

FY2023 Budget School Department

Superintendent's Recommended Budget

March 8, 2022

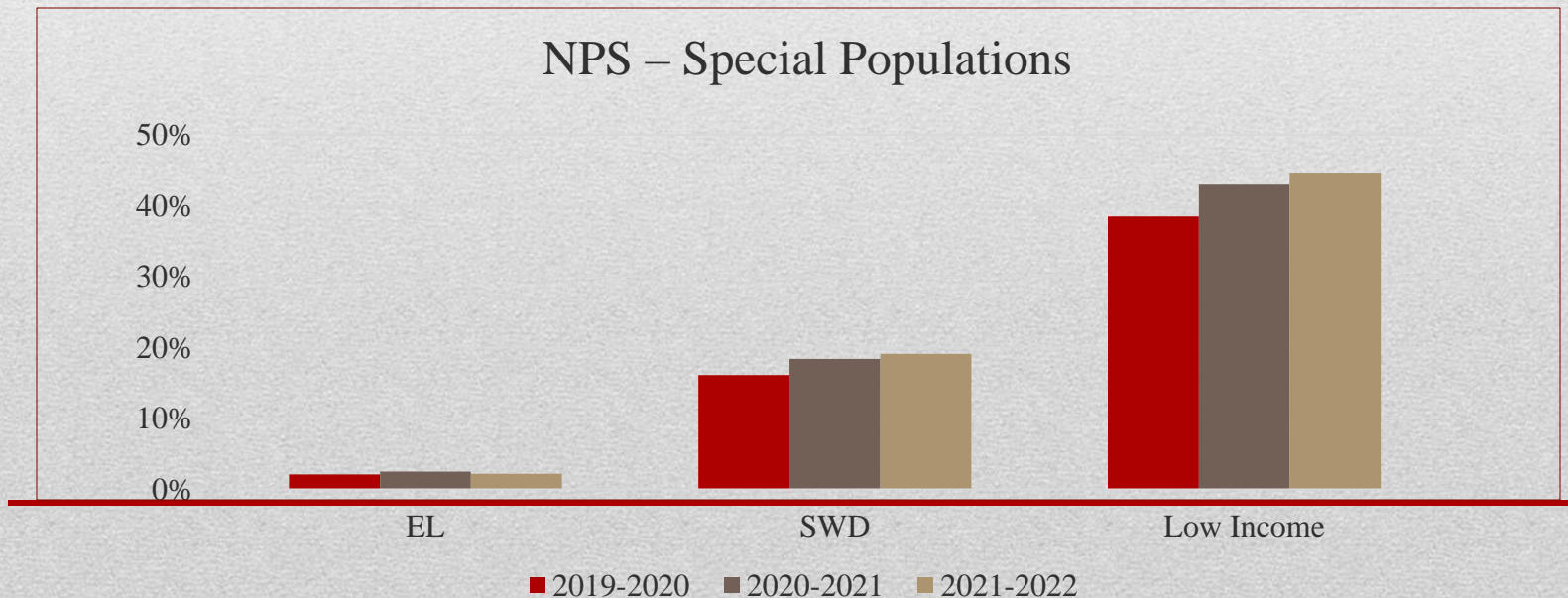
Introduction

For fiscal year 2023, we have developed a budget that supports the goals and initiatives of Year Two of our 2021-2024 District Strategic Plan.

Our staffing, instructional programming, technology, operations and district management decisions support the implementation of our strategic action plan and ultimately provide the highest quality educational environment for our students.

NPS – Special Populations

Students	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
EL	2.1%	42	2.5%	48 (+6)	2.2%	43 (+1)
SWD	16.1%	322	18.4%	354 (+32)	19.1%	382 (+60)
Low-Income	38.5%	770	43.0%	828 (+58)	44.7%	883 (+113)
Total Enrollment		1999		1924		1975



SY 2022-2023: New Normal

After over two years of identifying and doing our best to overcome the educational and operational obstacles caused by COVID-19, the Northbridge Public Schools are very much looking forward to starting the 2022-2023 school year strong and healthy.

Over the past two years, the pandemic has wreaked havoc on our academic progress, our levels of engagement with our work and one another, and our overall sense of joy and happiness. Students, staff and parents have been overwhelmed, exhausted and discouraged, and it's not going to be an easy task to return to "normal."

