

# Hooksett School Board

Board Chair's Annual Report, 2023-2024

July 2024

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Dear citizens of Hooksett,

Thank you for your support of the Hooksett School District, our school community, and our mission.

During the 2023-24 school year, the Hooksett School Board pursued several initiatives for students, school facilities and infrastructure, and personnel. We welcomed 21 new teachers, aids, and paraprofessionals to the district this fall, honored five retirees, and recognized 138 eighth grade students who moved on to High School.

The year brought some challenges to residents and the school district. The end of 2023 concluded a 5-year town revaluation that greatly increased the property taxes for many residential properties, which colored community sentiment going into the 2024 Town and School Deliberative Sessions. The School Board proposed a \$41.4 million 2024-25 operating budget that was reduced at the February Deliberative Session. Its proposed \$13.3 million 15-year lease maintenance project was eliminated. The school district implemented budget and staffing reductions in response to higher-than-budgeted expenses, notably special education transportation, and lower-than-anticipated revenue.

## 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 about 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 Hooksett PTA (Parent Teacher Association).

The Hooksett School Board is composed of seven Board Members elected to three-year terms, or elected or appointed to partial terms. Board Members serve on multiple regular or special committees to facilitate other work between regular meetings.

### 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.

### Hooksett School Demographics

As of June 2024 Hooksett Schools had 1,936 students. 1,268 students enrolled in preschool through eighth grade. 668 additional students were enrolled in several area high schools, with the majority, 474, at Pinkerton Academy, our high school of record.

Every monthly Hooksett School Board meeting packet has a snapshot of students, teaching staff, and grade allocation for K-8, and school and grade breakdown for our high schools. This does not

School Administrative Unit #15  
 Hooksett Pupil Accounting  
 High School Monthly Enrollment

DATE: June 3, 2024

School	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	TOTAL
Pinkerton Academy	128	125	104	117	474
Manchester Central	0	0	8	5	13
Manchester West	1	1	2	4	8
Manchester Memorial	1	2	4	2	9
MST	0	0	0	0	0
Bow High	0	1	3	5	9
Goffstown High	1	0	0	0	1
Londonderry High	29	25	28	19	101
Pembroke Academy	2	5	1	7	15
Other Private/SPED	9	6	14	9	38
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>668</b>

School Administrative Unit #15  
 Hooksett Pupil Accounting  
 Monthly Enrollment  
 June 3, 2024

School	Grade	TOTAL	Section	Average Class Size	Paraprof. Per Building	June 2023
Underhill	Preschool	26	3	9	3 E	26
	K	135	7	19	15 C	126
	1	126	7	18		141
	2	136	7	19		155
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>423</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>448</b>
Memorial	3	158	7	23	4 E	126
	4	131	6	22	6 C	135
	5	138	6	23		135
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>		
Cawley	6	143	8	18	5 E	140
	7	136	8	17	6 C	139
	8	138	8	17		145
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>		E = Employee C = Contracted
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>1,267</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>1,268</b>

