FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
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www.waterfordct.org



Board of Finance
Budget Hearing Minutes

Monday, March 23, 2026
Town Hall Auditorium 7:00 pm

Present: Chairman Glenn Patterson, Bill Sheehan, Michael Rocchetti (7:04pm), Ann Peabody, Joe Filippetti, Robert Tuneski, Jerry Fischer

Elected: First Selectman Robert Brule; Deb Roselli Kelly, Chair Board of Education; Sue Driscoll, RTM Moderator; Danielle Steward-Gelinas, RTM Minority Leader, District 1; Marcia Benvenuti, Board of Education Member; Laurie Wolfley, Board of Education Member

Staff: Thomas Giard, Superintendent of Schools; Joseph Mancini, Director of Finance/Operations Board of Education; Mark Geer, IT Board of Education; Heather Gaieski, Director of Special Services; Rebecca Hall, Admin Assistant Finance Office/BOF Recording Secretary

1. **Establishment of a quorum and call to order:**

A quorum was established and the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance was called to order at 7:00pm on March 23, 2026.

2. **Public Comment:**
   a. Helen Kwasniewski, Quaker Hill – Letter submitted by email (attached to these minutes)
   b. Laurie Wolfley, BOE, 15 Anita Drive – Letter read at meeting (attached to these minutes)

An opening statement regarding the budget process was made by Glenn Patterson, Chairman.

**Standing Motion:** was made by Joseph Filippetti and **seconded** by Bill Sheehan to consider the budget requests without individual motions for each series and department to expedite the meeting.
No vote taken; the standing motion was found not applicable to Board of Education budget considerations.

**Motion** by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to consider the Board of Education budget.

**Vote:** 7-0-0 **Motion: Passed**

3. **Board of Education Budget:**

**Motion** by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to reduce the Board of Education budget by **$129,000.**

**Vote:** 7-0-0 **Motion: Passed**

**Motion** by Michael Rocchetti and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to reduce the Board of Education budget **by $330,000 from the (new) subtotal based on $129,000 reduction.**

**Vote: 4-3-0** **NO: Sheehan, Fischer Peabody** **Motion: Passed**

**Motion** by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to move forward the FY26/27 Board of Education revised budget request in the amount of **$62,540,629.**

**Vote: 7-0-0** **Motion: Passed**

4. Adjournment:

**Motion** by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to adjourn the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance at 9:35pm.

**Vote: 7-0-0** **Motion: Passed**

Respectively Submitted,

Bill Sheehan, Clerk

Rebecca L. Hall, Secretary

**Attachments:** Public Comment Letter, Helen Kwasniewski

Public Comment Letter, Laurie Wolfley

BOF Hearing Budget

March 23, 2026

Helen Kwasniewski

BOE:

With enrollment down WHY is this budget request over 5% as well as not downsizing staff like teachers and administrators.

We cannot keep funding increases that teachers that get stipend/slush fund.

Also we all know that the BOE budget is extremely high due to past boards keep approve there request. You members need to have a backbone and vote NO either and send this budget back or cut there request.

Remember you need to the right thing for ALL residents which includes the senior citizen population and not for the department.

Thank you for your time.

Every year, the Board of Finance is seemingly dissatisfied with the goals the Board of Ed sets for itself and asks for more specific and measurable goals.

I'd like to point out that there is no one specific set of goals that the Board of Ed can meet for every student, because each student's needs are different.

I think this question originally stemmed from an employee of Electric Boat, a company that uses goals and objectives to evaluate successful job performance. When I worked at EB, I would be asked to set for myself—and ultimately meet—a set of goals and objectives. We all had to do that, and I think it was a reasonable practice: A submarine, after all, is a compilation of very specific components that are built to precise, minute specifications. Ultimately, the resulting submarine is expected to be pretty much exactly like the others in its class. As we worked to design and build its components, exactness was essential. When you have a clear sense of the exact product, it's easy to set goals and objectives designed to get you to that product, and then to measure your success against those goals and objectives.

Unlike a submarine, however, all students are different, and when you take into consideration the dramatic differences in their individual components—their home life, their varying learning needs, their DNA, for heaven's sake—you must come to acknowledge that no two kiddos are alike, and so the goals educators set for students not only differ, but they also change—sometimes dramatically—throughout a student's tenure in our schools.

EB sets very detailed goals and objectives for its employees because it makes sense to do so. It does not make sense, however, for the Board of Ed to take a similar approach to its teaching and learning. There are simply too many variables at play.

Laurie Wolfley
15 Anita Ave

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# WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## FY 27 Board of Education Approved Budget

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# WATERFORD IN THE NEWS

The Day — Waterford High revamps its culinary program

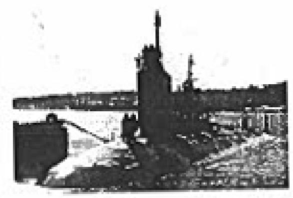
NEWS8 wtnh.com — VETERANS DAY CEREMONY AT CLARK LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL WATERFORD

4 Waterford Students Named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists — Patch

The Day — Waterford's Wilson and Bonewicz: teammates in football and business

The Day — Waterford student honored during Muslim American Heritage Month

The Day — Electric Boat partnership gives Waterford students real-world experience in advanced manufacturing



Industry Partners Help Build the Talent Pipeline

New London, Connecticut

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WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

*Performance versus Dollars Spent*

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# NEXT GENERATION ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX

| Indicators |
|---|
| 1a. ELA Performance Index - All Students |
| 1b. ELA Performance Index - High Needs Students |
| 1c. Math Performance Index - All Students |
| 1d. Math Performance Index - High Needs Students |
| 1e. Science Performance Index - All Students |
| 1f. Science Performance Index - High Needs Students |
| 2a. ELA Academic Growth - All Students |
| 2b. ELA Academic Growth - High Needs Students |
| 2c. Math Academic Growth - All Students |
| 2d. Math Academic Growth - High Needs Students |
| 2e. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Literacy |
| 2f. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Oral |
| 4a. Chronic Absenteeism - All Students |
| 4b. Chronic Absenteeism - High Needs Students |
| 5. Preparation for CCR - Percent Taking Courses |
| 6. Preparation for CCR - Percent Passing Exams |
| 7. On-track to High School Graduation |
| 8. 4-year Graduation: All Students |
| 9. 6-year Graduation: High Needs Students |
| 10. Postsecondary Entrance |
| 11. Physical Fitness (estimated participation rate = 93.6%) |
| 12. Arts Access |

