



Proposed Budget Narrative

FY2023

The mission of Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School is to **create** a culture of *academic and technical excellence*, **encourage** *continuous intellectual growth*, and **promote** *professionalism, determination, and citizenship* for all students, as they **develop** into *architects, artisans, and authors* of the 21st-century community.

Mission Overview for FY23

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School remains committed to training our future workforce. Like no other time, we are being challenged to adjust our practice and make decisions that impact students and staff. With this in mind, we continue to seek ways to collaborate and give students a voice. As we begin our work on our second five year strategic plan, a new focus has evolved, equity. As Jada Exama, a junior in Health Assisting stated recently at the first 5-Year Strategic Planning meeting, “where there is diversity, there is not always inclusivity.” In short, we must recognize our mission to include all students and to determine a way to create an environment where all students feel safe to be and become the best version of themselves. We believe this budget will allow us to create a culture of academic and technical excellence informed by kindness to achieve our Mission Statement.

Overall Budget

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School District currently serves 1,654 students per October 1 reporting from 17 member and 38 surrounding communities and offers 24 vocational, technical, and agricultural programs as cited in the October 1, 2021 SIMS Report to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE). Students from member communities are eligible to participate in all of our programs, while students from surrounding cities and towns are eligible to enroll in the seven agricultural programs.

This year, our Partnership program served an additional 56 students from Peabody, Beverly, Salem, Swampscott, and Marblehead public schools. Based on our day-student demands, we have made the decision to eliminate Electrical and Plumbing from the Partnership program. A Health Assisting Program will be added to the Partnership Program.

We continue to be one of the most affordable vocational and agricultural schools in the state. In fact, at this time, **many of our communities will receive a reduction in per pupil assessment**, despite a 4.93% increase over the 2022 budget. **ENSATS is currently at minimum contribution for the second time in school history.** We believe it is a combination of revenues, competitive grant funding, and careful fiscal considerations that allow for this.



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Instructional Supplies

When reviewing the instructional supply accounts, please note:

- Two programs completed its merger, Natural Resources and Environmental Technology to form Natural & Environmental Sciences.
- Construction related programs budgets include some on-campus projects.
- Automotive Collision Repair & Refinishing increased due to After Dark program students being enrolled and a spike in grade 9 enrollment.
- Engineering Technology increased due to being moved out of Perkins grant to the operation budget.
- A carpenter was added to the FF&G due to needs of the district and this replaces two of the positions that were reduced in 2020 due to COVID voluntary lay-offs.
- Increased cleaning contract due to use of south campus buildings through ESSER II
- Increased staffing due to enrollment trends.
- Increase supervisor position due to grade 9 enrollment, new admissions policy, and curriculum alignment.
- Increased stipends to create lead teacher positions with no administrative duties due to staffing trends.
- Changed Farm Manager position to a supervisory position to allow for appropriate evaluation of staff.
- Allocated funds for HTF and AFSCME negotiations.

To demonstrate the process, I have included the following graphic.

Date	Overall Dollar Comparison to FY22	Percentage over FY22	Adjustments to Proposed Budget
11/29/2021	\$4,027,465	12.58%	Initial budget requests, including additional staffing to accommodate the student population.
12/09/2021	\$3,284,570	10.26%	Removed technology upgrades and projects, instructional equipment, materials and custodial services and moved to a priority basis. Reallocated



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			some budget to grant funding, and ESSER II and ESSER III funds.
12/13/2021	\$3,071,289	9.6%	Requested staffing increases reduced in Spanish, Special Education, CTE Expansion.
12/27/2021	\$2,137,453	6.68%	Reduction in proposed new staffing for FY2023 and cuts to various departmental supplies and services.
1/20/2022	\$1,517,484	4.74%	Requested staffing increases reduced or moved to other funding sources, dual enrollment, Principal's office, and other general reductions.
1/25/2022	\$1,576,770	4.93%	Moved funds back into the maintenance budget for operational costs and needs of the District.