Our goal for FY23 is to refuel and re-ignite our educational system, and rekindle the motivation, engagement and pride that has always been the signature of the Northbridge Public Schools.

We are confident that our Strategic Action Plan, supported by a carefully designed district budget and implemented by ALL who are dedicated to our continued improvement, will yield a year full of success, pride and happiness for all members of the NPS community.



NPS Mission:

The Northbridge Public Schools is a proud community focused on the education and well-being of ALL students. We recognize each student as an individual, and we provide creative and innovative learning opportunities that encourage them to use their unique voices and personal strengths to achieve success both academically and personally.

Theory of Action:

If . . . we give our students the tools and support to pursue their passions, skills and interests, both responsibly and practically . . .

Then . . . our students will achieve personal success and contribute to the community in a positive way.

Focus for the FY23 Budget

- Continue to address the academic and opportunity gaps that were created or exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Continue to address the increasing demands for social-emotional and behavioral support for our students.
- Provide diverse and engaging opportunities for all students to achieve success.
- Increase support for our students identified as high needs (SWDs, LI, or EL.)
- Maintain healthy, clean and safe school buildings.

Shared Leadership

Create an environment in which all leaders include multiple perspectives to **collaborate on common goals** and **develop consistent and equitable practices and expectations** that support the **alignment of our schools** and the **success of the entire NPS community**.

- Provide PD to all staff, including: co-teaching; UDL; SEL; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); effective leadership; and PBIS to align practices across schools
- Provide opportunities for family participation in the school community: mental health/SEL workshops; multi-cultural activities/events; volunteer opportunities; family fun days/activities; participation in focus groups and committees

Inclusive Culture

Cultivate trusting relationships among all stakeholders, foster **open and transparent communication practices**, and create diverse opportunities to **build connections** and **engage with families and community** members in meaningful ways to promote a united and **socially just NPS community**.

- Continue funding a **district social worker** to provide resources and support students and families who face increasing challenges due to the pandemic
- Continue funding additional **adjustment counselors** at every school to build connections with every student and provide a daily source of additional support

Teaching & Learning

Provide engaging, inclusive and culturally proficient learning environments that nurture individual student growth and **close access, academic and opportunity gaps through effective instructional practices, smooth transitions between grades and buildings, aligned curriculum, and robust student support.**

- Continue funding **LBLD teacher at NES** to help close academic gap for our students with language-based learning deficiencies exacerbated by the loss of instruction during the pandemic
- Increase in **technology** budget to support replacement of Chromebooks, which have become an integral tool to providing our students with robust instruction
- Maintain increased # of **instructional assistants** to support the academic success of our students with disabilities

