



Superintendent's FY2020 Budget Message

The mission of the North Middlesex Regional School District is *“To provide a comprehensive educational experience focused on students becoming contributing members of society.”* Each year, it is the Superintendent’s job to advance that mission with a budget that puts in place people, programs, and appropriate facilities; that supports energized instruction and engaged learning; that pushes innovation in all aspects of the school experience; and remain aligned with our core values.

The Strategic Plan of the North Middlesex Regional School District provides a road map for our work, with goals and strategies tied to our mission. In addition, we measure the value and success of our work against five (5) Core Values:

1. The well-being of our students is at the heart of what we do.
2. Learning is a lifelong process for both students and staff.
3. A safe and supportive school climate is essential to student success.
4. All members of the North Middlesex community have the capacity to grow and develop their character.
5. We respect diversity in all forms.

With respect to the FY2020 budget, our main focus is on addressing key needs in the classroom through strong programing, providing adequate administrative support to assist teachers in the implementation of new programming, and in maintaining our push to become a 1:1 district with regard to technology, while continuing to work toward long-term solutions to the financial implications of our growing capital improvement list.

Budgets are the vehicle by which leaders communicate their priorities and implement the mission, vision, core values, and goals of the organization. Without a commitment of financial resources, the goals of the school system cannot be accomplished. The decrease in student population has had little impact on services due to increases in the areas of contractual obligations, rising health insurance costs, transportation increases, and the need to address social emotional education and supports for our students.

Specifically, this budget is consistent with the district's vision and education priorities. Areas of focus include:

1. To create a proposed budget that is transparent and specific so that School Committee and community leaders can understand our proposals and how they support the educational vision of the District.
2. To create programmatic consistency at both the elementary and middle levels as we work towards truly becoming a PreK-12 district. Currently there are differences in programs and delivery of curriculum among all three elementary schools and both middle schools.
3. To build a support system to assist the Assistant Superintendent with curriculum, instruction, assessment, and data analysis as well as building principals with additional support in educator evaluation.
4. To examine all potential sources of revenue that the District has at its disposal in order to fund additional enhancements without overly burdening the annual operating budget.
5. To build an equitable technology infrastructure so that we can increase our purposeful use of technology to benefit students and staff.
6. To implement salary, benefits, and contract language in a clear and consistent manner for all employees.
7. To begin implementation of a long-term vision for instructional materials and equipment.
8. To begin conversations towards the development of a stabilization fund in order to address our growing list of capital needs.

While the aforementioned investments represent increases to the FY2019 budget, the FY2020 budget still does not address other needs such as additional FTEs in nursing and counseling, a more aggressive approach towards 1:1 in technology, progress on our capital improvement needs, and other key supports for students and teachers.

Overall Budget Picture

The FY2020 budget development proposal represents a 3.62% increase over FY2019 (3.54% excluding debt service). Specifically, the budget would increase by \$1,990,477 from \$55,006,195 to \$56,996,672.

The 3.62% increase breaks down into the following categories:

- 2.10% Employee contractual obligations
- .29% Regular and special education transportation increases
- (0.04%) Active and retired insurance
- .24% Debt service
- .24% Plant facilities/capital projects/utilities
- .18% Human resources
- .14% Middlesex Retirement assessment
- .06% Special education tuitions
- .17% ASL & OT Positions
- .07% Curriculum Stipends
- .16% Charter School and School Choice Assessment
- .01% All other budget modifications

In addition, our budget is based on three (3) key overall principles:

- Classroom teachers and maintaining appropriate class size are important.
- Professional learning and program evaluation are critical elements of a successful organization. A second focus has been on teaching and learning, program review, professional learning around system objectives, and data analysis as the building blocks of continuous improvement.
- We have prioritized providing consistent programming at the elementary and middle levels, while putting a focus on how to actively market NMRHS as an institution that offers an education and overall culture that, at minimum, matches private, technical, and charter schools in the area.

While these beliefs have served our students and families well in the past, they do not fully capture the priorities of this school system and community.

