

FY27 Budget FAQs

February 12, 2026

Professional and Curriculum Development

What Professional Development is funded in the Education/Training/Conference line item (\$361,457) in FY27? How much is restoration and how much is growth to attend to emerging programmatic needs?

During the FY26 budget process, \$416,674 was cut from the Education/Training/Conference line item. Note, that the historical spending over the past 3 years is \$242,070, the District had multiple years of grant money available to fund professional development and there was a spending freeze implemented that curtailed spending for conferences and training. In FY26, all of the old grants were fully spent and closed; therefore, the request in FY26 was higher than the historical average. The request in FY27 of \$361,457 is lower than the request in FY26 by \$134,215. As noted in the Quarter Two Financial Report all of these older grants have now been fully expended.

The FY27 proposal restores funding reduced in FY26 for professional learning that supports:

- Contractual requirements such as tuition assistance for educators
- Required trainings, new hire curriculum specific training
- Professional memberships for disciplines and programs to access research, best practices, regulatory changes, etc.
- District instructional priorities (MTSS implementation, Literacy, Curriculum specific PD, AI integration)
- School-based improvement efforts aligned to School Improvement Plans
- National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) National Conference in Boston and supports science review work
- Leadership and systems development (evaluation, scheduling, systems refinement)

These investments ensure educators are prepared to implement curriculum effectively, meet compliance obligations, explore innovative practices to better support best outcomes for students.

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What is the purpose and cost of the proposed K–12 Science and Technology Curriculum Review at this time?

Systematic, periodic curriculum review ensures that instruction and resources remain aligned with state standards and research while supporting equitable student experiences and outcomes through strong K–12 coherence and alignment.

While coordinators and educators have reviewed individual units or courses, the district has not conducted a comprehensive K–12 review of the science program since the adoption of the most recent update of Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework (2016).

For FY27, we have budgeted \$60,000 for the review of our K-12 science programs. This includes anticipated stipend work for educators participating in the review team outside of contractual hours and the costs associated with piloting instructional materials.

Aside from grant-funded initiatives, are we paying for bullying prevention, social-emotional, or diversity-focused curricula or programming (e.g., Restorative Justice, IDEAS)? If so, what are the anticipated FY27 costs, including materials and any related professional development or training?

We fund Panorama (19K) which is our Social Emotional Screening Tool and Second Step, a Social Emotional Learning Curriculum (10K) from the general fund. Other SEL initiatives are funded through the IDEA and METCO grants.

Special Revenue Funds (pages 92-101)

What is a Special Revenue fund?

Special Revenue Funds are restricted funds; meaning they are resources that can only be used for specific purposes defined by law or the granting authority. They are not intended to supplant general educational expenses, they are to supplement or enhance existing programming. Grants are written based on specific eligibility criteria outlined in the grant application. Grant applications are submitted to the awarding authority for consideration and if a grant is awarded, the School Committee must accept it with all of the terms and conditions outlined in the award.

The total revenue anticipated from these funds in FY27 is \$21,728,966 and fund 152.3 positions; 36.7 through grants and 118.6 through revolving funds. There are 8 -11 state and federal grants that the district applies for and receives annually, each with its own purpose and restrictions. Recurring grants appear on pages 92-97 of the budget.
include:

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What can the METCO grant be used for?

The METCO grant (page 95) can pay for costs associated with METCO students' ability to participate in the program or to support their academic, social, or mental health needs. The grant also pays for related professional development. This program provides supplemental funding to support METCO students such as transportation, guidance counselors, METCO Liaisons, math and literacy specialists, program administration, supplies, etc. The grant cannot be used to fund general educational expenses such as classroom teachers, instructional supplies, textbooks, computers, etc..

Circuit Breaker (pages 33, 24, 99, 100)

Can you explain how the \$1.4M in unexpected state revenues will be used to refill the circuit breaker account as stated at the Q2 report discussion, and how the CB account balance impacts the LEA budget for next year and the following years? Could we elect to refill the CB account over multiple years and if so, what would be the impact on the district budget?

The \$1,943,064 that was projected to be used out of the circuit breaker account represents a structural funding deficit that has been carried forward several years that has been resolved by one time sources of revenue that are no longer available. That deficit in FY26 is close to being resolved by the aforementioned \$1.4 million for this year only. The structural financial deficit will roll forward to FY27 and is included in the proposed budget request for an allocation to cover an increase of \$8,106,2355 (5.67%). Minus the structural deficit, the increase would be \$6,163,174 (4.32%). If the proposed budget is fully funded in FY27 the structural deficit will be resolved for FY28.

