



Dedham Public Schools Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2027

Nan Murphy, Superintendent & Dr. Ian Kelly, Deputy Superintendent

March 10, 2026

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Who Are We Budgeting For?



2621

Students currently
enrolled in DPS
Approximately **1,982**
Dedham Families



675

Approximate Number
of **DPS Employees**
443 are Educators and
Instructional Support Personnel



113

Preschool



205

Kindergarten



1044

Grade 1 - Grade 5



562

Grade 6 - Grade 8



681

Grade 9 - Grade 12



46

Out-of-District

What Are We Budgeting For?



Dedham Public Schools
DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

2025
2030

Strategic Focus 1:



Teaching and
Learning

Strategic Focus 2:



Safe and
Supportive
Schools

Strategic Focus 3:



Family &
Community
Engagement

Strategic Focus 4:



Budget &
Capital
Improvements



What Are We Budgeting For?



Providing High Quality Instructional Materials

Academic & Social/Emotional Curriculum, Consumables, Instructional Equipment



Supporting All Students

Multi-tiered Systems of Support, Increased Access to General Curriculum & Advanced Coursework, Special Education Instructional Settings, Out of District Placements



Investing in Personnel

Highly Qualified Educators and Support Staff, High Quality Professional Development and Training



Enhancing Educational Experiences

Visual Arts, Athletics, Field Trips, Musical Programming

What Are We Budgeting For?



Dedham Public Schools
DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

2025
2030

School Facilities



General Upkeep
Maintenance
Grounds
Equipment
Capital Planning

Human Resources



Talent Management
for 650 Employees
Payroll
Collective Bargaining
Background Checks
State Reporting

Business Office



Budget Development
& Oversight
Financial Oversight
Accounts
Receivable/Payable
Contract Management
Procurement Processes

Technology



Network, Device
Management & Service
Database Management
Student Information
System
Educational Software
Support

Transportation



Regular & Special
Education Student
Homeless & Foster
Care
Out of District
Athletics & Activities



FY27 Budget Development Process



NOVEMBER



Central office develops level service and new initiatives budget



Building/department personnel and non-personnel requests



Faculty budget forums



Budget Subcommittee initial review and guidance



DECEMBER



Central office ongoing development of Superintendent's recommended budget



Faculty budget forums



Collaboration and consultation with members of senior leadership team



Ongoing review and feedback from the Budget Subcommittee



JANUARY



Superintendent's proposed budget finalized and presented to Budget Subcommittee



Budget Subcommittee vote of support for the Superintendent's proposed budget



School Committee Public Hearing – January 20, 2026



Schools Committee review, deliberation and possible vote



FY27 School Department Proposed Budget

Contractual Salary Increases, Student Transportation Services,
Educational Technology, K-3 Literacy & Numeracy Support

\$64,734,060

6.33%



Dedham Public Schools BUDGET Context





Funding Level 0: Sustaining Current Services

SUSTAINING CURRENT SERVICES

Funding Level 0

Increase over F26: \$3,218,048 (5.29%)

Sustains current services. Drivers include:

-  Personnel
-  Instructional Technology Refresh
-  Transportation Costs
-  Utilities



Dedham Public Schools BUDGET REDUCTIONS



2021–2023



Instructional materials, supplies, professional development, and attrition/turnover

2023–2024
\$922,000



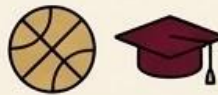
Instructional materials and supplies, curriculum leadership, clinical personnel, education support professionals, operational personnel

2024–2025
\$1,320,777



Administrative personnel, Unified Arts teachers, classroom teachers, specialist teachers, education support professionals, intervention teachers, operational personnel

2025–2026
\$1,379,001



Enrichment teachers and programming, athletic programming, professional development



DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS: PROPOSED BUDGET - FUNDING SCENARIOS







FUNDING LEVEL 1: Stabilizing Core Services

Increase over F26: \$4,183,048 (6.87%)
Inclusive of Funding Level 0

-  Instructional support (K-5)
-  Substitute teachers
-  Enhanced special education services
-  Operational support
-  Professional development

FUNDING LEVEL 2: Stabilizing Core Services









Increase over F26: \$5,348,048 (8.78%)
Inclusive of Funding Level 0 & 1

-  Instructional support (K-5)
-  Substitute teachers
-  Enhanced special education services
-  Co-curricular enrichment
-  Professional development
-  Instructional materials

