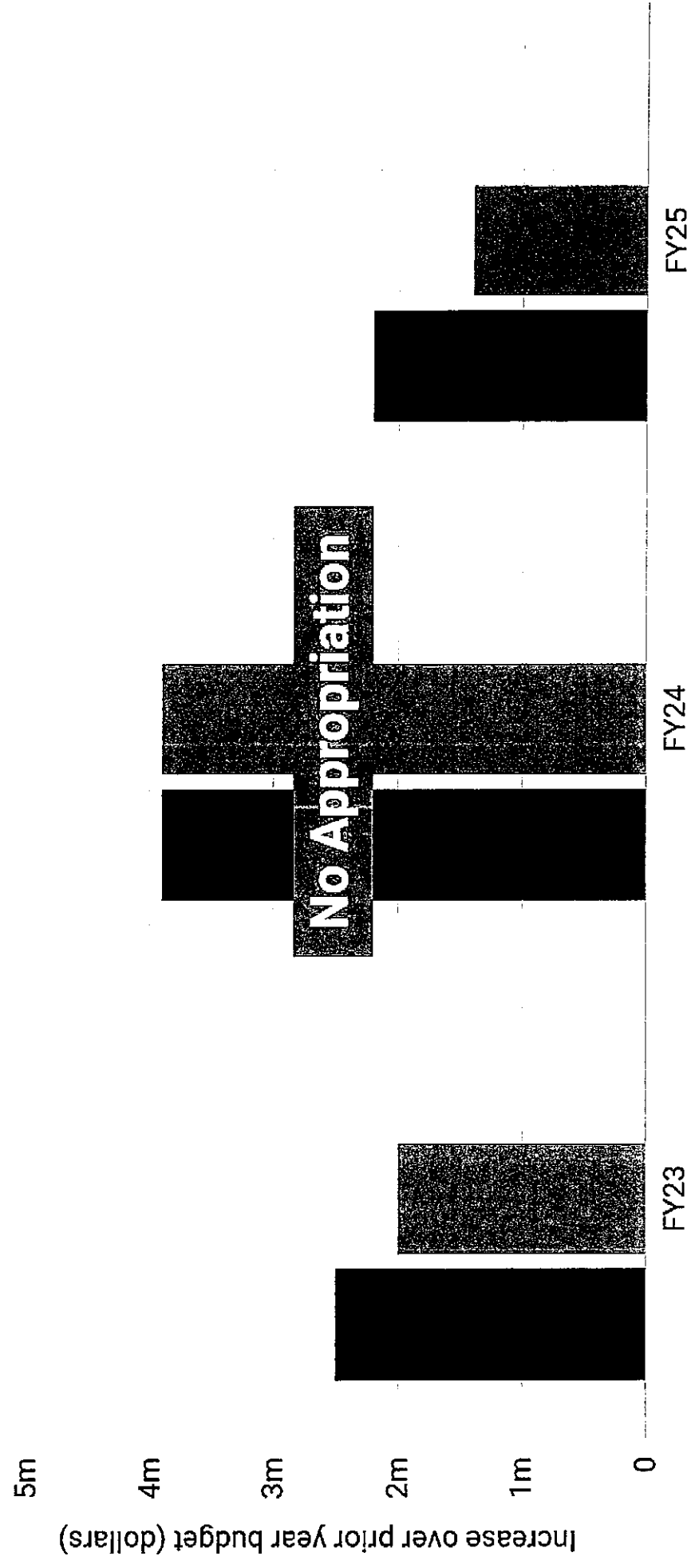
↑ **+ .21% Increase**
(\$123,549)

This is the year
that the
appropriation
served as the
budget increase.










This represents a .21% increase from the Final FY 25 Budget.

Budget Increases Vary by Category (FY23–FY25)

Requested Increase
 Adopted Increase
 Effective w/ Appropriations



Historical Implications of Budget Drivers

	FY 23 (Freeze on 9/2/22)			FY 24 (Freeze on 12/8/23)			FY 25 (Freeze on 7/1/24)		
	 Proposed	 Adopted	 Expended	 Proposed	 Adopted	 Expended	 Proposed	 Adopted	 Expended
Facilities Equip./Const.	\$36,225	\$36,225	\$15,653	\$47,400	\$47,400	\$29,857	\$47,400	\$30,214	\$68,397
Curriculum	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$195,000	\$199,347	\$153,971	\$209,629	\$209,629	\$206,221
JTPS	\$81,610	\$82,431	\$27,158	\$88,675	\$88,821	\$54,898	\$99,560	\$99,560	\$38,812
Judson	\$52,519	\$58,385	\$30,124	\$89,021	\$67,121	\$63,883	\$75,935	\$54,935	\$15,721
Polk	\$46,773	\$53,153	\$42,678	\$87,709	\$64,310	\$46,938	\$81,059	\$61,168	\$24,243
Swift	\$125,688	\$124,250	\$80,354	\$164,735	\$145,747	\$106,312	\$86,184	\$86,184	\$112,908
WHS	\$231,517	\$216,413	\$155,176	\$324,003	\$300,900	\$196,805	\$297,410	\$276,410	\$199,951
Athletics	\$423,435	\$378,441	\$255,091	\$341,095	\$341,095	\$290,960	\$491,124	\$341,976	\$320,915

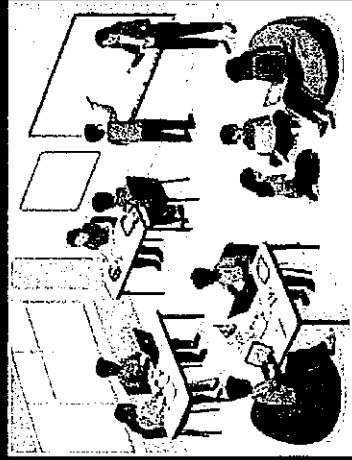
State of the District



Class Size vs. Student to Teacher Ratio

Class Size

Number of students in one classroom/period;
reflects day-to-day experience.



Watertown's Average:

18-25

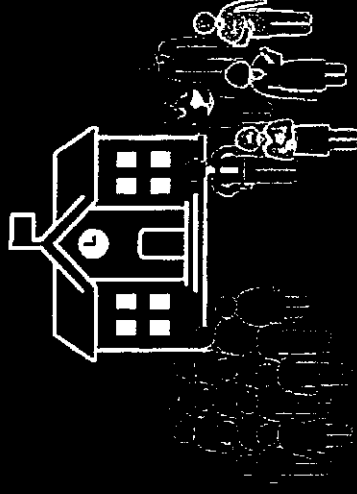
Students

(depending upon grade)

Focuses on the immediate learning environment.

Student-Teacher Ratio

Total students ÷ total teaching staff;
includes specialists and support staff.



Watertown Ratio:

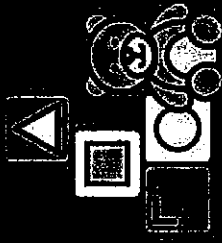
12:1

Reflects overall district staffing and support.

Watertown's student-teacher ratio and average class sizes fall within the band of other Connecticut school districts and are on par with the Connecticut state average.

FY 26 K-8 Enrollment & Average Class Size

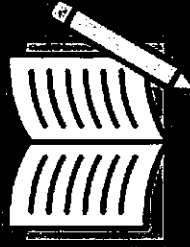
Kindergarten - Grade 2



Total Enrollment:
491

Average Class Size:
19

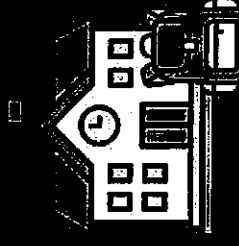
Grades 3-5



Total Enrollment:
602

Average Class Size:
20

Grades 6-8



Total Enrollment:
621

Average Class Size:
23

FY 26 WHS Enrollment & Average Class Size



Freshman

190 Students



Sophomores

166 Students



Juniors

180 Students



Seniors

171 Students



Core Classes CP/Honors and General

Electives - Class Size Range 18-22+ (goal)



Smaller class section numbers for highly specialized offerings, such as:

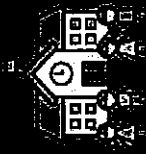
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Early College Experience (ECE)
- Specialized Electives



WHS is a comprehensive high school offering a balanced mix of programs, including AP, dual enrollment, career and individualized supports. This approach ensures every student theeps has a meaningful pathway for success. Challenging, rigorous coursework, and well-prepared for college or careers, enhancing the value of a WHS diploma.

