

Superintendent's Fiscal 2025 Budget Proposal



You don't have to see the whole staircase,
just take the first step.
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Presented by Superintendent Cliff Chuang to the
Bedford School Committee December 19, 2023

FY25 Budget Objectives

- Uphold the high standard of excellence and inclusive access to educational opportunities that the community continues to highly value;
- Maintain and strategically enhance educational services to meet the needs our diverse student body;
- Position the district to attract and retain a high quality educator workforce; and
- Set the stage for the initial investments steps in our next 3-year district improvement plan for the Bedford Public Schools which will be established through a collaborative strategic planning process in the spring and summer of 2024.

FY25 Budget Top-Line Summary

- The proposed FY25 budget is ~\$49.5M and includes a ~\$2.8M increase, an ~6% increase from FY24.
- This exceeds the Finance Committee's 3.5% guideline.
- We will also request:
 - The creation of a Special Education Stabilization Fund of \$950K for multi-year use
 - A one-time reserve fund transfer of ~\$210K for one-time costs related to the new literacy program

FY25 Budget Architecture

- MOE Request of 4.7%
- Additional Request (net) of 1.2%
- Increased use of special revenue offsets of \$473,250
- Use of all grants before expenditure of local funds
- Reserve for one-time and/or extraordinary special education costs
- Proposal to establish a Special Education Stabilization Fund (with commitment to collaborative establish governing policies)

Proposed Local Special Ed Stabilization Fund

Challenge: This area is subject to costs beyond control of the district relating to the individual educational plans of students with disabilities (e.g, staffing shortages, transportation cost escalation, a 14% market rate adjustment in special education tuition rates.

Proposed Solution: Establish a Special Ed Stabilization Fund (enabled by the 2016 MA Municipal Modernization Act) and enact clear financial policies governing future use in a collaborative process with Town Manager, Finance Committee, Selectboard.

Town Funding request: \$950,000

FY25 Budget Request

Maintenance of Effort

+

Additional Needs

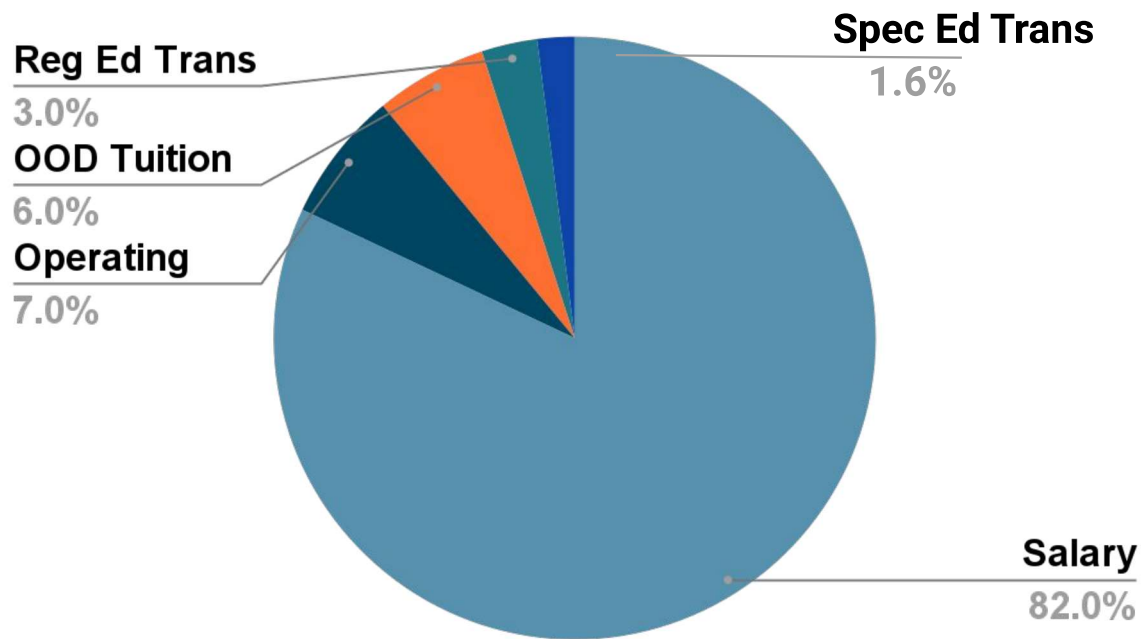
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TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST

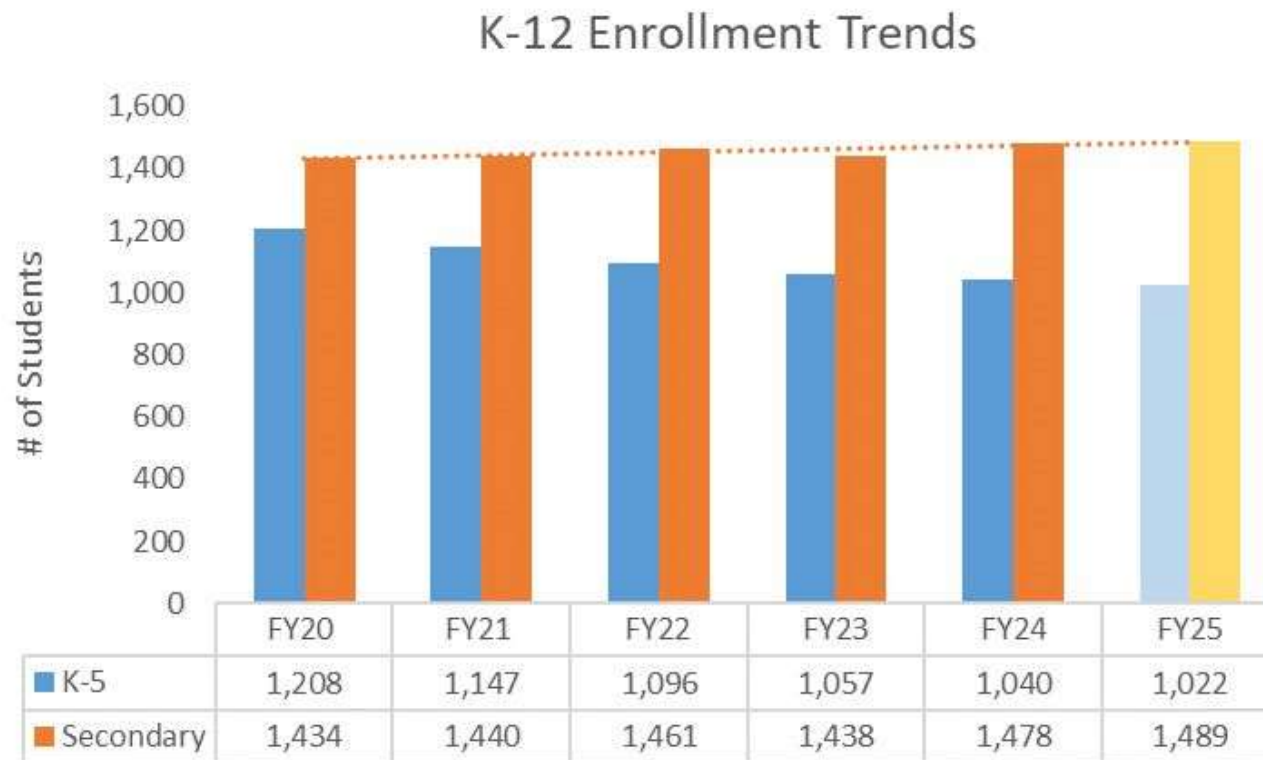
FY25 Budget Request

FY24	FY25 Maintenance of Effort			Additional Needs		FY25 Total Budget Request		
Adjusted Budget	FY25 MOE	\$ Change	% Change	FY25 Additional	% Change	FY25 Total	\$ Change	% Change
\$ 46,737,588	\$ 48,943,434	\$ 2,205,846	4.72%	\$ 577,062	1.23%	\$ 49,520,495	\$ 2,782,908	5.95%

