

What's Driving the Cost of Public Education?





JOSH VADALA

**Superintendent of Schools
Peabody**



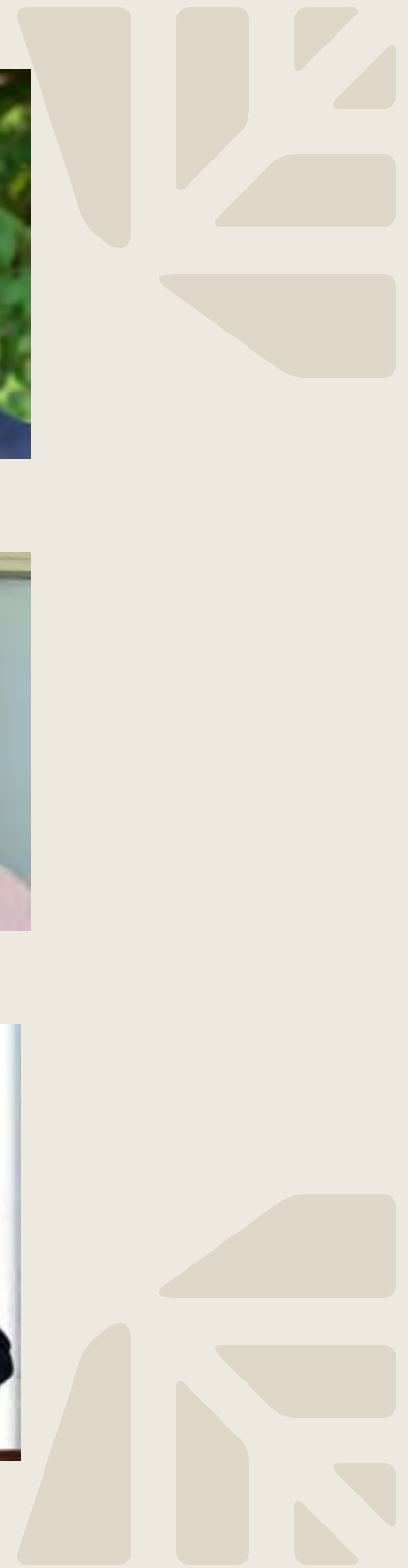
SEAN MANGANO

**Executive Director of Finance
Holyoke**



KEVIN DUMAS

**Town Manager
Mansfield**

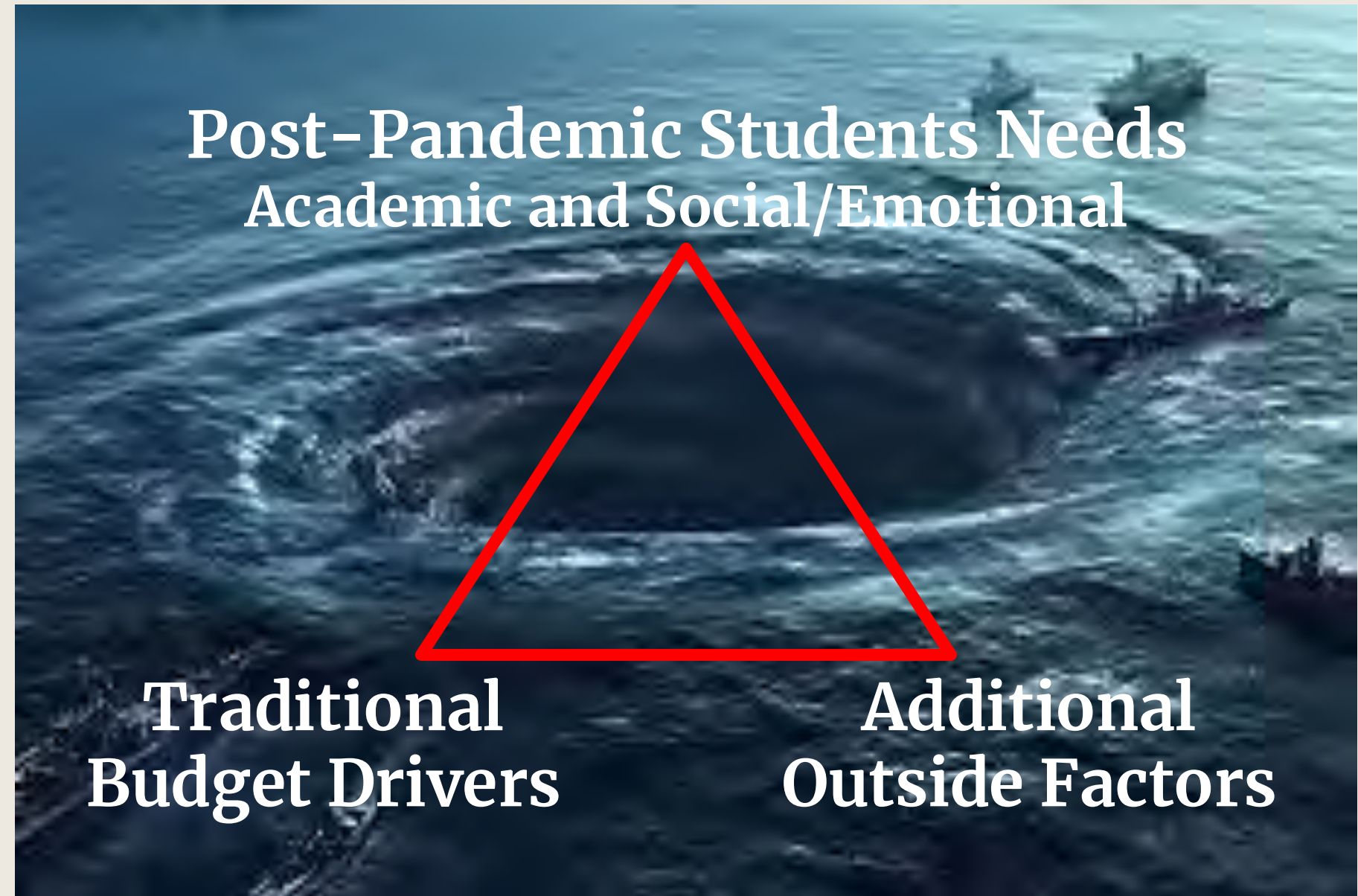


What Factors are Contributing to Increasing Budgets?