FUNDING LEVEL 3: Long-Term Efficacy

Increase over F26: \$6,503,048 (10.68%)
Inclusive of Funding Level 0-2









Student benefit from:

-  Instructional support (K-5)
-  Co-curricular enrichment
-  Enhanced special education services
-  Instructional materials
-  Professional development
-  Curriculum renewal
-  Substitute teachers
-  Program coordination

FUNDING LEVEL 4: Long-Term Efficacy

Increase over F26: \$6,718,048 (11.03%)
Inclusive of Funding Level 0-3

Student benefit from:

-  Instructional support (K-5)
-  Co-curricular enrichment
-  Enhanced special education services
-  Instructional materials
-  Professional development
-  Curriculum renewal
-  Substitute teachers
-  Program coordination

FY27 School Department Proposed Budget

Contractual Salary Increases, Student Transportation Services,
Educational Technology, K-3 Literacy & Numeracy Support

\$64,734,060

6.33%



6.33% - Strategic Investment - What?



11 ESP in
Grades 1-3



5 ESP
Kindergarten



2 Special
Educators
Grades K-12

\$

\$635,000



6.33% Strategic Investment - The Why

Supported by Research: The “Why”



From “Learning to Read” to “Reading to Learn”

K-3 is the critical window for
developing core skills.



A Strong Predictor

Early proficiency highly
correlates with later
academic achievement
across all subjects. (air.org)

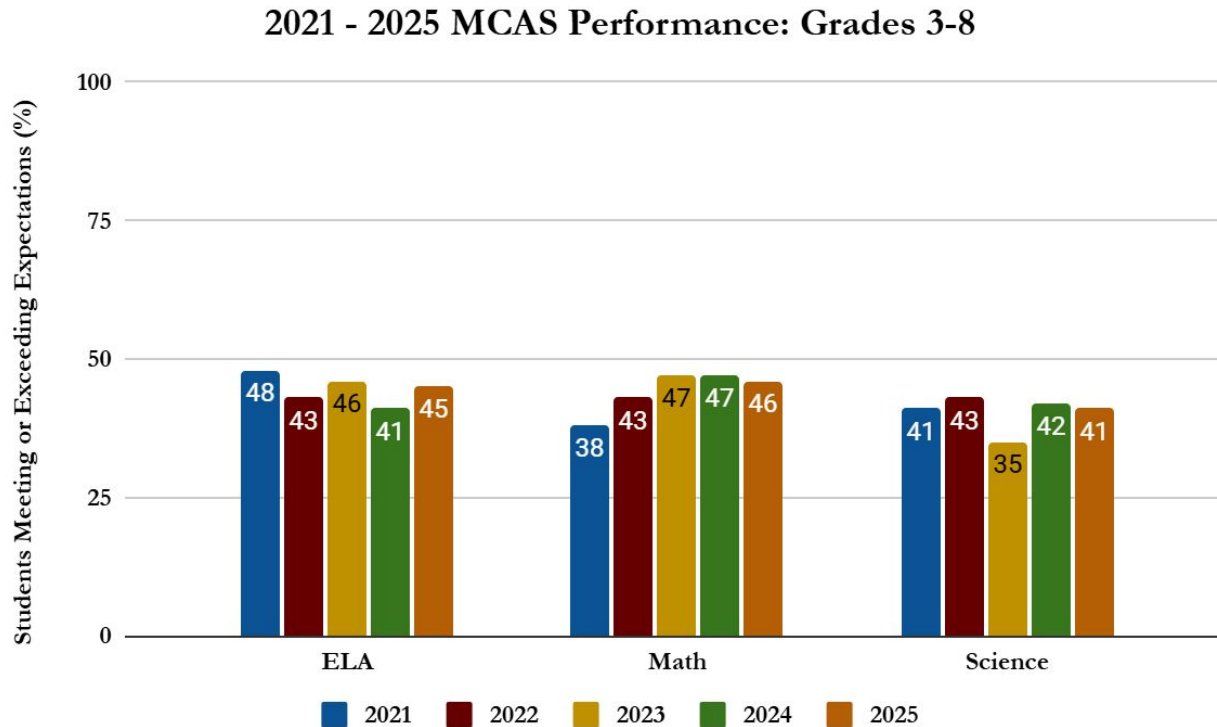


Effective Intervention

Intensive, evidence-based instruction
significantly improves outcomes and
prevents long-term challenges.
(readingrockets.org, ecs.org)

Dedham Public Schools Grades 3-8 MCAS Achievement

MCAS Achievement Scores (2021-2025) Percent Meeting/Exceeding Expectations



Dedham Public Schools Per-Pupil Expenditures



Dedham Public Schools Per-Pupil Expenditures



What's Included?



