BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

MAY 5, 2026

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber and duly noticed in two places, including the City's website, in accordance with the requirements of RSA 91-A:2 II.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance.

Members of Committee present:
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large Alicia Gregg
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman Paula Johnson
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Tim Sennott, Vice-Chair
Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman

Members not in Attendance:
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien

Also in Attendance:
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman Patricia Klee
Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent
Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer
Jen Bishop, Board of Education President
Regan Lamphier, Nashua School Board of Education
Rob Johnson, Nashua School Board of Education
Tim Cummings, Director of Administrative Services

ROLL CALL

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

MOTION BY ALDERMAN THIBEAULT TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE R-26-028

R-26-028

Endorsers:
Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderwoman Vengerflutta Smith
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman-at-Large Alicia Gregg
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA GENERAL, ENTERPRISE, SPECIAL REVENUE AND GRANT FUNDS

MOTION CARRIED

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS OF THE PROPOSED FY27 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA

Dept. #		**REVENUES**	**APPROPRIATIONS**

	Education		
191	School Department	213	214

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

It's to review the budgets of the City tonight. Our budget review is of the School Department. Revenues are on Page 213 and appropriations on 214, and we can bring the School Department up whoever wants to come up and sit.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So, good evening everyone. Thank you for having us here. Tonight we'll go through our budget presentation for the 2027 school year. So I'm Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools.

Staff Introducing themselves

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer
Jen Bishop, Board of Education President
Regan Lamphier, Chair of the Budget Committee

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So as we begin the presentation this evening, I think it's really important to think about the vision of our school. So we re-wrote our strategic plan and we wrote our vision statement. I think this really matters and hits home.

So our vision is the Nashua School District is a community where curiosity drives education, and every learner is valued. I think it's really important when we talk about our budget tonight on multiple facets, one the School District is about the community. It's beyond the bricks and mortars of our buildings. Curiosity, we're driving education forward. So what's in our budget that we're actually asking questions about and I think healthy discourse is what we need to move forward, and also curiosity to ask questions of how are we improving. Are we having an open mind, a growth mindset, or are we fix in ways that we're doing things, and every leaner is valued.

We were very specific on using the word "learner" because we're all learners - everyone in the community. It's just not students and when we talk about the next five years of the School District moving forward, everybody needs to come to the table with curiosity. I think it's really important as we ask these difficult questions on - especially around our budget or changes in our school that we give each other grace, that we're vulnerable, we're curious, we ask questions, and that we're not judgmental, and remember that we're all learners in the process.

So a little background of Nashua School District by the numbers. So Nashua at a glance and we'll see this later on - we're currently for our total enrollment is 9,500 students. Our budget last year was $191 million. Our average class size is 19 students per classroom. We have just over 2,000 staff members, and we had a graduating class of just under 800 last year, and we have 49 languages in our schools.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

All right, yep. So based off a student enrollment as Dr Andrade mentioned, we have 9,501 students currently during the 25-26 school year. If we look at the total FTEs related to teachers that we currently have on staff, that is 958 teachers that are employed through the District.

Next slide, please. So this slide is pretty interesting, just from a storytelling standpoint. So you have the historical information on screen of the last 10 years. This is our overall student enrollment and student makeup. So as folks can see all the way over to the right hand side for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, that 9,501 students is made up of 2235, which is our Special Education students. We have just over 2,000 students that are identified as ELL and then our General Education students is made up of just over 5,000. So the important message here is our student enrollment is absolutely changing year over year. Our student enrollment is also declining and based off of those declines and based off of our student population being identified in different buckets, we are seeing a significant increase in overall cost. Next slide.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So the last couple of years, we talked about our ELL student growth versus our ELL teachers and as you know back in 2021 or actually 2020, we were under a DOJ settlement agreement with the Department of Justice regarding our ELL instruction. So you'll notice over the last couple of years, and part of the settlement agreement was because we were not properly staffed in our ELL Department. So over the last few years, you can see the dramatic increase in our investment with ELL teachers to close the caseload or the gap between the amount of students that we have and the amount of ELL teachers so that we're providing better services.

So you can see here in this slide that back in 2008/2009, there was 1 teacher for every 45 ELL students and currently in 2025-2026, the ratio is down to 35 ELL students to 1 ELL teacher. In this year, we're proposing to add more ELL teachers to lower that ratio as well.

This is an overview of our elementary projected class sizes. If you recall about 3 years ago, we right sized the elementary school and we eliminated around 10 elementary teachers. You can see with the reduction of elementary regular ed teachers a couple years ago, we still monitor our class sizes and you can see overall in this slide that our class sizes are still high teens - low 20s. We watch these numbers throughout the summer to make sure that classes are not too large. We really concentrate on K, 1, 2. That's where the research is around smaller class sizes. So you might see classes in Grades 4 and 5 hovering around the 23/24 - there's a little more wiggle room there according to the research as opposed to K,1, 2.

This is our next year projected enrollment at our middle school levels and you can see, again, class size - just I'll walk you through one of the Pennichuck. So in 6th Grade, the 272 is the amount of students. There's 3 teams – that's the 2nd number. So the 3 is the amount of teams in 6th Grade. Four is the amount of teachers on a team and then you get to your average class size of 22.7. So you can see across the 3 schools that our class sizes are around that 24-25 range, somewhere around 21. So there's about 100 students. We aim for about 100 students on a team and that's the quick math at the middle school.

That's really fast. Any questions on how we kind of look at middle school numbers?

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

Yes do you want to take questions now or?

<u>Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent</u>

Yeah, I think it's as we kind of go I think it's conversational.

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

Can we do Budget Committee first?

<u>Alderman Klee</u>

Thank you. I apologize.

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

We're gonna do Budget Committee first.

<u>Alderman Klee</u>

Sorry.

<u>Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer</u>

I didn't know if we were doing questions.

<u>Alderwoman Kelly</u>

You were talking about class size in that K - 2 is where you really look at that size. What is, you know, what is expected and what is sort of the best practice for those grades in terms of how many?

<u>Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent</u>

So the research kind of - there's no exact number to say 10 is the perfect number or 25 but we know it's the high teens to low 20s is usually and we try to aim for that 20 mark. But anything where over 25 is a large class. Contractually, these are under our contractual numbers both at the elementary and secondary level so we don't want to rub up against the contract numbers as well, so.

Chairman Dowd

All set?

Alderwoman Kelly

Could I ask one more question, please?

Chairman Dowd

Go ahead. Follow up.

Alderwoman Kelly

So when you were talking about the changing enrollment, I was just you may not know the answer to this - it's a little bit of an anecdotal question but is it that we are getting fewer students who are general ed or is it that general ed students are finally getting diagnosed and then put into other buckets?

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

I think we're seeing more and more students with more intensive needs coming in and I think they're being properly identified. But overall, the reduction in regular ed students, I think, is more related to the housing market and declining birth rate. So I think it's just we're seeing more students who need IEPs or ELL services but I think the overall trend where we're not at 13,000 students anymore is housing and birth related.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. I have two quick questions. The slide that was after this one here, the one that talked about the Middle School, can you tell me what the 4 numbers? I was able to figure it out but I assume the middle 2 numbers are teachers?

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So yep. So the first number – we'll pick on Pennichuck again.

Alderman Klee

That's okay.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

And 6th Grade?

Alderman Klee

Yep.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So the 272.

Alderman Klee

Yeah, I figured that's the enrollment.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

That's the students.

Alderman Klee

Yeah.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

The 3 is the number of teams.

Alderman Klee

Teams, okay, yeah.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So there's 3 teams.

Chairman Dowd

You might want to explain what teams are.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

A team is a group of 4 teachers.

Alderman Klee

Right.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So that's your Math, ELA, Social Studies, and Science Teacher that constitutes 1 team.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

And then 4 is the number of teachers.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

And then the 22.7 is the average class size.

Alderman Klee

Okay. Yeah - no, I figured that one. It was a 2 middle numbers I was a ..

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

Yeah.

Alderman Klee

…little confused with. I appreciate that and may I ask a question from your beginning? Okay, here it is. One thing that I did - and maybe you're going to touch on it and if that's the case just tell me to wait. How many IEPs do you have, and how many of them are actually physically in the school, and how many of them do you provide for outside?

Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent

So these ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So these numbers do not include out of district tuition kids.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So the Special Education students that you see in this graph, it's kind of the orangey ..

Alderman Klee

Right.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

…yellow color.

Alderman Klee

Right. Yeah.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So we have 2,235 students that are identified as Special Education.

Alderman Klee

Okay and those would be students with IEPs?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

IEP's.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

IEP's.

Alderman Klee

Okay. But we're not talking about how many - the ones that are out of district do we get revenue for that one or?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So that out of district students we don't necessarily get revenue for students that we send out a district. There is a slide later in the presentation ..

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

…to talk about our current out of district tuition ..

Alderman Klee

I'll wait then.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

That we are paying.

Alderman Klee

I'll wait for that then. Thank you. I really appreciate this.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Welcome.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So is this you or me?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

You.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So this is still me - and then we can see the changes at the high school level over time and we could see that back in 2020, we had 3,400 students in our high schools and we're down to 3,102 this current year. Part of the facilities study - we're actually looking at over the next 3 years that we're projected to lose another 500 students at the high school level. But you can see whether it's the 3,400 number or the 3,100, our class size still at the high school is about 13 students.

Chairman Dowd

Could you just explain the reasons for the anticipated drop?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Kind of related earlier as we've seen a declining enrollment from K through 8 over the last couple years. So when we follow the cohorts, we can see the number of students who are - it's just less students going to the high school and I think, again, that's we've seen that that trend over the last decade is that there's just less students going through but that next wave will be at the high school.

Unidentified Speaker

Did you accidentally mute?

Alderman Thibeault

Yeah, I was told I wasn't on - people couldn't hear me.

Unidentified Speaker

Yeah, I think it stopped recording you.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay.

Unidentified Speaker

Are you recording?

Alderman Thibeault

Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker

Okay, as long as that's happening.

Alderman Thibeault

Yeah, yeah.

Unidentified Speaker

Okay. We may not have audio.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So it's been a change of again housing market, birth rate, and then just declining enrollment. This is the cohort over the next 3 years there'll just be less students at the high school.

Chairman Dowd

Okay.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. Can you just repeat how many less students you have over the next 3 years?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

500 at the high school approximately.

Alderman Johnson

500. May I continue?

Chairman Dowd

Yes.

Alderman Johnson

Do we know if they've gone to B.G. – a lot of them - by some chance? Bishop Guertin - if they the parents took them out of the public school.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

No. The projection is these students are currently in 6^{th}, 7^{th} and 8^{th} Grade.

Alderman Johnson

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So that's the cohort going through.

Alderman Johnson

Okay and I remember being on the Board during covid - right after covid, that's when we started seeing a lot of the decline because when we were locked up parents didn't send a lot of the kids back and maybe I'll mention it quickly now. I mean, if you if we go back to that redistricting study, which nobody liked Mr. Smith, he projected this. I agreed with him and now it's coming to fruition here that our population is declining here and I would suggest, and I got a copy of it because I couldn't find it, but I have it with me tonight - Mr. Smith's with that whole redistricting. I think people really need to take a look at that whole study because people didn't like about the closing of the schools and the population declining but it's happening. Thank you very much.

<u>Alderman Thibeault</u>

Thank you. So I mean I think the goal here is to increase population over time. So it's hard to look at a study where we're showing a decrease when the goal here in Nashua is to give people more places to live and hopefully bring - you know, the goal would always to be bringing more families in. But my point - going to back to her original question about BG, do you have any - and I know it's not under your purview - but any numbers of whether you know B.G. is going up or down in enrollment and the private elementary and middle school - what their enrollment as I guess?

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

So we do analysis. What we notice is that we lose students from 5th Grade to 6th Grade and the students actually come back in 9th Grade. So we lose the middle school years so we see a decrease in our middle school and actually an increase in our high school because the students who actually - and we do the re-entry interviews, that we have robust comprehensive high schools. Some of the best in the State between our CTE programs, our AP programs. So a lot of the charter schools do not offer what we offer at the high school. So we lose students. It's been the trend we lose students from 5th to 6th Grade and then they come back in 9th Grade. So even though that's the projection as we're looking at our middle school, those numbers might actually be higher because those families might come back in 9th Grade.

<u>Alderman Thibeault</u>

Can I add just a follow up?

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

And that's been the trend.

<u>Alderman Thibeault</u>

So and B.G. would be a school - we probably wouldn't want to look at their enrollment up and down because they're not getting just Nashua students. They're getting students from all over for different reasons - sports, being one of them for particular sports might be advantageous for them to go there where other things might not be. So it's hard to look at that and compare it to Nashua in a way, right?

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

And the other thing about B.G. is legacy. My grandfather went there, my father went there, my uncle went there. Like it's a family - so that's a different kind of conversation as well. So they might not be leaving because we don't offer programs, but ..

<u>Alderman Thibeault</u>

We’ll look at Alderman Sullivan on that.

<u>Alderman Gregg</u>

Thank you. So is Nashua an anomaly on this drop? Are we seeing school districts across the State dropping in?

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

It's across the nation.

<u>Alderman Gregg</u>

That makes sense.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah.

Alderman Gregg

Across the nation? Yeah, okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Absolutely.

Alderman Gregg

Thanks.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So one thing we want to add and we talk about efficiencies and moving forward just with our class sizes here, so our high school ..

Alderman Klee

I just, may I?

Chairman Dowd

Yeah, just one other thing I say. You’re got to get to it later on but when these kids go to these other schools, we still have costs associated because we have to bus them. We have to pay for their special needs students so it's not like we're losing money. It's costing us money.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. You mentioned that the class size was about 13. Is that because we they have specialty type classes. So in other words where the other classrooms might have had Math, English, Science, and Social Studies, and so on so everybody kind of moved where in high school, they pick their curriculum. You have more to offer so you tend to have smaller class sizes?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

That's true, yup.

Alderman Klee

Okay. So I just wanted to - and I noticed that you - I assume that you put that average in when you said that the average class size was 19.5 or whatever. So when we see these smaller class sizes because they have more offerings ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yup.

Alderman Klee

…it's not a true feeling as to what the real class size is. So just keeping that in mind, I was curious as to - I was trying to figure out what the average middle school class sizes were and the average elementary school class sizes versus - because the high school is going to bring that number way down.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Right. And also at the high school - most of the - I look at the master schedule.

Alderman Klee

Right.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

And so our AP classes might have some that are like 12 in that ..

Alderman Klee

Right.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

…we're running but other AP sections are at 25-26. So there's a variance ..

Alderman Klee

Right.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

…between…

Alderman Klee

I get that.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

…and it's based on student selection and then doing the master schedule. So it varies and, again, I think the high schools are really creative.

Alderman Klee

Yup, thank you.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

In this budget, and we'll talk about some of the reductions, so I charged the high school administration this year to redesign the high school. We knew we were going to come into a tight fiscal ask and if we did nothing and Ms. De Gray will talk about this in a little while, if we did nothing to our budget and we just rolled it over, it would be an 8% ask. So we knew an 8% ask is unrealistic. So as I mentioned earlier, we right sized our elementary schools about three years ago. We right sized our middle school when we did a redesign, our redistricting. This year, I charged the high schools to redesign their programs - and this was a huge ask and I need to really commend the high school administration. They worked with their Department Chairs to come up with a new schedule and so we're moving away from the 4 x 4 block to a 5 period block and what this does, and again I commend our Department Chairs. You know, we've had communication with the NTU to make sure we weren't violating any contracts but we changed the amount of sections teachers are teaching.

So in a 4 x 4 - this is a department with 16 teachers. So in the current schedule, teachers teach 6 classes a year. So if there's 16 teachers with 6 classes, we offer 96 sections. We're moving to a 5 block schedule next year. So now teachers will be teaching 1 extra class. So we only need 14 teachers who are teaching 7 classes and now we're offering 98 sections. So the teacher load is going to change but we will not eliminate a single class in the program of studies unless there's low enrollment. So no impact to the program of studies but what it'll end up doing is causing some efficiencies that we need less teachers to offer the same amount of classes and we're working with the teachers to make sure that there's professional development, that study halls are not unmanned so in working with the schedule. So I'll answer some questions to clarify.

Alderwoman Kelly

I'm wondering if I'm the only one with the high school, maybe two of us. So Elsa would be very upset if I didn't ask. Does this 5 block still include E block?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So that was - it was actually interesting. So we met with some students and that was the biggest issue, right? So it's kind of the history is when E block kind of first came in, it was not well received. It was kind of a little chaotic, and then they evened it out, and then the first iteration of this schedule eliminated E block.

Alderwoman Kelly

Hmm mm.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Right?

Alderwoman Kelly

I remember. That's when I got yelled. Yup.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So this is where we're at right now in the high school administration. I'm like alright so what can we do differently? So we are looking at bringing back E block but it's going to look differently. So there will still be time for clubs. Instead of having 45 minutes every single day, we're looking at times that it would be a longer block - maybe every other week for like 90 minutes or two hours. So we heard loud and clear from our students, and our faculty, and staff that they actually valued this time.

Alderwoman Kelly

Yeah.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

And so we will be modifying the schedule to incorporate E block in some fashion. So it will come back - it might not look like it right now but we heard loud and clear that there'll be some variation of E block moving forward.

Alderwoman Kelly

I appreciate that. I know I tied it to my daughter but I think in general equity ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yup.

Alderwoman Kelly

…and being able to participate in clubs during class ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yup.

Alderwoman Kelly

…was something that ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah.

Alderwoman Kelly

I heard really (inaudible) ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

And I just think that's - again, I give a lot of credit to the high school administration in working with the teachers and students to say what did we really value and let's not get stuck in a box. Let's go back to what's driving our education and if we have to tweak things, we can tweak things.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Take this slide out and explain to me what this does and how it changes the high school?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So this is where we eliminate - so from a program of studies point of view, it does not change the high school. What it does is we eliminate 2 teachers in a section. So now when we ask for our budget request, we're reducing almost 20 high school teachers without impacting the offerings to students.

Alderman Sullivan

So reduces headcount but keeps services the same?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Correct. Is that?

Alderman Sullivan

Yup.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yup.

Alderman Sullivan

That's it. Thanks.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

That's where I thought you were going.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions at the moment? Okay, continue.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Alright. So this next slide as folks are aware, we received an email back in December of 2025 with the Mayor's guideline. We were asked from a guideline standpoint to stick around 3%. So we're going to go ahead and show exactly where we've come in and then what the proposal is for Fiscal Year '27s budget.

Next slide. So a couple things to highlight. Major increases in Fiscal Year 2027. First thing transportation - no particular order here either. So Transportation, we're going to see increase by about $1.7 million. Just from a friendly reminder standpoint, this is year 2 of a 5 year contract that we signed with First Student. We were aware that in year 1 and 2 of the contract, we would see some pretty hefty increases and then year 3, 4, and 5, we should end up seeing roughly a 5% increase related to transportation.

We had to go ahead and add - or the recommendation is to add some additional money for our Special Education transportation students as well as our McKinney Vento population. We currently are paying just over $482 per bus per day. Next year's contract, again, based off of that roughly 16% increase is going to cost us $550.34 per day. Currently we have about 95 busses that is made up of 52 regular education busses and 43 Special Education busses.

The next item to highlight is Staffing Services. Over the last 2 -3 years, we have seen a significant increase in staffing services. This is our population if teachers, para's, support staff are calling out sick. We do need to go ahead and support our classrooms for our students so we are seeing a pretty big increase year over year. We do have ESS which is a subbing company that we contract with every year and based off a forecast, it makes sense to go ahead and recommend an increase in staffing services.

Chairman Dowd

Why don't we let them finish this slide then we'll take questions?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Perfect. Thank you for that.

Education Assistance recommendation to increase $70,000. We're seeing that more teachers are utilizing the educational assistance as well as some additional contracts. We're seeing more professional development and some additional degrees coming forward.

As mentioned in a previous slide, we're looking to hire four new ELL teachers next year. We have two collective bargaining units that were recently negotiated - NASP and the Clerical Unit. IT - we have a pretty significant or a decent increase for our IT core network infrastructure and switch that's going to cost just about $253,000.

Plant Operations. You're seeing an increase right around $200,000. The biggest driver there is an electric increase related to a new contract.

Your two biggest buckets of increases are Contract Services related to special education. The recommendation initially is to put $3.5 million in the Operating Budget, which currently we have $1.7 million budgeted and then $1.5 million in our Special Revenue Fund, which we currently have $500,000 budgeted.

And the last bullet point on this slide is out of district tuition. An increase of a $1 million in the Operational Budget. The current budget is $6.2 million year over year and we'll share in a slide in a couple minutes. We've seen this area significantly increase as well. The suggestion would be to add another million dollars to the Operation Budget bringing that closer to $7.2 million and also doing an increase into the Special Revenue Account bringing that budget up to $1 million. Questions?