Moving forward, we will focus more fully and transparently on the following views and policy choices:

- The elementary and middle school model facilitates strong connections between school and families, in addition to allowing for the creation of strong, long-term relationships between teachers and students. After much discussion with all stakeholders, we have a renewed commitment to this model.
- Put simply, educators matter. Supporting our educators and their families is an important aspect of ensuring an outstanding experience for our students. We believe that providing opportunities for quality professional learning, support for the families of our teachers, and competitive salary, benefits and working conditions are critical elements in guaranteeing that outstanding educators stay in NM. Moreover, hiring and retaining outstanding school leaders to evaluate and coach teachers is also significant to the success of our system.
- Equity does not mean equal. Some of our students require more of our teachers and services than others in order to meet the high academic and social standards we set. Our emphasis on differentiation within the classroom and using quality assessment to drive instruction provide two tangible examples of our work to meet the needs of all learners, which can only be accomplished through reasonable class sizes. Furthermore, our special education programming directs important resources to particular populations to ensure that all students and families have access to quality instruction, support, and information.
- Quality early education programming is an integral part of a public school system. While we have consolidated buildings and moved our Preschool program, we are dedicated to enhancing what is already an outstanding program. The Preschool's recent return to the Squannacook Early Childhood Center has provided staff and students with a high-quality educational environment.
- Technology is an important component of a quality teaching and learning environment. Equitable access to the contemporary tools of teaching and learning for all teachers and students is no longer something that is "nice to have." Appropriate tools are the basics of a quality classroom and are necessary to prepare students to be college and career ready. This is now more truer than ever as the state has moved to a computer-based assessment.

- An agile central administration is necessary to serve a comprehensive school district in a time of constant change as we continually evaluate everything that we do. While we accept the high demands put upon us by both the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the NM community for a school system that is performing well and one to be proud of, it is clear that changes and additions will need to be made to the central administration in order to ensure that we can meet these requirements, while providing appropriate levels of service and support to teachers and building administrators.

We know that compromises and choices will need to be made and that these ideas will require a substantial financial commitment on the part of the NM taxpayers. We look forward to the opportunity to continue these discussions over the coming months.

This FY2020 budget proposal represents an opportunity to provide critical resources to support student services, to continue to enhance our special education services in NM, to reaffirm our commitment to the belief that class size matters, and to reiterate our pledge to provide an equitable technology plan throughout our schools within the framework of the larger, ongoing conversation about the resources and choices that will be necessary to make our mission, vision, core values and goals a reality.

I have actively consulted with my leadership team, in formulating the FY2020 plan. The following spending plan represents my best judgment of the greatest good in line with our obligations to both the current citizens and the taxpayers of the next generation.

Expenditures

Educator, Secretarial, Nursing, Custodial, & Paraprofessional Increases

FTE	Location	Position	Salary	Rationale
1.0	AES	Teacher	\$60,000	Currently, this group is at 29 students, which has been a struggle this year with one (1) K teacher. We will continue to monitor both the incoming Kindergarten class size as well as the First Grade numbers over the summer.
1.0	VBES	Certified Nurse	\$28,800	As the district's largest elementary school

		Assistant		by approximately 100 students, this position is needed to triage and assist as needed.
1.0	NMRHS	American Sign Language Teacher	\$65,000	As a highly popular foreign language class at NMRHS, this position is needed to provide students with the ability to take three (3) years of ASL, which is required by most colleges.
1.0	DW	Occupational Therapist (Replaces COTA)	\$28,000	Need for a licensed therapist as opposed to a certified assistant.
1.0	NMRHS	Student Supervisor	\$30,000	A position that was eliminated last year, it is recommended to reinstate this role to provide for more of a presence at NMRHS in the hallways, common areas, and parking lots.
1.0	DW	Administrative Assistant	\$51,500	Position approved by SC in October for a January 2019 start date. This role serves as the executive assistant for the HR Director and Business Manager.
0.5	DW	Gateway Job Development Specialist	\$28,880	Position approved by SC in October for a January 2019 start date. This role will work to establish employment opportunities for our 18-22 population.
	DW	Facilities Use Manager	\$10,000	Position approved by SC in October for a January 2019 start date. This administrative-stipended role will be responsible for all indoor and outdoor facility use/rentals.

Educator, Secretarial, Nursing, Custodial, & Paraprofessional Reductions

Based on our current projections, which includes student population, class size, and scheduling, we are projecting a 8.9 FTE decrease in staffing. This reduction would include 3.4 FTE faculty and 5.5 FTE staff.