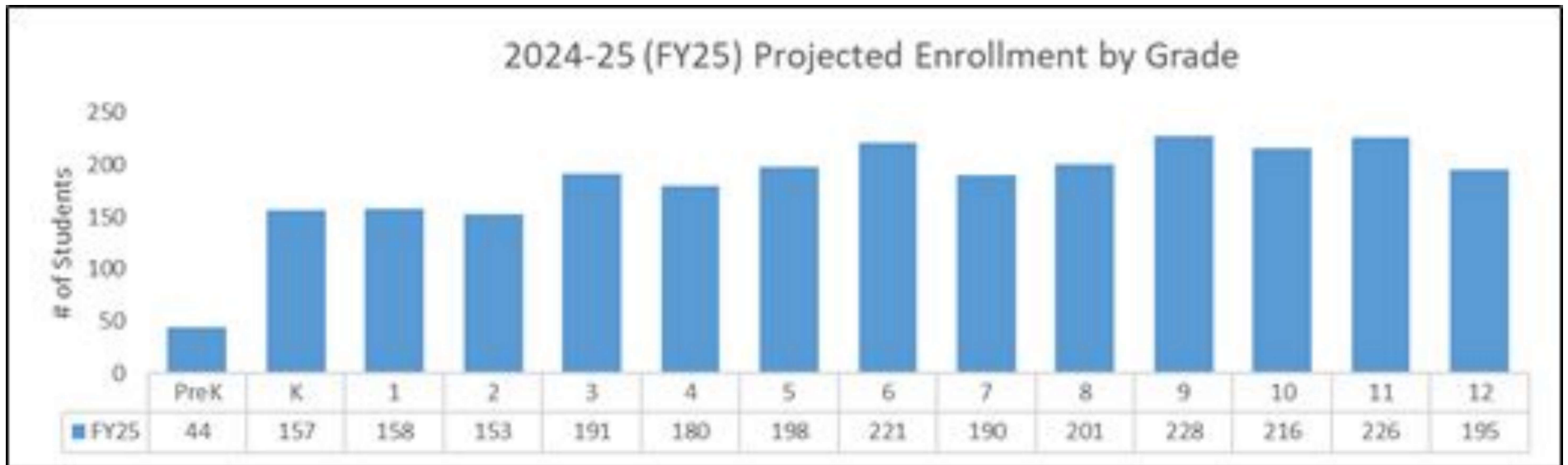
FY25 Request by Major Expense Category



K-12 Enrollment Trends



FY25 Projected Enrollment PreK-12



FY25 Budget Enrollment Planning

- Lower elementary enrollment projected again in FY25 (an estimated decrease of 18 students)
- To meet SC class size guidelines, Davis will require 24 classrooms (an increase of 1 class) and Lane will need 23 classes (a decrease of 2 classes)
- Secondary enrollment increases by an estimated 11 students
- Net decrease of -7 students K-12
- School Committee established class size guidelines are maintained

** Full enrollment projections are provided in the budget narrative*

FY25 Projected K-5 Classes

PROJECTED 2024-25	Davis Target Class Size			Lane Target Class Size			TOTAL
	Kindergarten Range 18 - 20	Grade 1 Range 20 - 22	Grade 2 Range 20 - 22	Grade 3 Range 22 - 24	Grade 4 Range 22 - 24	Grade 5 Range 22 - 24	
Enrollment	154	168	167	157	191	185	1,022
# Classrooms	8	8	8	7	8	8	47
Avg Class size	19.3	21.0	20.9	22.4	23.9	23.1	21.7