Our Schools & Students

Schools & Programs



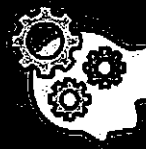
John Trumbull (PreK-2)

582 Students | Programs: PreK 3, PreK 4, SEL, ASD



Judson (3-5) & Polk (3-5)

Judson: 300 Students (ASD Program) |
Polk: 302 Students (SEL Program)



Swift Middle (6-8)

621 Students | Programs: SEL, Life Skills



Watertown High (9-12)

709 Students | Programs: SEL, Life Skills, Transition (18-22, 12 Students), Alternative (6-12, 4 Students)

Demographics & Enrollment

Total Enrollment: 2,529



Special
Education

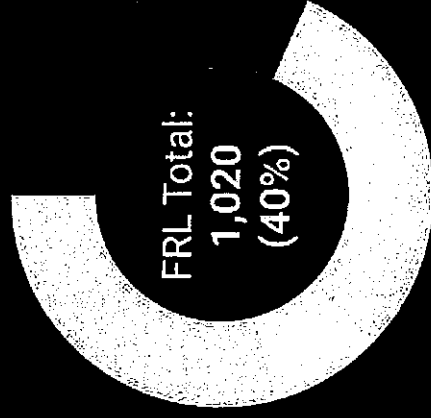
484 (19%)



Multilingual
Learners

121 (5%)

Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL)



Reduced
Lunch: **218**
(9%)

Free Lunch:
802 (32%)



FY 26 Special Education

PreK 3



JTPS

24

PreK 4



JTPS

32

SEL



JTPS, Polk, Swift, WHS

29

ASD



JTPS/Judson

25

Life Skills



JTPS, Polk, Swift, WHS

31

Structured Literacy



All Schools

WTA

Transition/
Alternative

11

Total In District

191

Total Special
Education Students



484

19%

District %

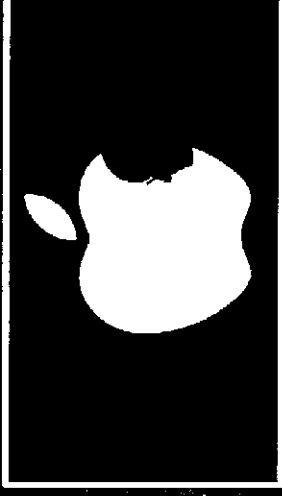
Students Placed
Out of District



21

What is the problem of practice?

“If you define the problem correctly, you almost have the solution.” – Steve Jobs.



Costs Are Rising for Everyone!

We must remain mindful of the impact on taxpayers, particularly this year, as anticipated increases in water and sewer costs present additional financial challenges.

Anticipated Fixed Costs Increases for FY 27

Fixed Costs	% Increase	Dollar Amount
Contractual Obligations (Without any grants or revenue sources applied)	4.71%	\$2,715,413
First Student Transportation	(Excess Cost Applied) 8%	\$260,285
Ed Advanced Consortium - Out of District Transportation	(Excess Cost Applied) 4.76%	\$45,099
Private - Out of District Transportation	Per Market	—
Employee Benefits (12-15%)	14%	\$1,223,710
Gas/Oil (5%)	3.29%	\$15,923
Electricity	Used 20% After December	\$85,025
Water/Sewer	29.57%	\$11,868
Out of District Placements (5%)	(Excess Cost Applied) 5%	\$158,148
Total		\$4,515,471

**How do we balance fiscal
responsibility while still moving the
district forward—beyond the basics,
even if only incrementally?**

A strategic approach for sustainable growth

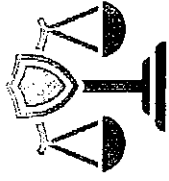


What are the desired outcomes?

“We start with the desired customer experience and work backwards.” – Jeff Bezos.

The Amazon logo, featuring the word "amazon" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with a curved arrow underneath it that starts under the letter 'a' and ends under the letter 'z', pointing to the right.

Our Budget Process MUST...



Demonstrate fiscal responsibility with intentional planning for both immediate needs and long-term goals.



Allocate resources equitably, prioritizing students and addressing areas most impacted.



Maintain current staffing while strategically adding high-leverage roles that strengthen our system.



Build trust and shared ownership through transparent communication, community engagement, and consistent messaging.



Empower school leaders and teachers, recognize every department's contributions, and reinforce shared accountability.



Communicate challenges openly and clearly, focusing on solutions and continuous improvement rather than fear-based messaging.

In Watertown Public Schools, We Believe...

Student Experience & Success



Every student can and will graduate ready for the future.



Every student must feel safe, known, and that they belong.



All means all — every student, every classroom, every day.

Community and Collaboration



We are stronger when we work together, and with our families and our community.

Teaching and Leadership Excellence



Great teaching and strong leadership change lives.



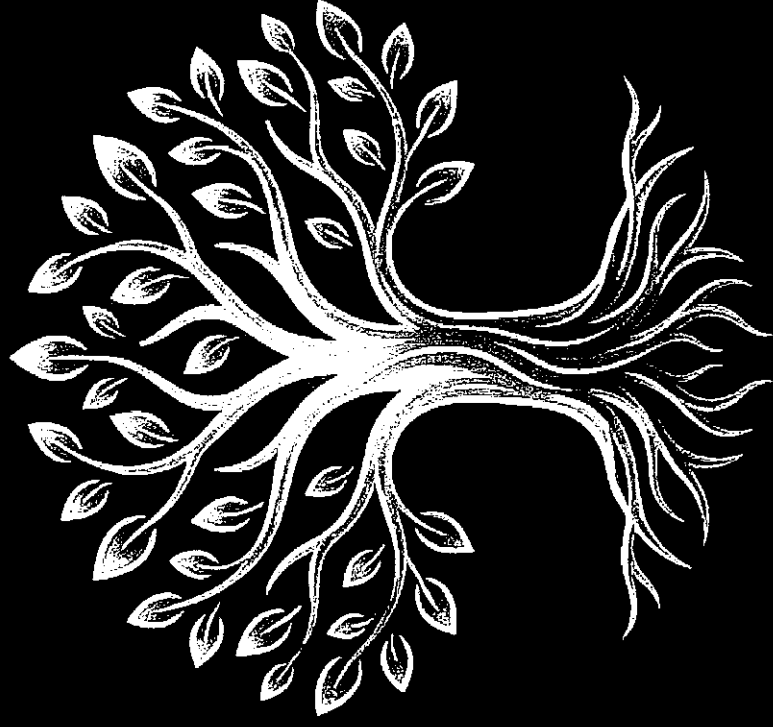
Evidence and reflection drive better outcomes.

Systems and Resources

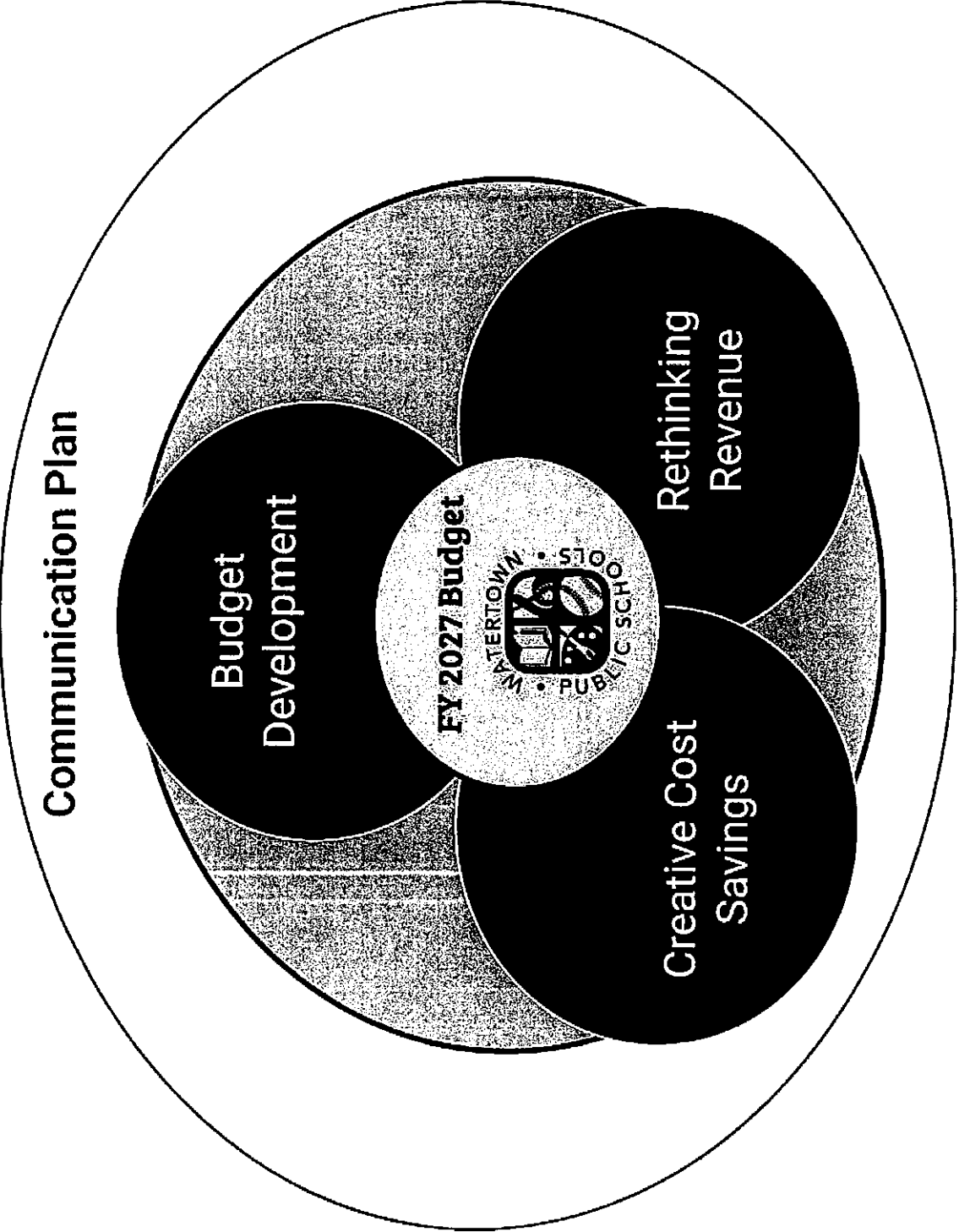


Efficient, sustainable facilities and clear, coherent systems free us to focus on students.