Perspectives from the field



The Bermuda Triangle of School Budgeting





Post - Pandemic Learning Loss

Will This School Year Be Another Casualty of the Pandemic?
 Key Findings from the American Educator Panels Fall 2020 COVID-19 Surveys

National study shows test scores decline post-pandemic
 CBS New York
 1.05M subscribers
 Subscribe

COVID-19 is a serious threat to aid to education recovery

DID YOU KNOW?
 BLACK AND LATINO STUDENTS CAN EXPERIENCE
12-16 MONTHS OF LEARNING LOSS
 DUE TO SCHOOL CLOSURES

Summer School As a Learning Loss Recovery Strategy After COVID-19:

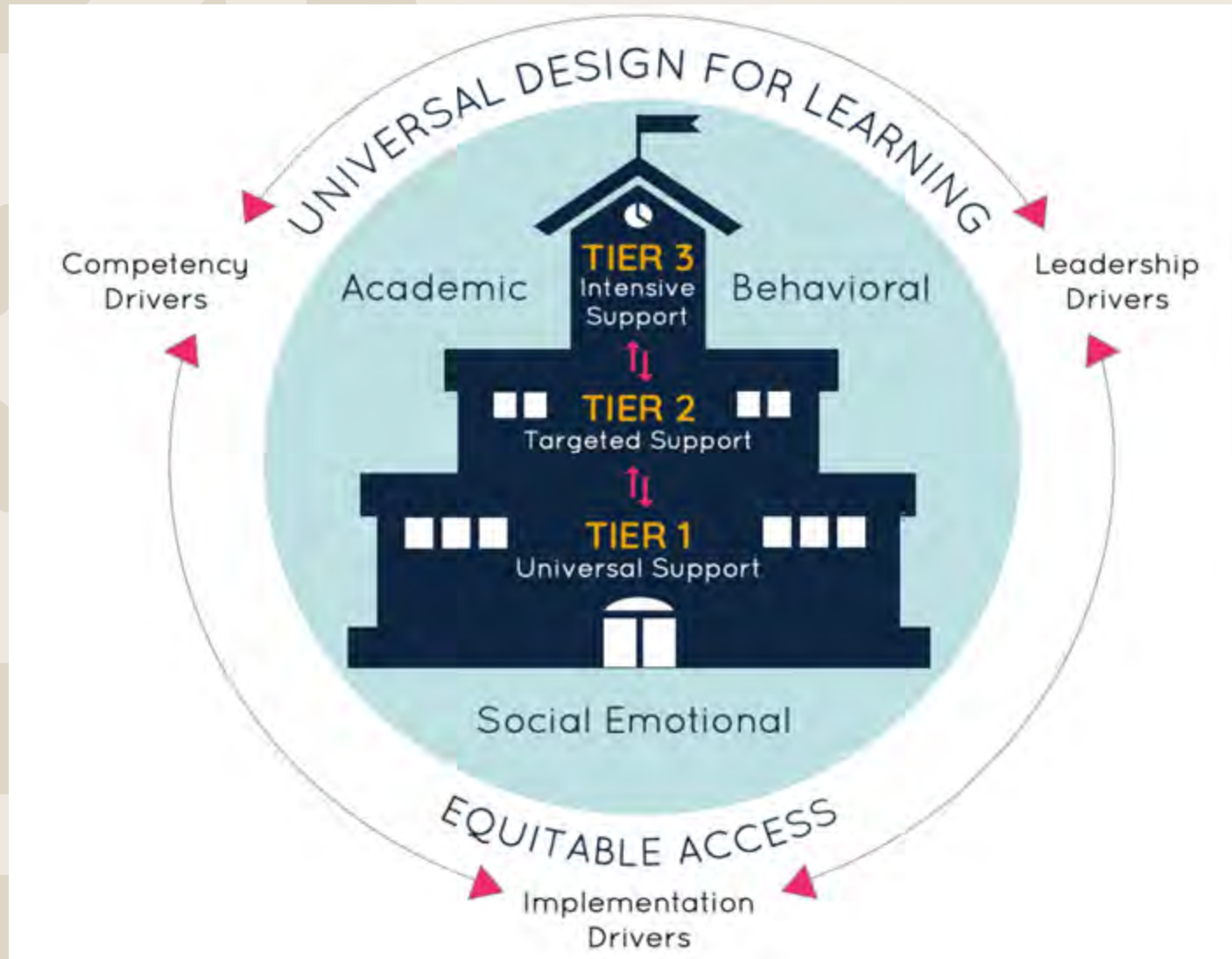
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
Two Decades of Progress, Nearly Gone: National Math, Reading Scores Hit Historic Lows

Subject	Average Loss	Worst Case	Best Case
Reading	116 days	183 days	57 days
Percent of 180 days	64%	101%	71%
Math	215 days	232 days	136 days
Percent of 180 days	119%	129%	75%



Post - Pandemic Learning Loss

How School Districts are Responding



- **Smaller Class Size (staff) ↑**
- **More Interventionists (staff) ↑**
- **Increase Paraprofessionals**
- **Curriculum Adoption (\$\$\$)**
 - High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) - (recurring \$)
- **Professional Development (\$)**
- **Technology Needs (\$\$\$)**
 - Replacing devices purchased with ESSER funding