- Enrollment projected at Lane requires 2 fewer class sections
- Enrollment projected at Davis requires 1 additional class section
- Grade K projection is most variable, and will be monitored carefully
- Grade 4 projection is closest to the upper end of the guideline, and also will be monitored closely
- Number of classes per grade will not become final until enrollment is better known

FY25 FTE Request

FY25 CHANGES DESCRIPTION		LOCATION	FY24 CHANGES FTE
Instructional Data Specialist and Data Dashboard Software	Salaries Dashboard Instructional Software System	SYSTEM WIDE SYSTEM WIDE	1.0
K-5 Coverage Model Improvement	Regular Education EA/Teaching Assistant	DAVIS SCHOOL	3.0
	Regular Education EA/Teaching Assistant	LANE SCHOOL	3.0
	Substitute	DAVIS SCHOOL	-2.0
	Substitute	LANE SCHOOL	-2.0
Intensive Programming and Student Support	Districtwide Leadership Salaries	SYSTEM WIDE	-0.6
	Program Administrator - Other Salaries (PreK)	DAVIS SCHOOL	
	Program Director (Districtwide) for Intensive Programming	SYSTEM WIDE	1.0
Enrollment	Professional Teacher	LANE SCHOOL	-1.0
	Professional Teacher	HIGH SCHOOL	-1.0
GRAND TOTAL FTE CHANGE			1.4

FY25 MOE / Level Services by Major Category

	FY24 Budget	FY25 MOE	\$ CHANGE	%
Salaries	\$38,545,920	\$40,321,241	\$1,775,321	4.60%
Operating Expenses	\$2,964,589	\$3,097,183	\$132,594	4.50%
Special Ed Out-of-District Tuition	\$3,045,561	\$3,152,168	\$106,607	3.50%
Regular Transportation	\$1,377,720	\$1,495,887	\$118,167	8.60%
Special Ed Transportation	\$803,798	\$876,955	\$73,157	9.10%
TOTAL	\$46,737,588	\$48,943,434	\$2,205,846	4.70%

FY25 MOE - Salaries

- Salary forecast includes contractual salary adjustments for steps, lanes and COLAs
- Includes known staff changes including retirements and advancement to higher training
- Factors in vacancies, unpaid leaves, and long-term vacancies covered by contractors
- **Overall MOE increase in salary cost is 4.6% above FY24**

FY25 MOE - Operating Expenses

- Substantial increases for costs for goods and services were made in FY24
- Most supply budgets are level-funded, or funded with modest increases due to known price changes
- **Overall MOE increase in operating expenses is 4.5% above FY24**

FY25 MOE - Out-of-District Tuition

- Gross tuition and ancillary costs increase by 8.6% to \$5.3M due to both rates and anticipated increased number of placements from 42 to 44 students
- Use of Circuit Breaker is increased from \$1.8M to \$2M
- Budget continues to be reliant upon an additional town reserve of up to \$150K
- **Overall MOE increase in Tuition is 3.5% over FY24**

FY25 MOE - Regular Transportation

- Contract has been out to bid this fall
 - The bid process is now closed and Bedford Charter submitted the only bid
 - Preliminary cost analysis informs this proposal
- Regular Transportation is based on stable fleet size
- Includes contracted rate increase for 13 buses for all 4 schools and 3 additional buses for JGMS and BHS
- **Overall MOE budget increase of \$118,167K and 8.6% over FY24**

FY25 MOE - Special Ed. Transportation

- Cost trends are increasing due primarily to rates (Industry faces a critical driver shortage)
- Increased offset from Circuit Breaker Transportation reimbursement used at an increased level above FY24
- **Overall MOE budget increase of \$73K and 9.1% above FY24**

FY25 Net Add'l Funding to Address Challenges

Challenge / Solution	FY25 Proposed Investment
Elementary Literacy Curriculum	\$170,000 (+\$210,000 one-time reserve)
Instructional Data Specialist & Data Dashboard	\$105,000
K-5 Coverage Model	\$102,604
Intensive Programming and Student Support	\$196,286
District Improvement Plan Initial Investment	\$130,000
Cafeteria Waste Sort Expansion	\$12,000
<i>Additional Net Reductions (2 FTE)</i>	<i>(-\$138,828)</i>
TOTAL	\$577,062

New Literacy Curriculum

Challenge: After extensive discussion, examination of student outcome data for literacy, and consideration of stakeholder feedback, the district will be discontinuing its use of the Units of Study (Lucy Calkins) literacy curriculum.

