FAQ's-MAUSD Facilities Planning

Questions	Answers
General	
Is there a place where we can find all links to information that has been presented so far?	Here is the link to the Facilities Planning page on the MAUSD website. [MAUSD FACILITIES PLANNING: RESOURCES AND FAQs – School Board]()
Have we been using any of this time during COVID to think outside of the box in a way that could help alleviate some of our struggles?	Although we are doing things differently during COVID, like using space differently, and using more outside space, these are not adaptations that significantly change our financial situation.
When you present proposals for school configurations, will they come with staff level predictions?	We know that when we talk about closing schools, the savings will come from both reductions in staff and reductions in closing the actual facility. There are difficulties in talking about staff reductions that could, based on the small size of our District, ultimately infer individuals that could be affected. The Superintendent and administration are charged with providing the best education for students and must evaluate all aspects of student outcomes given the limitations they have to work with.
In looking at staffing patterns, have we considered increasing the numbers of multi-age classrooms and bringing additional services into our buildings?	We currently have many multi-age classrooms throughout the District. With declining enrollment, if we keep all schools, we will likely have to increase the number of multi-age classrooms. We could potentially see 3-4 grades in a classroom depending on numbers (3/4/5/6 for example). Another reality is that the class size would likely need to increase.
What is the criteria being used to determine a long-range facilities plan for MAUSD?	On December 7, Superintendent Reen will make a recommendation to the School Board about a long-range plan for the facilities in our District. He will make this recommendation after hearing from the Facilities Feasibility Study Committee, incorporating feedback from the community, considering the impact of a town if that school were to close, and considering data such as building capacities and needs. With these inputs, the Superintendent will consider alternatives and

	make recommendations based on student outcomes and how each of these options may affect them, which may or may not align with some or all of the external input.
How will the Superintendent determine which schools, if any, to recommend closing?	The impact of closing a school is different in each town. A school in a town is part of that town's fabric, but it's important to look at the full picture of what makes up that town's fabric, such as general stores, recreation departments, libraries, etc. There is research on the impact of closing small schools in rural communities, but these studies of small schools are referring to places with elementary schools with under 600 students and high schools with under 1,000 students. There are few if any studies of schools that are the same scale as those in our District. To get a sense of what such a decision would have on each of our Five Towns in particular, Superintendent Reen has met with selectboard members in each of the Five Towns and will be including those conversations in his decision-making process.
Is the Board required to pursue the Superintendent's recommendation for a long-range facilities plan for MAUSD?	It is likely the Board will have many questions for the Superintendent to understand his recommendations. The Board could ask the Superintendent to pursue a different path forward for our facilities plan, but will strongly consider the Superintendent's recommendation as it makes a decision.
What is the next step in the process, after the Superintendent makes his recommendation to the Board on December 7?	The Board will listen to the Superintendent's presentation and recommendation, and ask questions. The Board will then seek input from the community about this recommendation before making a decision. First, information about the proposed long-range facilities plan will be shared with the community in a variety of ways, including two information meetings to be held on Dec 16 & Dec 17. The community will then be asked to provide input on this recommendation through a survey that will be administered both electronically and via mail. Once the data from the survey has been analyzed, the Board will meet to consider this information and decide whether or not to pursue some sort of vote in the community to bring this recommendation forward.

What is the best way for the community to provide input in this decision-making process?	There are several ways community members can get involved: 1) Attend the Board meeting on December 7, or one of the two information meetings on December 16 or 17, to get up to speed with information about the proposed recommendation for a long-range facilities plan for our District. 2) Submit questions or comments about this process to this email address: facilities.planning.questions@mausd.org. Responses will be posted to this FAQ page. 3) Complete the survey that will be distributed to all residents of the Five Towns, electronically and/or by mail, in mid-December.
How can we expand what we offer as a school district and be future oriented?	The Superintendent, administration and Board are actively meeting and discussing the future of our District. There is a genuine effort to build a vision that will positively affect student outcomes and a facilities plan that will help us achieve that vision. We are inviting and encouraging our Five Town Community (teachers, staff, students, family members, community members) to participate in these conversations about the future of our District as well. We hope that by being transparent about the challenges we're facing and presenting the options we think are most viable, we can work together to build on all of the goals we have for our students, based on a system that is sustainable long into the future.
Have we discussed magnet schools? Flexible school days? Classes in the evening?	The conversations we had with the community last fall included discussions of many possible configurations and options for our schools, as well as different ways to bring in revenue. Summaries of these events can be found on the Community Engagement page of the MAUSD website at: www.mausd.org/cec/. The feedback from those conversations, along with these scenarios, were further discussed at a Board/Administration retreat in early January 2020. All of that feedback was considered by the School Board and a decision was made to charge the Feasibility Studies Committee with researching seven of these options, along with a list of essential questions.