Administrative Staff Increases (Stipends)

FTE	Location	Position	Administrative Stipend	Rationale
--	DW	Mathematics Curriculum & Data Specialist	\$10,000	With increasing demands on students, teachers, and administrators additional district support is requested to support our educators in curriculum development, data analysis, and professional development. These
--	DW	English/Language Arts Curriculum & Data Specialist	\$10,000	

--	DW	Science, Technology, & Engineering Curriculum & Data Specialist	\$10,000	administrative stipends would be in addition to full-time teaching salaries for work conducted in the summer and beyond the contracted school day.
--	DW	Social Studies Curriculum & Data Specialist	\$10,000	

These stipended positions will be the first step in a multi-year plan to move towards full-time administrative positions who focus will be on:

- Curriculum Writing
- DESE Initiative Implementation
- Coaching & Support
- Data Analysis
- Professional Development
- Supervision & Evaluation

Employee Salaries & Benefits

1. Employee retirement expenses directly impact the budget on an annual basis. Specifically, we are forecasting exit costs of cost of \$75,000 (level funded) in FY2020. However, through the recruitment process to fill these positions, we will look at a combination of skill-set and cost to the district, which usually results in a decrease.
2. The FY2020 Health Insurance increases were approved by the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group Board at an average increase of 7%. This resulted in an increase of \$232,860 in the health insurance line. The assessment for retired teachers came in on 2-27-19 and results in a savings in this line due to a prior year adjustment. The FY2020 GIC assessment is \$237,444 less than the FY19 budget. Together the active and retiree health insurance is a reduction of \$4,554 over the FY2019 Budget.
3. Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Secretaries, and Nurses collective bargaining agreements have been settled. Each of these agreements includes a 2% COLA for FY2019, FY2020, and FY2021.

Utilities & Legal Fees

The district continues to look for ways to optimize utility costs across buildings. The district went “live” with two solar projects this past year on the

North Middlesex Regional High School and Ashby Elementary School. The transfer of Peter Fitzpatrick School also resulted in savings in building costs and utilities. Telephone costs are now tracked in the utilities lines due to the change in DESE codes.

Legal services include a minor increase anticipated for FY20.

Textbooks, Instructional Materials & Equipment, and Professional Learning

North Middlesex Regional High School is requesting an increase of \$8,250 for Virtual High School due to the change in the prior policy of utilizing district staff to provide VHS services. DESE also added the code (2345) to segregate cost of "Distance Learning,".

Special Education & Transportation

The district continues to work with students to find the least restrictive environment. Tuitions for FY2020 are budgeted at \$4,676,000 which is slightly less than FY2019, but due to a reduction in the use of Circuit Breaker funds, there is a \$32,286 increase to the general fund budget. The district continues to work to streamline costs for both in-district and out-of-district special education transportation. The increase in special ed transportation costs due to enrollment is projected at \$75,000. The district continues to see increases in the McKinney Vento homeless transportation and this remains difficult to predict but is mandated by the federal government. We are budgeting a \$35,000 increase in McKinney Vento homeless transportation.

Technology

Hardware & Infrastructure Increase: The hardware budget for technology devices, specifically audio/video classroom devices, has been increased to allow for installation of mounted projectors and sound bars in classrooms where there is currently no existing mounted audio/video technology while maintaining the necessary refresh cycle for all computers and Chromebooks. This year, hardware purchases include a computer refresh for AES and SMS, the replacement of approximately one-quarter of the district Chromebooks, the installation of 22 mounted interactive projectors with sound bars across the district, and upgraded replacements for the existing wireless access points at HBMS, NMS, AES, SMS, and VBES.

Hardware & Infrastructure Decrease: The lease for servers and backup systems has ended, and a refresh of these systems will not be needed for an additional 2 to 3 years, which resulted in a \$52,140 decrease. Additionally, the budget for the phone system lease has been decreased by \$15,000. E-Rate quotes are still coming in, but a decrease of 34,500 in technology costs has been budgeted.

Transportation

The District's Regular transportation contract will expire at the end of June 2019.