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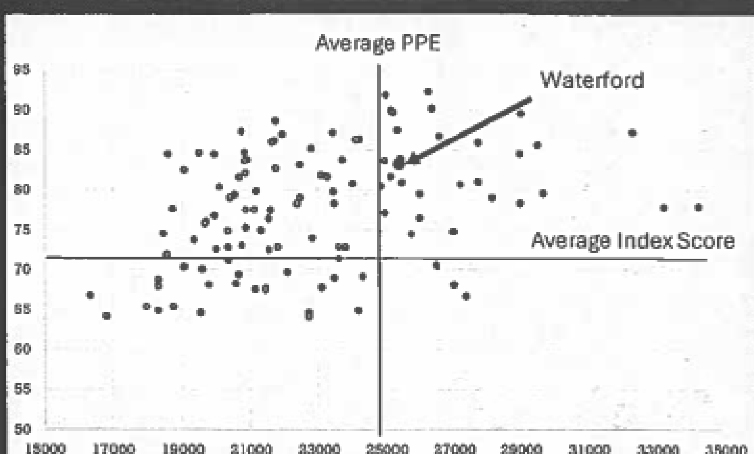
# ALL K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CT

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## ROI WATERFORD EXCELS…

- Well Above the State-Average in Performance
- Slightly Above State-Average in Spending

**Waterford – Top 25% in Performance of all K-12 Districts in CT**

**Dollars Spent per Pupil**
**VS.**
**Performance on the Accountability Index**

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## DISTRICT REFERENCE GROUPS (DRG) VARIABLES

- **Income** - Median Household Income
- **Education** - Percentage of parents with a bachelor's degree or higher
- **Occupation** - Percentage of students with parents aged 16 or older, employed, and holding jobs in executive, managerial, and professional specialty occupations
- **Family Structure** - Percentage of students living with families in a single parent household or in non-family households
- **Poverty** - Percentage of students from families with income eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals
- **Home Language** - Percentage of students whose families speak a language other than English at home
- **District Enrollment** - Gross enrollment for the local public school district

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# DISTRICT GROUP D – 26 DISTRICTS (2023)

- Berlin
- Bethel
- Branford
- Clinton
- Coventry
- Cromwell
- East Haddam
- Enfield
- Hamden
- Ledyard
- Mansfield
- Milford
- New Milford
- Newington
- North Branford
- Old Saybrook
- Region 4
- Region 12
- Region 16
- Region 19
- Seymour
- Shelton
- Wallingford
- Waterford
- Watertown
- Windsor

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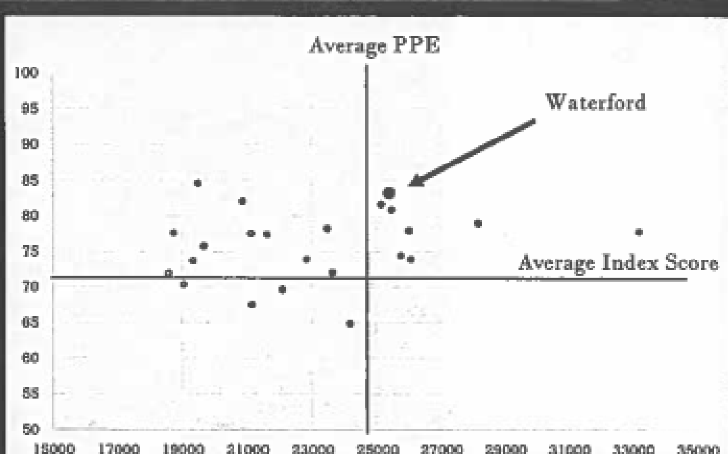
# DRG D TOWNS