Has there been any thought about decentralizing the Hannaford Career Center, and bringing some of those programs back to Mount Abe?	Decentralizing these programs would be very cost-prohibitive. It would require having more instructors at each site, as well as more specialized equipment and facilities. If we assume our enrollment stays the same as it is now, that works against our ability to offer this type of programming along with other educational tracks at a cost we can afford.
How has COVID impacted population and enrollment? How about climate change?	We would need just over 300 students to move into the district in order to alleviate the pressure we are seeing, and that's not including the anticipated loss of another 150 students due to declining enrollment. Although we may see some population increase as a result of COVID and climate change, it would not be significant enough, and happen fast enough, to address our challenges. Additionally, there are town zoning and infrastructure challenges (indicated in the NESDEC Report) as well to develop the housing necessary to accommodate this significant increase in student enrollment.
Have you considered using our school buildings to rent out extra space to individuals or businesses as a way to increase revenue in our District?	This concept has been considered. At the current market rate for leased space, the income will not significantly offset the financial challenges the District is facing. In the future with a better understanding of how the school campuses are being used this may be reconsidered.
Can the current superintendent's office be located in one or two schools, so that we do not pay out that money for the lease to use that current building?	Yes. This is part of the planning process and will be part of the future planning. Currently plans are to locate the superintendent's office at the Beeman site.
If school buildings are closed, how will they be used in the future?	Buildings that are repurposed and continue to have a school function within them will be retained as District property. If a town votes to close a school, the town where the building is located would be given first right of refusal (purchase for $1 plus any debt). If the town refuses the purchase option the District could sell the building on the commercial market.
How long will the most drastic measures keep us below the threshold? Will we be having this conversation again in a few years?	Enacting both phases of this proposal will enable the District to stay below the spending threshold for the planning period of 5-7 years and possibly beyond, depending on student enrollment stability. There is always the reality that other cost containment considerations will be needed until the decline in the student populations stabilizes.

How will we gather authentic teacher and principal feedback about this proposal?	Principals as part of the administrative team have been closely involved in the process. It is more difficult to get authentic teacher feedback considering the personal impact. All staff will be encouraged to complete the survey being distributed by the Board to gather feedback.
Have students been involved in this planning process?	Students have access to all of the presentation materials as does anyone. The high school students will be encouraged to complete the community survey.
How will students learn about these ideas, so that they can give their feedback?	The community survey will be distributed to high school students and they will be encouraged to complete it.
I have also heard that staff has already been told there will be big cuts. Is this accurate?	The cost of salaries is about 75% of the total budget. In order to reduce costs of the magnitude necessary, significant personnel reductions will be necessary. This has been communicated on a very broad level.
Would teachers have to reapply for their jobs in both phases?	In Phase one we would rely on the language in the negotiated agreements to determine who would be retained. In these agreements retention is determined by seniority in the district by category. In the vast majority of cases people would not need to reapply. It is possible that people would need to apply for new positions such as those that may be in place at the innovation sites.
What information has been presented on the option to close Mt. Abe, tuition out grades 9-12 and operate 5 k-8 schools in our current k-6 buildings?	You can find the information presented to the board on February 9, 2021 at this link.
What are the space needs for central office?	One large conference room (app. 600 sq ft), one small conference room (app. 300 sq ft), one reception area with a work station for receptionist (app. 300 sq ft), 11 office spaces (app. 175 sq ft each), kitchen/dining area (app 250 sq ft), storage (+/- 500 sq ft), restrooms to accommodate 12-15 people, small room for nursing mothers and breakout space for private conversations for staff who share an office space.
Is there an updated version of the Dec. 7 recommendation made by Superintendent Reen?	There is not currently an updated version of the Dec. 7 presentation though the need for this is recognized. There is no date certain for the completion of this update.
The Staffing and Finance K-8 spreadsheet from 2/9/21 shows a breakdown of students by grade and by town and uses 1238.38 equalized pupils. The MAUSD finance team projections shared on 3/16/21 show FY 26 equalized pupil count of 1343.48. We assume the enrollment projections have gone up significantly	The District's Enrollment projections have not gone up significantly. The 1238.38 number from the 2/9/21 spreadsheet reflects the Districts projections including the impact of the weighting study. This is the working number we are using internally currently. The 3/16/21 Community Interactive Spreadsheets' 1343.48 number purposefully reflects no impact of the

and that 1343.48 is the equalized pupil number that we should use for FY26. Please provide a detailed breakdown of projected enrollment (head count) by town and grade level for FY26.	weighting study, allowing the user of the Community Interactive Spreadsheet to factor a weighting study impact, or not, as well as 3 differing models of implementation/phasing scenarios. We have developed the Community Interactive Spreadsheet with a goal of allowing forecasting for an Equalized Pupil entry reflective of any analysis done by the user. You can see an updated enrollment projection by school and grade here.
Enrollment questions. I am not asking for the District to create something new. My recollection, however, is that there were some graphs offered during a meeting in November 2019 which showed historical and projected enrollment from each town, 1993 through 2014. Also, the NESDEC report on page 22 includes historical and projected enrollment in grade combinations, but not by facility. The NESDEC report for CVUD included historical enrollment and projected enrollment by grade, and by town, so one could imagine that similar enrollment data was also compiled by NESDEC for MAUSD. Finally, the presentation by the District on February 9th relating to a high school tuition scenario included enrollment in grades K-8 in each elementary school by FY. Again, I am not asking the District to create a new compilation of enrollment data. My hope rather is that this data has already been compiled, but not circulated. 1. What is expected to be student enrollment from 2021 to 2030, by grade, and by town? 2. What has been student enrollment from 2000 to 2020, by grade, and by town? Staffing questions. Clarifying questions only. 3. In connection with the District's unredacted December 22nd staffing spreadsheets: a. What do the tabs under the headings "Possibility 2A" mean? b. What do the tabs under the headings "Possibility 3A" mean? c. What do the tabs under the headings "All Open Elementary Cuts" mean?	1. We do not have enrollment projections out to FY30. 2. Enrollment 2000-2020 3. a. Facilities Possibilities Summary b. Facilities Possibilities Summary c. On the two tabs showing "All Open Elem Cuts Needed" there is a line showing the savings from a merger. Since these savings reflect reductions in staff as a result of the merger the remaining reductions were anticipated to come from the elementary schools. Enrollment projections FY22 - FY26 - NESDEC District-wide projections by grade (in blue) and MAUSD projections in all other grids. MAUSD projections use updated incoming kindergarten projections and average of most recent years incoming kindergarten classes. Enrollment 1992-2020 (used for presentations November 2020)
Questions relating to Central Office functions. The District has offered information on positions and the title/function of staff for the Central Office in MAUSD and ANWSD. See for example the District unredacted staffing spreadsheets offered around December 22nd, in the tab described as 3A FY26 no weighting with merger. It would be helpful in the development of some particular scenarios to know the comparable data for ACSD and CVSD. If that data is not readily available by the District, please let me know and I will inquire directly. If I need to inquire directly, it would be helpful if the	MAUSD does not have detailed information about central office staffing for ACSD and CVSD. Likewise, MAUSD does not have information regarding enrollment projections in those districts. You could contact the superintendent's office in each of those districts to learn more about their central office staffing.