Responding to Social and Emotional Needs



Different Students = Different Types of Support



Stress



Social Media



Attention



Depression

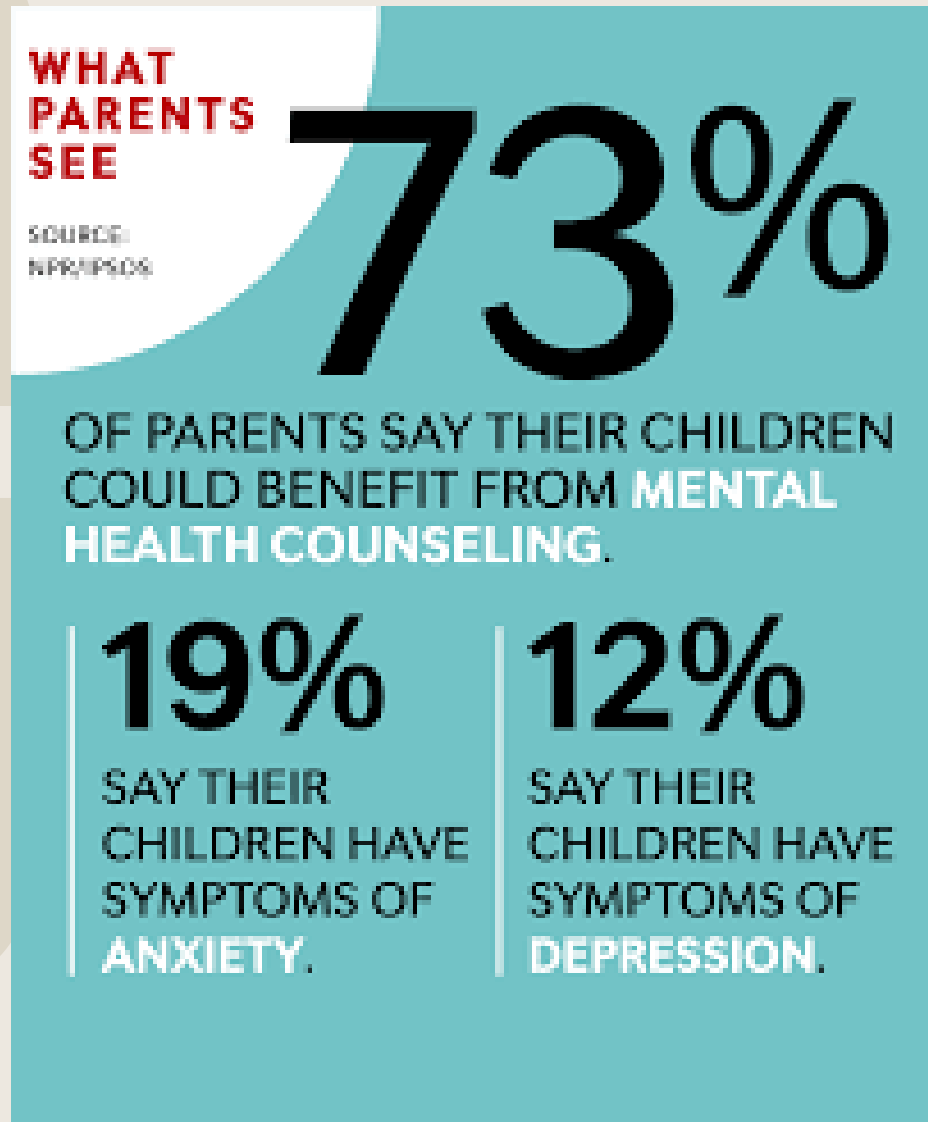


Bullying



Acting Out

Mental Health Supports in School Budgets



- **Additional Counselors (staff↑)**
- **Support Staff (staff↑)**
 - BCBAAs (Behavior Analysts)
 - School Psychologists
 - Paraprofessionals
- **School Safety Needs (\$\$\$)**
 - School Resource Officers
 - Door Access Systems
 - Security Cameras
 - Communication Systems

Traditional Budget Drivers



- **Health Insurance (\$\$\$)**
 - Additional Staff and Increasing cost of coverage
- **Special Education (\$\$\$)**
 - More students Identified
 - More Out Placements
 - OSD 14% increase
- **Transportation (\$\$\$)**
 - Homeless and Foster Care
 - Special Ed in district and OOD
 - Driver Shortage increases operating costs

Outside Contributing Factors

Pressure from all Sides



- **Collective Bargaining**
 - Salary Increases
 - Additional Leave
 - Class Size and/or Caseload limits
 - Solicit support from parents, students and elected officials
- **Demographic Changes**
 - Language Supports (Additional Teachers, Translators, etc.)
- **Legislative Changes**
 - Unfunded Mandates
- **Student Opportunity Act**
- **Chapter 70 Funding**

What does the data say?