Minimum Contribution

Massachusetts determines an "equitable local contribution requirement," which refers to how much of the foundation budget that should be paid for by each city and town's property tax, based upon the relative wealth of the municipality. We recognize that our school is the vocational and agricultural school of choice for our 17 member communities and value their partnership. FY23 is anticipated to be at minimum contribution.

Due to the anticipated increase in FY22 state and local revenues and the implementation of year one of the Student Opportunity Act, the District's Foundation Budget Assessment to the 17 member communities is limited to their required minimum contribution as calculated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The FY23 preliminary assessments do not include a foundation budget above minimum assessment. In fact, 10 of our 17 communities saw a reduction in per pupil assessment.



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During the budget process, our staff followed a budget timeline that includes programmatic staff to develop a budget proposal presented to Directors. Upon completion, the Directors worked together to prioritize needs based on the 5-Year Strategic Plan, Student Opportunity Act, and our mission of creating a *culture of academic and technical excellence*.

The FY23 budget represents a total increase of \$1.56M or 4.93% over the FY22 approved budget. Sixty-three percent of the FY23 budget increase is due to staffing and salary adjustments, 22 percent is due to contingencies for HTF, AFSCME, and individual contracts, and 13 percent is due to fixed costs and benefits.

As illustrated in the above chart, many areas have been further reduced to offset these increases to the overall budget. Some of these reductions will be an area of concern leading into the FY23 budget cycle as we depend more on revenues and grants to support the operating budget. The District will need to appropriately plan incremental increases to the budget to remain current and provide exceptional technical and agricultural education aligned to our mission while being cost sensitive to our member communities. We will continue to seek competitive grant funds and revenue streams to maintain services and upgrade facilities as needed.

Student Opportunity Act

In FY23, and we will receive \$590,000 of our Ch. 70 funds for SOA to implement expanded learning opportunities to students by focusing on student subgroups, using evidence-based programs to close achievement gaps, monitoring success with outcome metrics and targets, and engaging all families in SOA-funded program offerings.

These funds will support the following:

- a Summer Integration Academy to support entering grade 9 and 10 students not achieving at the same level as their peers in mathematics and English language acquisition;
- a data-tracking program to provide outcome metrics and to track student achievement and growth targets for teachers to adjust their instructional practice in real time for underperforming students.



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Partnership Program

With close to 1,700 applicants for 450 seats, ENSATS has a significant waiting list. It is essential that we seek creative partnerships to expand opportunities to serve those students who desire a vocational education. We will continue to work with Beverly, Marblehead, Swampscott, and MA DESE to seek competitive grant funding and Ch. 74 tuition based on enrollment within the program. Revenues for the Partnership program will be used to support salaries. This year, there are 60 students from these communities participating.

Dual Enrollment and Early College

We have increased funding for Dual Enrollment. The Dual Enrollment program with North Shore Community College (NSCC) provided opportunities for our ENSATS students to enroll in NSCC courses during the school day. These courses are in addition to the articulation agreements we have with NSCC for several of our CTE programs through a statewide articulation agreement. This year, the Dual Enrollment courses included Understanding Higher Education, Speech, and Composition 101. These courses were also offered to the Partnership students. At this time, we have applied for Early College designation which will give students greater opportunities to attend college while in high school.

NightHawks Adult Education

Our NightHawks Adult Education enrollment and course development continue to increase. Our SY2022 courses have expanded to include new industry training and credentialing sessions in collaboration with MassHire and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, aligned with the Baker-Polito Administration's Career Technical Institute Initiative. These new sessions currently include Plumbing, Welding (in partnership with the IronWorkers Union), Auto Technology, Carpentry (in partnership with the Carpenters Union), HVAC (in partnership with MA Clean Energy), Construction Laborer (in partnership with the Laborers' Union), and Electro-Mechanical Assembly. In partnership with the GE Foundation and the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium, our NightHawks Advanced Manufacturing course has been expanded to two 415-hour sessions annually. All of these sessions include career readiness workshops, employer meet-and-greets, career fairs, and job placement. Our NightHawks program has been invited to participate in the Regional HealthCare Hub Training Initiative to develop healthcare training programs for adults in our region. We have developed a Healthcare Training Program that was launched in the summer and will take place in Spring 2022 in collaboration with the North Shore Community Action Program. These organizations continue to work with ENSATS to extend our commitment to adult training with direct placement into the workforce.



