

# Ashford School Estimated Budget 2026/2027

January 15, 2026

Presented by: Cynthia Ford,  
Superintendent



# Ashford Board of Education Mission



The Ashford Board of Education, in partnership with Ashford School and the community, is committed to providing a safe and positive environment that encourages lifelong learning and empowers students to succeed in their continued educational endeavors. Students will also discover their passions, strive for excellence, connect with their community and the world, and contribute in positive and meaningful ways.

# Ashford Board of Education Goals:

**CURRICULUM:** Support an exceptional preschool program and ensure a kindergarten to 8th grade curriculum that engages and challenges students to use methods of inquiry to solve problems, think critically, and to express themselves creatively and effectively.

**FINANCE:** Develop and monitor a budget that ensures the best possible education while being fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

**CULTURE:** Foster an environment of physical and emotional health and wellness for all. Support a community that recognizes professional expertise and provides diverse opportunities that enhance teaching and learning.

# Goals Continued:

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS:** Provide enriching opportunities for community engagement, meaningful collaboration, and partnership with all stakeholders.

**FACILITIES:** Serve as a leader for Ashford in enhancing energy efficiency and sustainability, developing a maintenance and restoration plan that extends the school's useful life, and in demonstrating environmental responsibility.

# What Drives our Budget Decisions?

- ★ Current student data and needs: District data and state testing data
- ★ Internal Needs: Surveying Teachers, Meeting with Administration
- ★ Surveying School Community Parents
- ★ Board of Education Discussions
- ★ Current educational trends

# Ongoing Improvements in 2025/2026

- ★ Year four implementation of math program K-8. **2024/2025 Math index scores had a slight increase from 64.2 to 66.1 and is above the state average which is 61.1. Pre-COVID Index Score was 63.1. This supports curriculum goal.**
- ★ Year three of new reading programs in grades K-3, 4, 5, and 6. **2024/2025 LA index scores have improved slightly from 67.8 to 68.3.**
- ★ Continuing to implement our Social Emotional Learning curriculum. **In the first 80 days of 24/25 total major office referrals were 51 and in 25/26 there are 45. This is approximately a decrease in 6 total major office referrals. Overall we have 162 total referrals compared to 136 the previous year. The increase is due to better documentation of Elementary behaviors and an increased focus on tracking classroom level behaviors. Supports Culture and Curriculum goals.**

# Ongoing Improvements in 2025/2026 continued

- ★ Implementing a cultural program for Arabic and needed to move to a choice between French and Spanish through Rosetta Stone due to shortage in World Language Teachers. **Supports Curriculum and Finance goals.**
- ★ Continuing to improve our grade level PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to focus on data driven instruction. Providing support and time for teachers to plan. Providing teachers with time to meet as teams cross curriculum and grade levels during Professional Development days. **Supports Curriculum and Culture goals.**
- ★ Continuing to work with international organizations for exposure to world languages. Currently working with an Arabic teacher funding through alternative avenues. Gradually we will be funding this program starting slowly to have least amount of impact on the budget. Grades 4-8. Continuing the German Exchange Program for the 2026/2027 school year. **Supports Curriculum and Finance goals.**

# Looking to 2026/2027

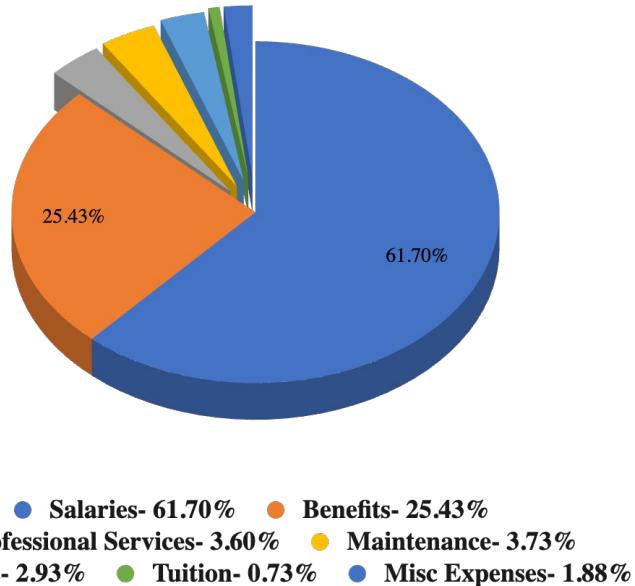
- ★ Continue to implement updated programs for science, reading and mathematics while providing professional development for teachers. **Supports Curriculum Goal.**
- ★ Purchasing new Social Studies Programs to match the new teaching standards put out by the State of Connecticut. **Supports Curriculum and Cultural Goal.**
- ★ Improve our district assessments and use of data to allow for students to demonstrate mastery of state standards.. **Supports Curriculum goal.**
- ★ Update our facilities to improve fossil fuel consumption by creating a plan for replacement windows and doors. **Supports Facilities goal.**

