



Canton Community Connection

Town of Canton & Canton Public Schools | 2025 - 2026 Town Budget Mailer



From the First Selectman,

My fellow residents,

The Board of Selectmen is committed to fiscal responsibility in lieu of the many competing interests facing taxpayers today. On Feb. 10, 2025, the CAO presented my board with a budget (operating & CIP) that increased spending by 10.68%. Board members discussed each department's budget with its respective director and challenged them to find savings.

Additionally, a “round table” meeting with residents, (the first time in Canton history) was held to have an open discussion with the public on the budget. Unlike past budgets, this budget provides full accounting and true costs of delivering those services to residents without the addition of any new staff positions. The Board of Selectmen cut over \$700,000 to deliver you a responsible budget that maintains services and continues to enrich our quality of life here in Canton. We thank you for your guidance during this budget process and ask for your support on May 8th.

Respectfully,

Kevin Witkos



Kevin Witkos
First Selectman

From the Board of Finance Chair,

Dear Canton Residents,

This year, an unusual circumstance made it challenging to balance maintaining town services and excellent schools with reducing the burden on Canton taxpayers.

Our town experienced an unprecedented depletion of our health insurance reserve fund, in fiscal year 2023-2024. This necessitated a significant increase in this line item for the upcoming budget. Our Board of Selectmen (BoS) and Board of Education (BoE) worked diligently to maintain Town and School services at current levels while accounting for this insurance cost increase.

Before the proposed budgets came before the Board of Finance (BoF), each went through significant review and reductions. As a result, the BoF recommended no further cuts for the BoS budget and made minimal cuts to the BoE budget. Any additional cuts to either budget will result in a reduction of Town and School services.

We encourage residents to attend the Budget Public Hearing on Monday, April 28, to share your views on the proposed budget. Following the hearing, the Board of Finance may alter the budget in response to residents' testimony or propose that the budget presented in this mailer go before voters at the May 8th referendum.

Sincerely,

Brian Miller



Brian Miller
Board of Finance Chair

From the Board of Education Chair,

Dear Canton Community Members,

The Board of Education is deeply grateful to the many parents, caregivers, and community members who have shown up to support our 2025–2026 school budget. Your voices have made a difference, and your commitment to our schools is both seen and appreciated.

Since the pandemic, our schools have made meaningful academic and social-emotional gains thanks to the strategic investments this community has supported. However, this year's budget reflects a challenging reality: due to an unanticipated spike in health insurance costs, we are presenting a maintenance budget—one that includes no new initiatives and simply covers contractual obligations and fixed costs.

The development of this budget has been a painstaking process, grounded in responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Before reaching the Board of Education, the Superintendent reduced his preliminary budget by nearly \$850,000. After extensive public meetings and careful review, the Board of Finance applied an additional \$158,000 reduction, bringing the total cuts to over \$1 million from when we started last October.

This budget was not created in isolation. There were no fewer than six public meetings dedicated to budget discussion, during which community members were invited to share input and raise questions. At one of those meetings, a parent expressed a sentiment that resonates: “With these continued cuts, are we still thriving—or merely surviving?”

This is a pivotal moment. The endorsed 2025–2026 budget is the minimum required to sustain the quality of education our students deserve. A strong school system benefits everyone—it drives economic growth, sustains property values, and most importantly, nurtures the potential of our most valuable resource: our children.

Thank you for standing with us and supporting the future of our schools.

Warm regards,

Lou Daniels



Lou Daniels
Board of Education Chair

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CANTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPERATING BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

Budget FY25	\$ 32,924,801	Percent of Increase
Salaries (Certified & Non-Certified General Ed Only)	998,551	3.03%
Health & Benefits	989,722	3.01%
Insurance Property & Liability	7,456	0.02%
Transportation, Including Fuel	5,713	0.02%
Electricity, Heating Oil, Natural Gas & Propane	66,943	0.20%
Special Education: Out of District Transportation & Tuition, Contracted Services & District Transportation, Consulting Services & Therapies	(139,829)	-0.42%
Athletics	7,699	0.02%
Educational Technology, Instructional Materials, Reference Books, Instructional Materials, Student Support	(768)	0.00%
Facilities & Maintenance	34,662	0.11%
Tech Services, Professional Development, Travel/Meetings, Postage, Professional Services	(1,176)	0.00%
New Personnel	92,900	0.28%
Personnel Reductions	(26,668)	-0.08%
Personnel Moved Grants	(114,764)	-0.35%
Personnel Transfers from the Town	132,284	0.40%
Additional Budget Reductions	(158,000)	-0.48%
Small Capital	72,555	0.22%
FY26 Board of Education Final Budget	\$34,892,081	5.98%

BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

- 1. STUDENT GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT**
Improve student achievement through rigorous, supportive instruction to ensure students are college and career ready.
- 2. PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
Enhance communication pathways for students, staff, and the community to build responsive, supportive connections for all.
- 3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY & EFFICIENT OPERATIONS**
Maintain a strong financial management structure to ensure financial sustainability to maximize financial resources available.
- 4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND BELONGING**
Foster a safe and positive learning environment in which students and adults engage to develop compassionate, resilient citizens of a local and global world.
- 5. EMBRACING EQUITY**
Strive to create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that celebrates diversity, fosters a sense of belonging and prepares students for a global society.
- 6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
Continuously invest in the development of skilled staff through hiring, retention, and development to promote continuous growth.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Year	PK-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	PK-12 Total
2024-2025	426	333	214	444	1417
2025-2026	425	335	207	436	1403
2026-2027	425	315	228	419	1387
2027-2028	417	314	222	402	1355
2028-2029	423	288	217	405	1333
2029-2030	412	301	210	393	1316

District enrollment is projected to fluctuate over the next five years, with growth projected primarily at the primary grades.

BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET PRIORITIES

1. Student achievement in all areas across the district.
2. Maintain class size according to the Canton Board of Education policy.
3. Focus on teaching, learning, professional development and social/emotional well being of students and staff.
4. Provide a safe and healthy school environment.
5. Propose a fiscally responsible budget that aligns with the Board of Education Goals.
6. Maintaining Canton's buildings and infrastructure.

Intergovernmental Revenues

SOURCES OF REVENUE

Education Cost Sharing (ECS) FY26 –The ECS grant is calculated using a formula that determines how much state funding each town receives for public education. The formula is designed to distribute funds based on student needs and town wealth.
District Revenues The Special Education Excess Cost Grant (SEECG) is a Connecticut state program that helps school districts cover the high costs of educating students with special needs when those costs exceed a certain threshold. The amount received by schools is determined using several factors, one of which is determined by the pool of available funding set aside in the state budget.
Reimbursement from other Towns for Tuition and Special Education Costs-Students who attend Canton Public Schools from other towns are charged the current per pupil expenditure rate for Canton. If the student requires special education services, these costs are also passed on to the student.
Reimbursement for services Pay to Participate fees - Canton collects Pay to Participate fees from students in grades 7 through 12. These fees are used to directly offset expenses related to athletics.
Building Use – Occasionally, the District receives requests from an outside organization for use of an area within our school buildings. When this occurs, Canton charges back if there is a need for a custodian to be on the premises during non-scheduled working hours. There is also a room charge, if applicable.
Grant Revenues Title I – Title I funds are used to support students by providing additional academic support and learning opportunities in order to close educational achievement gaps.
Title II – Title II funds are used to prepare, train, and recruit high-quality teachers, principals, and other school leaders.
Title III – Title III funds are used to provide supplemental educational programs for English Learners (EL). The goal of Title III is to help EL students achieve English language proficiency and meet the same academic standards as other students.
Title IV – Title IV funds are awarded to improve students' academic achievement through access to a well-rounded education, improving school conditions for learning, and improving the use of technology.
Adult Education – This is a cooperative grant with the Farmington Board of Education and is specifically used for providing adult educational opportunities as required by law to the residents of the town of Canton.
IDEA – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants provide funding for special education and early intervention services for children with disabilities. The District allocates these funds to support personnel, professional development opportunities to specifically support our students that require special education.
Commissioner's Network – The Commissioner's Network represents a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to improve student achievement. The Commissioner's Network grant allows for salary support for a certified Math Interventionist and Instructional Coach, staff supporting tutorial work after school, substitute coverage to support teacher professional learning, and support for staff participating in a Turnaround Committee and/or professional learning, specifically in Canton Middle School.
Open Choice – The Open Choice Grant, supported through the district's long standing participation in the Open Choice program, provides financial support for initiatives aimed at enhancing educational opportunities and overall district improvements.
Mental Health Supports - In FY26, Canton is scheduled to receive ARPA funding to support the mental health of all students attending Canton Public Schools. These funds will be dedicated to support the salaries of social workers districtwide.

