



# Town of Franklin

## Preliminary FY25 Budget Model

Joint Budget Subcommittee

March 6, 2024

Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator  
Lucas Giguere, Superintendent of Schools

<https://www.franklinma.gov/town-budget>

# Revenue: State Aid, Slide 1

STATE REVENUE	FY23	FY24	FY25 Proposed	Increase
Chapter 70 School Aid	28,885,721	29,191,961	29,343,701	151,740
Charter School Reimbursements	971,965	1,032,630	979,753	(52,877)
Unrestricted Aid	2,862,319	2,953,914	3,042,531	88,617
All Other Net of Offsets	414,166	426,733	422,946	(3,787)
	<b>33,134,171</b>	<b>33,605,238</b>	<b>33,788,931</b>	<b>183,693</b>

	FY23	FY24	FY25 Proposed	Increase
<b>ASSESSMENTS &amp; OTHER VOTES</b>				
School Choice	496,436	426,028	484,619	58,591
State Assessments	502,519	528,947	530,647	1,700
County Assessment	246,505	255,963	262,362	6,399
Charter School Assessment	5,544,108	5,874,756	6,068,541	193,785
Provision for Abatements & Exemptions	729,733	622,394	650,000	27,606
Subsequent Votes				
	7,519,301	7,708,088	7,996,169	288,081
<b>TOTAL NET REVENUE</b>	<b>128,939,974</b>	<b>134,456,883</b>	<b>137,724,258</b>	<b>3,267,375</b>
<b>LESS: TOTAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>(128,902,599)</b>	<b>(134,403,451)</b>	<b>(147,766,068)</b>	<b>(13,362,617)</b>
<b>UNUSED LEVY</b>	<b>\$ 37,375</b>	<b>\$ 53,432</b>	<b>\$ (10,041,810)</b>	<b>\$ (10,095,242)</b>

- State aid is **NOT** just Chapter 70. It's dozens of state formulas/assessments that amount to a "Cherry Sheet".
- Governor Healey's budget recommends a net **loss** \$76,782 in local aid over FY24.
- The School Department's declining enrollment, combined with the Chapter 70 formula dynamics ("hold harmless" aid, net school spending and minimum spending requirements), charter school expansion, and the town's increasing affluence have created a perfect financial storm for the Schools. This storm has been predicted for many years.

# Revenue: Local Receipts, Slide 2

	FY23	FY24	FY25 Proposed	Increase
<b>OTHER REVENUES</b>				
Local Receipts - General Fund	10,606,309	12,456,309	12,456,309	-
Host Community Agreement	335,295	-	-	-
J&J Opiod Settlement	67,505	-	-	-
	<b>11,009,109</b>	<b>12,456,309</b>	<b>12,456,309</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>				
Net Budget Stabilization / Other Transfers		250,000		(250,000)
Enterprise Fund (Indirects)	1,255,000	1,593,000	1,841,000	248,000
	<b>1,255,000</b>	<b>1,843,000</b>	<b>1,841,000</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>

- About half of “Local Receipts” (LR) are revenues that pay for fee for municipal services, such as building permits, ambulance receipts, licensing fees, recreation fees, etc. Similar to School Revolving Accts.
- Local Receipts is assumed to level funding from FY24.
  - This will change for the better by April 12th. I anticipate modest increases in cannabis, hotel, ambulance receipts, and motor vehicle excise.
- Local Receipts fluctuate year-to-year.
- Governor Healey’s Municipal Empowerment Act would help raise meals and hotel revenues, which are disproportionately paid for by out of town visitors.

