# North Brookfield Public Schools

## Proposed FY 26 Operating Budget

### School Committee meeting –January 27, 2025

# *NBPS Mission Statement*

*Our mission is to empower every student to reach their full potential by providing a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a sense of belonging. We are committed to continuous improvement, innovation, and the celebration of diversity, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education to all. We prepare our students for success in a global society by instilling qualities and skills to be contributing and effective citizens.*

# Guiding Principles of our Budget Development Process

**Budget Accuracy and Transparency:**

- Ensure the school department budget is transparent, and straightforward, reflecting the actual needs of students and making it accessible to all stakeholders.

**Inclusive Planning Process:**

- Involve the entire administrative team in the budgeting process, from conception through review, to promote a comprehensive and unified approach.

**Resource Management:**

- Prioritize the preservation of resources while also considering necessary growth and improvements, encouraging regular reevaluation and revision of budgetary allocations.

# North Brookfield Public Schools Strategic Objectives (2024-2027)

North Brookfield Public Schools

*If we invest in innovative curriculum and instructional methods, create personalized learning plans for all students, and foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive school culture; then we will empower students to reach their full potential, address individual needs, and cultivate a sense of belonging, resulting in improved educational outcomes and a positive school community.*

***Strategic Objectives***

| 1. Curriculum and Instruction Enhancement: | 2. Meeting the Needs of All Students: | 3. Fostering a Culture of Belonging: |
|---|---|---|
| **Objective:** To continuously improve and innovate curriculum and instructional methods to ensure the delivery of high-quality education. | **Objective:** To provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment that addresses the individual needs of all students. | **Objective**: To cultivate a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming school culture where all stakeholders feel valued and connected. |

# Goals for tonight:

- Present the draft of FY26 Superintendent's Recommended Budget.

- Receive feedback and guidance from the school committee, acknowledging that this is the initial step in a comprehensive and iterative process.

- Engage multiple stakeholders throughout the development of the budget to ensure it reflects the collective needs and priorities of the school district.

# FY'26 Superintendent's Recommended Budget
## *Overall Summary*

The budget request for FY26 totals $8,227,837.31 which represents $1,199,231.42 over FY25. A summary table is below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Final Approved FY25 Budget | $7,028,605.89 |
| FY26 Recommended Budget | $8,227,837.31 |
| FY26 Budget with Offsets | $9,763,911.89 |
| Increase  Approved to Recommended ($) | $1,199,231.42 |
| Increase (%) | 17% |

For more detail, the following table breaks down the FY26 budget further into three major accounting categories and includes an FTE[1] count. For FY26 the major budget driver is special education increases; salary increases, and additional costs for all transportation. **Salaries account 69.4% of the total FY26 budget, and 29.9% of the total increase.**

# Major Budget Drivers

| Account Type | FY25 Actual Budget | | FY26 Budget | Difference ($) | Difference (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1- Salaries (Professional, Admin, and other) | $5,352,342.16 | | $5,711,160.83 | $358,818.67 | 6.7% |
| 2-SPEd tuition | $1,797,939.30 | | $1,747,887.69 | $50,051.61 decrease | -2.76% |
| 3- Transportation | $945,240.30 | | $1,048,351.04 . | $103,110.74 | 11% |

# Why does the Special Education Budget continue to be such a large amount?

**Special Education Funding Dynamics:**

- Subject to volatility due to the need to adapt to individualized student requirements.
- Budget adjustments align with changes in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

**FY26 Tuition Rate Updates:**

- State's Operational Services Division (OSD) announces a moderate 4% increase in tuition rates for private institutions.
- This rate compares favorably to last year's 6% increase and the 14% surge in FY24.

**FY26 Budget Projections:**

- Based on precise, student-centered methodology.
- Anticipates out-of-district (OOD) placements for 13 students, down from 15 in FY25.
- Results in a budget reduction of nearly $50,000, a 2.78% decrease from the previous year.

**Budget Volatility and Monitoring:**

- Special education placements are inherently volatile; changes can occur unexpectedly.
- Continuous monitoring and adaptability are essential in financial planning.

**Commitment to Fiscal Responsibility:**

- Uphold fiscal responsibility while providing high-quality, individualized support.
- Responsive to the evolving needs of students, ensuring strategic foresight in budgeting.

