

Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
August 17, 2015

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, August 17, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the School Committee Room, 3rd Floor, Town Hall. Chair Mistrot called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Tom Campbell, Dirk Coburn, Amy Mistrot, Lisa Tabenkin

Firkins Reed participated by telephone

Members Absent: Paul Laurent

Others present: Peter Sanchioni Superintendent of Schools
Anna Nolin Assistant Superintendent
Timothy Luff Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Liam Hurley Director of Finance
Sharon Reilly Recording Secretary

Public Speak

Chair Mistrot asked if anyone wished to come forward for Public Speak. No one came forward.

Ms. Mistrot announced that applications are being sought to fill the vacant seat on the School Committee as a result of Anne Blanchard's resignation as of July 31, 2015. Ms. Blanchard resigned after 8 years of dedicated service due to new work commitments. Interested parties should submit their application to the Board of Selectmen's office no later than August 26. A joint meeting between the School Committee and Board of Selectmen will take place on August 31 to interview interested parties.

FY'17& FY'18 Forecasted Budgets

Dr. Sanchioni shared a PowerPoint budget presentation (included), which detailed the fiscal reality based upon a preliminary, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 appropriation projection of only \$53,800,800, which is lower than the approved FY16 approved NPS budget of \$53,817,355.

Given that NPS has to absorb annual fixed, contractual, and mandated increases in areas such as staff compensation, electricity, transportation, and Special Education tuitions, Dr. Sanchioni created a Baseline Budget scenario to describe the increases that are unavoidable for FY17. The Baseline Budget as projected is \$56,184,200, which creates a deficit of \$2,383,200 to the \$53,800,00 appropriation projection.

Dr. Sanchioni articulated that given the amount of fixed components of the NPS budget, a deficit shortfall can only be addressed with cuts to regular education staff and expenses, both of which have a direct impact to student learning. As articulated, Dr. Sanchioni described the following cuts that would be necessary just to support the Baseline Budget without additional funding .

Please refer to the attached PowerPoint for specific positions that would be eliminated and the impact from each from this scenario. To highlight, among many individual positions, the kindergarten and first-grade tutors would be eliminated, which would have a dramatic impact on the district's youngest, emerging students and would more than likely lead to increased Special Education referrals and potentially larger Special Education costs in future years without this early and fundamental classroom support.

There are two scenarios presented to address the last of the personnel cuts. There is \$475,814 in additional reductions that would either be addressed with another nine, currently undefined staff cuts or from the elimination of all athletic and activity advisor stipends. If the latter option is utilized, athletic teams and extra curricular activities would become self-funding with all costs of each individual program to be born by the student participants.

Proposed Cuts

Personnel	\$1,583,200
Expense	\$ 450,000
Increased fees/use of Revolving Accounts	\$ 350,000
Total Cuts Required from Baseline Budget	\$2,383,200

Dr. Sanchioni went on to make a recommendation to School Committee for a Level-Service forecast of \$57,830,200 for FY17 and a \$61,127,300 FY 18 forecast. The FY17 forecast would include 10.6 positions

needed to address continually increasing student enrollment. The FY18 forecast would include 15.5 positions. Rationale for each position is included in the PowerPoint.

School Committee expressed their concerns with the various budget scenarios:

- Is the level service budget really a level service budget? – class sizes continue to increase
- Grade 9 Health Teacher is imperative
- Recover budget is needed – don't know if level service is enough
- More cuts if an override fails

Chair Mistrot shared her perspective and that of Paul Laurent, fellow School Committee and Financial Planning Committee (FPC) member, who was unable to attend the meeting, that there are multiple priorities facing the town and that a sensitivity to the multiple variables outside of NPS is warranted in determining the needs put forth to the town on behalf of the school district.

Ms. Mistrot shared with members that Bill Chenard, Assistant Town Administrator Operations, had previously shared at an FPC meeting that an analysis of successful overrides showed that operational overrides in excess of \$5 million were largely unsuccessful. Given that the town was looking to increase how they budget for snow/ice removal as well as to reduce the town's reliance upon Free Cash to support recurring operations, the current, overall, municipal shortfall is projected to be \$7,266,649 by the end of FY18 based upon the Level-Service Budget Forecast (\$57,618,208) made by NPS at a summer FPC meeting. This \$7.3 million shortfall would put Natick solidly above the \$5 million, historically-successful threshold, which should be assessed carefully.