District could refer me to the staff in the other districts to contact, preferably with an email introduction. 4. What are the position numbers and position types for Central Office functions in ACSD, and in CVSD? Comparable format for position numbers and position types for MAUSD and ANWSD. 5. What is Oct. 2020 enrollment in ACSD and CVSD? 6. What is projected enrollment in ACSD and CVSD?	
What is MAUSD's existing relationship with area human service nonprofits, including three squares' enrollment programs, health care, child care, job training?	MAUSD has little to no relationship with most of the list provided. We do partner with the Counseling Service of Addison County and we work closely with our local private pre-K providers. Mt. Abe specifically does have additional relationships through the career and community based learning coordinator.
When was the last time data was pulled on how many students qualify for free and reduced lunch in all our schools?	Our food service director tracks this monthly. As a district approximately 38% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch. This ranges by school: 26% in Lincoln, 30% in Monkton, 36% at Mt. Abe, 37% at Beeman, 44% at Robinson, 46% at Bristol.
What best practices and/or research exists for administrative and central office size in comparison to the population of students in the district?	The Education Quality Standards address this to some extent for building principals. Historically, comparing staffing in central offices has proven challenging due to dramatically different structures utilized by different districts. What I mean by this is the roles and responsibilities required to be performed are distributed in very different ways. Adding to the complexity is the lack of a common definition of what is considered a central office position. Is an instructional coach a central office position? Some would say yes, others would say no. How about the director of technology? After school program director? Literacy Coordinator? Different districts report these positions differently. Also, the size of the district only matters to some extent. A small district and a large district each needs to employ a business manager, each needs people to manage the variety of grants that flow into schools, each needs someone to pay the bills and someone to manage HR, someone for payroll, etc. This is why we can realize considerable savings as a merged district because becoming a larger district only marginally increases the work required by a central office team.
How is it that the administration can say we cannot evaluate the efficacy of the MTSS model this soon in its implementation, but the administration/board still make the assumption that student outcomes for those who struggle have not improved? I can't quite wrap my head around how both of these are true, if there has not been adequate evaluation of the MTSS model to date.	When an organization makes a high order change, which could be argued took place in MAUSD in recent years, research on change suggests the organization should not expect to see the effects of the change until 5-7 years after the implementation of the change. For this reason it is premature to expect a significant improvement in student outcomes as a result of the changes we have made. Now throw in a global pandemic and that further impedes our ability to demonstrate the efficacy of our systems improvements. The remarks suggesting outcomes for students have not improved significantly are not assumptions. They are observations of student outcome

	data for MAUSD over the past many years.
Why do the central office staffing numbers not reflect the recommendations put forth in the Picus and Odden report?	I'll try to address this question by category as structured in the Picus & Odden report (p.68-69). See spreadsheet linked here showing the category by category FTE comparison. What you will see is central office staffing in MAUSD with approximately 1,320 students is 1.0 FTE over the staffing levels recommended by Picus & Odden for a district with 1,000 students and 9.05 FTE under their recommendation for a district with 2,000 students indicating the central office staffing in MAUSD is consistent with the recommendations by Picus and Odden, if not a little under staffed. A common misunderstanding in MAUSD is that coordinators, coaches or other positions are central office positions. They are not. We believe in distributed leadership in MAUSD and our coordinators and to some extent coaches are teacher leader positions. These positions are covered by the teacher collective bargaining agreement, paid according to the teacher pay scale and are part of the seniority list for teachers. They are not central office positions.
A couple of terminology questions: a) What happens in an elementary school "intervention room" ? b) When discussing district costs, what does "CO alloc" stand for?	a) This is where some students needing additional time and support to be successful receive the additional time and support. b) Central Office Allocation of Costs
Financial	
a) What is the Vermont state spending threshold for FY 2021? (The agency of Education website only goes to 2016.) b) Is there a different spending threshold for high school students and for elementary students, or is it an overall average for a district?	a) Current year - Fiscal Year 2021 threshold is $18,756 Next Year - Fiscal Year 2022 threshold is $18,789 b) this is an overall District number. The impact of differing costs can be seen through the Equalized Pupil calculations: Grades K-6 are counted as 1 student Grades 7-12 are counted as 1.13 students Grades PreK are counted as .46 student
How are middle school students categorized for spending thresholds and/or for tuition payments? Are they considered high school students or elementary students, or do they have their own category?	7-12 students are categorized the same