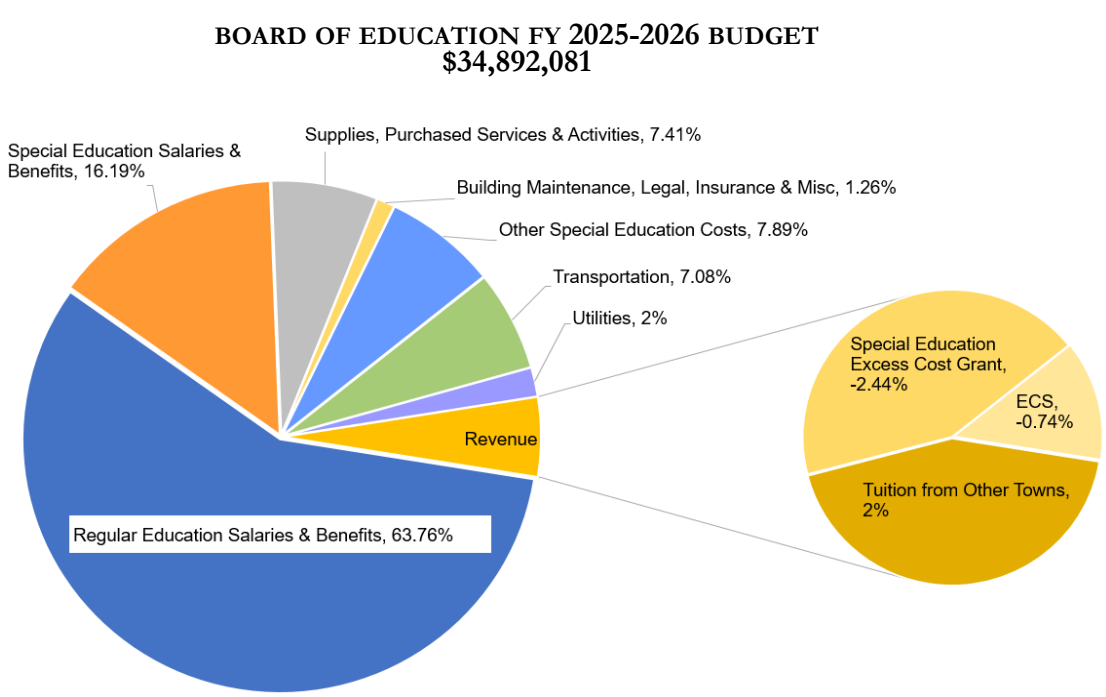
Annual Town Budget Meeting

Monday, April 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
Canton Community Center, 40 Dyer Ave. Canton, CT 06019

The annual town budget hearing will be held on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Canton Community Center to receive comments on the budget recommended by the Board of Finance for the July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026 fiscal year.

The Board of Finance will then adopt a final proposed Town Budget which will be brought to referendum on Thursday, May 8, 2025, with voting from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. in the Canton Community Center. Absentee Ballots will be available from the Town Clerk.

General Fund Budget Summary				
	Approved FY 24/25	Proposed FY 25/26	\$ Change	% Change
Expenditure				
Board of Selectmen Operating	\$12,380,606	\$13,097,355	\$716,749	5.79%
Capital Improvement	\$995,067	\$1,011,000	\$15,933	1.60%
Board of Education	\$32,924,801	\$34,892,081	\$1,967,280	5.98%
Board of Finance	\$2,310,865	\$1,816,487	-\$494,378	-21.39%
Total	\$48,611,339	\$50,816,923	\$2,205,584	4.54%
Revenue				
Anticipated Non-Tax Revenue	\$6,853,355	\$6,824,931	-\$28,424	-0.41%
Balance Raised from Local Tax	\$41,684,985	\$43,991,992	\$2,307,007	5.53%
Total	\$48,538,340	\$50,816,923	\$2,278,583	4.69%



Understanding the Canton Public Schools Budget

The budgeting process for Canton Public Schools is a crucial aspect of ensuring effective financial management and the delivery of high-quality education to students. The administration employs a strategic and comprehensive approach to budgeting, beginning with a forecasted budget which is compiled in the fall and presented in December. This first look approach enables Administration to access critical budget drivers as early in the process as possible.


In conjunction with the Town of Canton Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen, The Administrator's Proposed budget used the consumer price index to aid in the forecast as well as the FY26 budget development process. This process involves a thorough review of each line item in the budget, requiring administrators and department heads to provide detailed justifications for all proposed expenses. By examining the necessity of each expense, the school district can identify areas for cost savings and allocate resources based on current needs and priorities.

Forecasting for the Future

The administration and Canton Board of Education places a strong emphasis on forecasting for the future. The school district recognizes the importance of anticipating changes in enrollment, economic conditions, and educational trends to make informed financial decisions. The forecasting process involves analyzing demographic data, enrollment projections, and other relevant factors to predict future resource needs. This forward-looking approach enables the district to plan for potential challenges and opportunities, ensuring that the budget remains flexible and responsive to changing circumstances.

