

Mt. Blue Regional School District

RSU 9

Proposed FY26 Budget Review



April, 1 2025 6:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

“Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all.”

Chesterville | Farmington | Industry | New Sharon | New Vineyard | Starks | Temple | Vienna | Weld | Wilton

Presentation Agenda

- **Presentation will focus on:**
 - 25-26 Realities
 - Budget Transitioning
 - Learning/Instructional Priorities
 - Good State Budget News for RSU 9
 - A District Approach (staff reductions & adjustments)
 - Proposed Budget & Town Assessments for Education
 - Budget Cost Centers Review
 - Balance Forward Fund Planning
 - FY26 Total Budget & Historical #s
- **This budget is a proposed draft & subject to adjustments as may be approved by the full Board**
- **Our proposed “Funding” and revenue is based upon:**
 - Present Ed 279 Funding from Maine DOE - January 27, 2025
 - Approximately 58% of our funding comes from the state of Maine
 - Approximately 36.5% from our local community taxes
 - It also comes from
 - Approximately 5.5% from the federal government
 - Foster Tech Center receives 100% of their funding from the state
 - Franklin County Adult Ed. has its own warrant article voted on separately by RSU 9 voters

25-26 Realities

- Contract costs driven by 6% salary increases
- Built in 7% (At least 9% (\$80,000 more) -TBD) health insurance increase
- Special Ed. Revenue Billing Reimbursement shortfall in 24-25
- Substitute, overtime, & supply line overages needed budget increases to actual (\$300,000 more)
- Balance Forward (“savings account”) is getting smaller
 - **Used 2.095 million (24-25) proposed \$800,000 (25-26)**
- 7.5 million in ESSER Federal Funds no longer available
- Possible Federal fund reduction (best guess 10% = \$200,000)

Budget Transitioning

- RSU 9 is Climbing down from not “falling off the cliff”!
- A world without ESSER (7.5 mil)
- Federal Funds
 - New federal administration believes that the Dept. of Ed wastes \$\$.
 - Our communities are concerned about inflation, employment, family needs!
 - We built the 25-26 budget understanding these concerns!
- There are few open positions (which built up our balance forward previously).
- Approximately 15 staff have retired.
- **We must adjust our staffing #s or else earned salary and benefit costs will overwhelm our budget and communities.**
- **If the budget fails it could potentially lead to deeper, forced, unmanageable cuts to programs and staff (“over the cliff”)**

Learning/Instructional Priorities

- **Strategic Plan Goals** (across all schools)
 - Literacy & Math
 - Student Engagement
 - Prof. Development
 - Grow our own expertise
 - Consultants
 - Coursework (working with a half dozen staff to earn certification)
 - Budget Focus - Developing:
 - A richer, hands-on Curriculum
 - “Resource Expertise” in supporting student and staff needs (rather than increasing staff).
- **Our staff is working hard but our academic results are not where our students need them and where we want them!** We need to continue to increase and improve our staff expertise through PD and sharing across all schools and staff!

Good State Budget News

- First ED279 (preliminary funding #s)
 - \$1.03 million increase (not including FTC) (I was hoping for \$500,000)
 - Why the large increase?
 - » Partially because of:
 - \$250,000 in reimbursed SPED costs
 - \$200,000 in one-time reimbursement for Adult Ed (students served & classes taught)
- **Why was this so important?**
 - It allowed our present Strategic Plan (“SP”) initiatives to continue!
 - We did not need a 2nd round of reductions in this year’s budget!

A District Approach to Reductions and Adjustments

- Every school's student #s and SPED Case Manager #s were reviewed
- Position reductions, transfers, & adjustments are happening in all cost centers based on our overall student #s
 - *Districts around ME & in Western ME are making much larger staffing reductions*
- **Every cost center** has reductions (not necessarily lower than FY25)
 - Supply, books, overtime, and sub lines not reduced
- Example of all Cost Centers adjusting their budgets:
 - Transportation reduced from 3 to 2 new buses and reduced one position