- Salaries & Benefits



- Instructional Materials



- Transportation



- Student Support Services



- Building Operations & Maintenance



- Administrative Functions



Total Operating
Expenditures



FTE
Students



Average Per-Pupil
Expenditure



Why Does it Change?



- Increases in staffing costs, contracts, & insurance



- Inflation in operational expenses



- Changes in student enrollment



Understanding the Figure

- A descriptive measure reflecting the relationship between spending and students served.
- Influenced by enrollment, programs, staffing, class sizes, facilities, and local priorities.
- Most useful when considered alongside enrollment trends, staffing levels, and program offerings.
- Provides a complete picture of resource use for teaching and learning.



DEDHAM'S PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES

Among the highest in Norfolk County at \$27,128.50

HIGH NEEDS ENROLLMENT GROWTH



- Increasing Economically Disadvantaged, English Learners, & Students with Disabilities.
- Reflects a more diverse student body with expanding support needs over two decades.

STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO & CLASS SIZE

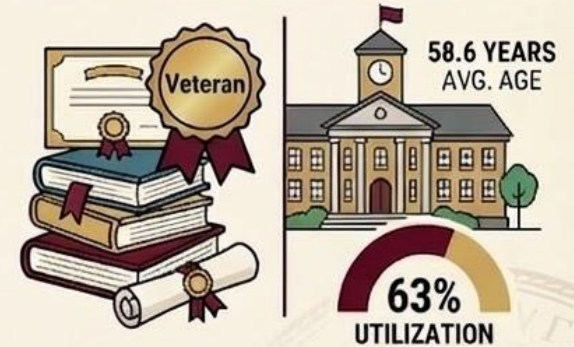


11.0:1
RATIO

~18
STUDENTS
AVG. CLASS SIZE

- Notably lower ratio than many peer districts.
- Demonstrates higher investment in staffing for personalized instruction.

COMPENSATION, WORKFORCE & FACILITIES



58.6 YEARS
AVG. AGE

63%
UTILIZATION

- Competitive compensation attracts and retains highly experienced educators.
- Older, underutilized facilities create fixed operational and maintenance costs.

FY27 School Department's Proposed Budget...



Addresses the **declining level** of core **instructional support** for students due to the fiscal constraints and challenges of FY24, FY25, & FY26.



Is **responsive** to the needs the **CURRENT** students PK-12.



Incorporates **faculty** and **staff recommendations** and requests.



Assimilates **community input** and feedback.



Tells the **story** of **who we are** and what **we value** as a school district. It is a reflection of our **shared commitment** to the four strategic focus areas outlined in our District Strategic Plan, and to the belief that every student should have access to high-quality learning experiences. Through this budget... our students challenged, and prepared for success.



Reference Materials

Dedham Public Schools: High Needs Populations Trends

Understanding the Shift in Student Profiles & Resource Needs

Defining “High Needs” (DESE)



Economically Disadvantaged

Eligible for free/reduced lunch or other public assistance.



English Learner

Students whose first language is not English and are developing English proficiency.



Student with Disabilities

Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for specialized instruction.

