

Wards 4 & 7 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)

****NEW LOCATION: Hunt Middle School Cafeteria, 1364 North Ave****

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

6:00PM-8:00PM

Join remotely: <https://zoom.us/j/85494151752>



6:00pm Free Community Dinner | 30 mins

6:30pm Welcome | 5 mins

- Adopted the agenda+ Reviewed the Ground Rules:
 - Listen to each other
 - Treat others respectfully
 - Share your opinion politely
 - Respect the agenda and process

6:35pm Open Forum | 10 mins

6:45pm City of Burlington ballot items | 40 mins

- Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak will present about the City's FY27 budget process and a proposed Public Safety Tax Rate Increase which will appear on the March 3 Town Meeting Day ballot.
- REIB Director Kelli Perkins, REIB Communications and Community Engagement Manager Christian Berry, and REIB Administrative and Financial Coordinator Vicky Luciano, will present on the proposed REIB Charter Change. (REIB = the City's Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging).

7:25pm School Budget | 15 mins

- Monika Ivancic

7:40pm City Council and School Board Candidates | 20 mins

(3 minutes for each candidate with 8 minutes for questions)

- Ward 7 City Council
 - Evan Litwin
 - Bill Standen
- Ward 4 City Council
 - Sarah Carpenter
- Ward 7 School Board
 - Polly Erickson
- Ward 4 School Board

8:00pm Meeting Adjourns

Ward 4&7 Steering Committee:

Annie Lawson

Joanne Hunt

Amy Bielawski-Branch

Sarah Diaz

Stephen Brown

Jane McDonald

To email the full steering committee: wards4-7npasc@googlegroups.com



FY27 General Fund Budget Review

Wards 4 & 7 NPA

January 28, 2026



What the City Needs: Projected FY27 Expenses



What the City Needs in FY27 - Personnel

- Started with FY26 personnel budget of \$73M
- Add **2 new firefighters** per BFFA contract
- Add contractually-negotiated **cost of living adjustments**
 - BFFA @ 7%
 - BPOA @ 4.75%
 - AFSCME – negotiations start in January so used a conservative estimate
 - Non-union – used AFSCME estimate as is our recent practice



What the City Needs in FY27 - Personnel

- Add required **annual step increases** for all eligible employees
- Increase **employer healthcare costs by 10%** based on initial estimate and subject to change based on current usage
- Increase **employer retirement costs by 5%** (initial estimate)
- Increase **worker's compensation** insurance costs by estimated **5%**



What the City Needs in FY27 - Operating

- Add 3% for inflation on most other non-personnel operating costs
- Added money have cash available to purchase nine new vehicles on the urgent/dire need list: six are for police & fire and remaining are for parks
 - Since 2013, City has constrained replacement of vehicles and equipment for budget reasons
 - In 2020, fleet committee estimated City needs \$2.7M year for sustainable replacement of fleet
 - City has not yet been able to find any sustainable fleet money in budget
 - Situation is no longer sustainable for first responders