Like most districts in our area, NMRSD has once again received only one bid for our bussing contract from our existing bus company, Dee Bus Service, Inc. Due to the lack of competition, which is recognized throughout the state, NM, like many districts is subject to either accepting the bid we receive, or risking a re-bid, which could result in an higher bid.

Dee has been serving NM for the past five years and provided us with a bid proposal that represents a 10.75% increase for FY2020. We are continuing to work with the vendor to address the increases and look for options to save in this area. This might include looking at co-operative bidding options in the future.

Overall, the bid received from Dee Bus Service for the 3-year contract is an increase of just over 20%. The contract amount would not change for bus sizes or by decreasing our tiers (we currently run 3).

As a regional district, we are required to provide a "seat" for all students who live over two miles from their school. What was promised to be a 100% funded program, is now only an average 70% reimbursement from the state for transportation costs for all students greater than 1.5 miles.

This continues to be less than the originally proposed 100%. We anticipate state transportation reimbursement of \$981,984 based on the numbers received from the Governor's Budget. The state is aware of the problems with both the current bid process as it stands as well as not fulfilling their original promise of full reimbursement and there is hope that their will be improvements that address both of these issues in the near future.

In an effort to facilitate transportation for after-school programming (extra help/fine arts/athletics), we will be recommending the addition of two (2)

middle school late buses. We are proposing one (1) at Nissitissit and one (1) at Hawthorne Brook. Each bus will run on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

Custodial & Maintenance

The district continues to fund capital repairs to the buildings within the overall budget. The FY2020 budget includes \$250,000 allocated for this purpose. The capital planning committee will be meeting to prioritize the projects for FY2020. Additionally, the high school building project recently provided NMRHS with the equipment necessary for indoor and outdoor needs required for the new school, which, in turn, led to fewer enhancement requests in this budget.

Contingencies & Circuit Breaker

The district plans to utilize circuit breaker funds to support special education tuition costs in FY2020. The total budget for special education tuition costs is estimated at \$4,676,000. \$3,676,000 will be budgeted from the general fund and \$1,000,000 will come from circuit breaker revolving funds.

(An average of \$749,765 per year is carried from circuit breaker for unanticipated special education costs)

Excess & Deficiencies CMR 41.06 (E & D)

1. Every regional school district shall maintain an excess and deficiency fund on its books of account. At the end of every fiscal year, any surplus or deficit in the district's general fund shall be closed to the excess and deficiency fund.
2. On or before October 31 of each year, every regional school district shall submit to the Department of Revenue the forms and schedules as the Department of Revenue requires for the purpose of reviewing and certifying the balance in the regional school district's excess and deficiency fund. At the discretion of the Commissioner, the Department may withhold release of all or some part of the quarterly state school aid for the regional school district if the regional school district has not filed the required forms and schedules by such date.
3. A regional school committee may use all or part of the certified balance in the excess and deficiency fund as a revenue source for its proposed budget. If the certified balance exceeds five percent of the proposed budget, the regional school committee shall use the amount in excess of five percent as a revenue source for its proposed budget.

A recent history of NMRSD use of Excess & Deficiency funds are as follows:

Fiscal Year	Certified E&D	Used to support subsequent budget	
FY14	\$1,516,911	\$250,000	
FY15	\$1,958,782	\$300,000	
FY16	\$2,744,243	\$490,000	
FY17	\$3,035,703	\$1,360,000	
FY18	\$3,172,219	\$1,000,000 *	Proposed* (certified excess over 5% is \$450,593)

2017 Per Pupil Cost

North Middlesex Regional School District	\$15,323.84
Nashoba Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School	\$19,477.39
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School	\$18,444.71
Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School	\$15,465.00
Sizer School, A North Central Charter Essential School	\$15,332.00
Ayer-Shirley	\$14,659.54
Groton-Dunstable	\$15,078.55
Gil-Montague	\$16,602.70
Hampden-Wilbraham	\$15,115.80
Harvard	\$17,791.46
Hudson	\$16,681.67
Littleton	\$15,127.03
Lunenburg	\$13,208.87
Mendon-Upton	\$15,845.27
Tyngsborough	\$14,620.10
State Average Cost	\$15,911.38

- NMRSD 2017 per pupil cost is \$587.54 per student below the state average.
- The NMRSD is assessed a little over a million dollars for students who opt to attend charter schools. This is a direct offset to the Chapter 70 state funding that is received.