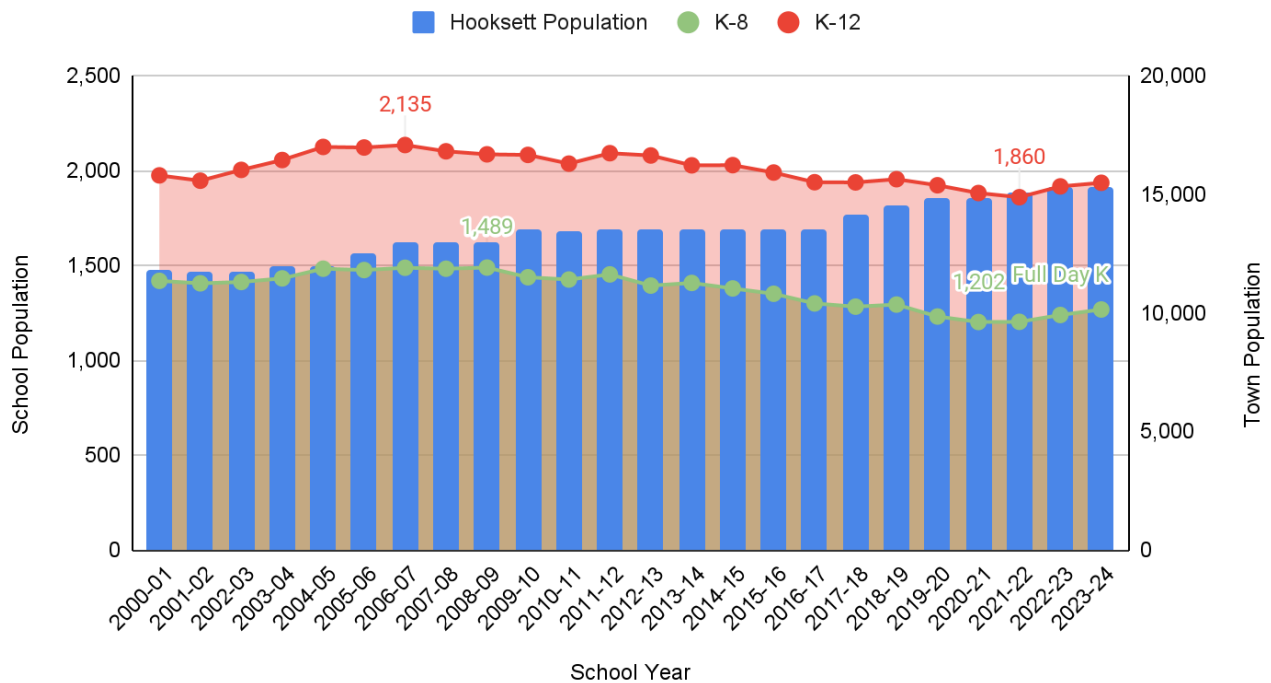
represent all district teaching staff, and for Cawley Middle School the class breakdown is for homeroom classes with teams rotating for core subjects of

language arts, math, science, and social studies - it does not address classes for additional unified arts subjects like Spanish or technology.

### Town Population and Student Enrollment Since 2000

It is useful to see trends in population for all of Hooksett and the school district. Utilizing the aggregate reporting in the yearly Hooksett Town and School Report, plus estimates from the NH OSI (Office of Strategic Initiatives), one can see a growth in Hooksett total population from under 12,000 in 2000 to over 15,000 today. However, Hooksett overall student population peaked during 2004-2008, with a high of 2,135 students, falling by 275 to 1,860 in 2021 with modest gains since. It should be noted that the Hooksett School Board implemented a transition from half day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten for the 2022-23 school year - this yielded a slight increase in total number of kindergarten students but did require an extra 3.5 classes to accommodate the kindergarten students being on site twice as long.

### Hooksett School District & Town Populations



### 2023-2024 Board Initiatives

#### Board Goals

At the Hooksett School Board’s June 2023 retreat, four goals were defined for the upcoming school year.

1. Develop a strategic plan, utilizing external consulting services
2. Address facilities needs
3. Improve school safety, wellness and communication
4. Enhance staff mentoring programs

Unfortunately, the strategic plan did not materialize, initially due to challenges retaining consulting resources, and then late year expense challenges that eliminated funding for that endeavor.

Addressing facilities needs manifested as a warrant article proposing a \$13,342,119 maintenance project for significant work at all three schools, notably two roof replacements, structural improvements, replacement ventilation units, and replacement boilers. This was proposed as a 15-year lease agreement. The last major capital improvement project in the Hooksett School District was for the construction of David R. Cawley Middle School and significant renovations at Hooksett Memorial School over twenty years ago. A large amount of equipment is thus reaching the end of its forecast operational life at the same time.

The School Board had undertaken several safety initiatives the past six years, and 2023-24 saw the implementation of safety equipment purchased from the prior year's fund balance.

Board Members attended several school wellness committee meetings and found creative and useful programs developed to address several student and staff wellness topics over the duration of the year.

Communication focused on community and staff engagement, with several in-person opportunities and continued online engagement. The Board hosted a booth at Hooksett Old Home Day 2023, which provided residents a chance to discuss school topics in a casual environment. Several Board Members created posters for the booth to share details about our school district: school highlights, infrastructure needs, demographic information, and School Board details.