The Financial Strategy



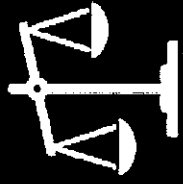
Financial strategy isn't about feeding one branch—it's about feeding the whole tree so every part of the organization can grow.



STRATEGY

Budget Development

Zero Based Budgeting - Connected to Priorities



Realistic
Spending
Caps

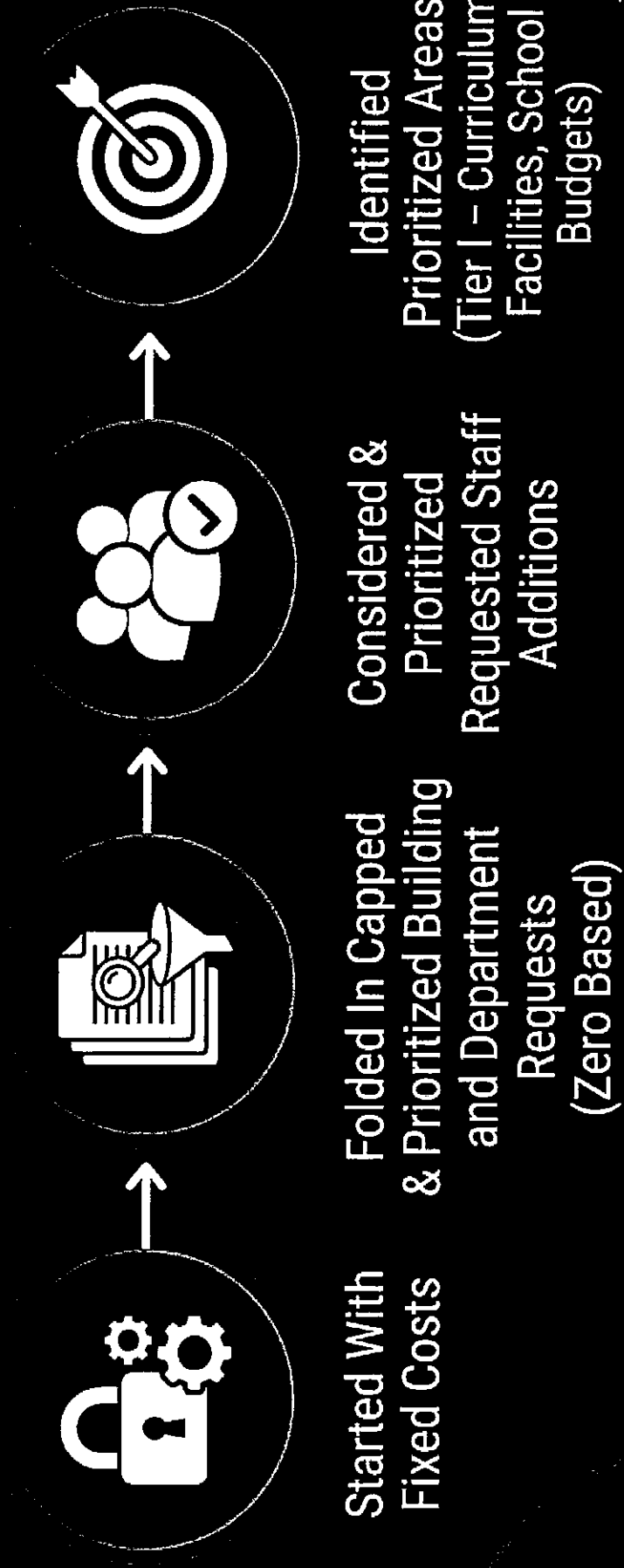


Strict
Prioritization



(District &
Department/
School Level)

Budget Development Process



Step One: Started With Anticipated Fixed Costs Increases for FY 27

Increase of: 7.83% With Everything Else Coming in FLAT

Fixed Costs	% Increase	Dollar Amount
Contractual Obligations (Without any grants or revenue sources applied)	4.71%	\$2,715,415
First Student Transportation	(Excess Cost Applied) 8%	\$260,285
Ed Advanced Consortium - Out of District Transportation	(Excess Cost Applied) 4.76%	\$45,099
Private - Out of District	Per Market	-
Employee Benefits	14%	\$1,222,710
Gas/Oil	3.29%	\$15,923
Electricity	Used 20% After December	\$85,025
Water/Sewer	29.57%	\$11,668
Out of District Placements	(Excess Cost Applied) 5%	\$158,148
Total		\$4,515,471

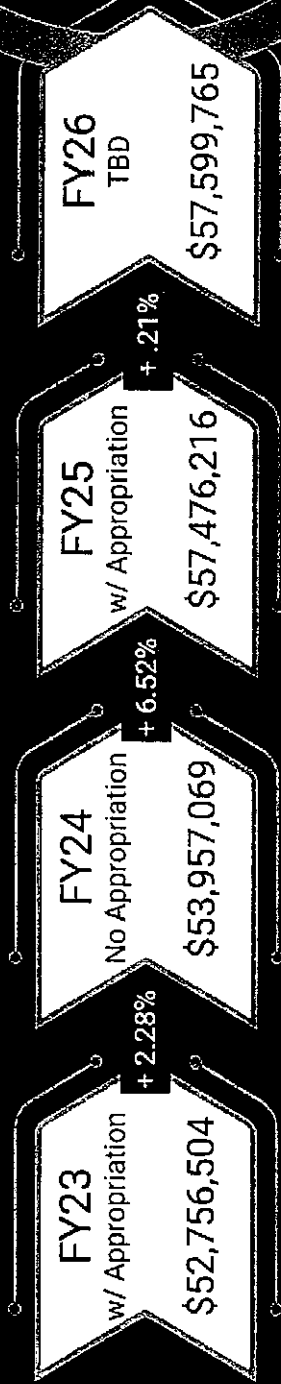
FY 26:	\$57,599,765
Increases	\$4,515,471
Total	\$62,115,236

Increase of:
7.83%
With Everything Else
Coming in FLAT



Summary of Budget Increases

This requested increase is no longer specific to the insurance, it is about the totality of operating cost increases from year to year.

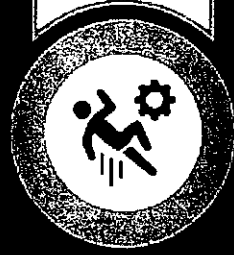


This is the year that the appropriation amount served as the budget increase.

Contractual obligations alone for 2026-2027 are 4.71% before applying grants and revenue

Step Two: Folded In Capped & Prioritized Department & Building Requests

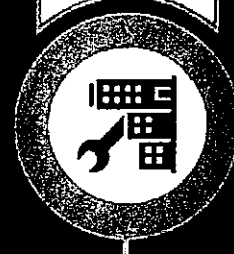
Which Came With Their Own Inherent Increases



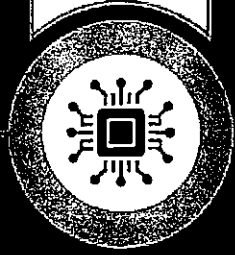
Athletics
Transportation,
Equipment, Uniforms,
Officials



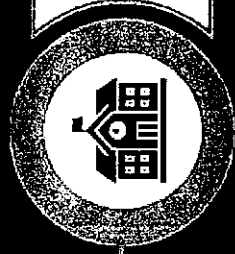
**Curriculum &
Instruction**
Instructional Materials,
Professional Learning



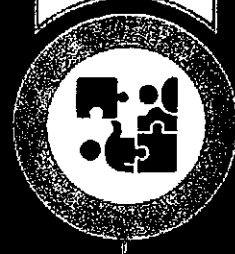
Facilities
Maintenance,
Repairs/Construction,
Equipment



Technology
Infrastructure, Devices,
Contracted Services



School Budget



Special Education
Beyond Outplacements



**Other Operating
Costs**
Telephones, Copiers,
Postage, Supplies

Step Three: Considered Requested Staff Additions (From Cabinet and/or Building Administration)