Significant Trends & Implications

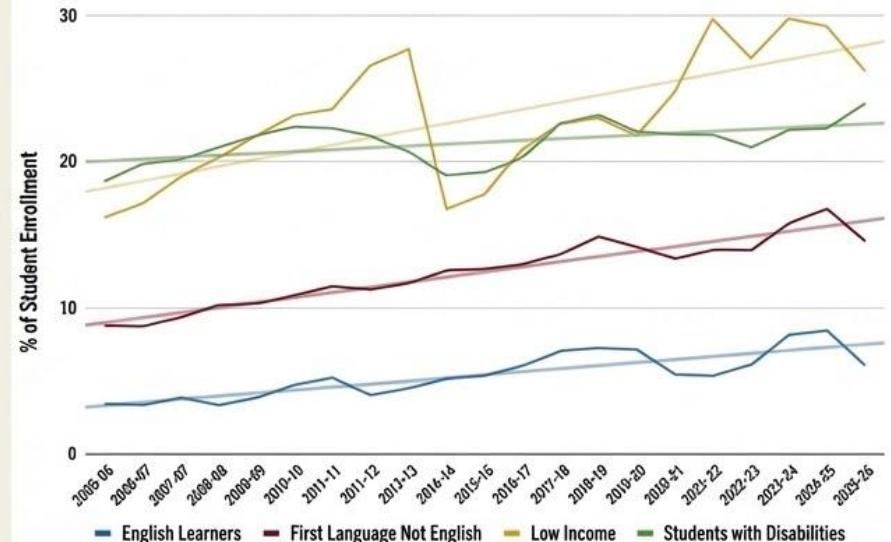
English Learners:
Grown from 3.5% to 6.1%.

Low Income:
Risen from 16.2% to 26.2%.

Low Income:
Sustained above-average at 24.0% (State Avg: 21.1%).

Overall High Needs: remains high at 42.4%, necessitating robust funding for specialized academic, linguistic, and social-emotional support.

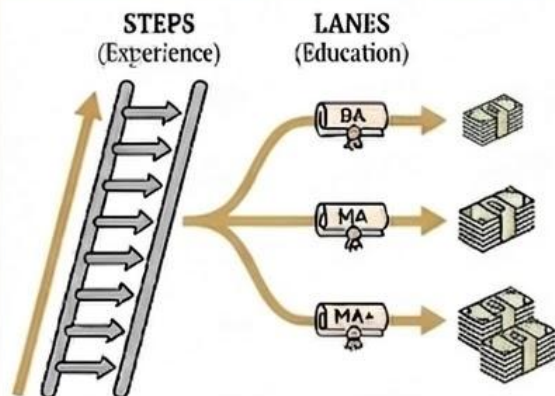
DPS High Needs Populations 2006 - 2026



Educator Compensation: System, Placement, & Comparison

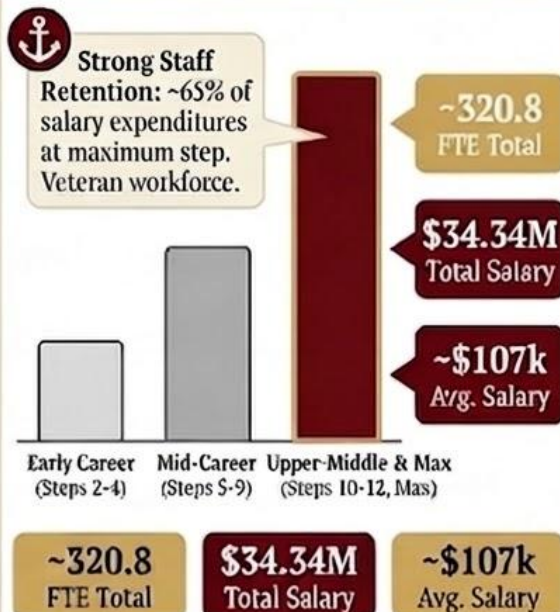
Understanding the Structure, Dedham's Workforce, and Competitive Standing

The "Step-and-Lane" System



Salary schedule based on experience ("steps") and education ("lanes"). Teachers move up steps annually and across lanes with additional credits/degrees. Ensures predictable, transparent compensation.

Dedham's Educator Placement (FY26)






Competitive Comparison



The Structural Reality of Our District

Understanding How Organization Influences Per-Pupil Spending

District Characteristics & Strengths

-  • Four small elementary schools
-  • Small average class sizes (under 18)
-  • A staff-to-student ratio of approximately 1:11



Strengths Created:

Small learning environments, strong relationships, individualized attention.

Cost Realities & Challenges



The Challenge of Incremental Shrinking

When enrollment drops slightly, we cannot incrementally reduce the budget.



Eliminate half a classroom.



Remove fractional administration.



Eliminate required student services.

Costs tend to decrease in steps, not gradually. **A building needs a principal whether it has 350 students or 300. A grade level needs a teacher whether there are 17 students or 15.** This means small enrollment changes rarely produce immediate savings.