The next page highlights the Canton Schools' sources of revenue, student enrollment, and a breakdown of the increase to the total operating budget. ►

To view all Board of Education budget documentation, visit the Canton Schools website www.cantonschools.org, or scan the QR code to be directed to the budget webpage.



Board of Finance Members:

Brian Miller, *Chair*

Sarah Faulkner, *Vice-Chair*

Peg Berry, *Member*

Thomas Blatchley, *Member*

Kenneth Humphrey, *Member*

Katie Kenney, *Member*

Other Elected and Town Officials:

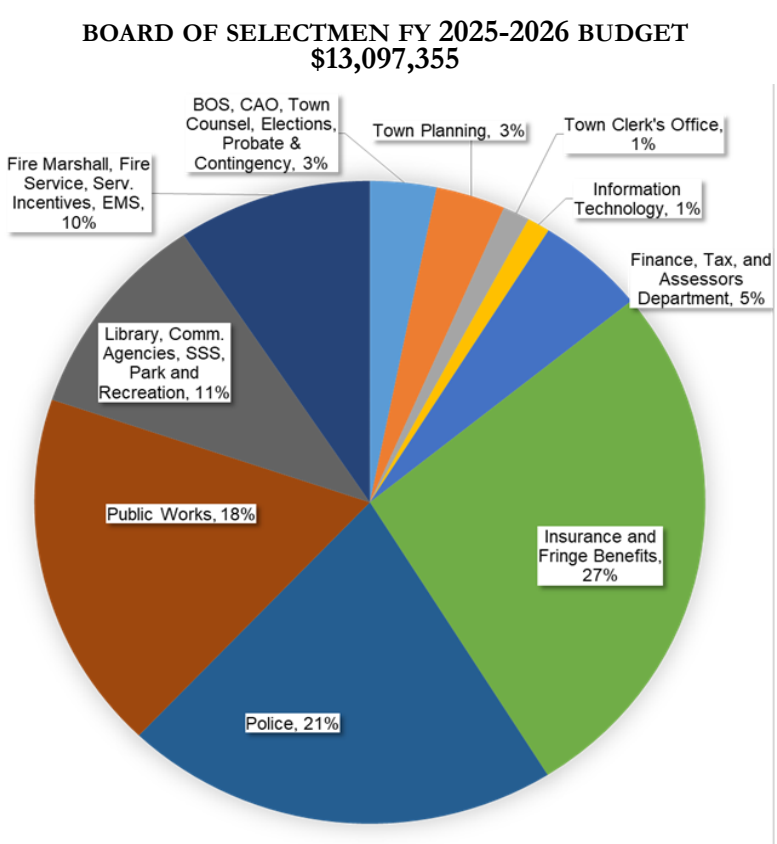
Kevin Witkos, *First Selectman*

Mark Penney, *Chief Administrative Officer*

Zoe Peak, *Finance Officer*

Louis Daniels, *Board of Education Chair*

Jordan Grossman, Ed.D., *Superintendent of Schools*



What are the major drivers of the budget increase?

- Largest Increases in Board of Selectman Budget:**

 - Fire Department Incentives
 - Medical Insurance
 - Contingency Account
- Largest Increases in Board of Education Budget:**

 - Health & Benefits
 - Contractual Salaries

How are local taxes determined each year?

Local taxes are determined by applying the local tax rate, known as the mil rate, to the total assessed value of all property in town. The value of all property in town—including commercial and residential buildings, vehicles, and some personal property—is called the Grand List.

By state law, property is assessed at 70% of its market value. Thus, if a residential property had a value of \$310,418, the assessed value would be \$217,293. The tax on this property would be the assessed value multiplied by the mil rate, divided by 1,000 (a mil). Under this year's proposed mil rate of 33.50, the tax on this property would be \$7,279.11. As a reminder, this is year 2 of the 4-year phase in.

Canton offers property tax abatement programs for eligible taxpayers including veterans and seniors. Information about tax abatement programs and eligibility requirements can be obtained by contacting the Assessor's Office (860-693-7842) and the Senior & Social Services Office (860-693-5811).

What do I need to know about the proposed budget?

This budget will require local property taxes of \$43,991,992. The total proposed budget calls for spending of \$50,816,923, an increase of 4.69% compared to the 2024-25 adopted budget. Note that this increase is caused by increased costs to maintain the Town's current levels of services and not by adding new or expanded services.

What role does the Board of Finance have in the budget process?

The BOF is responsible for managing both the short-term financial needs of the town and its long-term capital planning. In its decision-making process, the BOF tries to balance town services, a strong school system, upkeep of nearly \$120 million invested in the town's infrastructure, the town's AAA bond rating, and the impact of these decisions on the taxes imposed on residents and businesses.

To learn more about Canton's budget, visit the town website, www.townofcantonct.org