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Staffing

The district continues to maximize enrollment with the last significant increase in 2023. With that, staffing will begin to become more predictable. At this time, the budget accounts for an increase in instructional staff, 1 to 1 nurse, EL instructor, facilities and clerical staff and an administrative position to oversee the freshman academy. Some of these positions will be grant and tuition funded.

The District continues to support professional development beyond the school offerings with reimbursable courses up to \$1,000 per year per teacher by including \$50,000 in the overall budget. Further, The Skillful Teacher course will be offered in the summer to all teachers and is required for all non-PTS instructional staff and OSHA train the trainer courses for CTE staff. This course directly aligns with our mission of creating technical and academic excellence and with the objectives of our 5-Year Strategic Plan and Quality School Plan. Because of the unique nature of technical and agricultural education, these staff members are able to use \$500 each year to professionally develop themselves in their respective field. In addition the District supports the MAVA extended campus courses for vocational licensure and the MAVA Leadership program. We currently have two CTE teachers enrolled in this program as we build internal capacity. ENSATS plans to increase wellness offerings for our staff both physical activities and brain based activities.

The District offers FF&G staff professional development that leads to OSHA certification, pesticide prep and hoisting licensure.

The district offers PD to all members of the school community through an online request form and our plan can be found [here](#).

Enrollment

In FY22, ENSATS increased enrollment by 90 students. This increase is to satisfy the need for high-quality technical education on the North Shore to reduce waitlist students per Governor Baker's intentions as well as to maximize available CTE program seats. We will continue to accept students in grades 10 and 11 to programs that are under enrolled. Further, we anticipate increasing our partnership enrollment for the communities of Gloucester, Beverly, Marblehead, and Swampscott. This partnership is an added collaborative effort through increasing access to students in our sending communities.



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Enrollment Growth by School Year									
Population	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
In District	776	893	998	1087	1102	1157	1214	1309	1384
Surrounding	352	326	309	295	311	335	350	345	350
Total	1128	1219	1307	1382	1413	1492	1564	1654	1734
Growth %		7.5	6.7	5.4	2.2	5.6	4.8	5.8	4.8

Technology

The FY23 Technology department budget includes the replacement of outdated staff computers, utilizing more affordable models where possible to keep costs down. In addition, the budget includes the replacement of critical infrastructure to ensure that our backbone infrastructure remains current and does not interfere with day-to-day operations. Other technology-related projects include the upgrading of network access to many of the farmstead buildings, which are currently lacking. The budget includes regular licensing and support for all of our software solutions across all departments. A comprehensive technology plan was developed in 2021 and will continue to guide the needs of the district to ensure infrastructure, innovation, and high quality services are provided to all staff.

Student Activities and Athletics

Our student activities have operated since September with much success. Currently, we have 52 clubs meeting regularly. These include co-curricular activities such as DECA, FFA, and SkillsUSA as well as extra-curricular activities. These activities support the arts, celebrate diversity, promote community service, and foster the social relationships that many students have missed during the pandemic. This budget supports the stipends for the many advisors who dedicate their time to encouraging and supporting our students outside of the classroom. At this time, we are happy to report that we were able to add two new activities, Debate Club and Ski Club.



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Our Athletic Department continues to advance in many ways. At this time, 843 total students have participated in athletic programs with four teams (boys soccer, girls soccer, girls volleyball, and field hockey) advancing to the state tournament. Our girls volleyball team was vocational and CAC league champions, the girls soccer team and boys soccer team were both CAC League champions, and the girls cross country team won the vocational championship. The school has seen fantastic coverage from the Salem News. We have had several Coaches of the Year to date: Kelly Barrio for Girls Soccer and Joel Spruance & Mike Chase for Boys Soccer. This is a true testament to the commitment our coaches, parents, and students have for their sport of choice. A #RollHawks student fan section has also taken on a life of its own behind the efforts of some awesome senior students that love everything about being an Essex Tech Hawk.

