



West Milford Township Public Schools BUDGET PRESENTATION

2026-2027

Presented by

Dr. Brian Kitchin and Mrs. Melissa Bertagno

Board of Education

Claire Lockwood, President

William Cytowicz

Ray Guarino

Peter Lippe

Lynda Van Dyk

Tara Racano, Vice President

Teresa Dwyer

Miranda Jurgensen

Stephanie Marquard



Budget Highlights

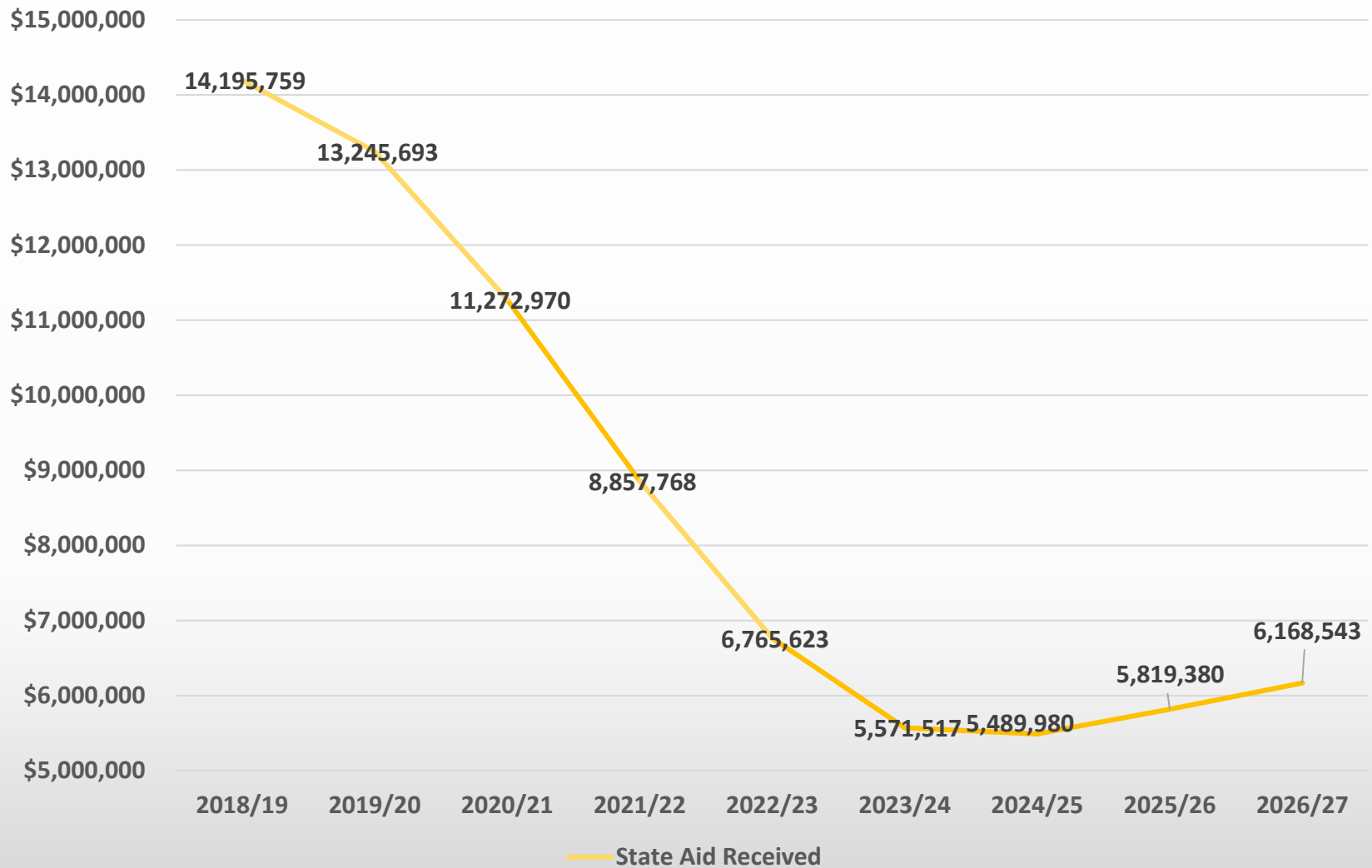
- Maintenance of current program offerings through a fiscally responsible budget despite our current inflationary environment.
 - Construction of the 2026-2027 budget includes the use of \$2,703,651 Health Care Adjustment
 - General Fund Tax Levy of \$72,526,314 which is an increase of \$4,072,723 or 5.92%
 - Reduction in the amount of fund balance utilized to balance the budget
 - Notable large expenditure increases outside of the District's control include health insurance, liability & property insurance, and utilities.
- Maximization of Outside Revenue Sources to support District programs and the budget.
 - Increase in tuition receivable students from other Districts.
 - Continue to utilize revenues generated in the food service fund to offset the expense of our cafeteria aides.
 - Continue to utilize revenues generated in the SACC program to partially offset the expense of our custodial costs.
 - Another year of capitalization of higher bank account interest rates due to a multi-year agreement with Provident Bank.
- Continuation of increased opportunities through our Highlander Pathways CTE programs with no increase in budgetary needs.



Budget Highlights (continued)

- Limited need for large scale capital projects:
 - UGL Window & Door Project started in the 2025/2026 school year; funding provided in prior year budgets through capital reserve
 - Proposed 2026/2027 budget again includes many smaller scale maintenance projects throughout the District
 - Paradise Knoll School requires a solution to the Heating unit.
 - A 2025/2026 revenue and offsetting expenditure for the Dygos Field Turf & Lighting Project has been started in the 2025/2026 school year. This project is being funded as a joint project with the Township of West Milford through grant opportunities and the Township's budget, and was not calculated as part of the Board of Education's tax levy impact.