# Continue Looking to 2026/2027

- ★ Continue to improve our World Language department by working with funding resources to have an Arabic teacher teach world cultures.
- ★ Continue to search for a World Language teacher in person.
- ★ Continue to work with outside funding for our partnership to travel abroad with our students every other year.

**These bullet points move the district towards BOE Curriculum, Finance and Culture goals.**

# Overall Estimate 2026/2027



<b>2026-27 Proposed</b>	<b>\$ 9,153,418</b>
<b>2025-26 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 8,853,864</b>
<b>Increase</b>	<b>\$ 299,554</b>
<b>% increase</b>	<b>% 3.38</b>

## Major Expenditures:

Salary increase: 2.41%

Benefit increase: 2.52%

Maintenance increase: 11.96%

Supplies increase: 6.83%

Misc. increase: 23.92%

# Staffing Adjustments:

- ★ Changed from Head Custodian to one full time Facilities Manager
- ★ Moving teachers to meet the needs of School:
  - A 5th or 6th grade teacher will move from 5 / 6 to 1st grade to keep class sizes small.
- ★ Reduction in one paraprofessional position: One to two students due to both moving to High School.
- ★ Continue Spanish or World Language opening until filled.

# Classroom Size and Teachers

## Projected staffing/Enrollment

2025-2026

2026-2027

Grade/Area	Number Students	Number Faculty	Average Class Size	Number of Students	Number of Faculty	Average Class Size
<b>PK-2</b>	130	9	14.4	129	10	12.9
<b>3-4</b>	64	4	16	67	4	16.75
<b>5-6</b>	77	6	12.8	68	5	13.6
<b>7-8</b>	100	4	25	90	4	22.5
<b>Total enrollment</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>354</b>	<b>23</b>	

Last year our projected number of students was 353 but it ended up being 370. For 7 / 8 we have 25 kids in our specials rotations but the academic rotations are smaller because we add foreign language into the rotation.

# Intervention and Specials Teachers:

	2025/2026		2026/2027	
Elementary Intervention		2		2
Secondary Intervention		2		2
Library Media/Computer Science		1		1
Elementary Science		1		1
Middle School German		0		0
Elementary Spanish		0		0
Middle School Spanish		1*		1
Art		1		1
PE/Health		2		2
Music		2		2
<b>Total teachers</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>12</b>

\*Unable to hire a Spanish teacher, students on Rosetta Stone for language with a special education para being moved to oversee students on the program. We paid .25 towards our Arabic teacher who is here through a grant program.