Facilities

Our Facilities department continues to complete projects alongside our CTE construction related programs on South Campus. At this time, we are renovating Alumni Gymnasium, Gallant Hall, and Smith Hall to create usable learning space for our students. This work will continue as we seek to bridge learning spaces between north and south campus.

It is recommended that we continue to support our stabilization. As two campuses with varying needs, having funding available for necessary projects and replacement of capital equipment will be essential. This is a commitment to preventative maintenance, campus projects, and CTE equipment not funded by grants. The Capital Planning Subcommittee meets regularly to review capital requests using a schoolwide electronic form. Once approved, the request is presented to the Finance subcommittee, and subsequently to the District School Committee for approval.

Retirement

At this time, we had one teacher who retired prior to the winter holiday break and a cafeteria worker. There are no other reported members who will be retiring at this time.



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Revenues

Our revenues continue to increase and support our overall budget. This will maintain a minimum contribution to our sending communities. We are recommending the use of \$641,907 (\$130K if state approves request) from our Excess & Deficiency (E&D) accounts to support infrastructure projects that will further develop the South Campus. This includes Gallant Hall, room renovations at Alumni Gymnasium for the Drama Club and other related projects to support the maintenance and educational development.

Gallant Hall is occupied by the Essex County Sheriff's Department (ECSD) Training Center, Company 2 Heroes support animal training facility for veterans, as well as the Companion Animals program and some CTE related classes on a needs basis. Upgrades this year included removal of asbestos, technology, new epoxy flooring, upgraded bathrooms and classroom space. Some of this work was done by our students and staff. Further development of Gallant Hall is ongoing and includes renovating space for the grade 11 and 12 Electrical and Plumbing program, four bathrooms, and a window and door project to begin in Summer 2022. While some of the occupants are community based, we receive \$58,000 in revenue from the ECSD.

Coordinated Family & Community Engagement, a community-based early education program through Peabody Public Schools continues to use space on south campus. In the Fall 2021, they moved to the lower level of Smith Hall and the transportation department moved to a mobile office suite close to their parking lot. In the Fall 2021, we welcomed back North Shore Community College onto our campus for their evening Cosmetology Program which nets the District \$52,500.

The special education assessment instituted in 2020 provided the District with an additional \$150,000 in revenues. These revenues will be used to fund our growing population of special education students. As we continue to work with state leaders for agricultural education funding, we received an additional \$1,629 per pupil for out of district tuition. This resulted in an additional \$562,005 in tuition revenue and will offset agricultural instructional staff.



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Competitive Grant Funding

The District received over \$5.2M in competitive grants to date. Many of the grants directly support expansion efforts in CTE programming, social emotional learning, DEI work, academic support, integrated learning, and adult education workforce development. We have been extremely fortunate to have Governor Baker and the Capital Skills office support our plan to provide exceptional career, technical, and agricultural education on the North Shore.

Governor Baker announced \$16M in competitive grant funding between SY22 and SY24 to support expansion of vocational education efforts throughout the Commonwealth. This includes the Career Technical Institute where our NightHawks Adult Education Program trains adults for high-demand occupations. Areas of opportunity include Advanced Manufacturing, Automotive Technology, Information Technology, Health Services, Hospitality, and Construction. There are several grant applications submitted to continue this work of training our future workforce. We are also staying focused on bills at the state level to support infrastructure projects.

Future Planning

We continue to be one of the most affordable vocational schools in the Commonwealth. Through careful planning, sound fiscal decisions, competitive grant funding, and our growing revenue, our district is committed to continuing to offer exceptional career and technical education at a reasonable cost to our sending communities. In fact we are presenting a budget that is at minimum contribution for the second time in school history. As a vocational school whose mission is to train our future workforce, we anticipate continued cost savings for on campus projects due to our students completing much of the work and from *the ability to operate as our own Department of Public Works*, including operating our own transportation department. Lastly, the District needs to fully support agricultural programming on the North Shore, including a *staffed farm crew* for both the animal and plant sciences. This crew supports livestock, the orchard, three greenhouses, a hoop house, harvesting hay for our animals, and more.