Impact of S2 Cuts – State Aid Received



State Aid Adjustment Impact – 2017/2018 State Aid Amounts vs. 2018/2019- 2026/2027

Budget Year	2017/2018 State Aid	Actual State Aid Received	Change in Dollars	% Change
2018/2019	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 14,195,759	\$ (415,361)	-2.84%
2019/2020	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 13,245,693	\$ (1,365,427)	-9.35%
2020/2021	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 11,272,970	\$ (3,338,150)	-22.85%
2021/2022	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 8,857,768	\$ (5,753,352)	-39.38%
2022/2023	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 6,765,623	\$ (7,845,497)	-53.70%
2023/2024	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 5,571,517	\$ (9,039,603)	-61.87%
2024/2025	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 5,489,980	\$ (9,121,140)	-62.43%
2025/2026	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 5,819,380	\$ (8,791,740)	-60.17%
2026/2027	\$ 14,611,120	\$ 6,168,543	\$ (8,442,577)	-57.78%
CUMULATIVE CHANGES	\$ 131,500,080	\$ 77,387,233	\$ (54,112,847)	-41.15%

Grant Funding Fluctuations – 2023/24 Through 2025/2026

Funding Source	2023-224	2024-2025	2025-2026	FY24 vs. FY25	FY25 vs. FY26
ESEA Entitlement Grants:					
Title I	\$ 424,451	\$ 192,871	\$ 360,055	\$ (231,580)	\$ 167,184
Title IIA	\$ 59,810	\$ 50,251	\$ 61,313	\$ (9,559)	\$ 11,062
Title III Immigrant	\$ 4,105	\$ 2,741	\$ 5,168	\$ (1,364)	\$ 2,427
Title IV	\$ 34,065	\$ 30,423	\$ 12,957	\$ (3,642)	\$ (17,466)
IDEA:					
Basic	\$ 912,114	\$ 888,269	\$ 879,404	\$ (23,845)	\$ (8,865)
Preschool	\$ 40,954	\$ 39,664	\$ 39,553	\$ (1,290)	\$ (111)
Extraordinary Aid	\$ 1,191,711	\$ 1,652,185	TBD	\$ 460,474	TBD
				\$ -	
ARP ESSER Grants Grant Period of March 13, 2020 - September 30, 2024:					
ESSER III	\$ 2,306,083			\$ (2,306,083)	\$ -
Learning Acceleration	\$ 250,075			\$ (250,075)	\$ -
Summer Enrichment	\$ 40,000			\$ (40,000)	\$ -
Beyond the School Day	\$ 40,000			\$ (40,000)	\$ -
Mental Health Support	\$ 45,000			\$ (45,000)	\$ -
ARP Homeless II	\$ 15,262			\$ (15,262)	\$ -
TOTAL Grant Allocations	\$ 5,363,630	\$ 2,856,404	\$ 1,358,450	\$ (2,507,226)	\$ 154,231