# Revenue: Tax Levy, Slide 3

TOWN OF FRANKLIN				
FISCAL YEAR 2025 REVENUE AND CONTROL SHEET				
Date: March 1, 2024				
	FINAL FY23	FINAL FY24	TA PROPOSED FY25	INCREASE/ (DECREASE)
<b>TAX LEVY</b>				
Prior Year Levy Limit plus 2 1/2%	\$ 85,955,821	\$ 89,436,897	\$ 92,839,014	\$ 3,402,117
New Growth	1,299,688	1,137,751	1,000,000	(137,751)
	<b>87,255,509</b>	<b>90,574,648</b>	<b>93,839,014</b>	<b>3,264,366</b>
<b>DEBT EXCLUSIONS</b>				
Horace Mann Issue #1	93,600	-	-	-
Keller-Sullivan	390,910	376,050	360,325	(15,725)
Horace Mann Issue #2	290,000	280,000	270,000	(10,000)
High School Issue #1	2,881,163	2,878,163	2,879,488	1,325
High School Issue #2	149,813	151,562	153,062	1,499
Tri-County New School	-	-	132,298	132,298
	<b>3,805,486</b>	<b>3,685,770</b>	<b>3,795,173</b>	<b>109,397</b>
<b>TOTAL POTENTIAL TAX LEVY</b>	<b>91,060,995</b>	<b>94,260,424</b>	<b>97,634,187</b>	<b>3,373,763</b>

- Debt Exclusions (DE) are tax increases that sunset at the conclusion of a project.
- Declining tax levy due to tax sunsets in debt exclusions coming off the books - Horace Mann, K-S.

# Revenue: Tax Levy, Slide 4

TOWN OF FRANKLIN				
FISCAL YEAR 2025 REVENUE AND CONTROL SHEET				
Date: March 1, 2024			TA	
	FINAL	FINAL	PROPOSED	INCREASE/
	FY23	FY24	FY25	(DECREASE)
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- Tax Levy is 2.5% annually +/- New Growth estimate, which will likely continue to decline in FY25.
- New Growth are property value increases captured mid year on construction, renovations, home improvements in both residential and commercial/ industrial areas. The cooler real estate market is having an impact on our tax levy.
- Thus, the Town has **\$3.264 million** in new discretionary tax levy to spread around, sans fixed costs.
- I have heard many suggest: "Why Doesn't The Town Just Give more money to the Schools?"

# FY25 Expenditures, Slide 1: Examples of Fixed Costs

- Pension Assessment & Benefits: \$692,000 increase for Norfolk pension assessment and municipal staff health care.
- Municipal Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) at 2.5%: Approx. \$625,000 increase from FY24 to FY25.
  - In addition, FY25 also fully assumes the new Arts/Culture and Creative Economy department, Elections increase for three (possibly four) elections; and an expanded Facilities Administration budget (Sustainability Coordinator).
- Facilities Budget rose \$670,000 in personnel and expenses (\$411,000), which is almost exclusively School based costs.
- \$20-25 million of the non-Public Education line items are costs relating to the Franklin Public School.
  - The “Municipal” budget pays for all school building debt & interest, property and casualty insurance, worker’s compensation, snow removal, non-teacher pension costs, grounds & building maintenance, utilities, fuel and maintenance for the school van fleet, retired teacher health and life insurance, facility personnel, all school grounds mowing and maintenance, and much much more.
  - Most of these costs are affected by inflation which suck up the capacity of the tax levy.
- Smaller costs add up (examples):
  - Town P&C & Worker’s Comp: 11% increase, MIIA
    - Rewards & Professional Training credits.
  - OPEB \$50,000 annual increase.
  - DPW Expense cost increases to tree trimming, mowing of fields/grounds, street lights, etc...
- For those who argue that the town should “just give the schools more money”, fixed costs is why we cannot!

# FY25 Expenditures Slide 2: New Discretionary Spending

- List of new discretionary, non-contractual or obligatory spending for FY 25 (est. \$731,335):
  - Sustainability Coordinator, per Town Council goals at \$85,000 plus benefits = \$120,000 budget hit.
  - DPW Expenses: \$378,900 for additional tree trimming, costs to mow the athletic fields and town parks, sidewalk crossing painting and striping, sidewalk repairs, street lights and much more.
  - Boards and committee investments to the Cultural Council (\$5,000), Historical Museum/Commission (\$15,000), Cultural District (\$1,000) Disability Commission (\$1,000) and the Town Council (\$3,000).
  - Three additional paramedics to support a third, daytime, peak hours ambulance.
    - However, the Fire Department brings in the revenue source through ambulance receipts.
    - The Department also will see a reduction in overtime with the additional staff.