OHD booth in the morning: Jilian Godbout, Vanessa Gelinias, Amy Tremblay, Wayne Goertel  
Later in the day we were joined by Jason Hyde and Lynn Baker. Photo credit: Derek Gelinias

## **Transportation**

As many school families know, school bus scheduling has been a challenge the past few school years, as growing transportation demand has exceeded diminished staffing across the entire commercial transportation spectrum.

The three school districts of School Administrative Unit 15 - Hooksett, Auburn, and Candia - contracted with a new bus provider starting in July 2023, First Student. Our contract with First Student also includes provision for bus tracking, so the BusWhere program implemented by the Hooksett School Board was replaced with another system, "FirstView". FirstView has the advantage of being updated by First Student staff in response to route or driver changes before the routes begin.

School bus routes underwent significant changes before and during the fall semester. Unfortunately, bus route development and revisions required considerable time from the school administrators.

### **Special Education Transportation Contract**

The Board entered into an agreement with Durham School Services to provide bus transportation primarily for special education needs. It is expected that consolidating this transportation with Durham will provide a hedge against the rapidly increasing costs for special education transportation.

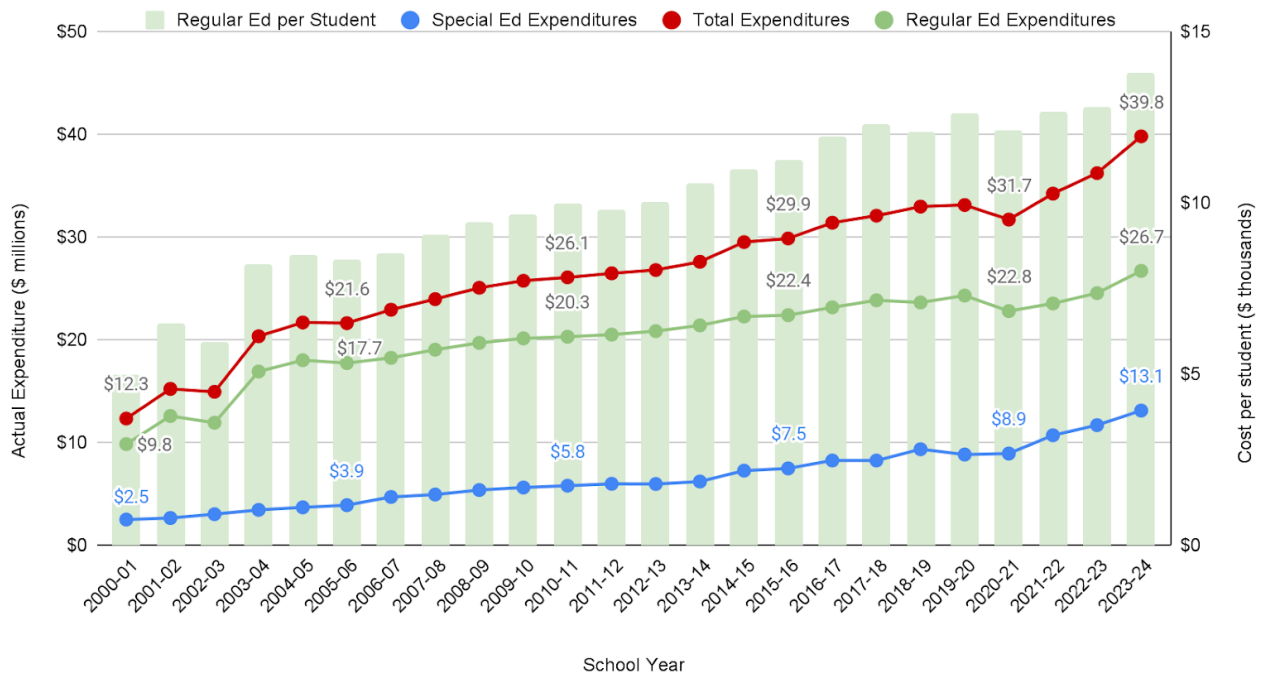
## **Financial Considerations**

### **Yearly School Expenditures since 2000**

It is useful to have an understanding of the trends in past spending for the school district. Summarizing the expenditure reports from the yearly Hooksett Town and School Report, one can see a growth in Hooksett school expenditures. Education spending charted here reflects total expenditures for each school year, and the portion for special education is calculated per RSA 32:11-a. The non-special ed portion is referred to as "regular education".

