



Dear citizens of Hooksett,

The 2021-22 school year was filled with remarkable achievements for the Hooksett School District. Students and staff returned to school, safely, for fully in-person education, following the hybrid on-site & remote model we hosted the prior year during the pandemic. We observed, assessed, and adapted to challenges our school community experienced following that upheaval, whether it be student needs, staffing shortages, or supply chain disruption.

The Hooksett School Board pursued a rigorous and highly collaborative budget process this year, which produced a 2022-23 budget that notably upgraded our half-day Kindergarten program to an entirely full-day Kindergarten program. The Board did so with a deliberate focus to minimize cost increases. This budget was recommended by the Hooksett Budget Committee, and overwhelmingly approved by Hooksett voters.

This spring, the School Board embarked on several school and community engagement events: tours of all schools, social events with staff and parents, a staff survey, staff appreciation, and retiree recognition. The Board implemented a pilot program for school bus monitoring software, approved for all Hooksett buses for 2022-23. We closed the year with a focus on school safety, reviewing security assessments and approving funding for additional safety infrastructure.

The Hooksett School District is thankful for the support of the citizens of Hooksett.

Hooksett School Board Duties, Mission, and Scope

The Hooksett School Board (HSB) is the governing body of the Hooksett School District (HSD). NH State Law, RSA 181:a-1, declares the duty of the school board to:

1. provide, at district expense, elementary and secondary education to all pupils who reside in the district
2. establish the structure, accountability, advocacy, and delivery of instruction in each school operated and governed in its district, and instructional policies that establish instructional goals about the knowledge and skills pupils will need in the future.
3. adopt a teacher performance evaluation system

The mission of the Hooksett School District is to develop a community of learners who are intellectually curious, resourceful, creative, and respectful of self and others. Individual growth and academic achievement, through constantly improving standards, is the District's highest priority.

Our District employs 220 staff members, including teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, maintenance and foodservice staff, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, and information technology specialists. Our schools are also supported by substitute teachers, contracted specialists, bus drivers, and community volunteers such as the PTA.

As of June, 2022, Hooksett Schools had 1,207 students enrolled in preschool through eighth grade. 649 additional students were enrolled in several area high schools, the majority (426) at Pinkerton Academy, our high school of record.

School Board Meetings and Information

The School Board has regularly scheduled meetings the third Tuesday of each month, typically at 6:00pm at David R. Cawley Middle School. The public is welcome to attend. Meeting agendas, materials, and minutes are posted online.

You can find the School Board online at:

<http://hooksettschoolboard.sau15.net>

<http://facebook.com/hooksett.school.board/>

All public meetings are also streamed live and available for later review on YouTube, at the “Hooksett Youtube” channel.

2021-2022 Highlights

Staffing Challenges

Reflecting national trends, the Hooksett School District faced challenges this year recruiting substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, and custodians. Our transportation provider, STA, also struggled to retain and recruit bus drivers. These staffing issues impacted school operations throughout the year, and required creative solutions to continue serving Hooksett students and families.

Technology

With the assistance of ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) grant funding during the pandemic, Hooksett schools completed the acquisition of one computing device for every student. This technology facilitated remote instruction when needed, but also provided ongoing self-service and supplemental education opportunities.

District learning management systems (Seesaw, Schoology) are utilized to improve student learning, to enable parents to monitor student homework, and to improve student work completion rates. Important classroom information can be found through these district learning management systems. School information is also available on the schools’ websites.

Pinkerton Academy High School Contract

The Hooksett School Board updated its contract with Pinkerton Academy. The agreement continues our arrangement with Pinkerton Academy (PA) for at least the next ten (10) years.

Hooksett's tuition contract with PA provides an opportunity every five years to update contract terms, or give notice of intent to not renew five years in the future. In 2021, Hooksett became eligible to propose updates to terms, the first opportunity to do so since the contract's inception. The Board developed proposed improvements to its contract, and collaborated with PA to come to a mutually approved revision in October 2021.

Notably, the contract makes clear that at least 63% of graduating eighth grade students will be enrolled at PA, provides reporting about student support services, programs, activities, testing, and post-graduation placement statistics. It also provides improved visibility into upcoming tuition changes to help the Hooksett School District prepare its budgets.