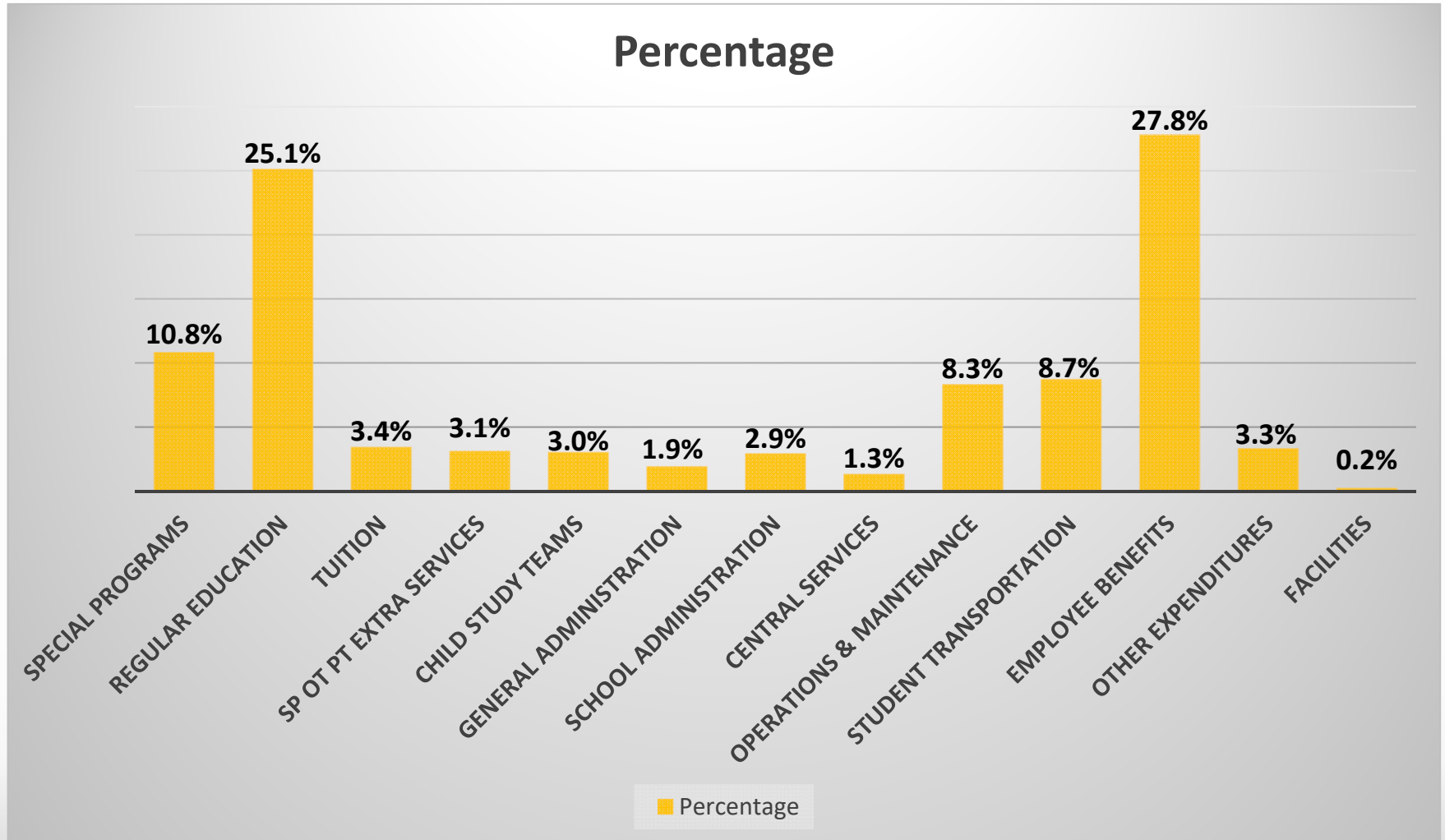
Budget Comparison

Current 2025-2026 vs Proposed 2026-2027

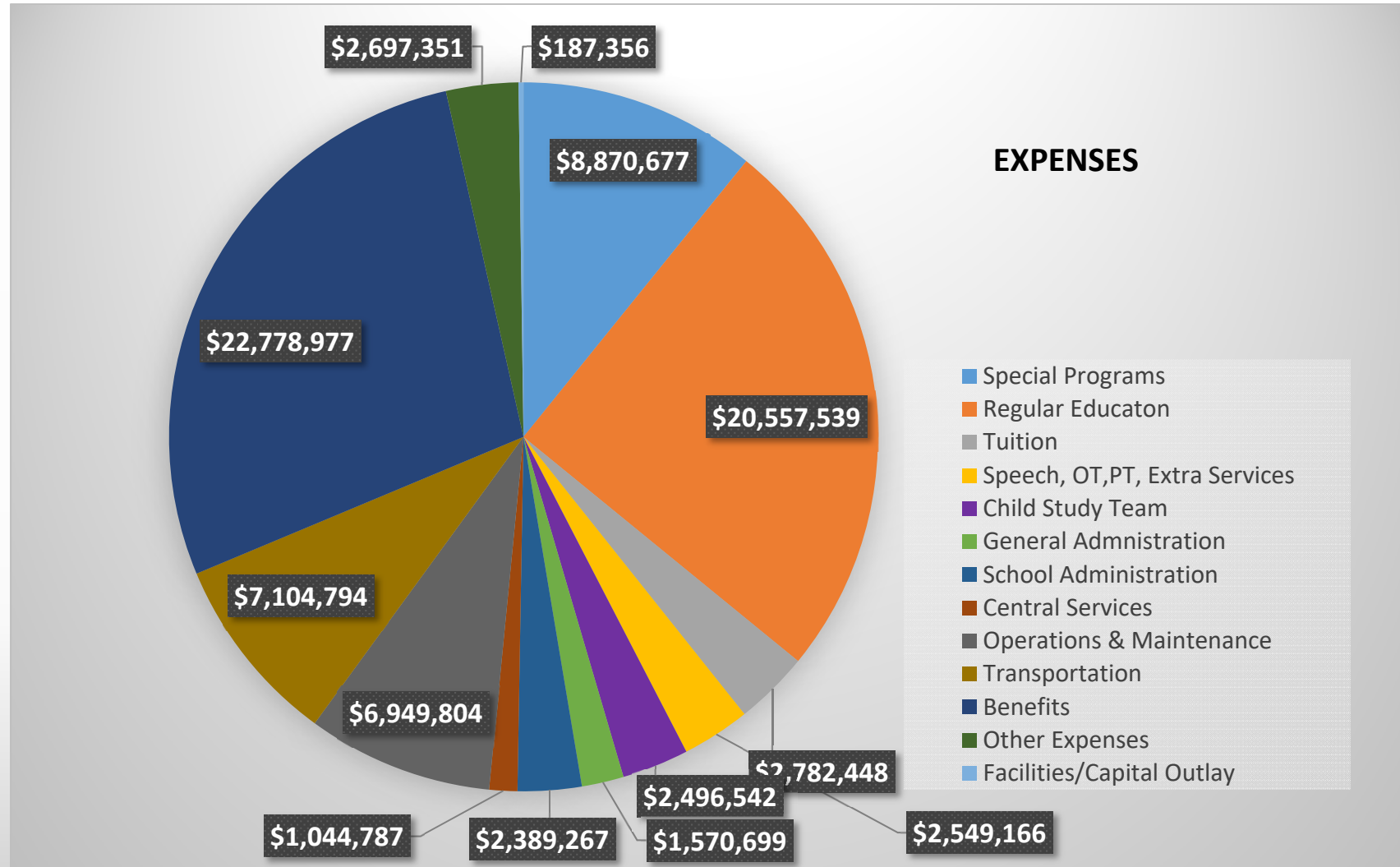
Current Expenditures	Adjusted 2025-2026	Proposed 2026-2027	Change \$	Change %
Special Programs	\$ 8,492,557	\$ 8,870,677	\$ 378,120	4.45%
Regular Education	\$ 20,987,340	\$ 20,557,539	\$ (429,801)	-2.05%
Tuition	\$ 2,961,267	\$ 2,782,448	\$ (178,819)	-6.04%
Speech, OT, PT, Extra Services	\$ 2,251,617	\$ 2,549,166	\$ 297,549	13.21%
Child Study Teams	\$ 2,541,299	\$ 2,496,542	\$ (44,757)	-1.76%
General Administration	\$ 1,703,358	\$ 1,570,699	\$ (132,659)	-7.79%
School Administration	\$ 2,517,462	\$ 2,389,267	\$ (128,195)	-5.09%
Central Services	\$ 1,177,801	\$ 1,044,787	\$ (133,014)	-11.29%
Operation & Maintenance	\$ 6,750,843	\$ 6,949,804	\$ 198,961	2.95%
Student Transportation	\$ 6,927,784	\$ 7,104,794	\$ 177,010	2.56%
Employee Benefits	\$ 19,163,463	\$ 22,778,977	\$ 3,615,514	18.87%
Other Expenditures	\$ 3,180,971	\$ 2,697,351	\$ (483,620)	-15.20%
Facilities**	\$ 286,108	\$ 187,356	\$ (98,752)	-34.52%
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	\$ 78,941,870	\$ 81,979,407	\$ 3,037,537	3.85%
Special Revenue Budget	\$ 1,583,823	\$ 965,773	\$ (618,050)	-39.02%
Debt Service Budget	\$ 605,000	\$ 614,724	\$ 9,724	1.61%
TOTAL DISTRICT BUDGET	\$ 81,130,693	\$ 83,559,904	\$ 2,429,211	2.99%