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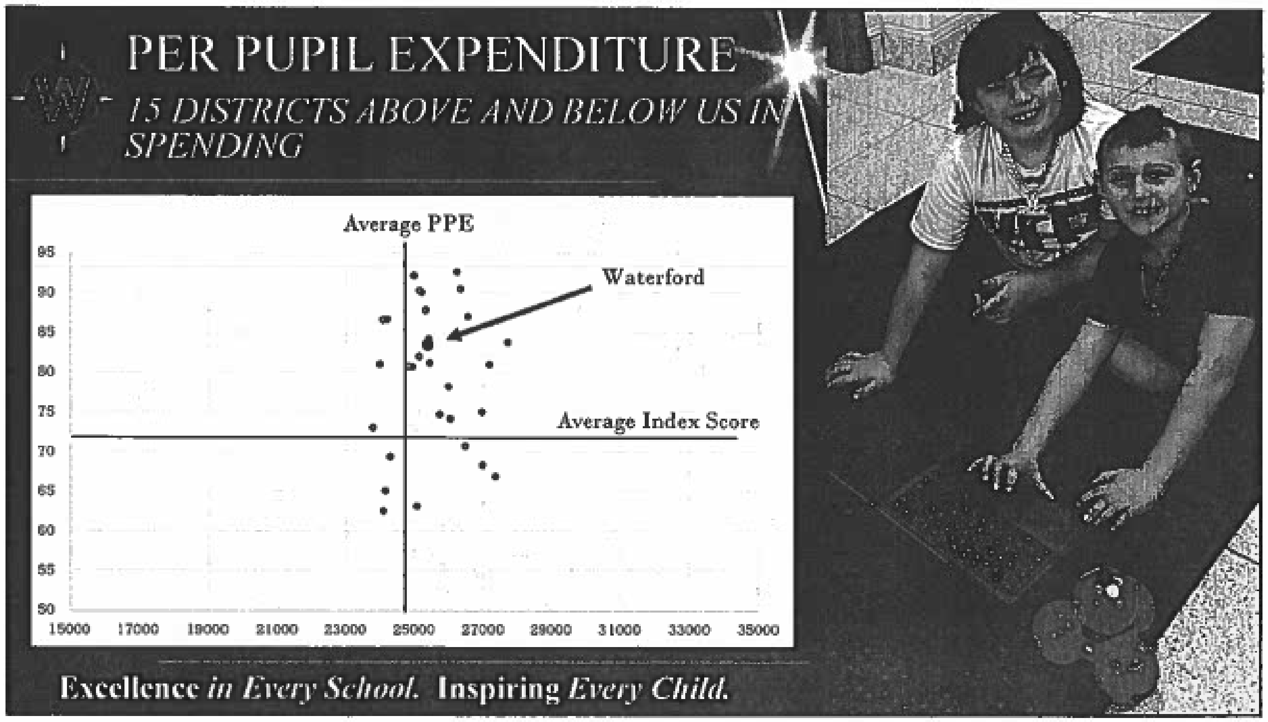
PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE
15 DISTRICTS ABOVE AND BELOW US IN SPENDING
Average PPE
Waterford
Average Index Score
95 90 85 80 75 70 65 60 55 50
15000 17000 19000 21000 23000 25000 27000 29000 31000 33000 35000
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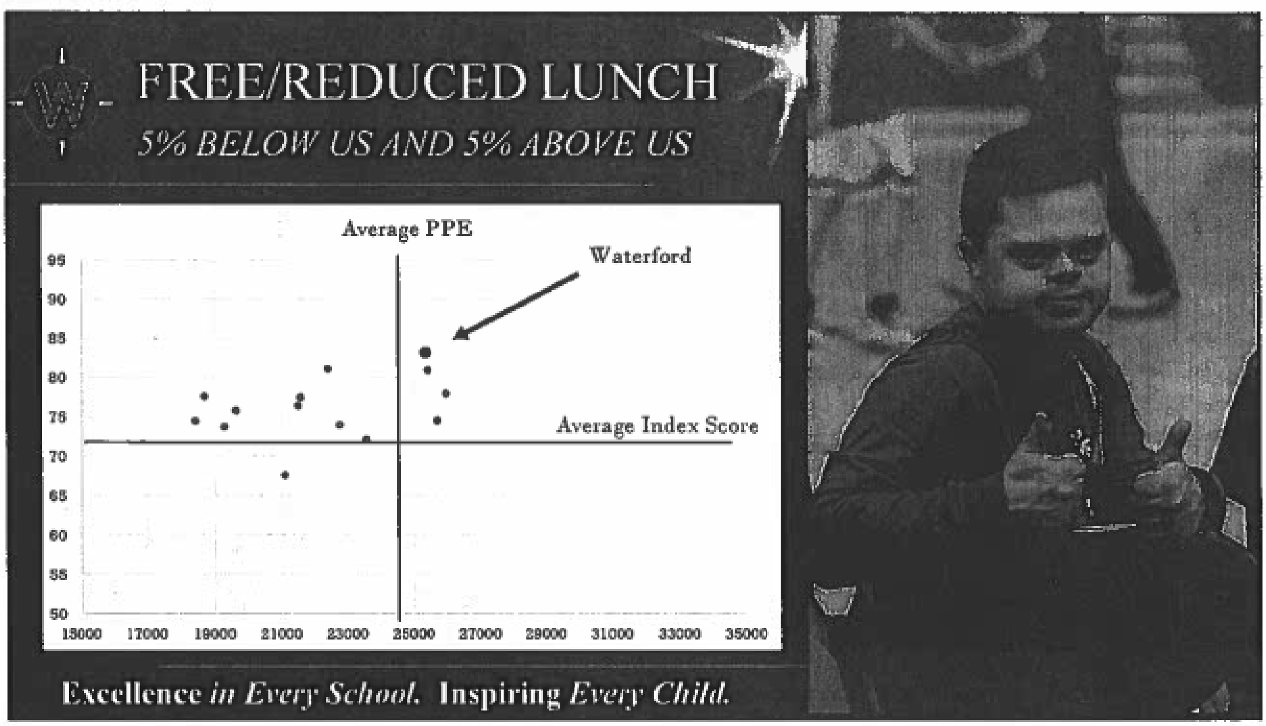
FREE/REDUCED LUNCH
5% BELOW US AND 5% ABOVE US
Average PPE
Waterford
Average Index Score
95 90 85 80 75 70 65 60 55 50
15000 17000 19000 21000 23000 25000 27000 29000 31000 33000 35000
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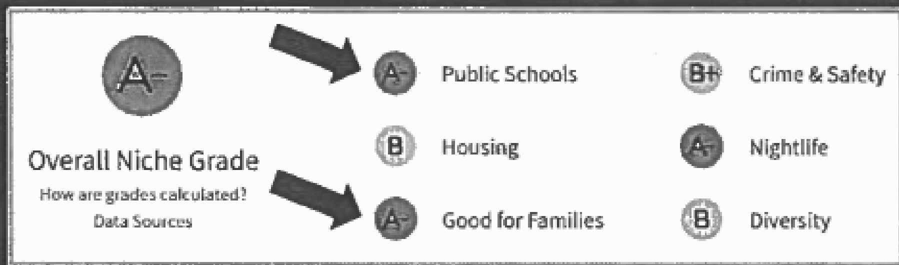
# CT BEST PLACES TO LIVE




*The town's overall Niche grade was listed as "A-" and it also received an "A-" level grade for its public schools and being good for families.*

https://patch.com/connecticut/waterford/waterford-named-one-top-100-places-live-ct-2025-rankings