Revenues

State Revenue:

- Federal and State Grants - The district budget includes the Governor's estimates of an increase in Chapter 70 funds of \$20 per student, Chapter 71 (transportation) \$981,984 and charter school reimbursement lines \$67,800. These amounts are set by the state budget process which begins with the Governor's budget released on January 23, 2019.

District Revenue:

- The FY2020 budget proposal is supported with \$1,000,000 of Excess and Deficiency (E & D) funds. This is \$360,000 less than was used in the FY2019 budget. E & D funds are replenished by operations from the prior year and are considered one-time funds. Our goal is to use less E & D money so that our annual budget is sustainable on its own and to eventually utilize E & D money in order to establish a stabilization fund for capital items. The district has not yet received the certification of E & D from the Department of Local Services, but the anticipated number is approximately \$3,000,000.
- In FY2019, School Choice revenues are projected at \$575,674 (78 Students from 13 Communities). The district utilizes the school choice fund to offset health insurance costs. We will recommend that school choice is expanded for FY2020 to help fill out classes that have available space and would not require an additional teacher. The budget for FY2020 School Choice revenue is estimated at \$624,310.

Town Assessments:

- Operating Assessments: The district is likely to receive the minimum state aid due to enrollment changes over the past years. Based on the Governor's budget released, this equates to an

increase in state aid of \$20 more per student. In addition, the district utilized a larger share of the E&D to support the prior FY19 budget to help offset increases to town assessments. These changes results in increases to town assessments where this revenue is no longer available. Even with a budget increase of only 3.62% the Town assessments are increasing an average of 5.96% where state aid is increasing only 0.94% overall. The share each town is assessed is influenced by both enrollment shifts and the minimum local contribution requirement. (minimum local contribution uses EQV - property valuation and the municipal growth factor to determine what each town pays)

- Transportation Assessment: Transportation is assessed to the towns based on enrollment and is offset with the cost state aid chapter 71. With the increases to special education transportation as well as the bid of the regular transportation contract, the transportation assessments are increasing an average of 4.82%. We will continue to work with the vendors to determine if there are ways to save in this area.
- Debt Assessment: The FY2020 Debt Service assessment includes principal and interest payments for two long term Bonds and one Bond Anticipation Note for the NMRHS project as well as short term borrowing for the Accelerated Repair Program at Squannacook Early Childhood Center, Varnum Brook Elementary School and Hawthorne Brook Middle School. There are also the continued Bond payment of principal & interest payments for the Nissitissit Middle School refinancing and a Bond Anticipation Note (including principal paydown) for the HBMS/SECC Septic project.

Federal and State Grants:

The district receives a number of state and federal grants. The largest of these is the SPED Allocation 240 Grant. We plan on utilizing this grant to pay for paraprofessional salaries and special education summer school salaries for FY2020. The total state and federal grants that were awarded for FY2019 totalled \$1,092,427. We anticipate the grant awards for Fy2020 will be slightly less than was received in FY2019.

- Title 1 Grant \$146,846
- Title IIA \$69,213

- Sped Allocation \$828,977
- Title IV \$11,293
- Early Childhood Allocation \$36,098

The district had significant reductions to the Title 1 funding beginning in FY2018. This was due to changes in the calculations and poverty factors that resulted in a reduction of the grant by approximately \$140,000.

Other Revenues:

- Facility Use Unknown - New Policy & Pricing Structure
- FLLAC \$174,031 (9 Classrooms/Gymnasium/Cafeteria)
- Tuition-In (SPED) \$145,000 (4 Students)
- Pre-School \$120,000
- Before & After School
Revolving \$18,700
- Food Services Revolving

The district currently runs a fully self-funded food service program (excluding capital investment). The district has been using an outside Food Service Management company since FY2011. The current vendor is Whitsons Food Service has been serving the district since FY14. We have a participation level in the lunch program of just under 40%. The district currently serves breakfast in all buildings as well. The free and reduced % district-wide is 25.7% as of 12/31/18. The food service continues to struggle to keep a breakeven program each year and higher participation and reduction in outstanding lunch balances could help this. The district food service budget is not released for FY20 yet, but we anticipate a similar budget to FY19.

