

**CITY COUNCIL AND BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL BUDGET AD HOC COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING**

Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 6:30 PM
Norwich City Hall, Room 335
100 Broadway, Norwich

Present:

City Council: President Pro Tem Joseph DeLucia; Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Alderman Swarnjit Singh

Board of Education (BOE): John Iovino, Kevin Saythany, Christine Distasio, Mark Kulos (non-voting)

Ex-Officio Members: Susan Lessard - SOS, Jamie Bender - Asst. SOS, Lisa Hughes - NPS Director of Pupil Services, Bob Sirpenski - NPS Business Manager, Josh Pothier - Comptroller City of Norwich

Absent: Ella Myles, BOE; John Salomone, City of Norwich

1. Call to Order. Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM. He thanked members of the committee for attending. Mr. Pothier distributed copies of spreadsheet showing how changes to the NPS budget will impact the General Fund/ Mill Rate. (Attachment A)

Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia acknowledged an error on the posted meeting agenda, clarifying that Item 3.a. should state 'FY 2025-26 School Budget', not 'FY 2024-25' and as such, no voting on actions will take place.

2. Public Comment Period. None was given.

3. New Business.

- a. Discussion and Possible Action - Recommendation to the City Council regarding FY 2025-2026 School Budget

Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia turned the meeting over to Superintendent Lessard to bring the committee up-to-date on the status of the current and proposed school budget.

Ms. Lessard distributed copies of an expanded agenda (Attachment B) and the revised Budget Proposal that had been presented to the Norwich City Council on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 (Attachment C). She presented a brief overview of the budget, emphasizing the impact of the Governor's Alliance funding.

Mr. Sirpenski then reviewed the risk items impacting the current budget and the FY 2025-26 proposed budget, including excess cost reimbursement fluctuating rates. Discussion followed.

Student transportation costs were reviewed, including First Student expenses for the remainder of the current school year and efforts being made to reduce next year's contract.

Mr. Sirpenski discussed the Pre-K operating deficit and funding sources for the program, which is expected to result in a shortfall for the current fiscal year. He also discussed Connecticut HB5823, which, if approved, could be a source of new funding for next year. Discussion followed.

Other factors impacting the current budget that were discussed included Medicaid reimbursement and a review of several of the larger variable expenses, including a cost reduction in supplies and equipment. Legal expenses were discussed and are not expected to have an impact on the FY 2025-26 budget.

Mr. Sirpenski concluded the discussion of risk factors by explaining that due to the variable nature of these expenses, the current fiscal year could end anywhere between breakeven to \$400k over.

Mr. Sirpenski discussed Raised Bill 7239, which, if approved by the CT Legislature, could have a positive impact on the FY 2025-26 budget and the new school buildings. Discussion followed on legislation, including Special Education funding.

Ms. Bender discussed the success of the first year of the Rose City School Program and plans to continue to expand the program, as well as other programs being discussed for future implementation. Mr. Sirpenski added that the current program has resulted in a \$661k cost savings. Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia asked the committee to consider the long-term maintenance needs for Veteran's School if the goal is to expand the Rose City School Program into that building.

Ms. Bender also updated the committee on the use of funding from the Governor's Alliance, both current and proposed funding.

Ms. Hughes introduced the Rose City School Resilience Program and how it will be used to offset costs. A draft narrative on the structure and objectives of the program was handed out to the committee (Attachment D). Discussion followed.

Mr. Sirpenski provided historical data on the current health insurance structure and current findings regarding the BOE's substantial portion of the City's self-insurance fund. As a result of increasing costs, discussions have taken place with the insurance broker requesting detailed information for each operating unit included under the policy (City, BOE, and NPU). Ms. Lessard provided committee members with a copy of a letter sent to the broker following up on this data request (Attachment E). This data, once received, will be used to decide a plan structure in the future.

Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia showed his appreciation for the great job NPS staff is doing with regard to the budget and thanked them for the progress that had been made since the beginning of the Ad Hoc meetings.

Ms. Distasio also commended the school staff on their efforts.

Ms. Lessard briefly discussed positions she would plan to reinstate if additional funds are received and the restructuring efforts that were made. Discussion followed.

Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia again complimented the committee on the work being done but expressed caution that the committee needs to be realistic as the 1% increase in the budget is not sustainable.

Mr. Sirpenski expressed his gratitude for the collaboration between NPS staff, the BOE and the City Council.

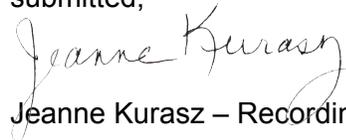
Alderwoman Gould also expressed her appreciation for the hard work done by NPS staff and the amount of detailed information provided.

A discussion was held regarding cancelling the next meeting, scheduled for May 8, 2025, as no new information would be available. It was decided to cancel that meeting and schedule a new meeting after the meeting currently scheduled for May 21, 2025.

No formal action was taken at the meeting.

4. Adjournment. Motion made by Alderwoman Gould, seconded by Mr. Saythany, unanimously approved 8:23pm. Next committee meeting will be held on 5/21/2025.