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. Why was there such a big increase in the Transportation budget?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So as mentioned previous, this is year 2 of a 5 year contract when we signed the contract last year with First Student after we went through an RFP process. We knew that we were going to have to take an increase at some point. The suggestion was to go ahead and do the bigger increases in year 1 and 2 of a contract. We had a lot of busses that were aged out so that is part of the driving factor. We had a contract that was prior to covid, so our rates were pretty low and then year 3, 4, and 5 of this contract, we should be sitting right around roughly a 5% increase. In addition to year 2 of this contract as mentioned, also some additional money in there for Special Education transportation and our McKinney Vento transportation.

Chairman Dowd

Has there been any pushback from the bus company because the increase in fuel prices?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

At this time there hasn't. We do have a contract with them and hopefully fingers crossed, that contract keeps us in place because gas has definitely increased.

Chairman Dowd

Well they certainly aren't gonna to be making any profits they were anticipating.

Alderman Johnson follow up?

Alderman Johnson

Yeah, thank you. How come - I know a lot of people call me about this. There's a lot of busses that you see empty like the high school - going to and from the high schools during the day - empty busses. Seeing them coming out of the South school in the morning and in the afternoon. That must be costing us quite a bit of money even though we sell bus passes, that doesn't cover the cost to operate them. So are we going to see combining of routes to minimize the cost here a little bit?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we do research the ridership and the ridership is extremely low even though people pay for bus passes. There's families that sign up for busses and never take a bus but we do look at it. We did look at consolidating some routes and right now our average route is about 50 minutes. So if we start combining routes, we might have students on a bus for 90 minutes up to two hours.

Alderman Lopez

Better put a bathroom in the back.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Excuse me?

Alderman Lopez

You better put a bathroom in the back.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah. So we do look at those efficiencies. We do look at ridership and then we also know we don't want students on a bus for 90 minutes. So part of the routes it’s hard to consolidate because where the busses are going but we do examine that.

Alderman Johnson

May I continue?

Chairman Dowd

Continue.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. Well I mean if your ridership is lower at the high school and we're running these big busses and especially to and from the school during the day to take the different classes, would it be maybe more prudent to have smaller busses or to have vans rather than spending all this money because this is a big bus. How much diesel fuel are we using on this to fill up these busses and they're not being utilized? I mean that's cost factor.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

No I 100% agree but when we look at the families who sign up, there might be 80 students at the beginning who sign up for the bus in only 10 ride it. So what happens if all 80 students actually take the bus that day? So you can't buy a van and a bus, right? Like you’re gonna ..

Alderman Johnson

Well and I get that but I mean, I'm looking at this from a cost factor. Also, the sale of the bus ticket doesn't ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

No, it doesn't. Nope.

<u>Alderman Johnson</u>

It doesn't - the money doesn’t cover the cost of the bus and then I have another question on something else after.

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

Okay. You realize that if they signed up, you have to have a bus for them.

<u>Alderman Johnson</u>

I get it.

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

And if everybody showed up. I think some of the people take a bus pass as well as have a car pass because if their car breaks down, they can't get to school.

<u>Alderman Johnson</u>

But what about when you're transporting them to and from each school and you don't have that ridership either, you know, it's empty.

<u>Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer</u>

So I just want to add some clarity if I can. So the $550.34 that's going to be the daily cost for next year. So that is per bus. There are some additional costs that we do incur for whether it's late day busses, midday busses, or what you're referring to is the shuttle busses between North and South during the day for some of the CTE programs. So I just don't want the message to be out there that it's $550 for these shuttle busses. It's not. It is $550 per bus and then there are some additional costs if they are running kind of those mid days.

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

Another question?

<u>Alderman Johnson</u>

Yeah, I’ve got some questions. How many busses again are we running?

<u>Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer</u>

So we have 95 busses currently. That's made up of 52 regular, 43 special ed busses.

<u>Alderman Johnson</u>

How many 43?

<u>Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer</u>

43 Special Education busses.

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

It's right there on the slide.

<u>Unidentified Speaker</u>

I can find it.

<u>Alderman Johnson</u>

One other question on the Staffing Services because when I was on the Board we had to do this because of covid and so how much of an increase are we doing every year?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So this hasn't been increased actually in the past 2 years. Over the last 2 to 3 years, we've always gone over budget in Staffing Services, which is why there is a recommendation instead of leaving it at a $950,000 budget, the suggestion would be to increase that by $275,000 for Fiscal Year and it's on screen but in case it's hard for folks to see - for Fiscal Year 2025, we actually spent $1,256,000 in Staffing Services and again, this is for our staff that are calling out for various reasons and we need support staff in front of our students.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I had a couple of questions around the bus as well and then I have one other. So do we have a number of busses that are in the contract? Do we have to have a certain number of roads?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So our contract is billed actually off of, I believe, it was 92 busses at the current time that we went ahead and built the RFP.

Alderwoman Kelly

I don't love the idea of having longer routes but it's just wondering around that and then in terms of the student fees - I know it doesn't cover it at all - is it comparable to what other districts charge? Have we ever upped it? What does that look like not that I want to pay more but?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So we pay I think right now it's about $65 per student for a bus pass. I think that's pretty standard. We have not done an increase as far as I'm aware in the last 3 to 5 years.

Alderwoman Kelly

Then my other question, if I could?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderwoman Kelly

IT core network Infrastructure. My question around that was there was discussion around consolidating the 2 IT programs.

Chairman Dowd

Don't we have another slide on that coming up? Can we wait?

Alderwoman Kelly

Can I just ask my question, please?

Chairman Dowd

Inaudible.

Alderwoman Kelly

You can touch on it when you get there but I'm just wondering why we would do this before we made that consolidation?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So the consolidation think of that as a staffing model. So by us going ahead and doing a consolidation of staffing with the City of Nashua, the IT core infrastructure switch - it basically is a core switch and I'm no IT person - but it is a core switch that needs to be replaced at one of our high schools. Luckily at this time, we don't need two of those but we are currently working with the team to go through some RFPs to understand. Hopefully it doesn't cost more than that.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay, thank you.

Alderman Thibeault

I'm good. My question was answered through all of that.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. When I was looking at the budget, I noticed bottom line year over year lift was about $14 million. So of that $14 million, $10 million of it was salaries and benefits. So maybe this is in another slide so maybe I'm jumping the gun a little bit ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Skip to the next slide.

Alderman Sullivan

It is. Okay.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Please, excuse me.

Alderwoman Kelly

It can wait.

Alderman Sullivan

Alright. Then I'll park my question.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Well no you were going there so we might as well go to that next slide for you unless there was another question – sorry – on this?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Lopez do you have a question?

Alderman Lopez

Yeah, I had a couple. So one of them is kind of based on an assumption so I want to make sure that I am corrected before I get too far afield, but with the staffing costs that you mentioned being essentially the solution to a staff member that is going to be out sick or away is to use contract services. But in past years, I believe Superintendent Andrade you said, that we haven't lost teachers - we've moved them into admin. So are any of those staff members still certified teachers that could be a contingency and is that already done or is there a reason that it couldn't be?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So I just want to be clear. So the contracted services here we're talking about is ESS. It's our daily subs, so ..

Alderman Lopez

So that's not staffing services if somebody's out?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

That's so ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Can I hop in?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Sorry. So Staffing Services as related on screen for 250, excuse me 275. That is our ESS for staffing services – teachers, and para, and support staff not showing up. That is not our Contract Service staff. There is a bullet point up here related to Contract Services. So we kind of have two different buckets. So Staffing Services, again, is if I'm a teacher, I call out sick for whatever reason tomorrow, we need a teacher in front of our kiddos tomorrow, Staffing Services - ESS is the company. They go ahead and fill kind of that daily sub.

Alderman Lopez

Okay.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Contract Services is if we can't go ahead and hire support staff. That's why we're seeing an increase in contract services.

Alderman Lopez

Okay but specifically, the ESS and the staffing increase that we're looking at here is there a way to do that in house particularly if the credentialing is there? If we're in a situation, for example, where we're going to ask teachers to teach 7 classes instead of 5, that seems like it would increase the vulnerability if one of those teachers is like I slipped on a banana and I'm out for a week then ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So what ESS does is a lot of the HR work. It's recruiting of the substitute teachers, the retaining, the onboarding, that aspect of it. So that's a burden. If it's not ESS, it'll be on our HR Department where someone calls out sick and then to find the substitute. So that's a lot of like a third party work.

We ran a number the other day - and we'll pick on the high schools, right. So the high school there's an admin team of 6 administrators. So if there's 10 teachers out sick, 6 administrators can't cover those classes. So like administrators not going in but ESS is always recruiting for more and more substitute teachers. So it's just not a matter of having a building Principal, or somebody else going to cover those classes, or a retired teacher. Like a retired teacher would be in the ESS pool to be a daily sub but they're helping us with the management and just to put it in numbers. We ran this figure last month. We had over 12,000 absences between our teachers, administrators, and power educators to up to last month.

Alderman Lopez

And is ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So that's ..

Chairman Dowd

Follow up?

Alderman Lopez

This is a follow up, sorry.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So that's so that's the cost of how many substitutes do you need and we pay $125 a day?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yes.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah.

Alderman Lopez

So just for scope, it is a regular situation in the school/high school or otherwise that there might be more teachers out than admin even available?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah.

Alderman Lopez

Okay. So you do a lot of last minute planning and contingency organizing and that's probably why having that staffing pool is important.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yes and it lessens the burden on our HR Department to make those calls, and all the screening, and the recruiting.

Alderman Lopez

Okay and then I had one question about transportation.

Chairman Dowd

Okay.

Alderman Lopez

With regards to the - well I guess I had two questions because I have to understand it first. The limiting criteria for the special education transportation is that physical limitations like you can't have beyond a certain number of people in special education on a bus at a time? Is that physical like access? You need to have handicap accessible? What makes us need to use a special education bus instead of a regular one?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

It's driven by the IEP and then the needs of the student. So depending if the student has needs like a wheelchair or other factors or supports, it depends, really on the IEP team. So like if a student just has an IEP that has reading services, it might be on a regular ed bus but if a student might be in an intensive needs classroom, that might be on a special needs/special education bus. So it's really driven by the team and depending on what the student needs and then First Student works with Krystal and her Department on making sure that there's adequate supports on that bus to support the child.

Alderman Lopez

So the fact that you assess that on individual student is obviously labor intensive is gratifying because as a legally blind person every time I tell an airline I need to board on time so I can see where I'm going, there's also a wheelchair waiting for me so they're not really making any differentiation between what one special need is versus other. So making sure that we're not just putting everybody on a bus because they're identified as an IEP is gratifying.

Is there any possibility for partnership or collaboration either with our Nashua Transit System, which is like run by a cousin of First Student, or even Boys and Girls Club, or PAL where maybe they're going to pick the child up anyway? Parents expect them to do that so the that coordinating communication means that we can reduce some of the burden on the school.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So I wouldn't look into that partnership for our special education transportation. I think that's very individualized. We did look at some routes last year when we were having the conversation with our going out for contract with - like are there routes that can be consolidated and quite honestly, the Nashua Transit Authority doesn't run enough routes to get our students like without taking 3 or 4 busses to get to the high schools efficiently.

Alderman Lopez

I was thinking the Paratransit actually.

But I had one final question. The age ranges of students using Paratransit I understand and again, this is an assumption so you can correct me. If we have students that are still going to school like for high school types of schools into their 20s, maybe we could do an alternative transportation because they're old enough but they're still not done in their curriculum?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So again, it goes back to the IEP team and that might be a conversation that it might be a goal part of their transition plan like when they exit at 22 but it might be how do you use public transportation? How do you use alternate planning but we would still again through the IEP team make those appropriate decisions ensuring that a student can get to and go home from school.

Chairman Dowd

On some of your IEP busses do they have to have a second adult other than the driver?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yes.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yes.

Chairman Dowd

Just to make it clear for people.

Alderwoman Kelly

Alderman Dowd, Aldermen Sennott says his hand's been up but you can't see him because of the presentation.

Chairman Dowd

He's got a question ..

Alderwoman Kelly

Yes.

Chairman Dowd

…is that what you're saying?

Alderwoman Kelly

Yup.

Alderman Sennott

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I apologize for my tardiness. Before we moved on from Transportation, I did have a question. In regards to the Special Education increases, I know I'm not the only person who's aware of a reconfiguration in the special ed program. Is any of that driving the cost increase for those transportation services?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

No. There is - I'll let Dr Andrade follow up afterwards. Based off of the transportation increase, this is purely based off of the contract that we have with First Student.

Alderman Sennott

Alright. I had a follow up, if I could?

Chairman Dowd

Go ahead, follow up.

Alderman Sennott

Alright just on the subject of transportation while we're there. I know that First Student is essentially our sole option but it seems year over year, especially at the beginning of the school year but throughout as well, I'm hearing from a lot of constituents a lot of growing pains in regard to how the routes are laid out, stops that they're having trouble getting their students to, late busses. I know that again they're the only player in town and we're beholden to a contract but long term how sustainable do we see our partnership with First Student? I know a lot of changes are in the pipeline that will affect the transportation aspect of the School Department and I just - is this our best fit going forward or are we just kind of kind of over a barrel?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah, thank you for the question. So we are - when we did the RFP process last year, we actually had only three transportation companies at the table. First Student obviously received that RFP award. I would say for the next 5 years, we're in a contract with First Student. The major drivers that we're really seeing not only because of the increase in the contract but we're starting to see more of our McKinney Vento population and some of our special ed costs really increasing. We do get – and not to cloud judgment - but we do get a little bit of money from the State from a federal grant for some of our McKinney Vento students but it is not much and we are seeing an increase in our students who are in between homes at this point.

So if folks are not aware if it is a Nashua student, and they are displaced from their residence, and they have found housing in Manchester, we do have to legally support that transportation from Manchester to Nashua and then home. That is one of the biggest driving factors in addition to the contract related to transportation.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

And if I could just add. I know it seems like we pick on First Student a lot but First Student has been a great partner for with us over a number of years and I think the public should know the first couple weeks of school are a little rocky but we do encourage families to reach out to the Transportation Office and Krystal feels the burden of this. We adjust a lot of routes the first 10 days of school where someone's like this isn't working, it might be they feel that they're unsafe. So we make adjustments to first couple days so first 10 days and we do that year over year. So we'll continue to do that. So please and families haven't been shy to contact us. Please continue to contact us. We're getting better. What we see as we talked about staffing services in our District, First Students actually having issues with finding drivers and so where we have a monthly call with them, we look at how many times a month that they have to combine routes, and kind of double up. So in the contract if they don't meet a certain threshold, then we get some reimbursement. So we look at those figures but they are also struggling to find enough drivers, and substitutes, and that's where sometimes busses are late, and that's out of our control but we are in good communication with First Student. I know a couple years ago it was a dumpster fire on a lot of stuff. I mean I'll say it - it was painful. We're in a much better place this year and we know next year it will be better.

Alderman Sennott

Thank you both for the clarification.

Chairman Dowd

All our divisions are having a problem with ELL drivers. DPW now is hiring people and training them to get their ELL license.

Alderman Klee

CDL.

Chairman Dowd

CDL license. I'm sorry.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah, I had so many questions about that comment.

Alderwoman Kelly

I did too.

Chairman Dowd

CDL License. So it's been a problem across the board. There just aren't enough of them.

Alderwoman Kelly

I don't have anything.

Alderman Klee

Thank you. Mine are more comments than - as someone who actually sat and watched the Franklin Street busses where you have a lot of the special needs students and so on, I can tell you that they come in all different sizes. Sometimes they hit - and the bus company determines what size bus it's going to be based on what they have available as well as population because I asked that same question of the Principal there and he explained that to me. Sometimes - and the reason I had asked these questions was because there's such a hard turn they have to go in there without affecting the residents.

I want to say that I thought it was amazing getting those students onto these busses with the lift and so on and those students are scared. The bus drivers are absolutely amazing. They talk to these kids, they get to know these children - these kiddos, and so on. So I commend you all for doing that and the bus company - and correct me if I'm wrong, they do have a certain determination as to what size bus they're going to send. Am I correct on that?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yep, you're correct. So we technically have 3 different bus sizes. We have kind of your standard regular transportation.

Alderman Klee

But a tinier (inaudible) ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

You have mid-size and then you have a smaller, normally Special Education ..

Alderman Klee

Right.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

…bus that also tends to have a wheelchair lift.

Alderman Klee

Yeah, and I did see that.

And the other comment that I have is you were right about the hellfire that we went through with the bus situation. At that point, I was getting people calling me saying that their kids were on the bus for 90 minutes, or sometimes even 2 hours, and by the time they got home, did their homework, and everything they had no other time. So, you know, I hope we can keep that bus ride for the kids less than 60 minutes because it does affect everything that they do from that point on - their homework, and everything, and if you're really looking at the needs of the children and the kiddos, I think it's very important to do this. Thank you.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Absolutely.

Chairman Dowd

The other thing if you notice, the high school - sometimes there are busses that aren't First Student. They're from Merrimack and I can't remember the others I've seen but there are some other busses from out of town that pick up their students that are going to Nashua for one reason or the other.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Alright, so this .. Oops, sorry Derek.

Alderman Thibeault

Sorry. Yeah, I just want to add and a question. So you’re right Dr. Andrade about changing of the routes. I've seen that in my neighborhood - changing of them in the first 10 days.

So First Student. So last year was the first year of the contract but it wasn't the first time we've used them, correct?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Correct, yup.

Alderman Thibeault

And so last year was that big bump that that's where we got a lot of - I don’t want to say complaint but just a lot of like - hey, why is this so much? Why is the school budget going up and again this year, it's going up 15% which again because of the way you guys have the contract structured it's in the beginning. You had said before that we had three RFPs and can you explain why we didn't pick the other two last year? Just because if new people walked in here and they didn't hear us last year and which I'm sure it happens, can you explain why we didn't go with the other two2 compared to First Student?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah, absolutely. Primarily was because of cost. First Student from a costing standpoint was the best price based off of the RFP. The other two companies coming forward would have cost us significantly more than what we're currently paying. One of the companies, they didn't even have like a fleet of busses so there was going to be a cost to go ahead and find a place to store all the busses plus buy roughly 100 busses for us. Because they do have a couple busses almost as like backup, right? If one breaks down, they still have a job to do. So it really was that and then the partnership. We've had a good standing relationship with First Student.

Last year was clunky and I can't say it was just First Student. We had a new transportation system. We had a turnover in the Transportation Director seat. I think I played transportation point of contact for a while so it was clunky for families for sure. I hope this year is better and again to Dr Andrade's point if it's not, please call. Be happy to even make an adjustment if we need to right now for various reasons.

Alderman Thibeault

Great. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

The other thing people don't understand sometimes is First Student has a huge facility on Burke Street.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

That is correct.

Chairman Dowd

For housing, maintaining busses, repairing them, and it's not just for the Nashua busses. It's for several communities around here. They all operate out of Burke Street. Any other questions before we move on? Seeing none, go ahead.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

All right. Next slide here, Mr. Sullivan. If I don't answer your question, please let me know but I think this is where you were going.

So based off of everything we've talked about if we went ahead and rolled over the budget plus did these increases - major increases for FY 2027, what we would be coming forward with is an 8.8% increase. We know that is not feasible. We understand and that is without benefits. We understand that is a long shot that would put a huge tax increase for all of the residents. So we are not doing that but I did want to go ahead and point out, again, year over year what is our major increases related to the budget? What makes up this overall pie chart? Really 75-80% of it is our labor and benefits. You got some utilities in there, transportation as we talked about is increasing, tuition out of district is district is increasing, your Special Education pupil support services. That's where your contract services sits. Also your OT, your PT services are in there, and then all other expenses is your supplies, your school level budgets, etc. So again, it would be an 8.8% increase. That is not what we're asking for.

Alderman. Sullivan did we answer your question or did you want to point something out?

Alderman Sullivan

No, that's good. Thank you.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Thank you.

Alderman Thibeault

So I know you're probably going to answer this but because I see it on this slide, I figure I'll bring up the elephant in the room. So 45% of this - in this proposed 8.8% is the special ed support services. Now I know out there in the world there's truth, myth, whatever that you're proposing to - I don't want to use the word “segregate” - that's what people are using but pool or try to do something where special ed students are in classes together in one school and maybe because the 45% increase would have been too much, this is a way to get that cost down. Can you just - I’m giving you open floor to speak about that a little bit because I hear different things out there and if it becomes a segregation, I don't think I could support that. So that's kind of what I'm trying to give you an opportunity to address.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we actually have a couple slides just in case that came up tonight.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay, I can wait.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Just so we've kind of prepared for that.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we'll get into that a little bit and just for everyone to know, there's no like Special Education School.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So no matter what school students may be assigned to, there will always be opportunities for inclusion. They will be with general education students.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay. I can wait till the slide.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah. So I just, yeah.