Position Reductions & Adjustments

School/ Department	Position	Action	Reason	Notes
MBMS	Resource/SPED	Eliminated	Vacant	
MBMS	Makerspace	Eliminated		½ time at MBMS
MBMS	Library	Reallocated	Retiree	Becomes Ed Tech 3
CBS	5th gr. teacher	Reallocated	Leaving	Dysregulated Stud. Support – ET3
CCHS	3rd gr teacher	Eliminated		One Year Position
MBHS	Resource/SPED	Eliminated	Vacant	
CBS	Resource/SPED	*Moved		*Moved to MBMS
FTC	Forestry	Reallocated		Becomes Ed Tech 3
AHS	3rd Grade	Eliminated		One Year Position
WGM	Ed Tech III - K	Reallocated		Dysregulated Stud. Support – ET3
District Office	Grants	Reduced		1 day/week
Transportation	Spare Driver	Eliminated	Vacant	
Facilities	Weekend Security	Eliminated	Vacant	
Facilities	FTSY Security/Cust.	Eliminated		Retiring
Facilities	Pt. Time Cust. (CBS)	Eliminated		Person will move
MBHS	World Language Teacher	Eliminated	Retiree	Students #s are low
WGM	K-Teacher	Eliminated		1 yr leave of absence not returning

Class Sizes

School	Current Enrollment	Projected Enrollment	Current Class Size	25-26 Projected Class Size as Budgeted
AHS	176	171	16	17.1
GDCS	106	94	13.25	11.75
CCHS	169	170	14.08	15
CBS	301	290	20.06	20.7
WGMS	310	303	15.5	16
MBMS	511	516	21	22
MBHS	714	702	14	15

Proposed Overall FY 26 Education Budget Tax Increase (budget to budget)

Proposed FY26 Town Assessments

(1.24% to towns)

0.54%

Town	% Increase to Local Taxes	Total \$\$ Amount Increase to the Town
Chesterville	4.04%	\$46,417
Farmington	3.40%	\$178,846
Industry	2.18%	\$23,644
New Sharon	-2.40%	(\$27,514)
New Vineyard	1.26%	\$11,159
Starks	1.75%	\$10,355
Temple	-4.45%	(\$22,691)
Vienna	0.26%	\$2,126
Weld	-10.64%	(\$77,814)
Wilton	1.48%	\$43,185

Proposed Town Assessments for Education

	Local Required % Section 5 F	% of total valuation	% of total valuation for debt	3 yr Average OR Previous Yr State Valuation Section 4B	2025-26 EPS Section 5F	2025-26 Local Debt	2025-26 Additional Local	2025-26 General Fund Assessment	2025-26 Adult Ed	Proposed Assessment	2024-25 Assessment	Increase (Decrease)	Percentage Change
Chesterville	7.83%	7.49%	7.79%	138,583,333	845,358.33	15,175.33	319,612.69	1,180,146.35	15,950.47	1,196,096.82	1,149,680.22	46,417	4.04%
Farmington	35.67%	34.12%	35.47%	630,983,333	3,848,998.33	69,094.76	1,456,013.37	5,374,106.46	72,624.04	5,446,730.50	5,267,884.66	178,846	3.40%
Industry	7.27%	6.95%	7.23%	128,600,000	784,460.00	14,082.12	296,754.06	1,095,296.18	14,801.42	1,110,097.60	1,086,453.77	23,644	2.18%
New Sharon	7.33%	7.01%	7.29%	129,600,000	790,560.00	14,191.63	299,203.20	1,103,954.82	14,916.52	1,118,871.34	1,146,385.50	(27,514)	-2.40%
New Vineyard	5.89%	5.64%	5.86%	104,266,667	636,026.67	11,417.54	240,423.85	887,868.07	12,000.74	899,868.80	888,709.63	11,159	1.26%
Starks	4.00%	3.83%		70,783,333	431,778.33	0.00	163,275.96	595,054.29	8,146.92	603,201.21	592,845.96	10,355	1.75%
Temple	3.19%	3.05%	3.18%	56,483,333	344,548.33	6,185.11	130,212.58	480,946.02	6,501.04	487,447.06	510,138.30	(22,691)	-4.45%
Vienna	5.29%	5.06%	5.26%	93,500,000	570,350.00	10,238.56	215,932.46	796,521.02	10,761.53	807,282.55	805,156.85	2,126	0.26%
Weld	4.16%	8.33%	8.66%	154,066,667	449,256.02	16,870.81	169,807.00	635,933.83	17,732.55	653,666.38	731,480.75	(77,814)	-10.64%
Wilton	19.37%	18.53%	19.26%	342,666,667	2,090,266.67	37,523.13	790,663.84	2,918,453.64	39,439.77	2,957,893.41	2,914,707.97	43,185	1.48%
TOTALS	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	1,849,533,333	10,791,603	194,779	4,081,899	15,068,281	212,875	15,281,156	15,093,444	187,712	1.24%
													Average increase to Towns

