



FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
March 4, 2026

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK  
RCUD 2026 MAR 19 PM12:52

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Monroe, Nicole Pacheco, Erik Andersen, Kelly Ochoa, Donna McKenna

MEMBERS ABSENT: Stephanie Pickup

STAFF PRESENT: Superintendent Tara Kohler, Assistant Superintendent Mark Balestracci, School Business Manager Nicole Potter

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Monroe at 6:30 pm.

***Approval of Minutes:***

A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to approve the February 11, 2026 Regular Session Minutes, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved (4-0) with one abstention of Mr. Monroe.

***Reports & Recommendations of the Superintendent:***

***Blizzard of 2026:***

Superintendent Kohler presented an update to the school calendar (attachment A) to the Committee, following the recent blizzard confirming that no state waiver is needed unless the school year extends beyond June 26. The last day of school is now scheduled as June 24. April vacation will remain unchanged, and Good Friday continues to be observed as a contractual holiday. Graduation is still set for May 31, though minor adjustments to senior schedules may be considered to ensure required instructional time is met. She emphasized that storm related closures do not produce cost savings, as contractual obligations and operational expenses continue, and in some cases increase due to damages and emergency response needs. Superintendent Kohler expressed appreciation for staff, volunteers, and Town departments, including Custodial and Food Service teams, as well as Police, Fire, and the BPW, for their coordinated efforts during the blizzard and shelter operations. The Committee members encouraged the public to communicate concerns through official channels rather than social media and noted the importance of accurate information sharing. Superintendent Kohler also thanked Ms. Ochoa's group for helping shovel the bus stops for the kids.

***Receive Update Regarding FY27 Budget:***

Superintendent Kohler again presented information supporting the draft FY27 budget (attachment B). She stated the FY27 budget request from the School Department is \$26,912,487 and the Net School Spending Number (NSS) is \$26,511,443. The Town has proposed \$26,105,176 without an override, which is -\$807,311 from the request and \$26,531,685 with an override, which is still negative, at -\$380,802. This also brings our number dangerously close to NSS, which Superintendent Kohler reminded everyone will have consequences from the State to the Town. She then went over the impacts, with and without the override. Without an override, there is a potential of reducing seven positions, a relocation of the Leroy L. Wood preschool to the East Fairhaven Elementary School to consolidate resources, increased class sizes at both elementary schools and Middle School, 7th and 8th grade transition from Middle School teams to a Junior High model, reduced unified arts and enrichment offerings and reduced counseling services for students district wide. She went on to note that with an override, there will still be a reduction of approximately three positions, increased class sizes at elementary schools, reduced unified arts and enrichment offerings at the Middle School, reduced counseling services for students, and consolidation of preschool programs. The Committee reiterated the importance of fully funding the schools and questioned whether other Town departments will be cut, even with an override. The discussion ensued regarding whether an override should be supported at this time.

***Upcoming Events:***

There is a joint meeting with the Finance Committee on March 10, 2026. The next School Committee Meeting will be held March 18, 2026.

***New Business:***

A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa to accept a \$600 donation from the Elizabeth Hastings Middle School PTO for the Kindness Project Presenters, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved (5-0).

A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to accept a donation of six teacher kits from the Kids in Need Foundation for the 26-27 school year, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved (5-0).

***Unfinished Business:***

***Update on Acushnet Tuition Agreement:***

Superintendent Kohler told the Committee that although they were still willing to have the meeting virtually during the blizzard, Acushnet opted to reschedule. She will notify them of the new date once she has it.

Superintendent Kohler went over the new administrative flexible summer hours with the Committee, noting they will be posted for the public.

***Questions from Individual Committee Members:***

Mr. Monroe stated they are working to put together a committee for the renaming of the softball field, following policy guidelines.