Respectfully
submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne Kurasz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jeanne Kurasz – Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT A

Budget Spreadsheet

City of Norwich
 Cheat Sheet for Changes in NPS Funding for FY2026

| Percentage Increase in NPS Budget over FY2025 | General Fund Impact | | | | FY2026 GF Taxes on MAV \$163,660 Home | NPS Increase over FY2025 | \$ Change from Tentatively Adopted Budget |
|---|---------------------|--|--|---------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | NPS Budget | General Fund Mill Rate (assuming everything else stays the same in the 2025-26 Budget) | Change in GF Mill Rate Compared to Tentatively Adopted | | | | |
| 0% (Same as FY2025 NPS Budget) | \$95,680,898 | 34.58 | (0.37) | \$5,659 | \$0 | (\$956,809) | |
| 0.20% | \$95,872,260 | 34.65 | (0.30) | \$5,671 | \$191,362 | (\$765,447) | |
| 0.40% | \$96,063,622 | 34.73 | (0.22) | \$5,684 | \$382,724 | (\$574,065) | |
| 0.60% | \$96,254,983 | 34.80 | (0.15) | \$5,685 | \$574,085 | (\$382,724) | |
| 0.80% | \$96,446,345 | 34.88 | (0.07) | \$5,708 | \$765,447 | (\$191,362) | |
| 1% (Tentatively Adopted FY2026) | \$96,637,707 | 34.95 | - | \$5,720 | \$956,809 | \$0 | |
| 1.20% | \$96,829,069 | 35.02 | 0.07 | \$5,731 | \$1,148,171 | \$191,362 | |
| 1.40% | \$97,020,431 | 35.10 | 0.15 | \$5,744 | \$1,339,533 | \$382,724 | |
| 1.60% | \$97,211,792 | 35.17 | 0.22 | \$5,756 | \$1,530,894 | \$574,085 | |
| 1.80% | \$97,403,154 | 35.25 | 0.30 | \$5,769 | \$1,722,256 | \$765,447 | |
| 2.00% | \$97,594,516 | 35.32 | 0.37 | \$5,780 | \$1,913,618 | \$956,809 | |
| 2.20% | \$97,785,878 | 35.40 | 0.45 | \$5,794 | \$2,104,980 | \$1,148,171 | |
| 2.40% | \$97,977,240 | 35.47 | 0.52 | \$5,805 | \$2,296,342 | \$1,339,533 | |
| 2.60% | \$98,168,601 | 35.55 | 0.60 | \$5,818 | \$2,487,703 | \$1,530,894 | |
| 2.80% | \$98,359,963 | 35.62 | 0.67 | \$5,830 | \$2,679,065 | \$1,722,256 | |
| 3.00% | \$98,551,325 | 35.70 | 0.75 | \$5,843 | \$2,870,427 | \$1,913,618 | |
| 3.20% | \$98,742,687 | 35.77 | 0.82 | \$5,854 | \$3,061,789 | \$2,104,980 | |
| 3.40% | \$98,934,049 | 35.85 | 0.90 | \$5,867 | \$3,253,151 | \$2,296,342 | |
| 3.60% | \$99,125,410 | 35.92 | 0.97 | \$5,879 | \$3,444,512 | \$2,487,703 | |
| 3.80% | \$99,316,772 | 36.00 | 1.05 | \$5,892 | \$3,635,874 | \$2,679,065 | |
| 4.00% | \$99,508,134 | 36.07 | 1.12 | \$5,903 | \$3,827,236 | \$2,870,427 | |
| 4.20% | \$99,699,496 | 36.15 | 1.20 | \$5,916 | \$4,018,598 | \$3,061,789 | |
| 4.40% | \$99,890,858 | 36.22 | 1.27 | \$5,928 | \$4,209,960 | \$3,253,151 | |
| 4.60% | \$100,082,219 | 36.30 | 1.35 | \$5,941 | \$4,401,321 | \$3,444,512 | |
| 4.80% | \$100,273,581 | 36.37 | 1.42 | \$5,952 | \$4,592,683 | \$3,635,874 | |
| 4.95% (Full NPS FY2026 Budget Request) | \$100,420,901 | 36.43 | 1.48 | \$5,962 | \$4,740,003 | \$3,783,194 | |

