



Superintendent's Proposed 2026-27 Budget

New Milford Board of Education
January 13, 2026

Purposes of This Presentation and These Hearings:



1. To **provide an overview** of the 2026–27 Superintendent's Proposed Budget;
2. To demonstrate **the impact of fixed costs** on the Superintendent's Proposed Budget;
3. To serve as a **springboard for questions and dialogue** about organizational needs;
4. To **showcase** the efforts and work of each school and department.

From the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education's School Governance Position Statement, 2016:



Superintendent's Responsibilities:

To prepare, advocate for, and implement the annual budget that addresses district goals and meets the needs of all students; and report regularly to the Board on the status of the budget;

Board of Education's Responsibilities:

To adopt, advocate for, and oversee the school budget, which is responsive to district goals and meets the needs of all students

District Guiding Documents and Concepts



Board of Education & District Goals

→ **Student Achievement:**

Increase student achievement through high quality curriculum, purposeful instruction, meaningful assessment and programming, emphasizing the growth of persistence and a strong work ethic for every learner.

→ **Family and Community Engagement:**

Increase families' engagement in their children's learning through consistent communication and the development of trusting relationships; increase community partnerships through ongoing outreach and opportunities.

→ **Budget Development and Fiscal Management:**

Practice fiscally responsible, transparent budget development and ongoing fiscal management that addresses district priorities and maximizes available resources.

→ **District and School Environment:**

Promote safe school environments that are physically, socially, and emotionally conducive to teaching and learning.

→ **District Workforce:**

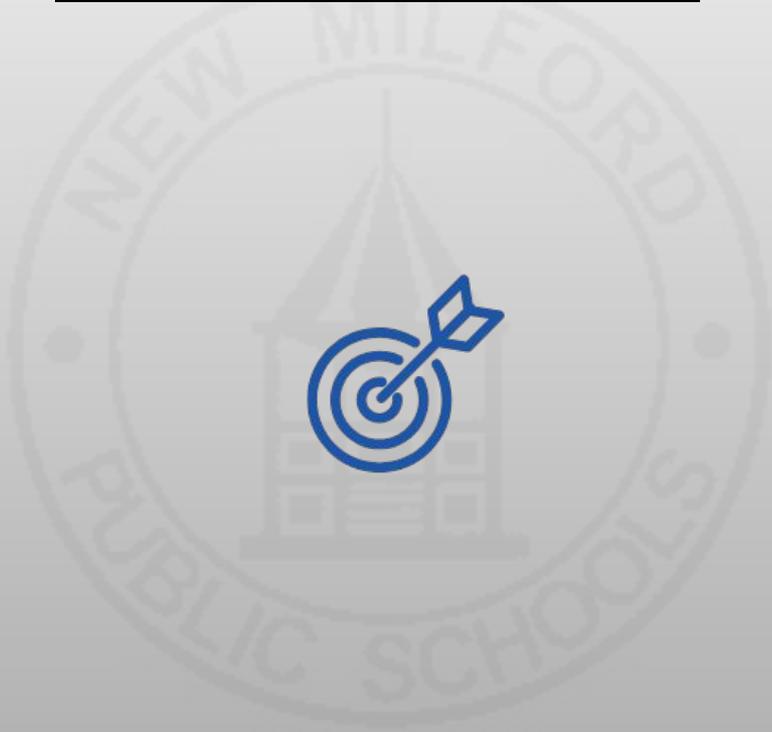
Hire, develop, and retain passionate and exceptional staff who will contribute to a collaborative, caring, and innovative culture, defined by continuous improvement.

New Milford Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a **collaborative partnership** of students, educators, family and community, is **to prepare each and every student:**

- **To compete and excel** in an ever-changing world;
- **To embrace challenges** with vigor;
- **To respect and appreciate** the worth of every human being, and contribute to society by **providing** effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, **offering** a wide range of valuable experiences, and **inspiring** students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

District Ideals



Portrait of a Lifelong Learner



New Milford System-Wide Learning Focus: Designing curriculum, assessment, and instruction to promote vertical coherence across the system

Prior to 2023: Tilling the soil



We adopted an Understanding by Design framework to articulate our curriculum across the district. Educators then developed units aligned with state standards and local priorities. In addition to our focus on curriculum design, we secured a centralized data management platform that provided a unified view of student assessment data to facilitate data-informed instruction. Finally we crafted the Vision of the Graduate to inform learning pathways at the high school.