JTPS	1.0 Kindergarten Teacher 1.0 PreK 4 Teacher 1.0 SPED Teacher (ASD Classroom)
Judson	BCBA 10 BCBA-As Restore .5 LMS Restore .5 Dean 1.0 Math Interventionist
Polk	Restore .5 LMS Restore .5 Dean 1.0 Math Interventionist
Swift	1.0 SPED Teacher (ASD Classroom) 1.0 SPED Teacher (Structured Literacy) Restore 1.0 Dean Restore 3.0 UA Teachers Restore 1.0 Math Interventionist Restore 1.0 ELA Interventionist

WHS	1.0 Science Teacher 1.0 Foods Teacher 1.0 Career Counselor 1.0 Math Interventionist
WTA	None
WAA	1.0 Secondary General Education Teacher
District Admin	.5 Office Manager 1.0 Social Worker 2.0 Administrator (Curriculum & Instruction Coordinators) 1.0 SPED Coordinator

Step Four: Prioritized Requested Staff Additions (From Cabinet and/or Building Administration)

JTPS	1.0 Kindergarten Teacher <u>1.0 PreK 4 Teacher</u> <u>1.0 SPED Teacher (ASD Classroom)</u>
Judson	<u>BCBA</u> 10 BCBA-As <u>Restore .5 LMS</u> Restore .5 Dean 1.0 Math Interventionist
Poik	<u>Restore .5 LMS</u> Restore .5 Dean 1.0 Math Interventionist
Swift	<u>1.0 SPED Teacher (ASD Classroom)</u> <u>1.0 SPED Teacher (Structured Literacy)</u> Restore 1.0 Dean <u>Restore 3.0 UA Teachers</u> <u>Restore 1.0 Math Interventionist</u> <u>Restore 1.0 ELA Interventionist</u>

WHS	1.0 Science Teacher 1.0 Foods Teacher 1.0 Career Counselor 1.0 Math Interventionist
WTA	None
WAA	<u>1.0 Secondary General Education Teacher</u>
District Admin	.5 Office Manager 1.0 Social Worker 2.0 Administrator (Curriculum & Instruction Coordinators) 1.0 SPED Coordinator

Legend

Position Included in Budget
Achieved Through Reallocation
Next Layer of Priorities

Step Five: Identified Priority Areas for FY 27

	FY 23 (freeze on 9/2/22)	FY 24 (freeze on 12/8/23)	FY 25 (freeze on 7/1/24)	FY 26 (50% Released)	FY 27 Recommended
	Expended	Expended	Expended	Expended	
Leases	\$15,653	\$29,857	\$68,397	\$91,255	\$188,390
Const Proj Facilities	\$4,317	\$7,382	\$22,933	\$250	\$250,000
Curriculum	\$0	\$153,971	\$206,221	\$65,660	\$489,900
JTPS	\$27,158	\$54,988	\$38,812	\$58,234	\$58,412
Judson	\$30,124	\$63,883	\$15,721	\$22,726	\$29,492
Polk	\$42,678	\$46,938	\$24,243	\$26,497	\$24,581
Swift	\$80,354	\$106,312	\$112,908	\$47,814	\$94,252
WHS	\$155,176	\$196,805	\$199,951	\$168,299	\$210,459



Result: FY 27 Budget Priority Areas

Every Child, Every Classroom, Every Day – Focus on Tier I Experience
Human Capital, Instructional Resources & Facilities



Retention

Retention of Existing
Positions & Class
Sizes



Restoration

Incremental Restoration
of Positions
Unified Arts Experience at Swift,
Library Experience All Schools



Recruitment

Recruitment for Needed
New Positions
2 ASD Teachers JTPS/Swift,
BCBA/BCBA-As ASD classes,
PreK 4



Professional Development

Fully Fund C&I Budget



Instructional Resources

Fully Fund C&I &
All School Budgets



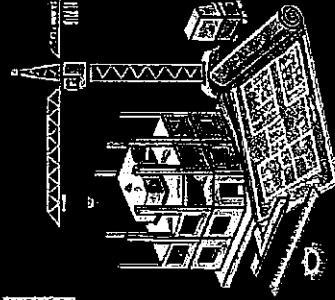
Facilities

More Robust/Realistic
Facilities Budget



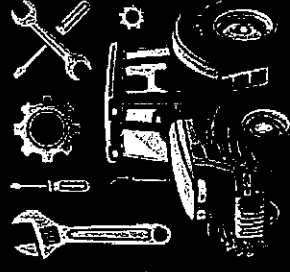
Facilities Construction & Equipment

Prioritized Projects:



- ⚙️ Use Drip Grant Funding:
 - Polk Playground
 - JTPS Playground
- ⚙️ Apply for DAS Grant: (60% Reimbursement)
 - Parking Lots - Crack Seal Asphalt Replacement, All Schools
 - Sidewalks - All Schools(If we do not get the grant, we will prioritize and complete what we can.)

Equipment:



- ⚡ Skid Steers - Average Age 2004, 22 years old
- ⚡ John Deere Tractors:
 - Maintenance
 - 2009, 17 years old
 - 2001, 25 years old
- ⚡ Mowers



Curriculum & Instruction

FOUNDATIONAL TIER 1 INSTRUCTION



State-mandated curriculum standards require research-based Tier 1 materials.



In grades K-3, state-mandated requirements exist for ELA curriculum and assessments.

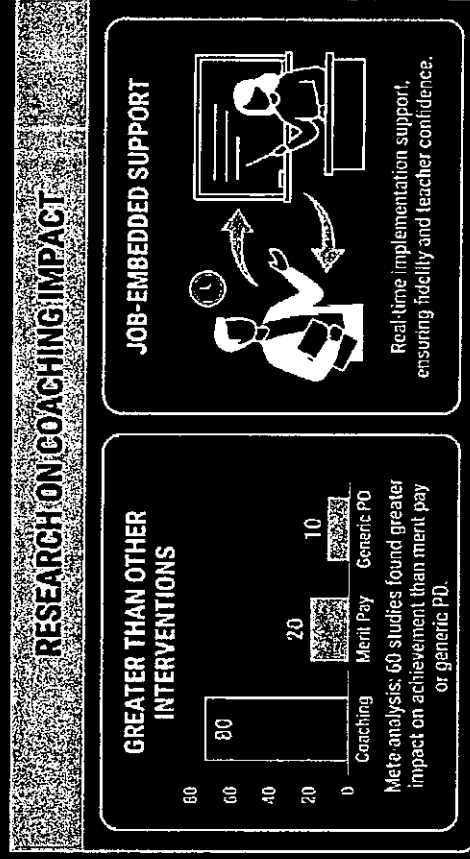


Strengthening Tier 1 instruction reduces intervention needs (Goal: 80% meet expectations).

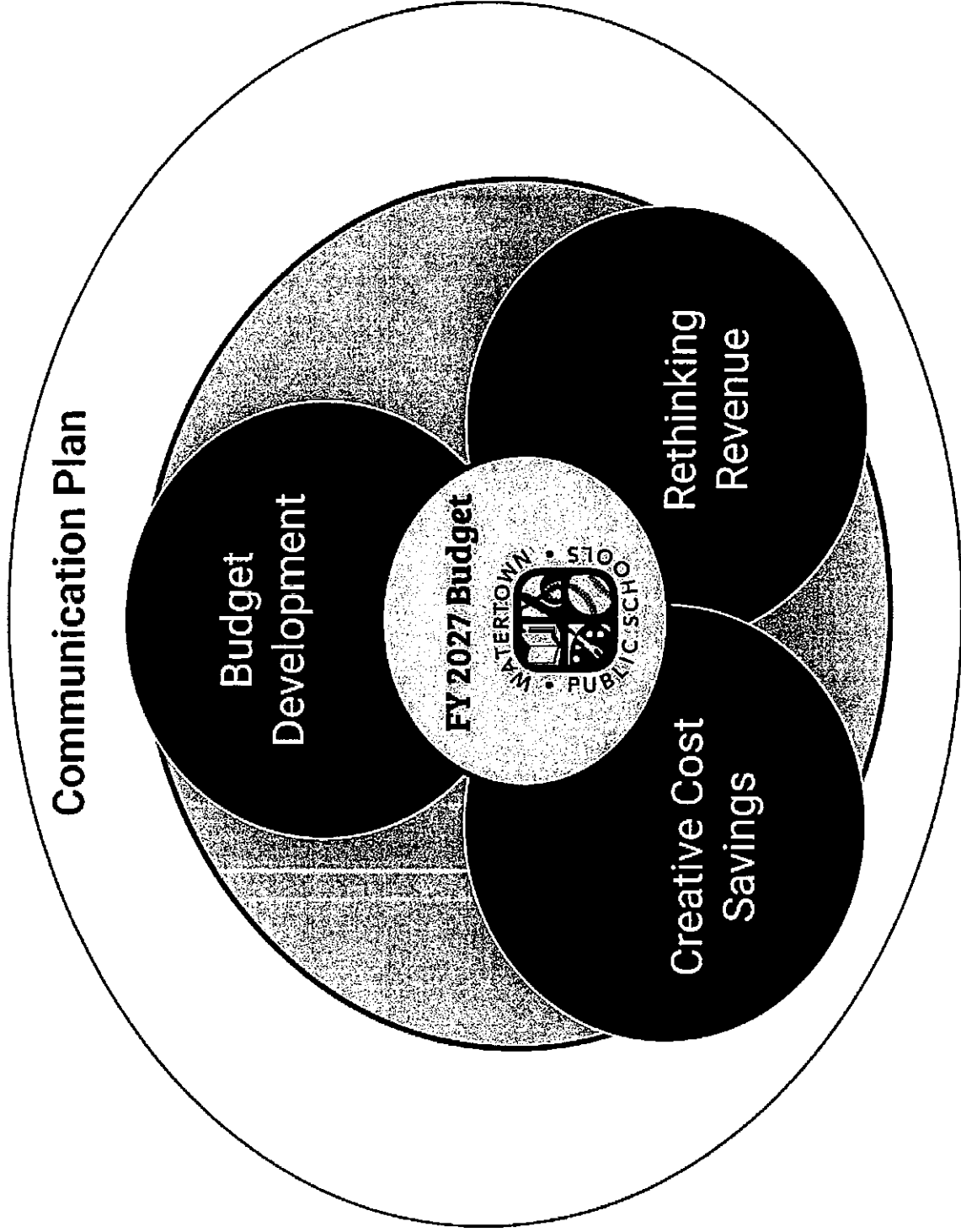
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & COACHING IMPACT