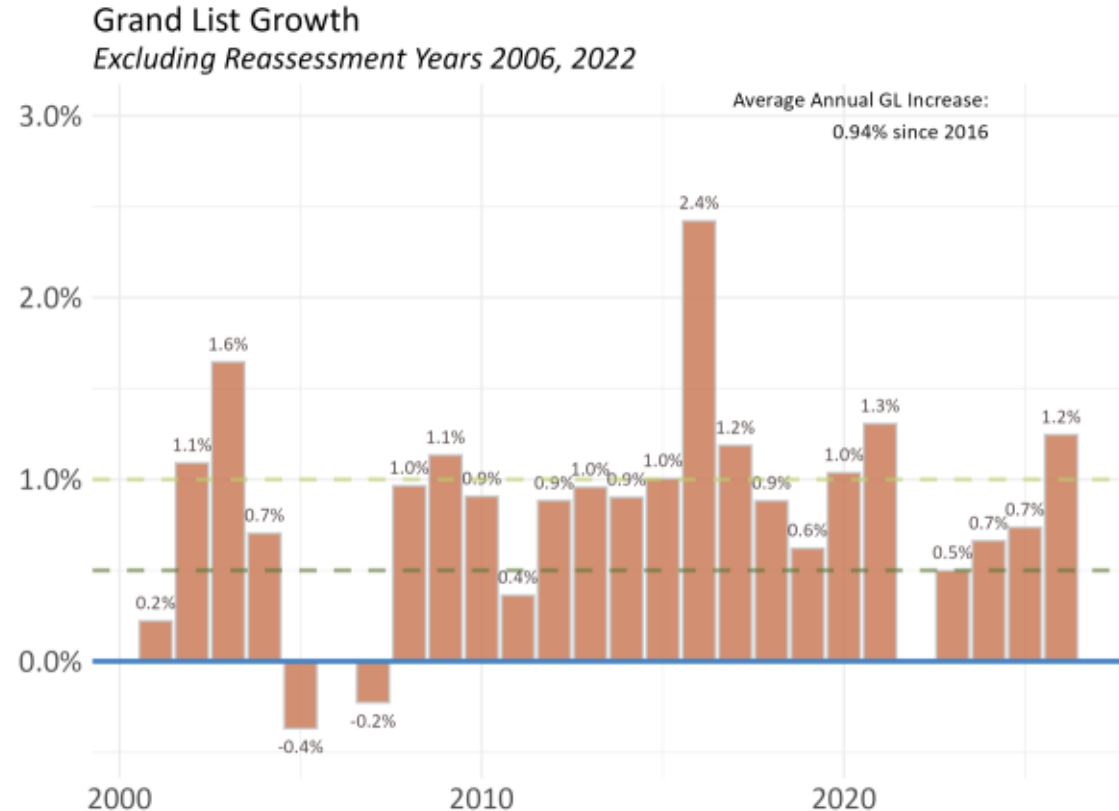


What the City Has: FY27 Revenue Starting Point



Grand List: Foundation for Prop Tax

- Start with new grand list estimate from assessor to create property tax revenue estimate
- This represents approximately half of City's GF revenue in total
- Average annual grand list growth of 1.05% since 2016
- In FY27, we do not expect growth in tax revenue due to loss of business personal property tax





Removing One-Time and Historically Unachievable Revenues

- FY26 Included **\$1.2M of ARPA funding** for police and fire salaries that is no longer available.
- FY26 included **\$650K of one-time increased collection** of delinquent property taxes & gross receipts – removing for further discussion
- Some revenues overbudgeted in recent years and budget not met – revising downward to make realistic creates an **additional expected gap of \$1.3M**
- All of this adds up to about \$4M of revenue City had in FY26 that is not expected in FY27. The City needs to find a new source of revenue for this or cut this amount of expenses.



Current FY27 Gap Estimate

- There is a budget gap estimated between **\$10-\$12M**
- Budget of \$107M, so approximately 10%



Options for Meeting FY27 Budget Need



FY27 Budget: Three-Part Approach

A gap of \$10-12M in City budget of \$107M is approximately 10% and will **require a balanced, three-part approach:**

- Raise Revenue
- Rightsize Government
- Realize Strategic Opportunities





Raise Revenue: Raise Police & Fire Property Tax

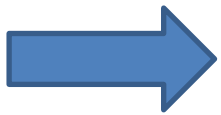
- One option to raise revenue is **\$0.05 increase to police & fire tax**
- **Would raise about \$3M toward projected gap**
- Overall expected increase to compensation and benefits for FY27 for police & fire (excluding retirement which is covered by dedicated tax) is **\$3.05M**
- Current police & fire tax projected to raise \$6.4M this year
- In contrast the budgets for those departments are \$39.1M
- Police & fire tax only raises 16% of costs for the services
- **Bipartisan City Council vote (9-3) to place tax rate increase on March ballot**



Municipal Tax Effect

Note \$353K is current median assessed value for home or condo in Burlington

Fiscal Year	Muni Tax Rate	Total Muni Tax on \$353K Property	\$ Increase	% Increase
FY22	\$.6704	\$2,367		
FY23	\$.7085	\$2,501	\$134	5.7%
FY24	\$.7523	\$2,655	\$154	6.2%
FY25	\$.8326	\$2,939	\$284	10.7%
FY26	\$.8556	\$3,020	\$81	2.8%
FY27	\$.9363 *	\$3,305	\$285	9.4%



* Proposed rate for FY27 including \$.05 police and tax increase + other increases required by Charter.