Members asked Dr. Sanchioni and Dr. Nolin for their perspective. Both strongly support appropriate resources for NPS but share a concern that additional funding requests had to be carefully assessed. If an operational override were approved but did not pass, the \$2.4 million in articulated cuts would be devastating to NPS and must be strategically avoided.

The following members of the public came forward:

Mr. Henry Haugland, former School Committeemember commented:

- School Committee's job is to advocate for the schools
- Need to improve achievement scores – have been flat for several years – excellence comes with a cost
- Average kids are impacted the most
- Do we settle for mediocrity or excellence?
- 2009 debt-exclusion override for the high school and Community/Senior Center passed by 80% - people in Natick want excellence

Mr. Paul Joseph, Chair of Economic Development Committee, Former Board of Selectmen, Parent

- Town needs to do more to solve this problem – need vision and leadership
- Structural problem needs to be fixed – how we manage ourselves, how we think about revenue sources
- How did we get here and what can we do about it? What have we done differently since last override in 2008? In this opinion, how we operate, manage and plan could have mitigated us getting into this.
- How do you measure excellence, intend to measure excellence, feedback mechanism to demonstrate progress?
- If we have justification and metrics, town will step up.

Ms. Katie Joyce, town meeting member and parent.

- Fears that if you don't ask for what you need, you will get much less. History has shown this.
- Put real numbers out in the public eye. Not everyone understands that the cost of an override may be less than a student's athletic fees.
- Demographics have changed in town since 2008. Many people have moved here because of the community and schools. If we don't do the right thing and programs are cut, people will leave - home values will decline.
- She stands to support the schools and will help in any way she can.

Leah Phillips Falzone, Natick parent of soon to be kindergartner and 2nd grader at Brown

- Moved to Natick just before the override in 2008 which was supposed to cover funding for three years.
- An override to support these budgets is her one chance for her children's education.
- There is not a great track record for getting what is asked for and needed. Her children will be pigeoned into what the School Committee decides to ask for.
- How are you going to address falling behind year after year. When do we ask for that?
- Undermining ourselves by always doing what we have to do not what we want to do.

David Mangan, Natick parent

- Natick has to decide who they want to be
- How did you feel about putting this budget together? Dr. Sanchioni responded that there has never been

a 7.5% increase in the budget in the best of times. Going any higher may result in loss of any override. Failure is not an option.

After further discussion about the balance between appropriate funding for key positions, Mr. Campbell made a motion to increase the FY'17 & FY'18 forecasted Level Service Budgets by \$500K in order to fund a high school health teacher, Kennedy & Wilson Physical Education teacher and Middle Schools literacy and math specialists. Mr. Coburn seconded. Mr. Coburn offered that if additional funding is to be requested, that this is an appropriate juncture to consider eliminating the increased athletic and additional middle and high school activity fees imposed the 15-16 school year. Mr. Coburn offered an amendment to increase the Level Service Budget by \$600K to account for this fee sunsetting. Mr. Campbell agreed to the amendment.

Mr. Hurley then made the following adjustments to the forecasted budgets which will be brought forward to the Selectmen later this evening and titled Level Service + budget.

FY'17 – all inclusive budget request (includes cost of benefits (shared expense budget)	\$58,430,200
FY'18 - all inclusive budget request (includes cost of benefits (shared expense budget)	\$61,832,300

It was unanimously approved by the four members present and by Ms. Reed by telephone to present to the Selectmen the Forecasted Level Service+ Budgets for FY'17 & FY'18 - \$58,430,200 and \$61,832,300, respectively.

Discussion on need for FY'17 Operational Override

After the lengthy budget discussion, Mr. Coburn made the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Natick School Committee requests that all possible funding mechanisms up to and including a voter-approved operating override be considered and pursued in order to provide adequate funding for all of Natick's financial needs.

Mr. Campbell seconded. It was unanimously approved by the four members present and by Ms. Reed by telephone.

Members Concerns

Mr. Campbell extended congratulations to the NHS Girls'4x4 relay team for their success at reaching the Nationals.

Mr. Coburn welcomed interested parties to apply for the vacant seat on the School Committee.