Revenue Challenges

- The overall revenue projected from state funds is an increase of only 0.94%
- Use of one time funds (i.e E&D) can create structural issues for budgeting in future years
- Transportation reimbursement continues to be less than 100%
- The modest budget increases for the district result in difficult assessments for our member towns

Possible Additions

I believe the FY2020 budget proposal described above represents a realistic scenario for the fiscal year. However, there is some possibility that NMRSD may receive additional revenues that would permit us to enhance this budget plan. Although final recommendations will be formulated when and if these funds become available, and in accordance with any restrictions imposed by the eventual funding program, our priorities for additional improvements and restorations would include the following (in no particular order):

FTE	Location	Position	Salary
1.0	SMS	Special Education Teacher	\$65,000
1.0	SMS	Special Education Paraprofessional	\$30,000
1.0	VBES	School Nurse	\$37,000
1.0	VBES	Special Education Teacher	\$55,000
1.0	VBES	Reading Specialist	\$65,000
1.0	VBES	School Adjustment Counselor	\$55,000
1.0	NMRHS	Grounds Custodian	\$35,000
1.0	SECC	Custodian	\$30,000
1.0	DW	Instructional Technology Technician	\$50,000

Capital Plans for Schools & Budget Implications

The district has segregated a specific capital budget for FY20 of \$250,000 in the general fund budget. These funds have been separately identified from the existing plant and facilities budget lines. We anticipate that the separation will allow better management of the capital costs and allow the capital planning committee a solid number to prioritize the capital needs of the District. In addition to the capital repairs funded in the budget, the district will be looking at several larger building projects. These include Ashby Elementary demolition of the old 1960's wing, Varnum Brook Elementary entrance, third floor HVAC upgrades at Nissitissit Middle School, playground space at Nissitissit Middle School. The larger capital improvements have significant consequences for the operating budget, especially in the outfitting of classrooms, maintaining buildings and supporting systems.

We continue to work with the towns to implement energy saving projects through the use of the Green Community State Grant. These projects include Hawthorne Brook Middle School Boiler, Hawthorne Brook Middle School HVAC upgrades for the gymnasium (pending), Varnum Brook Elementary School weatherization, Nissitissit Middle School lighting, Hawthorne Brook Middle School lighting (pending), Spaulding Memorial School lighting (pending). Without the support of the communities and their commitment to the NM District, these projects would not be possible. The savings in energy is a benefit for all of our communities!

Conclusion

The FY2020 spending proposal for NMRSD represents our effort to continue a strong educational agenda in a challenging fiscal environment, continued examination of our priorities and beliefs, and at a time when we are contending with the costs of serving our students and families at a level that NMRSD demands of its public school system.

This plan is focused on our Vision, Mission, and Core Values, along with the long-established priorities and policy drivers of this system:

- Classroom teachers and class size are important.
- Professional learning and program evaluation are critical elements of a successful organization.
- Serving NM students within the NMRSD is best for families and our schools.
- Our 3-tiered level model best facilitates the academic program and community that NM families are looking for in their school system.
- Teachers matter
- Equity does not mean equal . . . some of our students require more of our teachers and services than others in order to meet rigorous standards.
- Quality early education programming is an integral part of a public school system.
- Technology is an important component of a quality teaching and learning environment.
- An agile central administration is necessary to serve a complex school population.

Most importantly, this FY2020 proposal is designed to allow us to address key needs in the classroom, in classroom support, in special education, and in technology during the coming year, while continuing to work toward long-term solutions to the financial implications of our growing capital improvement list. It is important to note that this budget proposal has been reduced 1.19% from my preliminary budget message on January 28th and .57% from my budget hearing message on February 11th. Further reductions to this most current proposal, will likely result in a loss of staffing which may have a significant impact on class size.