ATTACHMENT B

Expanded Itinerary

Ad Hoc Budget Committee Meeting Agenda-Meeting #1

Date: May 6, 2025

Time: 6:30-8:30

Location: Norwich City Hall, Room 335

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair or Facilitator

2. Review of Current Budget Status

Presenter: Susan Lessard

- Overview of budget progress and current position

3. Update on This Year's Budget

Presenter: Bob Sirpenski

4. Legislative Updates: House Bills Impacting Budget

Presenter: Bob Sirpenski

5. Alliance Update

Presenter: Jamie Bender

6. Introduction of New Rose City School Resilience Program

Presenter: Lisa Hughes

7. Transportation Cost-Saving Opportunities

Presenter: Susan Lessard

8. Discussion Regarding Health Insurance

Presenter: Susan Lessard, Bob Sirpenski

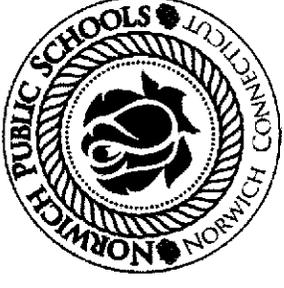
9. Scheduling of Next Ad Hoc Meeting

Group Discussion

10. Adjournment

ATTACHMENT C

Budget Proposal Presentation
April 8, 2025



Budget Proposal

Norwich Public Schools

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Budget Process

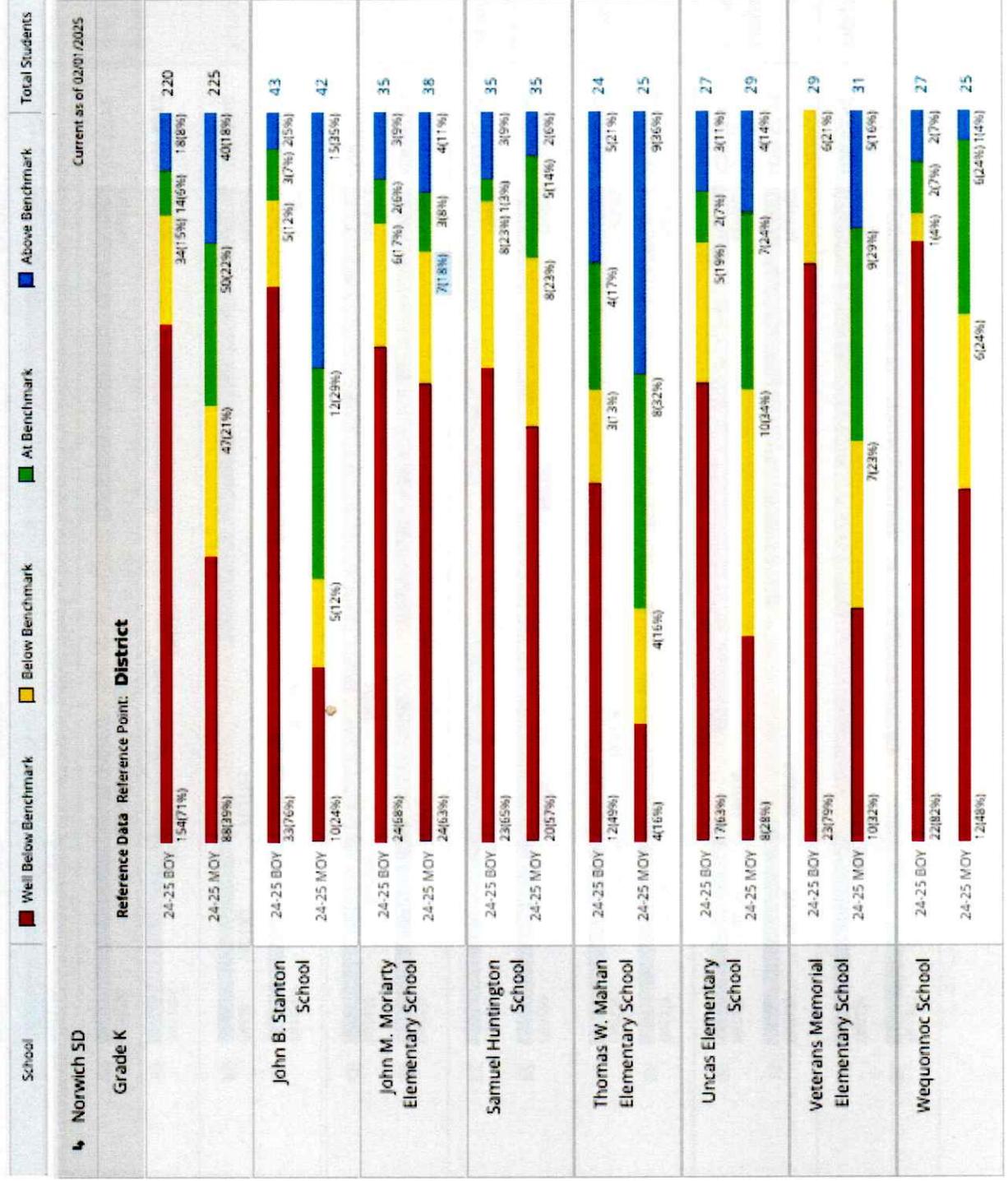
Budget Process Meeting Dates

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| January 28, 2025 | February 10, 2025 | March 12, 2025 |
| District Fuel | Facilities | BOE Approved Budget |
| Tuition Historical View | Technology | |
| Transportation | Other: Tuitions, SPED, Transportation & Fuel | |
| Special Education Contracted Services | | |
| February 19, 2025 | | |
| Salary | | |
| Fringe Benefits | | |
| Budget Summary | | |



Our students are growing at a higher rate than other students across the country in terms of their early literacy skills (for example, letter ID, fluency, decoding, and comprehension). More than 20% of our student population is making above-average growth. This is a nationally normed and state-approved assessment

Grade K Dibels



Grade 1 Dibels

| Grade 1 | Reference Data | Reference Point | District |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|
| | 24-25 BOY 152(51%) | 48(16%) | 48(17%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 129(45%) | 46(16%) | 48(17%) |
| John B. Stanton School | 24-25 BOY 26(39%) | 15(23%) | 9(14%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 25(38%) | 11(17%) | 16(24%) |
| John M. Moriarty Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 34(53%) | 14(22%) | 10(16%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 28(42%) | 14(22%) | 9(14%) |
| Samuel Huntington School | 24-25 BOY 22(59%) | 1(3%) | 8(22%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 18(51%) | 2(6%) | 7(20%) |
| Thomas W. Mahan Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 8(35%) | 4(17%) | 6(26%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 6(25%) | 3(13%) | 9(37%) |
| Uncas Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 15(43%) | 8(24%) | 5(15%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 15(50%) | 2(7%) | 9(32%) |
| Veterans Memorial Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 32(64%) | 5(10%) | 7(14%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 25(49%) | 13(25%) | 7(14%) |
| Wequonnoc School | 24-25 BOY 15(71%) | 1(5%) | 4(19%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 12(66%) | 1(6%) | 3(17%) |