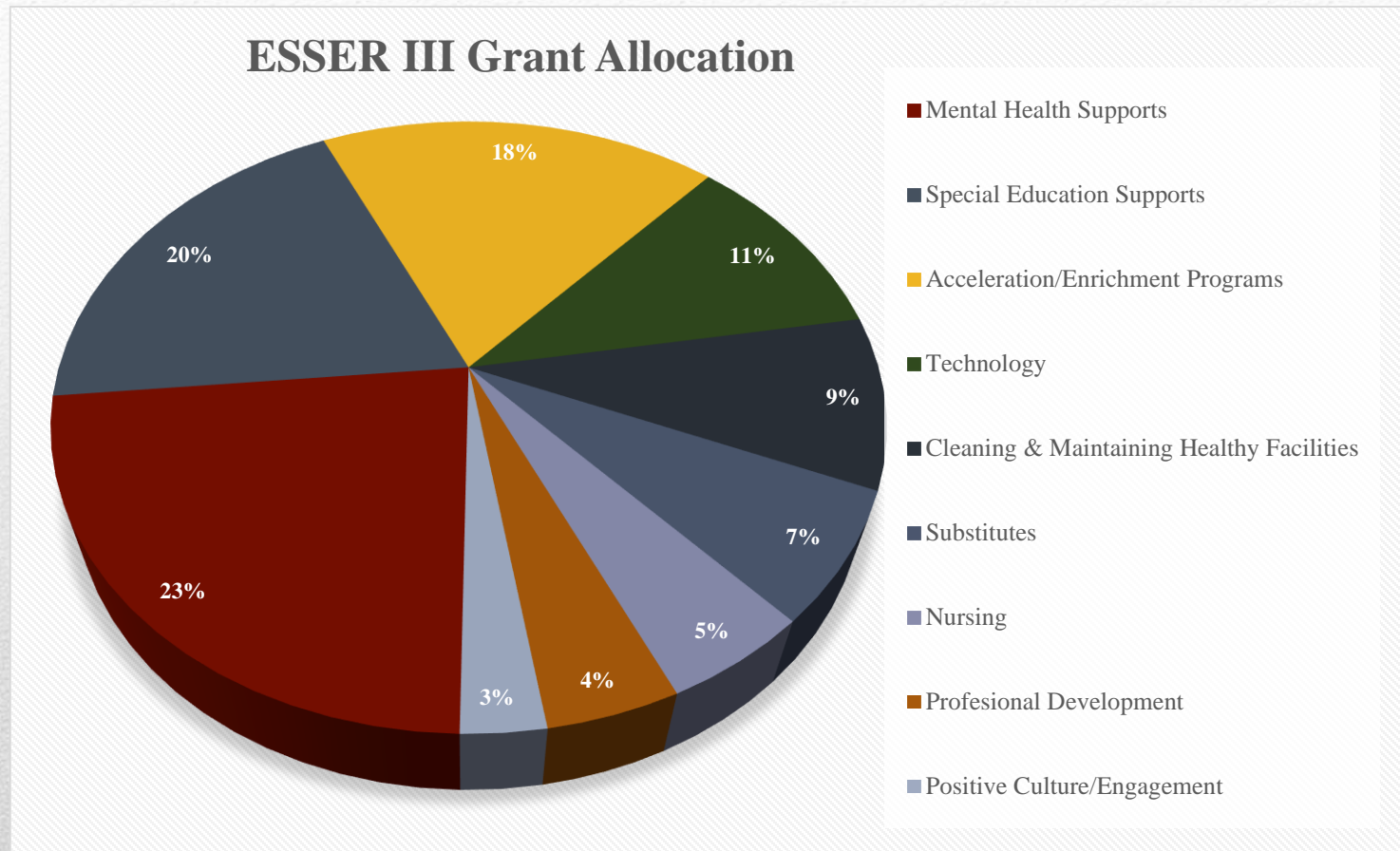
ESSER III – COVID Grant Funding

Positions Included in the FY23 Budget

School	Position	FTE
District	Social Worker	1.0
NES	Adjustment Counselor	1.0
MS	Adjustment Counselor	1.0
HS	Adjustment Counselor	0.2
NES	Language-Based Learning Disability Teacher	1.0
NES	Instructional Assistants	5.0
NES	Custodian - Nights	1.0
NES	Custodian - Days	0.5
NES	Nurse	0.5
District	Nurse Administrative Assistant	1.0
	Total Budgeted for Positions Above:	\$503,758

- Positions added in FY22
- Grant funds allocated to sustain positions through FY24

ESSER III – COVID Grant Funding



- Total allocation: \$2,174,018
- Funding period: 10/1/2021 – 9/30/2024

FY23 Budget Process

- November 2021: School Committee set budget parameters:
 - Level services budget
 - Reorganization of positions/programs to align with current needs (net neutral)
 - Further review upon notice of available revenue
 - December 2021: Site based managers submitted detailed level services budget to Superintendent
 - January 2022: Continued meetings with site-based managers to discuss proposed budgets and staff re-organizations
 - February 2022: Meeting with Town Manager to discuss available revenue; meeting with school committee to review current year budget status
 - February 2022: School Committee met with site based managers to review level services budget detail and proposed staff re-organizations
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FY23 Revenue (current projections)

Chapter 70 State Aid: \$15,725,341

- Minimum required increase of \$30 per student
- Minimum required increases since 2014

Town Contribution: \$9,543,771

- Increase of \$469,280 over FY22

Appropriation: \$25,269,112

- Chapter 70 + Town Contribution
- Maintains 2% increase despite basically flat state aid increases

Year	Chapter 70	Increase	% of Appropriation
2018	15,473,041	69,150	67.5%
2019	15,539,941	66,900	66.4%
2020	15,603,931	63,990	65.5%
2021	15,603,931	-	64.3%
2022	15,664,621	60,690	63.3%
2023	15,725,341	60,720	62.2%