Alderman Thibeault

Sure.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. I have a question regarding the utilities from a member of the audience because they couldn't speak at the beginning. How was the electricity budget calculated? What rates were assumed? The Energy Manager told us that the City was buying a tool to be used specifically for eliminating energy costs. Did you use that tool?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So the energy increase did go through an RFP process, I believe, and we can clarify that we worked in conjunction with the City of Nashua to make sure that we were following all proper channels and unfortunately based off of the increase with a lot of things, we are seeing a pretty big increase in electricity this year.

Alderman Johnson

May I get a follow up? Yeah, we did all these solar panels on the schools. How is that saving us money? Are we getting a good return on the money because I remember Mr. Donovan was saying that we weren't at one point? So are we starting to see a return on the dollar or was this a mistake to put all these solar panels up?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So I hate to follow Mr. Donovan's commentary but we are not necessarily seeing a significant return on the investment at this time. Mr. Smith did go ahead and do a presentation, I believe, to the Finance and Operations Committee a couple months ago on what is the overall kickback that we are getting from the several solar panels that are on our buildings. We are getting some back. I think at this point, it probably hasn't been enough time for us to be seeing that certain percentage back that we as a District had hoped but again, we are seeing a little bit but probably not where we expected longer term.

Alderman Johnson

I'm so glad I didn't vote for that.

Chairman Dowd

I can say that the electricity increase would have been significantly more had we not had the solar panels on the school buildings we have, plus the high school was completely - had a complete energy efficiency program that saved a lot of money and electricity in the high schools. There are other aspects of energy savings that Mr. Smith is trying to put forward with LED lighting in a lot of the schools.

Alderman Johnson

Can I do a follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. I can't remember what was the cost - the total cost for us to do all of these schools with the solar panels to get the return on the dollar?

Chairman Dowd

Zero.

Alderman Johnson

It didn't cost us anything.

Chairman Dowd

Didn't cost us anything. It's a public/private partnership. I don't want to answer for ..

Alderman Johnson

But that's okay.

Chairman Dowd

But I was involved with that and ..

Alderman Johnson

Because I wasn't on the Joint Special.

Chairman Dowd

…the companies installed them. We get the benefits from the electricity. Of course, they get a profit too.

Alderman Johnson

Of course.

Chairman Dowd

It was put in by private investors and at the end of I think it's 5 or 6 years, we have the opportunity to buy the systems if we wanted to or we can just continue.

The other thing if the government goes through and allows us, then we can use batteries. We can store electricity from the not used in those schools and run the schools even longer with the electricity we generate on the schools. So there are things coming downstream but we have to change certain people in Washington before because they've just cut the public/private partnership out.

Alderman Johnson

Let's not talk about Washington. We're talking about local government.

Alderwoman Kelly

I was just gonna bring up the Power Purchase Agreement. As I recall, we did a Power Purchase Agreement so didn't cost us up front and that return on our investment will come when we have the opportunity to buy them.

I also want to point out that there's a misconception that the solar on your house goes into your house. It goes out back into the grid and then comes back. So when all of the energy prices goes up, it still goes up. It's not like you're just harvesting into your home.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you. I'm just looking at what you've used so far up into March 30th, I guess, for electricity and it looks like if you plan it out for the rest of the budget season here, it's going to be right about almost spot on to where we budgeted last year. So I mean we're not coming in - you know sometimes people say oh, why didn't you budget - why'd you budget so much over when it was so much under? In this case, it looks like schools are going to be right on.

I know in changing having McCarthy open up, and having that hopefully more efficient, and I know we've used Elm Street a little bit but that's not under you guys anymore so that comes to us. So even though we have some savings there, that didn't translate enough to stop an increase in - I mean, I guess if they give you a higher rate, they give you a higher rate and we just got to do the best we can to negotiate that and whatever that rate goes up is what we end up having to pay. But I assume McCarthy must give us some value in just having more efficient. I mean Elm Street was old and probably not so efficient to run I would assume.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

I'd be happy to re-share the presentation that Mr. Smith did present at the Finance and Ops Meeting for the Board of aldermen.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay. Sure. Thank you.

Alderman Klee

Yeah, just a quick question. If you don't know it offhand, that's fine. What are we paying for kilowatt hour? Do we know that - based on the contract?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

I'm not 100% positive.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

I wouldn't want to quote that so let me follow up for you.

Alderman Klee

Yes, just share it with ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yup.

Alderman Klee

…Alderman Dowd.

Chairman Dowd

But I believe the School Department has a separate contract than the City does.

Alderman Klee

Right, yeah they do.

Chairman Dowd

With a lower rate and Mr. Smith could answer that.

Alderman Klee

Okay, thank you.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

All right, so the next slide here actually is a slide that was shared earlier in September. So there was a presentation that was done September 9th of 2025, again, at a Finance and Operations Committee meeting related to Special Education and just some of the increase that we've seen year over year.

So I wanted to include some of the slides in our budget presentation for some clarity. So a couple things to point out. Contract Services has dramatically increased over the past 4 years. Back in Fiscal Year 2022, we spent about $33,000 and for Fiscal Year 2026 at this point, we had originally said we were going to spend close to $4 million. That amount has changed. You'll see later in the presentation.

With that being said, please remember we don't have ESSER Funds anymore. I continue to say there is no ESSER money tray sitting in the backyard at District Office. It's the reality. So in addition what truly has changed? There's been a change in our student demographics. Again as we saw, a decrease in enrollment with an increase of the proportions of special education students that have been identified. This was prior to covid and it's a lot harder now to hire some of these teachers, some of these support staff, individuals to come into our schools. It's not just us as Nashua School District that is struggling - it's nationwide for sure. Not a lot of staff are going into teaching positions unfortunately.

Just some historical information related to ESSER. Again, ESSER funds are now gone. There were a couple activities that we did spend some ESSER dollars on so related to ESSER 1, 2, and 3. You can see the amount that we originally spent on contract services related to Special Education and then part of the presentation again, we'll go through exactly the increases related to contract services and tuition out of district. Next slide, please.

Alright, so an overview of our Special Education out of district student enrollment. So these are the students that we cannot support in house as the Nashua School District. So unfortunately, we do need to go ahead and send them out of district. So over the last 5 years, we have some numbers up on the screen of how many current students we have as tuition out of district. These numbers can drastically change day to day. Knock on wood, we potentially could receive a call tomorrow and there's a couple kiddos that are court placed here. We can't support their needs then we do need to send them out of district. If that is the case, some of these out of district placements per student does cost anywhere from $75,000 all the way up to about $300,000 - $350,000 per student. It is a cost that unfortunately we do not have a lot of control over. We are seeing a slight decrease this year in our out of district students with roughly 111 students as out of district at this time.

Chairman Dowd

Can I just ask a question? I just read something that the State over a certain amount of money for these types of students is supposed to pay like 80% over a certain dollar amount and they're not coming anywhere close to it.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

That is correct.

Chairman Dowd

Can you address that?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah, that is correct. So there is what they consider a cap. So depending on the student’s needs, there are caps anywhere from like $75,000 up to like $150,000. If we have met that cap for the student, then their estate is supposed to go ahead and reimburse us or pay for that remaining service. We are seeing that decreased as well.

Chairman Dowd

But they aren't giving us that extra money.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

That is correct.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. If you can go back two slides please. I just want to see - I just want to - I want to square this. If I'm reading that right, the cost of Special Education has gone up 121x since Fiscal Year 2022. Our student population has gone up less than 1%. Help me math that math.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So I don't want to punt your question. Can you give me two more slides and I'll show you some more numbers that I think you're going to have more questions around.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay, alright.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Please.

Chairman Dowd

You’re always ahead of the game, John.

Alderman Sullivan

I know. I should just wait.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Sorry.

Alderman Sullivan

I’ll just wait.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

It's the next slide after this, I promise.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Alderman Lopez

Do you think we’re being led down a path? What kind of…?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So the slide here up on screen is Special Education costing funding sources. Sometimes it kind of gets a little cloudy on what are the funding sources that we receive or what are the expenses that we need to go ahead and spend related to special education? So it's helpful to share that we have the operational budget, which is essentially what you folks are voting on. We also get an IDEA Grant every single year. This is related to our students with individual learning disability plans. We have a Special Revenue account, we have a trust fund account, and then we do receive State revenue related to special education. Next ..

Alderman Johnson

Can I ask a question quickly?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan – I mean Alderman Johnson.

Alderman Johnson

What is the percentage the federal government gives us on the IDEA?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So IDEA from an estimate standpoint for next year, and again it's on a slide coming in a couple minutes, but we received this year about $3.6 million in IDEA.

Chairman Dowd

All set?

Alderman Johnson

Yup.

Chairman Dowd

Okay, continue.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Alderman Sullivan, I think this is a slide we're going to talk about.

Alderman Sullivan

Look at this baby.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah, sorry for all the numbers but I think this was the cleanest way to explain this story. So Contract Services specifically related to Special Education. So if we look back from Fiscal Year 2022, again, we had about $30,000 budgeted related to our Contract Services. Again, this was during ESSER so this does not (the asterisks up at the top) does not include any ESSER funds. We spent about $33,000 in 2022.

Let's hop to Fiscal Year 2025. So back in 2025 just last year, we had $1.6 million budgeted. That was a makeup of 1.5 out of the Operational Budget, $125,000 in Special Revenue, and we spent in totality between both Operation and Special Revenue $3.5 million. So you can see from 2022, a little bit of spending. ESSER took care of a majority of it. In 2023, we had about $2 million that was covered through ESSER. So you're not seeing that impact the Operational Budget.

In 2024, you're seeing some hit to the Operational Budget, right? We originally only budgeted $190,000 between the Operational Budget and Special Revenue. Out of those two funding sources, we spent $3.1 million plus in ESSER 3, we spent about $2 million. Fast forward to this year, and I made a presentation about this back in September and we've been talking about this throughout the last several months, the budget we put forward for Special Education Contract Services last year, which was an increase. You can see it was an increase from what we originally budgeted in 2025 - it was $2.2 million.

I am forecasting at this point that we are going to spend roughly $7.9 million in Contract Services this year. The actuals through March 31st of 2026 is $4.2 million. Again, the reason for that right, we're not seeing a lot of teachers going to teaching positions, especially our Special Education teaching positions. We're not seeing our paraeducators being hired directly through the District. We have a substantial amount of them but we are seeing roughly about 66 Para's and Behavioral Techs that we're currently contract servicing this year.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah, that's exactly what I was going to say.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

Questions?

Alderman Sullivan

Thanks. So if I read this correctly what I think I'm seeing is really the shift in Fiscal Year '24 to '25. That's where the big jump is because that's when ESSER went away. So what we're not seeing in the prior years is what ESSER is doing in the background.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

That is correct.

Alderman Sullivan

We don't see it because it's not tracked, and we have no idea what size the programs are, and maybe we say we don't care because someone else is paying the bill.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

I want to say with ESSER we absolutely have tracking on it. So I don't want it to be misunderstood that there's no tracking or no accounting system related to what ESSER funds were spent on because there definitely is.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Can I have a follow up on that?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

From an operational budget standpoint, you are accurate in saying that the $2 million that was spent back in 2023 and 2024 is not reflective in this chart because ESSER is a separate funding source. It is grant funding.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. So if you were to put ESSER on there - put it on the on the chart, you wouldn't see such a spike?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

I think you're still going to see a spike. You're probably not going to see as drastic of an increase between '23 and '24 as you're seeing and then really last year and this year, pretty substantially we're seeing a big increase.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay and I don't want to take up the Committee's time but this was covered in September?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yep. So I did a presentation on September 9th of 2025. I'd be happy to send it along if folks can't find that.

Alderman Sullivan

Yeah, I'd appreciate that.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

On truly a deep dive of all of this back then, I thought we were going to be right around $4 million.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Wow.

Chairman Dowd

Okay, so that'll be an action item.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. We talked a lot about paras. I know that we've increased some incentives and I know that we've worked on their contract to try to bring more into our like full time staff. Has that been successful? I hear, you know, 66 of those pairs are contracted and then I guess my follow up to that is what would this look like if all of the para's that we can actually hire full time were hired full time?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

I just want to clar - what do you mean like what would it look like? We would have 66 less contractors in?

Alderwoman Kelly

Correct.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Right, so we budgeted for 372?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yup.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Paraeducators. So we have roughly about 60 openings. So we have about 300 Nashua employees – 316 and then the other 60 paraeducators are RBT or contractors. So just for a quick Superintendent math, you know, like paraeducators like we budgeted around $30,000. A paraeducator from a contract that might be anywhere from $45,000 to $70,000. If we bring in an RBT or BT, that's some of the needs of the students, that can be anywhere from $75,000 to $100,000. If we bring in a contractor who's a teacher that's over six figures, it's anywhere from $100,000 to about $120,000. So when we're only budgeting $30,000 or $50,000 for a paraeducator or a first year teacher, it's really hard to make up that difference when we're moving salary from - a transfer from salary and wages into contract services. It's just not making up the difference.

Alderwoman Kelly

Follow up, please.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we wouldn’t be at ..

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah, so we wouldn't be at $3 million.

Alderwoman Kelly

Yeah, that was kind of where I was going.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Right, yup.

Alderwoman Kelly

You said - I know your rough Superintendent math. You said $30,000 is about what it would cost. Does that include benefits or not include…?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

It does not include benefits.

Alderwoman Kelly

…benefits? Okay. Do you know what the cost is with benefits?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

We usually see about a 30% on average of a benefit cost. Again to Dr Andrade's point, we are able to move some of the wage money to offset some of this cost but again with that significant delta, you're talking $3 - $4 million right there in the paraeducators.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

And if I may, we're going to touch upon some of the staffing constraints. So we'll touch upon it a little later.

Chairman Dowd

By the way Alderman Sennott if you have anything just speak up because we can't see you if you raise your hand.

Alderman Sennott

Gotcha.

Chairman Dowd

Okay, thanks.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Alright, next slide please unless there's questions.

Alright, this one's just a cleaner version from a chart standpoint. It might be a little bit easier on the eyes but it does go ahead and show the similar story of where we're actually going to see projected this year's costs related to contract services.

Next slide. Alright the other big bucket is our tuition out of district. So we can see back in 2022, again, between the Operational Budget and Special Revenue, we've roughly budgeted about $5.9 million in 2022. We spent about $5.3 million. We saw a little bit of an increase in 2023 that jumped to just over $6 million of cost that was spent.

In 2024, we saw it jump to about $7 million for tuition out of district. Again in '24, we budgeted between the Operational Budget and Special Revenue about $6.1 million. So again, we are over budget just about $930,000.

In 2025, again, we were over budget by almost a million dollars in out of district and as of right now, we're looking a little bit lower looking to finish this year probably about $7.1 million in tuition out of district. Next slide. Again, just a chart to show this trend over the last five years related to tuition out of district.

This next slide is a revenue slide. How much revenue do we actually go ahead and pull in for the Special Education programs that we run? The way that we generate revenue here is through our Signs of Learning Program, our Brentwood Program, and then any students actually that are court placed, we can go ahead and receive revenue on services that they require. We've seen a significant increase over the last several years related to this. The tuition that does come in, this goes directly into our Special Revenue Account. Last year, we collected over $445,000 more than anticipated. This year as of now, we've brought in $991,000 and we're projected to end right around $1.4 million.

Alright, more on revenue. So the revenue that we receive through various funding sources for next year's projection, I'm looking at about $67 million. How is that broken up? Medicaid - so far Medicaid we've collected about $416,000. We're only a couple months left. I do think we'll collect more than the $500,000 that was budgeted but you can see in Fiscal Year 2025 when I came in, there really was a huge push and additional training to the staff to go ahead and do the Medicaid billing that is required for us to receive this revenue. We ended up bringing in over a million dollars last year.

The other funding sources just to point out on here. So the Special Education Aid, that aid is from our special education population. We've seen it kind of hover around roughly a million dollars year over year. So far this year, we're actually seeing a percentage a little higher than the prior years. So when I ran these actuals, we've actually brought in $1.4 million at this time.

State Adequacy Aid. From the projection at this point, we're seeing it to be slightly lower next year than what we currently have received. Again, this is an estimate. The State Adequacy Aid could potentially change. Just for awareness, there is a State Adequacy Aid calculator out there. If anybody truly wants a deep dive on it, I'm more than happy to sit with them but just from a high level standpoint, we do receive roughly about $4,800 per student related to State Adequacy Aid. In addition if the student is identified as ELL or special education, there is an additional - almost like supplemental money that we receive for those students that are identified. Similar to our free and reduced lunch population if they have an application that is approved, there is a little bit of an additional amount that we receive under that State Adequacy Aid. Again, this is truly just an estimate for Fiscal Year '27 that we're looking at to receive.

Then vocational tuition is related to our CTE program. You'll actually see so far this year, $329,000 has been collected. We're seeing a lot more CTE students come to the Nashua School District. Again, because we have such great offerings related to our CTE program. So we're hopeful that continues but as of so far, we definitely have seen an increase there.

<u>Chairman Dowd</u>

Just for the general public, could you explain what CTE is? I think we all know but a lot of people don't.

<u>Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer</u>

Yep. So it is – oh did you want to take that one?

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

No, go ahead. You're on a roll, I mean go.

<u>Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer</u>

It is our classes at the high school levels that basically prep them for the real world. So there's several courses. Some are like the cosmetology classes, some are automotive classes. We have a new class or a new program coming next year related to fire services and police services. There - I'm missing a ton of them. There's mechanics, building ..

Chairman Dowd

Food service.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So, yeah. We have the second largest Career Technical Education Center in the State, so.

So I was just going to ask Ms. De Gray a clarifying question. So when we say we receive the revenue, can you just - who receives the revenue?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yep. So the revenue - anytime we receive this section of revenue, it comes directly to the Nashua. It comes right here to City Hall and it's deposited into the revenue accounts.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. We had an offline chat before we started tonight and you mentioned that the cost to educate students about $18,000 plus/minus. What is the cost to educate a special ed student?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So that cost definitely varies. So when we do the DOE25 State reporting, that is a pretty substantial report in partnership with the City of Nashua that we have to do every October/November. That's what gives us that per pupil cost. So that's the $18,000 roughly that you're referring to. That's the average cost per student.

Now it absolutely costs more for us to go ahead and educate the special education students based off of various factors whether they have OT/PT services, right, depending on what that kind of service grid is in their IEP. Related to the report, we don't necessarily break out our regular ed students against our special education students but if there's analysis - unless Dr Andrade wants to add some more, we could get kind of a rough estimate of cost per pupil but what I can share is we definitely do not get enough revenue from the State related to probably all students really.

Alderman Sullivan

Right. Could I just have a follow up, please.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Bigger picture question. I watched the meeting on April 27th and Special Education - it was a lot of time spent on that and so I went down a little rabbit hole. What I found out - and maybe you've had this discussion at the Board level so I apologize if you had - but there is research that shows that if you spend effort – read/money on early development before the age of 5, that money spent - the ROI and educational outcomes for those students changes. Has that question been explored at the District level because if we do it, the revenue that we get from other towns if they're not investing in early childhood, that might be an opportunity where Nashua can be that early childhood later on special education, I guess, I'm stumbling for the words but the preventer. It's almost the antidote to help curb that a little bit and try to stop that population from growing thus costs and whatnot.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So twofold. So Franklin Street is our early intervention for students with - and we started providing services at age 3.

Alderman Sullivan

Great.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

To some of our students.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we know two years ago - so Franklin Street, I think we have close to 250 students in two sessions. We're about 200 students in our pre K program. I think the community be happy to hear and we announced this about a month ago. So about 2 years ago, we disbanded our Title I Pre-K Program that was in place when we lost about $500,000 in Title I money. Next year, we're bringing back to your point Mr. Sullivan, our Pre-K programs. So we'll be opening up 5 pre-K programs in our Title I schools and that's exactly to your point. So we know that's where the - it's a worthy investment so we restructured our Title I Grant so that we can reopen those classrooms so that more students will have access to our Pre-K programs and early intervention.

Alderman Sullivan

Alright. Thank you.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Again, that'll be funded through Title I and not the operating budget.

Alderman Sullivan

Great. Thank you. That's great.

Alderwoman Kelly

Sounds like the previous speaker was pushing for universal preschool.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah.