Potential Budget Increases in Western Maine as of 3-28-2025

In reviewing all other Western Maine school districts, from Poland to Rangely, their overall increases (not necessarily finalized) start at 12% ranging down to 3.18%, budget to budget.

RSU 9

Chesterville, Farmington, Industry, New Sharon, New Vineyard, Starks, Temple, Vienna, Weld, Wilton

0.54%

Balance Forward Fund Planning

- FY24
 - Unaudited Ending Fund Balance \$3,400,314 (waiting for audit completion)
- FY25
 - Transferred additional \$300,000 to Special Ed Reserve Account from FY24 balance
 - Transferred Additional \$250,000 to Capital Improvement Reserve Account from FY24 balance
 - Anticipated FY25 Ending fund balance available in FY26 \$2,850,314
- FY 26 Using \$800,000 to offset tax increase
 - \$125,000 continued professional development
 - \$200,000 continued support of full-time PreK
 - \$50,000 continued support for Family Engagement Coordinator
 - \$425,000 reduce overall increase to towns
 - Reserve Accounts
 - Additional \$450,000 to Capital Improvement Reserve Account
 - Additional \$200,000 to Special Ed reserve accounts FY26
- Anticipated FY26 ending Fund Balance \$1,400,314 (3.1%)

Article 1: Regular Instruction

- **Pre-K - Grade 12 Regular Instructional Program \$12,979,901**
 - Increase of \$287,334 over FY25 Level
 - +2.26% (+12.53% FY25)
 - Staffing #s
 - 24-25 to 25-26
 - Keeping New Positions
 - PreK Staffing (3 Teachers, 3 Ed Techs) “SP”
 - Mallett Kindergarten Ed Techs (2) w/one being reassigned “SP”
 - Middle School Interventionist (Teacher) “SP”
 - Alt. Ed. Teacher MBHS adjusted “SP”
 - Family-Consumer Sci/Culinary (Bjorn Center) “SP”
 - Permanent Subs (2) MBHS
 - Contractual Wage and Benefit Increases (included in all cost centers)

Article 2: Special Instruction

- **Instructional Program for Students Pre-K - Adult (22) Identified with Special Needs... \$8,101,782**
 - Decrease of \$164,687
 - -1.99% (1.76% increase FY25)
 - MaineCare funds continue to support this area
 - 7.5 to 7.0 hours per day for Adaptive Skills & Day Treatment Ed Techs (\$100,000 reduction)
 - Added an hour for 24-25 and adjusted it for 25-26
 - Present # of identified students 388 (fluctuates) & present # of new referrals 32
 - Staffing #s for 25-26 as compared to 24-25 - reduction of two resource room positions (vacant)
 - Contractual Wage and Benefit Increases
 - If needed, we will use the Special Ed Reserve Account for potential Out of District Student Placement needs
- **MaineCare billing**
 - FY26 Budget plan is to recoup \$900,000 of expenditures
 - FY25 Budget looked to expand our revenue to \$1.2 million (hiring constraints force us to start late)

Article 3: Foster Career & Technical Education Center

REMINDER: All Foster Tech Center (FTC) funds come directly from the Maine Dept. of Ed. Any and all present budget increases for FTC come out of their state funding along with their own Carry Forward Funds, not directly from RSU 9 Communities.

Their additional costs and funding are added to the RSU 9 bottom line but any and all increases do not add to local taxes, as they are covered through direct state funding.