Year	Appropriation	\$ Increase	% Increase
2018	22,910,443	481,000	2.1%
2019	23,389,965	479,522	2.1%
2020	23,839,465	449,500	1.9%
2021	24,254,032	414,567	1.7%
2022	24,739,112	485,080	2.0%
2023	25,269,112	530,000	2.1%

FY23 Revenue (current projections)

- **Grants: \$2,033,469**

- Allocations for annual grants not announced until after July 1 – budgeted as level
- Typical grant funding included in operating budget ~1.0M to 1.2M
- FY23 budget utilizing FY22 carryover funds due to FY20/21 budget savings
- ESSER III funds for added staff positions included in grant funding (currently funded through FY24)

- **Revolvers: \$3,331,773**

- School Choice, PK Tuition, Circuit Breaker, Athletic Revolver, Transportation Revolver, Use of School
- Anticipated amount needed to fund proposed operating budget
- Closes the gap between the operating budget and the appropriation/grants
- Throughout the year, if operating budget expenses come in lower than budgeted, less revolver funds are utilized. If operating budget expenses come in higher, more revolver funds could be utilized (or reductions made).

FY2022 Revolver Projections

Starting Balance	3,735,407
2022 Revenue	2,007,879
2022 Expense	2,778,571
Ending Balance	2,964,715

FY2023 Revolver Projections

Starting Balance	2,964,715
2023 Revenue	1,786,603
2023 Expense	3,331,773
Ending Balance	1,419,545

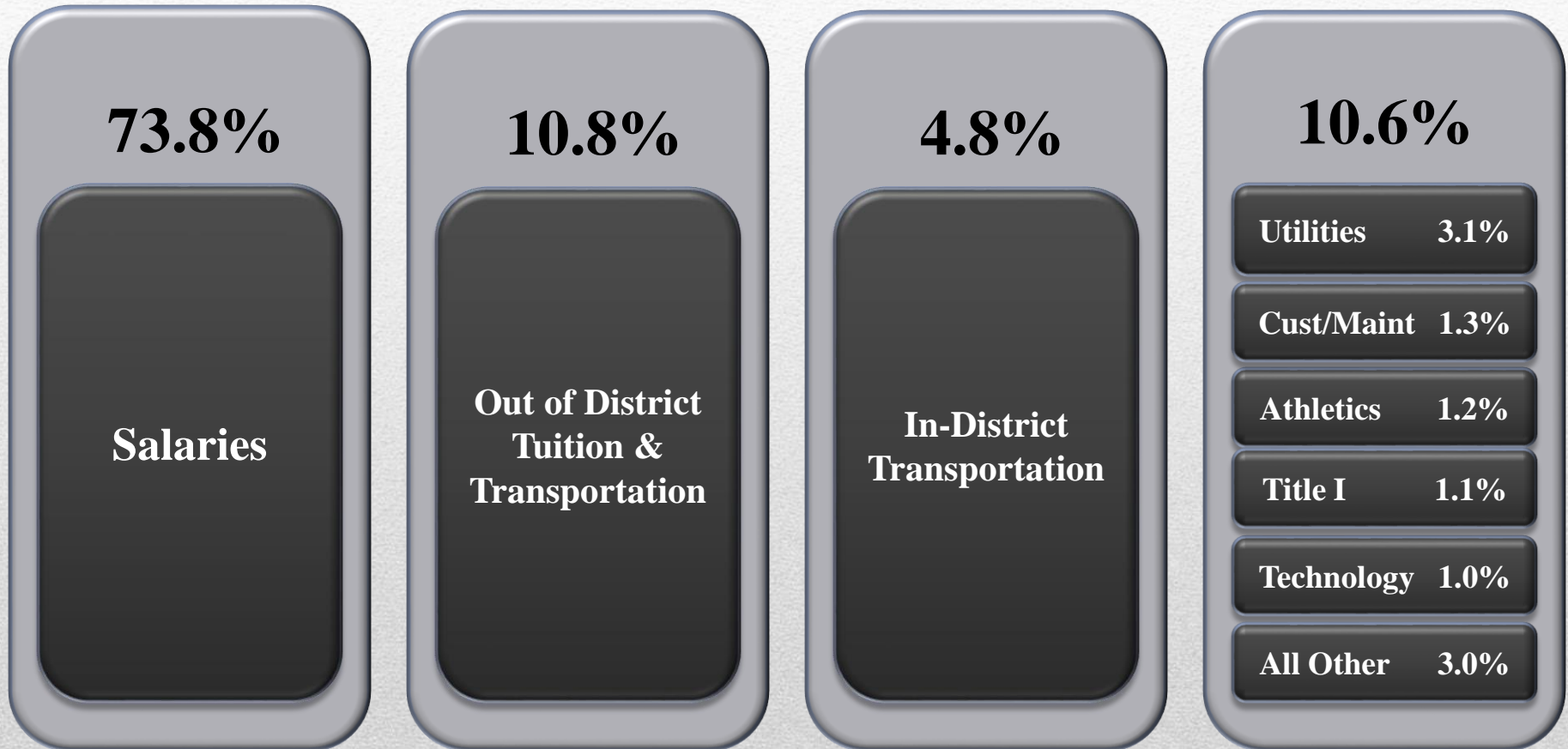
FY22 operating budget expenses are trending under budget = less expenses to be paid from FY22 revolvers = higher FY22 revolver ending balance = additional revolver funds to carry forward into FY23 & FY24