# FY25 Expenditures Slide 3: What's Not in the Budget

- The preliminary budget does not include the following:
  - Roads, sidewalks, parking lots, trails, open space capital infrastructure;
  - Further net zero or green initiatives or capital infrastructure;
  - Community development initiatives;
  - Athletic fields and facilities investments;
  - Mental health initiatives;
  - School & Town Technology infrastructure needs;
  - Recurring capital (curriculum, vehicles, protective gear) being included in the operating budget; and
  - So many other items people would love to have or that we need....
- Next 5-year capital projects in progress:
  - Police Station and public safety tower North Franklin;
  - Remington-Jefferson remodel;
  - Recycling Station/Solid Waste Master Plan;
  - Public infrastructure needs, such as roads, sidewalks, parking lots, trails;
  - General Facilities maintenance; and
  - Anything else that comes up...

# FY25 Expenditures Slide 4: The School Budget

- The Schools have developed four separate models for budget consideration and public discussion.
- The Superintendent and I have jointly recommended inserting a 12.92% increase, or \$9.3 million, increase to depict to the choices before the community.
- Superintendent of Schools, Lucas Giguere, is here to provide the overview of the School choices.

**10 Schools**



**494 FTE Teachers**



**1234 Employees**



**Total State Aid - Chapter 70**  
**\$29,493,708**



**In-District Cost Per Student**  
**\$17,897**



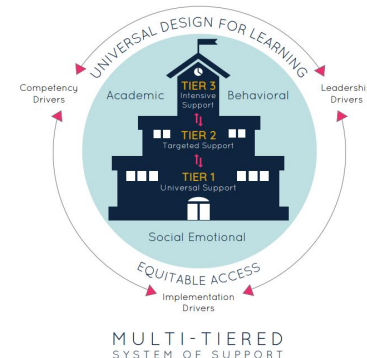
## OUR PRIORITIES

1. Maintain **class sizes** within recommended ranges
2. Provide **support for students** with complex educational, social, emotional, and behavioral needs.
3. Further advance the **literacy** and in grades PreK-12 **other curriculum and instruction initiatives** by providing necessary curriculum materials and professional development.
4. To review and determine what costs that are currently supported through the **ESSER-3 grant** might be shifted to the appropriated budget or other available source.
5. To sustain current and explore new investments for equitable access to **high-quality learning**, focusing on closing achievement gaps.



### How does the FY25 budget benefit students?

- The largest portion of the budget provides for salaries for staff to provide:
  - Student-to-teacher ratio in Grades to K-3 is approximately 18-22, and 5-12 is approximately 20-24.
  - Learning in classrooms with a talented faculty.
- Targeted supports provided for ALL students requiring intervention and individualized education supports
- All students have access to learning and co-curricular activities that are inclusive.
- The budget provides the materials, technology needs, and counseling resources required by students to learn, achieve, and grow.



In order to arrive at the recommended FY25 Budget, factors considered were:

- contractual increases to salaries
- special education programming
- health insurance costs
- actual costs of variables such as substitute teachers, transportation, and
- changes to outside revenue such as grants and revolving accounts



## BUDGET INCREASE OBLIGATIONS

<b>Begin with FY24 Final Budget Appropriation</b>	<b>\$71,989,431</b>
Contractual Obligations	\$1.7M
Absorbed salaries due to elimination of ESSER III Funds	\$497,000
Increase in Out of District Special Education Costs & Services	\$2.2M
Increase in Out of District Special Education Transportation	\$100,000
Increase in Transportation of Homeless Students	\$80,000
Increase in Contracted Transportation for in-district Students	\$108,000
Increase in Health Insurance Expense	\$650,000
Decrease in Grant and Revolving Funds	\$1.2M
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,535,000</b>



### What is level service plus?

The **Level Service Plus Budget** assumes the same level of service to the schools from the FY24 budget to the FY25 budget, including the current school programs, staffing levels, class sizes, and services. The base budget includes:

1. The total FY24 budget appropriation;
2. Statutory or regulatory mandates;
3. Personnel step, longevity and collective bargaining increases;
4. Increases under other existing contracts



The recommended FY25 budget represents a request for level services plus additional staff and supplies for the 2024-2025 school year. A level service plus budget allows us to:

1

Retain the same levels of teaching and learning for all students in the upcoming school year.