# Breakdown of Special Education Out-of-District Placements

**Out of District Placements Projections**

| **OOD Placement** | **# of Students FY25** | **Actual FY25 Budget** | **# of Students FY26** | **Projected FY26 Budget** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Collaborative | 4 | 230,728.85 | 3 | 217,923.89 |
| Private Day | 7 | 651,333.05 | 7 | 677,386.37 |
| Residential | 5 | 688,508.00 | 3 | 567,238.34 |
| **Grand Total** | **15** | **$1,797,939.30** | **13** | **$1,747,887.69** |
| **Tuition Difference 2025/2026** | | | | **$50,051.61 decrease** |
| **Cumulative % decrease** | | | | ***2.78% decrease*** |

- The Special Education tuition budget is developed on a student-by-student basis. Our projected FY26 budget reflects only students that we expect to require a private placement next year - there is no “contingency” in our budget request.

# Budget Reallocations- Notable Changes

- $2,471 shifted from extracurricular mentors to enhance the District Professional Development line.
- Focus on increasing teacher expertise and improving student outcomes.

**Facilities Maintenance:**

- Increased extraordinary maintenance budget by $5,000 to a total of $20,000.
- Ensures urgent maintenance needs at both schools are effectively managed.

**Student Transportation:**

- Transportation budget for homeless students increased to $25,000 from $4,240.
- Expenses reimbursed through the McKinney-Vento Act, covering upfront costs.

**Technology Upgrades:**

- Plan to upgrade 30 desktops to Windows 11 next winter.
- Aligns IT infrastructure with modern security and efficiency standards.

**Athletics Budget Adjustment:**

- Decreased overall athletics budget by $30,418 due to reductions in sports activities.

## Budget Additions
## NBES K-5 Sub seperate SPED teacher; ABA paraprofessional

## (Net $100,000)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.0 FTE Sub Separate SPED Teacher | 1.0 FTE ABA |

# Rationale for Positions

**Introduction of Special Education Resources:**

- Add a full-time special needs teacher for K-5, focusing on students on the autism spectrum and those with developmental delays.
- Employ a full-time ABA paraprofessional to provide continuous, specialized support.

**Benefits of In-House Program:**

- Fosters an inclusive learning environment, adapting to the unique needs of each student.
- Establishes foundational learning and social skills beneficial throughout the students' lives.

**Enhanced Educational Continuity:**

- Integrates special education within the district, enhancing educational continuity and social integration.
- Builds district capacity to serve special needs students in their community.

**Fiscal Responsibility and Savings:**

- Reduces reliance on potential costly external placements.
- Projects potential savings of approximately $500,000 in tuition and transportation costs over the next few years.

**Commitment to Educational Excellence:**

- Aligns with district's mission to nurture every student's potential.
- Prepares students for lifelong learning and community participation.

## Using Outside Revenue to Offset the Operating budget

The North Brookfield Public Schools budget is significantly supported by various external revenue streams, which help to reduce the overall operating costs. These sources include:

**Federal Grants:** These are funds allocated by the federal government, often earmarked for specific educational programs or initiatives.

**State Reimbursement Programs:** Such programs typically involve the state government reimbursing the district for certain expenditures, which might include special education, transportation, or other specific needs.

**Other Sources:** This category includes diverse income streams like pre-school tuition fees, revolving accounts,  and possibly local or private grants.

The total projected contribution from these outside revenue sources amounts to **$1,521,229.49** playing a crucial role in funding the district's budget.

## Offsets Explained

**Circuit Breaker Reimbursement:**

- **Significant increase in FY'25 due to a rise in special education expenditures.**
- **Projected decrease in FY'26, indicating stabilization or strategic cost adjustments.**

**Discontinuation of Student Gift Funding:**

- **Ended in FY'25, requiring budget adjustments to compensate for the loss.**

**Introduction of Athletic Revolving Funds:**

- **New in FY'26 to create revenue streams, specifically aiding athletic transportation costs.**

**E-Rate Funding Consistency:**

- **Continues to support technology and infrastructure enhancements.**
- **Crucial for upgrading the district's digital learning environments.**

**Increase in Rural School Aid:**

- **Notable rise from FY'25 to FY'26, enhancing support for rural educational needs.**

## Continued

**Grants and Funding Stability:**

- **Minor increases in SPED IDEA Grant 240 and Title I Grant into FY'26.**
- **Consistent funding from Title IIA and Title IV Grants for professional development and services.**

**School Choice Revenues:**

- **Slight fluctuations between $315,000 and $330,000 annually.**
- **Revenues fully utilized in the operating budget, limiting financial flexibility.**

**Significant Loss in Offsets:**

- **Nearly $500,000 reduction from FY'25 to FY'26, challenging budget planning and service maintenance.**