Grade 2 Dibels

| Grade 2 | Reference Data | Reference Point: District |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | <p>24-25 BOY 173(53%) 324 60(19%) 40(12%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 145(47%) 308 65(21%) 52(17%)</p> | |
| John B. Stanton School | <p>24-25 BOY 37(58%) 63 9(13%) 6(10%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 32(53%) 61 10(16%) 12(20%)</p> | |
| John M. Moriarty Elementary School | <p>24-25 BOY 32(48%) 66 16(24%) 7(11%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 23(44%) 53 14(26%) 10(19%)</p> | |
| Samuel Huntington School | <p>24-25 BOY 26(59%) 44 7(16%) 5(11%) 6(14%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 21(49%) 43 10(23%) 7(16%) 5(12%)</p> | |
| Thomas W. Mahan Elementary School | <p>24-25 BOY 9(25%) 36 10(28%) 13(36%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 8(22%) 36 7(19%) 9(25%) 12(34%)</p> | |
| Uncas Elementary School | <p>24-25 BOY 20(55%) 37 6(16%) 9(24%) 2(5%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 18(53%) 34 5(15%) 9(26%) 2(6%)</p> | |
| Veterans Memorial Elementary School | <p>24-25 BOY 30(67%) 45 6(13%) 6(13%) 3(7%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 26(56%) 46 7(15%) 9(20%) 4(9%)</p> | |
| Wequonnoc School | <p>24-25 BOY 19(58%) 33 5(15%) 6(18%) 3(9%)</p> <p>24-25 MOY 17(49%) 35 4(11%) 7(20%) 7(20%)</p> | |

Grade 3 Dibels

| Grade 3 | Reference Data | Reference Point | District |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | 24-25 BOY 145(45%) | 63(19%) | 321 51(16%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 153(48%) | 34(11%) | 315 50(16%) |
| John B. Stanton School | 24-25 BOY 28(48%) | 10(17%) | 59 9(15%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 29(52%) | 5(9%) | 56 8(14%) |
| John M. Moriarty Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 33(47%) | 12(17%) | 70 14(20%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 36(52%) | 11(15%) | 71 13(18%) |
| Samuel Huntington School | 24-25 BOY 15(34%) | 8(18%) | 44 11(25%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 14(32%) | 3(7%) | 44 15(34%) |
| Thomas W. Mahan Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 11(34%) | 8(25%) | 32 5(16%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 12(39%) | 6(19%) | 31 4(13%) |
| Uncas Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 26(65%) | 6(15%) | 40 6(15%) 2(5%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 28(65%) | 4(9%) | 43 8(19%) 3(7%) |
| Veterans Memorial Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 17(40%) | 12(29%) | 42 2(17%) 6(14%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 20(54%) | 1(3%) | 37 12(32%) 4(11%) |
| Wequonnoc School | 24-25 BOY 15(44%) | 6(18%) | 34 9(26%) 4(12%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 14(43%) | 4(12%) | 33 12(36%) 3(9%) |

Grade 4 Dibels

| Grade 4 | Reference Data | Reference Point | District |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| | 24-25 BOY 120(36%) | 89(26%) | 337 10(30%) 27(8%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 117(35%) | 57(17%) | 334 87(26%) 73(22%) |
| John B. Stanton School | 24-25 BOY 27(42%) | 18(28%) | 64 12(19%) 7(11%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 26(41%) | 11(18%) | 62 14(23%) 11(18%) |
| John M. Moriarty Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 24(35%) | 15(21%) | 70 22(31%) 9(13%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 27(38%) | 9(13%) | 70 18(26%) 16(23%) |
| Samuel Huntington School | 24-25 BOY 14(34%) | 12(30%) | 40 13(33%) 11(3%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 14(34%) | 8(20%) | 41 7(17%) 12(29%) |
| Thomas W. Mahan Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 11(29%) | 10(26%) | 38 14(37%) 3(8%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 12(32%) | 6(16%) | 37 11(30%) 8(22%) |
| Uncas Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 18(44%) | 11(27%) | 41 11(27%) 1(2%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 19(45%) | 9(21%) | 42 10(24%) 4(10%) |
| Veterans Memorial Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 15(40%) | 7(18%) | 38 15(39%) 1(3%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 8(21%) | 9(24%) | 38 12(21%) 9(24%) |
| Wequonnoc School | 24-25 BOY 11(24%) | 16(35%) | 46 14(30%) 5(11%) |
| | 24-25 MOY 11(25%) | 5(11%) | 44 15(34%) 13(30%) |