Proposed Solution: Shift to a new literacy curriculum aligned with the science of reading, with a decision expected in Spring 2024. This will require purchasing new curriculum materials and intensive professional development, including an additional summer professional development day for elementary teachers in Summer 2024.

Net funding request: \$170,000 plus ~\$210,000 in one-time costs requested as a reserve fund transfer (in either FY24 or FY25 depending on timing of acquisition of new materials)

New Literacy Curriculum

FY25 CHANGES DESCRIPTION		LOCATION	FY24 CHANGES FTE	FY24 CHANGES \$
Elementary Literacy Curriculum	Teacher Curriculum Stipends (Summer work)	SYSTEM WIDE		\$30,000
	Outside Professional Development Contractual Services	SYSTEM WIDE		\$50,000
	Textbooks and workbooks	DAVIS SCHOOL		\$150,000
	Textbooks and workbooks	LANE SCHOOL		\$150,000
	Town Reserve Fund Transfer - Textbooks	SYSTEM WIDE		-\$210,000
<i>Subtotal Literacy Curriculum</i>				<i>\$170,000</i>

Instructional Data Specialist + Data Dashboard

Challenge: The district has invested significantly in our data systems infrastructure (including our recent transition to the K-10 STAR assessment system), significantly expanded the number of district-wide instructional software tools, and modernized key infrastructure systems, requiring additional data capacity.

Proposed Solution: Add an instructional data specialist position to the current instructional coaching and data team, along with the licensing fee for a new data visualization product.

Net funding request: \$105,000

Instructional Data Specialist + Data Dashboard

FY25 CHANGES DESCRIPTION		LOCATION	FY24 CHANGES FTE	FY24 CHANGES \$
Instructional Data Specialist and Data Dashboard Software	Salaries	SYSTEM WIDE	1.0	\$80,000
	Dashboard Instructional Software System	SYSTEM WIDE		\$25,000
<i>Subtotal Data Specialist and Dashboard</i>			1.0	\$105,000

K-5 Coverage Improvement Model

Challenge: The current approach to covering staff absences at the elementary level has been challenging, including the inability to hire/retain consistent substitute staffing.

Proposed Solution: Replace the building substitute positions (4.0 FTE) with general education TAs (6.0 FTE, 3 at each elementary school) assigned to support grade level teams, aligned with recent research about how to structure substitute teacher structures.

Net funding request: \$102,604

K-5 Coverage Improvement Model

FY25 CHANGES DESCRIPTION		LOCATION	FY24 CHANGES FTE	FY24 CHANGES \$
K-5 Coverage Model Improvement	Regular Education EA/Teaching Assistant	DAVIS SCHOOL	3.0	\$96,302
	Regular Education EA/Teaching Assistant	LANE SCHOOL	3.0	\$96,302
	Substitute	DAVIS SCHOOL	-2.0	-\$45,000
	Substitute	LANE SCHOOL	-2.0	-\$45,000
<i>Subtotal K-5 Coverage Model</i>			2.0	\$102,604

Supporting Students with Intensive Needs

Challenge 1 (General Education): In general education, we have identified the need to provide comprehensive school-based, trauma-informed mental health services at the Davis School to support the intensive needs of a small group of students with diverse needs. The presenting needs of our students require additional clinical expertise and trauma-informed approaches to support the current team.