The next opportunity to amend terms occurs in 2026. You can find the contract on the HSD website under High School >> Agreements & Documents
<https://hooksetthighschoolinfo.sau15.net/agreements/>

Budget Process

The Hooksett School Board and Budget Committee proposed a budget for the next school year, 2022-23, of \$37,456,481. If this proposed budget was not approved by the voters, a default budget of \$36,875,094 would have been used instead.

The default budget is defined by state law, and is essentially the current (2021-22) budget plus contractual obligations. Notable contractual increases include:

- More special education programming, to meet a larger number of students requiring Individual Education Programs (IEPs) - up just over \$1 million
- Increased high school tuition, due to a larger portion of Hooksett students attending high school vs. elementary and middle school, and an increase in cost per student - up \$453,000
- A teacher retirement stipend for eight retiring teachers, per contract - totaling \$208,000

To help offset these increased costs, the School Board elected to not replace three of the retiring teachers in grades K-8.

The proposed school budget is \$581,000 or 1.64% more than the default budget. It would notably provide:

- Full day Kindergarten. This adds three and a half positions to staff seven full-day classes in the existing space at Fred C. Underhill school. Hooksett currently provides half-day Kindergarten, and one full-day class by lottery. This increased expense is \$391,000, which includes savings from fewer bus routes.
- Important preventative maintenance for school facilities.
- Improved support for school technology infrastructure.

Both budgets were increases over the current 2021-22 budget of \$35,342,454. It is worth noting that 2022-23 will mark the final payment of the \$20 million bond for David R. Cawley Middle School, which is a \$1,056,000 expense that will not be in subsequent budgets.

Changes in Demographics

Hooksett's population has increased from approximately 12,000 in 2000 to 15,000 today, though New Hampshire saw a decline in birthrates during this period. Because of declining enrollment in grades K-8, now nearly 300 fewer students than a peak in 2008-09, the School Board voted to not replace three retiring classroom teachers at Hooksett Memorial School. This partially offsets an increase in contractual costs from a larger number of students in special education and high school. Totaling salaries, NH Retirement employer contribution (at 21% of salary), medical insurance employer contribution (at 85-90% of premium), and other benefits, this resulted in a \$345,000 savings.

The projected classroom to student ratios at Memorial School, at current staff levels, are 1:17 to 1:19. After adjustments, this will be between 1:19 and 1:22. This is still better than the 1:25 policy guideline for these grades.

Full Day Kindergarten

In 2018, full-day kindergarten was considered part of a separate warrant article, stemming from it being associated with a \$4 million construction bond. That warrant existed solely because a construction bond required a higher threshold, approval by 60% of voters. Had that facilities warrant been approved, additional funding would still have been required in future operating budgets for additional kindergarten staffing.

This context is important to understand how full day kindergarten was discussed in 2018 when voters were asked:

If the Hooksett School District should raise and appropriate \$4,057,650 for the purpose of financing the addition and renovation at the Fred C. Underhill School to accommodate full day kindergarten.

The project was a large, multi-faceted project that also included a new media center, ADA renovations, traffic and parking updates, and some maintenance items. The warrant article did not pass.

In 2020, with a critical reevaluation of building usage by administration given changing demographics, it was determined that reorganizing space would allow for seven full-day classes within existing space - and without dependency on the portable building units. The school district launched a pilot full-day K program for 2020-21, one class of full day kindergarten for twenty students, which was filled via lottery. Over one hundred families entered the lottery for this one class.

Discussion about the lottery touched on concerns about the inconsistencies in how students reach first grade, often with differing skills. Some came from full-day kindergarten programs - either via this pilot program or private full-day K programs, whereas many other students were receiving the half-day program. Some students attended wrap-around programs of varying kinds for the half-day programs. Hooksett Schools' one full-day K pilot program continued in 2021-22, and was initially proposed to continue into 2022-23.

The full-day kindergarten program was introduced by the School Board at its Oct. 26, 2021 budget workshop, which generated inspired and robust debate. It will bring students into first grade with more consistent preparation.

