LEWISTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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March 9, 2026

RE: BUDGET MEMO

Hello Lewiston Community,

We are about to engage in the public budget process. We invite community stakeholders, students, parents, community partners, tax payers, and others who have a vested interest in our schools to join us and also invite us into community spaces to ask questions, share what you support, and make your thoughts known.

In this proposal there are 30 positions reduced. 23 of these are active employees engaged with our staff and students regularly.

School budgets have growth components driven by collective bargaining, salary scales, benefit costs (including insurance contributions), services based on levels of need, inflation, and utilities.

The budget referendum will be May 12, 2026. We encourage people to vote.

The version of the budget for next school year that we will be presenting to the school committee and to our community removes 23 full-time employees and 7 vacant positions. Reducing further would challenge or potentially break our oaths and commitments to our kids. This budget proposal does not do what we would like to do, but we are aware of the financial strain on local taxpayers. We had to make some tough decisions but feel this budget could be supported as presented. We had to shift some terminology in our anchors from “grow” to “maintain”. This budget does not allow for growth.

To do this we have:

- Maintained the commitments of our contractual obligations;
- Kept all non-staff lines flat or reduced where possible;
- Areas of addition:
    - Career and Technical program expansion;

    - Special Education program growth that causes cost deflection but is not inexpensive;
    - Restructuring for savings and continuity.
- Maximized efforts for subsidy and other funding including reimbursements;
- Maintains lower use of fund balance of $3,500,000;
- As presented is an 11% increase, which is less than 3 of the last 4 years;
- Worked closely with, and are thankful for, Lewiston Delegates who continue to effect change to support our community, and
- Continue to monitor state subsidy formula changes and federal funding conversations.

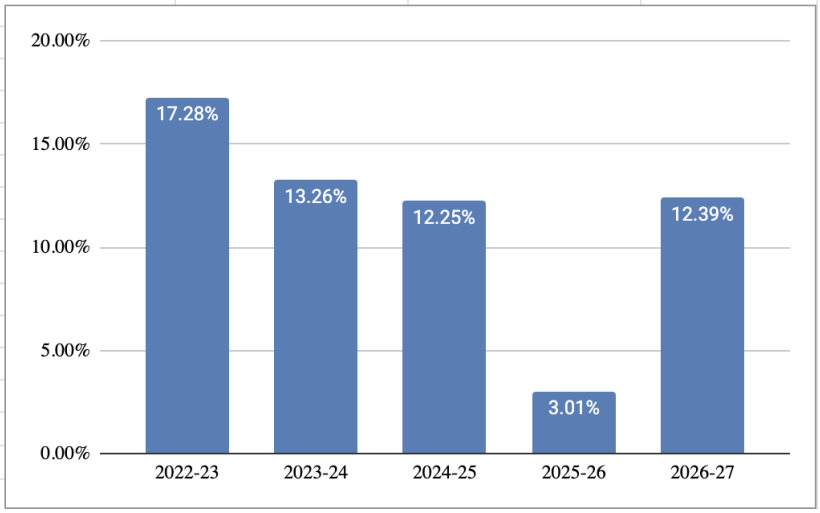
Again, in this proposal there are **30 positions reduced. Of these reductions, 23 are active employees** engaged with our staff and students regularly. In the past few years we have made tough decisions. There have been some added positions for specialized programming and some restructuring prior to this year, but overall we have reduced by nearly 100 positions over the last 4 years.

The school portion of funding in Lewiston is **$35,417,903, up 12.39%**. The overall budget with external subsidy is **$130,580,720, up 11%.** This is an increase of $12,901,989 from $117,678,731 in FY26. For comparison purposes, we are not much smaller than Portland, who budgeted $40 million more than LPS in their prior approved budget.

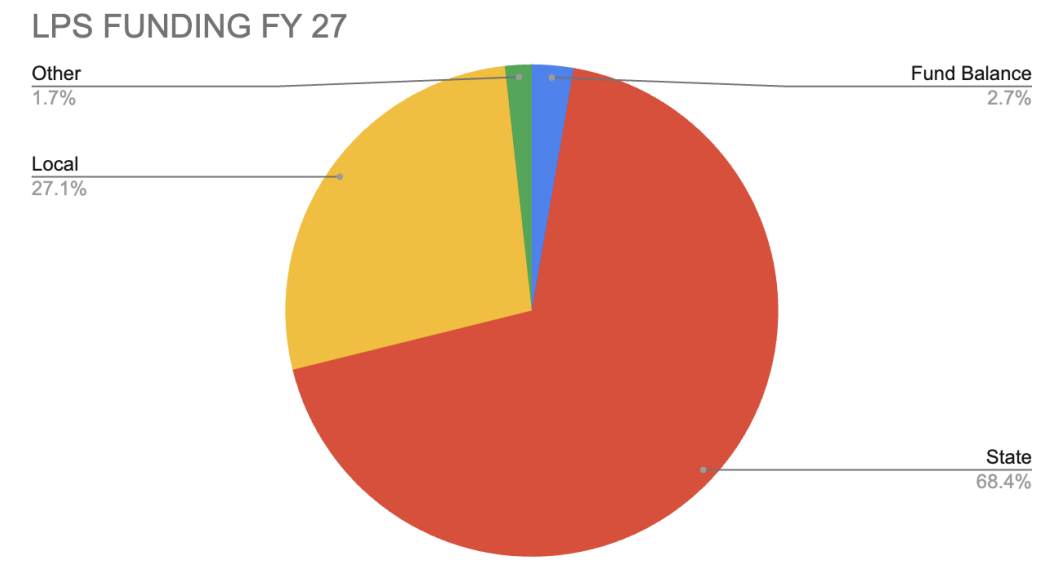
Lewiston is a large receiver of state subsidy due to the makeup of our students and the related barriers. Below is a chart that lists the changes of local contribution over the years. We are at 12.39% this year.

Local Contribution % increase

Fiscal Year	Local Contribution	Dollar Increase	% Increase
2021-22	$20,519,664		
2022-23	$24,065,029	$3,545,365	17.28%
2023-24	$27,255,458	$3,190,429	13.26%
2024-25	$30,593,191	$3,337,733	12.25%
2025-26	$31,513,001	$919,810	3.01%
2026-27	$35,417,903	$3,904,902	12.39%



The graphic below demonstrates the portions of funding that resources Lewiston Public Schools. As you can see, much of our budget (nearly 70%) is funded through state subsidy.



We know there will be concerns given the revaluation. We live here too and are waiting to see the impact it will have on our families. The real challenge is that the timing is never good to request funds. However, it is never easy to look at someone who loves our kids, supports their growth, gives of themselves, does a great job and say…I am sorry, you don't have a job. We just do not have the resources to continue to fund your work. We will do what we must but we encourage participation from as many people as possible as we work to maintain our oath and commitment to kids with the resources we are provided.

We will review many materials and hear from other members of leadership during workshops. We will host budget workshops and town hall meetings. Our offer stands to go to different spaces in the community to have conversations and answer questions. If interested, please contact the superintendent's office or email us. We encourage others to share their voice in the process at meetings as well.

The budget referendum will be May 12, 2026. We encourage people to vote.

Additional referendum information including absentee ballots can be found at:
https://www.lewistonmaine.gov/118/Absentee-Voting

Sincerely,

KJLanglais

K. Jake Langlais
Superintendent