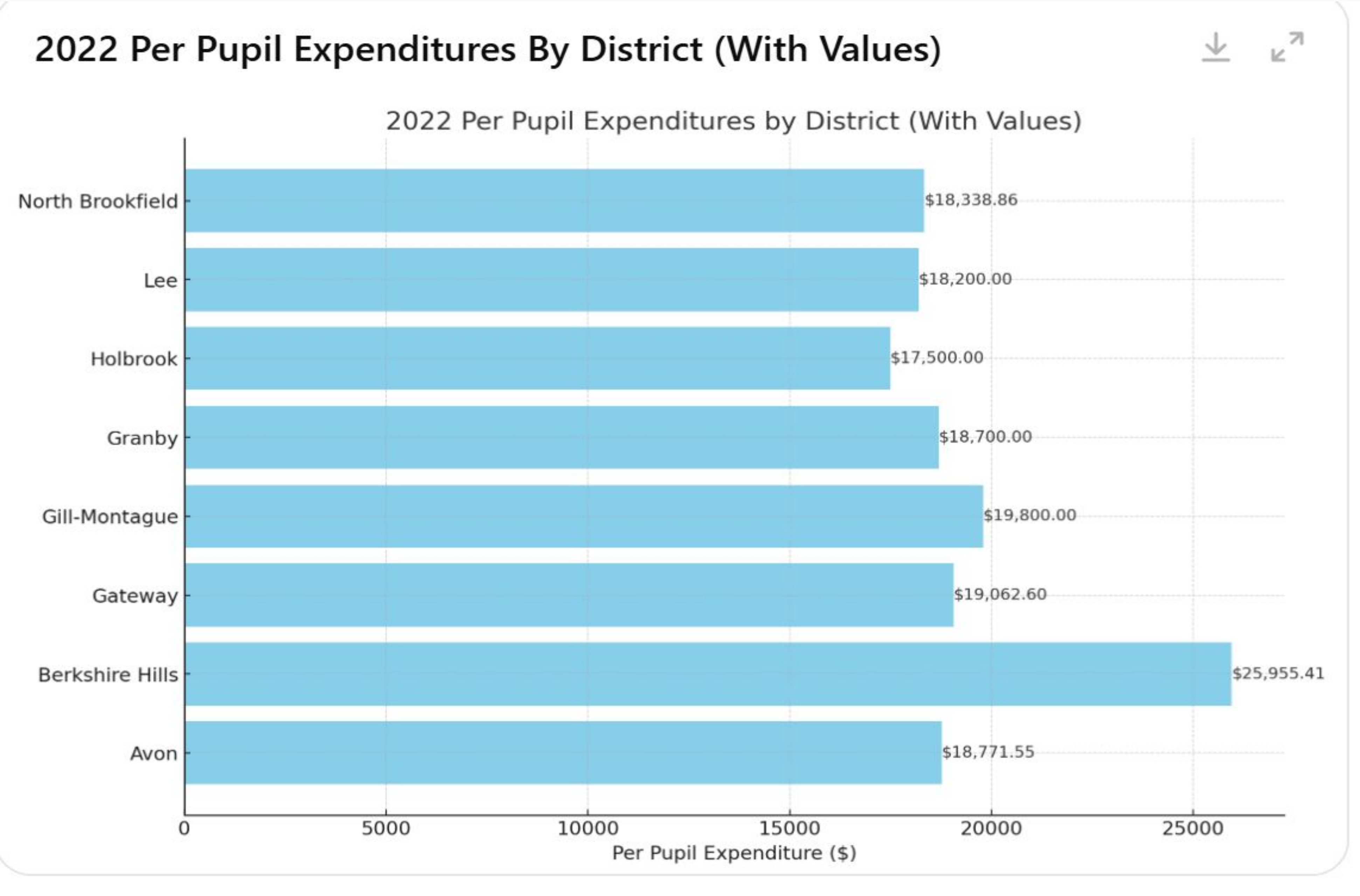
**Strategic Financial Planning:**

- **Focus on managing rising costs and addressing emerging needs.**
- **Prioritizing sustained technology investment and infrastructure, alongside strategic stewardship of special education resources.**