***Note: \$2,700,000 of the Facilities Budget for 2025/26 Dygos Field project has been deleted to show comparison*

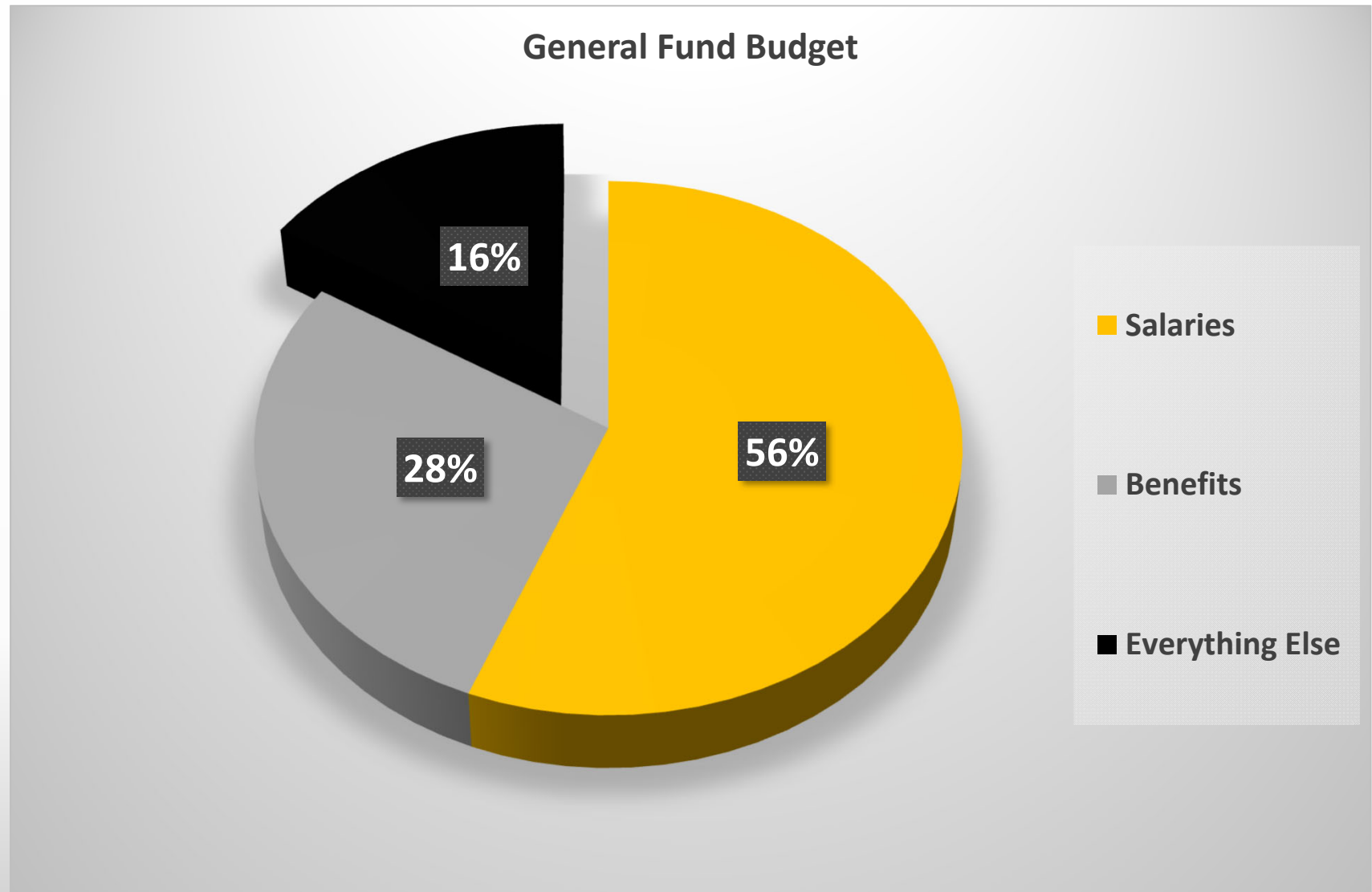
2026-2027 OPERATING BUDGET EXPENDITURE PERCENTAGES