A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa to adjourn the meeting and go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining agreement or litigation and the chair so declares, not to return to open session, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Sheri Souza  
Secretary to the Fairhaven School Committee

Approved, March 18, 2026

# FAIRHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August/September 2025 (23 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
25	26	27	28	29
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22/29	23/30	24	25	26

October 2025 (21 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

November 2025 (17 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

December 2025 (17 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

January 2026 (18 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
X	X	28	29	30

February 2026 (15 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
X	X	X	X	X

March 2026 (22 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

April 2026 (16 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

May 2026 (20 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

June 2026 (11 days)				
M	T	W	T	F
GRADUATION May 31				
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

## 2025 - 2026

Snow Day	Original Last Day of School	6/12/2026
1/26/2026	Revised Last Day of School	6/15/2026
1/27/2026		6/16/2026
2/23/2026		6/17/2026
2/24/2026		6/18/2026
2/25/2026		6/22/2026
2/26/2026		6/23/2026
2/27/2026	Tentative New Last Day of School	6/24/2026

# Fairhaven Public Schools

**FY27 Budget Update**

**March 4, 2026**



# Massachusetts State Budget Timeline with Chapter 70 Allocation for Fairhaven

January 2026 - Governor's Budget Released (**\$10,152,933**)

April 2026 - House Ways and Means Budget

April 2026 - House Budget Released

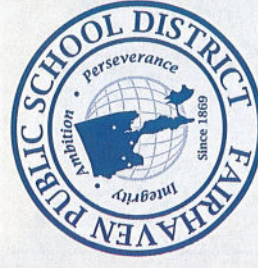
May 2026 - Senate Ways and Means Budget

May 2026 - Senate Budget Released

June 2026 - Conference Committee Resolves Differences

June 2026 - Governor Veto

July 2026 - Final Budget

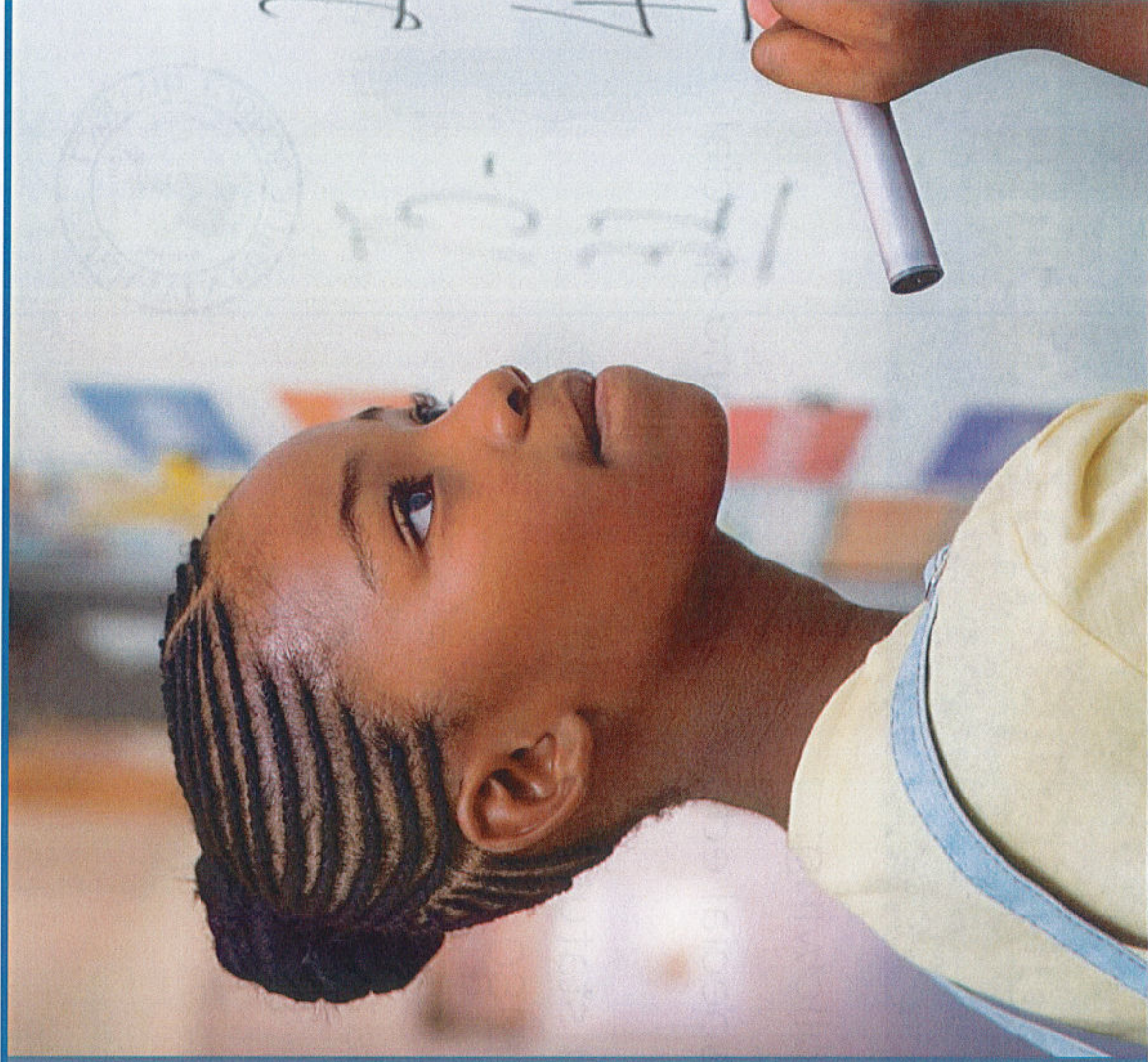




It's a statement of  
our **values**.

It's a set of **choices** we make about the kind of community we want. Which communities and services deserve funding?

The state budget is a moral document.



# Key items to encourage our legislators to support

Consider asking for support on the following:

- Fund Circuit Breaker at 90% for special education tuition and special education transportation
- Fully fund SOA toward the 7-year statutory requirement
- Fund Per Pupil Minimum Aid at \$180 per student
- Increase funding for specific use for Early College
- Fully fund Universal School Meals

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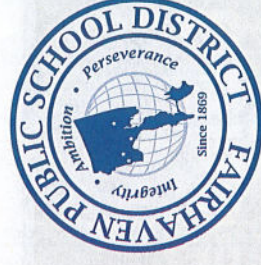


# Net School Spending

## Compliance With Net School Spending Requirements

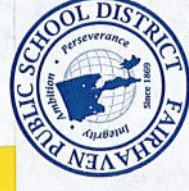
The Commonwealth's school finance statute, Chapter 70 of the General Laws, establishes an annual net school spending requirement for each Massachusetts school district. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in non-approval of a municipality's tax rate, enforcement action by the Attorney General, or loss of state aid.

Detailed data about prior year expenditures and current year budgets are submitted annually on each school district's End-of-Year Pupil and Financial Report. Once a district's information has passed DESE review, its compliance report is published on this website.



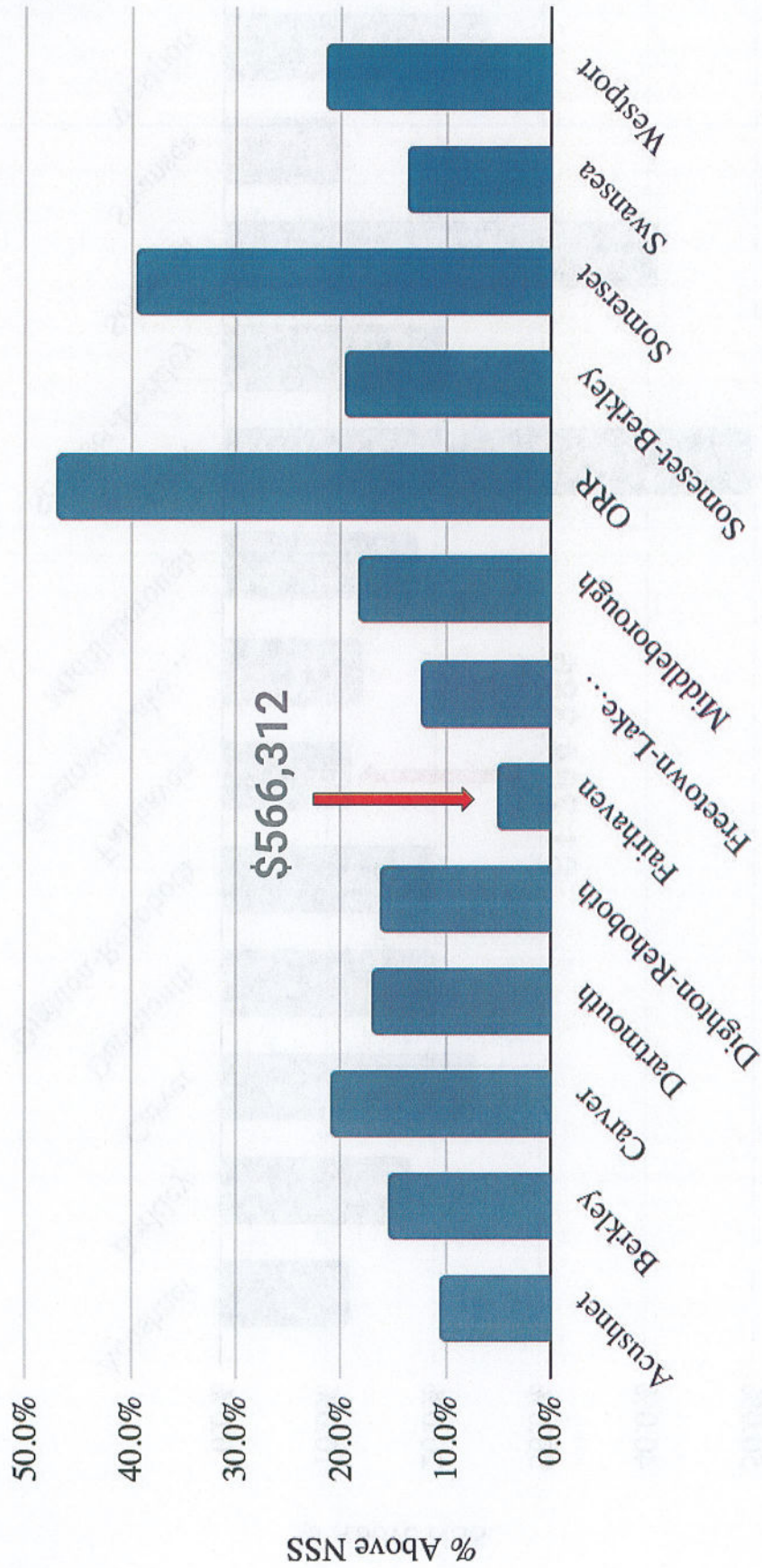
# Correlation Between NSS and Town Meeting Approved Budget

