

# Superintendent's FY24 Recommended Operating Budget

## Executive Summary

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The FY 24 Recommended Operating Budget reflects investments in the Barnstable Public Schools as a result of a significant increase in Chapter 70 (state aid) to Barnstable. The proposed budget is an allocation of \$82,761,867 which represents an increase of \$5,981,956 or 7.8%.

The Student Opportunity Act, legislation passed in 2019, establishes new foundation budget rates in benefits and fixed charges, guidance and psychological services, special education, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students. The foundation budget is the minimum spending target, determined by the state, necessary to provide an adequate education for all students. Since FY 21 (the first year of the six-year phased implementation of the SOA), Barnstable's foundation budget has been increasing and is increasing by 11.84% in FY 24. As a result of an increase in student enrollment and shifting

demographics, particularly in English learners and economically disadvantaged students, Chapter 70 state aid has also been increasing for Barnstable and is increasing by 32% in FY 24, or \$6 million.

Major budget drivers of the budget include salaries and wages as negotiated in contracts and collective bargaining agreements. Additionally, the budget accounts for inflationary pressures for fuel, supplies, and services.

The remainder of the recommended budgetary increase reflects priorities of principals and directors in order to provide services to students. We propose the following investments:

- Curriculum materials for the Early Learning Center and English learners;
- Personnel to expand offerings such as World Language and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) at Barnstable Intermediate School;
- Interventionists to provide skill-based instruction to additional Barnstable United Elementary School students to close skill/achievement gaps;
- Specialized professional development for educators including in matters of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as the realization of our emerging Vision for student learning;
- Personnel to continue to improve support for our growing English learner population, including family and community liaisons to promote communication and engagement, teachers and paraprofessionals, a high school department head, and high school bilingual counselor;
- Increased funding for personnel and services in our Facilities department;
- Creating equity across our five K-3 elementary schools with additional paraprofessional support;
- Assistant principals at all K-3 elementary schools to provide direct support to students and staff;
- Additional investments to meet mandated educational requirements.

The FY 24 Recommended Operating Budget is presented after a collaborative development process. The budget development process begins with a joint meeting of the School Committee and Town Council in October to gain an understanding of the anticipated fiscal climate. In December, principals and directors formulate their budget requests with School Councils and submit them to the Superintendent for

consideration. Administrators develop priorities during budget meetings in January. We presented an initial budget presentation to the School Committee on February 1, followed by a roundtable workshop review of budget requests on February 15. On March 1, we presented a budget update to the School Committee and the Governor's Budget was released, painting a different fiscal picture than anticipated in October.

This budget is being presented at the Budget Hearing on March 15, 2023. We are thankful for the collaboration with Town Manager Ells' office and we appreciate the efforts of the Business Department staff including Finance Director Mark Milne and Deputy Finance Director of School Operations, Chris Dwelley.

Lastly, I would like to thank Gareth Markwell, former Deputy Finance Director of School Operations and current Deputy Director of Municipal Operations, not only for his assistance in the early stages of the development of the FY 24 budget but mostly for his distinguished years of service to the Barnstable Public Schools in his former role.

Sincerely,

**Sara Ahern**

*Superintendent of the Barnstable Public Schools*