2

Afford financial increases from the previous year in order to maintain all programs.

3

Provide additional staff and supplies to ensure we maintain class size ranges, partially restore FY24 cuts

Final FY24 Budget	\$71,989,431
Proposed FY25 Budget	\$81,319,261
Increase in \$\$	\$9,329,830
Increase in %	12.96%

## BUDGET REALITIES

	Percentage Increase	Budget Amount	\$\$ Increase	Deficit for Level Services
<b>Stabilize</b>	<b>FY25 Level Services Plus Budget 12.96%</b>	\$81.4M	\$9.4M	\$0
<b>Survive</b>	<b>FY25 Level Services Budget 10.19%</b>	\$79.3M	\$7.3M	\$0
<b>Requires reductions</b>	<b>2.5% Increase Over FY24</b>	\$73.8M	\$1.8M	\$5.5M
	<b>3.5% Increase Over FY24</b>	\$74.5M	\$2.5M	\$4.8M
	<b>4% Increase Over FY24</b>	\$74.9M	\$2.9M	\$4.4M
	<b>5% Increase Over FY24</b>	\$75.6M	\$3.6M	\$3.7M
	<b>6% Increase Over FY24</b>	\$76.3M	\$4.3M	\$3.0M

### General Education component:

- Encompasses various programs and services benefiting all Franklin students.
- Includes costs for staff: educators in core classrooms, special subject teachers, nurses, guidance counselors, and administrators.
- Covers instructional materials, supplies, classroom technology, and devices for both students and staff.
- Incorporates extracurricular activities such as clubs, athletics, and art programs.
- Also accounts for transportation expenses.



### Special Education:

- Characterized as the most unpredictable budget item among all school departments.
- Annual fluctuations in the number, nature, and level of students with special needs, as defined in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Significant changes in student requirements pose challenges for budgeting special education expenses.



## SPECIAL EDUCATION IN-DISTRICT COSTS/SAVINGS

### Historical Special Education Out of District Costs

Year	# of Students	Cost	Change	% Change
<b>2021-22</b>	65	\$6,598,372.50		
<b>2022-23</b>	81	\$7,619,726.92	\$1,021,354.42	15.48%
<b>2023-24*</b>	75	\$7,440,153.74	-\$179,573.18	-2.36%

### In-District vs. Out of District Costs

Program	# of Students	FPS Cost Per Pupil	OOD Cost Per Pupil	Savings
<b>Elementary GOALS</b>	21	\$48,623	\$79,990	\$658,707
<b>Elementary REACH</b>	10	\$71,355	\$98,883	\$275,480
<b>NECC Partner Program</b>	13	\$83,940	\$185,000	\$1,313,780
<b>Middle School STRIVE</b>	9	\$58,350	\$147,922	\$806,148
			<b>Estimated Total Savings</b>	<b>\$3,054,115</b>

**LEVEL SERVICE PLUS REQUEST****STABILIZE**

Included partially restore staffing and programming to ***Stabilize***

<b>Elementary</b>	5.0 K-2 Tchrs 1.0 BCBA	1.0 STRIVE ESP 1.0 STRIVE Tchr	.8 ECDC ESP
<b>Middle</b>	1.0 Tchr 1.0 Spec. Ed. Tchr	1.0 Spec. Ed. ESP 1.0 ABA Tutor	
<b>High</b>	.5 Team Chair 1.0 Spec. Ed. Tch 1.0 Librarian	1.0 Tchr 1.0 Math Interventionist	
<b>Student Services</b>	.8 Van Driver		
<b>District</b>	2.0 DLI		

**Programs and Supplies**

- Middle School Clubs and Activities and bus transportation
- Middle School Transition programming
- After School Behavior Support
- High School Supplies such as music supplies and instrument maintenance, graphing calculators, language lab headsets, graphing calculators, online edu. software, etc.

