

Hooksett School Board

Chair's Report

April, 2024



March 12, 2024 Election Results

Thank you for coming out to Cawley Middle School to make your choices on the town and school warrant articles. Here is a summary of the results for the School District ballot (*in italics*).

1. School district officers
 - a. Three School Board Members
 - *Amy Tremblay and Vanessa Gelinat return for three-year terms.*
 - *Jonah Schulte was written-in for the one-year term with 354 votes.*
 - b. School District Moderator
 - *Corri Wilson was written-in with 420 votes*
 - c. School District Clerk
 - *Kristen Kotrlík was written-in with 312 votes*
 - d. School District Treasurer
 - *The school district continues to seek a candidate for this position.*
2. School district operating budget
 - a. Proposed budget: \$40,672,137 (*after a \$750k reduction at Deliberative Session*)
 - b. Default budget: \$40,846,130
 - c. *The larger budget, here the default budget, was approved by voters 1,197 to 431*
3. Three-year contract with Hooksett Education Support Professionals Assn. (HESPA)
 - a. \$325,206 projected 3-year cost increases for salary, retirement and taxes
 - b. *The contract was approved by voters 1,104 to 525*
4. 15-year lease purchase agreement for equipment and renovations at all three schools
 - a. \$0 projected cost (*after amendment to \$0 at Deliberative Session*)
 - b. *The warrant was approved by voters 826 to 779*
5. Technology Expendable Trust Fund contribution
 - a. \$100,000 from additional taxation
 - b. *The warrant was approved by voters 987 to 632*
6. Special Education Expendable Trust Fund contribution
 - a. \$150,000 from fund balance
 - b. *The warrant was approved by voters 1,199 to 427*
7. Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund contribution
 - a. \$100,000 from fund balance
 - b. *The warrant was approved by voters 1,208 to 421*

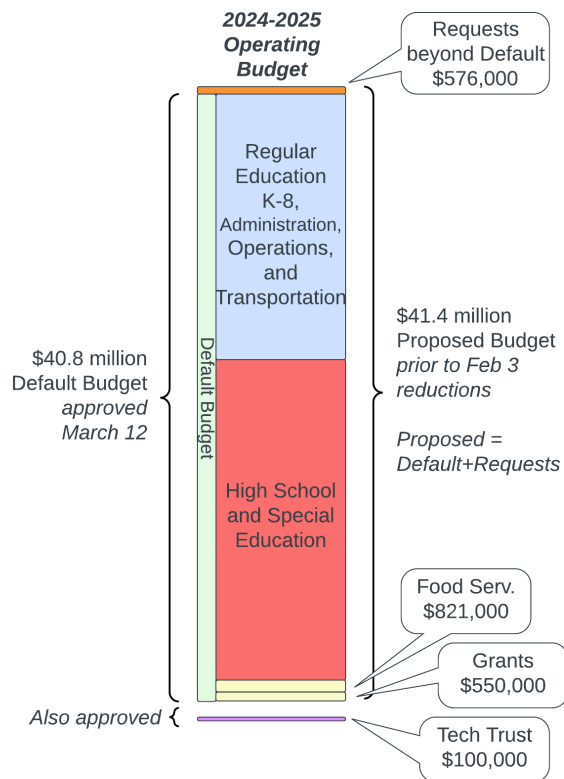
A Visual Presentation of Next Year's Operating Budget

Talking with many colleagues and community members, some themes became apparent regarding community engagement with our budget presentation materials: the topic would benefit from some pictures. Let's start with a high level picture of the two budgets presented by the Hooksett School District, following a Budget Committee reduction but prior to the \$750,000 Deliberative Session reduction on February 3.

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The budget work starts with creating the “**default budget**”, which is defined by NH state law. It is last year’s budget approved by voters, plus any necessary changes to accommodate contractual obligations. For example, the HEA teacher contract increases rates for current staff next year for a total cost of \$427,221, and high school tuition increased from \$15,408 to \$16,308 per student. The default budget contains those increases for current staff or projected high school enrollment. If any staffing was reduced, that would come out of the default budget. The default budget calculation also removes any one-time expenses from last year, such as a furniture purchase.

The governing body will likely have additional **requests**. These requests are added to the default budget to create the “**proposed budget**”.

Technically, voters select one of two bottom-line numbers for a school operating budget, and the district has some discretion to make budget or spending adjustments to respond to the evolving operational needs of the district.