# Special Education Support:

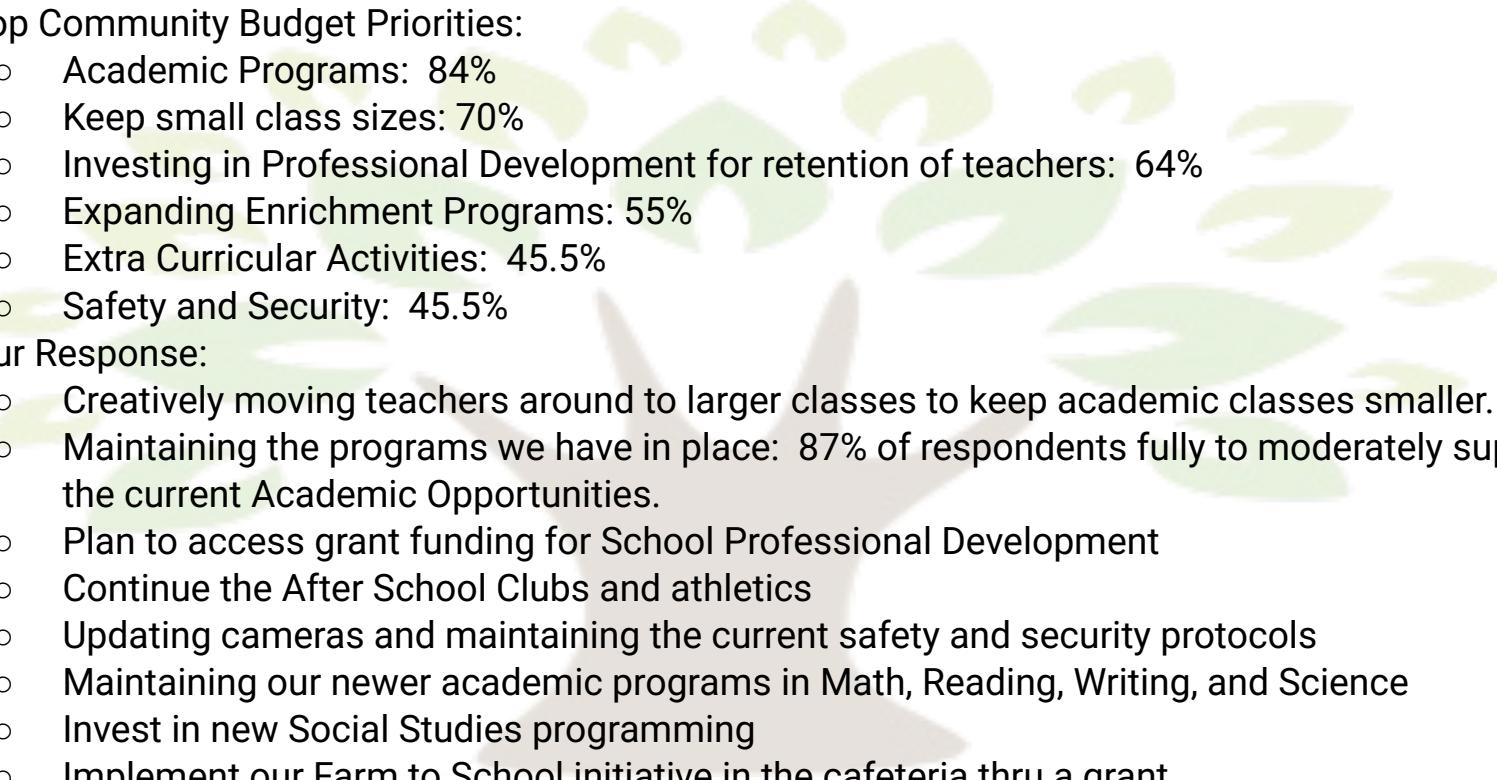
	2025/2026		2026/2027	
School Psychologists		.5		.5
Special Education		5		5
Speech Pathologist*		1		1
School Counselor		1		1
School Social Worker		2		2
OT(COTA,OTR)		.75		.75
Total		10.25		10.25

There is also a Speech Pathologist that is present 4 days a week under a contracted service. (This saves on taxes and benefits)

# Budget Summary (FY 2020-2027)

Fiscal Year	BOE Proposed	% change	BOF Approved	%change	Town Approved
2020-2021	\$7,835,765	2.04%	7,768,894	1.17%	1.17%
2021-2022	\$8,000,602	2.98%	\$8,000,602	2.98%	2.98%
2022-2023	\$8,337,427	4.21%	\$8,337,427	4.21%	4.21%
2023-2024	\$8,685,283	4.17%	\$8,578,536	2.89%	2.89%
2024-2025	\$8,836,649	3.01%	\$8,638,694	.70%	.70%
2025-2026	\$9,110,306	5.46%	\$8,853,864	2.49%	2.49%
2026-2027 (Proposed)	\$9,153,418	3.38%			