**COST TO STABILIZE & PARTIALLY RESTORE = \$1.6M OVER LEVEL SERVICE**

## INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

### A STABILIZED BUDGET ALLOWS US TO...

#### PRESERVE WHAT WE HAVE

Academic Programming: Advanced Placement (AP), K-12 Fine and Performing Arts, Franklin Arts Academy, 6-12 World Languages, Senior Project, high school electives, middle school teaming, STEM

Support Services: Tiered interventions, counseling services, case loads, class sizes

Co-curricular Programs: MS/HS clubs, DECA, National Honor Societies, Mock Trial, before and after-school music programs

Extracurricular Programs: Athletics, Unified Sports, clubs

#### EXPAND, INNOVATE AND RESTORE

Early college/dual enrollment: Partner with college and DESE on credit opportunities for academics and elective courses

Innovative Career Pathways: Align and develop coursework that leads to industry credentials, certifications, and licensure (e.g. Ch. 74-CTE).

Civil Service Partnerships: Continue to work with Franklin Fire, Police, EMT, and other departments to prepare students for civil career fields

Review previous programming and staff reduction for potential restoration

Explore opportunities to offer child care programming for employees and residents

## IMPACT OF FUNDING LESS THAN LEVEL SERVICE

### LESS THAN LEVEL SERVICE WILL REQUIRE REDUCTIONS

#### ELIMINATING/REDUCING WHAT WE HAVE

Academic Programming: Staffing, Advanced Placement (AP), K-12 Fine and Performing Arts, Franklin Arts Academy, 6-12 World Languages, Senior Project, high school electives, middle school teaming, STEM

Support Services: Tiered interventions, counseling services, case loads, class sizes

Co-curricular Programs: MS/HS clubs, DECA, National Honor Societies, Mock Trial, before and after-school music programs

Extracurricular Programs: Athletics, Unified Sports, clubs

Increases in all fee-based programs across the District

#### CANCELLING/DELAYING INITIATIVES

Early college/dual enrollment: Partner with college and DESE on credit opportunities for academics and elective courses

Innovative Career Pathways: Align and develop coursework that leads to industry credentials, certifications, and licensure (e.g. Ch. 74-CTE).

Civil Service Partnerships: Continue to work with Franklin Fire, Police, EMT, and other departments to prepare students for civil career fields

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## A TALE OF FOUR BUDGETS

Less than Level Service “Cuts and Reductions”		Level Service “Survive”	Level Service + “Stabilize and Partially Restore”	Level Service & Programmatic Improvements “Thrive”
Reductions programs and positions		Maintain services based on enrollment	Partially restore previous cuts	Restoration of selected programming/positions previously cut and innovation
FY25 @2.5%	FY25 @3.5%	FY25 @ 10.19%	FY25 @12.92%	FY25 @16.25%
\$73.8M	\$74.5M	\$79.3M	\$81.3M	\$83.7M
+\$1.8M	+\$2.5M	+\$7.3M	+\$9.3M	\$11.7M
				Requires continued visioning and strategic planning

\* These are not budget proposals but rather models based on the FY24 \$71,989,431 budget and details in this presentation.

## IMPACT OF FUNDING BELOW LEVEL SERVICE

### Reduction in Staff

Larger class sizes, fewer support staff such as counselors and librarians, and a reduction in unified arts like art, music, and physical education.

*Over time this can lead to burnout among remaining staff who must take on additional responsibilities, impacting the quality of education and support students receive.*

### Increased Fees

Reduce services and cut activities such as co-curriculars, athletics, transportation, and even basic supplies like textbooks or technology fees.

*Can create financial barriers for students and families, limiting access to opportunities and widening existing disparities.*

### Cuts to Programs

Forced to make tough decisions about which programs to prioritize/cut leading to the elimination or reduction of enrichment programs, electives and advanced placement course offerings

*Students may have fewer opportunities to explore various interests and prepare for future careers or higher education.*

## IMPACT OF FUNDING BELOW LEVEL SERVICE

### Elimination of Activities

Co-curricular activities such as sports, clubs, and arts programs are often among the first reductions due to underfunding.

