

TO: House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Chelsea Myers, Executive Director, Vermont Superintendents Association
Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association

RE: Education Finance: School Budgets

DATE: March 11, 2025

Voters approved over 90% or 104 school budgets in Town Meeting Day 2025 voting, demonstrating a show of public support for Vermont education. Nine school budgets were defeated, which is a more typical result than the defeats of FY25. Vermont has 56 supervisory districts and supervisory unions and 124 school budgets to support them.

In this year's March votes on Tuesday's Town Meeting Day and the previous days, 113 budgets were voted upon. Those range from small towns like Holland to the state's largest cities, Burlington, Rutland, and South Burlington. Eleven budgets will be voted on between March 10 and May 13, including the Essex-Westford school district on April 8.

Out of the nine defeated budgets, five have a history of prior budget defeats exclusive of FY25 (Alburgh, Georgia, Slate Valley, Springfield and Wolcott), three were defeated last year alone (Fairfax, Ludlow-Mount Holly and Paine Mountain), and one does not have a history of budget defeat in the past ten years (Stamford).

The cost of health insurance premiums and HRAs are included in school district budgets and paid by Vermont taxpayers. The cost of public school employees' health insurance exceeds \$300 million/year. The cost increased by 16% in FY25 and 12% in FY26. These costs are consuming a larger and larger portion of Vermont school budgets. In 2018, health benefits made up less than 10% of school budgets. It's now around 15%. If health benefits continue to grow at the current pattern, they will make up 20% of school budgets in a few years. To deal with this issue, school boards have to hold the line on the remaining parts of the budget. Healthcare is squeezing out other education initiatives. With projected education spending at 6.4%, it is clear that healthcare is squeezing out other education initiatives.

School administrators and school boards got to work considerably earlier this year for budgeting. In August, our associations, along with the Vermont Association of School Business Officials, released [a budgeting memo](#) to support early planning efforts. School leaders made challenging decisions with their communities to best support students and taxpayers, with some deciding to make significant staffing changes.

FY 2026 BUDGET VOTE STATUS REPORT
THROUGH TOWN MEETING DAY – MARCH 4, 2025

Unofficial Results

As of 3-11-2025

124	Total to vote
113	Budgets voted on and before Town Meeting Day
104	Approved
9	Defeated
11	Budgets to be voted at a later date

[Link to Live Spreadsheet Results](#)

Budgets Passed as of Town Meeting Day (104)

Budgets defeated as of Town Meeting Day (9)

SU/SD	School District
Central Vermont SU	Paine Mountain SD
Franklin West SU	Fairfax SD
Franklin West SU	Georgia SD
Grand Isle SU	Alburgh
Orleans Southwest	Wolcott
Slate Valley SD	Slate Valley SD
Springfield SD	Springfield SD
Two Rivers SU	Ludlow - Mount Holly Unified Union SD
Windham Southwest SU	Stamford SD

Budgets Scheduled to be Voted at a Later Date (11)

SU/SD	School District	Vote Date
Essex-Westford	Essex Westford	4/8/2025
Orange East	Oxbow	4/8/2025
Orange East	Waits River Valley	5/5/2025
Orleans Central	Lake Region Elem/Middle	3/10/2025
Orleans Central	Lake Region HS	3/19/2025
Rivendell Interstate	Rivendell Interstate	3/15/2025
White River Valley	Granville-Hancock	5/13/2025
White River Valley	Rochester-Stockbridge	5/6/2025
Windham Central	River Valleys SD	4/29/2025
Windham Central	West River Modified UED	3/26/2025
Windham Southeast	Windham Southeast	3/18/2025