# Community Survey Results



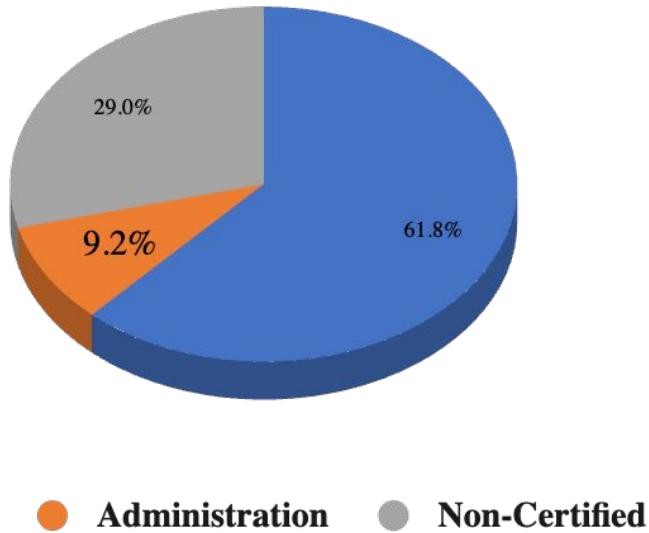
- ★ Top Community Budget Priorities:
  - Academic Programs: 84%
  - Keep small class sizes: 70%
  - Investing in Professional Development for retention of teachers: 64%
  - Expanding Enrichment Programs: 55%
  - Extra Curricular Activities: 45.5%
  - Safety and Security: 45.5%
- ★ Our Response:
  - Creatively moving teachers around to larger classes to keep academic classes smaller.
  - Maintaining the programs we have in place: 87% of respondents fully to moderately support the current Academic Opportunities.
  - Plan to access grant funding for School Professional Development
  - Continue the After School Clubs and athletics
  - Updating cameras and maintaining the current safety and security protocols
  - Maintaining our newer academic programs in Math, Reading, Writing, and Science
  - Invest in new Social Studies programming
  - Implement our Farm to School initiative in the cafeteria thru a grant
  - Continue our partnership with a German School and other international connections

# Certified vs Non-Certified

\*this depends on Individual Education Plans, therefore it changes year to year.

	22-23 Actuals	23-24 Actuals	24-25 Actual	25-26 Budgeted	26-27 Projected
<b>Administrators</b>	515,937.98	473,206.00	489,707.00	503,303.00	518,558.00
<b>Non-Certified Staff</b>	1,442,140.94	1,586,040.00	1,575,529.00	1,598,347.00	1,560,272.00
<b>Certified Staff</b>	2,683,666.08	3,016,943.00	3,174,106.00	3,222,494.00	3,375,302.00
<b>Substitutes</b>	96,916.44	70,025.00	76,025.00	76,025.00	76,025.00
<b>Additional Comp</b>	72,460.78	76,074.00	81,051.00	81,051.00	83,260.00
<b>ESY Certified*</b>	6,095.76	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,500.00
<b>ESY Non-Certified*</b>	14,140.57	13,700.00	21,880.00	22,114.00	22,114.00
<b>Total Salaries</b>	<b>4,831,358.55</b>	<b>5,247,954.00</b>	<b>5,430,298.00</b>	<b>5,515,334.00</b>	<b>5,648,031.00</b>

# Estimate: Salaries



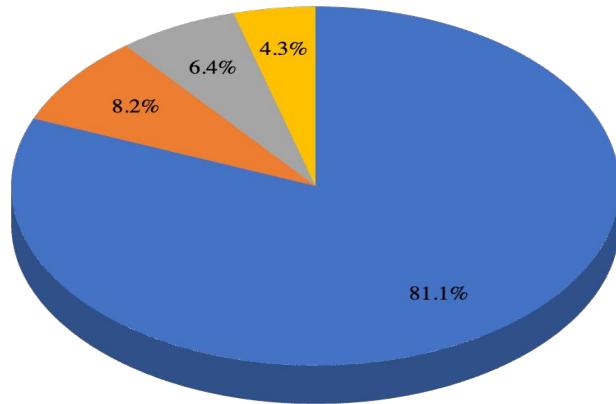
- ★ Salary costs are 61.70% of operating budget.
- ★ Substitutes are not broken out as certified/non-certified. Some substitutes are for certified teachers others for paras, kitchen and custodial.