Quality professional learning increases: teacher retention, curriculum fidelity, student proficiency.



STRATEGY



Creative Cost Savings

Conducted a
Detailed
Audit and
Trued Up of
1030 Budget
Lines

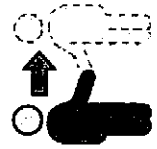
Implement cost-saving measures through preemptive, judicious prioritization, strategic reallocation, and the unlocking of new efficiencies.

Creative Cost Savings - Positions



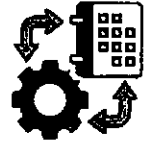
Strategic Expenditures

Completed cost-benefit analyses on key expenditures.



Targeted Recruitment

Phasing out selected contracted services through targeted recruitment (across multiple departments).



Optimized Scheduling & Allocation

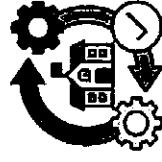
Utilizing strategic scheduling and class placement to enable reallocations; reviewed class size to achieve necessary reductions (hoping to achieve through attrition).



External Funding Sources

Leveraged Grant Funding & Revenue Sources.

Restoration Of Positions

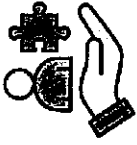


Achieved a **reimagined student experience at Swift** through strategic scheduling and staff reallocation, eliminating the need to restore 3.0 Unified Arts and 2.0 Interventionist positions. **No Budgetary Impact**



Optimized scheduling and **added a library clerk** to support elementary book circulation, sustaining elementary STEAM experiences and enhancing middle and high school library programming, while eliminating the need to add a 1.0 Library Media Specialist position. **Adds \$65,000 (vs. \$100,000)**

New Positions



Add a 2.0 ASD position (JTPS & Swift). **No Budgetary Impact - Grant Funded**



Add a 1.0 Secondary General Education Teacher at WAA. **Additional Savings + \$8,465**

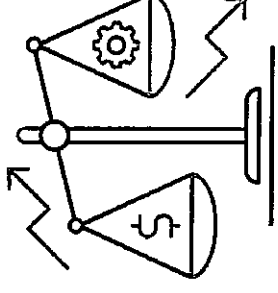


Add a 1.0 BCBA and 10 BCBA-A positions across ASD classrooms at JTPS, Judson & Swift, funded through the non-renewal of contracted services, fully covering the cost of the position and generating additional savings. **Additional Savings + \$776,000**







Add a **PreK 4 position** at no additional cost to the district by leveraging grant funding and tuition collections. (To Be Discussed Further in Revenue Section). **Revenue + \$96,608**

Cost Benefit Analysis








Watertown Transition Academy

(In-District vs. Outplacement)

Cost Component	In-District/WTA	Outplacement Equivalent (12 students)
 Staff Salaries & Benefits	\$246,817 salaries; \$90,740 benefits	-
 Rent (Siemon Co.)	\$81,563	-
 Transportation (daily & Field Trips)	\$103,800 (daily); \$18,371 (trans.); \$7,290 (comm.)	\$244,350
 Tuition (Outplacement & Revenue)	-\$133,370 (1 student)	\$1,500,000 (\$125,000/student)
Total Annual Estimated Savings \$1,329,139/Year		


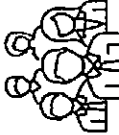
Watertown Alternative Academy

(In-District vs. Outplacement)




Cost Component	In-District	Outplacement Equivalent (2 Students)	Net Impact
 Teacher Salary/Benefits	\$107,904 salary; \$40,808 benefits	—	+\$148,712
 Rent (partial)	\$7,500	—	+\$7,500
 Tuition	—	\$100,000 (\$50,000 per student)	-\$100,000
 Supplies	\$16,774	—	+\$16,774
 Transportation	with WTA	\$81,451	-\$81,451
Total Annual Estimated Savings		→	\$8,465 / year

New Horizons

(Internal Staffing vs. Contracted Services)

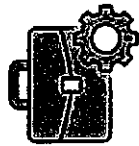
Cost Component	Contracted Services	Internal Staffing	Net Impact (Internal vs. Contracted Services)
 Aspire Contract (BCBA & 13 BTs)	\$1,596,000	-	-
 Salaries (1 BCBA + 10 BCBA-As)	-	\$820,000	+\$776,000 (savings)
Annual Savings			→ \$776,000 savings per year

Pre-K 4 (Adding a Section)

	Teacher cost	\$100,000
	Grant offset (Contingent - Assumes Risk)	-\$90,000
	Tuition revenue (16 additional spaces for typical peers)	\$106,608
		→ \$96,608

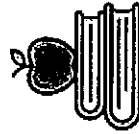
Certified & Non-Certified Reductions

(Hoping to Achieve Teacher, Paraeducator and Unaffiliated Reductions Through Attrition)



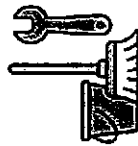
Administration
District AP

\$154,682



Teachers
Based on Class Size
(Assumes Risk)

\$400,000



Custodians (Floater)
Carried an Extra in FY 26 to
Cover a Leave of Absence

\$54,727



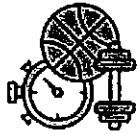
Paraeducators
More Efficient Scheduling &
Student Placement (Assumes Risk)

\$273,000



Unaffiliated
Two Tutors

\$44,000



Athletics
Strength & Conditioning Coach,
Freshman Sports (except basketball)

\$15,100
\$10,025

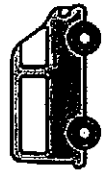


Total → \$951,534

Additional Cost Savings Measures

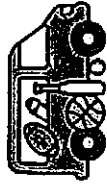
Some Priority 3 Items	\$39,163
Athletics	\$27,716
Special Education	\$221,200
Technology	\$159,060
Contracted Services	\$1,596,000
Facilities (Construction & Lease)	\$1,084,524
Total	\$3,127,663

Additional Cost Savings Measures - Ongoing



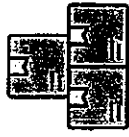
Reduce Fleet

Exploring the Waiver Option



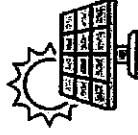
District Van

For WTA and smaller athletic teams



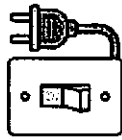
Bulk Ordering

Leveraging to reduce per-unit costs



Solar Opportunities

To lower long-term utility expenses



"Every Little Bit Counts"

Unplugging electronics, minimizing color printing, vetting vendor pricing, digital correspondence