Perspectives from the field



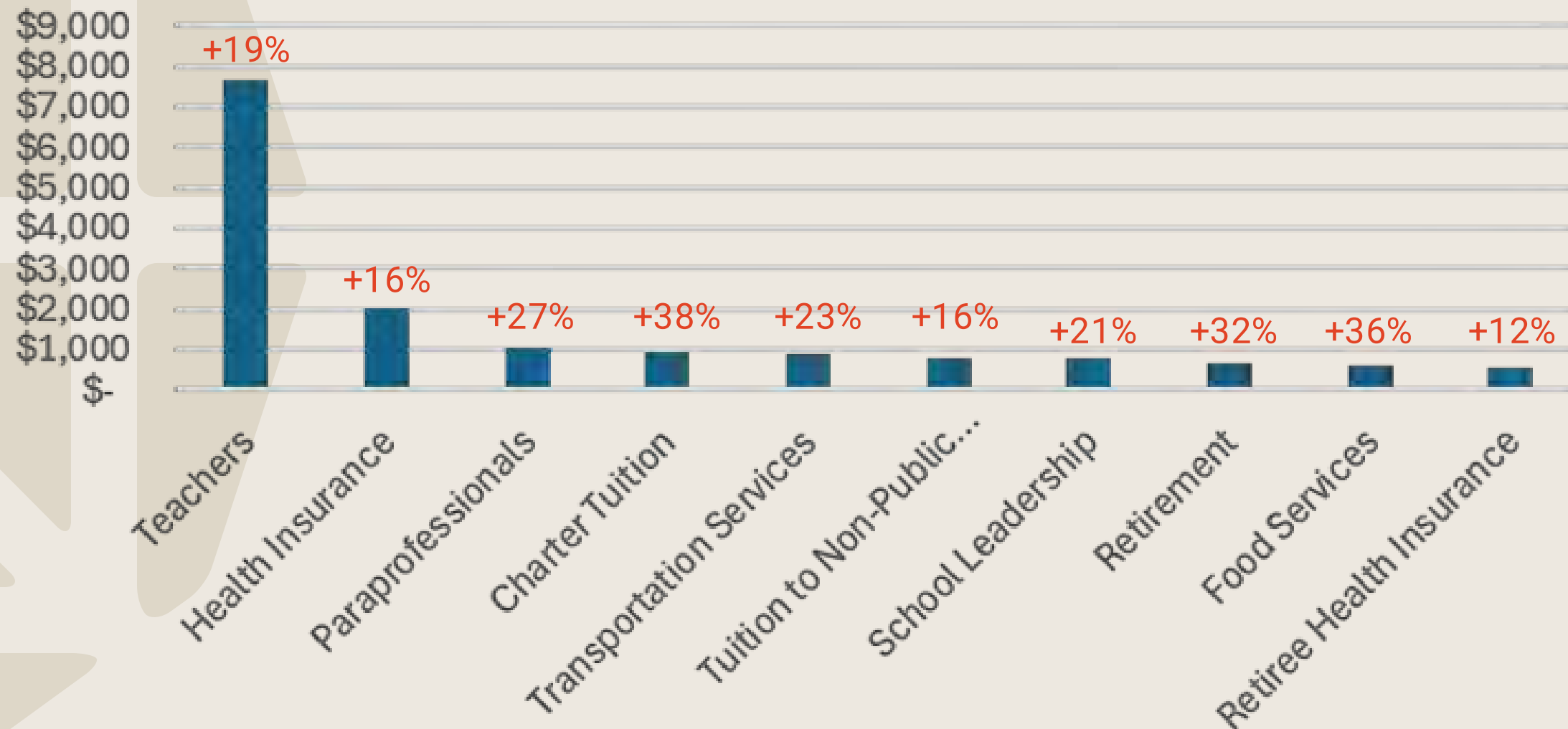
What Does the Data Say?

FY19 - FY23 General Fund Spending Growth



What are Schools Spending Money On?

Top Ten Spending Categories 2023 Per Pupil Spending



+/- % from
FY19 to
FY23

Teachers

+ 5.00%

Schools added 3,752 teachers from FY19 to FY24

Enrollment dropped 36,672 students from FY19 to FY24

- 3.85%

Student Opportunity Act



Unprecedented Investment in Our Public Schools

Modernizes School Funding Formula

Empowers Districts to Develop Educational Goals

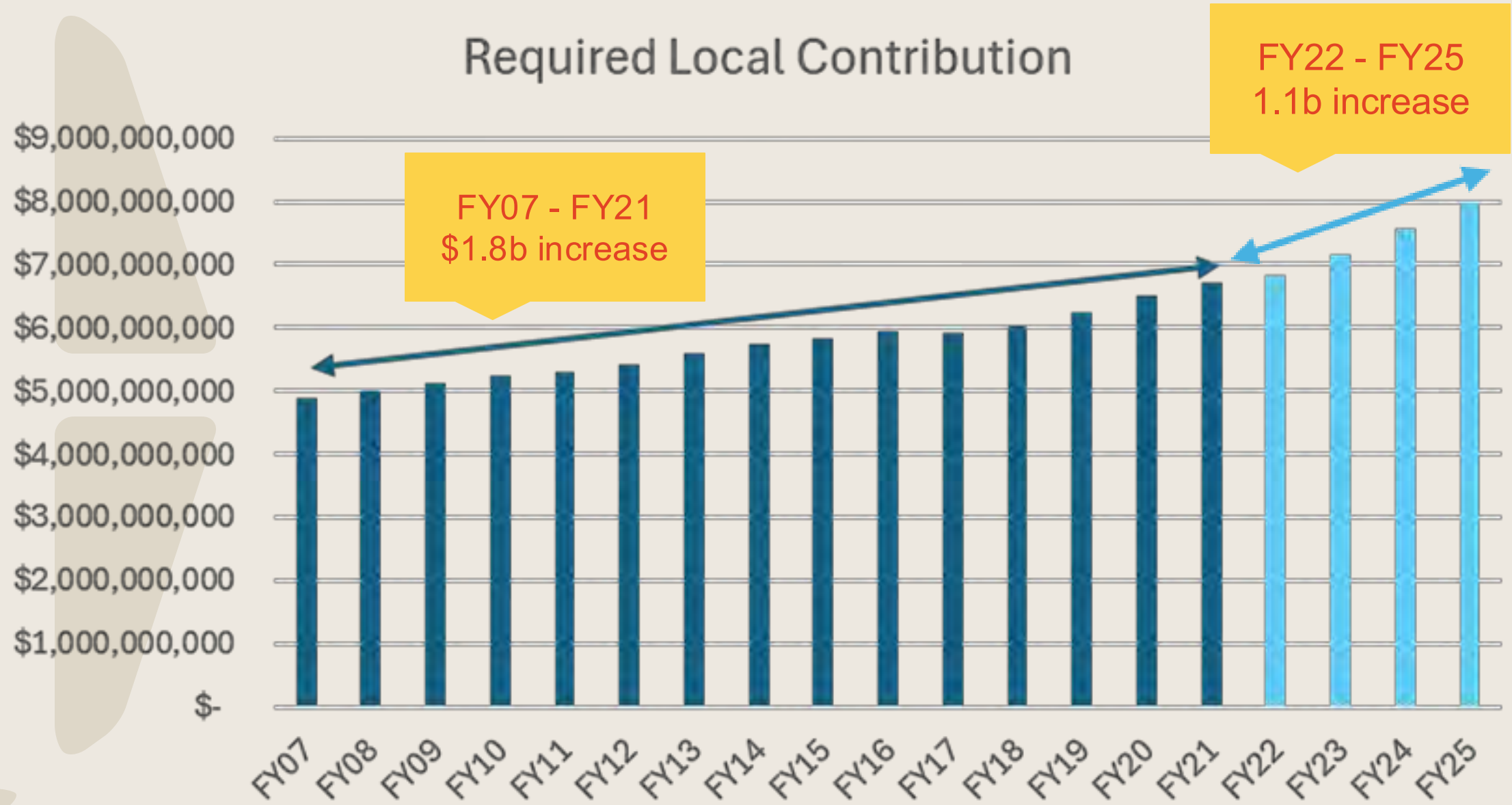
Provides Resources to Close Opportunity Gaps



