



# HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Margaret Adams, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

January 8, 2024

Dear Hingham School Community,

During the past few months, district and school leaders have begun building the FY25 budget for the 2024-2025 school year. The budget planning included opportunities to discuss our priorities and review current FY24 budget spending. We now began meeting with the School Committee and the larger community to share details of the FY25 budget. Despite the challenges of increased costs, our discussions have focused on supporting all of our students to ensure their academic, social-emotional learning, and behavioral health needs as we continue our recovery from the disrupted learning of the pandemic.

In the spring of 2023, the town supported an operational override of 7.9 million that supported the implementation of a level services budget for the 2023-2024 school year. As part of the override discussions, the School Committee, Advisory, and Select Board developed a Memorandum of Understanding that capped future spending for the FY25-FY28 to an overall 3.5% increase. Based on this agreement, the town will allocate \$68,003,625 for the FY25 budget to the schools, representing a 3.5% increase from FY24.

As part of the budget planning for FY25, we have identified a 2.8 million dollar deficit. Of the 2.8 million, 1.6 million is due to increased special education costs, including out-of-district special education tuition and specialized contracted services. The Memorandum of Understanding with the town allows the schools to request increased funding for special education costs above a 2% threshold. The remaining 1.2 million dollars of the deficit is due to the district's obligations to several budget drivers, including meeting the contractual agreements with our employees, utilities, and increases in substitute costs.

The FY25 budget will be impacted by several factors that are leading to increased costs:

- The district's personnel costs are increasing. As the district continues to negotiate with several of its employee unions, it must meet its contractual obligations to its employees.
- The district is experiencing increased costs, including natural gas, fuel, and electricity.

- The budget will reflect needed increases for substitutes to cover long and short-term absences.
- We continue to experience increased student needs due to the pandemic and other societal pressures. Most significantly, we see an increased need in students' social-emotional learning and behavioral needs. These needs require additional staffing and contractual services to meet our students' increased needs. In addition, out-of-district special education tuition will also increase.

As we have begun planning for the FY25 budget, these drivers have led to increases.

In the budget development, the district developed our priorities, including the continuation of the three-year strategic plan. The strategic plan outlines goals to create and sustain a school system that continuously improves teaching and learning so that our students can realize academic, social-emotional, and personal success. The following are additional priorities established by the Leadership Team in the development of the budget:

- Provide systems, structures, and programs in the Student Services Department in collaboration with efforts to strengthen MTSS, which addresses diverse social-emotional, behavioral health, and academic needs.
- Strengthen tiered systems of support for social-emotional learning and academics through staffing, schedules, professional development, high-quality instruction, and curriculum to support the wellness, mental health, and academic needs of all students.
- Promote and support strategic initiatives through aligned, relevant professional development. Continue advancing educator capacity to employ best practices, including Universal Design for Learning and implementing high-quality tiered curriculum and wellness supports.
- Provide access to safe, welcoming, and well-maintained facilities with reliable, high-quality technology to create a learning environment that supports students' academic and social-emotional development.

I look forward to providing more information to the community about the budget and how we continue to support our district's goals to support all of our students.

I look forward to presenting the budget plan to the School Committee, Advisory Committee, and other Select Board and community members in the coming weeks. We will have thoughtful and sometimes challenging discussions about supporting the district's goals to support all of our students. The past few years have been incredibly difficult for our students, families, teachers, and staff, but the community has shown your deep commitment to students and each other. We are confident that by continuing to work together, we can ensure a budget supporting our schools and students.

Regards,  
Margaret Adams  
Superintendent