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# TRENDS IN THE WPS

## WHO ATTENDS OUR SCHOOLS....

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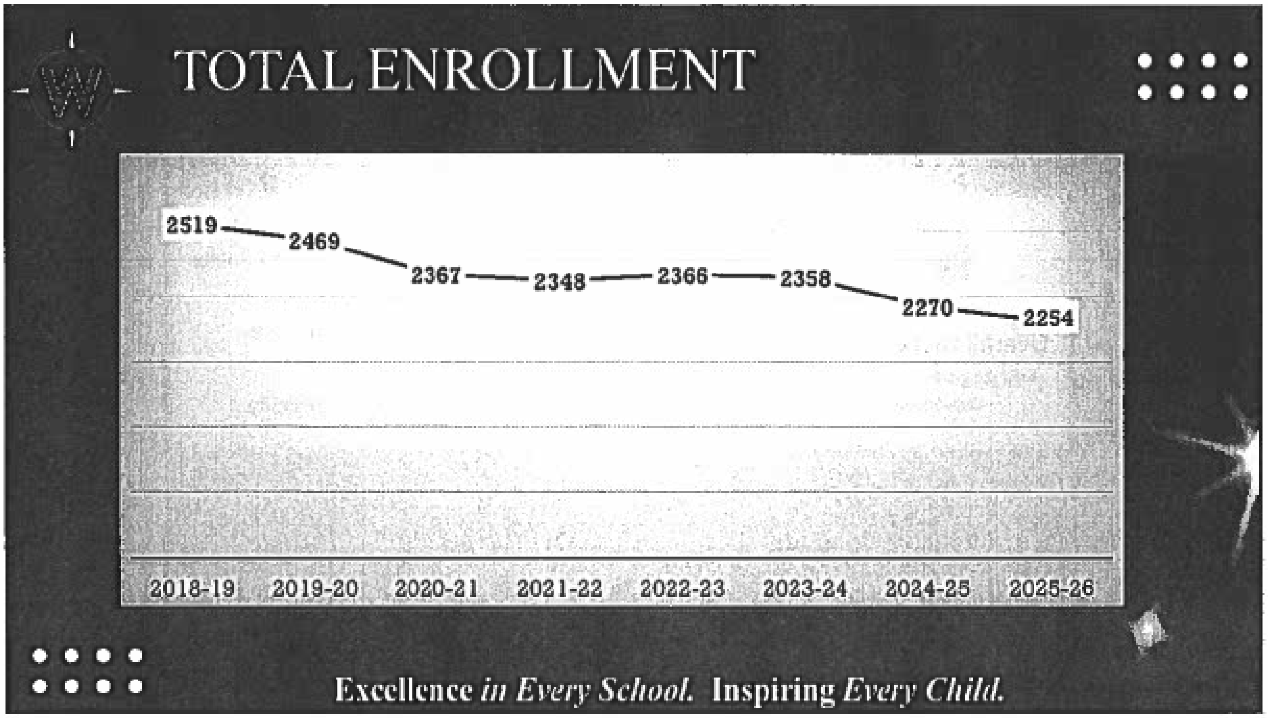
TOTAL ENROLLMENT
2519
2469
2367
2348
2366
2358
2270
2254
2018-19
2019-20
2020-21
2021-22
2022-23
2023-24
2024-25
2025-26
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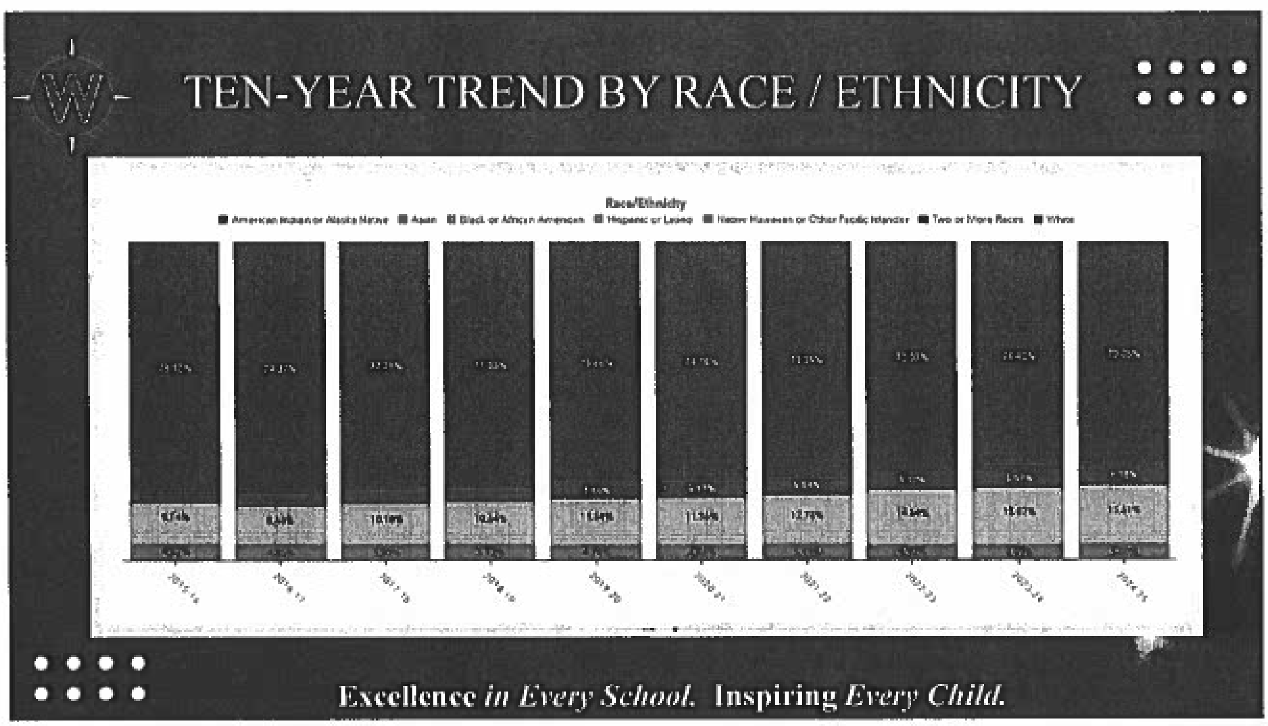
TEN-YEAR TREND BY RACE / ETHNICITY
Race/Ethnicity
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanic or Latino
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Two or More Races
White
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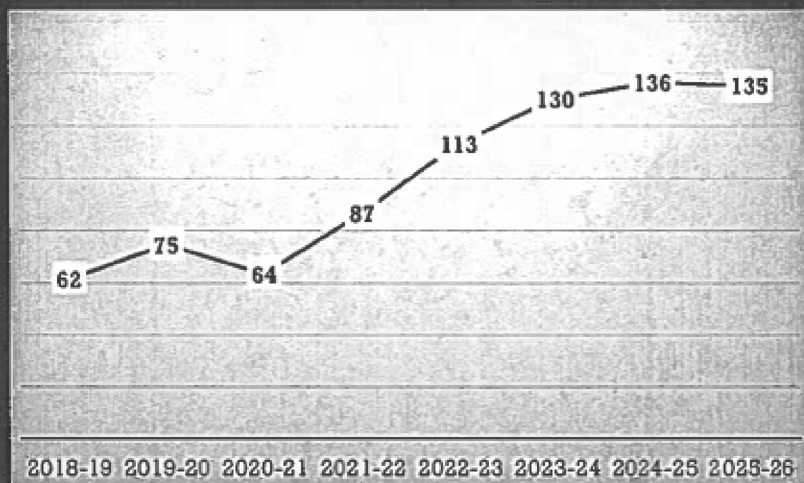
# MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS (ML)