Copied below from page 34 in the FY26 Budget Book:

The amount of OOD tuition that is charged to the Circuit Breaker revolving fund expense line is determined by the amount of money available in the Circuit Breaker fund balance at the end of the prior fiscal year. For example, the balance available in FY25 (\$4,258,609), is the amount available to offset tuition expenses in FY26. Funding the additional \$1,943,064 of tuition expenses in FY26 resulted in the total expenses being higher in FY26 (\$6,201,673 = 4,258,609 + \$1,943,064) than the fund balance in FY25 (\$4,258,609), therefore there is less revenue to offset expenses in FY27 (\$3,730,995). See diagram below.

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Tuition Expenses	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
Settlements	896,437	644,922	863,215	1,418,360	1,203,253	
OOD Tuition	3,934,981	4,588,068	4,939,295	2,968,628	3,300,141	
FY27 Gap returns to OOD Tuition					1,943,064	
Circuit Breaker	2,985,797	3,280,301	3,684,690	4,258,609	3,732,696	5,068,888
FY26 Budget Gap charged to CB				1,943,064		
Total Tuition	7,817,215	8,513,291	9,487,200	10,588,661	10,179,154	
Circuit Breaker						
Fund Balance	3,280,301	3,606,449	4,258,609	3,730,995	5,068,888	

Figure 2c-5. Financial Impacts of Circuit Breaker reallocation in FY26 on FY27 revenue offset

This temporary cost reduction strategy causes the OOD Tuition line to vacillate widely from FY25- FY27.

The amount we receive each year in circuit breaker tuition reimbursement is less than the tuition we will need to pay in the next year. If we don't refill the CB account it means we have to draw more from the general fund in the next year to pay for tuition due in that year. It is best to restore the CB account to lessen the impact of tuition on the general fund.

Staffing

Which BEU, Unit B administrators (Vice Principals, Deans, Curriculum Coordinators), are currently teaching a section, and which are not?

Currently 9-12 Coordinators and K-12 coordinators (Unit B) teach 0.2 at BHS. Associate Deans (Unit A) are 0.2 in their area of expertise. The BHS Assistant Head of School (Unaligned) teaches a course. The 6-8 World Language coordinator (Unit B) teaches a section at one of the K-8 schools. BHS Deans, K-8 Vice Principals, and the K-8 Coordinators do not have teaching responsibilities.

What is different about this year's proposal to eliminate ETS staff compared to last year's proposal that was rejected by SC?

Unlike classroom and other specialist teachers (art, music, world language, etc.), librarians and ETSs generally do not have a specific individual teaching load (i.e. they are not individually assigned any classes). They have historically been viewed as support positions much like literacy and math coaches, which we no longer have in our K-8 schools. Note the reduction does not eliminate the ETS function.

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How was the guidance counselor staffing reduction at Driscoll made and what are the ratios across the schools?

Decision-Making Framework

The challenge and responsibility before the district is to ensure that our schools are staffed well, are equitable and sustainable across all schools in the context of a significant district wide deficit. As part of addressing this structural deficit we were tasked with conducting a holistic review of staffing and needs within and across schools. Decisions are made with compassion for the individuals and schools directly impacted, accountability for the system at large and responsible stewardship of the district's fiscal resources.

Guidelines

Decisions are based on enrollment trends, service demands and operational functions taking into account the variation of needs and diversity across the district. All reductions are position level adjustments. The individual impact is determined by contractual seniority. Reductions are considered when a school is:

- Below professional guidelines
- Experiencing sustained enrollment decline
- Well below appropriate district averages

For FY 27 the guidance counselor ratio at Driscoll with a 2.0 FTE will be 1:262. The current 3.0 FTE's were based on a significantly larger student enrollment. This adjustment corrects the sustained over alignment driven by enrollment and brings Driscoll more in line with the other K-8 schools and in line with the ASCA guidelines. Due to retirement there will be an open guidance counselor position in FY 27.

Guidance FTE's FY 26

	Enrollment	FTE	Ratio
School			
Baker	661	3.00	220
Driscoll	524	3.00	175
Ruffin Ridley	868	3.00	289
Hayes	409	1.60	256
Lawrence	627	2.80	224
Lincoln	469	1.80	260
Pierce*	587	3.00	196
Runkle	463	2.00	232

American School Counseling Association Guidelines 1: 250

* Pierce School FTE's may realign based on enrollment when they are in one building

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OAF Restructuring (pages 24, 25). Could you share the rationale for not adding a position to OAF and/or for cutting the Director role?

The Finance Director position is a recently added position. We were able to redistribute the job functions among various positions (4) in OAF due to the special skills and experience among current staff. A critical function we are restoring is the Data Director to service OAF, OSS and OTL.