When calculating the spending threshold, does the state use equalized pupils or actual pupils?	The State set spending threshold amount is calculated annually using statewide data from the prior fiscal year, multiplied by a given percentage. (16 V.S.A. § 4001): Excess Spending Threshold | Agency of Education (vermont.gov) When the District calculates the Spending per Pupil to compare to the Spending Threshold, it uses the District Budgeted Education Spending (Expenses less Revenues) number divided by Equalized Pupils as generated by the Agency of Education.
How many Vermonters pay taxes based on the value of their home? How many pay taxes based on their income?	About ⅓ of Vermonters pay taxes based on the value of their home. Roughly ⅔ pay taxes on a sliding scale based on income. Regardless of how you pay your property taxes, increased taxes can be a burden for all.
What is the excess spending threshold?	This is an education cost-containment measure put into place by the Vermont legislature. Any school district that spends more money per student than the excess spending threshold set by the state will incur an additional tax of 100% of that excess spending.
Do we know what the threshold spending levels will be in the future?	We don't know what the spending thresholds will be in the future. While there are established escalation factors as part of the spending threshold calculation, they may not keep pace with cost pressures. We are making projections and assumptions based on what we've seen in the past, and formulas that exist. What we can see based on those projections is that we are on a trajectory of exceeding the threshold.
Will we ever go above the threshold?	The School Board decides parameters for the budget each year. In the past, the Board has decided it is important not to go above the threshold. This decision is based on the assumption that it would result in an undue burden to the taxpayers.
Can we ask the legislature for some relief in the spending threshold penalty this year, as this is a situation many other districts are facing?	The legislature is considering holding schools harmless for FY 22 so that schools will not be penalized by a drop in students in FY 22, but we will see that drop reflected in FY 23 so it is only a temporary reprieve. The legislature has to balance the needs and concerns of School Districts across the state with limited funds. Developing a per pupil spending limit was designed to drive a reasonable cost for each student's education.
Do the "over threshold spending" items in the various tables include the state penalty for going over, or would we essentially have to double the amounts shown, since half of whatever we spend over is taken by the state?	When you see figures that show how far over the spending threshold we would be that is the amount our tax penalty would be. For every dollar we spend over the threshold we need to raise taxes to cover that dollar plus an additional dollar that is the penalty.

How will our taxes be impacted by potential changes in our facilities configurations and what financial information will be available to understand these impacts?	Superintendent Reen will share this information in a presentation to the Board on December 7. At this meeting, he will make a recommendation to the Board about possible scenarios to consider.
Healthcare is a double digit increase every year. Where is the effort to pull that piece of the budget out and advocate for it on a bigger level?	The State unified health insurance contracts from each individual District into a statewide collective bargaining process. To date, this has not contained costs for Districts. In July, we hosted a group of school and community leaders to discuss the challenges we are facing in our schools, which overlap with challenges faced by many of our communities such as declining and aging populations, access to high speed internet and access to affordable health care. We encourage people interested in advocating for this issue at the legislative level to check out this list of topics and interested community members that evolved out of this meeting in July, and see where there might be collective energy to pursue some of these issues.
Why do we have such large surpluses in our budget at the end of the year?	It is important to have a budget that will fund the year's activity as opposed to going back to voters for additional funding. Considering the total budget, the surplus is a small percentage, usually about 2-3%. Another reason is that the Superintendent is continually evaluating the need to replace open positions that have been budgeted for but might not have to be filled. The total compensation (salary and benefits) of a licensed staff member is on average about $80,000, which can be significant.
What are the tuition rates at area high schools?	MAUSD $19,357 ANWSD $17,508 ACSD $18,905 CVSD $15,760 The above is announced tuition, and is an estimate. The actual tuition expense is calculated at the end of the year, reflective of the actual cost. It should also be noted that by FY26 all of these school districts can expect a reduction in equalized pupils as a result of changes made to the weighting formula. This will likely increase the tuition costs in each district, potentially bringing them all up to or near the spending threshold which is projected to be $20,579 in FY26.
At the 3/9/21 Board meeting a breakdown of cost per pupil was provided for the elementary schools for FY22. The total for General Administration attributed to the 5 schools is 1,794,079. The FY22 Budget Summary shows the total for General Administration in the district to be 1,702,474. So, it appears the amount allocated to the elementary schools for General Administration exceeds the	For this simple comparison, we did roll up costs to a single line that included far more than the Budget Line titled Gen Admin. Other costs that were included are: Superintendent Office, Worker's Comp, HRA/HSA, tuition out, Legal, Property/Liability Insurance, Board costs, Misc (postage, dues, furniture, mileage reimb, books, periodicals, conference fees, advertising, printing, data