Grade 5 Dibels

| Grade 5 | Reference Data | Reference Point | District |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| | 24-25 BOY 15(44%) | 65(19%) | 91(27%) 33(10%) 343 |
| | 24-25 MOY 14(44%) | 48(14%) | 94(28%) 48(14%) 336 |
| John B. Stanton School | 24-25 BOY 32(49%) | 5(8%) | 21(32%) 7(11%) 65 |
| | 24-25 MOY 26(42%) | 3(5%) | 23(37%) 10(16%) 62 |
| John M. Moriarty Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 27(42%) | 17(27%) | 14(22%) 6(9%) 64 |
| | 24-25 MOY 23(37%) | 14(23%) | 15(25%) 9(15%) 61 |
| Samuel Huntington School | 24-25 BOY 20(41%) | 7(14%) | 17(35%) 5(10%) 49 |
| | 24-25 MOY 21(44%) | 5(11%) | 15(32%) 6(13%) 47 |
| Thomas W. Mahan Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 10(29%) | 8(24%) | 11(32%) 5(15%) 34 |
| | 24-25 MOY 10(29%) | 8(24%) | 11(32%) 5(15%) 34 |
| Uncas Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 14(36%) | 14(36%) | 9(23%) 2(5%) 39 |
| | 24-25 MOY 21(51%) | 7(17%) | 8(20%) 5(12%) 41 |
| Veterans Memorial Elementary School | 24-25 BOY 30(58%) | 10(19%) | 8(15%) 4(8%) 52 |
| | 24-25 MOY 24(47%) | 7(14%) | 14(27%) 6(12%) 51 |
| Wequonnoc School | 24-25 BOY 21(52%) | 4(10%) | 11(28%) 4(10%) 40 |
| | 24-25 MOY 21(52%) | 4(10%) | 8(20%) 7(18%) 40 |

NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Budget Overview:

Current Budget (24-25):

- Total: \$95,680,898

Proposed Budget (25-26):

- Total: \$100,420,901
- Increase: \$4,740,003 (Includes tuition increases for NFA and Griswold)
- Percent Increase: 4.95%
- One percent equivalent: \$956,809

Governors Alliance Proposed Increase:

- \$2,064,152 (2.16%) Brings down to 2.79% or \$2,675.851

Excess Cost Funding Options:

- At 100%, 91%, 78%?-this will be decided at ad hoc meetings
- Was a conservative 78%-have now in budget

Reduction Assumption (if Alliance increase happens):

- \$2,675,851
- 1% increase from city=\$956,809
- Deficit of \$1,719,042
- Certified staff reductions of \$1,091,551 (Slide 17)
- **Total deficit with certified reductions \$627,491**

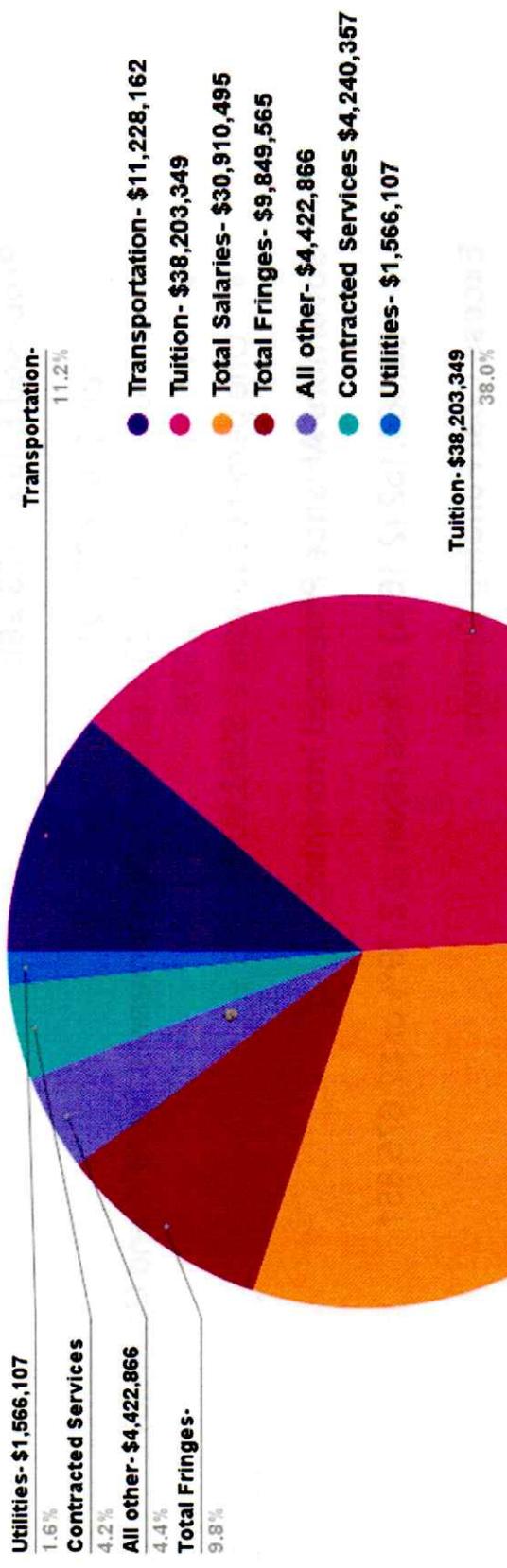


NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FY 2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

MAJOR BUDGET DRIVERS SUMMARY

TOTAL \$100,420,901



*All Other = Supplies (custodial, instructional), Insurance (liability, property), Postage, etc.

NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS Budget – Major Considerations

- Risk Items: Special Education costs continue to escalate at an unsustainable rate
- Will there be legislative relief? Excess cost bills? Adjustment to ECS for Special Ed?
- Long term goal to stop the escalation: programs to bring back students to the district, reduce outside services needed and generate revenue: Rose City School
- Excess Cost Reimbursement rate: what will it be? 91%, 71%, 64.19%, 62.02% or something else?
 - * Budgeted 78.8% based on new legislation that was passed on March 5, 2025
- ECS/Alliance scheduled to increase by \$2,064,152: will it happen?
- HB 5823: \$2 million for Early Childhood Education at Norwich Public Schools
- Change in School Readiness funding formula: not sure of the financial impact
- Health Insurance: final cost not known-more exact numbers in May
- Transportation: Meetings being held with First Student to reduce costs
- Proposed Budget represents a 4.95% increase



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Budget – Major Considerations
(continued)

- Budget adjustments made to tuitions and excess cost reimbursement
- Revenue adjustments made for Rose City School and NTA tuitions
- \$325,000 in revenue to offset costs
- Excess Cost Reimbursement increased by \$479,205
- Increase is based on legislation passed on March 5th adding \$40 million dollars
- Assumption is that in the new budget, this will not be “taken away”
- Legislation proposed to fund excess cost at 100%
- Legislation and final state budget will affect Alliance/ECS funding, Norwich Pre-K/Early Childhood funding and Adult Education funding
- Session schedule to end on June 4, 2025



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Recap

Tuitions - 38.8%

NFA - 3.70% increase

Griswold - 3.50% increase

Special Education Outplacements - \$9,023,684 (111 students)

This is a decrease by \$1,816,227 from 24-25

Excess Costs - Tiered legislation showed Norwich at 91% vs. 62.02% (possible 76.2% provided we get \$479,205)



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS RISK FACTORS THAT WILL INFLUENCE YEAR-END POSITION

Special Education Excess Cost supplemental appropriation – The State approved an additional sum of \$40 million dollars for excess cost reimbursement this fiscal year. The estimate for Norwich is \$479,205. The payment is expected to be received in early June. Any deviation from the estimated reimbursement will affect the year-end balance.

Student Transportation – School year transportation expenses for First Student averaged \$51,421 per day in March, which is less than the YTD daily amount of \$51,551. In April the BOE voted to discontinue the NFA winter buses. This action should cause the average daily cost for the remainder of the year to drop. Barring any unforeseen changes or increases in individual student transports, transportation should end within 1% of budget.

Pre-K Operating Deficit – Grant funding does not fully cover the cost of the District's Pre K Program. Depending on enrollment, the deficit that the Board of Education must cover related to direct operating expenses not including shared services is estimated to range between \$293K and \$364K. For estimating the year-end balance, an average deficit of \$328,537 has been used. Variation from this estimate will alter the year end budget variance.

Medicaid reimbursement – The District bills for Medicaid eligible services provided to students. This revenue offsets Special Education Services. It is estimated that net revenue for this activity will be \$100,000 for the remainder of the year.



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS Risk Factors (continued)

- Other variable expenses such as unemployment, overtime, substitutes, Special Education tuitions and services, legal expenses, and facilities are expected to be representative of recent months spending levels.
- The heating season has virtually come to an end and that account should end up in a favorable position
- The budget freeze implemented early in the school year has been effective in helping mitigate the negative budget variance. The total amount in variable expense accounts not spent could total \$375,000.
- Variable expenses that will influence the final year-end balance include substitute and overtime salary expense, utility expenses, Special Education expenses, unemployment compensation, and unforeseen facility and equipment repair expenses
- The year- end forecast prepared at the end of February indicated that the District could end the year with a budget deficit in the range of breakeven to \$400,000.
- After reviewing April expenses, that estimate is still valid. Currently, however, the estimate is trending towards the breakeven side of the estimate.



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

The Appropriations Committee released their recommended budget in late April. Key provisions are listed below:

Appropriations recommended a 4.4 % increase in education spending over the Governor's budget.

Appropriations maintained the Governor's proposed increase of \$2,064,152 to the ECS/Alliance Grant

Appropriations added \$124 million in each of the two budget years to the Excess Cost Grant. If passed, this increase could potentially fund Norwich's grant reimbursement to 91% or higher.

Excess Cost reimbursement could increase by at least \$400,000

HB5823 – Provides \$2million to NPS for early childhood education

Raised Bill 7239 – DRIP Program – Provides funding for minor capital repairs – can be carried over from year to year - \$244,156/year for NPS



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS ROSE CITY SCHOOL RESILIENCE PROGRAM

Purpose:

Support 5 middle/high school students with personalized, in-district services.

Projected Savings:

\$350K by reducing use of outside services and out-of-district placements; potential additional \$150K-\$175K in cost avoidance.

Goals:

- Build student resilience, confidence, and a growth mindset
- Improve attendance and engagement
- Strengthen family-school collaboration
- Ensure access to mental health and academic support
- Promote credit attainment and graduation



| Certified Positions | Current | Vacancies 23/24 | Proposed for 24-25 | Difference |
|--|---------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Instructional Coaches (ELA, Math, SEL) | 15 | 1 | 11 | -4 |
| Reading/Math Specialists | 35 | | 11 | -24 |
| MLL Coach | 3 | | 3 | 0 |
| TESOL/MLL teachers | 26 | 1 | 27 | 0 |
| Special Education teachers | 41 | 3 | 44 | 0 |
| Music teachers | 11 | 1 | 10 | -2 |
| Library | 5 | 1 | 5 | -1 |
| PE | 14 | 1 | 14 | -1 |
| Art | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Counselors | 12 | 1 | 8 | -5 |
| Social Workers | 16 | 1 | 15 | -2 |
| School Psychologist | 6 | | 6 | 0 |
| Deans | 6 | | 6 | 0 |
| "Penpals" | 1 | | 0 | -1 |
| Admin Positions | | | | |
| Principals | 9 | | 9 | 0 |
| Assistant Principals (Middle) | 7 | 1 | 4 | -4 |
| Assistant Principals (Elementary) | 2 | 1 | 2 | -1 |
| Special Education Supervisors | 5 | | 2 | -3 |

NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Budget – Eliminated positions from 24-25 Summary

- 5 Instructional Coaches (Math, ELA, SEL)
- 24 Reading and Math Specialists
- 5 School Counselors
- 2 Social Workers
- 4 Assistant Principals
- 2 Special Education Supervisors
- 1 PE Teachers
- 1 Librarian
- 2 Music Teachers



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Budget – Eliminated positions from 24-25

Central Office eliminated positions

- Did not replace an admin assistant in HR
- Did not replace the volunteer position
- Eliminated Student Services Office Manager
- Eliminated one residency officer
- Eliminated the payroll manager
- Replaced Director of Communications with a Communications Coordinator and combined responsibilities with volunteer position
- Hired a part-time Medicaid Admin Assistant to replace full-time admin assistant
- Moved three Admin Directors to Coordinator positions (12-month to 210 days).



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Budget – Eliminated positions from 24-25 Summary

- 5 Instructional Coaches (Math, ELA, SEL)
- 24 Reading and Math Specialists
- 5 School Counselors
- 2 Social Workers
- 4 Assistant Principals
- 2 Special Education Supervisors
- 1 PE Teachers
- 1 Librarian
- 2 Music Teachers



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Budget –Eliminated positions for
2025-2026

Additional Staff Reductions for Next Year:

- 3 Dean Positions
- 3 MLL Coaches (2 moving to MLL teaching positions, 1 to elementary teaching position)
- 2 Elementary School Counselors
- 2 Social Workers
- Possible non certified positions
- 2 Grade 2 Teachers – due to class size reduction at Mahan and Wequonnoc

Other Savings from Attrition:

- 2 teacher retirees
- 5 Paras by attrition (historical average para attrition over the summer is 13)

Rose City School (RCS) Savings:

- Two MS classrooms: approximate \$200,000 savings



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Budget –NFA and Griswold Tuition Increase

Total NFA 24-25

\$27,043,020

Total NFA 25-26

\$29,488,913 (\$2,445,893 or a 2.6% increase of our overall budget)

NFA Special Education

24-25: \$7,882,321

25-26: \$9,297,695

Increase=\$1,415,374

Total Griswold Regular Ed.

24-25:\$1,204,354

25-26: %1,485,942(.3% increase of our overall budget)

Increase=\$278,588

Griswold Special Education

24-25:\$798,440

25-26: \$1,132,369

Increase=\$333,929



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Budget – Eliminated positions for
2025-2026

Additional Staff Reductions for Next Year:

- 3 Dean Positions
- 3 MLL Coaches (2 moving to MLL teaching positions, 1 to elementary teaching position)
- 2 Elementary School Counselors
- 2 Social Workers
- Possible non certified positions
- 2 Grade 2 Teachers – due to class size reduction at Mahan and Wequonnoc

Other Savings from Attrition:

- 2 teacher retirees
- 5 Paras by attrition (historical average para attrition over the summer is 13)

Rose City School (RCS) Savings:

- Two MS classrooms: approximate \$200,000 savings



NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Enrollment

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Pre-K Students: | 289 |
| K Students: | 244 |
| Grade 1: | 305 |
| Grade 2: | 338 |
| Grade 3: | 329 |
| Grade 4: | 341 |
| Grade 5: | 342 |
| Grade 6: | 339 |
| Grade 7: | 365 |
| Grade 8: | 336 |
| Total: | 3,228 |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| NFA (includes SPED) | 1,471 |
| Griswold (includes SPED) | 67 |
| Ledyard Agri-Science | 15 |
| Bacon High School | 17 |
| Waterford High School | 3 |
| Technical Schools: (Norwich, Grasso & Windham) | 232 |
| Act Magnet School | 8 |
| 3 Rivers Middle College | 20 |
| LEARN Magnet Schools | 83 |
| New London Magnets | 126 |
| Rose City School | 9 |
| Norwich Transition Academy | 34 |
| Quinebaug Middle College | 1 |
| Total: | 2,086 |

NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2024-2025 Ending District Costs

| Kristen Stangfellow Superintendent | Expenses |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Salary, TSA, Doctorate stipend | \$ 211,500.00 |
| Vacation payout | \$ 35,740.34 |
| Medicare taxes | \$ 3,638.85 |
| Health Insurance | \$ 31,122.63 |
| Mileage | \$ 2,399.93 |
| Total | \$ 284,401.75 |

| Tamara Glosier Assistant Superintendent | Expenses |
|--|----------------------|
| Salary & TSA | \$ 191,657.50 |
| Medicare Taxes | \$ 2,822.07 |
| Mileage | \$ 2,076.90 |
| Total | \$ 196,556.47 |
| Total for KS & TG | \$ 480,958.22 |

| Investigator | Billable Hours | Total Cost |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Shipman & Goodwin | 213.5 | \$ 89,122.18 |
| Kyle McClain | 308.3 | \$ 88,264.11 |
| Total Cost | 521.8 | \$ 177,386.29 |

| Cumulative Costs | |
|--|---------------|
| Total of KS & TG Salaries | \$ 480,958.22 |
| Total cost of legal fees/investigation | \$ 177,386.29 |