Alderwoman Kelly

I have a question around per pupil cost. So there's been a lot of talk around the idea that we have less people coming to our schools so why isn't our budget going down? So can you talk to me about if someone leaves our District do we have $18,000 less in costs?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So the tuition definitely – so the revenue that we receive from the State does follow the student. So if we have students that do go ahead and move out, we would go ahead and lose a revenue source.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

However, right, so we're not taking a bus off the road. We're not laying off a teacher. We're not turning the lights off in a classroom. We're not turning off heat. So some of those fixed costs if we lose 100 students, so we'll lose some State aid. However, the cost to operate a building is still going to be there. So and what's hard in some of the arguments is if we lose 100 students to charter schools, if we lose 100 students to - why aren't we restructuring? Because the students might not be from the same grade, same classroom, or the same school. So losing 100 students across – we'll just pick on elementary - across 12 schools, does nothing to our operating budget. We just lose State aid but we will still have the same amount of busses, same amount of teachers, same amount of electricity that we're operating. I think that's where you're going.

Alderwoman Kelly

If I could have a follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderwoman Kelly

Actually, through you potentially to what my colleague across the aisle here. I know there were a couple of bills at the State to try to increase the per pupil cost. I believe they all died but I was just wondering if you know what happened?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah, that's still not going very well.

Alderwoman Kelly

Yeah, I kinda figured. Thank you. I'm all set.

Chairman Dowd

Alright.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Alright, this next slide is related to the Federal grants that we receive every year. We actually just received the preliminary numbers for Title I, Title II, and Title IV for next Fiscal Year. Again, it's a preliminary number at this point but they're actually a little bit higher than what the estimates are up on screen. But in totality, we roughly receive anywhere between $11.2 million for State aid. For next year, again, I would say we're going to be roughly right around $10 million and then we do get some type of indirect costs back. That's almost like an administration fee that we're able to charge.

Alright. These next 2 slides and again, I'm more than happy to dig in on a special conversation related to Special Revenue accounts. There was a presentation in the April Finance and Ops meeting - sorry to keep referring back to that - but it's been a year of a lot of education. But there was a big presentation that I did related to the Special Revenue accounts in last month's Finance and Ops meeting. If folks would like that, I'd be more than happy to send it along.

This is a snapshot of all of our Special Revenue accounts. Folks can see there are various accounts listed. The thing to remember about Special Revenue is this isn't inside our operational budget. This is additional funding that we have. All of these Special Revenue accounts are self-sustaining. What does that mean? The first one up on the screen – 2120 Department which is Food Service. Food Service is a self-sustaining program. So if we do not bring in enough to go ahead and sustain the Food Service Department per se, then we will have to go ahead and supplement that in our operational budget.

The next slide is related to our expenses. Anytime we go ahead and build the Special Revenue budget, your revenue and your expenses always need to offset. So these are the expenses related to the Special Revenue accounts. Any questions on Special Revenue before I turn it back over to Dr. Andrade?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we're going to go back to Special Education and talk about some of the changes and what the impact on some of the - that could be a relief on the budget kind of moving forward. So I just want to - give me a couple seconds to just give a little background of some of the work that already taken place this year. So decisions weren't made in a vacuum. Over the course of this past year our interim Special Ed Director Tom Beer has worked with our building Principals, Case Managers, Special Education Teachers at the elementary level to look at the quality of our Special Education Program.

So this has been an ongoing work group for the last year and one of the concerns that emerged was the lack of clarity in our Special Education Programs whether it was around timelines, requirements, or notifications. The other concern was there was a lack of clarity on how students were placed into intensive needs programs and we're only talking about intensive needs programs. It's not a student with a reading or a math disability. We're talking about students who are intensive needs or mild/moderate that need more intensive services.

So through the work group, we saw a lot of mismatches in some of how our rosters and classrooms were being placed. So we looked to address those concerns and we also looked at a trend that students who were being referred to intensive needs were actually having more behavioral problems and they were accessing more ABA - Applied Behavioral Analysis

Services - that were needed in the classrooms. So we saw that.

The other thing that came out that emerged was the program at Sunset Heights was actually being really successful and there was a growing need on how do we continue that program. What we saw in that classroom, there was a high level of support from BCBAs or Behavior Technicians, resulting in increased learning, and engagement, and so we really went back to the group and how do we move forward. So there's been conversations about neighborhood schools, and this goes to why do we have 43 special education busses.

So what you see on this slide across the top is the neighborhood schools - Amherst Street, Bicentennial through Sunset Heights and then down the bottom, you can see across the left hand side is the schools that we actually have our intensive needs services in and you'll see that not every elementary school has intensive needs classrooms or moderate classrooms. So students are already traveling. So we'll pick on - what's highlighted is at Amherst Street is only 5 students who live in the Amherst Street neighborhood who actually attend Amherst Street programs. The other 13 students who are identified for intensive needs programs are bussed across the District. So you can see at Bicentennial there's 5 students, at Birch Hill there's only 1 student in their neighborhood school, at Charlotte Avenue – I can't read that far – that's 9.

Alderman Klee

9.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

I can look down. Thanks. At Dr. Crisp, Fairgrounds, and Ledge Street, there are no Special Education Intensive Needs programs there. So the 30 students at Dr Crisp were identified in Intensive Needs Programs are all bused to a different school. They're not in their neighborhood school. Same thing with Fairgrounds and Ledge Street as well as Mount Pleasant. So you can see across this chart that we are bussing a lot of students around the District and that they're not in their neighborhood schools, or there's not Intensive Needs Programs in every single school. So this has been the model in Nashua for many years. I see a hand over here.

Alderman Klee

Yep, but I want to wait.

Chairman Dowd

Yes.

Alderman Klee

I apologize for interrupting you but when you're talking about this can you explain if Amherst Street has an Intensive Needs special class - why all 18 students aren't there?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Because, yep...

Alderman Klee

When you're through talking.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yep. So there's different levels of support, right. So we have 3 levels or 4 levels of Intensive Needs classrooms. So we have some students in our most intensive needs classrooms that may have less than an hour of inclusion a day...

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

…and then we have moderate classrooms that might have anywhere from 1 hour to 3 hours of inclusion and then we have intensive services that might have anywhere from 3 to 6 hours.

Alderman Klee

Perfect.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

And then we also have Signs of Learning classroom which is at New Searles. So if a student needs services in our Signs of Learning whether it's hearing impaired, they're at New Searles or we have our Project Achievement classrooms currently at Broad Street and Birch Hill and those are for students that may need more services related to trauma or behavior.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we have these programs across the schools in different places. What we ended up finding out and we did a study - and good segway here - is that through this process, students were being placed into available seats. So this is a current roster in a classroom and so you can see some of our dilemma we have. This is a Grade 1 and Grade 2 classroom. You see in the in the right hand corner the hours in general education. So we have a student who has access to a group para but he or she – that student - is in general ed classrooms 5.5 hours a day in the same classroom with a student who has only 1 hour of inclusion with a group para. How is a paraeducator in 2 places at the same time? They can't be in a regular ed classroom and in the Intensive Needs classroom, right? So we actually have to hire another paraeducator for that classroom so that the student can actually - one of those students can access their services whether in the general ed classroom or in the intensive needs classroom.

So what we are looking at in our reconfiguration is to balance out our classrooms so that students with like abilities and similar inclusion hours are grouped together so that they can actually receive the services in the least restrictive environment. So this is the reconfiguration that's going on. So whether it's a classroom moving to Broad Street - Broad Street currently already has classrooms that are intensive needs services and inclusion is happening there. So if we add another classroom at Broad Street, a student with 1 hour of inclusion services will still have 1 hour of inclusion time. There will be no change to this service grid. There's no segregation going on. There's no warehousing going on. Students will still receive their services in a general education setting that they currently have now.

What we're looking at is really balancing off these classrooms because it's a burden. It's hard on a Special Education Teacher or a para when they have such a range of abilities in one class. Who's coming, who's going, at what hour? What is in that IEP because the student that has 5.5 hours of inclusion is a lot different than the student who has 1 hour of inclusion. Could be 2 different curriculums, 2 different - like that is a lot to manage and it's hard to recruit teachers to come in and say manage this. So this is where the conversations and we'll get deeper into the kind of reconfiguration.

This is another sample. Again, this is our intensive needs. This is another classroom. Again, we have this is Grade 2 through 4 in one classroom. We have 4th Graders who have 5 hours of inclusion in the same class with 2nd Graders that have only 30 minutes of inclusion or 1 hour of inclusion. As a classroom teacher, how do you manage that? That is really difficult. So what we're looking to do in our new model is to reset. To actually define which services are at in our intensive needs classrooms, in our moderate classrooms, in our instructional services classrooms, in our project achievement so that we can maximize our resources so that students can be in the least restrictive environment so then that student – we'll pick on this classroom here. If that 3rd Grader is in a group para or the 3rd Graders are all in group para's, if there's an incident that happens in a regular ed classroom, all those students are coming back because we don't have enough adults. So students are actually not receiving the inclusion they have because of staffing in these classrooms. So we're trying to reset that aspect so that we do have the proper staffing and students are in the least restrictive environment. They're in the general ed setting as much as it's currently called for and so this is - maybe not the reconfiguration's the wrong word - but it's a reset on really defining what is our Special Ed Programs, what makes them special, and that students are in the right classrooms. Because this is, again, this is difficult.

This has been a practice that when I came here in 2022, I walked into a class action grievance from the union around Special Education because this practice was happening and it was stressing people out. It is hard to work in these environments. I think it's hard to recruit people in so this is the reset. We are not looking to segregate students. We are looking actually to make sure students are properly placed and that they receive the services that are currently called in their IEPs in the least restrictive environment. So this is an example of what would happen in a classroom next year and this is a current roster minus the student names. So you can see in this setting - in this classroom - most of the students who are assigned to this intensive needs classroom will be in a general ed setting most of the day and they'll come back to receive their services probably anywhere from 1.5 to 2 hours. So this is the direction that we're looking in our reconfiguration which will alleviate some of the stress on our teachers, that we're able to recruit teachers to come in, and we won't need contracted services. We'll be able to retain our paraeducators and clarify their roles and responsibilities and again if we can schedule better in this classroom, we don't need as many people so we won't have to rely on contractor services. So this is where we're looking for some of those efficiencies.

But I can't reiterate enough that the services in the students current IEPs are not changing. It might be the location and where they're receiving the services. It might not be at Amherst Street, some of the Amherst Street students - and I'll just pick on Amherst Street right now. Amherst Street is a Title I school and a paraeducator needs a different certification to work in a Title I school. We currently have budgeted for 25 paraeducators - 25-28 there abouts - say we'll call it 25. We have 18 contractors in Amherst Street because we cannot find paraeducators with the special certification to work in a Title I school and that's been over the last 4 years. We're moving those classrooms out of Amherst Street to Main Dunstable and Bicentennial - don't quote me - but they're going to 2 other schools that do not have a problem hiring paraeducators. So students will have more access to, again, general ed classrooms but we'll also know that we'll be able to recruit paraeducators to those schools and not rely as much on contractors if that makes sense.

So this is the conversations that we're having about their reconfiguration. We will be addressing this again on Monday night in much more detail but this is the conversations that's going on and it's not – and thank you, Mr. Sullivan for asking the questions about special ed costs - but we want to make sure that it's not a special ed and general ed conversation. I don't think you intended it that way so it's not an us against them. We need to educate all students properly but there is a cost associated with this and what the reconfiguration is doing is to reset some of these rosters and make sure that the students get what they need in the least restrictive environment.

<u>Alderman Klee</u>

Thank you. I just want to go back to the fact that a para in a Title I school needs more certification or different types of certification. That being the case, I assume that's because the student population within that group has different needs. Now if you just pull that student out and put them into a non-Title I school are we ..?

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

It's related to Title I regulations. So ..

<u>Alderman Klee</u>

Right.

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

…any Title ..

<u>Alderman Klee</u>

Which it's based on economic and so on.

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

Yeah.

<u>Alderman Klee</u>

But not different types of needs?

<u>Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools</u>

No. So I mean if you look at the Amherst Street, in the Amherst Street program, there's 29 students from Amherst Street. Only 5 are from the Amherst Street, right. So you have 2 students from different schools ..

<u>Alderman Klee</u>

Right.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

…that may or may not qualify for Title I.

Alderman Klee

Right.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

But it's really about the regulations of the Title I schools and who can work in there, so.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah in order to hire - to Dr Andrade's point - in order to hire a paraeducator, I think it's actually an Associate's degree that the paraeducator has to have and that again is required by the federal grant. So because they're Title I schools in order for us to qualify for that federal grant funds, we have to make sure that there's an additional criteria to those positions.

Alderman Klee

But it doesn't change the level of intensity. I heard you say that the IEP will remain exactly the same but it doesn't do an end run against the Title I because you're taking a Title I student who would normally qualify in a Title I school. I know I'm saying this wrong but I think you understand what I'm saying is Title I schools are defined as that for certain criteria.

Now if we pull the student that's out of it - and I can see by this thing here where you're talking about how there's only 5 students in Amherst that are actually Title I - maybe some of the other schools that are but when we're looking at some of those schools they're not Title I schools and they're going there needing this criteria. Correct?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yup.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So the IEPs at the end of the day will drive the amount of services but we want to make sure that we can properly staff those classrooms and I think by shifting some of the classrooms, we won't incur the contract service expense to it. We still meet the students needs.

Alderman Klee

Just one quick question if I may?

Chairman Dowd

Quick because we've got others who want to ask questions.

Alderman Klee

Yeah. No and I apologize for this but does it increase the transportation cost?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

We haven't analyzed that yet.

Alderman Klee

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So we'll be looking at because the rosters are still fluid and we haven't run it but I don't think it could get much worse.

Alderman Klee

Yeah a lot of them are being transported anyways, yeah. Okay, thank you. Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

Alright, thank you. So thank you for that explanation. I know that there's been lots of different stories being told and I think what you just described as a thoughtful working group that's been working together to come up with a plan. I'm gonna assume that the paras and teachers were also part of your working group. Can you just talk a little bit about the makeup of that group?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah, so that's exactly. There was teachers, principals. I think there was a separate working group for the paraeducators but Mr. Beer has met with - he had 5 or 6 different meetings over the course of the year to make sure that especially our Case Managers voice were heard and there's been frustration in this Department for years on how students are placed.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay and then if I could follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderwoman Kelly

Obviously, it's not going to be an overnight change in morale and ability to bring in new teachers or new paraeducators. Do you have a general sense of like - if we implement this next year, we think it's a couple of years before we can kind of reset? What do you think?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yeah. So we've met Dr. Scarpati and the elementary principals have met with all the paraeducators or teachers who will be impacted in these moves and some educators. We just had our opening so teachers are selecting voluntary transfers or involuntary transfers. So some teachers have elected to move. Some have stayed within their building. So it's been a pretty seamless process. You know, some people are paraeducators want to stay in their home school, right, so we'll look at that.

The other important factor is that out of these 228 students or thereabouts, we will be meeting with every family to describe the change. It will be through an IEP process. So it's like families have already received a letter saying that changes will be happening and that will be followed up with an individual meeting with that family and talk about those changes.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay, and I have one follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderwoman Kelly

So you were talking about the Title I requirements and I believe you said that whatever school we were talking about there were 18 that you had to pay out of contracted services. So my question is at that point does the funding of the contracted services outweigh the federal dollars that you get?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah, it absolutely does. So the 18 paraeducators for that example in Amherst Street, that's coming directly out of our operational budget. That does not include the cost that we're spending in other areas with the Title I Grant.

Alderwoman Kelly

So this reconfiguration will address that?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Correct.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yup.

Alderwoman Kelly

Great, thank you.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

And I think just 2 points to highlight. I think to Dr. Andrade's point, right, this reconfiguration of the intensive needs classrooms, again, we're not saying we're shifting all of these classrooms to one specific school. We're not picking one specific school to just have as an intensive needs school and again going back - thank you - to this slide, there's only about 15% of those students that are currently identified as intensive needs students that are sitting today in their home school. So by us going ahead and making this change, it's actually going to benefit these students more as well as make the teachers and the paras have a little bit of an easier workload coming in each day.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So all of the attending schools will remain the same next year. Amherst Street - we're moving 2 out of the 3 classrooms. There will be 1 classroom that remains and those are mostly our medically fragile students who've been there for a number of years. It's fully staffed by NTU paraeducators. They've been loyal to that building for years and years and we owe them a debt of gratitude of how they service and so we're leaving that classroom at Amherst Street. But they will be intensive needs programs at Amherst Street, Bicentennial, Birch, Broad Street, Charlotte, Main Dunstable, New Searles, Sunset next year. Again, making sure that there's full inclusion or inclusionary opportunities for all students in all buildings.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up?

Alderwoman Kelly

I have another question but I'll ask it at the end. Thank you.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Alright. So a couple more slides here. So the Board of Education as well as the Superintendent's recommendation is a 6% increase for Fiscal Year 2027’s budget. Next slide, please.

The breakdown of this would be as shared on screen. Again, this is a 6% prior to benefits in the benefit increase. So how do we - next slide please - how do we go ahead and get to a 6% increase and what do we have to do to get from that 8.8% increase now down to the 6%? It's roughly $3.8 million in total cuts. $2.4 million of those dollars were identifying to come from positions. We're recommending to go ahead and cut $450,000 from transportation and go ahead and reduce contract services by a $1 million dollars in order to hit a 6% increase if it is approved.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

If I just may here. The 21 teachers that - this is why I brought up the high school schedule. In the reconfiguration of eliminating some high school teachers but still offering the full program of studies. I don't have the exact number right now but out of those 21 teachers that we gave a reduction in force letter to or thereabouts - Mr. Hoffman probably has the right number in front of me but it's close to 10 or 12 teachers. It's not 21 teachers that are without a job. Some are retirements or some of the openings teachers have transferred in, so it's really a reduction of hard conversations with really 10 to 12 teachers who truly do not have a job for next year. So it's not the 21 and I think again, kudos to our HR department, our administrators working collaboratively with Mr. Hoffman. It's helped to soften the blow.

Chairman Dowd

So the Mayor cut you an additional ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yup.

Chairman Dowd

…half percent ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yup.

Chairman Dowd

…which is $600,000?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So, yeah, every half a percent is roughly $675,000.

Chairman Dowd

And can you dictate where that's coming from?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

We as a District will go ahead and step back if that is the proposal that is suggested and voted on. It will come primarily from positions and then we'll have to do some additional cuts in order to get to that 5.5%.

Chairman Dowd

Just wanted to get that out there for the record.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you. That was going to be my first question. I have a couple questions. So if that does come back and like you said that would be potential staff at that point. So I assume we’re gonna have to look for that money or that will be what ends up happening. So I just want to thank you again for clearing that up. I mean some of the things they said about you online, it made me good for a couple of days online so, you know, it took some of the heat off me.

So my questions so fast forward a month. We're at the school. The Mayor is getting the heat. You guys are in the audience and people come up to the microphone. Two questions for you that you're going to hear and I want to see how you answer them right now. I'll give you them both at the same time so I don't have to beg Alderman Dowd for a follow up. Why don't you just close a school? That's one. Two - and I'm not saying this is me - I'm saying it's what we're going to hear and so let's try to get it out in the open now.

The other thing is the Mayor told you 3%. You went 5.5%. Why don't you just go 3%? Now if you go 3%, what ends up happening? What do you cut if you had to hold to that 3% and how much damage does that do to the school program in Nashua?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Rock, paper, scissors?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Rock, paper, scissors – who's going? I'll start I guess and then Dr. Andrade can hop in if that's okay. I think I won rock, paper, scissors. So rough estimate to close the school is about $1.6 - $1.8 million. Why - I mean 3%. 3% is gonna be tough realistically. If we truly have to do 3%, you're talking positions. You saw our budget, right? 75 - 80% of our budget is people, personnel, staff. We've got 12 elementary schools to support; 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, and a preschool program. 3% would be extremely tough. You're going to see a lot of layoffs and a lot of cuts. You're also going to go ahead and see cuts from some of our various offerings that Nashua is so wonderful at which is CTE, some of our athletics, some of our sporting events. If we truly get cut down to 3%, it's going to shake a lot of trees.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

That's going nuclear. Another $3 million cut is all of our programs.

I'll go back to the first question and I really want to thank the Board of Aldermen. We're in the middle of a Facilities Master Plan Study. So I think and we reached out to the City to have Harriman come in and have a special BOA meeting to actually get the BOA's input on kind of next steps. We'll be having a community forum on May 20th and we'll have another meeting with the Board of Aldermen/Board of Education on our next steps.

So could we close the school – possibly but I think the bigger question is what's going to come out of the Facility Study and how do we come together as one Nashua to say what direction do we want to go? So we can start doing a band aid approach to say let's close one school here, one school there but that is really not a plan. That's reactionary. So we really want to look at is how do we take a proactive approach that the community can get behind because whether it's closing 1 school or 2 schools. I mean we've had conversations possibly about Mount Pleasant in the past, right?