<b>2026-27 Proposed</b>	<b>\$ 5,648,031</b>
<b>2025-26 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 5,515,334</b>
<b>Increase</b>	<b>\$ 132,697</b>
<b>% increase</b>	<b>2.41</b>

## Estimate: Employee Benefits

	22-23 Actuals	23-24 Actuals	24-25 Budget	25-26 Budgeted	26-27 Projected
<b>Employee Health Insurance</b>	1,458,328.38	1,863,221.00	1,714,505.00	1,836,434.00	1,895,183.00
<b>Life Insurance</b>	12,756.36	16,165.00	16,165.00	16,165.00	16,424.00
<b>SS/Medicare</b>	179,882.47	186,114.00	192,616.00	192,082.00	190,578.00
<b>Retirement Benefits</b>	122,401.27	156,076.00	154,372.00	150,580.00	148,792.00
<b>Tuition Reimbursement</b>	9,999.92	20,000.00	20,000.00	15,500.00	15,500.00
<b>Unemployment Ins</b>	24,028.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
<b>Worker's Compensation</b>	30,490.44	32,655.00	33,200.00	33,200.00	34,619.00
<b>Other Benefits</b>	4,376.21	3,600.00	3,600.00	3,600.00	3,600.00
<b>Professional Development</b>	6,144.62	12,450.00	12,450.00	12,450.00	12,450.00
<b>Mileage</b>	0	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
<b>Total Benefits</b>	<b>1,848,407.67</b>	<b>2,306,281.00</b>	<b>2,162,908.00</b>	<b>2,271,011.00</b>	<b>2,328,146.00</b>

# Estimate: Benefits



- Employee Insurance
- Retirement Benefits
- SS/Medicare
- Other Benefits

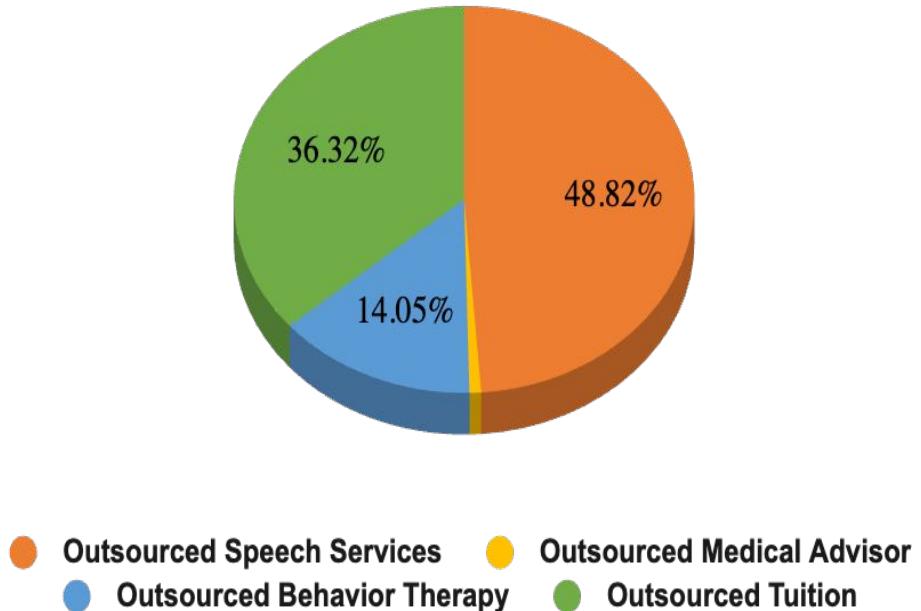
★ Medical Insurance Premiums are projected to Increase by 10%.

2026-27 Proposed	\$ 2,238,146
2025-26 Budget	\$ 2,271,011
Increase	\$ 32,865
% increase:	% 2.52

## Estimate: Student Services

	22-23 Actuals	23-24 Actuals	24-25 Actual	25-26 Budgeted	26-27 Projected
<b>Outsourced Psych. Services</b>	20,000.00	32,200.00	15,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
<b>Outsourced Speech Services</b>	139,290.47	87,104.00	87,560.00	87,560.00	89,478.00
<b>Outsourced OT Services</b>	33,656.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	69,000.00
<b>Outsourced PT Services</b>	29,140.56	29,950.00	29,950.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Outsourced Medical Advisor</b>	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
<b>Outsourced Behavior Services</b>	2,750.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	25,750.00
<b>Outsourced Tuition</b>	107,691.58	159,006.00	66,995.00	135,890.00	60,000.00
<b>Total Student Services</b>	<b>334,028.61</b>	<b>318,760.00</b>	<b>210,005.00</b>	<b>238,950.00</b>	<b>250,728.00</b>