Internship Program

Continuing to rebuild, in lieu of daily subs



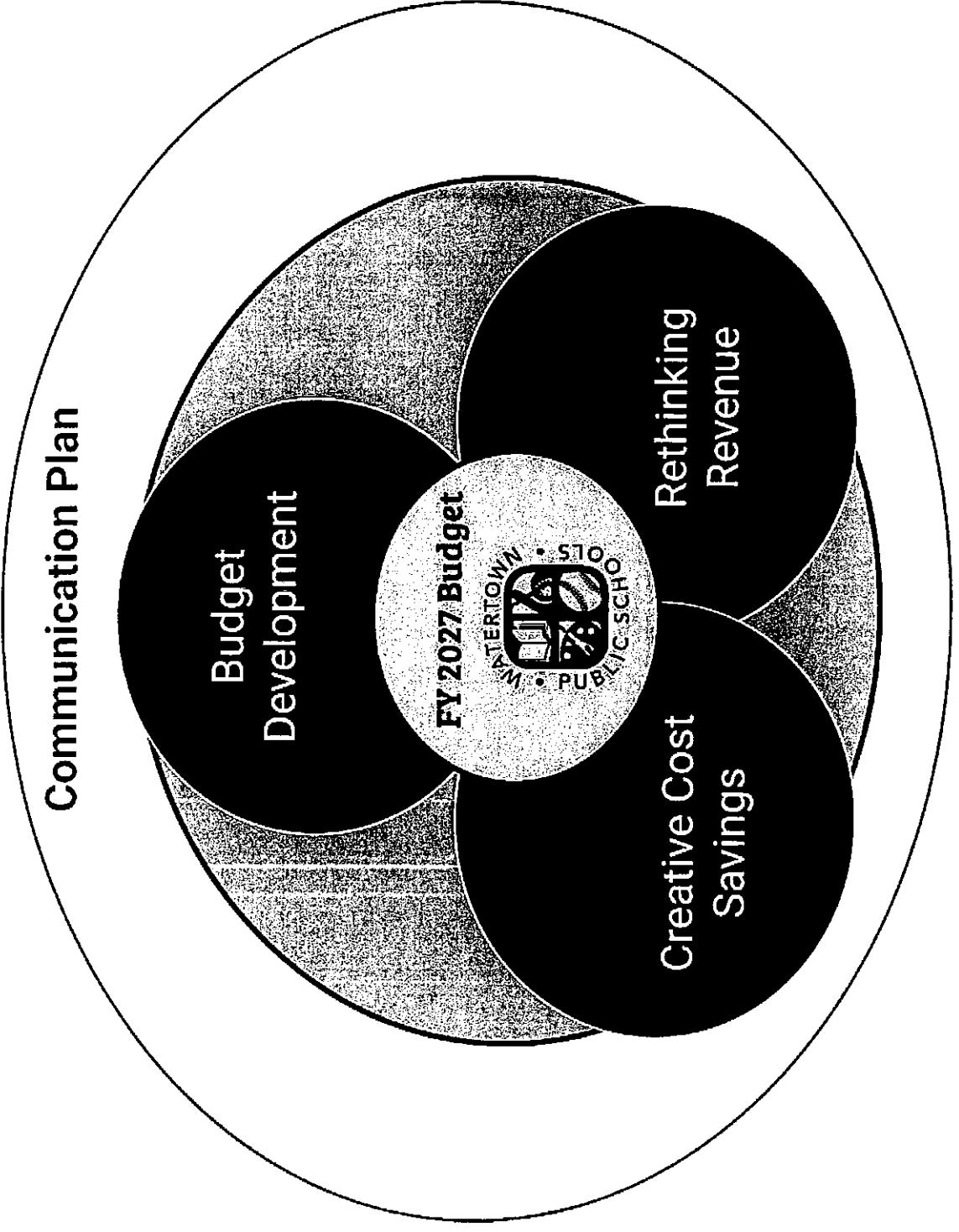
Residency Policy

Implementing with fidelity for appropriate enrollment



Contracted Services

Vetting vendor pricing to reduce costs

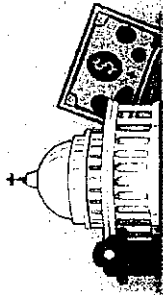


STRATEGY

Rethinking Revenue

Fully realize and sustain available financial resources by leveraging grant opportunities, implementing revenue-generating policies, and strategically expanding tuition-bearing programs.

Funding Sources for CT Public School Districts



Federal Funding / Grants



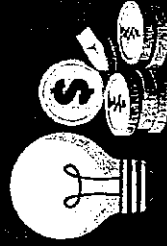
Public School District Budget



State Funding

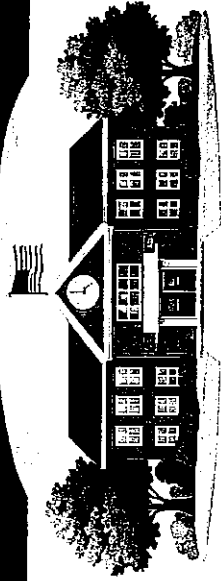


Local Funding / Taxes



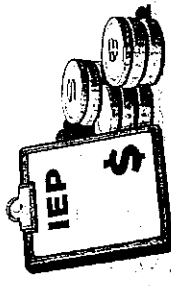
District Initiated Revenue

Excess Cost & Educational Cost Sharing in CT



Excess Cost

- State reimbursement for high-cost special education placements, covering expenses beyond 4.5 times the district's average per-pupil expenditure




Educational Cost Sharing


- State financial support to local school districts, determined by a formula considering the district's wealth, student needs, and funding from local property taxes





Historical Picture of Educational Cost Sharing

FY 2023*


 Final Budget: \$52,756,504


 ECS Amount: \$11,704,228


 % of Budget: 22%


 Final Cost to General Fund: \$41,052,276

FY 2024


 Final Budget: \$53,957,069


 ECS Amount: \$12,323,226


 % of Budget: 23%


 Final Cost to General Fund: \$41,633,843

FY 2025*


 Final Budget: \$57,476,216


 ECS Amount: \$12,576,137


 % of Budget: 22%


 Final Cost to General Fund: \$44,900,079

FY 2026

 Final Budget: \$57,599,765

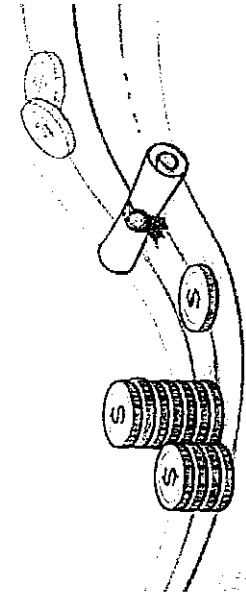
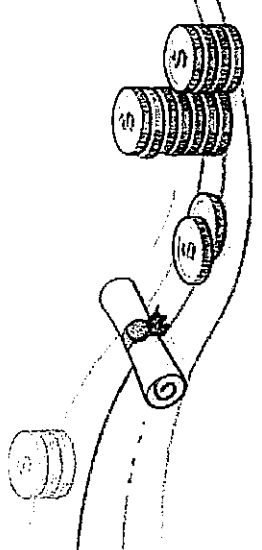
 ECS Amount: \$12,991,496

 % of Budget: 23%

 Final Cost to General Fund: \$44,608,269

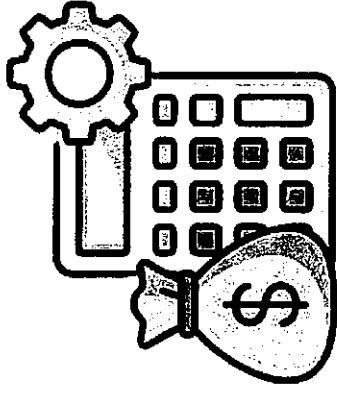
**ECS Estimate for
FY 27 - \$13,446,198**





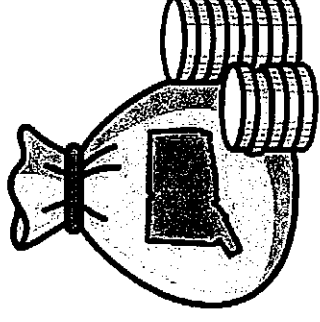
How State Funding is Applied to Offset Costs in the WPS Budget

Excess Cost



\$1,300,000 calculated into
Special Education Budget

Educational Cost Sharing Funds



\$13, 446,198 (approximately)
sent directly to the Town

Revenue Sources

Grant Funding & Opportunities



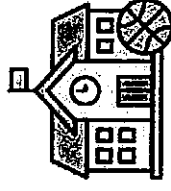
- Judicious use of anticipated grant funding, with transparent communication to stakeholders.
- Aggressively pursuing competitive grant opportunities.
- Exploring securing a commission-based grant writer.

Tuition & Program Revenue



- Recruiting additional tuition-paying students in state-approved special programs (WTA and PATHS) through targeted marketing and promotion of unique career pathway programs.
- Opening an additional Pre K 4 section to generate increased tuition revenue.
- Achieving a 100% tuition collection rate through clear communication and consistent follow-up.

Facilities & Activity Fees



- Implementing the facilities use policy with fidelity to ensure appropriate fees and cost recovery.
- Implementing the pay-to-play policy with fidelity, aligned with equity considerations.

Anticipated Revenue Sources for FY 27

Grants



Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, IDEA, SEED, Smart Start

\$1,452,858

Tuition



(PreK, WTA)

\$726,874

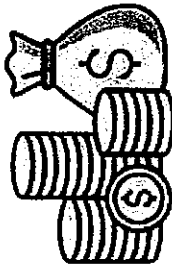
(\$260K Assumes Risk in WTA Tuition)

Facilities Fees & Pay to Play



\$175,000

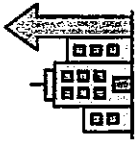
Total Anticipated Revenue



\$2,354,732

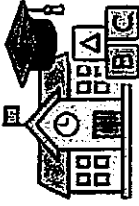
Future Potential Revenue Sources to Explore

WAA Program Expansion



Continue to build the WAA program as another tuition source.