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# LANGUAGES IN OUR SCHOOLS 2025-2026

**24 different languages**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Albanian | Hindi | Portuguese - #4 |
| Arabic | Japanese | Russian |
| Bulgarian | Khmer | Spanish - #1 |
| Burmese | Korean | Tagalog |
| Cantonese | Lao | Thai |
| Cebuano | Mandarin - #3 | Tibetan |
| Greek | Nepali | Ukrainian |
| Gujarati | Polish | Urdu - #2 |

*Over 11% of our families have a primary home language other than English.*

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## NEW BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

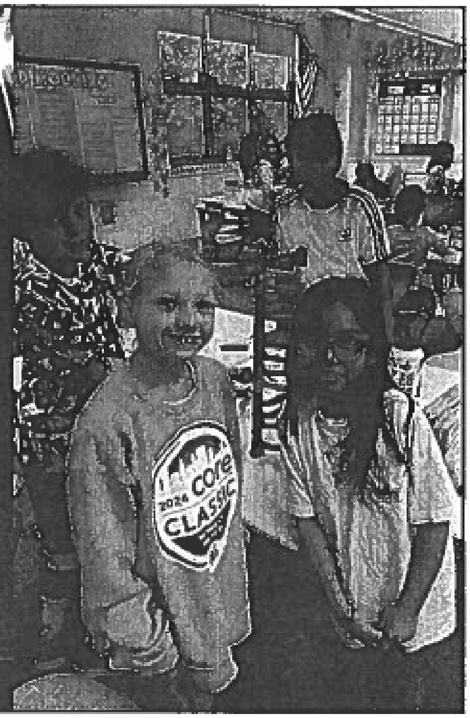
**Great Neck 24-25 & Oswegatchie in 25-26**

**20 or more students with same native language**

There are 62 districts in CT that have bilingual programs.

What this means for WPS:

- Instruction in English as well as student's native language
- Enable students to achieve English proficiency and academic mastery
- Use of English should continuously increase
- Annual plan submitted to CSDE
- Additional professional development for all teachers
- Potential staffing implications



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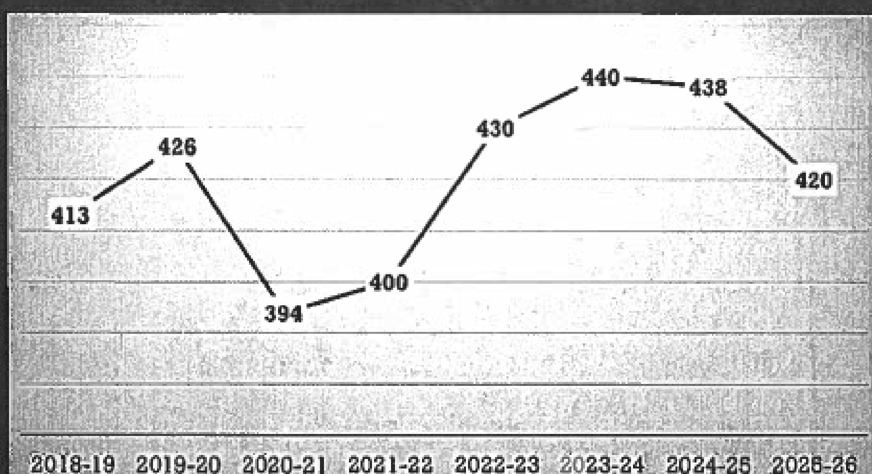
## SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