We've also seen the community spark up when there's a possibility about closing New Searles, right? So we have the NIMBY - not in my backyard. So let's not close but what is going to be the investment in our buildings over the next 25 years? I'm hoping that's what comes out of the Facility Study but over the course of like - what did we look like in 5 years? So I think if we can support this 6% increase or the Mayor's 5.5%, we're also, I think, in position to look at our Facility Study. We invested $400,000 into that. Review it, look at those recommendations but we may have time starting in September to say this is our plan if we're closing a school to adequately plan for that based on the data that everyone agrees upon. Not like as Miss Johnson said like we've done studies in the past but we need to be unified on it and really start painting that picture. So it's not a punt but I think it's strategic planning.

So I think if we had a 3%, we're closing one school, right, and then that's just chaos, and its hundreds of positions that we're laying off. But I think really - and that's how I would answer that question - is let's look at the Facility Study. We made that investment because contrary is you spent $400,000 and you did whatever you did anyways without actually looking at the data. So why did you spend the $400,000? Like that's not a savings. So that's where I think really we need to look at that study and make a purposeful, proactive approach that the community can get behind, and that's when we start closing schools, and we see what's coming down the pike in 5 or 10 years. Again, that $3 million is – we're just gonna be bare bones and all the extra services that makes Nashua so special, those are going to be the first ones to go, so.

Alderman Thibeault

Great, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

So when the Mayor came out with that 3%, I asked him how would we possibly meet that 3% when all the cities and towns in New Hampshire are being hit with the same pressures. After all their cuts, Concord is around 13% increase. I think Merrimack's around 9%, and it's between 6% and 13% across the State because the State keeps flowing monies down to be picked up by your local communities, and they're not funding adequate education like the courts told them, and they're trying nine ways around it. I mean what do they expect? It's all coming down to property taxes and unless there's changes in Concord, that's the way it's gonna be.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I wanted to just comment on the on the Facilities Study. I had the pleasure of attending one of interactive discussions. I know Alderman Dowd was there and there were a lot of us from these Boards but I thought that they did an incredible job of really talking to a lot of different people, coming up with different scenarios but they also talked about like what do we want as a community and what does that look like? I thought that was very powerful, so. I think if anyone can come to the next one - you said it was ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

May 20th at Nashua South in the cafeteria.

Alderwoman Kelly

It was just - it was so interesting to see how they've kind of ..

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

6 o'clock.

Alderwoman Kelly

6 o'clock, there we go.

Unidentified Speaker

More sessions please for those who can't make that one specific session. More sessions.

Alderwoman Kelly

I do think that we sit here and we talk about numbers and we talk about facilities but there were some powerful stories from people who said, I'm a teacher at a different school and when my kids walk in, this is what their building looks like. I had a little guilt because my kid goes to me Main Dunstable and it's beautiful. It just got renovated. So, you know, thinking about it not just in dollars and cents but what do we want for our community? How do we attract families and other people to come in because this is a value that we have? So I really appreciated that and I'm going to end with an actual question.

I asked this then and I just want to make sure that I put this out there again because one of the biggest costs that we see is that out of district placement and there were some talk about trying to find some facilities when we built McCarthy but I just want to make sure it's front and center as we're looking at potential facility changes. Are there ways that we can bring that cost down by renovating buildings and being able to accommodate more kids in our out of district or in our District instead of sending them out of district?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yes, I think the simple answer and I think probably that goes into some of the reshaping what our services are and how do we adequately staff, right, because we know it's more than one great teacher with paraeducators to actually support our neediest students. So making sure there's access to school psychologists, BCBAs, OT, PT, social workers. So it's really a robust program but in the Facility Study, we talked about making sure that there's adequate space for our intensive needs classrooms and that aspect because we would hope to bring students back - K through 12.

Alderwoman Kelly

Great. Thank you.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. I'm going to ask questions from a member of the audience but he's not here anymore. He had asked me to please ask the questions for him. Give me one second, I took pictures of it. He wanted to know - there are about 269 open positions on the school website. I noticed that also. Are these included in the budget and what's the total cost for the salaries, benefits, FICA, pensions for these?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So the current positions that are posted are a mix of Fiscal Year ‘27 positions that have already been identified like your special education teaching positions, your paraeducators, etc. We still do have some positions posted for current school year and then you also have actually several positions sitting up there related to the crossing guards. We have about 16, I think, positions that are unfilled from a crossing guard standpoint. In total, the dollar amount I believe I shared with a Board of Education member that had a similar question - and I can forward this email along to the Board of Aldermen as well so everybody has the data - I think it's roughly about $6 million that you'll see.

Now the tricky piece is the benefits, right? We could make some hypothetical prediction of what these open positions potentially would elect for benefits. If you want to do that, we could talk about roughly a 30% delta of what that benefit cost is going to be. Those positions, again, are currently for Fiscal Year ‘27. Once this school year ends, we should be taking down all prior year positions and only leaving up current year positions.

Alderman Johnson

May I continue with some of these questions?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you because I also know that there was a Century 21 Grant back from I think 2021 or ‘20 and I had questioned that with an email to Dr Andrade. He gave me answers to a lot of questions that I had.

Okay. The next one - stipends actuals have exceeded the plan for the last couple years. Why is that and has it not been corrected for the 2027 budget?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So you're going to see an increase in stipends for various reasons. We've had some turnover in positions over the last couple years. When we do not have a position filled, you sometimes see a current staff member receiving a stipend in order to go ahead and fill in that position . So for example, we do have 2 interim Special Ed, excuse me, Interim Director and an Assistant Director right now. We have a couple people out on medical leave. So there are various reasons why stipends come into play. The stipend category though as well isn't just those unfilled positions. There's various reasons that people get stipends whether it's through the Teachers Contract and they're getting a stipend designated for a specific reason. So the stipend category is kind of like a catch all bucket of any stipends through the District.

Alderman Johnson

May I continue with these questions?

Chairman Dowd

Continue.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. Salary adjustments have been planned for several million dollars the last couple years but actuals have been zero. Why is that and why is there still budget for salary adjustments for 2027?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yep, good question. So when we think about salary adjustments, you need to look at wages or my suggestion would be that you look at the 51’s which is what I refer to as a 2 digit roll up kind of in like a totality bucket. So if we were to look at current year's budget and if you were to look at 331 actuals, I believe our total - sorry, let me just pull it up - our total wages, you'll see that line item still being zero. That's usually where we put kind of a placeholder for any contracts that we are currently in negotiations for.

So Fiscal Year ‘26 if folks recall, we did go ahead and negotiate our Teachers Contract. For Fiscal Year ‘27, we will go ahead and negotiate which we've already done a majority of it, negotiate our Clerical Union and our NASP or our Principals Union. You're never going to see a transfer from that line into wages. So again, that totality bucket of the 51’s which is all of your wages. So they would look at the proposed budget that's in front of you or hopefully in front of you. There’s some actuals in there as of 331. So 51 Salaries and Wages in total, the budget was $102,000,000 –$102.5 to be exact. As of 331, we spent about $66 million and again, you're not going to ever see that salary adjustment line move out of the 51900 of salary adjustments and move into the 51100, which is your wages full time. It's basically a roll up of the 51’s.

Alderman Johnson

May I continue?

Chairman Dowd

Continue.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. One of the FY27 objectives on page 216 is approving efficiency. Can you describe a couple of these efficiencies and what the cost savings are in the 2027 budget?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yeah, sure. So some of the efficiencies that we had talked about, again, is Contract Services. One could argue is it really an efficiency or not? We really need to hire these folks on our own, right? The Contract Service amount is just costing us an astronomical amount of money. As Dr Andrade mentioned earlier, we roughly budget for the paraeducators about $30,000. They're costing us anywhere between $45,000 and $100,000 through a contract agency. We really need to be driving down the cost related to Contract Services but again, it's kind of a catch 22. We need these staff in front of our students whether it's a special education teacher or paraeducator if it's mandated in an IEP.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Furthermore, I think we have to remember we're not making widgets, right? We're educating students. So sometimes when we talk about efficiencies what do we mean, right? Sometimes it's how do you make the assembly line faster? That's not our job, right? So sometimes it's really the efficiencies that we're looking at. The big one is at the high school. We're offering the same program of studies with a different schedule with less teachers. That is a major efficiency. That's, you know, down 22 teachers at the high school. That's an efficiency and I hate to say an efficiency is people, right, because that's somebody's job, that's somebody's name and at the end of the day, it's about educating students.

So, you know, some of the efficiencies might be around electricity or how get better there. That's what sometimes we're looking at but our efficiencies is delivery of services and so whether it's our Special Education Program of how do we staff better? How do we have a high school schedule that making sure that it's the right amount of teachers? So those are the major efficiencies that we're looking at. Do we have the right amount of adults in front of students? So I just want to be careful when we say efficiencies and we're not cutting off our nose to spite our face. I know that there was a couple questions that went up really fast.

Alderman Johnson

May I continue?

Chairman Dowd

Continue.

Alderman Johnson

Thank you. Last year the Board gave you $3 million. Has that all been spent through at this point or?

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

So that that money you're referring to of $3 million was remaining benefit money that was left over from prior year. That got transferred into the trust fund related to special education. In order to go ahead and offset those Contract Service costs that you saw this year which is going to be about $7.9 million, we absolutely had to go ahead and almost exhaust that trust fund.

In addition at some point depending on where we end this year, we might be coming back to this horseshoe to have a conversation of is it possible to go ahead and do some type of additional supplemental appropriation out of our Special Revenue Account?

Alderman Johnson

Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

So my question was around that. The way you get to the 6% is reducing Contracted Services by a million dollars but you're also sitting here telling me that we came in at $7 million. So is that even a realistic - the math doesn't math.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yep, it's a great question. I think internally we as the District need to do a better job of recruiting talent. We need to try to do what I would call some passive sourcing of truly reaching out there to try to find some of the talent on our own versus unfortunately, this year I think it was a very quick play to go directly to Contracted Services.

Alderwoman Kelly

So you'll be doing that pretty actively this year ..

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yes, we will.

Alderwoman Kelly

…and really trying to look at how you can do that. Okay, great. Thank you.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Yup.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. During the meeting last week - not my question but Miss Raymond asked it and I thought it was a very astute question - in regards to the Contract Services versus our own folks, she had made the suggestion do we try to raise the level of pay of our own folks that's a little bit more competitive to try to woo those people onto our payroll thus leaving us money. Because I would assume that maybe those Contract Services are for profit organizations. So there's some margin built in there for them to make a nice profit while we don't. So I thought that was a great question. Have you looked at it? Are you planning to?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

We started having internal conversations but it would be a conversation that we would need with the NTU to open up contracts.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Alderman Lopez

Can I just give you a direct invitation to set up a table at the Tree Streets Block Party because when you're trying to recruit people, like that's a population that really is looking for work, has a lot of diverse skills, and I think that's an example of things that you could do to engage the population of Nashua to get some of the paraprofessionals that you're looking for. There's a lot of younger people that are coming through those areas and I don't just, you know, I'm thinking the Tree Streets Block Party because I'm organizing it, and it's also on June 13th by the way just so I actually give you some actual information about it, but there's other events that are coming up which engage the community, the Nashua specific community, and I think there's a lot of people that just don't have an easy path to it and if they meet somebody, they shake hands with them, and they're given a description, they might be much more likely to apply and give it a shot.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

If I may respond. So that's where we use ESS as a recruiter and subbing. So Nicole our representative from ESS, she's everywhere in Nashua. She's at the Library, she's at the grocery store, she's putting up flyers. So she's actively recruiting so we'll give her that reference as well but she'll set up a table in someone's living room if that's gonna help. So and that's what we're looking for that and that's what we use the Contract Servicing and that company to do.

Alderman Lopez

And that's the same as hiring directly to the District so that we're not using outside contractors.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yup. So we just have to do a better job at it, so.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

I think the other .. Oops ..

Chairman Dowd

Go ahead.

Krystal De Gray, Chief Operating Officer

Sorry. I was gonna say I think the other thing we need to do from a recruiting strategy standpoint and we've talked about this unfortunately, it's a catch-22, right, because it's a cost item but our employees really should be our number 1 recruiting source referrals. Like we all know people, right? If it's an organization that you're excited to come to work at every single day, we should be talking about doing some type of referral incentive to go ahead and hire that staff. So there are definitely opportunities and ideas that we are looking at to really strengthen the recruiting efforts here at the District.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah and I think my purpose here wasn't just recruit for the ..

Chairman Dowd

Follow up?

Alderman Lopez

Yes, if you don't mind?

Chairman Dowd

Go ahead.

Alderman Lopez

Okay. I think my purpose was to maybe set the precedent that the rest of the City could be helping recruit raise awareness of this because we did talk about last year and I think for maybe a couple of months, I was like hey, you guys should check out the School District on the wrong end of the year because we do our budget season at the beginning of summer not towards the end. So I think maybe we as a city could help raise awareness that there's these jobs that are available and people could be applying.

Alderwoman Kelly

I don't (inaudible) to know HR or any your salary, etc., but I know we did an incentive program with the Police when they were having trouble recruiting. So maybe there's an opportunity to do one-time incentives to move people from contracted to full time.

Chairman Dowd

Again I think if anybody looks at the Union Leader, there are a ton of school districts trying to get teachers all over the State. So it's very competitive and some of the salaries I've seen - you've got to be competitive.

So are there any other questions relative to the Board of Education budget before we conclude? Seeing none. Thank you very much for your presentation and Alderman Thibeault do we have a motion?

MOTION BY ALDERMAN THIBEAULT TO TABLE R-26-028 BY ROLL CALL

Yay:	Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Gregg, Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Johnson, Alderman Sennott, Alderman Dowd	6
Nay:		0

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chesley Marvin

Chesley Marvin, 10 Marian Lane. It's a little too late so excuse how rough this is gonna be but I just wanna urge everybody to fund our schools and regardless of who shows up or doesn't show up at various meetings, we all have very busy lives and I wouldn't assume that people don't care about school funding and the future of our children. So I'm here as a voice and respectfully disagree with the use of the term "NIMBY" to refer to people who give a fuck about our schools ..

Chairman Dowd

Please watch your language.

Chesley Marvin

…and show up all the time to speak for people and for our children. So I – yeah.

I also would love to see more set public hearing or like public sessions that speak about the budget for the schools and I'd also love to see another public session about the public info thing on the 20th. I won't be able to attend obviously. I'd love to attend. Everyone knows where I stand so I know that's not a problem but I really do like to participate in things like this and I care about all of our elementary schools not just New Searles but obviously since that's the school my kids attend. I don't think it's a crime to stand up and say I would love for it to continue to exist and budget ties directly into that.

So anyway thanks everybody for your awesome questions and I know everyone's trying to do the best for Nashua and our students so I'm here doing the same. Thanks for your time.

Chairman Dowd

There is a public hearing on the entire budget in June at Nashua High School North.

Chesley Marvin

Right, I knew that.

Chairman Dowd

Any other Public Comment?

Eric Hvoslef

Yeah, I'm gonna second what Chesley said – oh sorry – Eric Hvoslef, 22 Marian Lane. I'm Chesley's neighbor. We're gonna have a block party in August apparently so just FYI. But uhm, and you're invited ..

Alderman Sullivan

Oh good.

Eric Hvoslef

But I wanted to second what Chesley said and apologize. I don't have anything really prepared right now but I fully also disagree with the term – the label "NIMBY" with regard to closing any of the public schools in Nashua. Totally inappropriate and I think the closure of any of the individual schools and, again, like Chesley I'm very much connected to New Searles and I've seen how it's impacted – had a great, positive impacts on my son who's in Kindergarten and us as a family. My wife and I moved here from Colorado with the Harris Road, and Conant Road neighborhoods in mind, with New Searles in mind, and it's gone above and beyond all of our expectations even having known like the good rating and good positive regard that we heard about from afar.

So I just wanted to kind of express my concern over those comments, express my concern that about any school closure in general and, you know, there are profound, and often personal impacts, and that's why I think using that label is dangerous. I'm sorry, I'm losing my train of thought but there needs to be really, really deep thoughtful consideration about that proactive plan moving forward and far more than what the Harriman Facility Study could unveil to any of us. So that community discussion is going to be really critical, I think, and hearing from the residents in around Harris Road, around Conant Road, and in Ward 9 is going to be really critical, and I hope that the ears can really consider those thoughts and opinions.

Chairman Dowd

Any other Public Comment? Seeing none.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Dowd

First, a couple of things. We just finished the project on New Searles. We just paid the last invoice. We basically replaced the front of the school. We put in a security vestibule. We changed the entire power system. We put in a whole new fire alarm system. So that ought to be taken into consideration when you're looking at schools.

Also when you close a school and that's only the Board of Education that can do that, there should be a use for that building because now it becomes city property and there are a lot of things to look at when you close a school.

Another thing is I think a lot of people who had some concern about the budget books this year. I don't want responses yet but I want you to be thinking about changes for the next year, the '28 budget, because this year's we're getting some input for the budget book but not a whole new budget book. So think about what you'd like to see in the '28 budget book so we don't have any surprises.

The other thing is I want you to start thinking about the public hearing and how we want the public hearing to flow. Again, we'll bring that up later but I just want people to get it in the back of their mind as to how we want to have the public hearing going. Alright, other comments? Committee members first.

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah and thank you for pushing that back on the BOE. Just kidding. I think no matter what school, if they ever close a school, happens is going to be probably the people in that area are obviously could be - unless they really hated the school which there's always a few - but my kids went to Bicentennial, my wife went to Bicentennial. So obviously, it's going to be its 50th anniversary this year, right, bicentennial. So '76. So it would be devastating to us of course if they decided to close Bicentennial. So it's going to be hard if that's the path they take at some point but if enrollment keeps going down, there's got to be some changes somewhere and I don't think - no, I don't want to speak for Dr Andrade - but when he says "NIMBY", I don't think he means it in a negative term. It's just we all are attached to our school systems. I know Alderman Klee for instance would probably chain herself to Mount Pleasant to keep that from closing and in all our Wards, we're going to fight. New Searles isn't that far from me. It's actually closer to me than Bicentennial is so as far as distance. So I can get there much quicker and we played games there - basketball games, baseball games at New Searles.

So obviously, all these schools are precious to someone and it's going to be a very difficult issue if we have to go down that road at some point. So it will be hopefully like the people in the audience said, a very thoughtful discussion and we have to trust that you guys going to go through that with the help of the BOA to look at the Facility Study, and the Harriman Study, and try to decide what to do in the future. It's a shame. Hopefully, we could keep as many open as we can but we got to get more people in here going to school here and if we could do that, then maybe we could save everything. But thank you.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to kind of reiterate a comment that you made Mr. Chairman and that is that when we close a school, we only shift the cost of that school to the city unless we sell the school or we do something like this.

I also think that the facilities plan would show something like New Searles who's had upgrades and so on as a physical school that you would want to keep versus something like Mount Pleasant who hasn't had a whole lot of dollars put into it since 1986. So I see the writing on the wall as far as Mount Pleasant is but yes, I will be chaining myself to the door as well as many of the other residents that live there and I do hope ..

Alderman Lopez

I suggest a structural support.

Alderman Klee

I do hope that we take into consideration with the facilities plans the types of families that go to that school. So you've heard me talk about Mount Pleasant having the walking school, and the economic impact that having these students bussed somewhere else versus now they can walk to the schools, and they can - the families can actually go to different events. For instance, there's a lot of events that Mount Pleasant has such as like the bingo night, and I know Ms. Lamphier has joined me at bingo night, and they have movie nights, and they have all these different other things. Even if all of those things went to another school, these parents who can't drive because they don't have nothing more than one car or don't drive in general because of economic needs, they no longer can participate in these things. So I think all of that needs to be taken to consideration. I know Mount Pleasant has not had any money and as I said, I see the writing on the wall. They didn't put a security vestibule in like they've been doing to all the other schools. They haven't done any of these other things and so on. It saddens me. It truly saddens me but I want to tell you that I think your presentation that you gave here was really good and I appreciate the extra discussion about the special education and showing us the visual of this and everything. So I do appreciate it. I don't want to sound like I'm chastising or anything. I'm just repeating things I've said before. So I thank you for coming and I think you did a great job. Thank you.

Alderman Sullivan

Thanks. I wanted to thank the Ward 9 residents that stuck it out for 2.5 hours to speak. You have little kids at home so I appreciate that and empathize with that for sure.

In terms of closing a school, there's some research out there. I can't quote it but it says basically, and I had mentioned this to the parents at the PTO meeting that I got to sit in on, but there's research out there that shows the best school for your kid is the one that's closest to your house. I think that we should consider that.