March, 2022 Election Results

Hooksett voters approved Article 2, the proposed 2022-23 school operating budget of \$37,456,481, which included full day Kindergarten. They also approved Trust Fund contributions to Building Maintenance (\$75,000), Special Education (\$100,000), Technology (\$50,000), but rejected a new Retirement Capital Reserve Fund. Voters approved adopting RSA 198:4-b II updates increasing fund balance retention up to 5% of net assessment, and a petition article making facemasks/coverings optional on school grounds. The School District legal counsel asserted that the petition article would be non-binding on the district.

End of School Year Budget Updates

The Board eliminated the 20-day yearly service requirement for substitute teachers to receive a higher "longevity" rate of pay.

The Board also voted to spend from the fund balance:

1. Up to \$275,000 for security upgrades (spanning all three schools). Some of this may be offset with grants.
2. Up to \$120,000 for Fred C. Underhill School outdoor equipment
3. \$63,000 for Fred C. Underhill School gym upgrades: repainting and flooring repair
4. \$157,000 for 3.5 kindergarten paraprofessionals, and a 6-year ELA package
5. \$10,000 for bus monitoring software for 2022-23

All remaining unencumbered funds were returned to taxpayers.

School Bus Tracking Software

As many families know, school bus scheduling has been a challenge this school year. Like many industries, busing has been impacted by a shortage of qualified, interested employees. Tight staffing complicates routing when bus drivers call out sick.

In 2022, it seems a reasonable expectation that school administrators and parents know where buses are located, especially when not on schedule. Researching solutions in the busing industry, we were most impressed with BusWhere, which monitors buses in real-time via GPS,

provides exact location to administrators, and provides a smartphone application allowing parents to see their bus routes and notifies them of route status and the anticipated arrival time to their stop.

We partnered with our bus provider, Student Transportation of America, for a BusWhere pilot on three of our most beleaguered routes in May, and are extending monitoring to all bus routes for 2022-23.

2022-23 Goals

At the Hooksett School Board's May, 2022 retreat, seven goals were defined for the upcoming school year.

1. Increase stakeholder engagement
2. Mentorship program
3. Increase parent utilization of classroom platforms
4. Improve transportation
5. Website content and usability improvements
6. Improved student testing results
7. Proactive planning for large projects

Thank You

The entire town of Hooksett appreciates the time, effort, and commitment put forth by the school administration, staff, and community volunteers who supported our students throughout the year. Parents and guardians, thank you for your commitment to supporting our students outside the classroom. Parent involvement in education is a critical factor for student achievement. The School Board appreciated a wealth of constructive input and feedback given by many Hooksett citizens during our meetings and deliberative sessions.

We should all thank the town of Hooksett, who spent \$35 million dollars this year to educate nearly 2,000 students, pre-Kindergarten through High School.

Finally, I would like to thank the School Board Members, and those who supported us this year. This team acted with the utmost concern for our students and staff, operating transparency, fiscal prudence, facilities, and our academic programs. Thank you for your dedication, guidance, and leadership.

School Board Members who departed in 2022

- Greg Martakos, Past Chair
- Lindsey Laliberte, Past Vice Chair

School Board Members

- Wayne Goertel, Chair
- Jillian Godbout, Vice Chair
- Amy Tremblay, Secretary
- Lynn Baker (2022-)
- Jason Hyde
- Alexis Quinlan (2022-)
- James Sullivan

School District Clerk

- Leeann Moynihan (-2022)
- Jennifer DeCampo (2022-)

School District Moderator

- Kathy Bobay (-2022)

School District Treasurer

- Mike Salvas

Administration

- William J. Rearick, Superintendent
- Marge Polak, Assistant Superintendent
- Amy Ransom, Business Administrator (-2022)
- Principals: Matt Benson, Brad Largy, Ben Loi
- Directors: Dean Farmer, Christine Gialousis, Meghan Largy, Cindy Nusbaum, Daniel Roma, Justine Thain

School Board Recorders

- Leeann Moynihan (-2021)
- Becki McCarthy (2022-)

Pictured below: The Hooksett School Board, with Superintendent Rearick, at its June, 28, 2022 meeting. Left to right: Jason Hyde, Lynn Baker, Jillian Godbout, Wayne Goertel, William Rearick, Amy Tremblay, Alexis Quinlan, James Sullivan



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne".

Wayne Goertel
Hooksett School Board Chair