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Final cost of investigation/Salaries: | \$ 658,344.51 |
|--|----------------------|

ATTACHMENT D

Rose City School Resilience Program



Rose City School Resilience Program: Building Resilience and Stamina for Student Success

Rationale:

The **Rose City School Resilience Program** is designed to support middle and high school students and their families in building the resilience and stamina necessary to engage in in-person or hybrid learning models successfully. Recognizing the challenges many students face (social, emotional, academic, or logistical), this program provides a structured yet flexible framework to help students stay on track to earn credits and access essential services.

The Need for the Rose City Resilience Program

Many students struggle with consistent school attendance due to a range of factors, including mental health concerns, anxiety, social challenges, and family circumstances. Recent disruptions have amplified these issues, making it increasingly difficult for students to maintain engagement in traditional school settings. The **Rose City School Resilience Program** seeks to bridge these gaps by fostering strong school-family partnerships and implementing personalized strategies to help students persist in their educational journey.

This program will mitigate costly programs such as Shoreline Therapy and end costly placements students are not attending. We anticipate starting with approximately 5 to 7 middle and high school students who may benefit from this program. Initial cost analysis indicates an approximate savings of approximately \$350,000 by reducing the use of outside services and out-of-district placements; potential additional \$150,000-\$175,000 in cost avoidance, which includes out-of-district placements and cost avoidance of out-of-district placements for 2 students.

Program Objectives:

1. **Enhance Student Resilience:** Provide students with the tools to navigate challenges, develop a growth mindset, and build confidence in their ability to succeed in school settings.
2. **Increase Attendance and Engagement:** Support students in gradually increasing their ability to attend and participate in in-person or hybrid learning models.
3. **Strengthen Family-School Collaboration:** Work closely with families to create a supportive home environment reinforcing school participation and academic progress.
4. **Ensure Access to Essential Services:** Connect students with mental health resources, academic support, and other critical services to remove barriers to learning.

5. **Promote Credit Attainment and Graduation Pathways:** Help students stay on track academically by providing tailored support to earn credits and work toward graduation requirements. Connect with APEX learning (something that other area high schools utilize)

Program Components:

- **Personalized Support Plans:** Individualized strategies to address students' unique barriers to school attendance and engagement.
- **Resilience and Stamina Specially Designed Instruction:** Instruction focused on coping skills, self-regulation, stress management, and motivation.
- **Hybrid and Transitional Support:** Gradual reintegration plans for students struggling with full-time, in-person attendance.
- **Family Coaching and Outreach:** Regular check-ins, family workshops, and resources to strengthen the home-school connection.
- **Access to Community and School-Based Services:** Direct connections to counseling, tutoring, and social services to address external barriers to success.

Staffing:

- Full-time Social Worker or counselor, and one to 2 coaches, teacher/tutor overseeing hybrid learning, therapy dog visits

Model Includes:

- APEX credit recovery online and in-person learning similar to VLA
- Home Visits
- Parent Training (including Safety Care for Families and Mental Health First Aid)

Anticipated Start:

- Fall 2025

Anticipated Number of students served to start:

- 2-4 in-district Middle School students
- 5-6 outplaced High School students
- This number will grow if we make this a regional program. There is a significant and growing need in this area across districts.

Location:

Rose City School

ATTACHMENT E

Letter to MDG Benefits Solutions
April 28, 2025



Administrative Offices

Susan M. Lessard Superintendent of Schools
Jamie Bender Acting Assistant Superintendent of Schools

90 Town St., Norwich, CT 06360
Phone: (860) 823-6284 Fax: (860) 823-1880

Lisa Hughes, Ed. D. Director of Student Services
Robert Sirpenski Business Administrator

April 28, 2025

To: Matthew Libby, MDG Benefits Solutions

Dear Matt,

I am writing to formally request a detailed breakdown of claims incurred by each operating unit: the Board of Education, the City of Norwich, and Norwich Public Utilities for our self-insured health plan. As you know, our District is facing ongoing financial pressure driven mainly by our inability to validate the fairness and accuracy of the current allocation rates.

We were told that Anthem cannot provide claims by operating unit; however, we understand that invoices to the City already have this information. Given the substantial impact these costs are having on our self-insurance fund, we must receive the following:

1. **Detailed claims data for each operating unit from Anthem** (BOE, City, NPU) for the past 3 fiscal years, including:
 - Total paid claims
 - High-cost claimants over \$100,000
 - Pharmacy vs. medical breakdowns
 - Administrative fees
2. **Monthly or quarterly summaries** that show trends in utilization and major cost drivers.

This information is essential for:

- Conducting a fair and independent actuarial review,
- Evaluating our continued participation in the self-insured group,
- Making informed decisions about future plan options, including the State Partnership Plan.

Please confirm receipt of this request and provide this data by May 12, 2025.

We appreciate your cooperation and urgency on this matter. The fiscal health of the BOE's fund and, ultimately, the sustainability of the benefits program, depend on access to this information.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Lessard

Susan Lessard, Superintendent

Robert Sirpenski

Robert Sirpenski, Business Administrator