

RSU 3

Regional School Unit #3



Serving students from Brooks, Freedom, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe, Montville, Thorndike, Troy, Unity and Waldo

2023-24 School Budget Proposal Information

Annual District Public Budget Meeting:

Wednesday, May 24, 2023 6:30pm at Mount View Middle School, Thorndike

Referendum Vote: Proposed Budget and School Board Director Seats

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 8:00am – 8:00pm at town polling locations:

BROOKS – Town Office
FREEDOM – Town Office
JACKSON – Town Office
KNOX – Town Hall
LIBERTY – Town Office
MONROE – Town Hall
MONTVILLE – Town House
THORNDIKE – Town Office
TROY – Town Office
UNITY – Town Office
WALDO – Town Office

TO THE CITIZENS OF RSU 3:

It is my hope that this letter finds you doing well. We can all agree that our community has faced its share of challenges over the years. Through the pandemic, increasing presence of school safety across the country, and an ever changing economy; I feel that we are working together well to meet the students at their various levels of needs.

Over the past several months, the administrative team and school board have worked diligently in preparing a budget that meets the mission of the district, meets the needs of our students, and balances the fiscal resources of the district. The FY '24 budget represents an overall expenditure of \$21,843,000.00 for the year beginning July 1, 2023.

The state funding for FY '24 for the district was increased by \$340,945 or 3.56% in comparison to the funds received in FY '23. The funding is based on several factors included in the Maine Essential Programs and Services Formula (EPS); property value across the district student enrollment, a state mil expectation, and more. A new Educators Association contract was negotiated between the Board and Association that will increase teacher salaries.

The RSU 3 Board of Directors crafted a budget that they believe supports the needs of the students, while being mindful of the burden on taxpayers. This budget includes the reduction of two Ed Tech positions currently unfilled, as well as reducing purchases for the athletics department and transportation department. There was an increase in the general budget to fund the Assistant Principal position at Mt. View High School that was previously grant funded and to fund a Transportation Supervisor to assist with our large, rural district needs. With those reductions and additions, the adopted FY '24 budget is \$21,843,000, which is \$1,326,100 more than the FY '23 budget or 6.46%. The most significant increases in this budget are a result of rising fuel and utility costs and establishing RSU 3 to be on par with competitive wages and salaries in the market. This budget does not introduce any new programs or staff positions to assist in meeting our diverse student needs.

The FY '24 budget of \$21,843,000 is the funding required for the operation of the school system, including salary and benefits, transportation, extra-curriculars, and the maintenance of facilities. The administrative team analyzed all budget components and made difficult, fiscal decisions that led us through a thoughtful development of this budget. As a district, we were able to maintain current levels of resources, both material and personnel, to best meet the needs of our students. The Board of Directors feels that this budget meets the needs of our students and the resources of the district.

With the budget increase of \$1,326,100, an increase in state funding, and a lower state mil rate expectation (6.97 vs 7.10), the local tax assessments will rise by \$990,155 or 10.37%. Although we cannot predict additional funding, we are hopeful that RSU 3 will receive additional funds if they become available. When that has occurred in prior years, the Board has approved that any additional funding received was used to reduce the tax burden on our towns.

Some factors that are impacting our schools and students that the community needs to be aware of are; student housing insecurity, student attendance, and an increase in student use of flavored tobacco products. The current state average for students experiencing housing insecurity is 1.5%, while in RSU 3 we are approaching 4% of our population in this category. Housing insecurity means living in shelters, doubled up with other families, inadequate housing, unaccompanied youth, and living in hotels/motels. In student attendance, RSU 3 experienced almost 50% of our students (SY 2021-22) that were chronically absent, meaning they missed 10% or more of their school year. Meanwhile that same year, we had 47 incidents of truancy and 1,414 unexcused absences. While we are doing everything we can with our resources, as a district we are asking for our communities' help in addressing these concerns.

The School Board, administrators, staff, and students of RSU 3 are very fortunate and appreciative of the support from our communities. As we work together for what is best for our students and families, we will build upon our community relationships and support one another. We will continue our focus on social/emotional learning and supports, student-centered learning environments, continued support for student-growth, increased access to 21st Century learning tools and experiences, and promote and prepare students for postsecondary aspirations. In addition, RSU 3 will be increasing our efforts to establish an appropriate, rigorous learning curriculum to prepare our students for their futures.