At 9:20 p.m., the School Committee adjourned and attended the Board of Selectmen's meeting where Dr. Sanchioni and Chair Mistrot presented the FY'17 & FY'18 forecasted budgets. (See Selectmen's meeting minutes).

Attest: _____

Peter Sanchioni, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Secretary to the School Committee

Sharon Reilly
Recording Secretary

Documents provided via NovusAgenda

FY'17 & FY'18 Forecasted Budget PowerPoint Presentation

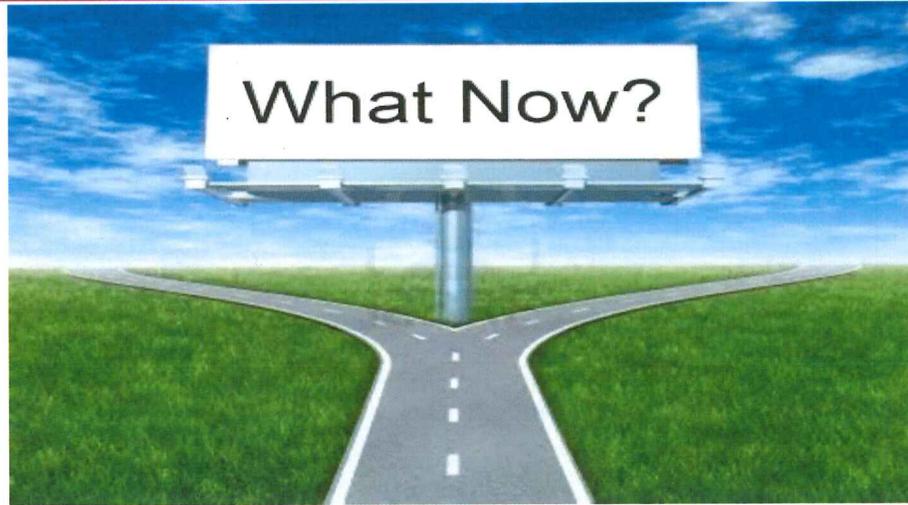
Handouts

Spreadsheet outlining initial budget request vs. actual budget request approved for FY2010-2016

Spreadsheet outlining FY'17 & FY'18 Recover Budget vs. Level Service Budget vs. Baseline Budget

Spreadsheet outlining FY'17 & FY'18 Recover Budget vs. Level Service+ Budget vs. Baseline Budget

Natick Public Schools FY 17 & 18 Forecasted Budgets



FY 16 Recap



FY 16 approved budget = \$53,817,355

This budget allowed the School Department to add 9.9 critically-needed staff positions to help address another year of increased enrollment.

However, this budget required \$1.3 million of one-time funds to support, which is an unsustainable, long-term fiscal strategy.

Current Reality



Based upon realistic revenue forecasting, the Natick Public Schools FY 17 appropriation is projected to be: \$53,800,800

This is a 0% increase.

FY17 Reality



BASELINE BUDGET:

- Allows for no new staff hires, which are needed to address annual enrollment increase and only provides for contractual increases
- Expense increases for special education, transportation and utilities only
- In essence, by increasing only those accounts that we must raise = **\$56,184,000**

FY 17 forecasted appropriation: \$53,800,800

Baseline Budget deficit: -\$2,383,200

FY 17 Baseline Budget



FY 16 Approved Budget	\$53,817,355
FY 17 Mandated/Required Increases:	
Steps/Lanes	\$1,075,000
*COLA	\$ 853,800
Retirements	(\$141,000)
SPED Increase	\$ 264,000
Transportation	\$ 265,600
Building Operations and Mtc.	\$ 49,100
Total Increases	\$2,366,645
FY 17 Baseline Budget	\$56,184,000
FY 17 Forecasted Appropriation	\$53,800,800
Deficit - \$ to be eliminated from the schools	\$2,383,200

Reality of Cutting a Budget



- FY 16 Budget Breakdown:

- Salaries	77%
- Tuitions	9%
- Expenses	7%
- Transportation	4%
- Energy	3%

Tuitions, transportation and energy cannot be reduced. In the salary account, approximately 20% is dedicated to special education, which cannot be reduced based upon IEP mandates.

Cuts can only be made to regular education staff and to expenses that directly or indirectly impact student learning.