Preliminary Early Balanced Solution

Category	Solution	Amount	Notes
Raise Revenue	Increase Police & Fire Property Tax \$.05	\$ 3M	Council approved question to be placed on Town Meeting Day ballot.
Raise Revenue	Utilize One-Time Revenues	\$ 2M	Exploring use of dedicated tax balances from many years previous in appropriate, budget-relieving ways.
Raise Revenue	Enhance Collections	\$ 1M	Examples include parking tickets, ambulance fees and building permits. Refine amount.
Rightsize Government	Reduce Government Expenses 5-10%	\$ 3M	Department Heads made recommendations for further discussion.
Rightsize Government	Create Voluntary Furlough Program	\$ 0.2M	HR moving forward to create voluntary program.
Realize Strategic Opportunities	Sale of City Property	\$ 1M	Vacant properties or used for parking. Would create one-time money and add to property tax revenue on ongoing basis.
	Total	\$ 10.2M	

Numbers are preliminary, and this is just an initial look at one way we could choose to structure the solution.



Summary

- \$10-12M current gap
- Will utilize a three-part approach to handle – raising revenue, rightsizing government, and realizing strategic opportunities
- \$0.05 increase to police and fire tax will raise \$3M, which pays for increases City is obligated to contract to pay to those employees
- Vote happens on Town Meeting Day, March 3
- Each department will present budget to Board of Finance in early April
- Budget drafted by Mayor and must be approved by June 30 by City Council



REIB CHARTER CHANGE

OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING (REIB)

January 15, 2026




REIB Charter Change: What Voters Are Being Asked to Decide

- On March 3, Burlington voters will decide whether to add the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) to the City Charter
- The City Charter defines which parts of City government are permanent
- This change would make the REIB a stable, ongoing part of City government.
- Placing the REIB in the Charter helps ensure this work continues consistently over time, regardless of changes in leadership.



What is DEI in City Government?

Practical tools to improve systems & outcomes for everyone

Diversity	Equity	Inclusion
<p>Recognize our community's differences</p> <p>Understand that one-size-fits-all solutions don't always work.</p> 	<p>Address barriers to access and opportunity</p>  <p>Provide fair support so all can succeed</p>	<p>Ensure people feel welcomed and valued</p>  <p>Create spaces where everyone can participate.</p>

Focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion helps the City serve all its residents effectively and fairly.

REIB Charter Change: What the REIB Does and Why it Matters for Burlington

What the REIB Does in Burlington

- Supports city departments in the development, implementation, and coordination for programs and services to ensure consistency and accessibility
- Provides training and guidance for City staff, boards, and commissions
- Creates ways for community members to engage directly with City government

Why This Matters for Burlington

- Helps the City and community respond to diverse and community-identified needs
- Supports a strong local economy and community resilience.
- Brings diverse perspectives into City decision-making and builds trust.



REIB Charter Change: Budget Clarity

Budget clarity:

- The REIB already exists
- It represents about **0.7% of the City's General Fund**
- At its highest funding level, it has never exceeded **1% of the General Fund**

Budget Development Update

January 20, 2026



Agenda

- Budgetary assumptions
- Enrollment review
- Superintendent's Recommendation
- Tax Implications
- Timeline
- Appendix