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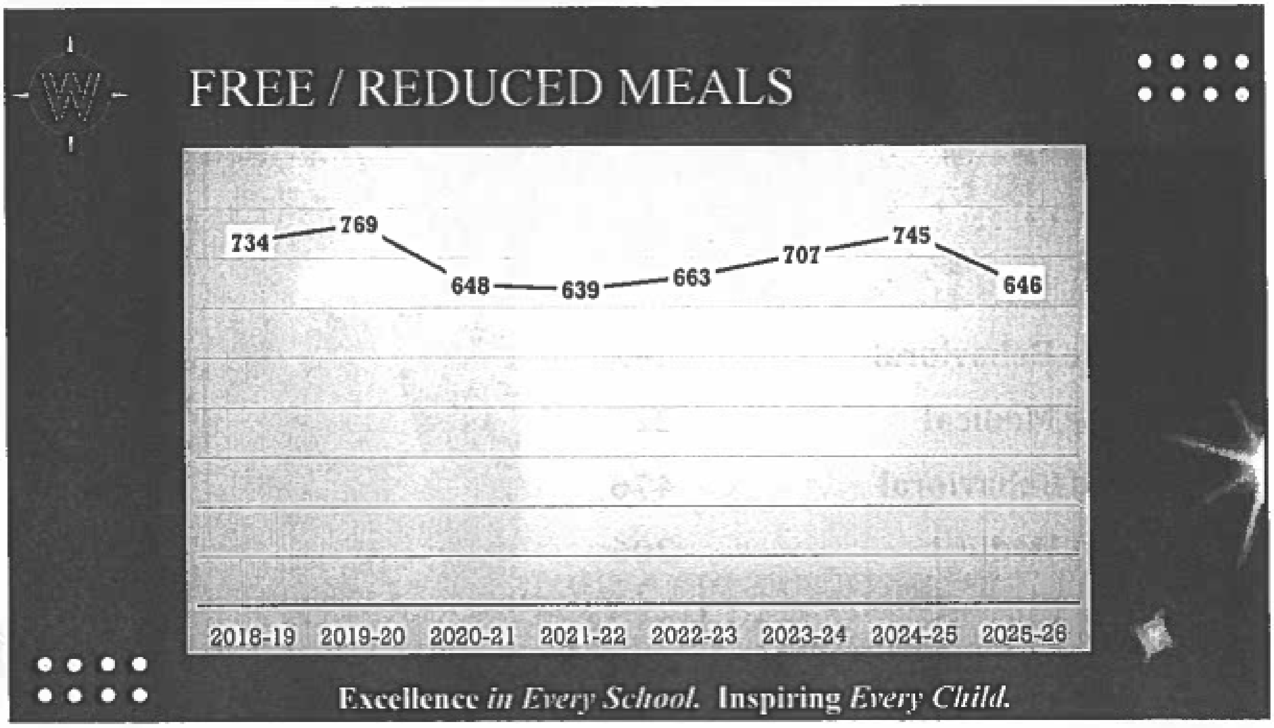
FREE / REDUCED MEALS
734
769
648
639
663
707
745
646
2018-19
2019-20
2020-21
2021-22
2022-23
2023-24
2024-25
2025-26
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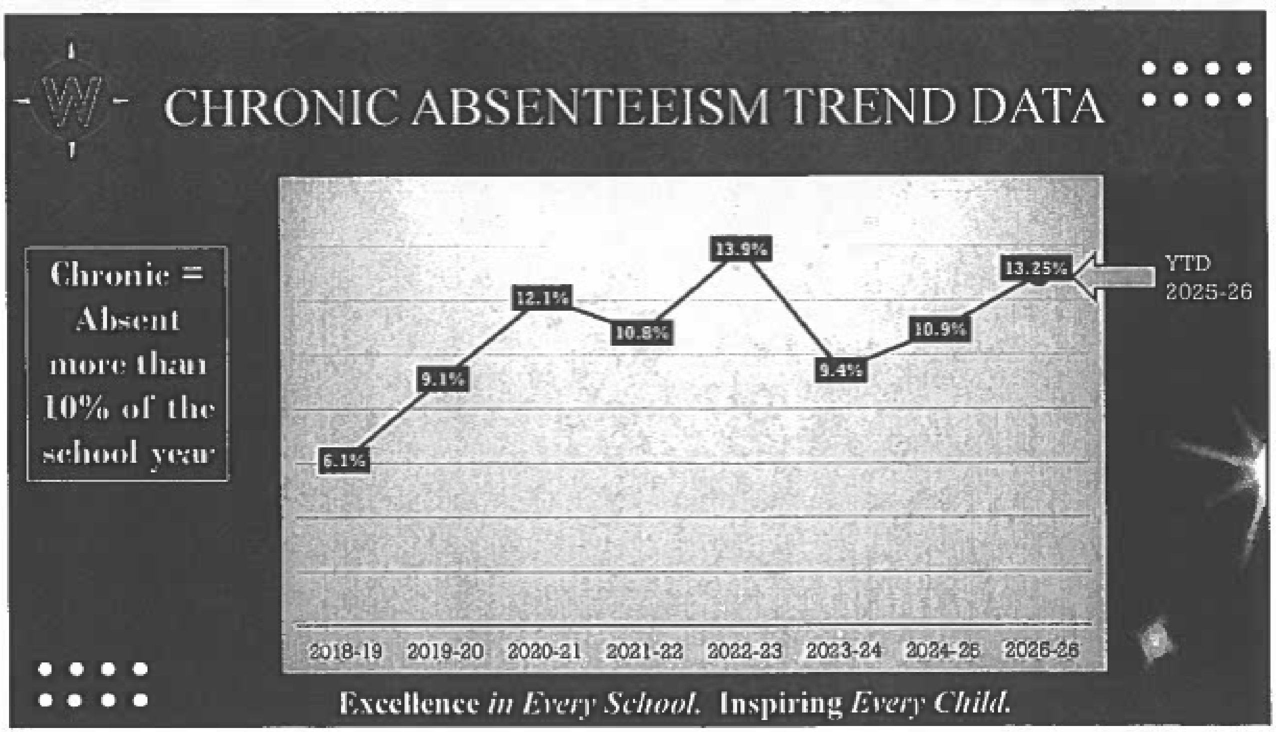
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM TREND DATA
Chronic = Absent more than 10% of the school year
6.1%
9.1%
12.1%
10.8%
13.9%
9.4%
10.9%
13.25%
YTD
2025-26
2018-19
2019-20
2020-21
2021-22
2022-23
2023-24
2024-25
2025-26
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## WPS SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CLINICS

**1151 visits through 2/28/26**

| 2025-2026 Year to Date Totals | |
|---|---|
| Clark Lane Behavioral | 242 |
| Clark Lane Medical | 227 |
| Waterford Behavioral | 476 |
| Waterford Medical | 206 |

**<u>1945</u> visits all of last year**

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## WHY IS THIS DATA IMPORTANT?

**BOARD GOALS:**

**Be a district for**
**<u>all students</u>...**

**It takes <u>resources</u>**
**to do this.**

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WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# THE BUDGET

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## GRANTS

**$215,000 Total in FY26**

| Grant | Amount | Grant | Amount | Grant | Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARPA - Para Educational Professional Development | $8,000 | Global Partners Grant | $500 | Perkins Supplemental | $49,815 |
| American Online Giving | $5,700 | Long Island Sound Grant | $500 | PTA Robotics Grant | $1,500 |
| Chelsea Savings Grant | $500 | Fund for Teachers | $5,000 | Library LP Collection | $200 |
| CT Donors Choose | $1,100 | Pampered Chef | $800 | American Online Giving (Pfizer) | $800 |
| E-Rate Program | $49,040 | Mohegan Challenge Grant | $500 | SEED Grant | $3,930 |
| Eugene O'Neill Theater | $1,000 | Title IV | $26,154 | State Bilingual Grant | $3,976 |
| Fund for Teachers | $5,000 | Perkins | $33,310 | Teachers on the Estuary TOTE | $400 |
| Teaching American History Grant | $1,200 | Title III | $16,967 | Noank-Mystic Music Enrichment | $500 |
| UCONN/US Navy Sea Perch | $2,600 | Truman Presidential Library Teacher Seminar | $1,200 | | |