# Estimate: Student Services



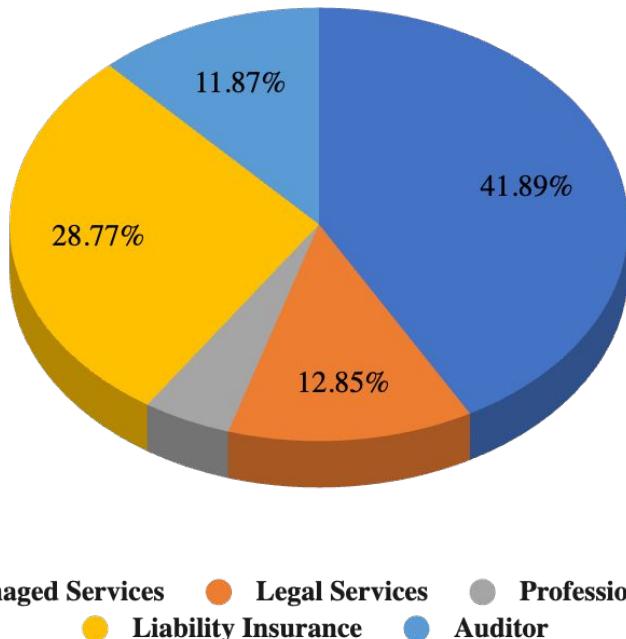
- ★ No outplaced special education student anticipated
- ★ These numbers are dependent on students Individual Education Plans

2026-27 Proposed	\$ 250,728
2025-26 Budget	\$ 238,950
Increase	\$ 11,778
% Increase	% 4.93

## Estimate: Other Services

	22-23 Actuals	23-24 Actuals	24-25 Actual	25-26 Budgeted	25-26 Projected
<b>IT Managed Services</b>	72,693.00	79,500.00	79,500.00	81,500.00	81,500.00
<b>Legal Services</b>	29,352.50	51,460.00	11,500.00	21,500.00	25,000.00
<b>Professional Services</b>	7,710.59	8,593.00	8,990.00	8,990.00	8,990.00
<b>Liability Insurance</b>	48,738.91	50,245.00	55,032.00	54,187.00	55,977.00
<b>Auditor</b>	17,557.00	15,430.00	23,000.00	22,000.00	23,100.00
<b>Total Other Services</b>	<b>176,052.00</b>	<b>205,138.00</b>	<b>178,022.00</b>	<b>186,177.00</b>	<b>194,567.00</b>

# Estimate: Purchased Services



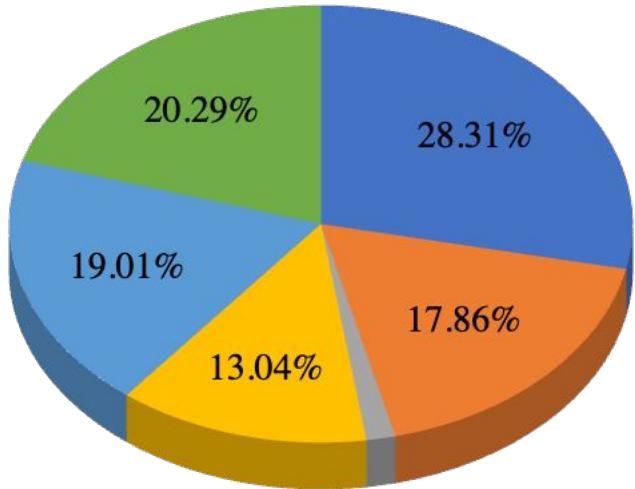
- ★ Non-certified contract negotiations in 26-27
- ★ No increase in the IT contract with Savage Systems

2026-27 Proposed	\$ 194,567
2025-26 Budget	\$ 186,177
Increase	\$ 8,390
% Increase	% 4.51