total budget line item by more than $92,000. Additionally, this leaves no allocation of General Administration expenses to Mt Abe. Please explain.	plan etc). Total 3,588,160 of which 1,853,318 was allocated to MTA based on pupil count. We did purposefully exclude Special Education costs, as an intensive needs student would skew a comparison.
Please provide a breakdown of operating costs, facilities costs etc. showing cost per pupil for Mt. Abe and providing the same data provided for the elementary schools. Our analysis using available data produced the following: School Enrollment School cost + district cost Cost Per pupil Lincoln 75 $2,213,934.00 $29,519.00 Beeman 73 $1,651,963.00 $22,630.00 Robinson 115 $1,962,226.00 $22,721.00 Monkton 117 $2,280,164.00 $19,489.00 Bristol 256 $4,025,556.00 $15,725.00 K-6 Totals 636 $12,133,843.00 $22,016.80 Mt Abe 7- 12 686 $19,619,467.00 $28,599.81 MAUSD FY '22 $31,753,310.00	<u>Costs Associated with Mt. Abraham</u> Direct Operating 10,979,253 Debt 0 Transportation 848,776 Food Serv 137,014 Sped Admin 40,570 Gen Admin 1,853,318 CO Alloc 641,569 Facilities 279,668 Cap $ 1,000,000 Operating Total 15,780,168 Total Per Pupil $23,003 Allocations were made on a per pupil basis, and are not reflective of an equalized pupil comparison. We did purposefully exclude Special Education costs, as an intensive needs student would skew a comparison.
The reconfiguration proposal from 12/7/2020 lists $1,000,000 savings if approved construction spending is removed from per pupil spending (H.35) and this makes sense given the 1.1m line item for facilities work. In the follow up questions to the Staffing and Finance K-8 presentation on 2/9/21 Patrick stated that he carried 1/3 of this amount with an escalator, so something in the 375K range, in the non staffing costs, but when queried about potential savings from the H.35 bill said it would be $1,000,000. Can you clarify if this was inadvertent and the potential savings in this scenario would be more like $375K, or if you would expect the full $1,000,000 savings, as stated.	In the scenario that closed Mt. Abe it did not make sense to continue to carry the full $1,100,000 of construction services in the budget. However, we wouldn't likely want to eliminate the full amount since we will want to continue to keep up with the remaining five schools. In light of this I carried ⅓ of the construction services forward as an expense. It is also important to note that should H.35 become law the construction services would not be removed from the cost per pupil for the purposes of calculating taxes, it would be an exclusion from the Excess Spending computation helping us to avoid paying the dollar for dollar penalty if we were to exceed the threshold. Additionally, it is unclear if removing this expense

	from the per pupil spending threshold would result in a corresponding reduction in the spending threshold.
Along these same lines the reconfiguration proposal from 12/7/2020 list savings from an increase in the SPED grant (Act 173) at $289,974 but Patrick's comments at the 2/9/21 presentation indicated that it would be around $200,000. Is there something about tuitioning out high school students that would reduce the grant amount or can we assume a potential savings of $289,974?	A shift to block grant funding for special education under Act 173 would be based on student enrollment. If our 9-12 grade students were no longer enrolled in MAUSD schools we likely would not expect to see the full $289,974. I used $200,000 as an estimate to account for this.
We are trying to better understand non-staffing costs, especially as they were calculated and presented in the K-8 model on 2/9/21. The spreadsheet shows a lump sum total of non-staffing costs of $8,544,241. We understand that you accounted for tuitioning out the high school students by using 70% of the total non-staffing costs for costs associated with staff, 80% for costs associated with student support and 33% of the cost of facilities improvements and included 2% and 5% escalators. We have compared these numbers with the budget expenses broken down by category in the FY 22 Budget but are coming up well short of $8,544,24 . Please provide us with a complete breakdown of the non-staffing numbers and calculations used to arrive at $8,544,241.	We have added a raw data spreadsheet of FY's 19-22 Budget projections to allow users to revise any costs reflective of the assumptions and ups/downs in their particular proposal. This additional spreadsheet will have multiple codes (a document to explain these codes will also be available), allowing the user to search, combine, remove, add, and/or revise the District's historical budget data. This spreadsheet also has been redacted of all Med Insurance classifications, as it would allow for personally identifiable information to be revealed. This total has been rolled up and allocated on an average per staff number for use in your projections. Non Staffing Costs: Transportation, MTA Upkeep, Elementary Schools Facility costs, Superintendent, Admin, Central Office, Pre K Tuition, Special Education, IT, Cap Fund, Food Service, Misc.
Please provide us with the projected savings in FY 26 if the legislature removes the annual increase in health care premiums from the per pupil spending calculation (S.38 H.78)	Should this become law the health care premium increase would not be removed from the cost per pupil for the purposes of calculating taxes, it would be an exclusion from the Excess Spending Threshold computation helping us to avoid paying the dollar for dollar penalty if we were to exceed the threshold. Additionally, it is unclear if removing this expense from the per pupil spending threshold would result in a corresponding reduction in the spending threshold. Should funding for healthcare increases come from a source outside the District budget (ie state funded), then the savings would be realized by the District and the local property tax would not be impacted. This projection could be used by forecasting a 0% increase in Medical Insurance Inc in the Community Interactive Spreadsheet.
Questions relating to the District's February 9th spreadsheet relating to an option for high school tuition. I note that the value under the heading "non-staffing K-8 costs" is $8,544,24. I believe the general assumption is that personnel costs are roughly 75% of educational spending. I am having trouble understanding how the staffing costs for K-8 schools and the	We have added a raw data spreadsheet of FY's 19-22 Budget projections to allow users to revise any costs reflective of the assumptions and ups/downs in their particular proposal. This additional spreadsheet will have multiple codes (a document to explain these codes will also be available), allowing the user to search, combine, remove, add, and/or revise the District's historical budget data. This