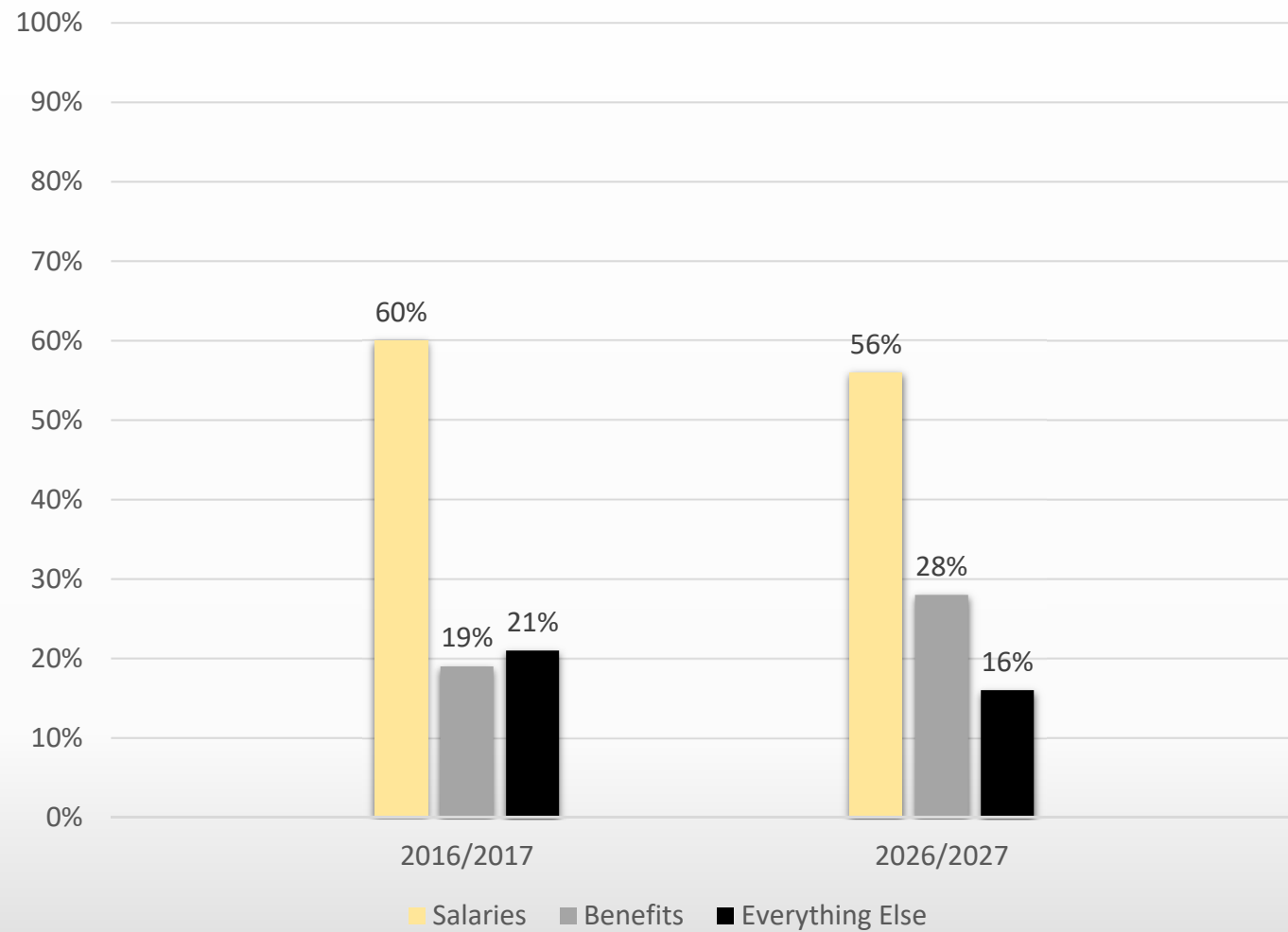
2026/2027 OPERATING EXPENSES



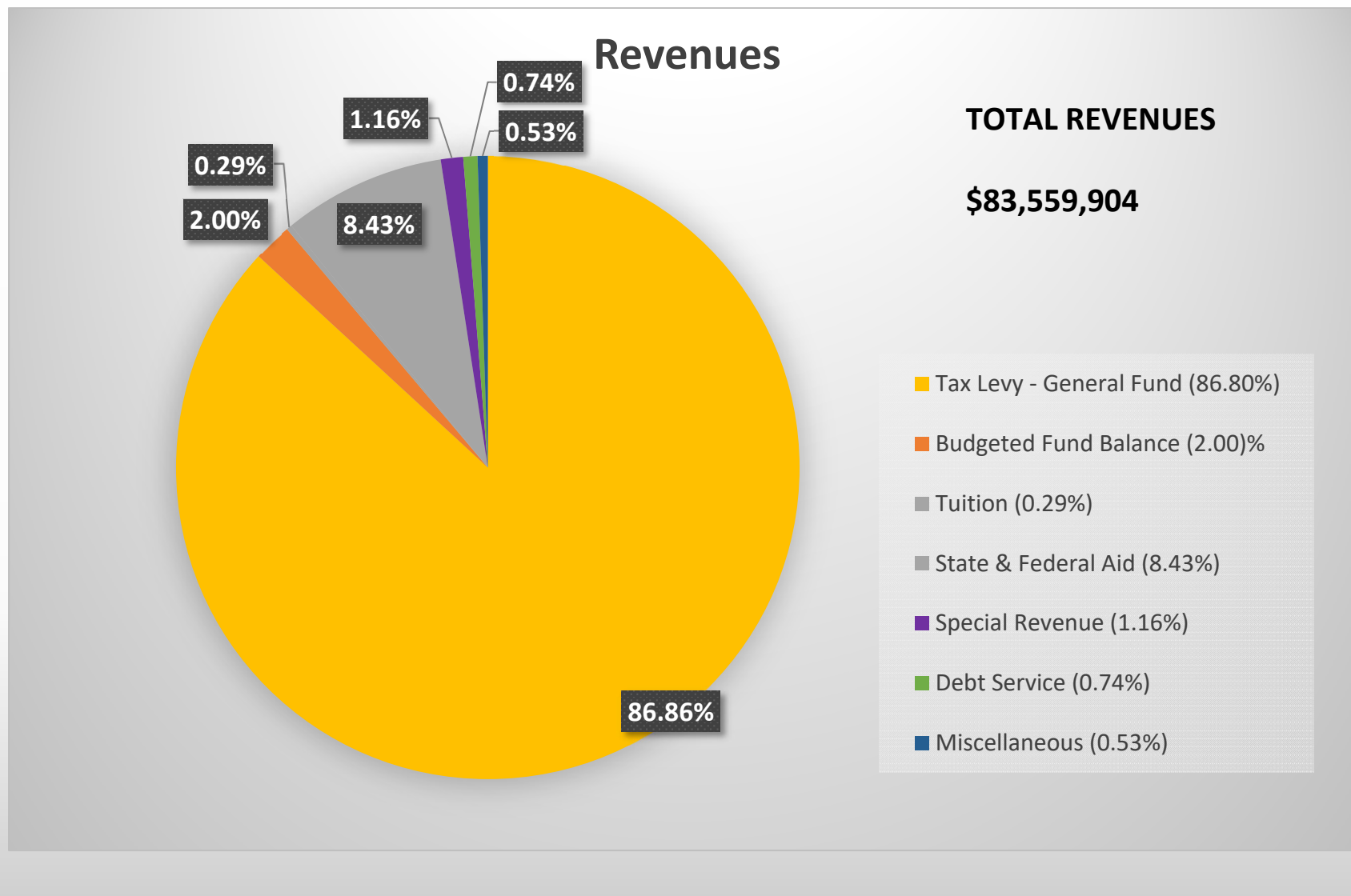
Proportion of Expenditures



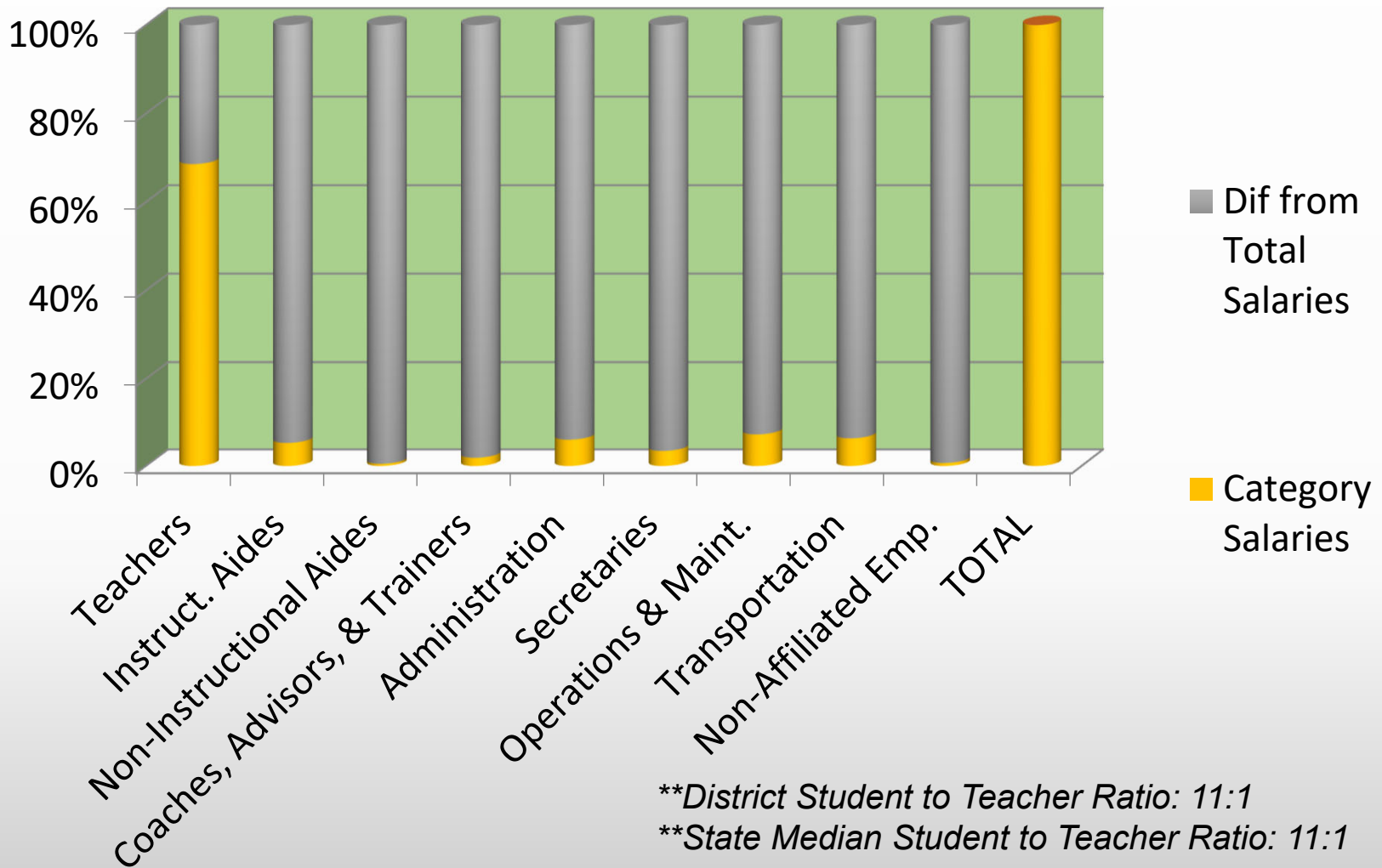
10 Year Change



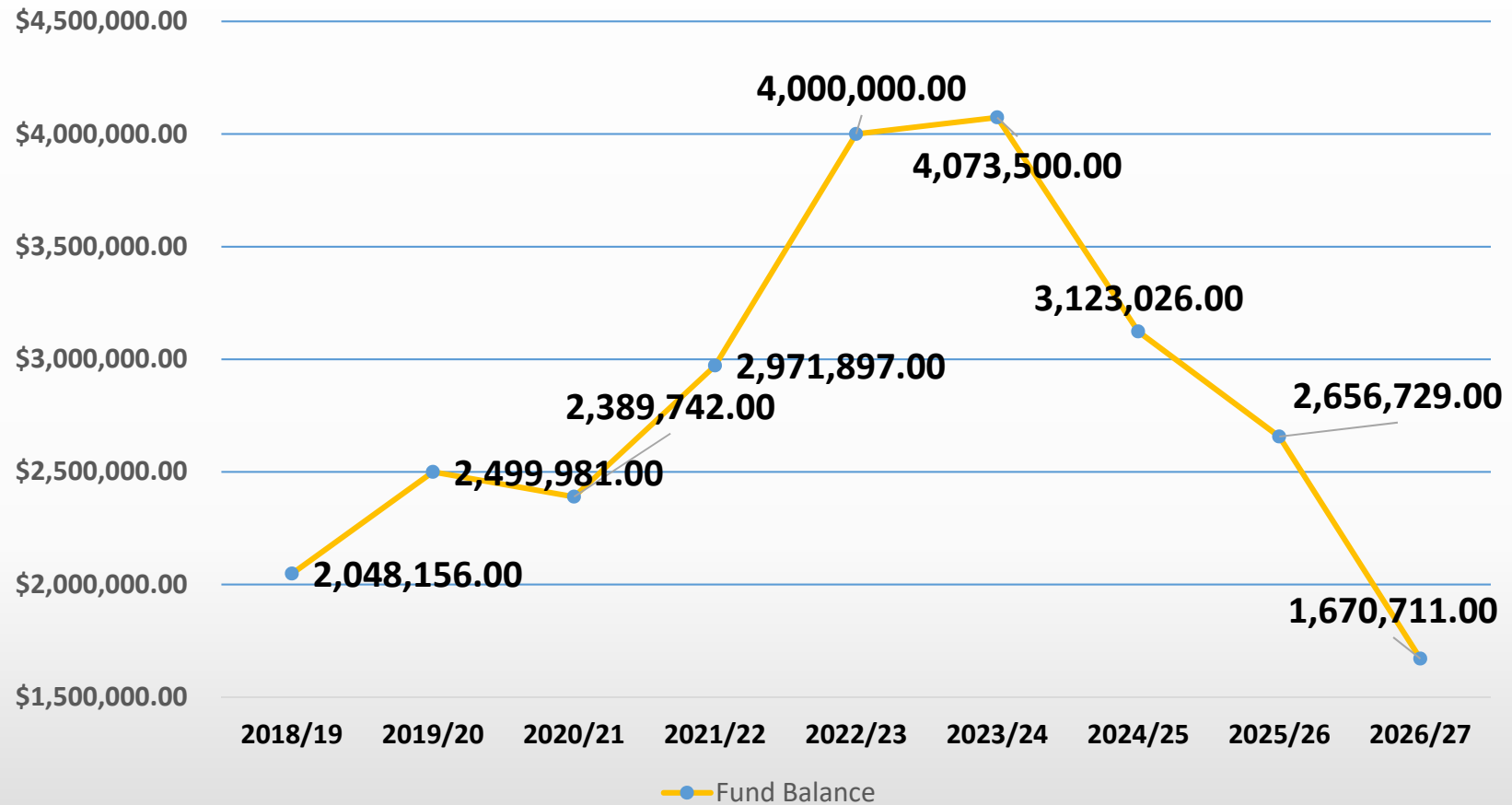
REVENUE DISTRIBUTION



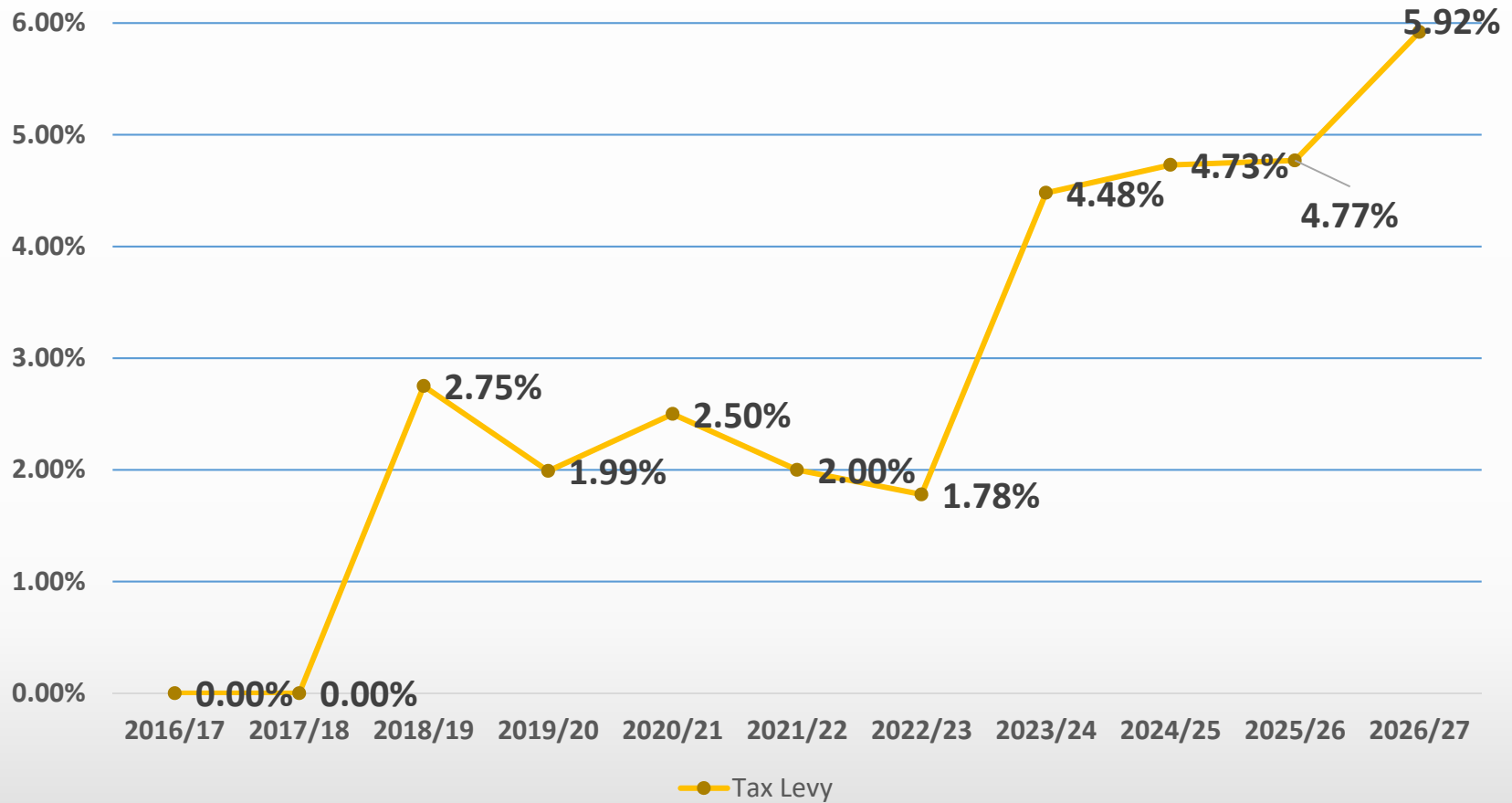
SALARIES BY CATEGORY



Fund Balance Utilization to Support Budget – 2018/19 – 2026/27



General Fund Tax Levy Trend Over 10 Years



Tax Levy Increase

	2025-2026	2026-2027	INCREASE/(DECREASE)
General Fund	\$68,453,591	\$72,526,314	\$4,072,723
Debt Service	\$399,300	\$399,300	\$0
Average Assessed Home	\$243,900	\$ 244,600	\$700
Average Tax Levy Increase	\$271.49 (\$22.62 Monthly)	\$379.90 (\$31.66 monthly)	