Evidence of Growth

- Established a New Milford unit template with professional development to support curriculum designers
- Established and used a curriculum development review process
- Public sharing on the district's website to clarify course-level curriculum for families
- Development of a visual of the Vision of the Graduate for high school use
- Onboarded a data management platform

2023-2025: Planting the seeds



We continued to make key improvements to student learning and support. First, we strengthened our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and 504 plans through data-informed discussions. We also improved upon curriculum coherence by adopting new core literacy materials aligned with the Science of Reading (K-5) and selecting enhanced math programming (6-8). To monitor instructional quality, we implemented literacy and numeracy learning walks. At a district level, the Superintendent initiated district-wide instructional rounds as well as facilitated the development of five Board of Education goals that centered on student achievement and a positive school climate. Finally, we revisited the Vision of the Graduate to make it a district wide portrait to guide assessment and instructional practices throughout the grade levels.

Evidence of Growth

- Formal adoption of a new K-5 progress reports (5/25)
- Revision of K-12 portrait of a learner (6/25)
- Development of a K-12 504 Handbook
- Publish a K-12 District Data Review Cycle calendar
- Consistent and thoughtful use of district's data management platform
- Adoption of Board Goals to anchor system wide decision making
- Creation of a common OnTrack framework to gauge learner progress for each school
- Regular use of literacy & numeracy learning walks and instructional rounds to calibrate for effective practice and inspire fresh thinking

2025-26: Tending to seedlings



We stay committed to continuous improvement in teaching and learning by focusing on: setting clear learning expectations that is aligned to standards and district portrait of a learner, revising learning tasks that are more likely to be challenging, relevant, and meaningful for every learner; strengthening the teachers skills in examining student data to tailor instruction. We will create a multi-year strategic plan that charts a clear learning journey for all students, guiding our district-wide actions and building upon our current teaching and learning initiatives.

Evidence of Growth

Setting clear learning expectations:

- Define high impact instructional strategies
- Develop K-12 learner progressions for the portrait of a learner
- District-wide requirement for making lesson purpose and relevance explicit

Revising learning tasks:

- Develop learning principles to guide revision of learning tasks

Strengthening the teachers skills in examining student data

- Regular meetings with professional learning communities to align curriculum with instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners.
- In the classroom, teachers use formative measures to make responsive instructional choices based upon student performance

2026: Encouraging growth & First harvest



Our efforts will continue to grow learner-centered practices for teaching and learning. This will be addressed through:

- Illustrating Student Growth through Multiple Measures
- Strengthening PK-12 Literacy
- Modernizing Assessment and Grading
- Cultivating Reflective Practices
- Defining and Showcasing Excellence

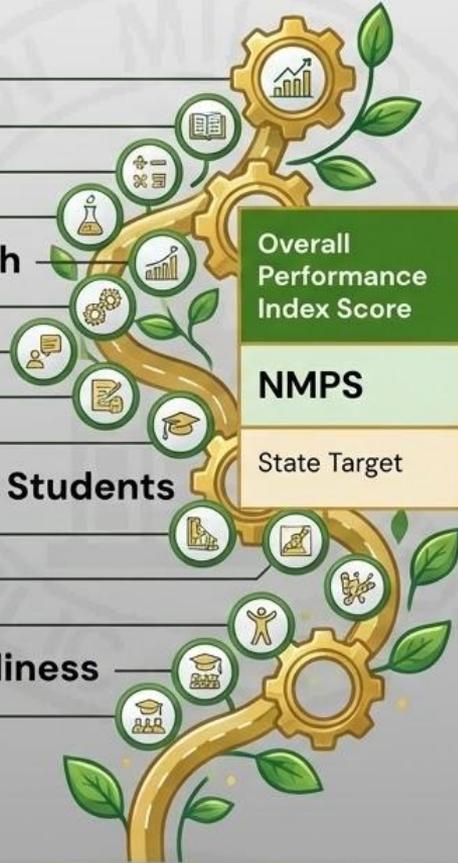
Evidence of Growth

Identification of artifacts for each element of the Portrait of a Lifelong Learner