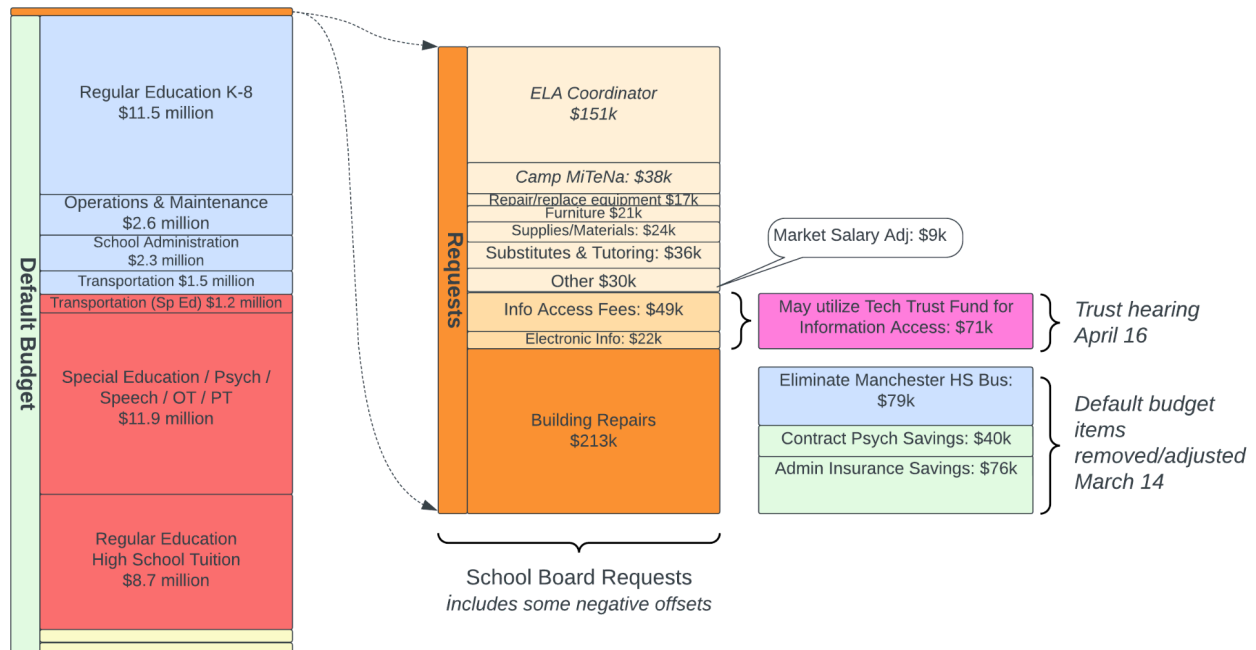
Finally, there may be additional warrants, such as those making contributions to trust funds. These may be funded either “from taxation” or “from fund balance”. “Fund balance” may exist at the end of the fiscal year because of unanticipated revenues to offset expenses, or because some budgeted items cost less than what was budgeted. As examples, consider some high school student families moving out of Hooksett reducing our tuition payment, or additional grant funding.

For the default budget, it’s worth noting that about half is allocated to high school tuition and various special services. Those are diagrammed in red, and there are limited opportunities to modify those budgets. The high school regular tuition rate is “the rate”, and we pay this for all the students going to high school. If the number of students changes, the total paid will fluctuate. Special service costs are projected for the students known at time of budgeting, and school districts state-wide have seen more volatility here. Since the time budgets are created, there may be additional students qualifying for service, increased service needs for current students, or increased service rates for forecasted services because of higher demand for special service infrastructure.

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Since the Hooksett School District received the default budget for 2024-25, if requested items are to be funded, those funds will have to come from somewhere - either by eliminating items in the default budget, finding cost savings, or offset by the possibility of increased revenue. At the time of writing, money for building repairs has been obtained by finding cost reductions in administrator team insurance and contracted psychological services, and by eliminating high school bus service to Manchester. There will be a trust hearing at the April 16 meeting to consider remaining trusts, such as utilizing the Technology trust fund to find various information access fees, or the Building Maintenance trust fund.

Stay in Touch Online

You can find the School Board online at:

<https://hooksettschoolboard.sau15.net>

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

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Goertel
Hooksett School Board Chair

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