WTA & PreK Expansion



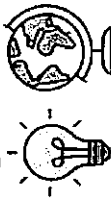
Continue to expand the WTA & PreK programs.

Structured Literacy ESY



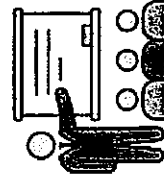
Tuition-paying program for area districts.

Enrichment Programming



Before & After school opportunities.

Professional Learning Academy



Summer program for educators from area districts.

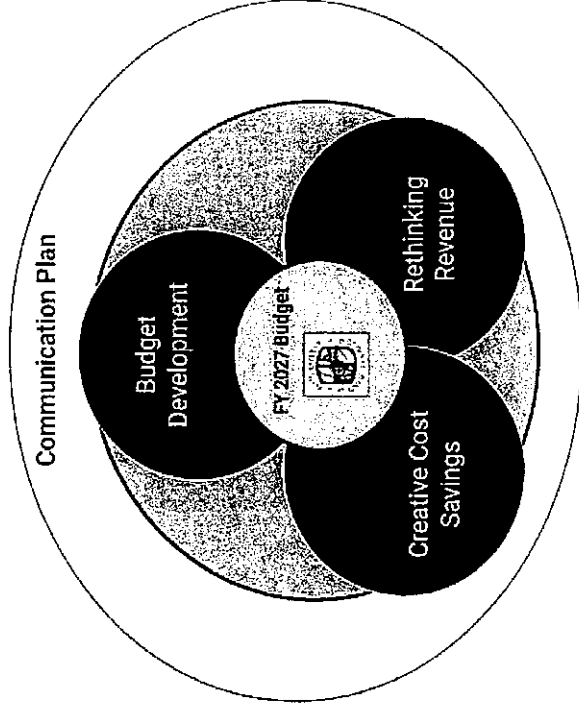
District Owned Van



Generating revenue through transportation services.

The Bottom Line

**Goal: Financial Sustainability & Student Success
Avoid unnecessary cost shifts to the town and taxpayers while maintaining
and growing essential services and supports for students.**



Three-pronged budget strategy

- Increase our own agency by earnestly and actively working to offset costs through targeted cost reductions and new revenue.
- Judiciously allocate resources to sustain responsible organizational growth.
- Transparently and honestly partner and communicate with stakeholders at every stage of the budgeting process.

With This Budget We Can Achieve

Scope of Facilities Repairs
Grant Dependent

ALL SCHOOLS

- Maintain Class Sizes
- Sidewalk Repairs
- Asphalt Repairs
- Funded School Budgets - Instructional Materials, Supplies & Resources
- More Robust Job-Embedded Professional Learning