The General Court of Massachusetts

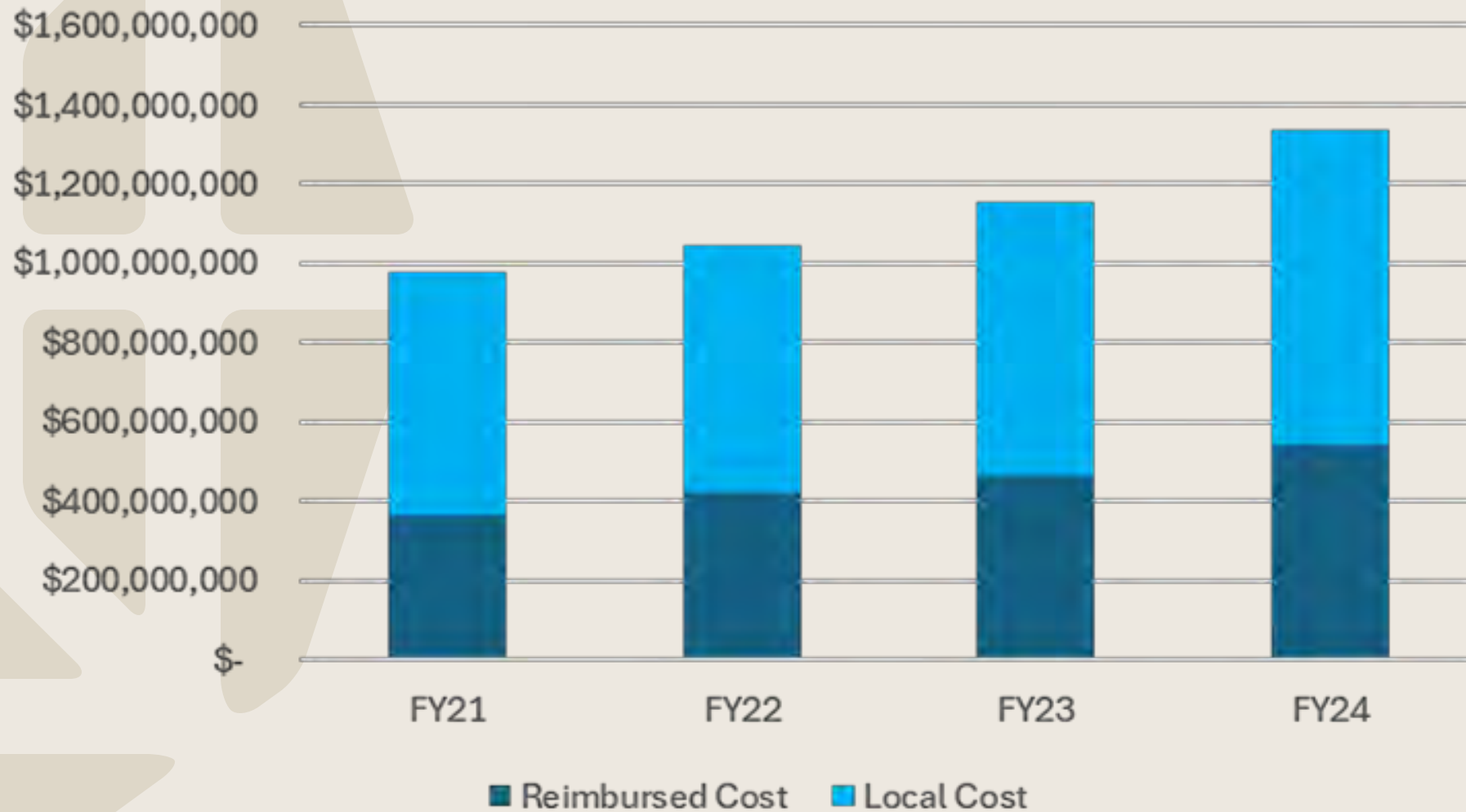
- **Required Local Contribution** the minimum amount of money the city must appropriate for education as determined by the Chapter 70 formula.