FY23 Superintendent's Recommended Budget

\$30,634,354

- \$1,381,410 or 4.72% increase over FY22 Updated Budget
 - FY22 Original vs. FY22 Updated
 - FY22 Original was the SC approved budget for FY22 voted in March of 2021
 - FY22 Updated includes SC voted approved additions since that time, i.e. added grant positions, additional PK teacher and PK para (tuition funded), MS Sports, etc. but also includes current year reduced expenses, i.e. salary for pro-rated positions vs full year positions, unpaid leaves of absence, resignation/retirement replacement salary savings, etc. Some reduced expenses in FY22 are one time, and some continue in FY23.
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FY23: Where Does the Money Go?



All Other includes: Supplies/Materials/Text (0.9%); Professional Development (0.2%); Instructional Contracted Services (1.0%); Other Expenses (0.9%)

FY2023 Superintendent's Recommended Budget

Category	FY 2022 Updated	FY 2023 Proposed	Increase/ Decrease	% Change
Salary/Other Compensation	21,551,260	22,598,133	1,046,873	4.9%
Supplies/Materials/Texts	235,577	269,069	33,491	14.2%
Professional Development	84,267	70,902	(13,365)	-15.9%
Instructional Contracted Services	255,923	294,404	38,481	15.0%
Athletics	332,431	376,153	43,722	13.2%
Technology	271,237	301,073	29,836	11.0%
Utilities	925,188	947,478	22,290	2.4%
Custodial/Maintenance	388,053	385,453	(2,600)	-0.7%
Transportation	1,404,850	1,469,199	64,349	4.6%
Out of District Tuition & Trans	3,191,664	3,309,906	118,242	3.7%
Title I	338,310	342,080	3,770	1.1%
Other Expenses	274,184	270,503	(3,680)	-1.3%
	29,252,944	30,634,354	1,381,410	4.72%

- Other expenses includes: copiers, legal, dues, accreditation. advertising, Medicaid billing, postage, MTRS grant expenses, etc.

FY23 Expense Drivers

Category	Increase/ (Decrease)	Notes
Salaries	\$1,046,873	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps/Lanes/Across the Board % increases (ATBs) • 5 union contracts not yet negotiated for FY23 • Pro-rated position in FY22 (i.e. mid year hire) = Full year in FY23 • Minimum wage increase / increase in substitute rates • Limited teacher retiree offsets (2 mid year, 1 June 2022)
Out of District Tuition & Transportation	\$ 118,242	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 students in FY23 vs 31 students with placements in FY22 • 5 less placements (graduating/aging out) • 3 additional placements (2 OOD students moved into Northbridge) • Transportation: 3 less runs; higher daily rates = small decrease
Transportation	\$64,349	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.6% increase in-district regular and 3.2% increase in district special ed contract rates • Increased Vocational/Foster/McKinney Vento daily rates = need is unknown in advance – budget based on past incidence
Athletics	\$43,722	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time Athletic Director • Athletic Trainer vs EMT – student safety, additional MIAA requirements for coverage • Maintain MS sports

Reorganization of Positions: Transfers

School	Position	FTE		School	Position	FTE
NES	Grade 4 Teacher	1.0	→	NES	Grade 3 Teacher	1.0
NES	Instructional Technologist	0.5	→	NES	Technology Teacher	0.5

- Transfer Grade 4 teacher to Grade 3 as the current small Grade 3 class moves up to Grade 4
- Increase two sections of related arts per day to accommodate scheduling needs for 7 grade levels.
- Keeping 8 sections of Kindergarten budgeted – unknown incoming class size

2021-2022 Average Class Size				2022-2023 Estimated Class Size		
Grade	2021-2022 Enrollment	Sections	Class Size	2022-2023 Enrollment*	Sections	Class Size
Kindergarten	153	8	19.1	150	8	18.8
Grade 1	157	8	19.6	153	8	19.1
Grade 2	153	7	21.9	157	7	22.4
Grade 3	120	6	20.0	153	7	21.9
Grade 4	131	7	18.7	120	6	20.0
Grade 5	147	7	21.0	131	7	18.7

Enrollment figures based on 12-21-21 iPass enrollment report

*2022-2023 is estimated – planning for current class enrollment

Reorganization of Positions: Additions

School	Position Added	Current FTE	New FTE
District	Athletic Director	Stipend	1.0
High	Library Clerk	0.5	1.0
Middle	Music Teacher	0.5	1.0
NES	1:1 Nurse	.74	1.0

- Increase AD to FT. This reduces the need for administration to be present at every MS or HS athletic event, as well as provides improved communication to families and athletes and increased efficiency of sports scheduling and programming.
- Current AD covers HS library in the mornings when it is primarily used for research by students attending with their teachers; full-time HS Library Clerk will allow for teachers to send students to library to do independent research, check out books, or use the space to study, etc. (FT HS librarian transferred to NES in FY22)
- Increase MS Music to 1.0 FTE to support expansion of the middle school music and chorus programming as a feeder to the HS and provide more flexibility/options when scheduling related arts courses. (NES has expanded their band/chorus programming and those students will feed into NMS programs.)
- Currently 1:1 Nurse supports a student in the four day PK program, which is 137 school days per year, next year, when this student moves to Kindergarten, support will be needed for 180 school days

Reorganization of Positions: Additions

School	Position Added	FTE
NES	RISE Teacher K-2 (Intensive Special Needs)	1.0
NES (MS/HS)	Floater Secretary Substitute	0.8

- Over the last two years, the number of students being served in PK-1 RISE Program at NES has increased from 12 to 19. This caseload is untenable for one teacher to provide ALL students with specially designed instruction that addresses their IEP goals. The addition of a K-2 RISE teacher will split the caseload and allow both teachers to provide high quality instruction to our students with the highest needs.
- Lack of trained coverage when a school secretary is absent – floater substitute will be trained in process, procedure, and software systems to provide appropriate coverage at all schools
- Position will be stationed at NES to assist in the main office when no other secretaries are absent as that school only has 2 secretaries to support over 950 students and 160+ staff members
- Currently paying overtime and/or substitute costs for secretarial coverage

Reorganization of Positions: Restructure

School	Position	FTE		School	Position	FTE
District	Occupational Therapist	0.5	→	District	Occupational Therapist	0.6
District	COTA	1.0		District	COTA	0.6
MS/HS	EL Paraprofessional	1.0	→	MS/HS	EL Teacher	1.0

- Part-time OT was added to the budget 2.5 days a week in FY22 through ARPA grant funds due to an increased number of evaluations, as well an increase in the number of students starting at the elementary level who were not previously identified (due to COVID closure)
- Increase part-time OT from 2.5 days to 3 days a week and reduce COTA from 5 days to 3 days a week for FY23 to address the continued projected increase in evaluations and the need for licensed staff to complete testing/evaluations; additionally, OT hours vs COTA hours are required as several new students have been identified with significant needs who require the services of a highly trained OT
- FY2022 – 4 EL teacher positions originally budgeted
- September 2021 – EL teacher position became vacant; instead of hiring replacement teacher, position was reorganized to EL para based on EL enrollment numbers and levels at that time
- Current and projected EL enrollment numbers and levels warrant reorganizing back to 4 EL teachers instead of 3 EL teachers and 1 EL para

Reorganization of Positions: Reductions

School	Position Reduced	FTE
NES	Lunch Aides Reduce hours from 3 (budgeted) to 2.5 (current actual)	.31
Admin/Old NES	Part-time Custodian	.40
District	OOD Van Driver	.50