We look forward to the opportunity to provide elected officials, appointed representatives, and the community with further explanation of these important proposals over the coming months. In the meantime, we are happy to share all of NM's accomplishments from FY2019, which would not be possible without a committed community:

North Middlesex Regional High School

- Class of 2018
 - 83% went on to two and four-year colleges
 - 7% joined the workforce
 - 7% went to prep school, trade school, or joined the armed forces
 - 50 recipients of the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship
- NMRHS Student Council - MASC Gold Council of Excellence Award
- Advanced Placement - 205 students participated and 59.5% earned college credit from the college they plan to attend
- Girls' Field Hockey, Girls' Volleyball, Girls' Soccer, & Girls' Cross Country qualified for the 2018 Fall MIAA State Tournament
- Girls' Cross Country won their division for the first time in school history
- Student Vocalists
 - 6 All-State Choir recommendations
 - 4 All-State Chorus participants
- Musical Theatre Productions
 - *Godspell - The Revival* - 8 TAMY nominations with 2 awards
 - *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* - 14 TAMY nominations with 4 awards
- Choir Ensembles
 - Women's Choir Gold Medal @ MICCA Festival
 - Chamber Choir Silver Medal @ MICCA Festival

- Concert Choir Silver Medal @ MICCA Festival
- Women's Choir Gold Medal @ NYC Music Festival - National Youth Choir Invitation to Carnegie Hall - March 2019
- Chamber Choir Gold Medal @ NYC Music Festival - National Youth Choir Invitation to Carnegie Hall - March 2019
- Concert Choir Gold Medal @ NYC Music Festival - National Youth Choir Invitation to Carnegie Hall - March 2019

Nissitissit Middle School

- 11% increase on Mathematics MCAS from the previous test
- Implementation of a Best Buddies Program
- Several Band and Chorus students were selected for Central Districts
- Concert Band earned a Bronze Medal at MICCA
- Chorus performed at the Pepperell Senior Center
- Band marched in the Pepperell Memorial Day Parade
- 2 STEAM days annually with guest speakers and interactive programs for students
- Implemented a Community Rowing Program - Concept Rowing
- Veteran's Day Assembly
- CLASP after-school enrichment
- Mural club
- MakerSpace/ Genius hour for grades 5 and 6
- Student productions: "James and the Giant Peach" and "Honk"

Hawthorne Brook Middle School

- 2017-2018 Gold Medal @ METG for Excellence in Performance
- Fall production of *The Wizard of Oz* sold out all four performances
- Select Chorus performed at the Townsend Senior Center
- Bear-I-Tones *A Cappella* Group
- CLASP after-school enrichment program focusing on coding, crafting, Harry Potter, baking, and cooking
- CrossFit Kids before school program
- Wake Up & Work Out before school program - game based
- Yoga before school
- Robotics Club
- Band performed at the Senior Center Luncheon
- 12 Band students accepted into Central Districts Festival

- Silver Medals @ MICCA for Concert Band and Wind Ensemble
- Band received the top 3 awards at their performance trip to Hersey, Pennsylvania - First in Class, Top Middle School band Overall, and Character & Citizenship

Squannacook Early Childhood Center

- Relocated to our new space at 66 Brookline Street, Townsend, Ma
- Piloting Footsteps2brilliance reading app for home use with our student population
- Utilizes We Thinkers - social strategies and principles in the alignment of Social Emotional Learning
- Host special visits from HBMS Chorus and other communities events
- Connection to Jana Harrison (Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Coordinator)
- Started TEO Backpack Weekend Food Program

Ashby Elementary School

- Exceeded the states target set for 2018 MCAS in grade 3 ELA, and Grade 4 ELA and Math
- Utilizes a five day a Response to Intervention block every morning where students work on individual reading target set by our school data team with support from the I-Ready assessment software
- Houses the district special education program, +STEPS
- Participate in Special Olympics
- We participate in the CAUSE Day in the Spring, which has replaced Jump Rope for Heart
- Developed a Social Emotional Learning staff team
- We have built a strong connection with the local Ashby churches and TEO to support families at the holidays and each weekend through the Weekend Backpack Food Program
- Hosts music concerts that incorporate band in grade 3 and 4 and K-1-2 concert, Memorial Day concert, and our 4th-grade play (The Most Epic Birthday Party Ever!)
- Work with student council from the HS in collections for Project 351

Spaulding Memorial School

- Exceeded the state target set for English/Language-Arts achievement on 2018 MCAS
- Utilize a Tier I model to teach two (2) social-emotional lessons per month in every classroom
- Utilize an Intervention Block three (3) times per week where individual goals are set for students working below, at, or above established grade-level targets
- Partners with the Townsend Ecumenical Outreach (T.E.O) to provide Weekend Backpack Food Program to students and families in need.
- Partnered with TEO and student council to hold food and pajama drive to promote good citizenship.
- Works with Atwood Acres Senior Center and local Veterans in Hospital to provide Valentine's cards each year.