*These activities play a crucial role in fostering students' social, emotional, and physical development. Losing access to these opportunities can have long-term implications for students' overall well-being and academic success.*

### Negative Impact on Recruitment and Retention

Creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and instability leading to high turnover rates.

*Turnover not only disrupts continuity in teaching and learning but also incurs additional costs for recruitment and training of new staff.*

STAFFING RETENTION RATES						
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Teachers	84.2%	86.6%	86.4%	90.9%	88.8%	87.3%
Principals	81.8%	81.8%	81.8%	84.7%	72.7%	72.7%

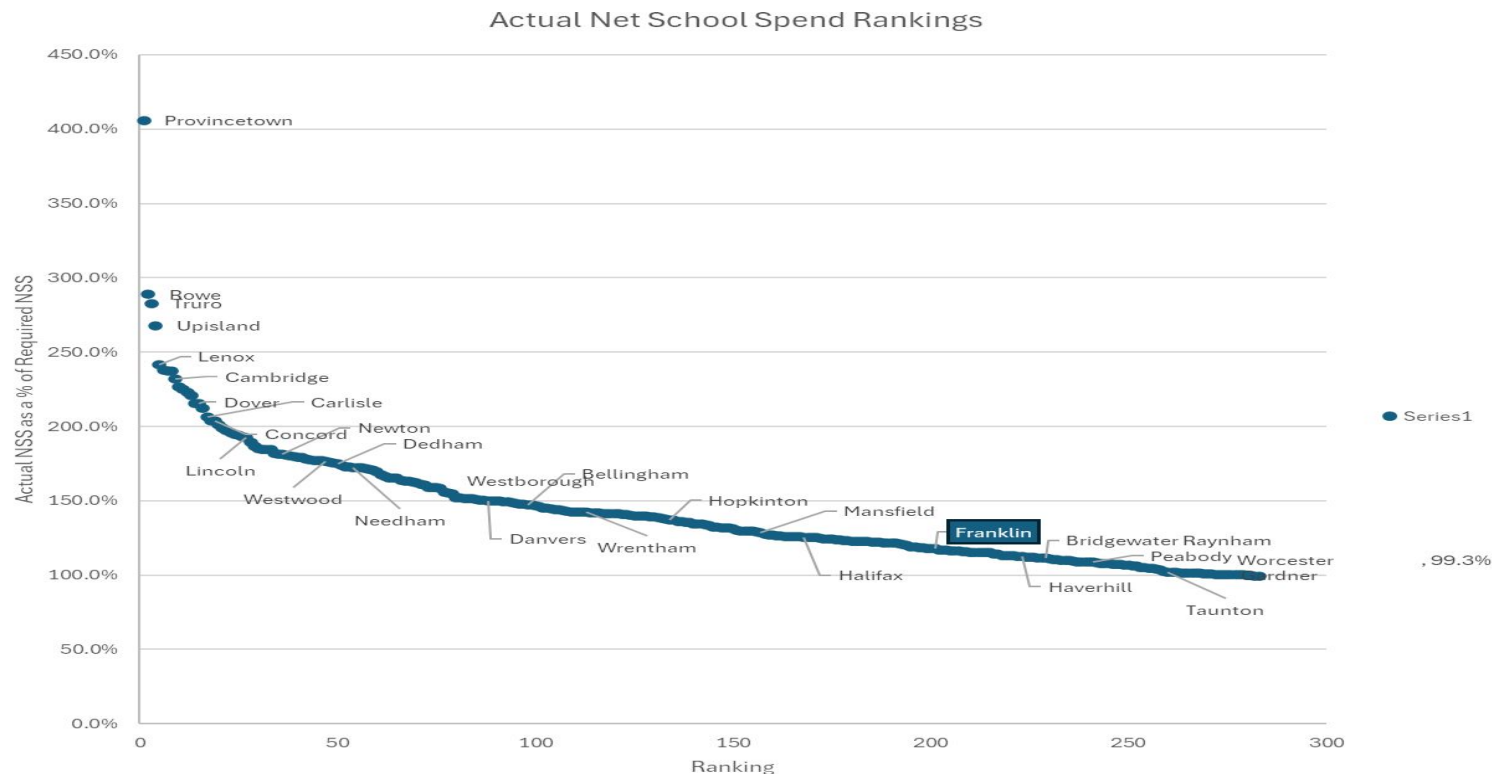
### Culture of Volatility

Perpetuate a culture of volatility within the school district.