non-staffing K-8 costs identified in the spreadsheet work out to a roughly comparable percentage. A good number for non-staffing K-8 costs is clearly an important element in constructing some alternative scenarios. 7. What are the cost categories under the heading “non-staffing K-8 costs”, and what amounts are attributable to each category?	spreadsheet also has been redacted of all Med Insurance classifications, as it would allow for personally identifiable information to be revealed. This total has been rolled up and allocated on an average per staff number for use in your projections. Non Staffing Costs: Transportation, MTA Upkeep, Elementary Schools Facility costs, Superintendent, Admin, Central Office, Pre K Tuition, Special Education, IT, Cap Fund, Food Service, Misc.
Questions relating to the “Call for Proposals” spreadsheets. The spreadsheets include several cells where different assumptions can be entered for those offering alternative proposals. It would be helpful to know what assumptions for these cells the District used in developing its proposals. My sense is that alternative proposals ultimately will be evaluated in comparison to the District’s proposal. 8. In the yellow cells with red border, what assumptions did the District make restive to its December 7th proposal, and if different what assumptions is the District now making?	The assumptions used by the District are available in the Community Interactive Spreadsheet. We have now updated these assumptions by adding Purple highlighting allowing the user to find this information quicker. 8. Full effect of the weighting study was applied to FY23 in that 12/7 projection. (7.7%) We are currently projecting a 7.7% impact and are applying it with a 2 year phase-in starting in FY24.
Equity questions. I hope these are the only questions which might require particular effort by the District. The data requested are necessary to respond to the directive in the “Call for Proposals” to include discussion of the equity implications of any proposal. Furthermore, ever since the issue of inequitable allocation of resources was raised in December 2020 by several Board members and the District, it has been a source of deep division and acrimony in the community. I would be grateful if everyone would say “Let’s stop talking about this!”, but the concept that children in some districts have an inequitable advantage over children in other districts, and that this concept supports the merits of consolidating the “advantaged” schools is already widespread in the community. Unless the issue is put to rest one way or another with accurate and sufficient information, I fear that it will impede our efforts to reach solutions. 10. In connection with the District’s “equity” powerpoint presentation on March 9th: a. What fiscal year data is being reported? b. What cost categories are included in “operating costs directly associated with a school”, what is the amount for each cost category for each elementary school, and what fiscal year is being reported? c. What cost categories are included in “general administration”, “Central Office allocation”, and facilities, under “school’s share of District costs”, what is the amount for each cost category for each elementary school, and what	To be clear, in no presentation, nor in any comments made has the superintendent even suggested that students in one MAUSD school have an inequitable advantage over students in another MAUSD school. The superintendent feels strongly that equitable support and services are being delivered to students in all MAUSD schools. Achieving equitable support and services for students in our schools requires varying spending per student with our smaller schools costing more per student than our larger schools. This is the only reason the cost per student conversation came up. As we face declining resources the inefficiencies of our smaller schools, as evidenced by the higher cost per student, add complexity to our financial situation making it more difficult to deliver the services we would like to offer to all students. As a simple example: The cost per student of a 10k stove/oven combo as seen through the lens of our 6 school buildings: Number of students at MTA: 686 Stove/Oven cost per student: 14.58 Number of students at Bristol: 256 Stove/Oven cost per student: 39.06 Number of students at Beeman: 73

fiscal year is being reported? d. What is the average professional staff pay grade and step cost factor for each elementary school, the middle school, and the high school in FY21? e. What is the average health insurance cost factor for professional staff for each elementary school, the middle school, and the high school?	Stove/Oven cost per student: 136.99 Number of students at Lincoln: 75 Stove/Oven cost per student: 133.33 Number of students at Monkton: 117 Stove/Oven cost per student: 85.47 Number of students at Robinson: 115 Stove/Oven cost per student: 86.96 Continuing to debate whether or not it costs more per student to operate a smaller school vs a larger school does not move the conversation forward. If the decision is to continue to operate all of our schools and to continue to offer equitable support and services in those schools we simply need to accept that the cost per student will continue to vary significantly and the inefficiency will limit the support and services in all schools. 10a: FY22 10b: For this simple comparison, we did roll up costs to a single line that included far more than the Budget Line titled Gen Admin. Other costs that were included are: Superintendent Office, Worker's Comp, HRA/HSA, tuition out, Legal, Property/Liability Insurance, Board costs, Misc (postage, dues, furniture, mileage reimb, books, periodicals, conference fees, advertising, printing, data plan etc). 10c: You can view the cost categories on the 7th tab of the Community Interactive Spreadsheet, We have added an additional raw data page to the Community Interactive Spreadsheet to allow for the user to look at costs in a District, School, Item, Category lens. 10d & e: AVE PER SCHOOL: SALARY STEP MED BES - 65000.05 8.58 17147.56 BEE - 58368.05 6.71 16215.06 LCS - 66235.11 8.13 21487.66 MCS - 63430.67 8.0 16814.50 RES - 68659.01 9.1 19157.52 MTA - 68543.75 10.8 17955.74