Year	Required Net School Spending	TM Approved School Department Budget	Difference Between TM Approved Budget and Required NSS	Rate
2015	18,754,655	18,348,083	(406,572)	0.5%
2016	19,025,420	18,737,194	(288,226)	-0.1%
2017	19,026,410	19,385,787	359,377	2.8%
2018	19,138,449	19,783,472	645,023	5.0%
2019	19,508,512	20,383,354	874,842	7.5%
2020	20,489,575	21,302,516	812,941	4.9%
2021	20,980,114	21,546,426	566,312	5.0%
2022	20,975,457	22,179,843	1,204,386	12.2%
2023	22,300,571	22,910,638	610,067	5.0%
2024	23,768,493	23,753,641	(14,852)	2.3%
2025	24,687,013	24,820,213	133,200	3.8%
2026	25,896,938	25,656,166	(240,772)	



# FY21 NSS %

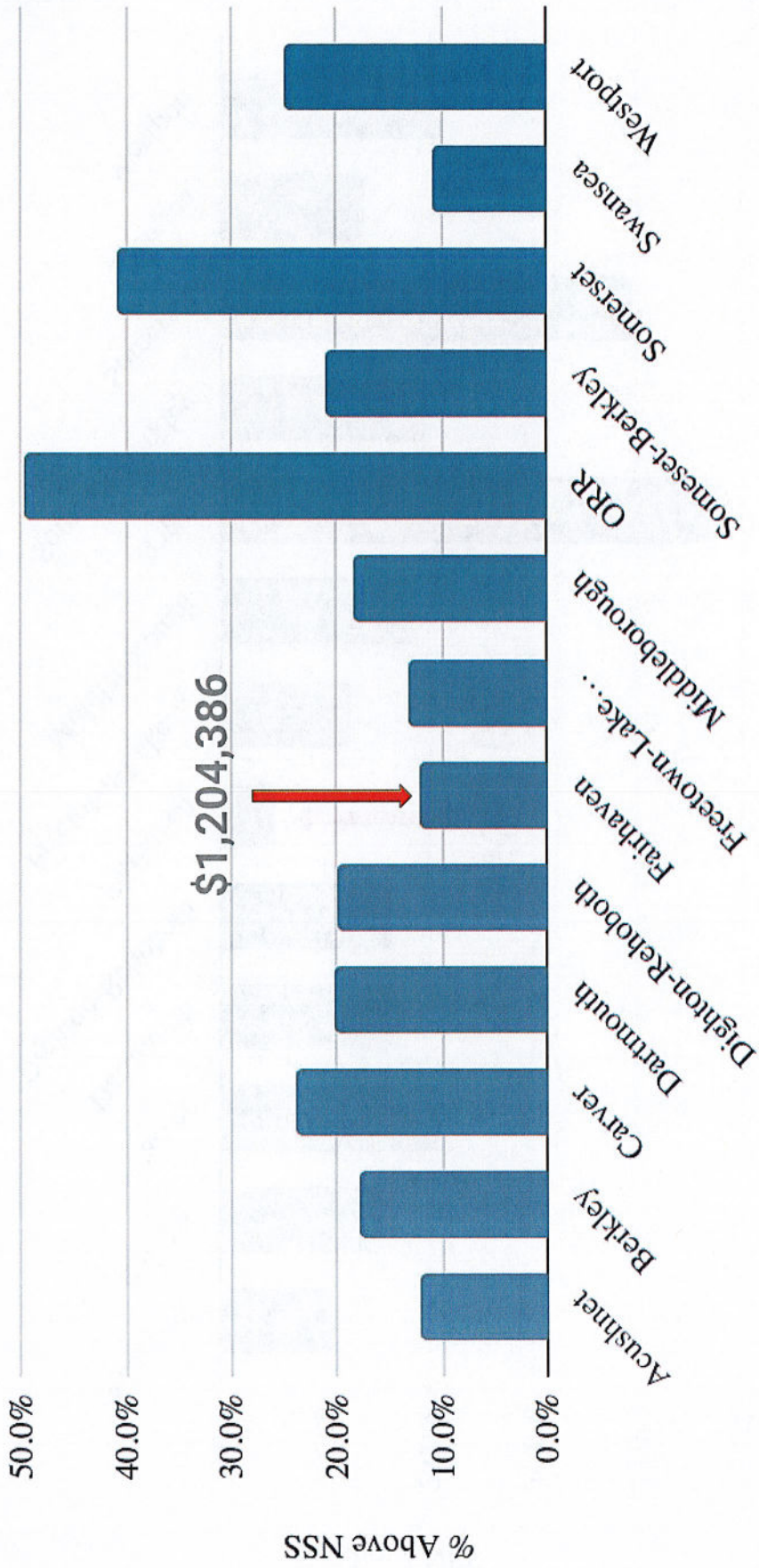
275/318



Town

# FY22 NSS%

245/318

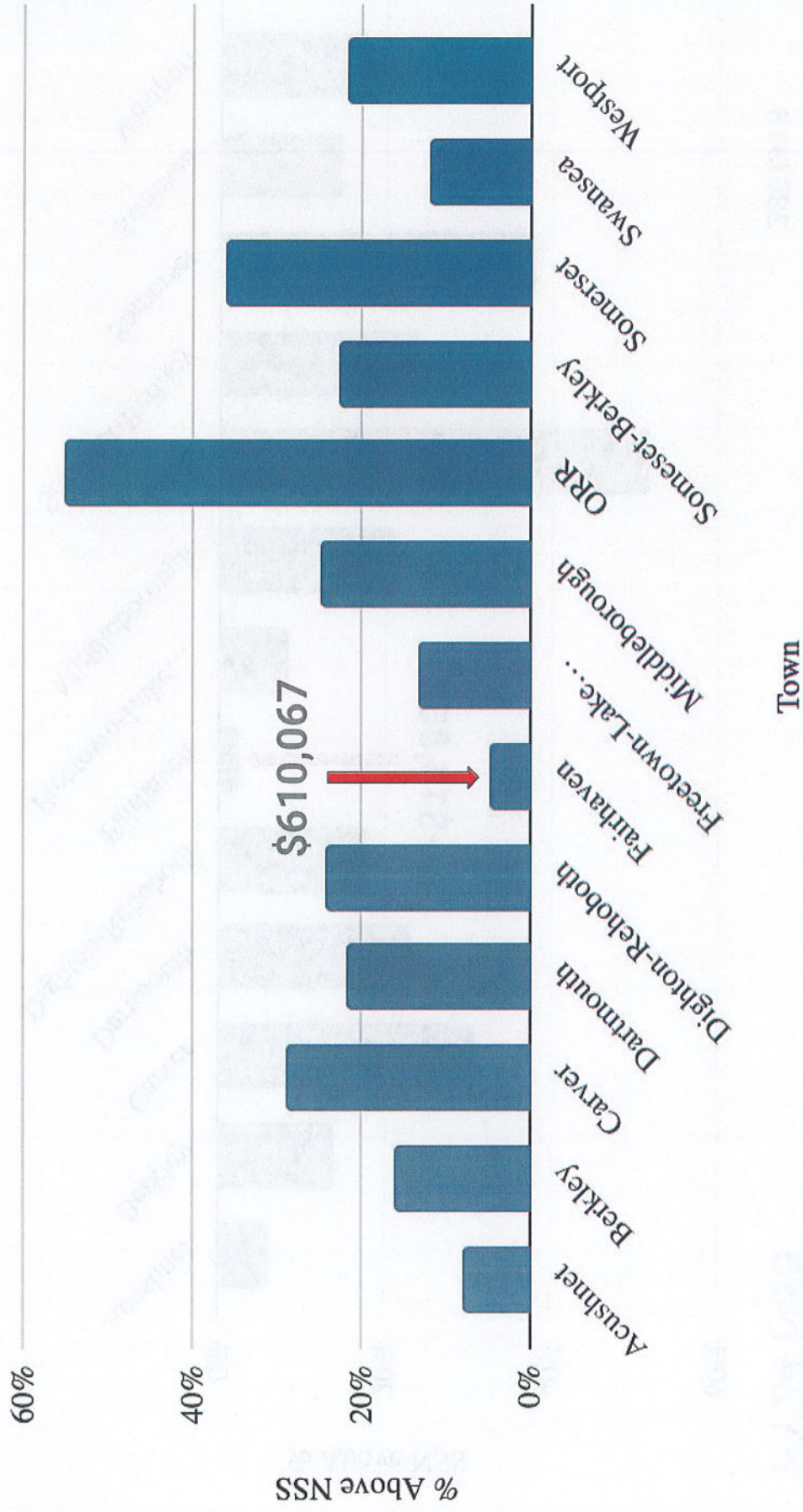


\$1,204,386

Town

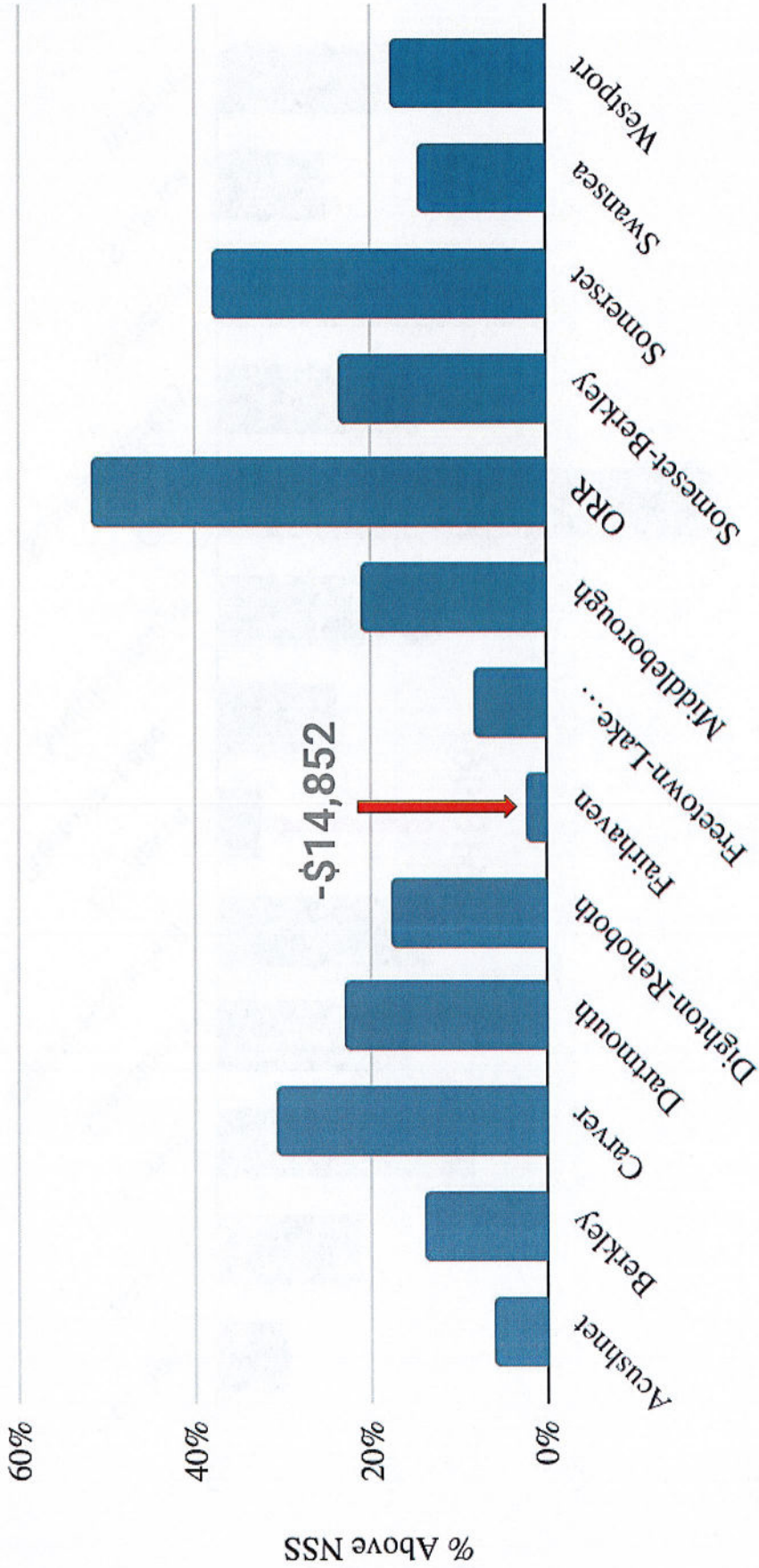
# FY23 NSS

277/318



# FY24 NSS

280/318



# FY27 Draft Budget Request

FY27 FPS Budget Request is **\$26,912,487**

FY27 Net School Spending requirement is **\$26,511,443**