It is worth highlighting that in the last twenty years, 2003-04 to 2023-24, the overall school expenditures have nearly doubled from \$20.3 million to \$39.8 million\*. Considering the costs for regular education and special education separately, we see that regular ed increased about 58%, from \$16.9 million to \$26.7 million, and special ed increased 282%, from \$3.4 million to \$13.1 million\*. Accounting for a decline in students, regular ed cost per student has increased about 68%\*\*.

## Hooksett School District Historical Expenditures



A few other details:

1. Accounting for 2023-24 is not finalized at the date of this writing. \*
2. You will find different costs per student in NH Dept. of Education data reports. These reports use “average daily membership in attendance”, exclude lunch revenues, make “certain adjustments”, and don’t differentiate regular vs. special ed costs. \*\*
3. The drop in expenses in 2020-21 is largely due to a pandemic-era federal payment of school lunch fees. There is, of course, truly no free lunch as taxpayers paid this via federal taxes, but for HSD accounting purposes the program eliminated the ~\$600,000 food service expense.
4. The expansion of kindergarten in 2022-23 was almost cost neutral, as three additional teaching positions recruited were offset by the Board not replacing three retiring teachers at Hooksett Memorial given the fifteen-year decline in enrollment.
5. NH SB-394 in 2022 extended taxpayer funding for special education costs for students from age 21 to age 22.

## 2023-24 School Year Operating Expenses and Revenue

The past school year saw increases in expenses, some far beyond budget, which the district was required to accommodate as they were required by law. The cost of special education was higher than projected given more students being identified for services and increasing service cost since the time of budget creation. The largest increases were not for education but for transportation. Budgeted at \$938,581, special education transportation incurred expenses nearly \$750,000 beyond budget. An increase in students requiring transportation, and tremendous transportation cost increases given that the supply of services has not met

increasing demand, were responsible for increases far beyond those seen for large-scale regular busing.

A subcategory of special ed transportation increases is for homeless student transportation, required by the McKinney-Vento Act, passed in 1987, a largely unfunded federal mandate. These expenses are not specifically broken out in our expense reports, but amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars and are split between a homeless student's district of origin and district of current location. Regrettably, several Hooksett students were displaced this year.

One recurring source of revenue came to an unexpected halt this year, which was school funding from the impact fees assessed on new residential construction. In March, the Hooksett School Board learned that approximately \$280,000 of anticipated impact fee revenue from new construction could not be assigned to the school district due to the expiration of a 20-year school construction bond the year prior. Hooksett's impact fee ordinance is enacted pursuant to NH law RSA 674:21 which specifically refers to "public school facilities", and is clarified to be constrained to new construction.

Furthermore, NH state Special Ed aid and Medicaid were over-budgeted, resulting in an additional \$193,000 shortage in revenues.

### **Utilization of Trust Funds, Capital Reserve Fund, and Contingency Fund**

In January, the Hooksett School Board held a public hearing and authorized the expenditure of up to \$415,938 from the Special Education Trust Fund. The board also authorized the expenditure of up to \$100,000 from the Technology Trust Fund.

In February, the Hooksett School Board held a public hearing and authorized the expenditure of up to \$200,000 from the Contingency Fund, and up to \$261,221 from the School Maintenance and Improvement Capital Reserve Fund to offset unanticipated expenses.

## **2024-25 School Year Fiscal Planning**

### **Context: Town Revaluation**

The district's preparation of the operating budgets and other proposed warrant articles in the fall and early winter unfortunately took place against a slow-motion backdrop of the town's five-year revaluation. The various town properties are revalued every five years to ensure consistency with other towns and evolving market conditions, as they are used for the calculation and collection of property taxes. Hooksett property owners received correspondence in September of the revaluation of their properties, but these letters provided no community context nor guidance for potential tax implications. Some residential properties saw revaluation increases of over 70% reflecting strong market conditions, whereas commercial and industrial properties saw increase percentages in the teens. The end result is that residential owners owned a larger portion of revalued Hooksett, and thus a larger portion of its tax liability.

Unfortunately, after the first letters and a great deal of incorrect speculation shared on community social media, a second letter was sent to many property owners with further increases to their revaluation. When tax bills came at the end of the year, owners of a median single-family home saw an increase of nearly \$1,000 in their property tax bill.