What have been the administrative savings to date from Act 46?	Audit costs have dropped from 42550 in FY17 to 37500 for FY21. A 5050 reduction. We have reduced an accounting position from 1.0 FTE to .3 FTE, resulting in an approx $37,149 per year savings (plus reduced benefits) as reflected in the FY22 budget.
Existing School Operation	
If one town votes to keep their school but we as a district are over the per pupil spending threshold, is the entire district penalized by the resulting penalty tax increase?	Yes, our spending as a district is divided among the pupils in our district, so whatever it is that causes our spending to be over the threshold will impact all towns. This also applies with spending under the per pupil spending threshold.
Under what circumstances could town decision making ability change?	To change the way that a decision is made to close a school, a majority of a commingled vote of the Five Town electorate would be needed to change to the Articles of Agreement that were put into place when we became a unified school district.
What is the cost of simply keeping a building open? Where is the information that shows if and how we will save money from closing schools?	This information as well as other detailed financial information will be shared at the Board meeting on December 7.
Looking at the review of Staffing reductions needed to keep school buildings operating as they are now: What do class sizes and programming at the schools look like at that level of spending by 2026?	Class sizes would likely need to range from approximately 20-30, with an average around 25. Grades would also be combined as necessary to attain these class sizes. Support, such as onsite nurse, student intervention, and programming such as arts and music would be reduced (proportionately across the District).
Does each town vote on whether to close their town school?	Yes. According to the Articles of Agreement that were adopted when MAUSD became a unified school district, no town school can be closed unless a majority of voters in that town vote to close it.
So a ballot to close a school would have to be on the town ballot, not the MAUSD ballot?	Yes. Each individual Town would need to vote on school closure for that Town. It would not be a vote of all the towns with the results co-mingled.
Maybe I'm missing something, but isn't the creation of "innovation sites" at Lincoln and Starksboro tantamount to closing those schools with a vague workaround to avoid giving those towns a chance to vote about their effective school closures?	Residents in all five towns have expressed that they don't want to close their schools. The recommendation is an attempt to find the savings that are needed, while working to improve outcomes for students, without closing schools. The recommendation does not reflect any intention of creating a work around. It is an attempt to

	reflect what was heard from the towns.
Phase 1	
In phase 1, do some Starksboro and some Lincoln K-5 students attend school in Bristol or Monkton?	All students from Starksboro and Lincoln (as well as New Haven) will attend either Bristol or Monkton. The detail of which particular school will be determined based on balancing each school's capacity and looking at the proximity to Monkton and Bristol.
So in Phase 1, all grade 6 students attend @ Mt. Abraham, and all K-5 students attend either Bristol Elementary or Monkton Elementary?	Yes, that is correct.
If the board agrees to go with the recommendation what is the impact on students who are in smaller classes now being sent to a different school and in much larger class sizes?	Most classes in MAUSD are currently in the 18-22 range. Some are slightly smaller and some are slightly larger. If the board acts on the recommendation we may be able to keep class sizes around where they are now. Otherwise we could expect an increase in class sizes. In larger school settings students will have access to more consistent resources such as interventionists, guidance counselors and nurses.
What specific staff vs. teacher vs. central office cuts are being proposed for Phase 1?	General numbers have been shared in Superintendent Reen's Dec 7th proposal to the Board. Additional detail risks identifying personnel that could be impacted.
What would the staff reduction be under the current proposal?	Staff reductions are details in the Superintendents proposal on December 7th. Link to the presentation is https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ZdSGjoScbEYm-RI_rKNs3VxapL1SsIl8jRP5OijK9Ew/edit#slide=id.gaf120b31e7_0_660. Staffing is detailed on slides 38 and 39.
How would staff cuts be decided among the new 2 schools? Would Bristol and Monkton staff get a priority? What would happen to the staff at Robinson, Lincoln. and Beeman?	Reductions in staff would be on a seniority basis as defined in their contract.
Phase 2	
Would a partnership with the Addison NorthWest Supervisory District (Vergennes) allow for economies of scale at the Administrative level?	Yes. As populations of students decrease, looking to limit the overhead cost is a driving factor. Merging districts would also result in merging the Central Offices which would produce significant savings.

Who would be responsible for redefining contractual agreement if we were to merge?	All contractual agreements would be reviewed and the need for renewal or revision would be determined under the new consolidated organization.
How will admin be divided if we have a merger?	If a merger with Addison Northwest is enacted, we would seek legal counsel to determine how we would need to proceed with filling admin positions.
Innovation Centers	
Is the program that Vergennes currently runs at Willowell (The Walden Program?) similar to what you might see at an Innovation site?	Something like the Walden Program is a possibility, and there are many others. One key difference is that we want to make the programming available to all students, not just a select group. Having said that, operating two facilities for innovation sites could create opportunity for a more intensive experience for our older students.
I'm wondering what the point is of housing the "innovation academies" at schools that would otherwise be closed?	Having a dedicated space for the innovation programs allows the space to be tailored to the needs of the program. Trying to get this initiative launched while building it into the two buildings that will be delivering K-5 instruction would be difficult due to space constraints in those buildings and other logistical barriers with the shared space.
Is co-creating a "specialty" through which all elementary students will rotate in and out and the curricula at Monkton and Bristol more of the status quo?	The intent is not for it to be more of the status quo. It is an opportunity to design an environment and a program that enhances the curricula in our schools, much as so many different field trips do but in a more equitable manner. It is also important to note that status quo is not an option. Assuming we have to find the savings to avoid much higher taxes the question is really what level of support, service and programming will we be left with after we find the savings. If we consolidate schools in some way we create efficiency which preserves support, services and programs for our students. If we do not find efficiency we will lose support, services and programs for our students. By repurposing schools we can create the efficiency we need while also creating an opportunity to build something special for our students, keep all of our buildings in use for students in some capacity and retain our buildings to maintain flexibility in the future.
How will programming be integrated into the curriculum happening at the main schools?	Much like the curriculum used in all of our classrooms the programming at the innovation sites would be developed based on Common Core, NGSS, C3, etc. This commonality will help facilitate the integration of programming. In addition, communication between innovation site teachers and their colleagues in the other schools will

	help with the integration of the program.
Why wouldn't the innovation centers just be in those vacant rooms on the previous slides, each school, keeping the students in their own towns K-5 or 6. Then there might be synergies as well.	The only way we can realize the savings we need without significantly reducing the support, services and programs for students is to bring students under fewer roofs. If we don't take that step not only will there not be enough money to support the innovation concept there won't be enough money to provide the level of support and service we do now. In addition, it can be difficult to build something innovative in an environment that has some logistical necessities that can become hurdles for innovation to overcome. In a separate location some of these challenges may be reduced.
I appreciate the spirit of innovative sites if the towns still get plenty of good energy from them. How would the district save money while still having kids in the building? Would the district support the innovation projects with paid professionals? As well as volunteers? I hope it is something that could expand to all schools eventually in some way.	The innovation centers would have a small core staff to oversee and coordinate the various programs. Community presentations, evening events etc. are part of the discussion that needs to happen around these innovation sites. This could bring the kind of energy to the town that you mentioned. The district saves money by creating efficiencies in staffing resulting from students being under fewer roofs for their general studies. These savings are what creates the opportunity for the innovation centers. The classroom teachers would regularly attend the innovation sites with their class and liley even do some planning with the educators at the innovation site. In doing so the learning that happens could be brought back to the other schools. As the centers develop volunteers and mentors could provide a valuable perspective to studies.
How do families get to decide if their child gets to attend the innovation program at LCS or RES? Is this a program where students would attend for the year/semester/or a few weeks? This is a huge discussion and we need to hear more about your vision	All students in the District would participate in the innovation center programs. For example, there could be an environmental workshop in Lincoln, and every 5th and 6th grade class throughout the District would rotate through the program over the course of the school year. Additionally, some of our older students may be able to pursue a semester-long program of studies as part of an independent learning opportunity.
Would some students attend an innovation center year-round or all elementary students have a "home" school (Bristol or Monkton) and then they would cycle through the innovation centers at some point through the year?	All students would attend either Bristol or Monkton as a "home" school. They would cycle through the innovation center with their teachers for defined units through the year.
Why are the innovation center co-creating possibilities separate from the curricula offered at the future Bristol and Monkton schools? Is this	Yes. The innovation centers will provide in depth, hands on or nontraditional classroom teaching on various subjects including environmental science, STEM (science, technology, engineering and

vision to treat the innovation center as a “specialty” that all students at the elementary level rotate in and out of and the remaining elementary schools’ curricula similar to the status quo (but more students per classroom)?	mathematics), the Arts (drama, visual) as well as allowing more personalized learning for the upper grades. By using repurposed campuses, they will provide a uniquely different space for study, completely unconnected with their regular classroom. Having 2 innovation centers could allow for a dedicated elementary space and separate middle/high school space or allow for a broader range of programs. It is important to note that without repurposing or somehow bringing students under fewer roofs class sizes will be larger than in the proposed repurposing proposal.
I am curious about how the staffing would be achieved at the repurposed schools? Current staff? Community members?	The innovation centers (repurposed schools) would have a small core team to manage the center, develop circula, and lead/facilitate instruction. This could be from our current staff if there is sufficient interest and background amongst our current staff. Community members who have expertise in the subject being explored would be welcomed and encouraged to volunteer.
Where is the staffing coming from for the innovation schools with the 75-91 staff reductions?	Staffing could come from our current staff if there is sufficient interest and background amongst our current staff. In addition elementary classroom teachers would likely go to the innovation centers with their students and would be helping to deliver the instruction with the innovation staff. Older students may be working more independently with support and facilitation from innovation site staff.
Universal Child Care	
Will the preK at Beeman be universal full time care? Or would it be like the 10 hours of free preK and then a cost similar to ELP?	The pre-K portion would be much like it is currently with wraparound care offered to families for whom it would benefit. There would be a cost associated with the care. The cost structure has not yet been determined.
There is currently a public preschool in Bristol only. Are you planning on, effectively, shutting down all of the private preschools which currently partner with the school district and bussing all preschoolers to Beeman which has a playground not designed for preschoolers?	This raises a really good point. There is no plan to compete with our local preschool providers. The intent is to serve essentially the same number of students in early ed as we do now while offering wraparound childcare for those 3&4 year olds to help provide families with a fee-based full day option. We would not be looking to dramatically increase the number of 3&4 year olds we serve. We recognize the importance of working closely with our preschool partners to ensure there are no unintended consequences. We recognize that if we were to expand the number of 3&4 year olds we serve in a significant way we could put local private providers out of business which could create a reduction in openings for infants and

	toddlers which would be detrimental to families.
Transportation	
What is the increased cost of transportation? financial and personal costs for small children and their parents	Transportation is anticipated to be cost neutral in the recommendation that was made. Routes may change to help ensure bus rides for students remain comparable to what they are now.
What's the Greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation for each scenario?	Greenhouse emissions would be in relation to any increase or decrease in bus routes. Since buses are a type of public transportation, the more important aspect is effective use. They should be looked at as saving emissions when ridership is high instead of individual cars being used to deliver students to school.