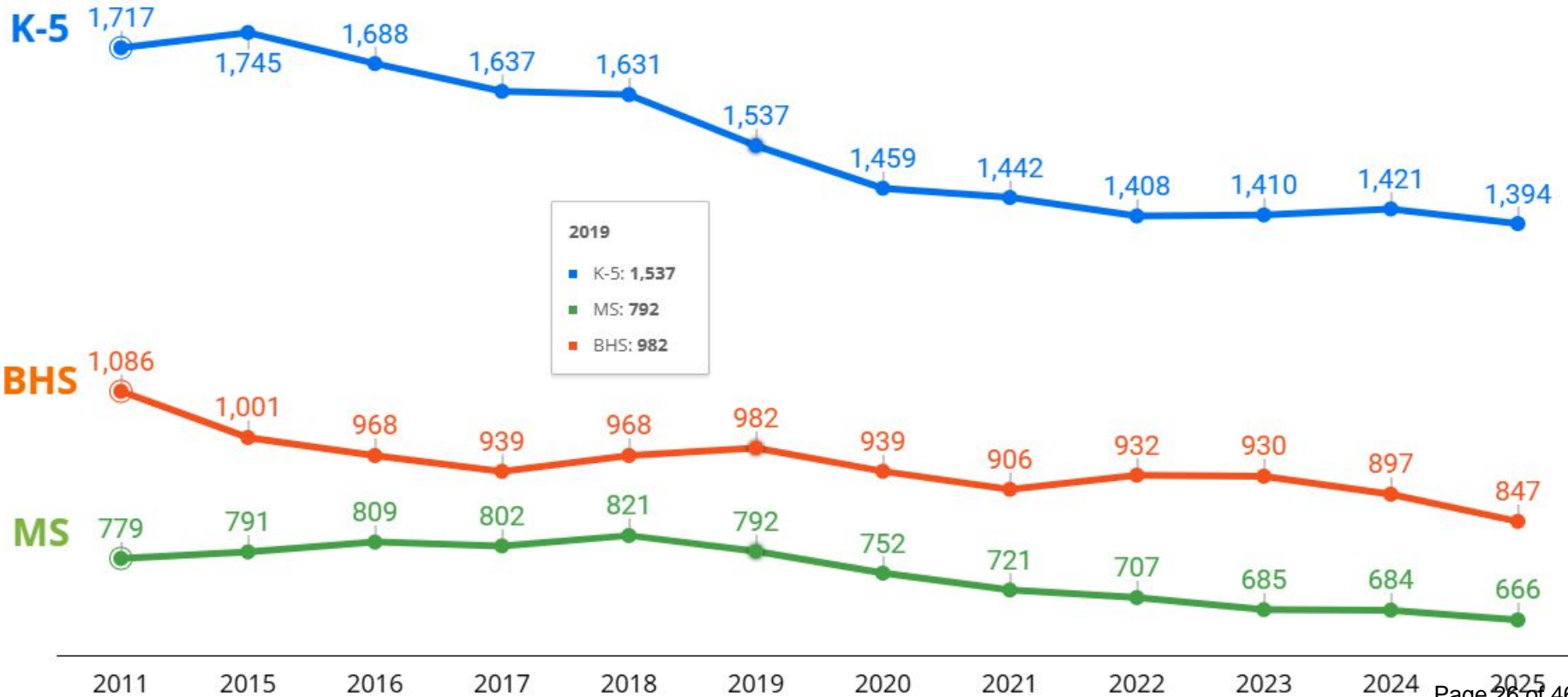


Budgetary Assumptions

Full list of assumptions posted on budget website

- **Wages:** 5% increase based on pattern of settled bargaining agreements.
- **Benefits:** 8% increase in health insurance premiums.
- **Debt Service:** 6.6% the last major increase associated with BHS/BTC.
- **Federal Funding:** \$2m of program costs in excess of federal revenue.
- **Rent Savings:** \$2m of savings associated with end of DtBHS lease.
- **Surplus:** Approximately \$2,400,000 surplus available to support the FY27 budget.

BSD Enrollment History



3.2% Decline in Enrollment from Last Year

- Declining school-aged population in Burlington (as well as the county and state).
 - Housing appears to be the most significant obstacle.
- Substantial decrease in the number of refugees being resettled in Burlington (and across the country).
- Neither private school enrollment nor school choice are having a meaningful impact on enrollment.

Draft Board Guidance

- Realign staffing to reflect lower projected enrollment and ensure Act 73 class size minimums are met.
- Limit budget growth due to the impact of BHS/BTC debt service.
- Identify funding needed to support specific strategic plan activities.
- Continue to offer academically rigorous programming for all learners that leads to improved student outcomes.
- Present the Board with at least three budget scenarios reflecting different tax impacts due to uncertainty in federal and state funding.



Superintendent's Recommendation

Includes spending and position reductions to manage costs

Total Budget	\$140,807,830
Total Budget Increase	4.47% increase
Actual Tax Rate after tax buydown*	4.70% increase

The current year's budget produced a tax rate that was 4.5% lower than FY25.