Then what I heard tonight is by closing a school, it's $1.6 million in savings off the bottom line. Okay. Perhaps that redistricting - maybe you model out if we redistrict what does that save on transportation costs? What does that do big picture? So I guess I would just ask to look at all the options and use that last one regardless of the school as a last ditch effort. I understand the way the direction that the school population is going but what I'm hoping for any member of the public that did tune in, or will tune in, or read the minutes is when you have a shifting population that requires more attention and more specialists, it's going to drive the cost up. I think that, you know, I was trying to find a clumsy metaphor but basically if I wanted to completely redo my house, I could do it myself which would be cheaper or I could hire people and that would be a lot more expensive.

So it seems like that seems to be happening with some of our students in the District and I think that maybe we can find a happy medium, get real creative, and try to curb these expenses that do fall upon the Nashua taxpayer. So I'm cognizant of all of it and I thought it was a good open discussion tonight. Fantastic presentation. Really just clear graphics, and just year over year, and that's, you know, that speaks to me, and I really appreciate that. So really, really, good job. Well done.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you for coming in. One of the things when you're looking at closing a school, you can see the student population is going down but we now have 5 different building activities going on in the City. One of them is going to be over 500 homes. So when you're looking at school populations, you need to take into account not only the increased families that will be living in those facilities and people say, well they're not going to have any kids. Well, that's ridiculous. Some of them are three bedrooms you know what I mean - or four bedrooms. So there are going to be children in them. Where they come from, we don't know.

As the population is aging, there's also going to be younger families buying homes from older people moving into town assuming they can afford them. The other thing is the birth rate that should be taken into account, but I don't have a problem with closing a school if it makes sense. Again, that's up to the Board of Ed. People keep coming after the Board of Aldermen close the school. We can't close a school. Not our purview by law. So, alright. I think remarks by Alderman has probably been covered.

Alderman Sullivan

I just had a question.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. You're not going to do it on one of your posts?

Alderman Sullivan

No.

Chairman Dowd

Okay.

Alderman Sullivan

Well I'll put it I'll post it as soon as I find out the answer but when is the Public Hearing? What time?

Chairman Dowd

Well I can tell you it's at 7:00 o'clock. I don't have the schedule.

Alderman Klee

The 7^{th}.

Alderman Lopez

I believe it's on 6/7.

Alderman Sullivan

6/7 at 7:00.

Multiple

Oh, man.

Chairman Dowd

Nashua High School North, Auditorium.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Televised.

Alderman Gregg

Actually it's the 8th.

Alderman Gregg

It's Monday the 8th.

Alderman Thibeault

There goes your joke, Tom.

Alderman Lopez

Now everyone's gonna think it's the wrong day cause I said that.

Alderman Sullivan

6/8 at 7:00 pm.

Alderman Gregg

Yes, 6/8 at 7:00.

Alderman Sullivan

At Nashua High North.

Alderman Gregg

Yup.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Alderman Gregg

That's all in there.

Alderman Lopez

I appreciate the effort but it's not getting there.

Alderman Sullivan

See I'm glad we had that (inaudible).

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN SENNOTT TO ADJOURN BY ROLL CALL

Yay:	Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Gregg, Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Johnson, Alderman Sennott, Alderman Dowd	6
Nay:		0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared closed at 9:42 p.m.

Alderman Derek Thibeault
Committee Clerk Pro Tem

Nashua School District
Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Presentation

NASHUA
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Gateway to Opportunity

Dr. Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools
Krystal De Gray, MBA, Chief Operating Officer
May 5, 2026


OUR VISION
THE NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT IS A COMMUNITY WHERE CURIOSITY DRIVES EDUCATION, AND EVERY LEARNER IS VALUED.

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT BY THE NUMBERS

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Gateway to Opportunity

Our Evolving District

NASHUA AT A GLANCE

9,501
Students

$191.2M
for the Fiscal Year
2026 Budget

19.4
Average Class
Size

2,055
Staff
Members

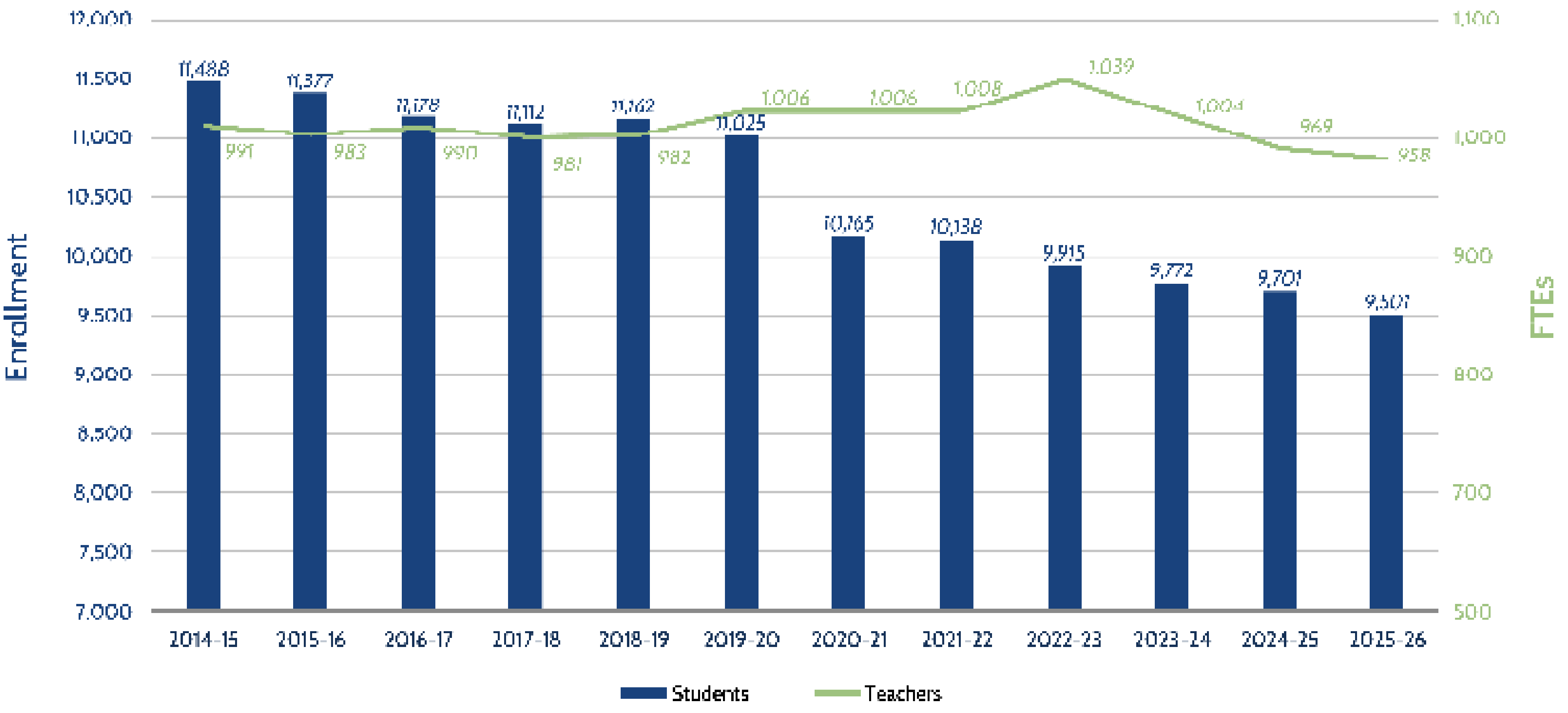
797
Seniors who
graduated in 2025

23.6% went on to a 2-year college
43.7% went on to a 4-year college
26.9% went on to employment
2.6% went into the military
3.2% created other opportunities

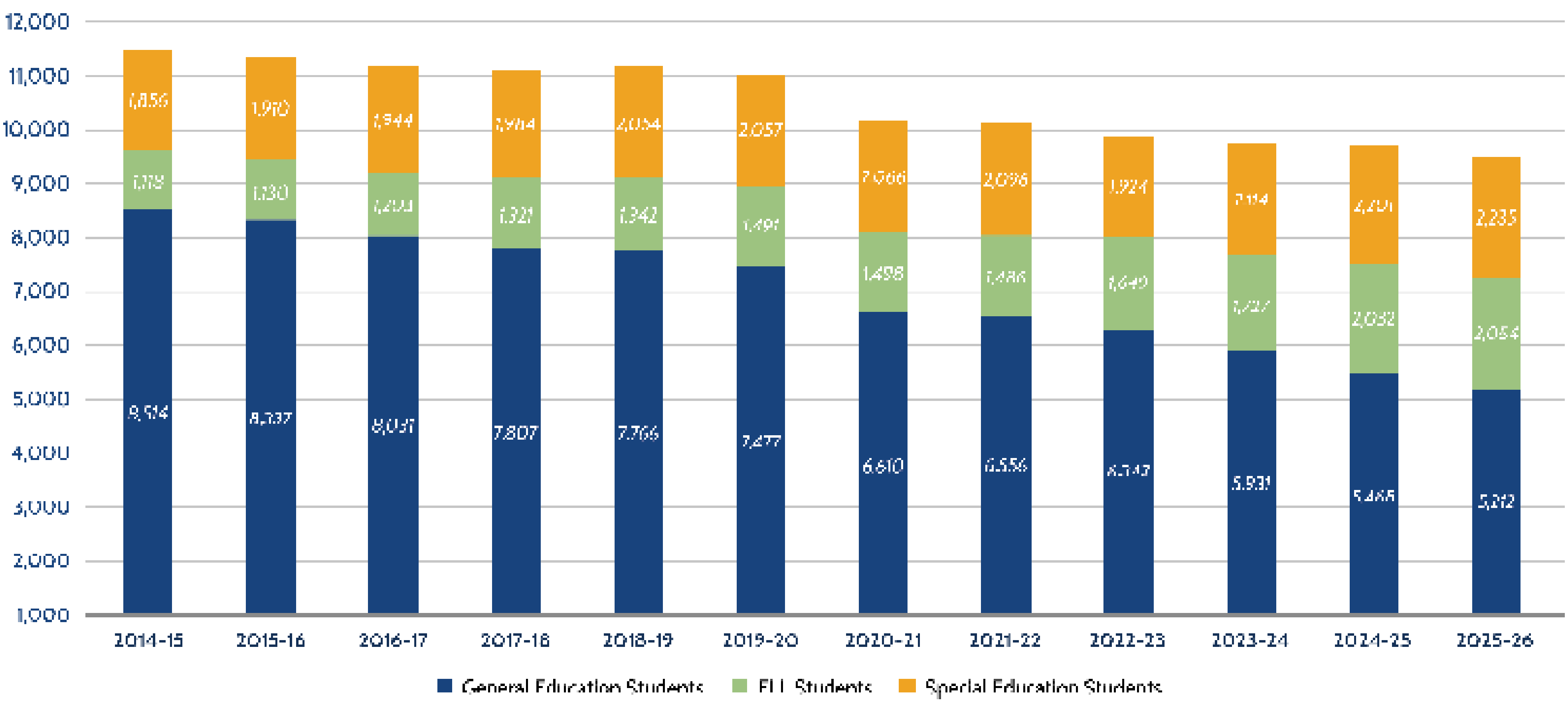
49
Spoken
Languages

NASHUA
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Gateway to Opportunity

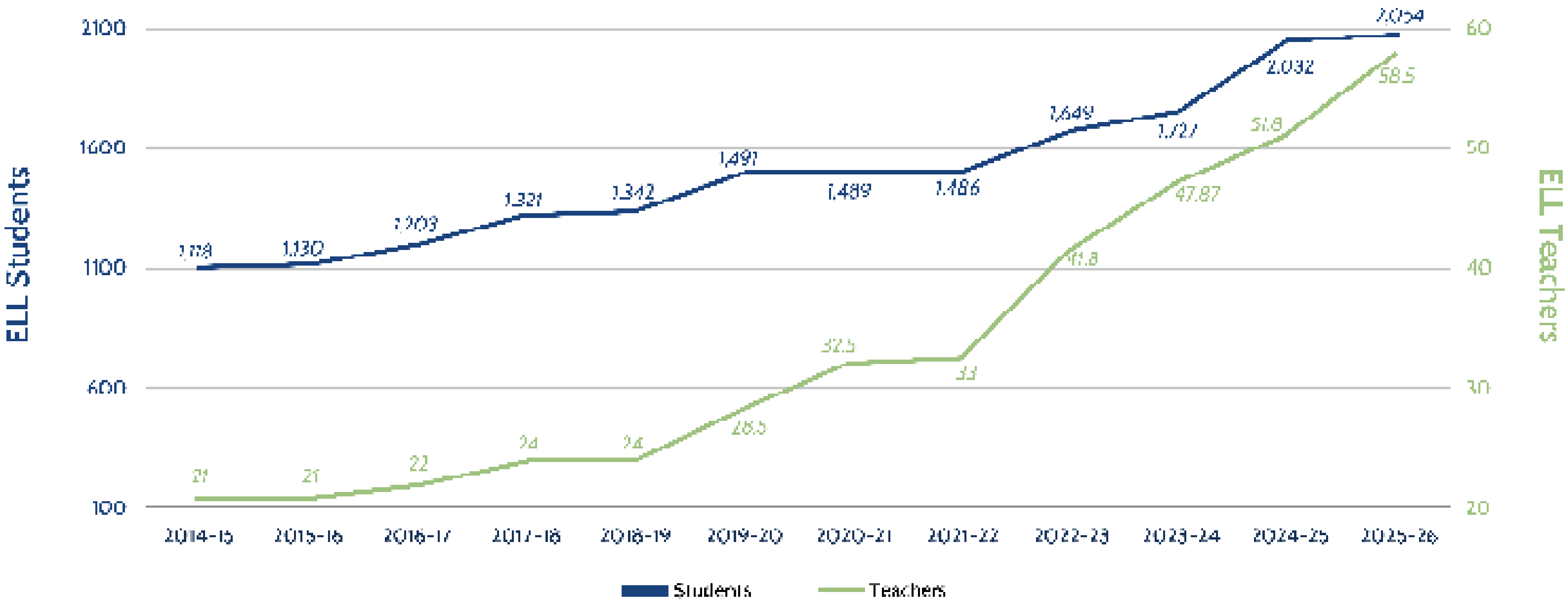
Student Enrollment and Total FTEs

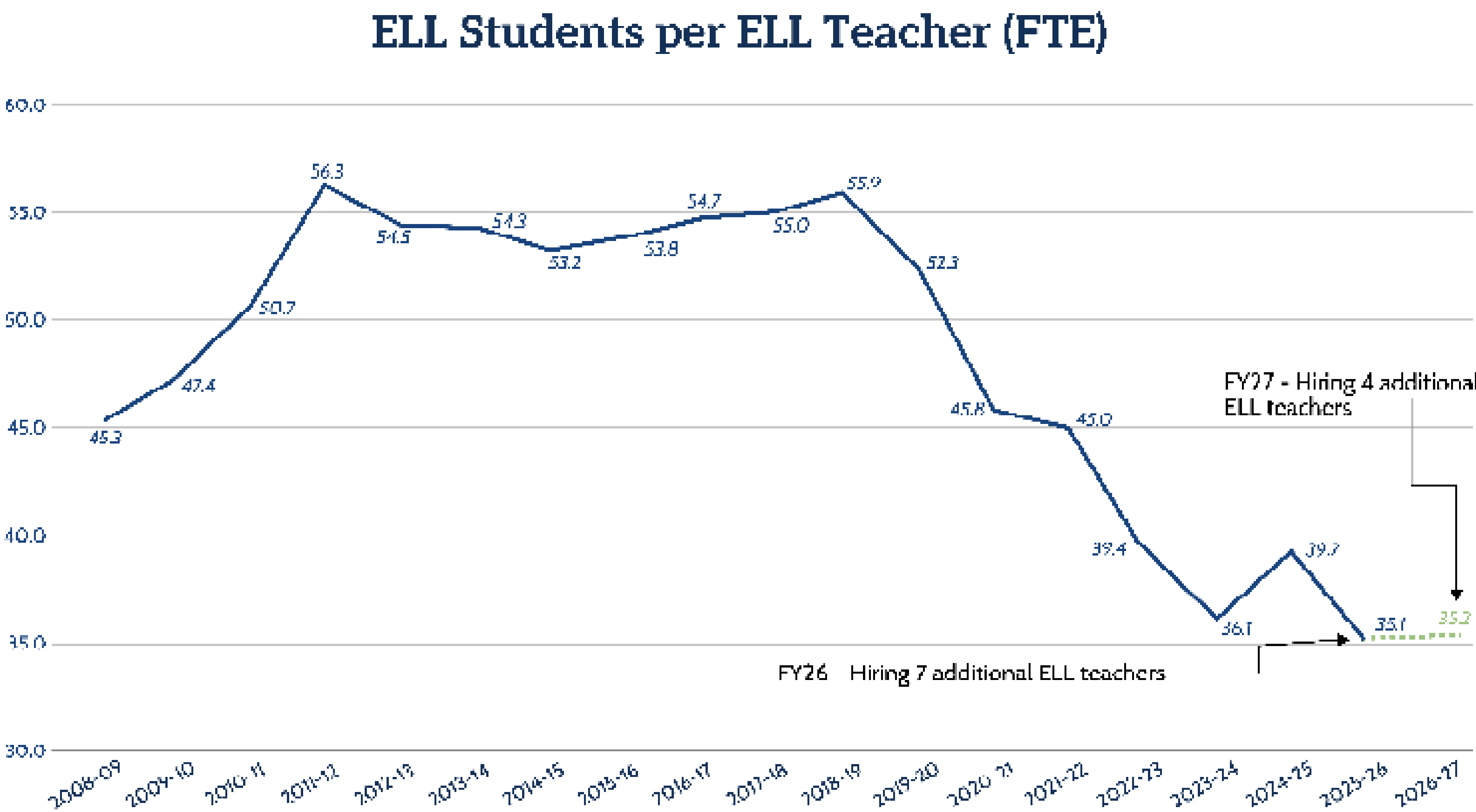


Total Student Enrollment



ELL Student Growth vs. ELL Teachers




ELL Students per ELL Teacher (FTE)
60.0
55.0
50.0
45.0
40.0
35.0
30.0
56.3
54.5
54.3
53.2
53.8
54.7
55.0
55.9
52.3
50.7
47.4
45.3
45.8
45.0
39.4
36.1
39.7
35.1
35.2
FY27 - Hiring 4 additional ELL teachers
FY26 Hiring 7 additional ELL teachers
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
2018-19
2019-20
2020-21
2021-22
2022-23
2023-24
2024-25
2025-26
2026-27

ELEMENTARY PROJECTED CLASS SIZE SY 27

Students | Teachers | Students Per Class

School	K	1	2	3	4	5
Amherst Street	42 | 2 | 21.0	47 | 3 | 15.67	41 | 2 | 20.5	44 | 2 | 22	41 | 2 | 20.5	57 | 3 | 19
Bicentennial	79 | 4 | 19.75	79 | 4 | 19.75	78 | 4 | 19.5	69 | 4 | 17.25	92 | 4 | 23	93 | 4 | 23.25
Birch Hill	40 | 3 | 13.33	35 | 2 | 17.5	62 | 3 | 20.67	52 | 3 | 17.33	63 | 3 | 21	51 | 3 | 17
Broad St	42 | 2 | 21	42 | 2 | 21	27 | 2 | 13.5	35 | 2 | 17.5	48 | 2 | 24	45 | 2 | 22.5
Charlotte Ave	62 | 3 | 20.67	62 | 3 | 20.67	51 | 3 | 17	60 | 3 | 20	69 | 3 | 23	70 | 3 | 23.33
Dr. Crisp	61 | 4 | 15.25	58 | 3 | 19.33	56 | 3 | 18.67	56 | 3 | 18.67	62 | 3 | 20.67	62 | 3 | 20.67
Fairgrounds	66 | 4 | 16.5	64 | 4 | 16	61 | 3 | 20.3	75 | 4 | 18.75	76 | 4 | 19	79 | 4 | 19.75
Ledge Street	67 | 4 | 16.75	67 | 4 | 16.75	73 | 4 | 18.25	86 | 4 | 21.5	74 | 4 | 18.5	76 | 4 | 19
Main Dunstable	55 | 3 | 18.33	51 | 3 | 17	65 | 3 | 21.67	65 | 4 | 16.25	82 | 4 | 20.5	64 | 3 | 21.33
Mt. Pleasant	41 | 2 | 20.5	48 | 3 | 16	46 | 2 | 23	38 | 2 | 19	48 | 2 | 24	40 | 2 | 20
New Searles	33 | 2 | 16.5	33 | 2 | 16.5	40 | 2 | 20	53 | 3 | 17.7	35 | 2 | 17.5	45 | 2 | 22.5
Sunset Heights	69 | 3 | 23	74 | 4 | 18.5	45 | 2 | 22.5	56 | 3 | 18.7	63 | 3 | 21	55 | 3 | 18.33