- Student portfolio to display artifacts of progress on the Portrait of a Learner;
- Skill-based badges to demonstrate growth on the Portrait of a Learner;
- Multiple ways to demonstrate progress toward mastery of the standards in each unit;
- District-wide definition of high quality student work;
- Library/Gallery of exemplars of high quality student work
- Students present their work to audiences in addition to the teacher
- Reflection strategies integrated into each unit and as part of teacher practice;
- Examples of student and adult use of artificial intelligence as a learning support;
- Belief statement and guidelines for grading and assessment practices;
- Students read, comprehend, and curate a variety of digital media and print text

District Accountability Indicators

- Overall Performance Index _____
- English/Language Arts Performance _____
- Mathematics Performance _____
- Science Performance _____
- English/Language Arts Academic Growth _____
- Mathematics Academic Growth _____
- Progress Toward English Proficiency _____
- On Track to High School Graduation _____
- Four Year Graduation Rate _____
- Six Year Graduation Rate for High Needs Students _____
- Chronic Absenteeism Rate _____
- Arts Access _____
- Physical Fitness _____
- Preparation for College and Career Readiness _____
- Post-Secondary Entrance _____



Overall Performance Index Score	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
NMPS	71.1	70.2	69.3
State Target	85	85	85



Budget Development Process



OCTOBER

Schools/departments receive templates; Enrollment projects finalized.

NOVEMBER

Superintendent & Fiscal Services meet with each school/department; Submit budgets.

DECEMBER

Preliminary budget rollover into MUNIS.

JANUARY

Superintendent & Cabinet decide proposed budget; Decisions communicated; Budget books created & delivered.



Fixed Costs



2026-27 Fixed Costs

Required Item for 2026-27	\$ Increase	% Increase
Contractual Salary Increases	\$1,871,548	2.45%
Contractual Health Benefit Increases for All Bargaining Units	\$1,361,548	1.78%
Transportation: Bus Contract Increase	\$194,723	0.26%
Utility & Refuse/Recycling Increases	\$75,089	0.10%
Other Insurance (Life, Disability, Workers Comp, Cyber, Liability for Auto/Property, Student Accident)	\$68,616	0.09%
Total Increase of Fixed Costs	\$3,571,524	4.68%

Fixed Costs are required items and elements that carry forward from one year to the next.

77.3% of the entire budget is Employee Salaries and Benefits

Summary of 2026–27 Dollar Amounts and Percentages

Fixed Costs	+\$3,571,524 = 4.68% increase over the 25–26 budget
Total Superintendent's Proposed Increase	3.20% increase over the 25–26 budget

2025–26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget = 3.93%; BOE Adopted = 3.93%; BOF Adopted = 3.91%

2024–25 Superintendent's Proposed Budget = 4.46%; BOE Adopted = 3.87%; BOF Adopted = 3.87%

2023–24 Superintendent's Proposed Budget = 5.03%; BOE Adopted = 4.88%; BOF Adopted = 4.37%



2026–27 Proposed Additions and Reductions



Proposed Personnel Additions and Reductions

FTE Reductions

**-5.0 Certified Staff, Grades
PK-5**

**-3.0 Certified Staff, Grades
6-12**

-0.4 Nurse

FTE Additions

+1.5 Certified Staff, PreK-5

Net FTE Reductions

6.9

Salary Reduction Amount

\$516,886

**Benefits Reduction
Amount**

\$130,000

2025-26 Current District Enrollment by Grade

Pre-K	122
Kindergarten	180
Grade 1	200
Grade 2	260
Grade 3	261
Grade 4	263
Grade 5	240
Grade 6	265