*In the absence of the \$75 million tax buydown, the tax rate increase would be 8.99%

Budget and Tax History

Year	Education Fund Spending	Other Funds (ESSR, Title Funds, Grants, etc.)	Overall Budget	Property Tax Impact	Education Spending Per Pupil/LTWADM
FY 25	\$94,424,438	\$50,515,666	\$144,940,104*	10.4%	\$13,889.62
FY 26	\$103,360,823	\$31,419,008	\$134,779,831	-4.5%	\$14,825.77
FY 27	\$109,078,822	\$31,729,008	\$140,807,830	4.7%**	\$15,774.58

The overall budget is projected to increase by 4.47%.

FY'26 Education Fund Spending increase is inflated due to the BHS/BTC construction project.

** FY'25's overall budget includes significant funding from the federal government (including federal COVID funds that are expiring) and other sources that do not derive from property tax payers.*

****FY'27 Property Tax Rate increase assumes a \$75 million tax buydown from the State of Vermont. Without this, the tax rate increase would be 8.99%.**

Proposed Reductions

10.0 full time equivalent (FTE) position reductions.

- Teacher position reductions are enrollment and model-based reductions.

4.5 FTE enrollment based teacher positions (1 FTE Flynn, 1 FTE Champlain, 2.5 FTE BHS)	1.0 FTE Central Office position
2.0 FTE EL teacher positions	\$1.5m Rent & Borrowing savings
1.5 FTE Food Services admin positions	\$100k IT/data/operating savings
1.0 FTE Property Services position	\$50k District operating savings
	\$100k hiring guidelines savings

Prioritizing Instruction

In direct response to recent achievement data, in this budget, we prioritize the following instructional activities:

- Updating the academic coaching model to include increased time spent on direct student support (e.g., intervention)
- Revising the evaluation framework to align with the learning framework.
- Prioritizing early literacy through the use of universal screeners and training in the science of reading.
- Expanding support for elementary mathematics.
- Expanding in-district special education programming for students with the most significant needs.

RISE Allocation

RISE Allocation Amounts by School

Eagle Bay	\$57,684
Smith	\$101,171
SA	\$103,220
IAA	\$127,107
Champlain	\$131,531

Edmunds El	\$140,105
Flynn	\$150,762
Hunt	\$171,072
Edmunds M	\$201,832
BHS	\$454,814

RISE Allocation Themes

Nearly \$1.6m of School-directed, Equity-oriented Investments

- Elementary: Interventionists, Special Education positions, Drama teacher, professional development in math and literacy.
- Middle School: Literacy, guidance positions, deeper learning PD and curriculum, social-emotional supports.
- High School: Reading specialist, mental health counselor, YES funding, deeper learning opportunities.

Property Tax Estimates

Hypothetical Property Payer - \$370k example (avg value)	Property Tax Impact
Property rate change	4.7%
Tax on \$370,000 homestead	\$5,913
Tax Difference from current rate	\$ 266

Hypothetical Property Payer - \$500k example	Income Tax Impact
Property rate change	4.7%
Tax on \$500,000 homestead	\$7,991
Tax Difference from current rate	\$ 359

Figures reflect rounding. Existing law provides additional property tax relief for households with incomes below \$47,000. This is known as a "circuit breaker." Once a taxpayer qualifies for the circuit breaker, additional school district spending does not increase the taxpayer's tax liability.

Ballot Language

Shall the voters of the School District approve the School Board to expend \$140,807,830 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? Burlington School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$15,774.58, which is 6.40% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.

Budget Development Timeline

- 1/20** School Board meeting
- 1/20** City Council presentation
- 3/3** Town Meeting Day budget vote

Subject to change

Full budget timeline available at:

<http://www.bsdt.org/district/budget/>



Appendix

The following slides are provided for reference.

FY25 Audit and Fund Balance

FY25 Audit is in final phase of review

FY25 Audited Fund Balance

- Approximately \$2,400,000 surplus available to support the FY27 budget.
 - This surplus is in line with prior year results.
- Represents roughly 2% of the total budget.

Fund Balance is One Time Revenue

- Careful budget management should result in annual surpluses.
- Currently supports significant costs associated with rent for temporary spaces (DtBHS, BTC, etc.).

Equitable Budgeting

A Brief History

- Research-based model created with input from the community.
- Overwhelming support for allocating resources to the students who need them most.
- Provides a foundational level of support plus RISE funds for investments unique to each school community.
- Recognize that our staffing level must be responsive to enrollment changes.

Community Survey: Who did we hear from?

In 2021, we heard from...