Deficit Strategy



• <u>Deficit</u>	<u>(\$2,383,200)</u>
• Personnel Cuts	\$1,583,200
• Expense Cuts	\$450,000
• Revenue Offsets	\$350,000

Personnel Cuts



• Personnel Cuts	\$1,583,200
Social Worker PACE - NHS	\$60,000
Nurse	\$53,662
IT Technician	\$43,000
Secretary (2)	\$100,000
Kindergarten Assistants	\$300,000
First Grade Assistants	\$133,551
MS Curriculum and Team Leaders	\$44,874
Cut Activities and Clubs by 50%	\$91,313

Personnel Cuts



Personnel Cuts Continued

High School Administrator	\$120,000
Guidance Counselor	\$53,662
Art/Music Teacher	\$53,662
PE/Health Teacher	\$53,662

Cut Another 9.0 FTE \$475,814

These cuts will be regular classroom teachers, largely at NHS, which will have a dramatic impact for students to complete their state-mandated, graduation requirements.

OR

Personnel Cuts



OR

Eliminate Coaching Salaries	\$432,294
Eliminate Additional Advisor Stipends	\$43,520

- This would necessitate a significant increase in user fees to maintain all sports and clubs.
- Athletics and extracurricular activities would need to be self-funding by sport and activity.
- These fees would be range in cost, but student involvement would be based upon a family's ability to pay the fee/s.
- A student's lack of participation could dramatically impact their college resume and attractiveness to schools.

Impact of Personnel Cuts



Personnel Cut Impact

Taking into account that the student population is projected to rise by at least another 100 students and that currently the NPS has unmet needs, personnel cuts would be catastrophic resulting in:

Impact of Personnel Cuts



- Nurse and Guidance Counselor caseloads will swell to irresponsible levels - At KMS, the Nurse will have over 675 students, many who are medically fragile.
- Loss of Social Worker would eliminate support for students returning from hospitalizations, which will increase SPED referrals and expense.
- KEIPs and FEIPs provide an invaluable early intervention service to kindergarten and first-grade students that has greatly reduced the need for special education services. Without kindergarten and first grade assistants, more students will be referred for special education services
- Art and music electives will be eliminated at NHS.

Impact of Personnel Cuts



- PE classes will be over 40 closer to 50 at both middle schools and NHS
- Elementary class sizes will increase district wide, over 25 at some schools. Currently, 13 classes are at 25.
Larger class sizes are especially detrimental at K and grade one without KEIP and KEIP support.
- The modulars at Brown will not be used for their intended purpose, which was a \$1M+ investment by Natick.
- There will be MS academic class sizes over 25
- Multiple HS electives will be lost and many more academic classes will have over 30 students. There were over 30 NHS classes with 25+ students for SY14/15.

Expense Cuts



Expense Cuts

\$450,000

- Unable to institute lower-cost 1:1 sustainability plan for NHS.
Students use 5-6 year old computers
Jeopardizes 1:1 program, which has been fully executed since 2010 and is the foundation of NPS's educational delivery grades 8-12.
- No new technology for grades K-7, which is an even greater need with larger classes with less instructional support.
- Schools will be restricted to must-need supplies only
- No new curriculum materials, textbooks or reading books for elementary schools
- Professional Development budget eliminated.

"Research shows that an inspiring and informed teacher is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement, so it is critical to pay close attention to how we train and support both new and experienced educators."

Use of Revenue Offsets



Revolving Accounts	\$100,000
Raise Fees: increase bus or add NHS parking fee	\$150,000
<u>Circuit Breaker</u>	<u>\$100,000</u>
Total	\$350,000

Impact of a Baseline Budget



If the cuts are made to achieve a Baseline Budget, the Natick Public Schools will provide a **very** “different” education than the one received by preceding generations. Students will experience:

- large class enrollments
- teachers overwhelmed by high student loads
- less offerings vs. increased graduation requirements
- and significantly higher fees for extracurricular participation.

“Soft Costs” from the Deficit Strategy



Self-funding extracurricular fees will force an unknown group of students out of afterschool activities.