Grade 7	267
Grade 8	247
Grade 9	268
Grade 10	251
Grade 11	301
Grade 12	290
LHTC	19
Total Enrollment	3434

Projected Total Enrollment
for 2026-27

3339

**HPS K-2 Average Class Sizes for 2026-27
with the reduction of one Grade 1 and one Grade 2 teacher**

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
14.2 students (Current = 14.2)	17 students (Current = 15.5)	18.6 students (Current = 20.8)

**NES K-2 Average Class Sizes for 2026-27
with the reduction of one Grade 1 and one Grade 2 teacher**

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
13.6 students (Current = 13.6)	15.8 students (Current = 15.3)	17.8 students (Current = 19.3)

SNIS Grade 5 Average Class Sizes for 2026-27 with and without an additional teacher

Without 1.0 teacher	With 1.0 teacher
23.9 students	21.9 students

Other Areas of Proposed Savings

Reductions	Amount
Out of District Tuition	\$195,283
Out of District Transportation	\$320,950
General Busing	\$168,182
Legal Fees	\$85,000
Pension	\$59,576

Other Proposed Increases

Proposed Increase	Amount
Substitutes	\$144,885
Disability Insurance	\$45,000
Director of Human Resources salary increase	\$30,000
School Security Officer Hourly Rate	\$8,928 Six SSOs' rate of pay +\$1.00 per hour to \$31.00
Literacy Workbooks – HPS and NES	\$14,000

High Needs Students Over Time

	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
Number of English Learners	120	124	121	145	162	199	190	238	251	315	328	321
English Learners Percentage of District Population	2.70%	2.90%	2.90%	3.50%	4.10%	5.00%	5.10%	6.50%	6.90%	8.80%	9.40%	9.30%
Number of Free/Reduced Lunch Students	875	852	953	965	1270	1342	1359	1167	1318	1185	1160	1257
Free/Reduced Lunch Percentage of District Population	20.20%	20.20%	22.80%	23.50%	32%	34.10%	36.70%	31.80%	36.20%	33.20%	33.20%	36.40%
Number of Students with IEPs	591	604	615	613	615	602	619	578	613	594	632	648
Students with IEPs Percentage of District Population	13.60%	14.4%	14.70%	15%	15.50%	15.30%	16.70%	15.80%	16.80%	16.70%	18%	18.8%
District Population	4335	4209	4186	4100	3969	3925	3707	3665	3639	3563	3498	3446

High Needs Snapshot

	2014-15	2019-20	2025-26
Free/Reduced Lunch	875 20.2%	1342 34.1%	1257 36.4%
Multilingual	120 2.7%	199 5.0%	321 9.3%
IEPs	591 13.6%	602 15.3%	648 18.8%
Enrollment	4335	3925	3446

What did not make it into the 2026-27 proposed

budget?

1. **Grade 4 Literacy Curriculum Materials: \$93,000**

We will use part of our 2% set-aside funding for these materials.

2. **Requested Personnel and Items Not Included:**

6.0 Kindergarten general education paraprofessionals – HPS and NES (~\$38,000 each salary and benefits)

Trapezoid Classroom Tables and Associated Chairs – NES

Classroom Carpets – SNIS

1.0 Dean of Students – SMS

1.0 Music teacher – SMS

3.0 Hallway Monitors (general education paraprofessionals) – SMS

Renovation of Chorus Room to be a Chorus Room (former Home Economics room)

1.0 In-School Suspension Monitor – NMHS

2.0 Multilingual tutors – NMHS

Slab Roller for Ceramics – NMHS

Ductless Fume Hood for Art – NMHS

1.0 Director of Curriculum/Instructional Supervisor – Central Office

Summary Points

- ✓ **Honest and thoughtful budgeting practices;**
 - ✓ **Balance of addressing needs and demonstrating fiscal responsibility in support of improved outcomes and opportunities;**
 - ✓ **Student needs persist and continue to increase;**
 - ✓ **Maintaining our momentum: continuing to grow and improve;**
- Maximizing our staffing for the greatest return on the community's investment**





Thank You!