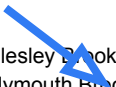
*Instability makes it difficult to implement long-term plans for improvement and innovation and can hinder efforts to attract investment and support from external stakeholders, further exacerbating the financial challenges.*

## NET SCHOOL SPENDING - HIGHEST TO LOWEST

75% of school districts in MA spend more on education than Franklin



# 15% of Cities and Towns have a greater local effort from Income Wealth

Boston Newton Cambridge Wellesley  Franklin Woburn Weston Worcester Lexington Needham Somerville Quincy Arlington Hingham Andover Belmont Winchester Concord Framingham Lowell Springfield Medford Waltham Plymouth Brockton Shrewsbury Natick Lynn Wayland Weymouth Milton Sudbury Beverly Chelmsford Barnstable Haverhill Westwood Malden New Bedford

Peabody North Andover Marblehead Woburn **Franklin** Fall River Acton Watertown Billerica Braintree Methuen Reading Hopkinton Melrose Lawrence Westford Taunton Dedham Attleboro Falmouth Revere Walpole Marlborough Duxbury Salem Dover Canton Sharon Burlington Scituate Norwood Wakefield Danvers Tewksbury Marshfield Easton Leominster Dartmouth North Attleborough Medfield Longmeadow Gloucester Newburyport Mansfield Westborough Westfield Chicopee Northampton Dracut Southborough Pittsfield Norwell Cohasset Wilmington Lynnfield Stoneham Carlisle Sandwich Everett Saugus Bedford Swampscott Milford Randolph Stoughton Lincoln Grafton North Reading Ashland Foxborough Bridgewater Sherborn Nantucket Northborough Ipswich Fitchburg Holden Agawam Holliston Groton Hanover Yarmouth Boxford West Springfield Chelsea Bourne Hudson Pembroke Middleborough Medway Manchester Amherst Norton Holyoke Westport East Longmeadow Winthrop Norfolk Wrentham Mashpee Wilbraham Amesbury Hamilton Northbridge Bellingham Seekonk Ludlow Abington Raynham Wareham Auburn Swansea Kingston Littleton Rehoboth Somerset Dennis South Hadley Harwich Middleton Rockland Uxbridge Tyngsborough Belchertown Stow East Bridgewater Charlton Lakeville Fairhaven Whitman Sutton Webster Millbury Easthampton Hull Newbury Topsfield Pepperell Lunenburg Clinton Gardner Harvard Sturbridge Maynard Upton Georgetown Bolton Brewster Oxford Chatham Mattapoisett Hanson Plainville Millis Greenfield Carver Sterling Southbridge Southwick Wenham Acushnet Boxborough Holbrook Marion Leicester Rockport Freetown Mendon Spencer Douglas Rutland Dudley Orleans Townsend Westminster Palmer Edgartown West Newbury Blackstone Lancaster Ayer Salisbury Rowley Great Barrington Dighton Boylston Groveland West Bridgewater Lenox West Boylston Halifax Berkley Southampton Merrimac Williamstown Monson Rochester Hopedale Athol Winchendon Essex Ware Provincetown Dunstable Deerfield Shirley Templeton Nahant North Adams Ashburnham Princeton Granby Dalton Hampden Eastham Montague Paxton Lee Adams Hadley Berlin Wellfleet Avon Hubbardston Orange Barre West Brookfield North Brookfield Oak Bluffs West Tisbury Brimfield Plympton Sheffield Hatfield Chilmark Tisbury Ashby Truro Millville Sunderland Warren Brookfield Cheshire Leverett Northfield Stockbridge Holland Lanesborough West Stockbridge Westhampton East Brookfield Hinsdale Hardwick Huntington Conway Williamsburg Richmond Oakham Bernardston Otis Phillipston Becket Granville Shutesbury New Marlborough Pelham Russell Wales Ashfield Colrain Petersham Shelburne Cummington Egremont Buckland Erving Clarksburg Blandford Monterey New Braintree Worthington Gill Whately Washington Leyden Chester Royalston Montgomery Charlemont New Salem Chesterfield Windsor Peru Sandisfield Aquinnah Savoy Wendell Warwick Alford Plainfield Goshen Florida Rowe Tolland Hancock Heath Middlefield Tyngham New Ashford Hawley Mount Washington Monroe Gosnold