- * impact overall student engagement
- * impact student wellness
- * probable increase in mental health issues and risky behaviors

Dramatic reductions to staff will create morale issues

- * probable loss of non-PTS and young teachers who would leave NPS to a district that supports/invests in education
- * open NPS positions would be hard to fill with quality candidates as teachers do not want to take the chance working for a district that does not support/invest in education.
- * NPS has reaped these rewards of the 2009 override for many years but will be commensurately damaged if dramatic cuts are enforced.

NPS Request – FY 17 Level-Service Budget



• Level-Service Request	\$57,830,200
• <u>Current FY 17 appropriation projection</u>	<u>\$53,800,800</u>
• Additional FY17 funding request	\$4,029,400

- The Level-Service Request would allow for 10.6 positions to address another year of increased enrollment and preserves expense accounts, which support student achievement.
- This Level-Service funding is being requested by the School Committee

FY17 Level-Service Position Requests



ENROLLMENT DRIVEN

High School - English Teacher 1.0
 High School - Social Studies Teacher 1.0
 Wilson - Teacher: TBD based upon enrollment 1.0
 Elementary - General Education Teacher 1.0
 Brown - Art Teacher 0.2

CASELOAD NEED

High School and Wilson - Nurse split between both schools 1.0

Kennedy and Wilson - Guidance Counselors 2.0

COMPLIANCE

MS & HS - Special Education ETL 1.0
 District Assistive Technology Specialist 1.0
 District Paraprofessional 1.0
 Preschool BCBA 0.4

FY18 Level-Service Request



FY 17 Level Service Budget	\$57,830,200*
*(Includes benefits)	
FY 18 Level Service Increases:	
Steps/Lanes	\$1,108,000
*COLA	\$ 900,900
Retirements	(\$144,600)
Staff Additions (15.5)	\$ 858,700
SPED	\$ 277,000
Transportation	\$ 63,600
Building Operations & Mtc.	\$ 50,700
Other increases	\$ 60,000
Cost of Benefits (Town Budget)	\$ 122,800
Total Increases	\$3,297,100
FY 18 Level Service Budget	<u>\$61,127,300</u>
FY 18 Forecasted Appropriation (2.5%)	<u>\$59,275,955</u>
Deficit - \$ to be eliminated from the schools	\$ 1,851,345

FY18 Level-Service Request Positions – Enrollment Driven



School and Position	FY18 Budget FTE	FY18 Salary	FY18 Health Insurance and Other benefit Cost
HS – Art Teacher	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
HS – Science Teacher	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
HS – PE Teacher	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
Kennedy & Wilson – Two Teachers	2.0	\$111,660	\$43,200
Elementary General Education Teacher	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
Brown 0.4 Music Teacher	0.4	\$22,232	\$8,640

FY18 Level-Service Request Positions – Enrollment Driven



School and Position	FY18 Budget FTE	FY18 Salary	FY18 Health Insurance and Other benefit Cost
Elementary PE Teacher	0.6	\$33,498	\$12,960
Kennedy Wilson PE Teacher	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
Teacher – TBD	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
Preschool SPED Teacher	0.4	\$22,232	\$8,640



FY18 Level-Service Request Positions – Caseload Need

School and Position	FY18 Budget FTE	FY18 Salary	FY18 Health Insurance and Other benefit Cost
HS Guidance Counselor	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
HS Psychologist	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
Kennedy Adjustment Counselor	1.0	\$55,830	\$21,600
District Psychologist – PhD Level	1.0	\$80,000	\$21,600