- **Career & Technical Education Programs\$4,271,404**
 - An increase of \$254,000
 - 4.62% (23.92% FY25)
 - Increase in Carry Forward from 24-25 to 25-26 +\$108,000

Article 4: Student & Staff Services/Support

- **Programs in Guidance, Social Work, Library Media Centers, School Health (Nurses), Curriculum & Assessment, GATE, MLL, and Instructional Technology\$3,702,120**
 - Decrease of \$117,536
 - -3.08% (15.69% increase FY25)
- **2nd year of:**
 - **Increased PD Funding across our district**
 - Includes training and paid time for extra staff hours
 - Additional PD \$\$\$ (\$125,000)
 - **Coordinated Service Support from Family Engagement Coordinator**
 - Instructional Tech line decreased by \$80,367 (9.94% decrease)

Article 5: Other Instruction

- **Co and Extra Curricular Programs\$680,899**
 - Increase of \$125.00
 - + 0.02% (20.93% increase FY25)
- **Expenses Support Coach/Advisor Stipends, Supplies, Equipment, and Fees**
 - Athletics
 - Co-Curricular across multiple grade spans
 - BARR stipends for all schools (approximately \$107,000)

Article 6: System Administration

- **Superintendent's Office, School Board, Fiscal Services (Business Office), District Wide portion of Instructional Technology\$1,526,092**
 - Decrease of \$82,001
 - -5.10% (12.48% increase FY25)
 - Why?
 - Unemployment tax reduction
 - One time costs subtracted
 - Grant oversight position reduced
 - Superintendent's salary & benefits frozen
 - "Highly Efficient System Administrative Offices are below 4%" (Jim Rier, Maine DOE) (retired)
 - RSU 9 is at 3.36% of the total draft budget

Article 7: School Administration

- **School Building Level Administrative Offices (Principals & Admin. Assistants)**
All Elementary (5), Middle (1), and High (1) Schools\$1,987,612
 - Increase of \$38,999
 - +2.00% (6.18% increase FY25)
 - Why?
 - Moved Community Coordinator position to Social Work budgets
 - Contractual Increases for Wages (5%), Benefits & Coursework
 - No personnel increases
 - Building Administrators (9)
 - Administrative Assistant Support (12.75)

Article 8: Student Transportation

- **All Aspects of Student Transportation Services\$3,158,545**
 - Increase of \$231,386
 - +7.90% (0.51% increase FY25)
 - Can't expect to purchase extra needed parts etc. from 24-25 budget in May & June
 - Why?
 - Contractual Wage & Benefit Increases
 - \$188,000 increase in salaries and benefits
 - Additional 2 buses to replenish part of our fleet

Article 9: Plant Maintenance and Operations

- **All Aspects of Custodial and Maintenance Operations\$5,116,855**
 - Decrease of \$70,808
 - -1.36% (4.56% increase FY25)
 - Why?
 - Reduction of two part-time positions & one school year (3)
 - Scaling back of projects
 - Reserve Accounts for Capital and Fuel Reserve will be used if a major problem occurs

Article 10: Debt Service

- **Existing Expenses for Project Related Debt Service\$3,873,186**
 - Decrease of \$68,607
 - -1.74% Decrease (1.70% decrease FY25)

Franklin County Adult Education Program

- **All Aspects of Adult Education Programming\$590,378**
(has its own individual article)
 - Decrease of \$9,578
 - -1.60% (11.59% increase FY25)
 - Contractual Wage and Benefit Increases
 - Adult Literacy Contracted Services (outreach)
 - Career Professional Services (job preparedness)
 - Why?
 - No increase to the local share over 24-25
 - Using 50% of their present fund balance

Total Budget

- FY26 Budget \$45,398,396
- Increase \$242,726

- Total Budget Increase 0.54%
- Education Taxpayer Increase 1.24%
 - Average to our ten towns

Historical RSU 9 Budget Increases & Decreases

● Overall Budget\$242,726

- FY26 - +0.54%
- FY25 - +8.26% overall 4.45% to taxpayers
- FY24 - + 4.30%
- FY23 - + 0.62% *Five year average is 3.34%
- FY22 - + 2.97%
- FY21 - (-1.69%)
- FY20 - + 0.027% *Ten year average is 1.71%
- FY19 - + 6.25%
- FY18 - (-2.06%)
- FY17 - (-2.10%)
- FY16 - + 7.65%

Any Final Questions

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