Proposed Solution: Establish a contract partnership with an organization that provides culturally inclusive mental health and behavioral support programs and address trauma. In addition to bringing specific expertise, the partnership is designed with job-embedded professional development to support our educators, student support staff, and instructional leaders, as well as a family education component.

Net funding request: \$150,000 (net impact on operating budget)

Supporting Students with Intensive Needs

Challenge 2 (Special Education): Our current approach to supporting students with the most intensive special education needs is currently piecemeal, including challenges with ensuring adequate administrative oversight of out-of-district placements, the federally-mandated Extended School Year (ESY), our substantially separate in-district SAIL 1 program across buildings, and the integrated preschool program.

Proposed Solution: A targeted reorganization of special education administrative positions, including establishing a year-round K-12 intensive needs program director and converting the current preschool coordinator position to a program administrator, which also equalizes evaluation loads across administrative staff.

Net funding request: \$46,286

Supporting Students with Intensive Needs

FY25 CHANGES DESCRIPTION		LOCATION	FY24 CHANGES FTE	FY24 CHANGES \$
Intensive Programming and Student Support	Districtwide Leadership Salaries	SYSTEM WIDE	-0.6	-\$75,340
	Program Administrator - Other Salaries (PreK)	DAVIS SCHOOL		\$626
	Program Director (Districtwide) for Intensive Programming	SYSTEM WIDE	1.0	\$121,000
	Other Instructional Services - Contractual Services	DAVIS SCHOOL		\$150,000
<i>Subtotal Supporting Intensive Needs</i>			<i>0.4</i>	<i>\$196,286</i>

District Improvement Plan Initial Investment

Challenge: Due to the timing of the Bedford budget process, the FY25 budget will be finalized and approved at the March 2024 Town Meeting prior to the completion of the next 3-year district improvement plan required by state regulations. To ensure that we can begin initial implementation of priorities identified by the plan, it is necessary to have some built-in budget flexibility to make some initial investments in FY25.

Proposed Solution: Increase the funding in a School Committee account for this purpose. Once the district improvement planning process is completed, the proposed plan for use of these initial funds would come before the school committee for approval prior to spending.

Net funding request: \$130,000

Cafeteria Waste Sort Program Expansion

Challenge: In order to respond to the tightening of disposal regulations and Bedford's Recyclable Materials Policy, we need to further reduce the amount of waste going to trash in our cafeterias, which requires additional staffing support.

Proposed Solution: Provide waste sort monitors in each cafeteria through a combination of high school & special education interns, volunteers, senior citizen/veteran tax work-off program, and paid part-time employees.

Net funding request: \$12,000

Efficiencies; Proposals not brought forward

- In the past four years, the district has pursued and successfully implemented efficiencies and administrative reorganization that has included 7.6 FTE para-professional and 2.0 FTE Professional positions, not including the 9.0 FTE professional teacher positions that have been eliminated due to enrollment.
- For FY25, a reduction in 1 FTE high school general education position serving a small number of students is proposed, along with the previously mentioned 1 FTE reduction due to declining elementary enrollment.
- In consideration of the district improvement planning process planned for Spring 2024, other proposals not brought forward included reducing the class size guideline at the elementary level, additional TA/BT positions in specialized programs, additional summer work days for Assistant Principals, additional elementary math intervention FTE, and supply budget increases to the extent they were requested.

FY25 Budget - Next Steps

- 12/20/23 - Online Posting of Full Proposal & Line Item Budget
- 12/21/23 - Presentation to BPS Staff
- 1/9/2024 - School Committee Budget Review and Discussion
- 1/16/2024 - School Committee Budget Review and Discussion
- 1/23/2024 - School Committee Budget Hearing and Vote
- 1/25/2024 - School Budget Presentation to Finance Committee
- 2/1/2024 - Addtl. Discussion / Vote at Finance Committee (as needed)
- March 2024 - Town Meeting Vote

Thank you! Questions?