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECTED ENROLLMENT SY 27

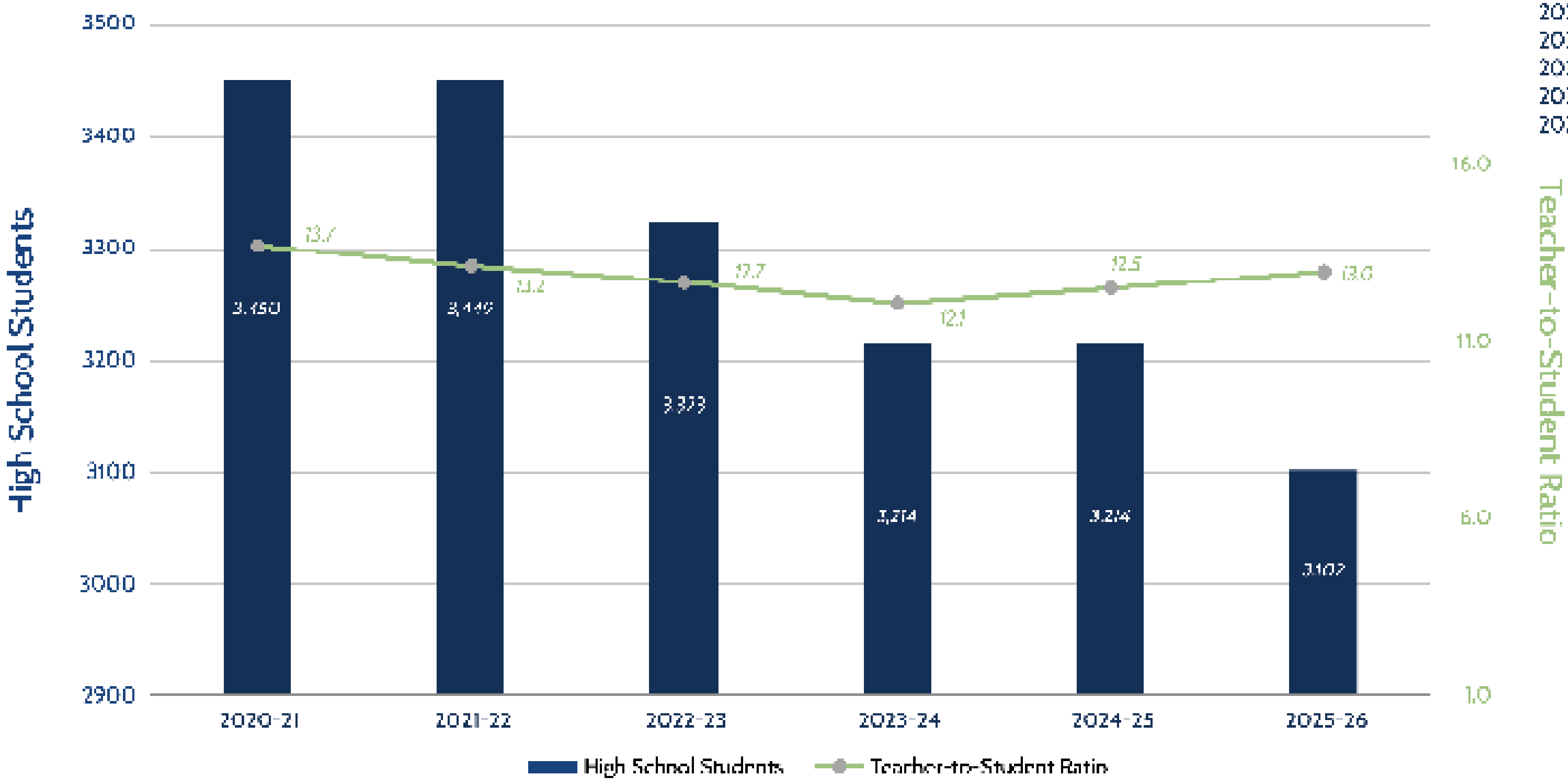
Students | Teams | Teachers per Team | Students Per Class

School	Sixth Grade†	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	Grade Total
Pennichuck	272 | 3 | 4 | 22.7	251 | 3 | 4 | 20.9	252 | 3 | 4 | 21.0	775 S's | 36 T's| 21.5
Fairgrounds	210 | 2 | 4 | 26.3	177 | 2 | 4 | 22.1	200 | 2 | 4 | 25.0	587 S's | 24 T's| 24.5
McCarthy	186 | 2 | 4 | 23.3	211 | 2 | 4 | 26.4	240 | 2.5 | 4 | 24.0	637 S's | 26 T's| 24.5

**Class size is calculated by dividing total enrollment by academic teachers at each grade level. McCarthy utilizes push-in and pull-out special education services which can impact class size.*

†Sixth grade enrolment assumes a 50:50 split of DRC fifth graders and that 10 FES fifth graders go to MMS instead of FMS. MMS 6th grade enrollment does not include SPED programs. We expect this number to be higher.

High School Teachers to Student Ratio



Teachers/Year	
2020-21	252
2021-22	262
2022-23	261.25
2023-24	265.25
2024-25	256.75
2025-26	239

HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE REDESIGN

High School Scheduling Considerations

EXAMPLE: DEPARTMENT WITH 16 TEACHERS

- Current 4 Block Schedule:
- 16 teachers x 6 classes = 96 sections
- Budget reduces by 2 teachers:
- 14 teachers x 6 classes = 84 sections
- Need to cut 12 Classes

- Proposed 5 Block schedule:
- 14 teachers x 7 classes = 98 sections
- Gain 2 additional sections

Office of the
MAYOR JIM DONCHESS
CITY OF NASHUA

229 Main Street
P.O. Box 2019
Nashua, NH 03061

[illegible]

December [illegible]

To: [illegible]
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[illegible]
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[illegible]
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Steve Buxton, Chief, Nashua Fire Rescue
Lisa Fauteux, Director, Public Works
[illegible]
[illegible]

CC: [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Re: FY2027 Budget Guidelines

Dear Directors, Chairmen and Commissioners:

[illegible]

[illegible]

THE MAYOR'S GUIDANCE

[illegible] budgets and collaborate to identify cost saving opportunities and allocate resources wisely.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in preparing your FY2027 proposed budgets.

Sincerely,

Jim Donchess
Mayor, City of Nashua

cc: Board of Aldermen

MAJOR BUDGET INCREASES IN FY 27

- **FY 2027 transportation budget $ 1.7M**
  - Budget $12,457,228 - Increase of $1.7M – 15.8%
  - Second year of 5-year contract
  - Additional money for Special Education & MKV transportation
  - Daily bus cost $550.34 - from $482.75
  - Total Buses FY 2026
    - Total buses 95 - 52 Regular Education and 43 Special Education Buses
- **Staffing Services $ 275,000**
  - $1,225,000 Increase by $275,000 ($950,000 FY 2026 Budget , $1,256,511 in FY 2025 - Actual) within Operating Budget
- **Education Assistance increase of $70,000**
  - Teachers are using more with credits
  - Secondary impact of teacher's wages
- **4 New ELL Teachers**
- **2 Collective Bargaining Units newly negotiated**
  - NASP & Clerical

- **IT Core Network Infrastructure – $253,000**
- **Plant Operations increase around $200,000**
  - Electricity increase due to new contract
- **Contract Services – Special Education $1.8M:**
  - For FY 2026, NSD reduced the amount of funds budgeted from contracted services and anticipates covering excess costs with Special Revenue. This money is used to hire special educators and specialists who provide student services for which NSD is obligated to do so.
  - $3.5 Million ($1.7M FY 2026) within Operating Budget
  - $1.5 Million ($500,000 FY 2026) within Special Revenue
- **Out of District Tuition– Special Education $1M:**
  - Costs continues to rise
  - $7.2 Million ($6.2M FY 2026) within Operating Budget
  - $1 Million ($526,000 FY 2026) within Special Revenue

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Fed & State Mandates

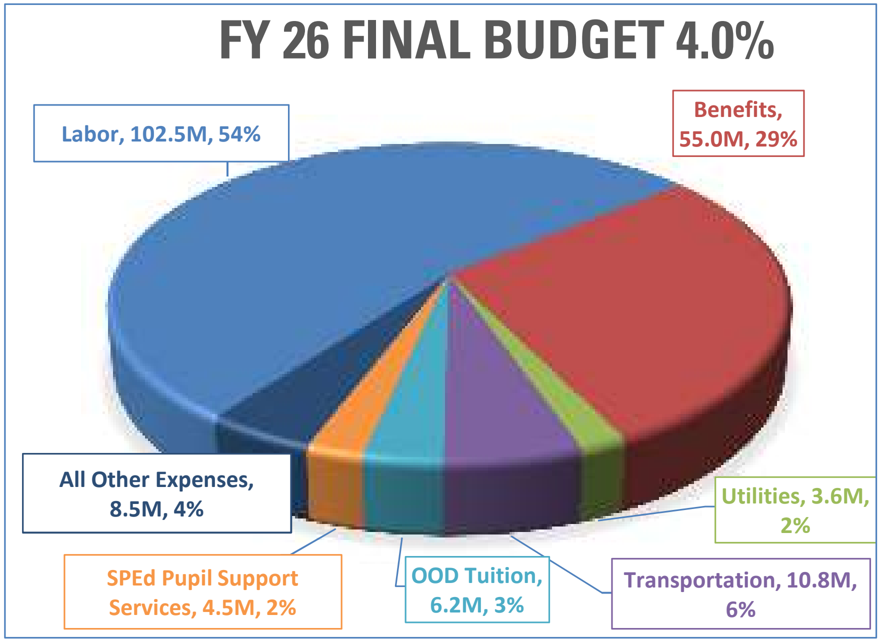
- Special Education – Out of District Tuition and Contracted Services
- ELL – 4 New Positions
- Transportation
- Safe, warm buildings

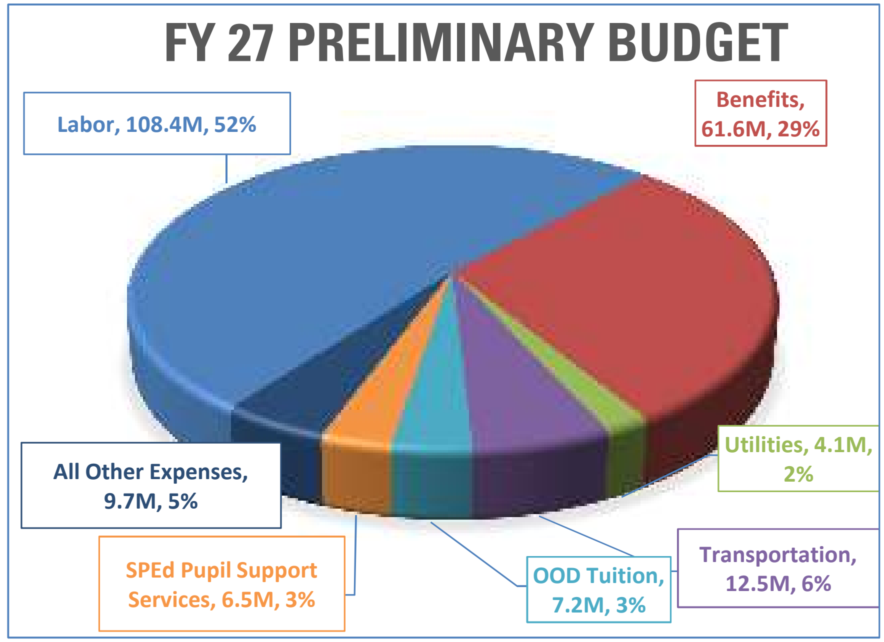
Nice To Have

- Math and Reading Interventionists
- Tier 1 Curriculum Supports
- Behavioral Staff
- Technology Plan (Hardware)

Wish List

- ED Tech
- HR Department
- ERP System Update
- Playground
- Classroom Furniture
- Tech Plan (Panels)





Category	FY 26 Final Budget	FY 27 Draft Budget	Total $ Change	% Change
Labor	$102,542,031	$108,434,312	$5,892,281	5.7%
*Benefits**	$54,959,100	$61,554,192	$6,595,092	12.0%
Utilities	$3,873,624	$4,092,143	$218,519	5.6%
Transportation	$10,756,643	$12,457,228	$1,700,585	15.8%
OOD Tuition	$6,200,000	$7,200,000	$1,000,000	16.1%
SpEd Pupil Support Services	$4,459,864	$6,474,966	$2,015,102	45.2%
All Other Expenses	$8,471,297	$9,701,065	$1,229,768	14.5%
Total	$191,262,559	$209,913,906	$18,651,347	9.8%
Total Without Benefits	$136,303,459	$148,359,714	$12,056,255	8.8%

NASHUA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – SPECIAL EDUCATION

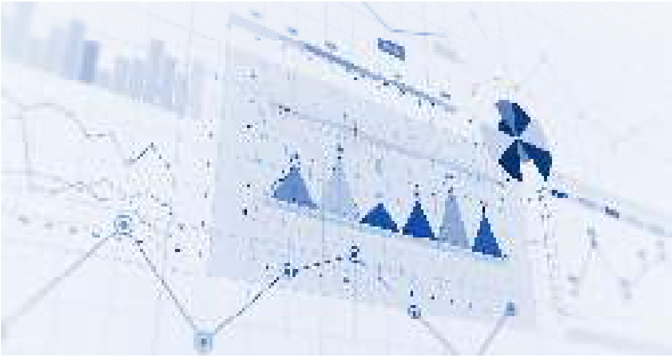
- Contract service expenses have dramatically increased in the past four years
  - FY 2022: $33,000
  - FY 2026: $4,000,000
    - Non ESSER/Non-IDEA
- What is causing this?
  - Changing Student Demographics: Decreasing enrollment with an increasing proportion of special education students
  - Prior to COVID there was less difficulty hiring the positions needed to service these students, those students then need to have their services met with contractors
  - ESSER funds are gone now which has masked this issue as the need for contractors has increased. The below amounts were used for contracted services:
    - ESSER I (Sept 2022): ~$500k
    - ESSER II (Sept 2023): ~$2.3M
    - ESSER III (Sept 2024): ~$2M
- The City of Nashua has received increased revenue in the form of student tuition and state adequacy aid which has helped with these large financial impacts
  - FY 2022: $44.4M Total Intergovernmental Revenue, $40.3M from Adequacy Aid (90.8% of Total Intergovernmental Revenue)
  - FY 2026: *Estimated* $66.5M Total Intergovernmental Revenue, $64.6M from Adequacy Aid (97.1% of Total Intergovernmental Revenue)
- The NSD budget process going forward in FY 2027 and beyond needs to reflect increased expenses and unpredictable revenue streams
- The school district and city need to prepare for budgetary constraints pertaining to increased costs in contract services and out-of-district tuition
- State, Federal, Student Activity, and Food Service Audits are all on track

SPECIAL EDUCATION OOD STUDENT ENROLLMENT

- 21/22 - 108 Students
- 22/23 - 100 students
- 23/24 - 124 students
- 24/25 - 129 students
- 25/26 - 111 students

SPECIAL EDUCATION COST FUNDING SOURCES

- Operating Budget
- IDEA Grants
  - An "IDEA grant" refers to funding distributed to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which authorizes programs to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities. These grants ensure eligible children receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), with funds supporting services for infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-aged children. States and LEAs must meet specific conditions to receive and use these grants, including providing specially designed instruction at no cost to parents.

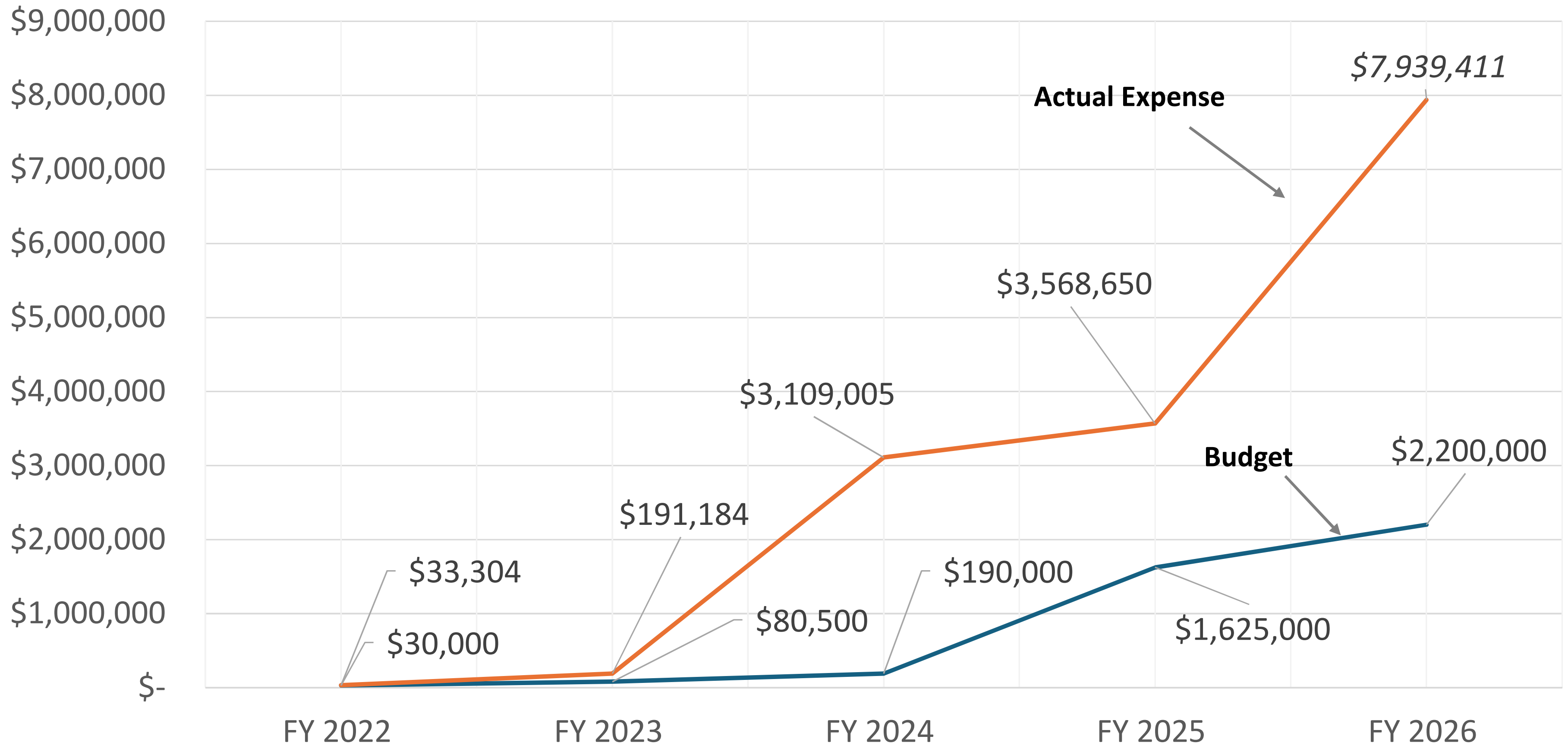


- Special Revenue
- Trust Fund
- State Revenue

SPECIAL EDUCATION COST: CONTRACT SERVICES

Fiscal Year and Account	Original Budget	End of Year Expenditure*	Amount Remaining
FY 2022 Operating Budget	$ -	$ 33,305	$ (33,305)
FY 2022 Special Revenue	$ 30,000	$ -	$ 30,000
FY 2022 Grand Total	**$ 30,000**	**$ 33,305**	**$ (3,305)**
FY 2023 Operating Budget	$ 35,000	$ 148,435	$ (113,435)
FY 2023 Special Revenue	$ 45,500	$ 42,749	$ 2,751
FY 2023 Grand Total	**$ 80,500**	**$ 191,184**	**$ (110,684)**
FY 2024 Operating Budget	$ 40,000	$ 2,823,569	$ (2,783,569)
FY 2024 Special Revenue	$ 150,000	$ 285,436	$ (135,436)
FY 2024 Grand Total	**$ 190,000**	**$ 3,109,005**	**$ (2,919,005)**
FY 2025 Operating Budget	$ 1,500,000	$ 3,098,740	$ (1,598,740)
FY 2025 Special Revenue	$ 125,000	$ 469,910	$ (344,910)
FY 2025 Grand Total	**$ 1,625,000**	**$ 3,568,650**	**$ (1,943,650)**
FY 2026 Operating Budget	$ 1,700,000	$ 4,211,015	$ (2,511,015)
FY 2026 Special Revenue	$ 500,000	$ 57,705	$ 442,295
FY 2026 Grand Total	**$ 2,200,000**	**$ 4,268,720 3-31-26 Actual** ***$ 7,939,411 EOY Est.***	**$ (2,068,720)** ***$ (5,739,411) EOY Est.***