Student Opportunity Act



Special Education Costs

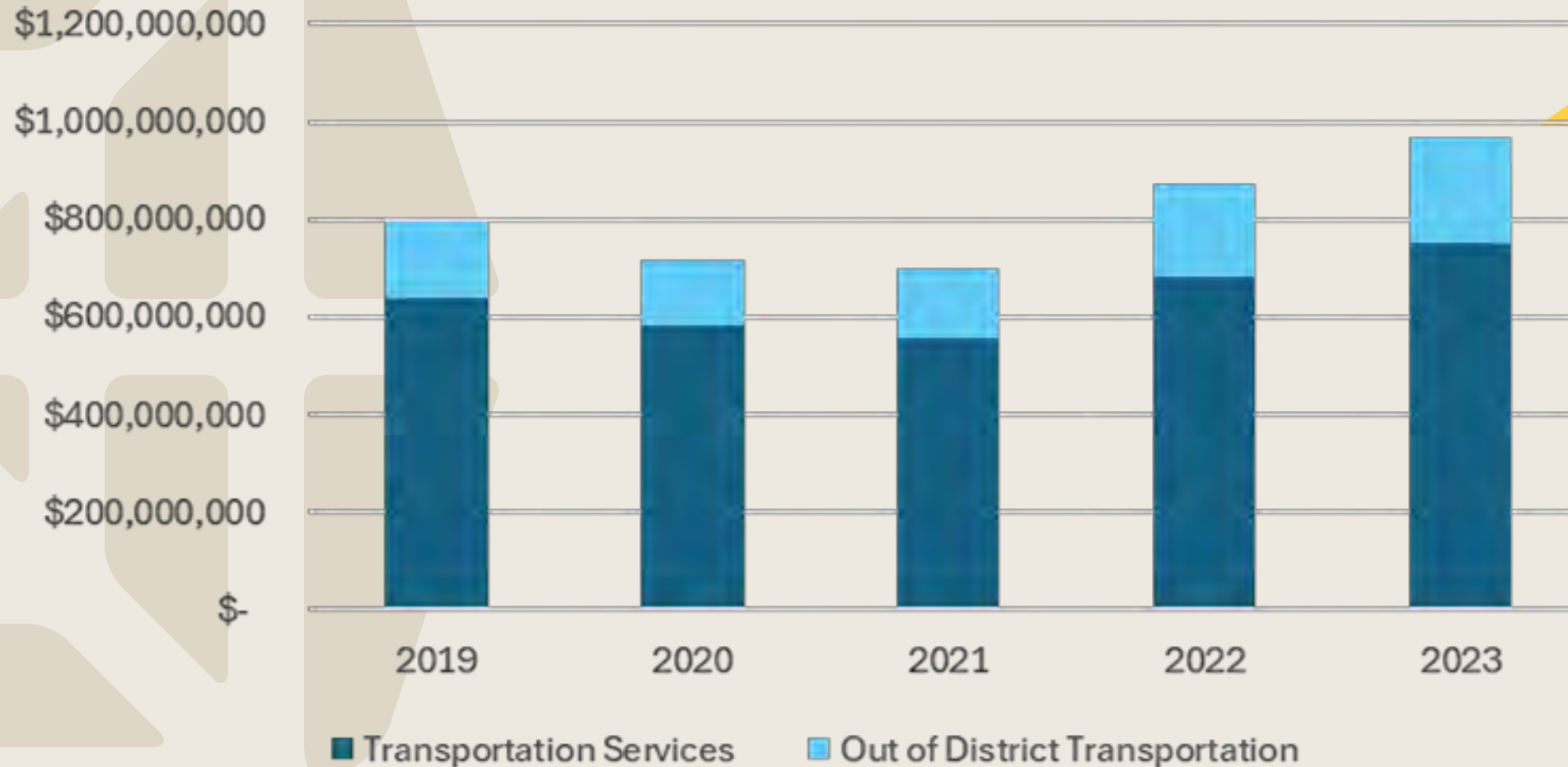
Circuit Breaker Eligible
Special Education Costs



Costs have increased 37% over four years

Transportation

School Transportation Spending



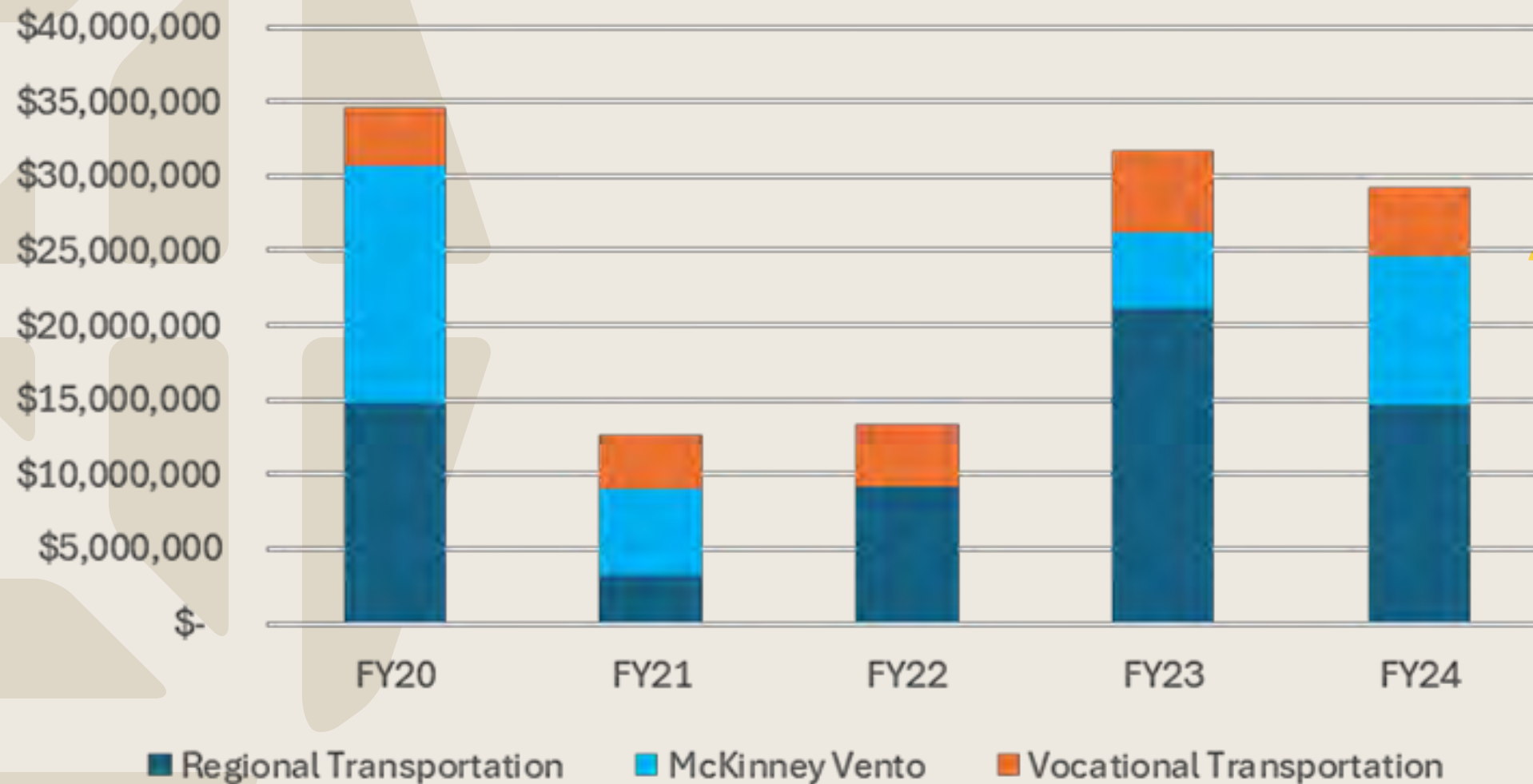
\$1 billion spent on school transportation services annually.