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Conclusion

This proposed budget was carefully developed and reviewed with a whole-school approach. From the beginning, teachers were involved through the development of departmental budgets. Directors met regularly to determine priorities for optimal student learning and facility operations. Upon completion of the proposed budget and the Governor's release of the state Chapter 70 funding, the budget proposal was finalized. The proposed budget was presented at a faculty meeting on February 2, 2022. It was done with purpose, recognizing the costs to our sending communities who have invested in this school and have been part of the success in preparing students for life. I would like to personally thank those that worked alongside me to ensure a responsible budget for both our sending communities and our closer school community. It truly is a team effort!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Riccio', is positioned below the text 'Respectfully submitted,'.

Heidi T. Riccio, Ed.D.
Superintendent-Director



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Excess & Deficiency Funds

For the FY23 budget, we will use E&D funds from federal, state, and local competitive and entitlement grants as well as from individual and business donations. These potential revenues are examined for their alignment with our ongoing mission and compliance with applicable regulations. The District realizes cost savings from increased revenues for special education assessments, an increase in agricultural tuition, an increase in state aid, funding for the Student Opportunity Act, as well as from our use of on-campus technical and trade teachers and students to complete projects.

ENSATSD has received certification for \$641,907.00. This is \$130,000 less than anticipated and we have sought the guidance of the Department of Revenue for reconsideration. We plan to use these funds to support infrastructure projects on South Campus as identified in the [2019 feasibility study](#).

Finally, every effort will be made to replenish E&D funds so that these can continue to be a sustainable revenue source to help with future budget demands. The ENSATSD School Committee shall vote to approve the use of E&D funds, and anyone from our sending communities is welcome to share comments via hriccio@essextech.net.

Excess & Deficiency Funds

For regional school districts, per the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 603 41.06, Excess and Deficiency (E&D) Funds require that:

- (1) Every regional school district shall maintain an excess and deficiency fund on its books of account. At the end of every fiscal year, any surplus or deficit in the district's general fund shall be closed to the excess and deficiency fund.
- (2) On or before October 31 of each year, every regional school district shall submit to the Department of Revenue the forms and schedules as the Department of Revenue requires for the purpose of reviewing and certifying the balance in the regional school district's excess and deficiency fund.
- (3) A regional school committee may use all or part of the certified balance in the excess and deficiency fund as a revenue source for its proposed budget. If the certified balance exceeds five percent of the



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proposed budget, the regional school committee shall use the amount in excess of five percent as a revenue source for its proposed budget. (as cited in 603 CMR 41.00: M.G.L. c. 69, §1B; c. 71, §14B and §16D; c. 150E, §1)

For the FY21 budget, we will use E&D funds from federal, state, and local competitive and entitlement grants as well as from individual and business donations. These potential revenues are examined for their alignment with our ongoing mission and compliance with applicable regulations. The District realizes cost savings from increased revenues for special education assessments, an increase in state aid, early returns from our Gateway Partnership Programs with Gloucester, Peabody, and Salem, as well as from our use of on-campus technical and trade teachers and students.

ENSATSD has received certification for \$641,907.00 (\$130,000 less than anticipated) that will be used to support necessary infrastructure projects on South Campus as identified in the 2019 feasibility study.

The ENSATSD School Committee will vote to approve the use of E&D funds through the budget process, and anyone from our sending communities is welcome to share comments via hriccio@essextech.net.

Additional Expenses to Consider

Essex North Shore has 13 buildings, just under 1 million square feet, and 166 acres of land that are under our care. We ask our district residents to please note, as a regional vocational technical school district, that our budget must cover several high-value items often included within the General Government portion of cities and town's annual budget in addition to the normal expenses of a traditional municipal school district, including:

Capital Improvements	Central Office
Debt	Farm Buildings, animals, and crew
Federal revenue shortfall	Legal Expenses
Pension obligations	Property Insurance
School Resource Officer	Treasurer, audit, and other expenses
Unemployment	Workers Compensation
	State retirement account for county school

NOTE: Any attempt to compare or contrast our assessment versus a local k-12 system should not factor in these expenses.

Credit: Dr. Michael FitzPatrick, Blackstone Valley Technical High School



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