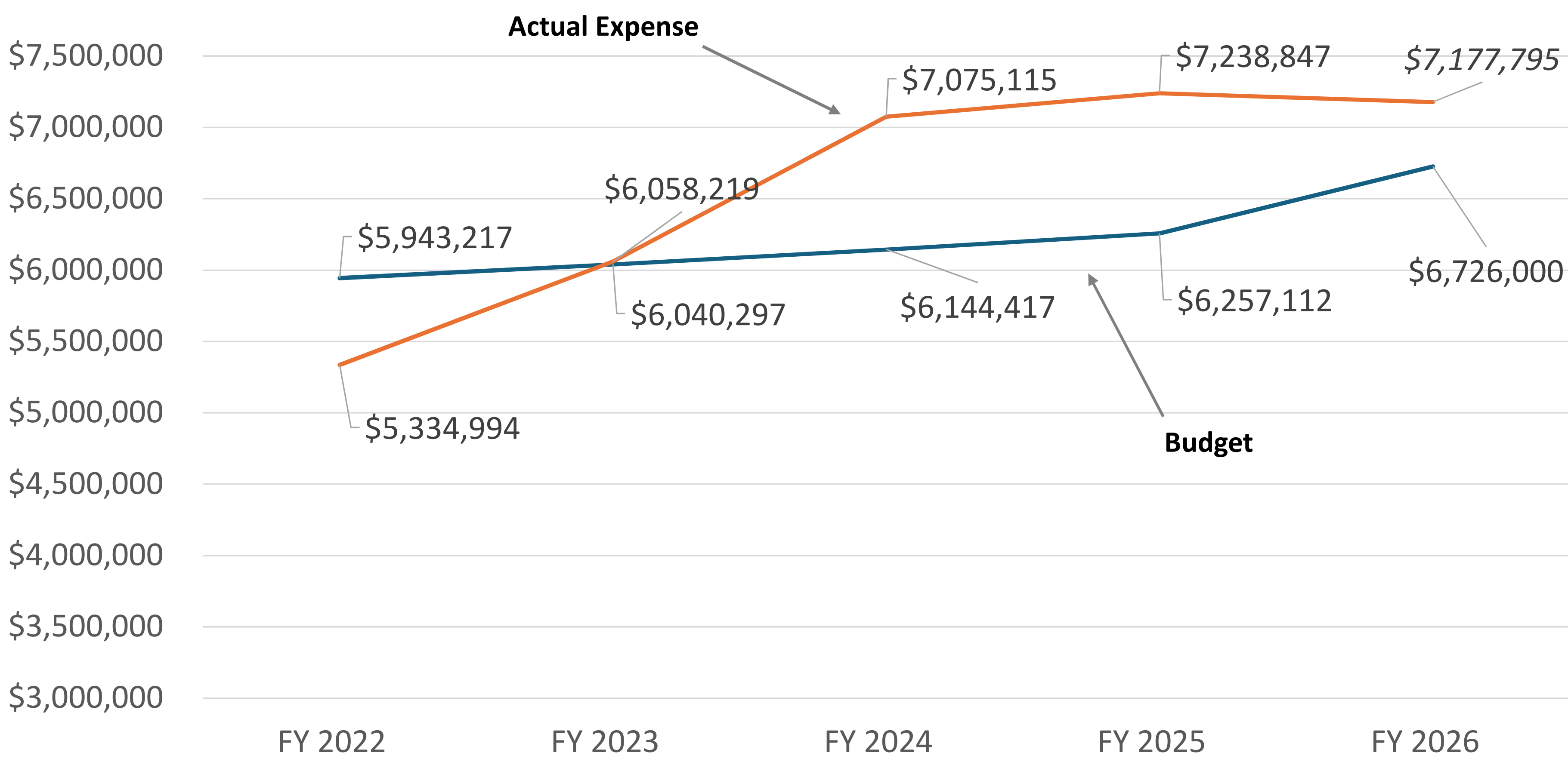
SPECIAL EDUCATION COST: CONTRACT SERVICES



SPECIAL EDUCATION COST: OUT OF DISTRICT TUITION

Fiscal Year and Account	Original Budget	End of Year Expenditure	Amount Remaining
FY 2022 Operating Budget	$ 5,794,417	$ 5,334,994	$ 459,423
FY 2022 Special Revenue	$ 148,800	$ -	$ 148,800
FY 2022 Grand Total	**$ 5,943,217**	**$ 5,334,994**	$ **608,223**
FY 2023 Operating Budget	$ 5,894,417	$ 6,058,219	$ (163,802)
FY 2023 Special Revenue	$ 145,880	$ -	$ 145,880
FY 2023 Grand Total	**$ 6,040,297**	**$ 6,058,219**	**$ (17,922)**
FY 2024 Operating Budget	$ 5,894,417	$ 6,926,056	$ (1,031,639)
FY 2024 Special Revenue	$ 250,000	$ 149,058	$ 100,942
FY 2024 Grand Total	**$ 6,144,417**	**$ 7,075,115**	**$ (930,697)**
FY 2025 Operating Budget	$ 6,000,000	$ 7,015,089	$ (1,015,089)
FY 2025 Special Revenue	$ 257,112	$ 223,758	$ 33,354
FY 2025 Grand Total	**$ 6,257,112**	**$ 7,238,847**	**$ (981,735)**
FY 2026 Operating Budget	$ 6,200,000	$ 4,690,992	$ 1,509,008
FY 2026 Special Revenue	$ 526,000	$ 154,226	$ 371,774
FY 2026 Grand Total	**$ 6,726,000**	**$ 4,845,218 3-31-26 Actual** ***$(7,177,795) EOY Est.***	**$ 1,880,782** ***$ (451,795) EOY Est.***

SPECIAL EDUCATION COST: OUT OF DISTRICT TUITION



SPECIAL EDUCATION TUITION REVENUE

Fiscal Year	Tuition Budget	Tuition Actual	Difference
FY 2022	$200,000	$403,279	$203,279
FY 2023	$200,000	$652,055	$452,055
FY 2024	$300,000	$808,273	$508,273
FY 2025	$895,000	$1,340,875	$445,875
FY 2026	$826,000	$991,241 *EOY Est* $1.4	$165,241

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE

Fund Source	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026 Estimate	FY 2026 Actuals	FY 2027 Estimate
MEDICAID DISTRIBUTIONS	$ 578,140	$ 1,116,740	$ 500,000	$ 416,166	$ 500,000
STATE AID CHARTER SCHOOLS	$ 90,790	$-	$-	$-	$-
EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNT AID	$ 51,413	$ 55,197	$ 50,000	$ 92,713	$ 50,000
STATE BUILDING AID	$ 674,670	$ 126,341	$ 126,341	$ 126,341	$ 126,341
SPECIAL EDUCATION AID	$ 1,365,635	$ 1,070,880	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,427,424	$ 1,000,000
STATE ADEQUACY AID	**$ 54,969,387**	**$ 59,485,156**	**$ 64,654,778**	**$ 67,017,028**	**$ 65,567,936**
VOCATIONAL TUITION AID	$ 226,490	$ 262,084	$ 220,000	$ 329,259	$ 250,000
VOCATIONAL TRANSPORTATION AID	$ 1,452	$ 2,020	$ 2,000	$ -	$ 2,000
TOTAL	**$ 57,957,997**	**$ 62,118,418**	**$ 66,553,119**	**$ 69,408,931**	**$ 67,496,277**
STATE ADEQUACY AID %	***94.8%***	***95.8%***	***97.1%***	***96.6%***	***97.1%***

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT

NASHUA SCHOOL FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS

Nashua School Federal Grant Funds				
Grant Name	**FY 2025 Actual**	**FY 2026 Original Allocation**	**FY 2026 Actual**	**FY 2027 Estimate**
Adult Diploma Program	$ 154,366	$ 164,752	$ 164,752	$ 150,000
CSI Grant Title 1	$ 157,464	$ 436,565	$ 436,564	$ 250,000
IDEA Preschool - IDEA	$ 3,537,791	$ 3,568,026	$ 3,568,026	$ 3,300,000
IDEA Preschool - Preschool	$ 87,547	$ 87,694	$ 87,694	$ 85,000
McKinney-Vento Homeless Education	$ 25,511	$ -	$ -	$ -
Perkins V Program Improvement	$ 371,642	$ 390,459	$ 390,459	$ 350,000
Title 1 Part A	$ 3,802,137	$ 4,397,504	$ 3,756,400	$ 3,400,00
Title II Part A	$ 699,406	$ 794,045	$ 794,045	$ 700,000
Title III	$ 246,342	$ 257,521	$ 257,521	$ 235,000
Title IVA	$ 584,831	$ 553,365	$ 553,365	$ 475,000
Title IVB 21st Century	$ 600,066	$ 454,958	$ 649,517	$ 625,000
SAFE GRANTS	$ 769,339	$ -	$ -	$ -
Other Unanticipated Grant Funding	$ 43,998	$ 104,084	$ 104,084	$ -
TOTAL ESTIMATED SCHOOL GRANTS:	**$ 11,080,440**	**$ 11,208,973**	**$ 10,762,427**	**$ 9,570,000**
Indirect Cost	2.80%	2.6%	2.6%	2.5%
Indirect Cost Estimate	**$310,252**	**$291,433**	**$279,823**	**$239,250**

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL REVENUE - REVENUE

Fund Name	Actual FY2024	Actual FY2025	Budget FY 2026	Actual FY 2026	Budget FY 2027
Dept. 2120 - Summer Food Services Program	$ 98,029	$ 96,393	$ 118,355	$ 114,531	$ 116,000
Dept. 2201 - Drivers Education	$ 154,650	$ 160,918	$ 175,965	$ 56,680	$ 189,719
Dept. 2204 - Summer School	$ 25,252	$ 13,603	$ 18,000	$ 1,678	$ 12,383
Dept. 2207 - Adult Education/Continuing Education	$ 68,586	$ 60,279	$ 37,100	$ 13,893	$ 54,378
Dept. 2212 - Athletic Department	$ 219,772	$ 228,861	$ 226,500	$ 107,490	$ 240,000
Dept. 2217 - Facilities Rental	$ 219,377	$ 154,042	$ 150,000	$ 45,157	$ 150,000
Dept. 2222 - After School Program (21st Century)	$ 101,099	$ 90,203	$ 100,000	$ 27,777	$ 70,000
Dept. 2252 - Day Care	$ 58,793	$ 56,545	$ 60,000	$ 25,745	$ 69,000
Dept. 2227 - North Student Shop	$ -	$ -	$ 2,000	$ -	$ 5,000
Dept. 2232 - South Student Shop	$ -	$ -	$ 1,000	$ -	$ 20,000
Dept. 2247 - Culinary Arts	$ 5,680	$ 3,754	$ 6,000	$ 654	$ 8,100
Dept. 2257 - Special Education Local Tuition	$ 895,989	$ 1,447,039	$ 1,231,770	$ 426,016	$ 2,706,770
Dept. 2258 - School CTE Tuition Fund	$ 126,377	$ 215,151	$ 230,000	$ -	$ 300,000
Total School Special Revenue Funds	**$ 1,973,604**	**$ 2,526,788**	**$ 2,356,690**	**$ 819,621**	**$ 3,941,350**

SPECIAL REVENUE - EXPENSES

Fund Name	Actual FY2024	Actual FY2025	Budget FY 2026	Actual FY 2026	Budget FY 2027
Dept. 2120 - Summer Food Services Program	$ 94,767	$ 107,163	$ 118,355	$ 121,052	$ 116,000
Dept. 2201 - Drivers Education	$ 127,587	$ 158,047	$ 175,965	$ 152,988	$ 189,719
Dept. 2204 - Summer School	$ 31,342	$ 59,515	$ 18,000	$ 6,632	$ 12,383
Dept. 2207 - Adult Education/Continuing Education	$ 39,595	$ 41,916	$ 37,100	$ 11,821	$ 54,378
Dept. 2212 - Athletic Department	$ 218,003	$ 206,000	$ 226,500	$ 121,291	$ 240,000
Dept. 2217 - Facilities Rental	$ 219,377	$ 154,012	$ 150,000	$ -	$ 150,000
Dept. 2222 - After School Program (21st Century)	$ 123,488	$ 103,330	$ 100,000	$ 86,734	$ 70,000
Dept. 2252 - Day Care	$ 57,024	$ 59,165	$ 60,000	$ 34,683	$ 69,000
Dept. 2227 - North Student Shop	$ -	$ 575	$ 2,000	$ -	$ 5,000
Dept. 2232 - South Student Shop	$ 1,377	$ (2,245)	$ 1,000	$ -	$ 20,000
Dept. 2247 - Culinary Arts	$ 715	$ 435	$ 6,000	$ 444	$ 8,100
Dept. 2257 - Special Education Local Tuition	$ 487,182	$ 786,845	$ 1,231,770	$ 157,234	$ 2,706,770
Dept. 2258 - School CTE Tuition Fund	$ 134,982	$ 159,640	$ 230,000	$ 182,951	$ 300,000
Total School Special Revenue Funds	**$ 1,535,439**	**$ 1,834,398**	**$ 2,356,690**	**$ 875,830**	**$ 3,941,350**

INTENSIVE NEEDS SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCATIONS

36 out of 228 (15.7%) Intensive Needs Students attend their neighborhood school

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

ATTENDING SCHOOL

	Amherst Street	Bicentennial	Birch Hill	Broad Street	Charlotte Avenue	Dr. Norman W. Crisp	Fairgrounds	Ledge Street	Main Dunstable	Mount Pleasant	New Searles	Sunset Heights	(blank)	Grand Total
Amherst Street	5	2	3			3	4	6	2	1	1	2		29
Bicentennial	1	5	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	5		1		23
Birch Hill	3		1			8	5	2	1		1			21
Broad Street	1			1	1	7	4	1	3	3	1	2		24
Charlotte Avenue	3	3	1		9	2	7	7	2	1				35
Main Dunstable	1		1		1	1	2	3	1			1		11
New Searles	2	3	7	3	1	4	4	3	1	5	7	1	9	50
Sunset Heights	2	5	1	1	1	3	5	6	2	1	1	7		35
Grand Total	18	18	15	6	14	30	33	30	14	16	11	14	9	228

2025-2026 SAMPLE INTENSIVE NEEDS ROSTER

Grade	Para Support	Hours in Gen Ed
1	Group	5.5
1	Group	1.5
1	Group	2
1	Group	1
2	Group	5
1	Group	2
1	Group	3
1	Group	4.5

2025-2026 SAMPLE INTENSIVE NEEDS ROSTER

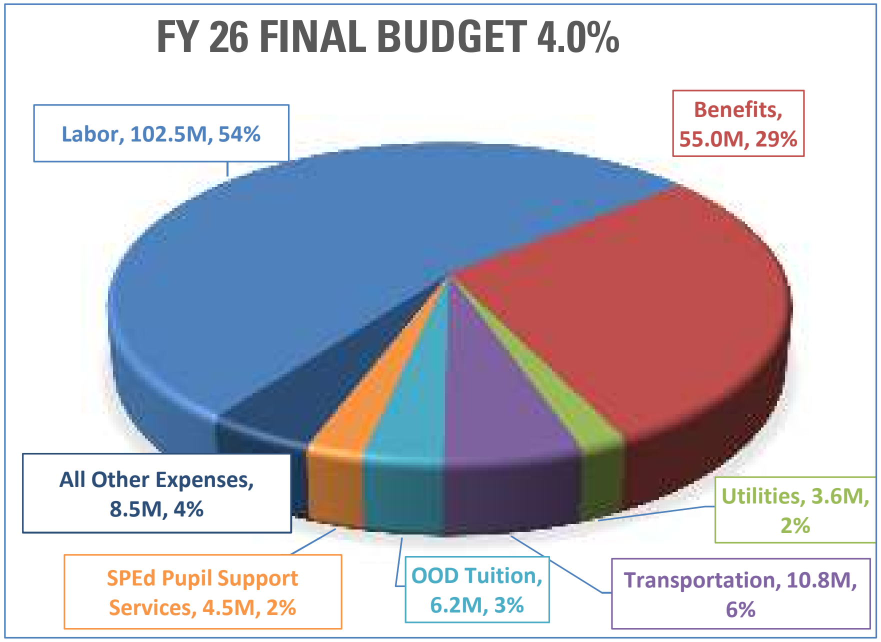
Grade	Para Support	Hours in Gen Ed
4	Group	5
4	Group	5.5
3	Group	3.5
3	Group	1
3	Group	1
4	1:1	3
3	1:1	1
3	Group	6
2	1:1	1
2	Group	.5 (30 mins)
2	1:1	2
2	1:1	1.5

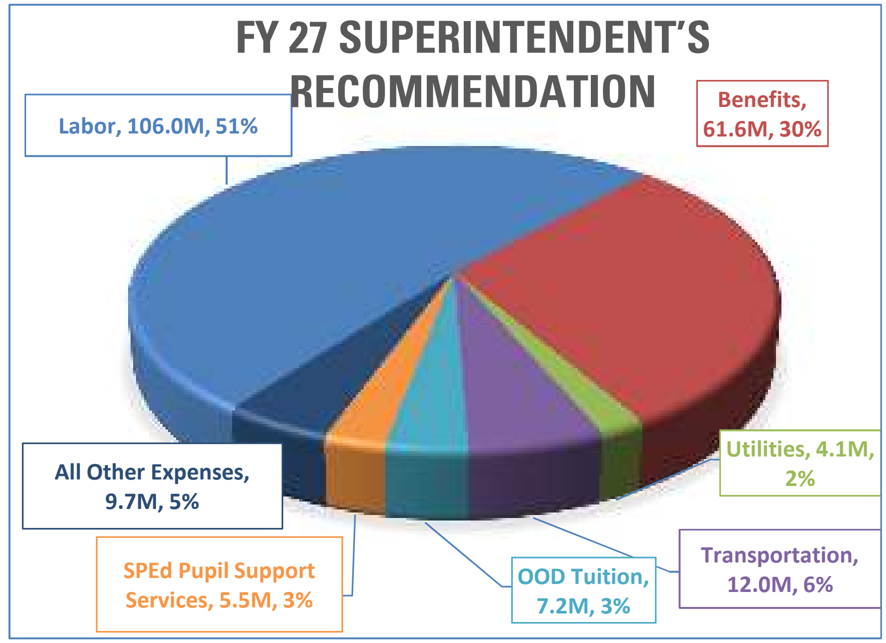
2026-2027 SAMPLE INTENSIVE NEEDS ROSTER

Grade	Para Support	Hours in Gen Ed
4	Group	5
4	Group	5.5
3	Group	6
5	Group	5.5
5	Group	4
5	Group	5
5	1:1	4.5
4	1:1	4.5

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT - BOE BUDGET RECOMMENDATION 6.0% INCREASE FOR FY 2027

NASHUA
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Gateway to Opportunity





Category	FY 26 Final Budget	FY 27 Draft Budget	Total $ Change	% Change
Labor	$ 102,542,031	$ 106,006,264	$ 3,464,233	3.4%
*Benefits**	$ 54,959,100	$ 61,554,192	$ 6,595,092	12.0%
Utilities	$ 3,873,624	$ 4,092,143	$ 218,519	5.6%
Transportation	$ 10,756,643	$ 12,007,228	$ 1,250,585	11.6%
OOD Tuition	$ 6,200,000	$ 7,200,000	$ 1,000,000	16.1%
SpEd Pupil Support Services	$ 4,459,864	$ 5,474,966	$ 1,015,102	22.8%
All Other Expenses	$ 8,471,297	$ 9,701,065	$ 1,229,768	14.5%
Total	$ 191,262,559	$ 206,035,858	$ 14,773,299	7.7%
Total Without Benefits	$ 136,303,459	$ 144,481,666	$ 8,178,207	6.0%

Superintendent's Budget Recommendation 6% for FY 2027

MAJOR BUDGET DECREASES IN FY 2027 - 6% INCREASE

- $3,878,048.00 Total Cuts
- Wages
  - $2,428,048.00 – 56 positions
    - Teachers - 21
    - Paraeducators/Behavior Specialist - 18
    - Clerical - 6
    - TIA's - 2
    - Instructional Coaches - 5
    - Administrators - 4
- Transportation
  - $450,000.00
- Contract Services
  - $1,000,000.00

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT

QUESTIONS