+18% over 5 years

+38% over 5 years

Transportation Reimbursements

Unreimbursed Transportation Costs

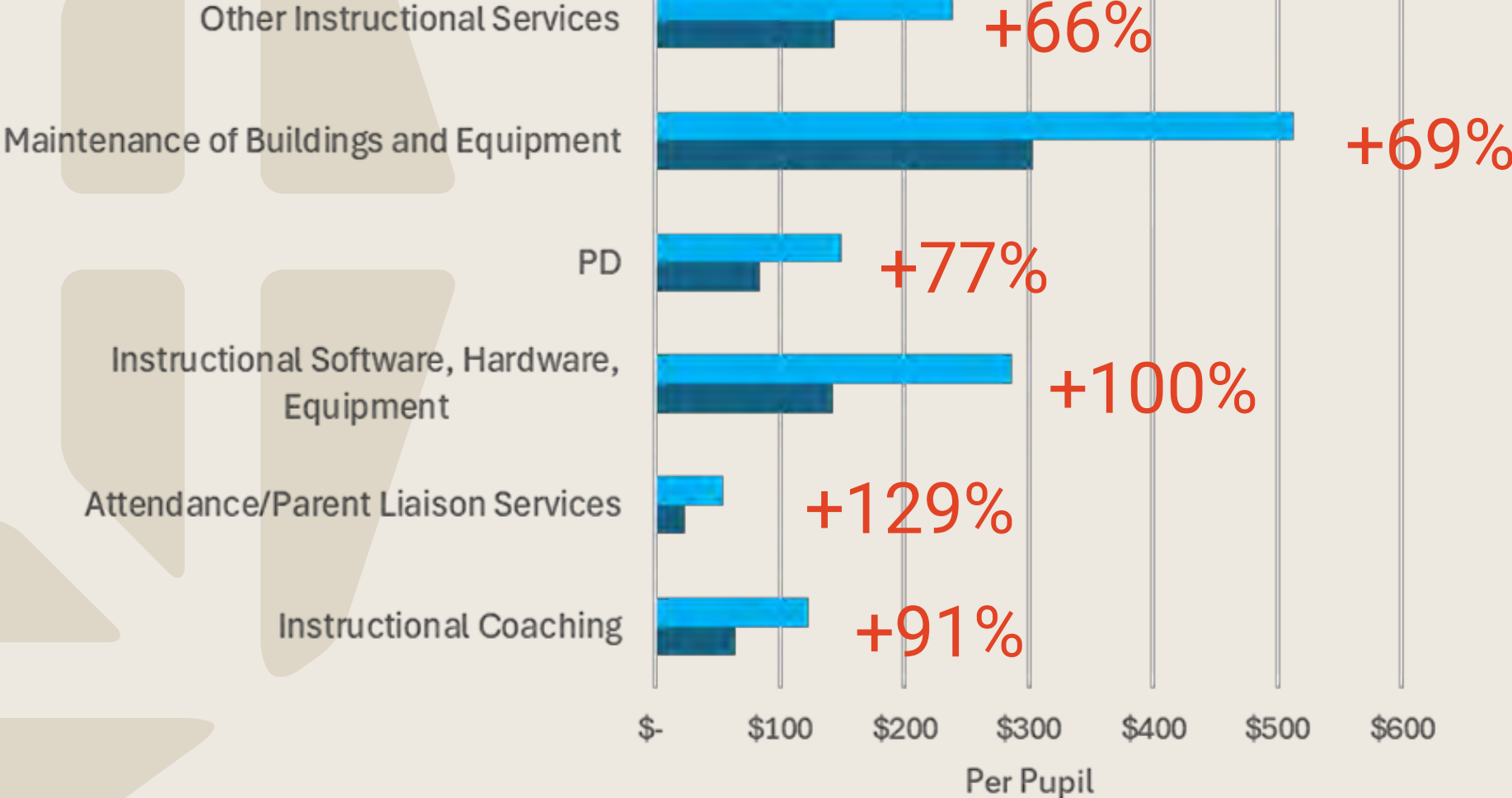


- Unreimbursed costs in FY24 total 29.2m
- Unreimbursed costs over the five years total 121.6m

Other Impactful Costs

Other Cost Drivers

2023 2019



PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FROM A LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



CONNECT 

TOWN OF MANSFIELD

"ONE TOWN, ONE-
BUDGET"

PRESENTATION

"ONE-TOWN, ONE BUDGET PROCESS"

HOW DID "ONE-TOWN, ONE BUDGET" EMERGE?