**Hooksett Education Support Professionals Association (HESPA) Contract**

At the March 2023 town & school election, voters approved an out-of-contract \$4.00/hour increase worth \$345,000 in salaries and benefits for the 2023-24 school year, to bring up hourly wages for covered positions to be more competitive, after seeing large increases in rates for many of these positions at alternative employers. Regrettably, our district still had trouble filling many positions.

For the 2024 ballot, the proposed agreement reached between the Hooksett School Board and HESPA was a new three-year agreement for 2024-27.

The HESPA contract specifies salary and benefits for the following school district employees: paraprofessionals, custodians, administrative assistants, Title 1 tutors, and nutrition assistants (food service). About sixty positions, some part time, are covered by this agreement. When the district is unable to fill positions, the district must hire contractors to meet staffing needs, and in the case of paraprofessionals the positions are legal obligations. This proposed agreement narrows the salary gap between positions, and offers a competitive wage to help recruit more in-district employees to decrease the district’s reliance on contracted services.

The various positions have varying starting rates, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the three positions hardest to fill - paraprofessionals, custodians, and food service - have the lowest rates in the current salary schedule. This proposed agreement offers year 1 increases for Paraprofessionals and Custodians of \$1.56, and Nutrition Assistant of \$1.08, to fill in gaps with the lowest paid staff on the salary chart to bring them up to - or closer to - other starting positions. All positions then see \$1.00/hour increases for each of the three years of the proposed contract.

	<b>New Hire Hourly Rates</b>			
<b>Unit Position</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
Administrative Assistant	\$19.15	\$20.15	\$21.15	\$22.15
Custodian	\$17.53	\$20.09	\$21.09	\$22.09
Lead Custodian	\$20.23	\$21.23	\$22.23	\$23.23
Nutrition Assistant	\$15.36	\$17.44	\$18.44	\$19.44
Nutrition Supervisor	\$20.23	\$21.23	\$22.23	\$23.23
Paraeducator	\$17.53	\$20.09	\$21.09	\$22.09
Title I Tutor	\$23.48	\$24.48	\$25.48	\$26.48



The Board believes this proposed agreement creates a compelling contract for our valued staff which it covers, with rates higher than many peer districts. It is important to note that total compensation for these positions may also include a NH Retirement System contribution and an excellent healthcare plan with employee contribution rates that are extraordinarily small. For example: the school district’s family health plan costs nearly \$37,000 next year, of which the district pays \$33,500 for eligible staff covered by the HESPA contract. Other employers simply do not offer this caliber health plan at these very low employee contribution rates.

## 2024-25 Proposed Operating Budget Preparation

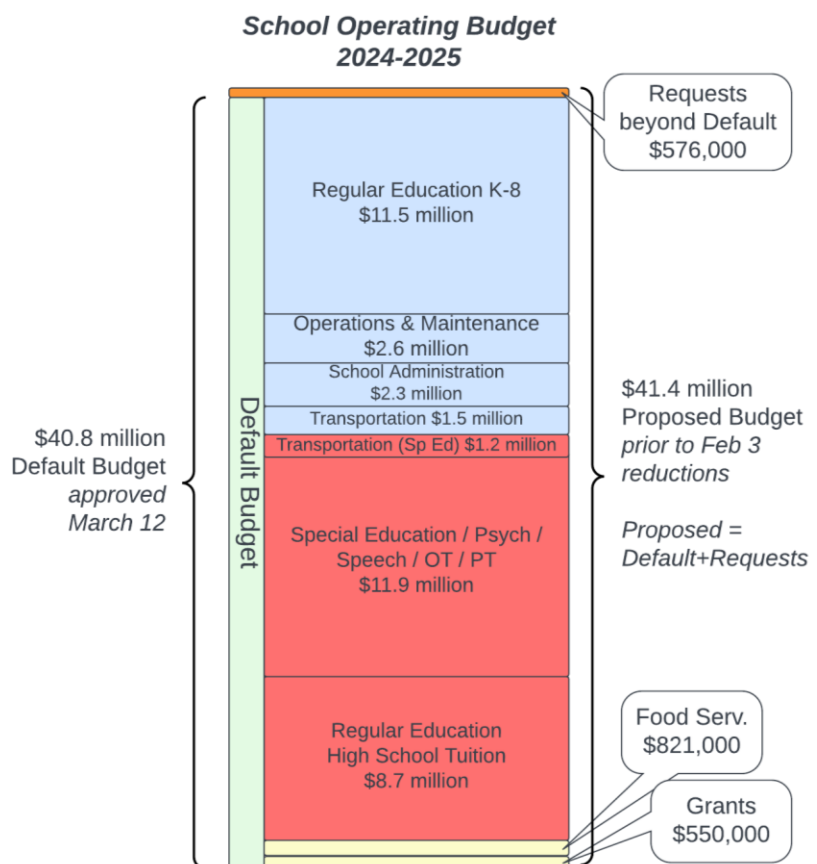
It’s important to note that school expenses are over 70% for staffing, a much higher percentage than town governments. For directly employed staff, this includes salary, the New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS) employer pension contribution of ~20% of salary (for eligible staff), and taxes (FICA), plus significant employer contributions of 83% to 92% to health and other insurance plans. Where we’ve been unable to hire staff, we’ve utilized contract staffing services. Contractual obligations are “baked in” to future budgets, such as contracts for employee groups, transportation, or special education needs.