****2025-2026 Health Care adjustment (\$1,683,150) & Banked Cap (\$128,539) increases tax levy above 2% = \$1,811,689**

2026-2027 Health Care Adjustment (\$2,703,646) & 2% Tax Levy (\$1,369,072) = 5.92%

Tax impact of \$12.94 per \$100,000 of assessed value



Understanding State Aid

- Governor set a maximum increase of 6% State Aid
 - Equivalent to 0.4% of West Milford's Total Operating Budget
 - Some districts saw TOB increases of 4-5% and more from the same 6% state aid increase
 - West Milford will see an increase of \$119 per pupil compared to many districts receiving over \$1,000 per pupil with the highest district reaching \$1,567.96
- State aid accounts for only 8% of our Total Operating Budget. West Milford now funds 87% through local Tax Levy.
 - Districts with a disproportionately high percentage of their budget funded through local tax levy are also more significantly impacted by a 2% cap and are forced to use adjustments to generate a passable budget
- New Jersey has identified 228 districts to receive the "Maximum Aid Percentage Difference" of 6%
 - With a percentage based system for increased funding, districts already victimized by inequitable funding practices will only see the funding gap grow.
 - 6% of a smaller aid number provides less additional funding.



Next Steps

- Reductions which avoid the most impact to programming and students
 - Closure of Elementary School
 - Attrition and Reorganization
 - Reduction of Stipends, including Freshman Sports
- The reductions are necessary to present a balanced, passable budget
- Expenses will continue to increase beyond revenues in the future



Budget Calendar

- March 24, 2026 – Presentation for Board approval of Preliminary Budget
- March 27, 2026 - Submission of Preliminary Budget to County Office
- April 17, 2026 - Advertisement of Preliminary Budget
- April 28, 2026 – Public Budget Hearing for Board adoption of the budget
- May 1, 2026 - Budget must be posted to District website no later than 48 hours after Public Budget Hearing and adoption



QUESTIONS

- The User Friendly Budget will be posted to the District website once the preliminary budget has been submitted to and approved the Executive County Superintendent and the final budget has been approved by the West Milford Board of Education.
- Please address questions concerning the District budget to:
- Dr. Brian Kitchin brian.kitchin@wmtps.org
- Mrs. Melissa Bertagno melissa.bertagno@wmtps.org

Thank You