FY18 Level-Service Request Positions – Compliance

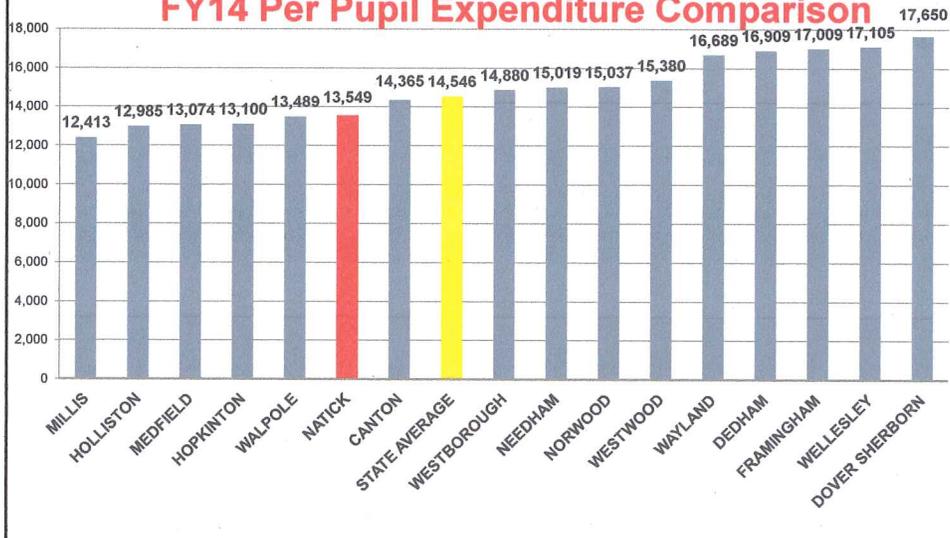
School and Position	FY18 Budget FTE	FY18 Salary	FY18 Health Insurance and Other benefit Cost
HS ELL Teacher	0.4	\$22,232	\$8,640
HS Speech Teacher	0.5	\$27,915	\$10,800
District Paraprofessionals	1.0	\$24,970	\$21,600
Preschool ELL Teacher	0.2	\$11,166	\$4,320

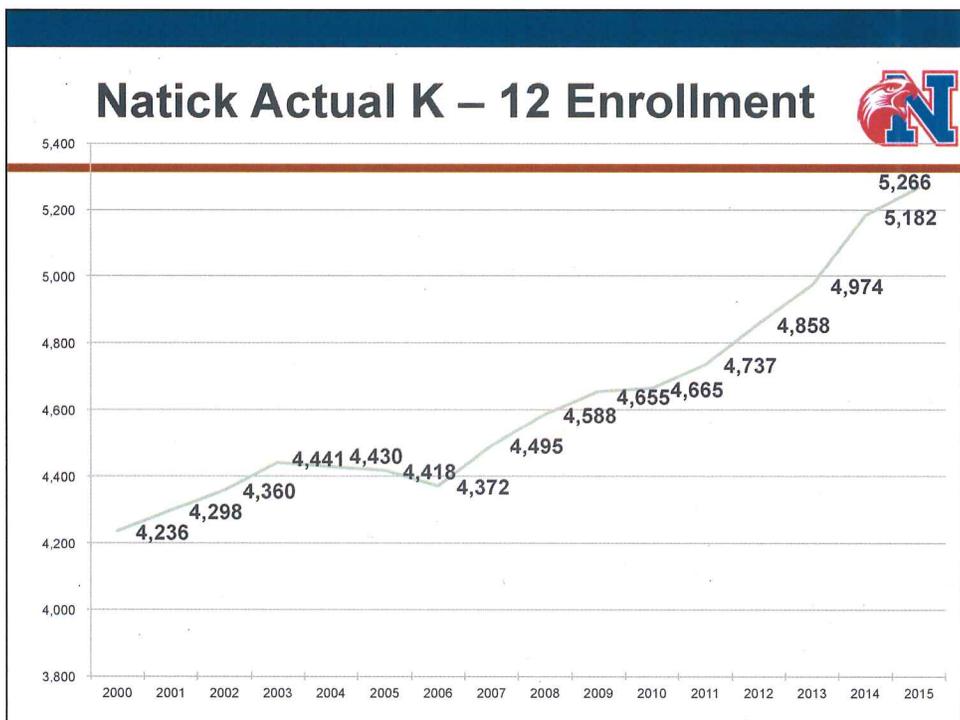
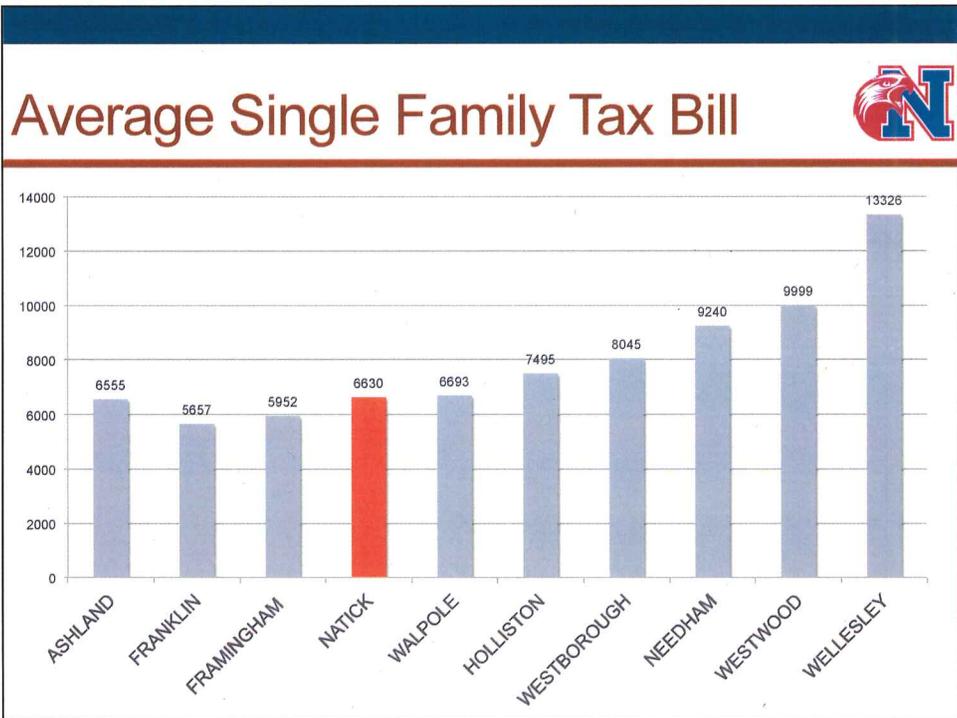
FY17 and 18 NPS Level-Service Shortfall