Varnum Brook Elementary School

- 83% of students met targets on 2018 MCAS
- Houses three district special education programs (ACHIEVE/TLC/Language-Based)
- Partners with the Pepperell Senior Center for the Sir William Pepperell Reading Program
- Various community assemblies - Breakfast with Santa, Turkey Trot, Food Drive, and Veteran's & Memorial Day Assemblies
- Involvement in Special Olympics
- Participates in the Jump Rope for Heart

District Curriculum and Instruction

- North Middlesex curriculum leaders continue to lead the state in organizing cross-district curriculum opportunities bringing together 25+ districts and over 100 educators to collaborate around the state frameworks and effective teaching practices.
- North Middlesex brought back a full day of targeted professional development offerings run by teachers, for teachers in November. Over 25 staff members presented for their colleagues in our district and an additional number of staff members presented at the annual NPEN

(Northeast Professional Educators Network) Professional Development day to 2600 teachers across nine different sites.

- Teachers across the district continue to enhance their curricula, assessment methods, and instructional practices to ensure students are engaging with rigorous, meaningful activities.
- North Middlesex has been working with SERESC delving deep into social and emotional competencies, starting with self-awareness and self-management. Each building has created a Social Emotional Learning team to help lead the work for teacher and student understanding. This multi-year partnership will help align expectations and skill sets for a successful student experience.
- The district continues to support understanding how inquiry around data collection can efficiently and effectively increase student learning through the school-based data leadership team meetings and trainings. With increasing demands on administrators, teachers, and students, being a critical consumer of the information available helps our staff on a daily basis with the high demands placed on them while teaching.

Special Education

- As we have done in past years, district special education paraprofessionals participated in a series of trainings related to providing supports for our students.
- Our district mental health team (school counselors, psychologists, behavior analysts) participated in a series of trainings designed to support our students needing therapeutic supports and intervention. These trainings included topics such as suicidal ideations and interventions, assisting students with trauma, and homeless/foster care services for students.
- The district implemented the SBIRT Screening Tool (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment) implemented by middle/high school nurses.
- The district continues to utilize and subscribe to Project Interface mental health referral service. This service is available to the district community as well as all three member towns.
- NM is one of 40 districts in the state who meet monthly for trainings, collaborate and discuss current mental health topics/trends.
- The district is piloting the SHAPE tool (School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System).

- NMRSD continues to provide OUTSTANDING support to its students with disabilities across the district. This is evidenced by the wide range of students we support throughout the year. This is further evidenced by the fact the district returned 5 students from out of district (private school) placements at the start of and during this school year.

Technology

- Phones and phone systems at HBMS, NMS, AES, SMS, VBES, and SECC have been replaced with systems using current telephone technology.
- All computers at VBES were replaced with updated models.
- 18 new mounted interactive projectors with sound bars have been installed in district classrooms with 6 more planned before the school year is out. The result will be that all kindergarten through grade 12 core subject and grade 5 through 12 substantially separate classrooms, as well as many non-core subject classrooms, will now have mounted interactive projectors with sound bars. All remaining pre-kindergarten, Gateway, full classroom special ed, library, art, and music classrooms are budgeted to receive mounted interactive projectors with sound bars in the 2019-2020 school year.
- 120 Chromebooks have been replaced with updated models maintaining a better than 2:1 student to device ratio with up to date mobile devices, in addition, to bring your own device (BYOD) access at all schools.
- Wireless access upgrades have begun at all elementary and middle schools for better support for a large number of wireless devices in each building. Wiring upgrade plans have been started to allow for the additional wireless access points required to increase to a 1:1 student to device ratio while maintaining BYOD access at all schools.
- An internal evaluation of existing department operational tools and procedures identified several cost savings and efficiencies we were able to implement as reflected in this budget.