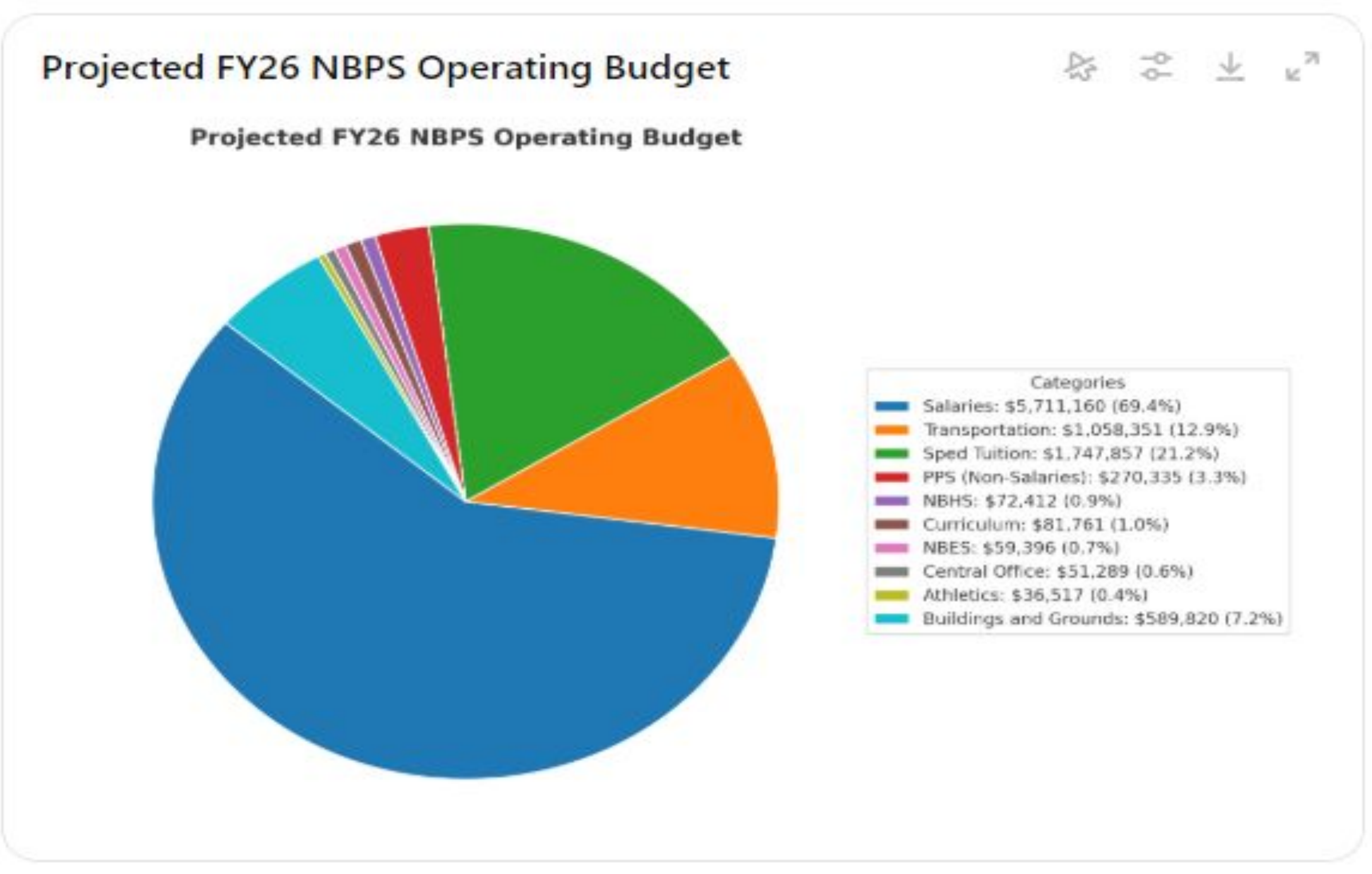
# How Does North Brookfield's Spending on Schools Compare to Other Towns?

| District | Total Expenditures per Pupil | In-District Expenditures per Pupil | In-District FTE Pupils |
|---|---|---|---|
| North Brookfield | $16,285.62 | $18,338.86 | 470.3 |
| Leicester | $16,439.09 | $15,283.98 | 1,408.7 |
| Belchertown | $16,412.66 | $16,570.19 | 2,131.2 |
| Brookfield | $16,371.32 | $15,823.45 | 279.9 |
| Tantasqua | $16,339.66 | $16,622.37 | 1,776.3 |
| Fairhaven | $16,314.78 | $15,679.70 | 1,856.5 |

## Compared to DESE District Analysis and Review Tools (DART) districts



## Visual Breakdown



# Closing Thoughts

- **A Journey, Not a Destination**
  This process is just the beginning. The work we’ve outlined today serves as the foundation for a collaborative, ongoing effort. Together, we’ll refine, adapt, and build upon these ideas to meet the evolving needs of our students, staff, and community.

- **Focusing on Immediate Impact and Long-Term Goals**
  While some actions will yield immediate benefits, this initiative is equally focused on creating sustainable systems that will drive progress for years to come. Balancing short-term wins with long-term aspirations is central to this work.

- **Commitment to Transparency and Collaboration**
  Through careful data analysis and stakeholder input, this process reflects our commitment to being transparent, responsive, and inclusive. Engaging staff, families, and community members will continue to be key in shaping our next steps.

- **Strong Foundation for Strategic Growth**
  The presentation highlighted critical insights and priorities that underscore the importance of aligning resources, fostering collaboration, and emphasizing student success. These efforts set the stage for a stronger, more unified approach to addressing the district's needs.