- From 2010-2012 - Annual Fiscal Year Budget pressures for School needs collide with Town needs
- Pressures of the economic impact of a recent recession (2008-2009)
- Communication gap between Elected and Appointed Officials
- Intensively strained relations between Town & School Administration
- Public's Disapproval and Dissatisfaction of its Local Government



CONNECT 

TOWN OF MANSFIELD

"ONE TOWN, ONE-
BUDGET"
PRESENTATION

PUTTING "ONE-TOWN, ONE BUDGET" INTO ACTION

- A new Town Manager and New School Superintendent hired
- A Budget Sub-Committee was formed with 2 members from:
 - ❑ School Committee
 - ❑ Select Board
 - ❑ Finance Committee
- Trust is built – established needs and consensus building begins
- Communication is occurring between all groups
- Financial policies for the Town are created to rebuild financial structure and security – eliminate the use of "one-time monies"



TOWN OF MANSFIELD

"ONE TOWN, ONE-
BUDGET"
PRESENTATION

FINANCIAL POLICIES ARE ESTABLISHED

- All 3 bodies approved the cash reserve & stabilization policies:
 - School Committee
 - Select Board
 - Finance Committee

➤ **Adopted Best Practices:**

➤ **Stabilization & Free Cash Usage...**

- *Not for Operating Budget use*
- *One-Time use only*
- *Repayment to fund*
- *Established target balances*
- *3% -5% free cash*
- *At least 5% stabilization*
- *Direct impact bond rating*



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TOWN OF MANSFIELD

"ONE TOWN, ONE-
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PRESENTATION

CREATION OF TRI-BOARD MEETINGS

MAKING SURE INFORMATION IS SHARED DIRECTLY:

- 3 years ago we created an additional layer of communication with the establishment of the Tri-Board Meeting consisting of the all member of the following:

- School Committee
- Select Board
- Finance Committee

- Budget Subcommittee Meetings are followed with a Tri-Board Meeting throughout the budget process



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TOWN OF MANSFIELD

"ONE TOWN, ONE-
BUDGET"
PRESENTATION

PUBLIC ACCESS & TRANSPARENCY

THE MOST INFORMATION IN ONE PLACE - HOW WE ENHANCED OUR BUDGET PROCESS

➤ **Enhancing The Budget Process: In just 3 clicks from the
Town's website...**<https://www.mansfieldma.com/756/Budget-Subcommittee-Meetings-Data>

- ❑ Budget Subcommittee Meetings and data
- ❑ Summary of the purpose of our scheduled meetings
- ❑ Meeting minutes
- ❑ PowerPoint presentations
- ❑ On-demand video from Mansfield Cable Access
- ❑ **Mansfield** is the only community that we can find providing such transparency



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"ONE TOWN, ONE-
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PRESENTATION



PUBLIC ACCESS & TRANSPARENCY

Budget Information & Financial Updates

Members

The Budget Subcommittee is an ad hoc committee, consisting of two members of the Select Board, two members of the School Committee and two members of the Finance Committee. Each of these representatives shall be appointed on an annual basis by their respective committee chair, or by consensus.

Voting members, Changing Annually

- Sara Walsh - Finance Committee
- Jack Cooney - Finance Committee
- Lynn Cavicchi - School Committee
- Steve Schoonveld - School Committee
- Maureen R. Doherty - Select Board
- Walter L. Wilk - Select Board
- Kevin Dumas, Town Manager (*Non-voting Permanent Member*)
- Teresa Murphy, Superintendent (*Non-voting Permanent Member*)

In our continued efforts to outreach to our residents with the most up-to-date revised budget information, the Town Manager presents the following information for your review.

▼ [Budget Meetings & Presentations](#)

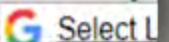
[FY 2026 Budget Meetings & Presentations](#)

[Archived: FY 2025 Budget Meetings & Presentations](#)

[Archived: FY2024 Budget Meetings Information](#)

▶ [FY2025 Budget](#)

▶ [FY2024 Current Budget](#)



TOWN OF MANSFIELD

"ONE TOWN, ONE-
BUDGET"
PRESENTATION

PUBLIC ACCESS & TRANSPARENCY

Budget Subcommittee Meetings & Data

FY2026 Budget Subcommittee Meetings & Data

On 9/19/2024 the Budget Subcommittee met with the Tri-Board Committees (Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee) in Meeting Room 3a/b at 6:00 pm at Town Hall. This meeting recording is viewable on the [Mansfield Cable](#) website and via virtual [webinar](#) using [this meeting link](#).

- 9.19.24 Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes- COMING SOON
- [9.19.24 Town Presentation](#)
- [9.19.24 Budget Subcommittee recording](#)

On 9/11/2024 the Budget Subcommittee met in Meeting Room 2a/b at 6:00 pm at Town Hall. The recording of this meeting is available on the Mansfield Cable Access website and via the link below.

- 9.11.24 Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes- COMING SOON
- [9.11.24 Budget Subcommittee recording](#)



TOWN OF MANSFIELD

"ONE TOWN, ONE-
BUDGET"
PRESENTATION

IN CONCLUSION

LEARNED LESSONS:

- Communication is key – All Boards receive the same monthly reports & budget data throughout the year
- Budget needs and parameters are established
- Town-wide Capital Improvement Projects discussed
- Annual Revenues and Expenses are agreed to annually
- In the end, we reach consensus and speak in unison at Town Meeting



CONNECT

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FROM A LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



Helpful Resources

Come back tomorrow! Workshop “Raising Revenue: Passing Debt Exclusions and Overrides,” Saturday, Jan. 25 1:30-2:45pm.

Chapter 70: Understanding the Funding Formula for Education (3/20/24)

This MMA webinar reviews key elements of Chapter 70, including components of the foundation budget, how local contribution and state aid are determined, and the phase-in of the Student Opportunity Act.

<https://www.mma.org/resource/chapter-70-understanding-the-funding-formula-for-education/>

Chapter 70 Resources Page, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

The Chapter 70 District Profiles and Chapter 70 Trends (data available towards the bottom of the list) are especially useful. This site also has aid and net school spending going back to FY2019 (earlier years are available upon request).

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/default.html>

FY19-FY23 Per Pupil Expenditure Data, DESE

Statewide data (that can be downloaded) showing all operating expenditures broken out by category.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.html>