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## COMPETITIVE GRANTS OVERVIEW

| FISCAL YEAR | $ GRANTS OBTAINED |
|---|---|
| FY 21* | $ 82,500 |
| FY 22 * | $ 72,500 |
| FY 23 | $160,000 |
| FY 24 | $175,000 |
| FY 25 | $214,000 |
| FY 26 | $215,000 |

**$920K in Grants in Last 6 Years**

**REDUCES OUR BUDGET REQUEST**

** DECREASE DUE TO COVID-19*

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## WHAT THIS BUDGET ACCOMPLISHES

- Respond to Current Conditions and Emerging Needs
  - Meeting emerging student / family needs
  - Emerging IT needs
- Provide a High-Quality Education
  - Clear, Articulated 6-12 Career Pathways
- Address our Strategic Plan and Board Goals
- Maintain Current Programs and Offerings, including Athletics and Extra-Curriculars
- Maintain Reasonable Class Sizes
- Provide Quality Professional Development
- Sustain our Curriculum Renewal Cycle
- Execute our Preventive Maintenance Program

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# MAIN BUDGET DRIVERS

| | $ Increase | % Increase to Overall Budget |
|---|---|---|
| Salary & Compensation | $ 1.28M | 2.14% |
| Benefits | $ 1.13M | 1.89% |
| Tuition – Heat, Energy, Fuel – Transportation – Other Fixed Costs | $ 628K | 1.05% |
| **Total** | **$ 3.04M** | **5.08%** |
| Everything Else | $129K | .22% |

5.30%

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# POSSIBLE BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

| | $ Increase | % Increase to Overall Budget |
|---|---|---|
| BOE APPROVED FY27 BUDGET | $3,171,319 | 5.30% |
| HEATH INSURANCE RATE ADJUSTMENT | ( $129,000 ) | ( .21% ) |
| **NEW FY27 BUDGET** | **$3,042,320** | **5.09%** |

5.09%

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# INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 111 – Salaries, Certified | $ 768,599 |
| 121 – Temporary Pay, Certified | $ 85,958 |
| TOTAL | $ 854,557 |

- 111 - Contractual Increases for Certified Staff
- .13 Teacher Increase to support Theater Class at WHS
- Align Substitute Teacher Line to Actuals / Trend - $77K

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# SUPPORT SERVICES

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 112 – Salaries, Support | $ 448,328 |
| 119 – Salaries, Other | ( $ 42,993 ) |
| 122 – Temporary Pay, Support | $ 10,551 |
| 132 – Overtime, Support | $ 4,570 |
| TOTAL | $ 420,456 |

- 112 - Contractual Increases for all Support Staff
- 122 & 132 – Based on trend / actuals
- 2.0 Positions based on Needs
  - IT Systems Administrator
  - Family-School Liaison

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# EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 212 – Health Insurance | $ 1,028,432 |
| 215 / 219 – Life Insurance & LTD | ( $ 8,604 ) |
| 220 – FICA, Employer's Contribution | $ 46,483 |
| 240 – Reimbursements | $ 0 |
| 250 – Unemployment Comp | ( $ 18,767 ) |
| 260 – Workers' Comp | $ 10,979 |
| 290 – Unused Sick Leave | $ 64,183 |
| 291 – Retirement Incentive | $ 9,000 |
| TOTAL | $ 1,131,706 |

- 212 - Health Increase based on 12% increase in State Partnership Plan Rate
- Workers' Comp, Life and Long-Term Disability – Rate & Contractual
- 220 - FICA – Reflects Employee Headcount
- 290 & 291 – Contractual – Reflects Number of Retirees

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# CONTRACTED SERVICES

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 321 – Instructional Service – Contracted | $ 0 |
| 322 – Professional Development | $ 4,500 |
| 323 – Curriculum Development | $ 5,000 |
| 330 – Other Prof/Technical Services | $ 12,765 |
| 331 – Legal Services | $ 20,000 |
| TOTAL | $ 42,265 |

- 322 – Inflation and Usage Trends
- 323 – Based on Volume and Intensity of Curriculum Revision Cycle
- 330 – Special Education Needs – Registered Behavior Technician
- 331 – Trend and Upcoming Union Negotiations

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# TRANSPORTATION

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 510 – Transportation, Pupil | $ 145,427 |
| 627 – Transportation Supplies | ( $ 22,199 ) |
| TOTAL | $ 123,228 |

- 510 – Contractual Rate Increase
- 627 - Diesel and Fuel – Market Rates

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# INSURANCE

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 520 – Fire/Property Insurance | $ 5,346 |
| 521 – Liability Insurance | $ 5,409 |
| 529 – Other Insurance | $ 0 |
| TOTAL | $ 10,755 |

- Rate Driven

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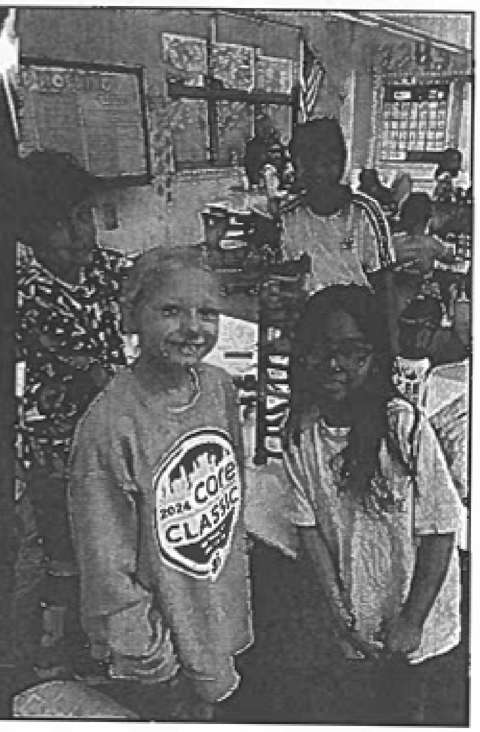
## COMMUNICATIONS