## Current FY 27 Town Proposals

Current Proposed FY27 Budget for FPS from the Town of Fairhaven is **\$26,105,176** (**WITHOUT** an override)

**~~-\$807,311~~**

Current Proposed FY27 Budget for FPS from the Town of Fairhaven is **\$26,531,685** (**WITH** an override)

**~~-\$380,802~~**



# Correlation Between NSS and Town Meeting Approved Budget

\*Inclusive of FY27 TA Recommendations

Year	Required Net School Spending	TM Approved School Department Budget	Difference Between TM Approved Budget and Required NSS	
2015	18,754,655	18,348,083	(406,572)	0.5
2016	19,025,420	18,737,194	(288,226)	-0.1
2017	19,026,410	19,385,787	359,377	2.8
2018	19,138,449	19,783,472	645,023	5.0
2019	19,508,512	20,383,354	874,842	7.5
2020	20,489,575	21,302,516	812,941	4.9
2021	20,980,114	21,546,426	566,312	5.0
2022	20,975,457	22,179,843	1,204,386	12.2
2023	22,300,571	22,910,638	610,067	5.0
2024	23,768,493	23,753,641	(14,852)	2.3
2025	24,687,013	24,820,213	133,200	3.8
2026	25,896,938	25,656,166	(240,772)	
2027	26,511,443	26,105,176	(406,267)	Without override
2027	26,511,443	26,531,685	20,242	With override

# Impacts to FPS Budget Based on Town Recommendation

*Reduce approximately seven (7) positions*

*Relocate Wood preschool to East Fairhaven and consolidate resources*

*Increased class size at both elementary schools (K-5) and Middle School*

*7th & 8th grade transition from Middle School teams to a Junior High model*

*Reduced unified arts and enrichment offerings*

*Reduced counseling services for students district-wide*



# Impacts to FPS Budget With Potential Override

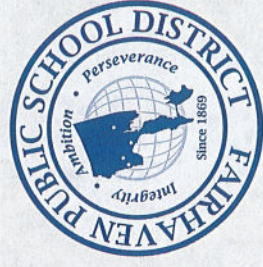
*Reduce approximately three (3) positions*

*Increased class size at elementary schools*

*Reduced unified arts and enrichment offerings at Middle School*

*Reduced counseling services for students*

*Consolidation of Preschool programs*



# Questions and Recommendations from the Committee