The Hooksett School Board (HSB) proposed a \$41,422,137 operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The Board appreciates the considerable work by our school administration and staff in diligently planning for next year. Budgeting continues to be complicated by post-pandemic challenges finding certain staff and materials, and the concerning inflationary economic environment.

The 2024-25 “default budget” is the 2023-24 voter-approved operating budget plus contractual obligations, and is \$40,846,130. For reference, the operating budget approved by voters in March 2023 was \$38,442,000 (total gross appropriation including grants and food services).

The larger contractual obligations increasing the default budget include:

1. Staff contracts approved by voters in March. The \$38.4 million operating budget on the 2023 ballot did not include any increases for salary, retirement contribution, or benefits



The larger contractual obligations increasing the default budget include:

1. Staff contracts approved by voters in March. The \$38.4 million operating budget on the 2023 ballot did not include any increases for salary, retirement contribution, or benefits

for teaching staff, nor the contract adjustment for support staff, as those were separate warrant articles.

- a. The HEA (teacher) contract had estimated cost increases of \$414,352 for 2023-24, and \$427,221 for 2024-25.
  - b. The HESPA (support staff) contract was modified to increase hourly rates and benefits at a cost of \$345,482.
  - c. These effectively increased the current (2023-24) budget by \$760,000 (to \$39.2 million), and then the 2024-25 budget by \$1.2 million.
  - d. The new 2024-27 HESPA contract is considered separately, if approved will have an additional \$171,912 cost for 2024-25
2. Special education costs, both in number of students qualifying for services and cost of providing services. Special education plans are legal obligations, increasing nearly \$1 million.
  3. High School tuition
  4. Health insurance
  5. Transportation
  6. Teacher retirement bonus for three retiring teachers
  7. Competitive salary adjustments for certain administrative staff

Notable requests for the proposed budget included:

1. Two staff positions; one current position no longer funded by grants, and a new teaching position at Hooksett Memorial School
2. Student information access fees, currently paid from grant funding which will expire
3. Scheduled building maintenance
4. Repairs to HVAC units at two schools
5. Accounting for increased cost of supplies
6. Funding the eighth-grade trip to Camp MiTeNa

## **Maintenance Project Proposal**

The Board proposed a \$13,342,119 maintenance project for significant work at all three schools, notably two roof replacements, structural improvements, replacement ventilation units, and replacement boilers. The roofs, boilers, ventilation, and energy management systems are at the end or beyond the end of their lifespan, and routine maintenance on each will become more difficult and expensive.

The last major capital improvement project in the Hooksett School District was for the construction of David R. Cawley Middle School and significant renovations at Hooksett Memorial School over twenty years ago. A large amount of equipment is thus reaching the end of forecast operational life at the same time.

The district had selected a general contracting vendor for facilities analysis which it had worked with previously in Candia, EEI. The Board had considerable discussion about the project size, and chose to address all three schools anticipating that it would yield a lower final cost to the community given a long trend of rising constrictions. The Board heard perspectives that construction costs were increasing at a yearly rate of 5-8%. Board Member Godbout raised

concerns regarding competitive bidding, with the general contracting model being pursued not well documented.

