



A PRO FORMA BUDGET FOR THE BRIDGEWATER, HEBRON, AND GROTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

BUDGET ESTIMATE, Fiscal Year 2026

ANALYSIS

A BUDGET ESTIMATE TO DETERMINE THE FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATE UNIT (SAU) FOR THE 3 TOWNS

Bridgewater, Hebron, and Groton HB349 Steering Committee

Summary Overview

This budget estimate demonstrates the financial feasibility of the 3 towns' efforts to form their own SAU.

This pro forma budget should **not** be considered the actual 1st year budget for the new SAU but rather a researched and educated estimate of the cost of running a district. Its purpose is twofold:

1. As a basic comparison between our current level of expenses and the projected cost of having our own SAU.
2. To provide citizens with a reasonable estimate of expenses and potential tax increases or decreases for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2025.

Our accuracy is limited by the following factors:

1. Some figures are based on contracts that will be executed when there is an SAU that can officially enter into such agreements. We were able to use reasonable assumptions based on history, current demographics, and comparable district benchmarks.
2. The number of students changes each year; historical numbers were considered but we are projecting future enrollments, and many things can change in a 1–2-year period. This budget assumes a level enrollment and percentage of students, per town.
3. There are staffing and structural decisions that will need to be made by a school board as opposed to a steering committee. Those decisions have a budgetary impact, so again, best assumptions were used.

Expense Budget

Using a budget template from a similarly sized K-8 district (Ashland) we went through and assigned values to each of the itemized expenses using the SAU4 budget information. That was followed by a review of the values against the Ashland budget information as a benchmark. At issue were some general SAU 4 expenses assigned to BHVS that were district wide, requiring appropriate adjustments. Once we had reasonable assumptions, we consolidated the expenses into general categories: Salary and Benefits, Retirement, etc. to provide the budget estimate.

Revenue Budget

The revenue to run a district comes from several predictable sources, all of which our new district would be eligible for:

1. Statewide Property Tax (Statewide Education Property Tax -SWEPT)
2. State Adequacy Aid
3. Local School Tax Assessment
4. Grants and other funding
5. Special Education and other reimbursement
6. Tuition (SAU4 students)

This pro forma assumes a minimal receipt of grants in the first fiscal year. Funding such as Special Education Aid is provided on a reimbursement basis and is therefore excluded from the FY26 budget.

The steering committee and subsequent school board will continue to pursue all avenues for additional funding, but to keep numbers conservative we have not reflected these in the projections. As a reminder, the numbers we are using are estimates for revenue that will be two years into the future so by definition they cannot be certain. They are, however, good estimates to use on this proof-of-concept budget to illustrate that running our own district is both possible and realistic. In subsequent years we anticipate both larger grants and special education reimbursement.

Budget Benchmarking

We used numbers that were best assumptions derived from the SAU4 existing budget; these were still projections. A best practice verification is to contrast our proposed budget against comparably sized and structured area SAUs to test if our budget is similar. Since we are anticipating moving to a K-8 district we used two nearby towns (cost items should be similar for geographically proximate towns) as benchmarks: Thornton and Ashland. Building maintenance is not included in our projected budget since it is anticipated that will continue to be provided by the Village District. The results can be seen in the grid below:

	STUDENT COUNT	BUDGET
BRIDGEWATER, HEBRON, and GROTON	184	\$4,733,822
ASHLAND	166	\$4,296,866
THORNTON	189	\$5,895,436

EXPENSE BUDGET ESTIMATE

TOTAL SALARIES (excluding Custodians)		
PROFESSIONAL SALARIES	\$	1,169,119
PARAPROFESSIONAL SALARIES	\$	240,000
SUBSTITUTES SALARIES	\$	6,570
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BENEFITS		
MEDICAL INSURANCE	\$	619,335
LIFE INSURANCE	\$	2,558
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RETIREMENT		
SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE EXP	\$	155,607
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT	\$	121,004
TEACHER RETIREMENT	\$	175,669
ASSOCIATED COSTS (ex. prof. development)	\$	115,105
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PLANT OPERATIONS (incl. 2 custodians)	\$	142,530
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (incl. transport)	\$	65,936
FOOD SERVICE	\$	110,000
SUPERINTENDENT SERVICES	\$	169,755
SUPPORT (Legal, Audit, School Board Services)	\$	33,328
TECHNOLOGY	\$	157,531
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TUITION (net cost)		
MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$	437,000
HIGH SCHOOL	\$	759,000
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SUBTOTAL	\$	4,480,045
TRANSPORTATION (paid by each town)		
Bridgewater	\$	117,697
Hebron	\$	63,684
Groton	\$	72,396
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BUDGET TOTAL	\$	4,733,822

REVENUE BUDGET ESTIMATE

STATEWIDE PROPERTY TAX (SWEPT)		
BRIDGEWATER	\$	900,521
HEBRON	\$	590,518
GROTON	\$	138,348
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EQUITABLE EDUCATION AID (ADEQUACY)		
BRIDGEWATER	\$	-
HEBRON	\$	-
GROTON	\$	296,883
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STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS		
BRIDGEWATER	\$	75,000
HEBRON	\$	37,500
GROTON	\$	37,500
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SPECIAL EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT		
BRIDGEWATER	\$	-
HEBRON	\$	-
GROTON	\$	-
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TRANSPORTATION		
BRIDGEWATER	\$	123,582
HEBRON	\$	66,868
GROTON	\$	76,016
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LOCAL TAX OBLIGATION		
BRIDGEWATER	\$	1,178,475
HEBRON	\$	576,867
GROTON	\$	635,744
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REVENUE TOTAL	\$	4,733,822