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 530 – Communications | $ 6,107 |
| 531 – Postage | ( $ 637 ) |
| 540 – Advertising | ( $ 500 ) |
| TOTAL | $ 4,970 |

- 530 – Rate Driven
- 531 & 540 – Aligned to Trend

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## TUITION

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 560 – Tuition, Other Public | ( $ 156,707 ) |
| 563 – Tuition, Private | $ 340,009 |
| TOTAL | $ 183,302 |

- 560 & 563 – Based on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- 560 – Decrease Based on Changes in State Funding Levels and Enrollment Trends

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# OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 580 – Travel and Conferences | $ 10,548 |
| 590 – Other Purchased Services | $ 17,557 |
| TOTAL | $ 19,831 |

- 580 – Contractual Rate Increase on Athletics Travel
- 580 – Trend on Usage and Increased Costs to Attend Workshops
- 590 – Trend and Rate Increases

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# INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 440 – Rentals | $ 1,500 |
| 611 – Instructional Supplies | $ 7,050 |
| 612 – Software | $ 103,640 |
| TOTAL | $ 112,190 |

- 611 – Instructional Supplies
  - Cut Many Requests
  - Inflation
- 612 – Software – Primarily Product Rate Increases & Long-term Renewals
  - Reduced – ($9K)
  - Long-term Renewals – $3K
  - Rate Increases on Existing Products - $12K
  - New / Replacement Products - $97K

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# OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 410 – Water Service | $ 4,635 |
| 411 – Sewer Service | ( $ 8,111 ) |
| 430 – Maintenance & Repair | $ 88,459 |
| 613 – Maintenance Supplies | $ 9,250 |
| 620 – Fuel Oil | $ 0 |
| 621 – Electricity | $ 213,573 |
| 622 – Natural Gas | ( $ 54,657 ) |
| 623 – Propane | ( $ 3,465 ) |
| TOTAL | $ 249,684 |

- 410 – Usage & Rate
- 411 – Usage
- 430 – New Copier Contract – Replaced 10+ year old Copiers
- 613 – Maintenance – Trend, Actuals & Inflation
- 621 – Electricity – Primarily Rate
- 622 & 623 – Natural Gas – Market Price

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# TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS/OTHER SUPPLIES

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 641 – Textbooks | $ 24,500 |
| 642 – Library Books and Periodicals | ( $ 1,174 ) |
| 690 – Other Supplies/Materials | ( $ 7,140 ) |
| TOTAL | $ 16,186 |

- 641 – Trend and Market Price
- 642 – Minor Increases to Support Non-Fiction at WHS
- 690 – Approx. $10K Budgeted for Vape Detection at CLMS
- 690 – Adjusted Health Offices Supplies to Actuals

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# EQUIPMENT

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 730 – Equipment | ( $ 8,196 ) |
| TOTAL | ( $8,196 ) |

- Tech Plan Device Replacement moved to Capital
- Sound-proofing at one Elementary School
- High Jump, Pole Vault, and Long Jump Replacement/Installation
- Music Instrument Replacements for End-of-Life Instruments
- Continued Investment in Career Pathways at WHS

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# DUES & FEES

| Accounts | $ Increase/Decrease |
|---|---|
| 810 – Dues & Fees | ( $ 8 ) |
| TOTAL | ( $ 8 ) |

- Rate Driven

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# MAIN BUDGET DRIVERS

| | $ Increase | % Increase to Overall Budget |
|---|---|---|
| Salary & Compensation | $ 1.28M | 2.14% |
| Benefits | $ 1.13M | 1.89% |
| Tuition – Heat, Energy, Fuel – Transportation – Other Fixed Costs | $ 628K | 1.05% |
| **Total** | **$ 3.04M** | **5.08%** |
| Everything Else | $129K | .22% |

**5.30%**

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# ROI
# WATERFORD EXCELS…

- Well Above the State-Average in Performance
- Slightly Above State-Average in Spending

**Waterford – Top 25% in Performance of all K-12 Districts in CT**

**Dollars Spent per Pupil**

**VS.**

**Performance on the Accountability Index**

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## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

GENERAL DYNAMICS
Electric Boat

WATERFORD YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

UCONN
AVERY POINT

Town of Waterford CONNECTICUT

WATERFORD POLICE

WATERFORD public library
Discovery begins here.

ATLANTIC broadband

UCFS
United Community & Family Services

BRIAN DAGLE FOUNDATION

Safe Futures

Effective School Solutions

United Way LIVE UNITED

Dominion

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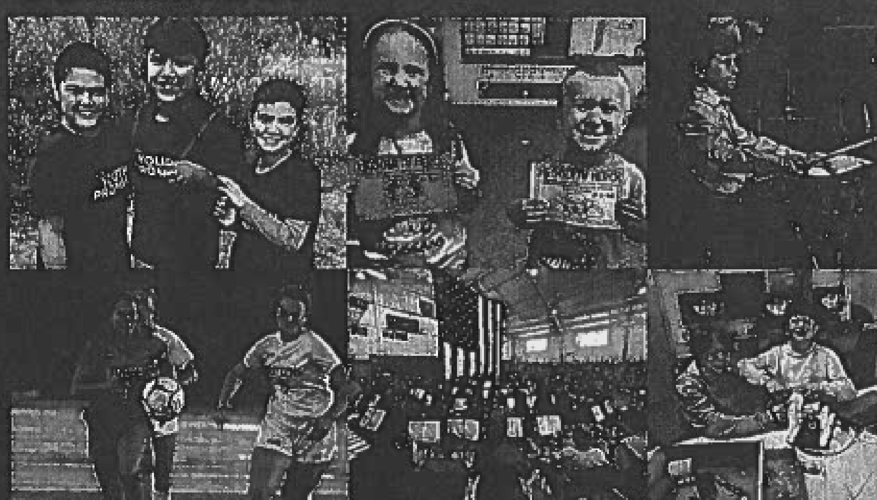
## PRIDE IN OUR STUDENTS,TEAM & COMMUNITY



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# THANK YOU!

Thank you for believing in our staff, students and families of Waterford.

Your continued support will help us to provide exceptional programs for our students, preparing them for success and the best opportunity at a better life.

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