John
Trumbull

Playground,
.33 FTE Library
Clerk, PreK 4
Section, ASD
Classroom



Judson

.33 FTE
Library Clerk



Polk

Playground,
.33 FTE
Library Clerk



Swift

.5 FTE Library
Media Specialist,
Additional
Courses, ASD
Classroom



WHS

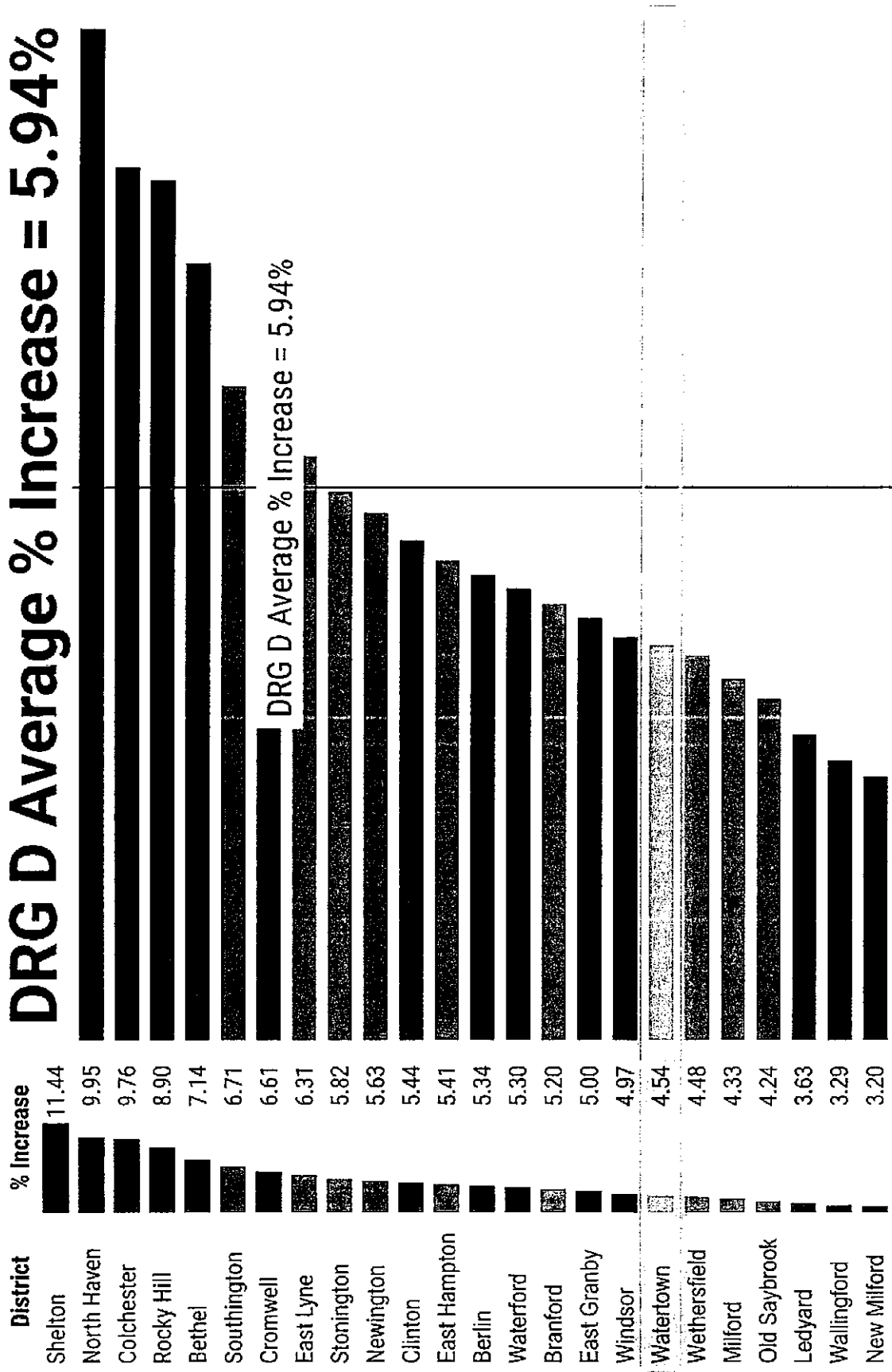
.5 FTE Library
Media
Specialist



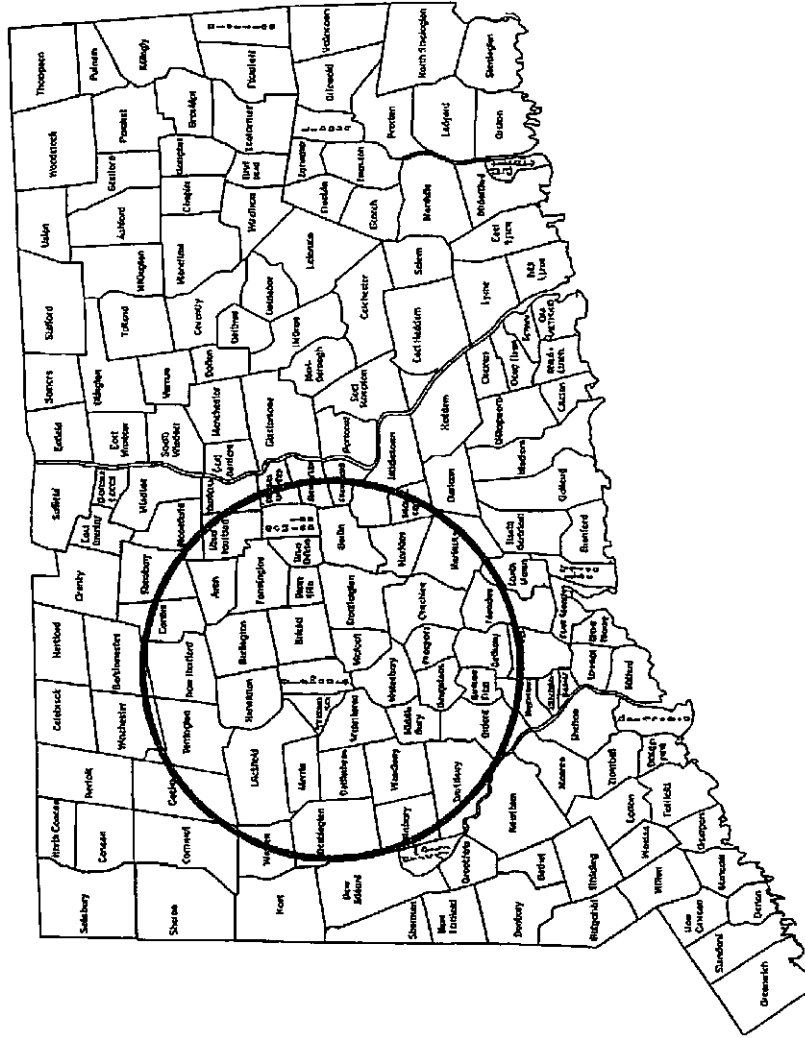
WTA/WAA

GenEd
Teacher,
Van

DRG D Average % Increase = 5.94%



% Increase for Bordering Towns - Varying DRGs



Town/Region	DRG	% Increase
Bristol	G	10.95
Winchester	G	8.57
Naugatuck	G	7.99
Cheshire	B	7.54
Avon	C	7.49
Torrington	B	6.76
Canton	C	6.67
West Hartford	B	6.61
Oxford	C	5.79
Wolcott	F	5.71
Region 10 (Burlington, Harwinton)	C	5.37
Region 15 (Middlebury Southbury)	B	5.3
Hamden	G	4.75
Region 14 (Woodbury/Bethlehem)	C	4.64
Meriden	H	4.59
Watertown	D	4.54
Farmington	B	4.35
Region 20	E	4.24
Plymouth	F	3.99
Region 16 (Prospect/Beacon Falls)	E	2.75
Thomaston	E	1.98
Average		5.79

FINAL CALCULATION: FY 27 WPS PROPOSED SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET

Amounts include additional increases

FY 26: \$57,599,765
Increases: \$4,515,471
Total: \$62,115,236

Increase of:
7.83%
With Everything Else
Coming in FLAT

FINAL BUDGET BREAKDOWN

All In - Priority Areas, Fixed Costs & Other Increases: \$66,645,891

REDUCTIONS & SAVINGS

↓ Staff Reductions: ↓ -\$951,534
↓ Estimated Grants: ↓ -\$1,452,858
↓ Revenue: ↓ -\$901,874
↓ Additional Cost Savings: ↓ -\$3,127,663

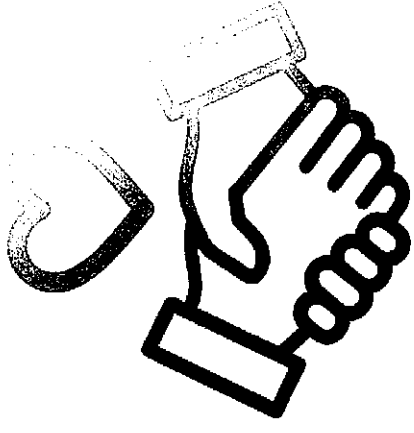
FINAL TOTAL: \$60,211,962

Dollar Increase From FY 26: \$2,612,197

% Increase From FY 26: ↑ 4.54%



**QUESTIONS
& FEEDBACK**

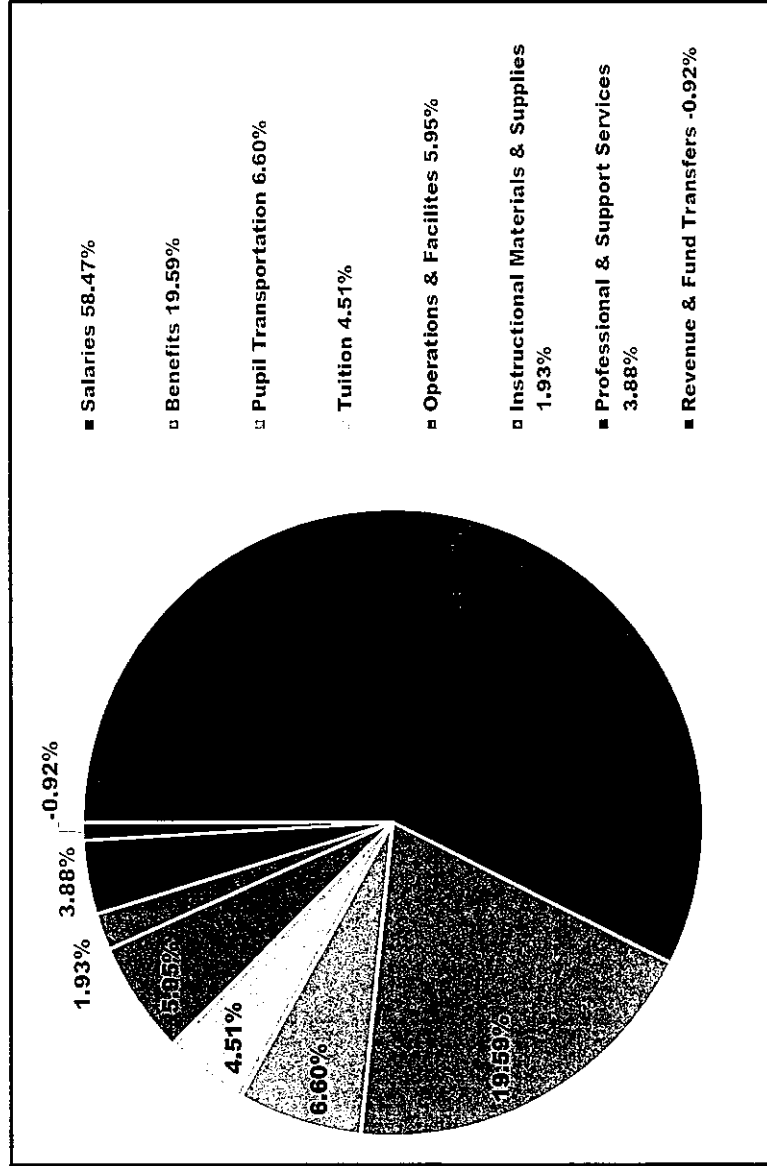


**THANK
YOU**

Thank You, Questions & Feedback ...

Watertown Public Schools

FY 27 - Budget Percentages By Category



Category	Percentage	Sub-Category	Percentage
Salaries	58.47%	Instructional Supplies	0.63%
		Textbooks	0.06%
		Library Books/Periodicals/Workbooks	0.03%
		Other Supplies	0.24%
Benefits	19.59%	New Equipment	0.97%
Pupil Transportation	6.60%		
Tuition	4.51%	Professional/Technical Services	2.49%
		Legal Counsel	0.12%
Utilities	1.67%	InService Training	0.32%
		Other Professional Services	0.23%
		Software Service Contracts	0.13%
		Field & Athletic Trips	0.18%
		Travel & Conferences	0.05%
		Dues & Fees	0.36%
		Revenue & Fund Transfers	-0.92%
		Telephone	0.18%
		Insurance	0.64%
		Contracted Repairs & Mince Serv	0.89%
Lease/Rentals	0.76%		
Custodial & Mince Supplies	0.42%		
Heat & Energy	0.83%		
Facilities (Constl Projects)	0.42%		
Rubbish Removal	0.14%		

Watertown Public Schools

Leadership Organizational Chart - Anticipated 2026-2027

Ms. Lisa M. Fekete
Acting Superintendent of Schools

Cabinet

<p>Ms. Jennifer Galik Interim Director of Operations, Director of Curriculum & Instruction</p> <p>Districtwide Administrators</p> <p>Ms. Cecily Edwards Elementary Special Education Coordinator</p> <p>Mr. Sean Blaney Secondary Special Education Coordinator</p> <p>Ms. Pauline Lagasse Special Education Transition Coordinator</p>	<p>Ms. Marie Kashuba Business Manager</p> <p>John Trumbull Primary School</p> <p>Ms. Laura Meka Principal</p> <p>Ms. Nicole Cote Assistant Principal</p>	<p>Ms. Alissa Olivier Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services</p> <p>Judson Elementary School</p> <p>Ms. Kristin Raymond Principal</p>	<p>Mr. Michael Dalton Director of Instructional Technology</p> <p>Polk Elementary School</p> <p>Mr. Tom Hogrefe Principal</p>	<p>Mr. Luigi Velardi Director of Facilities & Security</p> <p>Swift Middle School</p> <p>Ms. Shelley Rinaldi Principal</p> <p>Mr. John Anastasio Assistant Principal</p>	<p>Ms. Emily Doering Director of Food Services</p> <p>Watertown High School</p> <p>Mr. Gianni Perugini Principal</p> <p>Ms. Hannah Plourde Assistant Principal</p> <p>Ms. Rebecca Bell Assistant Principal</p> <p>Mr. AJ Bunel Athletic Director</p>
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