- When the FY22 budget was built, the schedule for NES lunches had not been finalized – lunch aides were budgeted at 3 hours per day; the current schedule requires 2.5 hours per day of coverage for 5 out of 6 lunch aides – 1 lunch aide remains budgeted at 3 hours to assist with PK lunch
- The Administration building used to be cleaned by a part-time custodian who also assisted with cleaning at the old NES. When additional custodial support through grant funding was added to the new NES, the role of cleaning the Admin building was assigned to an exiting NES custodian, reducing the need for this separate part-time position
- Our current in-house out of district van driver is retiring towards the end of the current school year at the conclusion of her existing van run. Due to the ongoing driver shortage, this position is not planned to be filled for FY23 at this time as it will be increasingly difficult to maintain appropriate coverage for this position on a full-time basis – this position can be revisited in the future when van drivers and van driver substitutes are more readily available

Reorganization of Positions: Reductions

School	Position Reduced	FTE
NES	Title I Literacy Specialist (grant funded)	1.0
High School	Computer Teacher (retirement)	1.0

- The Title I model at NES is currently staffed with one Literacy Specialist and three Title I Tutors – next year Title I at NES will be staffed with four Title I Tutors and the remaining grant funds will fund the Middle School Reading Specialist initially added and funded by ESSER funds
- One of the HS Computer Teachers is retiring at the end of the 21-22 school year. Instead of filling that position, the most popular computer courses will be maintained and additional electives will be added across other subject levels to ensure an appropriate number of classes for scheduling

Reorganization Summary

FTE Positions Reduced:	4.61
FTE Positions Added:	5.16
Total FTE's Added:	0.54

Net Cost: \$26,728

Looking Ahead to FY2024

- The proposed FY23 budget utilizes \$3.3M in revolver funds to balance the budget. If \$1.7 million is received as revolver revenue for FY24 (~level to projected FY23), only \$2.1 million of revolver funds will be available to balance the FY24 budget in order to leave a \$1M balance. This is \$1.2 million less than is planned to be utilized in FY23.
- If FY22/FY23 expenses comes in under budget and less revolver funds are needed to balance the budgets in those years, and/or if FY22/FY23 revolver revenue comes in higher than projected, additional revolver funds will be available to help fund the FY24 budget.
- ESSER III grant funds are currently written to sustain the recently added grant-funded positions through FY24; along with continuing to address COVID related needs and student acceleration; however, District priorities for this grant funding will need to be reassessed in FY24 depending on total available budget funding.
- Funding challenges: state aid increases are minimal; appropriation increases have been limited to ~2% of total appropriation; FY22 carryover grant funds will be utilized in FY23, but FY23 grant funds are also slated to be utilized in FY23 and not carried over to FY24 = less grant funds available for FY24; and more revolver funds are budgeted to be utilized than replenished. We have continued to push off and prolong the time until the next large budget deficit, but unless the FY22 and FY23 budgets come in significantly under budget, or an additional revenue source presents itself, sustaining the current level of services budgeted for FY23 in the FY24 budget will be extremely challenging

FY2023 Revolver Projections	
Starting Balance	2,964,715
2023 Revenue	1,786,603
2023 Expense	3,331,773
Ending Balance	1,419,545

FY2024 Revolver Projections	
Starting Balance	1,419,545
2024 Revenue	1,700,000
2024 Expense	2,119,545
Ending Balance	1,000,000

Summary

- Level services operating budget for FY23 requires a \$1,381,410 or 4.72% increase over FY22
- Chapter 70 only increased by the minimum \$30 per student, or \$60,720 and the Town Contribution increased by \$469,280 resulting in the school department's appropriation increasing by 2.1% = \$530,000
- \$3.3 million will be spent from revolver accounts to help fund the budget, leaving a \$1.4 million available balance
- Salaries – contract obligations – main reason for budget increase – followed by OOD Tuition, Transportation, and Athletics
- Re-organization of positions = close to neutral: net 0.54 FTE's added; \$26,728 net cost
- ESSER grant funding continues to be available for FY23 to sustain added grant positions and to help support the resources necessary to meet the current academic, social, and emotional needs of our students.
- Based on current revenue projections, a lesser amount of funding will be available to fund the budget in FY24, resulting in an anticipated revenue shortfall

Important Upcoming Dates

- Presentation to Finance Committee – March 9, 2022
- Public Hearing – March 22, 2022
- School Committee Votes on the Budget – April 12, 2022
- Annual Spring Town Meeting – May 3, 2022