## Estimate: Supplies

	22-23 Actuals	23-24 Actuals	24-25 Budgeted	25-26 Budgeted	26-27 Projected
<b>Supplies, Other</b>	130,601.10	130,765.00	118,300.00	116,060.00	125,035.00
<b>Instructional Supplies</b>	255,541.43	92,193.00	74,544.00	72,333.00	78,833.00
<b>Books &amp; Periodicals</b>	7,213.80	1,555.00	6,600.00	6,600.00	6,600.00
<b>Diesel &amp; Gasoline</b>	41,776.50	24,771.00	63,100.00	55,920.00	57,580.00
<b>Heating Oil</b>	124,915.19	140,498.00	99,600.00	87,040.00	83,980.00
<b>Building Utilities</b>	54,867.44	60,948.00	67,000.00	89,622.00	89,622.00
<b>Total Supplies</b>	<b>614,915.46</b>	<b>450,730.00</b>	<b>429,144.00</b>	<b>427,575.00</b>	<b>441,650.00</b>

# Estimate: Supplies



● Supplies Other   ● Instructional Supplies   ● Books & Periodicals  
● Diesel & Gasoline   ● Heating Oil   ● Building Utilities

- ★ Heating Oil is based on 34,000 gallons @ \$2.47/gal plus tax
- ★ Diesel is based on 30,000 gallons @ \$2.51/gal plus tax less contributions from DPW, Fire/Ambulance Service, and Region 19 Transportation contract
- ★ Gasoline is based on 10,000 gallons @ \$2.39/gal plus tax minus contributions from DPW and the Senior Center

<b>2026-27 Proposed</b>	<b>\$ 441,650</b>
<b>2025-26 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 427,525</b>
<b>Increase</b>	<b>\$ 14,125</b>
<b>% increase</b>	<b>% 3.30</b>

# Budget Development



# Budget Development Process

- ★ Examined past years actual expenditures.
- ★ Surveyed the teachers for the needs of classroom for instruction to include technology.
- ★ Met as administrative team to look line by line for needs to increase student instructional demands.
- ★ Examine class size and staffing review according to needs.
- ★ Sent out a survey to the school community to inquire around focus.

# Shared Services

- ★ Fuel: Diesel, gasoline and heating
- ★ Technology Services
- ★ Health insurance is bid as a large group for cost savings
- ★ Ashford buses used to transport PK-12 students are funded via a contract with Regional District 19 that provides high school busing.
- ★ Liability policies are bundled
- ★ Audit Services and Liability broker agents are shared
- ★ Shared space at town DPW for Mechanic to maintain vehicles
- ★ Electricity volume pricing.

<b>Grant</b>	<b>2025-26 Award Amount</b>	<b>Important Note: Monies are already subtracted from the budget</b>
Title I (continuous)	64,661.00	Partially funds a Math Interventionist plus a set-aside portion for homeless student transportation
Title II(continuous)	9,007.00	Used for Professional Development (PD) of Staff
Title III(continuous)	366.00	Used for EL supplies and programs
Title IV(continuous)	10,000.00	Used for technology purchases not included in regular budget
REAP(continuous)	34,715.00	Educational supplies, books, technology, PD
IDEA 611(continuous)	114,986.00	Funds salaries for 1.5 Special Education teachers
IDEA 619(continuous)	7,149.00	Partially funds one paraprofessional
Early Start CT (Continuous)	108,000.00	Partially funds our Pre-K program
SEED	35,502.00	Funds for Special Education Expansion

# Next Steps:

**BOE attend BOF February 19, 2026:** BOE presents to the BOF their 2026/2027 proposed budget requests and answer questions.

**BOF March 12&19, 2026:** Reviews Budget requests with additional clarifications and discuss recommendations.

**BOF March 26, 2026:** BOF adopts proposed budget and sets the date for Public Hearing.

**April 1, 2026:** Town Budget books available at town hall for public to pick up.

**Proposed Town Public Hearing April 7, 2026:** Public Hearing, last chance to make any changes to budgets.

**April 13, 2026:** Town budget books available to the public.

**April 21, 2026:** Annual Town Meeting.

**May 5, 2026:** Proposed Ashford Town Budget Referendum.

**May 7, 2026:** BOF sets Mil rate



Our children in Ashford are very lucky to have you all in their corner, advocating for their futures.