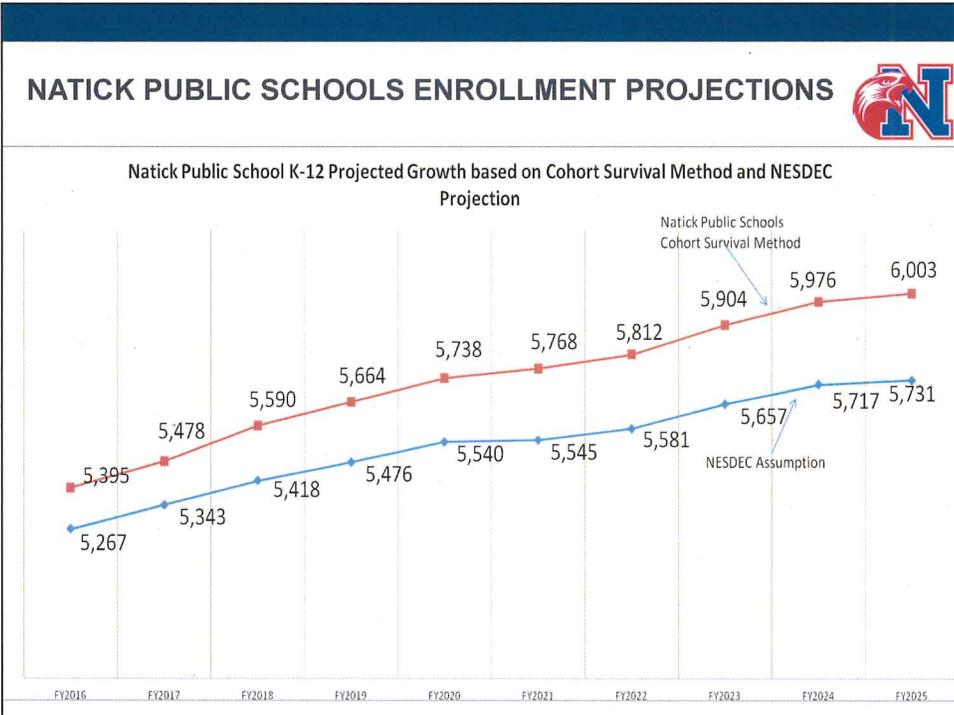


FY17 Level Service Shortfall	\$4,029,400
FY18 Level Service Shortfall	\$1,851,345
Total	\$5,880,745

FY14 Per Pupil Expenditure Comparison







Household impact

- The estimated increase to the tax bill of a house assessed at \$506,000 - the Natick average - is \$71 per \$1,000,000 in additional tax levy.