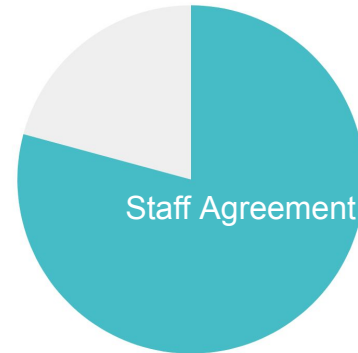
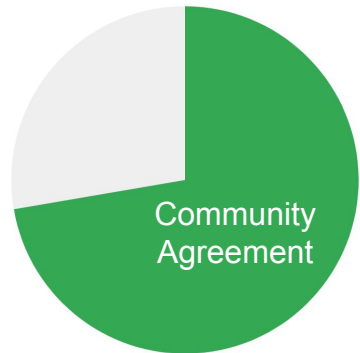
- 450+ students, family members, staff, and community members
- Individuals affiliated with every BSD school and program
- 43.2% of respondents' students receive free or reduced lunch
- 21.7% of respondents' students receive special education services
- 20.9% of our respondents self identified as BIPOC
- 14.4% of respondents speak a language other than English in their home



2020 Community Survey: What did we say?

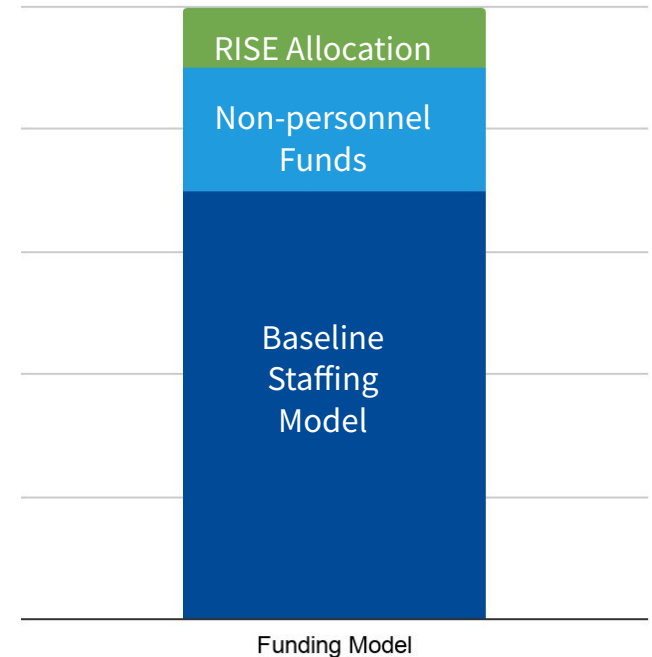
*72% of all respondents and 79% of BSD staff
strongly agree or agree that*

***resources should be allocated in a way that supports
the students who need them most - even if it means
reducing the resources at their school(s).***



Our proposed model has three components

- A **staffing model** will provide each school with its core staffing, using staff:student ratios (e.g. 1 counselor staff for every 200 students)
- Non-personnel funds will be allocated based on a **per-student** basis
- An Equity Allocation will provide additional funding using a **weighted student formula**, meaning more funds in schools with greater need
 - Schools will have discretion in how best to serve their students using these funds
 - Intent and desired outcomes will be documented for future evaluation



RISE Allocation

Nearly \$1.6m of School-directed, Equity-oriented Investments

- RISE allocations decrease by about \$50,000 district-wide based on reduced enrollment.
- Closer alignment to attendance procedures also contributed to the reduction.

What would a Level Services budget have cost?

A 5.6% tax rate increase would have been required to maintain level services and staffing. This includes:

- The probable 5% state buydown of tax rates (without which, the tax impact would be 10.6%)
- Maintaining current services would have resulted in fewer reductions
 - 4.5 FTE teacher reductions
 - \$1m DTBHS Rent Savings
 - \$450K savings from reduced bond borrowing

BTC Budget

Tuition decrease applies to BSD and sending schools

FY27 Budget = \$3.53m

- Reduced leasing cost after moving to new BHS/BTC
- 2.0 FTE teacher reductions (one enrollment based, one due to insufficient grant funding).
- 126.88 “average” enrollment over six semesters, a 5% increase from the prior year.
- **Announced Tuition of \$21,944.**
 - i. This represents a **12% decrease.**