



King Philip REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 18, 2024

To: King Philip Regional School District School Committee

From: Dr. Rich Drolet, Superintendent

Re: Budget Narrative - Final Proposed FY25 Budget

Introduction

This proposed FY25 budget proposal for the King Philip Regional School Committee follows the [budget calendar](#) which Mr. Azer, Director of Finance & Operations, created in the summer of 2023 to help guide us in the development and communication of the FY25 King Philip Regional School District budget. This FY25 budget proposal maintains most of our high level of services for all students, plus attains goals in the following area:

- New Specialized Programming for Students with Significant Social and/or Emotional Needs (KPRHS)

King Philip Regional School District's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan is sunsetting. As you know, we will be creating and publishing a new 2024-2029 Strategic Plan this spring/summer, which will include new goals and initiatives to help increase innovative learning experiences, bring our "Vision of a Graduate" more to life, and lead our students to develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to succeed in college, career, and life.

In developing this budget, I worked closely with our King Philip Executive District Leadership Team. This recommended budget addresses the needs of our students while remaining fiscally responsible.

Overall Financial Picture

After receiving \$7,885,180 from the state in Chapter 70 funding for FY24, King Philip will be receiving limited additional Chapter 70 state funding monies for FY25 (\$7,944,040)

due to an increase of 37 students from FY24 to FY25 (\$58,860 increase). It should be noted that this estimated 0.7% increase in state aid (\$30 per pupil) and Chapter 70 funding is always subject to change.

With a *level-service* budget, we would face an 10.62% overall increase for FY25 when compared to FY24 due to annual contractual increases, health insurance cost increases, plus special education out-of-district tuition increases, charter school increases, and school choice increases. In planning with our principals, if we were to advocate for a *needs-based* budget, costs would rise further and we would have a 12.99% overall increase for FY25 when compared to FY24. To get such a large percentage increase down to this reasonable overall increase of 4.33%, we unfortunately are proposing some reductions. Keep in mind our leadership team continues to labor over all decisions. We have also adjusted and reduced many line items that may have been underspent in the past.

Anytime we have to make reductions there is an impact, but our goal is to minimize any affect on students. We will still offer our high quality educational courses, programs, and extracurricular activities. We do not want to propose any layoffs, but due to budgetary constraints, some positions will no longer be funded. Final decisions about any position reductions will be *strategic* to have the *least* detrimental impact on student learning and programming. We cannot make or announce those final staffing decisions yet due to factors associated with contractual agreements.

I acknowledge our School Committee won't know which positions will be eliminated until after the King Philip Regional School Committee budget vote tonight. As of this date, 19.5 positions will need to be reduced. Some positions will be reduced through attrition, and other positions will be reduced via layoffs. We need to give employees proper notice if their positions are being reduced or eliminated, but not before final staffing decisions are made in May or June. Procedures outlined in contractual agreements will be followed; as a result, there will be some vacancies or positions filled based on mitigating factors such as seniority and/or educator licensure. At this time, publishing any proposed positions that may be reduced for the 2024-2025 school year wouldn't be fair to staff. I will meet with individual School Committee members if you want more information, but I will not expose any individual staff members, and we also need to protect and maintain employee morale. Conversations with some impacted employees are beginning to happen now, and will continue to happen now through June, and perhaps also into the summer with potential recalls.

Non-Position Related Reductions or Savings

Here are the savings that will be attained for the 2024-2025 school year:

- Utilizing Transportation Reimbursement Reserve Funds
- Professional Development Cost Savings
- 5% Line Item Reduction to Instructional Supplies and Services
- Staffing Reductions through Attrition

Savings in Position Reductions

As previously mentioned, 19.5 positions will be reduced as part of this King Philip Regional School District FY25 budget proposal when compared to this 2023-2024 school year (FY24). Some positions will be reduced through attrition (approximately ten positions), or in some cases reallocated. And unfortunately, some other positions (approximately ten positions) will need to be reduced for the 2024-2025 school year.

New Programming

Through reallocation of current staff, FY25's new programming will offer specialized therapeutic programming for some students we consider to be at the highest level of risk due to social-emotional dysregulation, anxiety/depression, and oftentimes prior hospitalizations. This program will be staffed by a special education teacher, adjustment counselor, and teacher assistant. This program will provide academic and counseling support in a single space every day, with clinical care coordination. We expect this program will allow us to keep more students in-district who might otherwise require an out-of-district placement. In addition to helping us meet our legal and moral obligations to educate students in the least restrictive setting, we believe this program can potentially generate substantial cost savings that produce a long-term net fiscal benefit for the district.

This new program will lead to increased support for students with special needs and stronger district programming at the high school. As it relates to our budget, we will continue to strive to reduce the number of students who need to be educated outside of our public school district by strategically investing in programming and staff in FY25. In the past year, our number of out-of-district students has risen.

Technology and Digital Learning

Since the pandemic teachers have been infusing more technology into their lessons and utilizing a variety of technology tools, both software and hardware. These tools maintain a level of instruction that supports ongoing learning. In preparing the budget, the analytics of each of the tools were examined to determine the benefit and use of each.

Some tools will be eliminated, while others will be adjusted to accommodate specific users.

New Chromebooks are purchased each year, and are given to the incoming 7th grade students and new staff. This strategy ensures all students have access to a device to support learning in and out of the classroom. Over the past several years, the district has shifted most of its hardware purchases to either an annual recurring services model, or lease to own model. These two models lead to a more predictable, stable budget year over year.

Looking Forward to FY26 and Beyond

We are currently working on compiling an updated King Philip Regional School District Capital Improvement List, which we will present at all tri-town town meetings this year or next year. The twenty-year bond from our 2006 school renovations will expire in two years. Our greatest priority to present to you in the next year will be for our roofs being replaced, which are nearing twenty years old. Besides that, we will need a King Philip High School turf field replacement and tennis courts replacement in about five years.