The work was recommended by the general contracting vendor as a lease instead of financing the work via a traditional tax-exempt municipal bond. EEI indicated financing via lease provides options for savings if the project runs under budget, the district is able to pay ahead of schedule, or refinancing at a future lower rate. A bond commitment requires a public hearing and a 60% voter approval threshold to pass, whereas the lease agreement does not require a public hearing and only requires a 50% voter approval to pass.

Although financing details were unclear, this work was proposed as a 15-year duration for the financing instead of 20 years, given an expectation of reduced financing costs for the shorter term and a desire to get off a schedule where so much major maintenance is required at the same time.

### **Budget Committee Review**

Hooksett's Budget Committee is held by NH Law, RSA 32, to "ensure the prudent allocation of the public funds", and had purview over the school operating budget and other proposed articles from November until their public hearing in January. School Board Member Lynn Baker was the Board's representative on the Committee. Several members of the SAU 15 and Hooksett Schools administrative team, plus Board Members Godbout and Goertel, attended several meetings of the Committee to provide context and answer any questions.

Discussion over the sessions focused heavily on classroom sizes, with the requested teacher addition to Hooksett Memorial ultimately being removed by the Committee in a close vote.

The proposed Maintenance project also received considerable discussions, with competitive bidding and method of financing being the primary topics of concern. The Budget Committee Chair, Brian Soucy, brought to the district's attention the NH Municipal Bond Bank, a financing aggregator for municipal bond issuance state-wide. They had published impressively low rates from its most recent sale. The Bond Bank represented a different method for obtaining a bond than had been undertaken in 2000 for the district's prior 20-year bond, in which the borrower (Hooksett School District) had to obtain a rating agency credit rating and sought bond issuance directly. A lack of clarity on a potential lease rate, and the expectation that it would be higher than a bond rate as a tradeoff for its flexible financing features, were significant concerns.

In January, just prior to the Budget Committee's public hearing, the School Board took up the maintenance project financing question. Lease rates had been difficult to research, but the district had obtained a quote for a 4.65% 15-year rate. The NH Bond Bank's most recent sale had a 3.09% rate for a 15-year bond. Future rates for financing could not be guaranteed, and the financing wouldn't occur until the summer after a successful March election and necessary permitting was complete. There was debate about the rate to use for the purpose of calculating a yearly cost to include in the warrant. After two split decisions (Sullivan absent), the School

Board ultimately voted 4-2 (Hyde & Goertel opposed) to put the maintenance warrant forward with lease financing.

### **School District Deliberative Sessions**

At the February School Deliberative Session, residents voted to reduce the proposed school operating budget by \$750,000, from \$41,422,137 to \$40,672,137, reducing tax impact by \$0.24 per thousand. This reduction placed the proposed budget \$173,993 below the default budget of \$40,846,130.

The Town proposed operating budget had been similarly reduced at the Town Deliberative Session that morning.

Some residents saw thousands of dollars in additional cost on their property tax bill given the recent town revaluation. This was often cited as a motivation for budget reductions at both Deliberative Sessions, wanting local governments to undertake some “belt tightening” just like residents needed to at home.

Residents also voted to eliminate the proposed 15-year lease purchase agreement for infrastructure replacements and improvements, reducing a \$13.3 million maximum principal cost to \$0, effectively canceling the project before it reached the March ballot. It should be noted that there were no concerns expressed at all about the necessity or size of the project itself. Strong opinions against the project centered around the same concerns expressed by some Budget Committee Members. First, regarding transparency into costing and competitive bidding. Secondly, the School Board’s selection of the lease financing model instead of a municipal bond, the latter having a much lower posted actual rate. The lease selection was characterized by some residents as trying to pass the project with a lower voter approval threshold (50% vs 60%) at the expense of a potential \$1.5-\$1.9 million in additional financing costs with the higher lease financing rate.

Sadly, neither Deliberative Session had robust representation by town residents. The first votes tallied at each Session indicated 67 and 46 residents attending the start of the Town and School meetings, respectively, which included the residents attending as elected officials or local government staff.

Voters overwhelmingly chose the higher school operating budget, in this case the default budget, on town election day in March.