## Franklin is ranked 54th of 351

## Preliminary Solutions & Override Information

# School Structural Deficit Choices

1. Engage the community in an override to raise property taxes to fund school and municipal services.
  - a. Raise recurring other non-tax levy revenue sources (EG fees, etc)
2. Shift resources from municipal departments to the School Education budget.
3. Paradigm changes, reevaluate the service delivery. Examples:
  - a. Evaluate programs/needs/essentials versus wants - Visioning
  - b. Evaluate properties and facilities - Master planning
  - c. Evaluate cost drivers and propose innovative solutions to alter paradigms.
  - d. Evaluate spending priorities. Maybe the community cannot do it all...
4. Town and Schools should preserve, if not grow, all reserves, at all costs.

# Next Steps

1. Tonight - Public discussion on the state of school and town finances.
2. Town Administrator will set a balanced budget by March 13, 2024. Budget production is a full month of staff involvement. See [previous budgets here](#).
3. Town Administrator budget will be (likely) released April 12, 2024.
  - a. Staff are working on a allocation number for the Schools from several sources of revenue.
4. Finance Committee Hearings - May 6 (General Government), May 8 (Public Safety and DPW) and May 15 (Schools and Public Education).
5. Town Council Hearings May 23 and 24.
6. Any override discussion must take place with the Joint Budget Subcommittee, the entire School Committee, entire Town Council and Town Clerk.

# Override 101

- Step 1 - The School Committee begins the process of an override (unless Schools are not asking for any additional levy capacity, such as 2014).
- Step 2 - The Town Council reviews the School request. Discussion of non-education override items such as roads, sidewalks, capital, municipal needs, etc.
- Step 3 (optional) - Joint Budget Subcommittee (should, but not required) to review total proposal. Submits recommendation to the full Town Council for potential ballot prep.
- Step 4 - Town Council coordinates with the Town Clerk on an election schedule.
  - Elections schedules vary based on factors, such as, the election date and type (federal, state, local), before a budget approval or after a budget approval, etc.
  - Typically 35-90 days to accommodate election different requirements. Minimum 35 days.
  - See DOR's [Prop 2 ½ ballot questions manual](#).
  - Depending on the date, additional requirements are triggered.
- The Town Administrator, Superintendent of Schools and paid staff CANNOT advocate for or against an override with town resources. We are significantly limited in our ability to assist.
- A Grassroots organization is required, ballot question committee, legal structure.

# Overall Financial Impacts to Citizens

- The public needs to be conscientious of the impact of cost increases to citizens:
  - Property values have increased = higher property taxes. Avg increase \$198.
    - Override calculations TBD.
  - New Stormwater Fee July 1, 2023 in FY24
    - Expect another small increase of \$10-\$20/household in FY25 to maintain this unfunded mandate.
  - 20% Sewer Rate increase July 1, 2023 for Beaver Street Interceptor.
    - 15% July 1, 2024, 10% July 1, 2025.
  - Trash/Recycling fee is expected to rise \$25 to \$50 for FY25. It is still lower than 20 years ago, but an increase.
  - PFAS remediation regulatory costs (water rate increase is certain FY25 for PFAS).
    - Water Rate increases expected of a 8% FY25, 8% FY26, 8% FY27 for this unfunded mandate.
  - Expected debt exclusion for a new Tri-County School to hit taxpayers in FY25. This has been built into the model.
  - Resident Municipal Aggregation 10 cent electricity rate ended November 2023.
    - .15 cents November 2023-2025.

## DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS