MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

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COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all.

TO: RSU 9 Staff

FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent

RE: FY27 Budget Development Update

DATE: 3-6-2026

Over the last five years in my role as your superintendent, I have worked with the RSU 9 Board and administration to prioritize a budget that reflects our deepest values: supporting our students and investing in our people. Guided by our Strategic Plan, we have expanded programming, increased social-emotional and instructional resources, and provided additional support for our families.

We have made significant strides in strengthening our district's foundation in alignment with our strategic plan by:

- Cultivating Professional Development
- Improving Special Education Services and Systems
- Prioritizing Staff Retention by consistently increasing salaries and benefits to honor our veteran educators and remain competitive for new talent.

While we are proud of our progress, we know that we still have much work to do. To help our students truly grow and succeed, we must stay focused on prioritizing our teaching and support structures. However, we are now facing a difficult financial situation. As we plan the upcoming budget, we must find a way to keep supporting our important goals while dealing with the reality of fewer enrolled students, difficulties faced by our towns, and less funding from our state.

Fiscal Year	Total budget	% Increase	Town Avg. % Increase
FY '25	$ 45,155,670.00	4.45%	3.99%
FY '26	$45,548,396	0.87%	2.24%
FY '27	$46,229,943	1.5%	1.44%

We take our role and responsibility in our communities seriously and know that we must balance our needs with those of our communities as well. In reviewing the chart above you can see that we are working to balance our requests so as not to put an undue burden on our towns or the people who live in them.

Understanding the importance of the district's fiscal impacts to our communities our Board has reinvested savings to support implementation of our district's strategic plan. This plan allows us to continue to make progress on better meeting the needs of our students and schools by implementing multiple interconnected action steps. These efforts help make sure that we follow our mission "Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all."

In the proposed FY27 Budget we are continuing to invest in students through staff salaries and benefits increases, MTSS, Special Education supports, and instructional professional development. Unfortunately, our state aid was reduced by $500,000 (student population decreases), and along with economic concerns within our communities and state we need to adjust accordingly. These concerns mean that we must tighten our budget (all cost centers (Transportation, Technology, Operations etc. have had reductions to their budgets) and continue to make some position reductions through attrition whenever possible. Even though salary and benefit increases are well deserved they do create budget pressures that must be accounted for within our overall budget both now and with our long-term planning needs. We did reduce some staffing this past year with concern that if we didn't start to adjust we would face a funding cliff and would then need to make major staff reductions this year or next which we know would damage student programming and continuity. We are again making some staffing reductions which will not affect our overall average class sizes.

Although we all would prefer to keep every position and to have class size below 14 and to not have to move people based on year-to-year grade level needs, we face the same budget pressures that schools across our state are facing. We must adjust how we allocate our resources and spending so as to place our available funding to its best possible use. Reductions have been made throughout the proposed FY27 Budget across all cost centers as well as some needed increases (such as insurance etc.) to support our contractual obligations.

Currently, the year-over-year budget increase for FY27 is 1.5% as our Board's Budget Committee has worked through the draft budget. A 1.44% increase to our towns affects each town differently based on property valuations and student #s as this document explains.

Developing any budget requires important and sometimes difficult decisions on the part of our Board and district admin team as we adjust to our current reduction in students along with the fiscal realities and needs that our towns face. Our Board and admin team cares deeply about our students, families, and each of you. It is our responsibility to propose a reasonable budget that strives to continue to meet our strategic plan goals and action steps for our Learning Community. We must balance our present needs with long-term spending realities to avoid a revenue cliff which would do irrevocable harm to the district we know and call, Mt. Blue!

The RSU 9 Board continues to work hard to make thoughtful decisions in support of our students, schools, staff, and families. As the budget sub-committee and board make final decisions, we will be sure to keep you informed.

If you would like to share your thoughts about the draft FY27 Budget adjustments shared with you in this memo the next meeting of the Board's Budget Committee takes place on Thursday, March 12th, 6:00 pm in the Forum at MBC.

Projected Class Size #s