### **2024 Accumulated Budget and Expense Challenges**

In March, SAU 15 retained the services of past Business Administrator Karen Lessard to act as interim Business Administrator. In April, she reported on some new fiscal challenges identified by her rigorous analysis of current year expenditures and the 2024-25 default operating budget.

Regrettably, the various fiscal challenges facing the district required some difficult choices in staff and other budget reductions. The matter was complicated somewhat by differing perspectives about items being “automatically cut” by virtue of the Board not having not received voter approval for its proposed budget, though NH Superior Court precedent indicates no obligation for the default budget presented to be the exact default budget implemented.

## **Staff Reductions**

### **Lost/Eliminated Positions**

1. Director of Curriculum, English Language Arts
  - a. Previously grant funded, extension contingent on proposed budget approval
2. Director of Curriculum, Mathematics
  - a. Eliminated by Board vote (6-1, Goertel opposed)
3. Reading Specialist, Cawley Middle School
  - a. Eliminated by Board vote

## **Other Reductions**

1. Some of the district’s administrators made different healthcare elections to reduce upcoming costs to the district. Thank you for that creativity.
2. Reduction in school psychology service costs by utilizing a doctoral student
3. The Board voted to eliminate the bus service for Manchester HS students. HS busing is not required by NH Law, and Pinkerton Academy is our “high school of record”. (6-1, Sullivan opposed)
4. \$30,000 from Educational Media Services (acct 2220)
5. \$9,615, Cawley support services
6. \$81,600 Special Ed tuition to accommodate a placement change

## **End of School Year Updates**

The Board voted to remove one outstanding professional development (PD) day for teaching staff as an end of year bonus recognizing their commitment to our students. The Board also increased compensation starting in the next fiscal year for three Assistant Principal positions that were not competitive with relevant other districts, by \$3,000 each.

The Board voted to return any remaining fund balance (not yet finalized at the date of the meeting, though expected to be quite meager), to its contingency fund given that all trust funds had been exhausted during the year.

Board Member Gelinias resigned in May, and John Ciempa was appointed as an interim Board Member in June.

## **Looking Back: Staff Retention**

The start of the past school year brought over 21 new teaching staff to the school district. The past year saw fewer than half that number of resignations. 2023-24 marked the first year of a

new 3-year teacher contract with HEA, which closed large gaps in competitiveness for staff with lower and middle ranges of experience. The \$4.00/hour increase to support professionals, plus targeted increases in the 2024-27 contract with HESPA, have improved competitiveness there.

## **2024-25 Board Goals**

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

1. Readdress facilities needs with community-involved committee
2. Improve Communication about budget & warrant processes and Deliberative Sessions
3. Monitoring and evaluating the new teacher mentor system
4. Safety & Wellness
5. Ensuring operational continuity given recent staffing changes

## **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 nearly \$40 million dollars this year to educate 1,936 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. Thank you for your dedication, guidance, and leadership.

### **School Board Members**

- Wayne Goertel, Chair
- Jillian Godbout, Vice Chair
- Amy Tremblay, Secretary
- James Sullivan
- Jason Hyde (-2024)
- Lynn Baker
- Vanessa Gelinias (-2024)
- Jonah Schulte (2024-)

### **School District Clerk**

- Jennifer DeCampo (-2024)
- Kristen Kotrlik (2024-)

### **School District Moderator**

- Leeann Moynihan (-2024)
- Corri Wilson (2024-)

### **School District Treasurer**

- Amy Boilard (2024-)

#### SAU 15 Administration

- William J. Rearick, Superintendent
- Meghan Largy, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability (-2024)
- Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator (-2024)

#### Hooksett School District Administration

- Principals: Matt Benson, Brad Largy, Ben Loi
- Directors: Christine Osborne, Dean Farmer, Daniel Roma, Justine Thain, Sonia Laliberte (-2024), Meghan McLain (-2024), Cindy Nusbaum

#### School Board Recorder

- Becki McCarthy (-2024)



The Hooksett School Board at its May 2024 meeting. Left to right: Jonah Schulte, Lynn Baker, Jillian Godbout, Wayne Goertel, Superintendent William Rearick, Amy Tremblay, Vanessa Gelinias, James Sullivan

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Goertel  
Hooksett School Board Chair