I feel very strongly that with the support of the community, the hard work of our talented staff, and a collaborative approach from all, that we can and will provide for our students to have a bright future and that the district will meet its mission of ensuring that every student is academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for the future. On behalf of the students and staff of RSU 3, thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,



Mr. Charles D. Brown, Superintendent

To the Citizens of RSU #3:

As each of us read the enclosed materials, we turn quickly to the page listing the assessments for each of our own towns and what this will mean for our own pockets. I am mindful that for many of the 11 towns in our school district, about half the town budget is spent on road maintenance/plowing and the other half goes to the school district, leaving but a small sliver to maintain other town services. During the Covid pandemic we saw the cost to fill our gas tanks drop to the lowest levels in years, and now we are stretching our budgets to fill our tanks and heat our homes. Electricity costs hung for years around 15¢ and now delivery and supply costs are over 26¢ / kwh. With these basic need increases, so also, we see salary increases.

The Board of Directors is mindful of the costs for the maintenance of safe and welcoming schools in our district. In addition to the complex (K-12) in Thorndike, there are 5 schools embedded into our communities: Unity (pre-K), Troy (K-5), Brooks (preK-5), Monroe (preK-5) and Liberty (preK-5). Please attend the upcoming public forums that will address the long-term costs for their upkeep with some future reconfiguration proposals. We hold a responsibility to each community and a responsibility to all 11 towns for an aligned budget that supports program needs of our almost 1,100 students.

Alternative School choice students and homeschooled students who reside in our district towns are welcomed to participate in many of the offerings through RSU #3. We welcome their enrollment in any of our course offerings listed on our website specific to either Mt. View Middle or Mt. View High School. The high school sponsors short term exchange programs for our students in both Germany and France. We offer chorus, band starting in the 5th grade and a myriad of co-curricular programs and clubs such as Art, Broadcasting, Chamber Singers, Drama, and Envirothon to name a few. The diverse three seasons of sports offerings for both the middle school and high school aged students include the traditional soccer, basketball and baseball/softball. But there are also teams for field hockey, wrestling, cheering, football, golf and track. Please contact the district about the interests of your child(ren) and how RSU #3 can support those interests.

I look forward to your participation at the annual May District Public Budget meeting. Should you wish to study the formula used by the Maine Department of Education to determine the state funding for RSU #3 (or any district), please go to this link to view the ED 279. The ED 279 details the funding of essential programs and services and is based on many factors, with the primary factor being student enrollment averaged over the last two years. <https://neo.maine.gov/DOE/NEO/eps/public/ed279.aspx>

Our forefathers understood the importance of an educated citizenry for a democratic form of government. The principals on which our new nation was founded are of great importance to each succeeding generation. Unlike prior to 50 years ago when deaf or blind or English language learning children were sent elsewhere, I am thankful we support all children. I am a passionate advocate for public education that meets the diverse needs of our children of RSU #3.

Sincerely and in appreciation of your support,



Eleanor Hess
Chair, RSU #3 Board of Directors

RSU 3 SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR	TOWN REPRESENTED	TERM EXPIRES
Ashleigh Eastham	Brooks	2025
Eleanor Hess	Freedom	2024
Jonathan Lorenz	Jackson	2025
Todd Garnett	Knox	2024
Richard Frost	Liberty	2024
Michael Schaab	Monroe *	2023
Dawne Southworth	Montville *	2023
Jesse Hargrove	Thorndike *	2023
Kristin Blanchard	Troy	2025
Najean Shedyak	Unity *	2023
VACANT	Waldo	2024

*The new district-wide voting process for at-large School Board Directors, will ask **all** RSU 3 voters to vote for **all** vacant seats on the school board. The at-large school board election will be held on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at your town voting poll location.

RSU 3 Proposed Budget Articles and Programs for 2023-24 Approved by the School Board April 10, 2023

Article 1	Regular Instruction	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$6,577,975	\$6,985,700	407,725	6.20%
•	K-2 Instruction Targeted Funds	\$64,600	\$78,700	14,100	
•	Pre-K Program	\$155,000	\$155,000	-0-	
•	Elementary & Middle School Instruction	\$4,073,625	\$4,346,500	272,875	
•	Secondary Instruction Grade 9-12	\$2,064,600	\$2,182,500	117,900	
•	English Language Learners	\$128,750	\$132,000	3,250	
•	Gifted and Talented	\$91,400	\$91,000	(400)	

Budget Note: Cut 1 MVHS Ed Tech position, increased resource material by \$5,000, \$1,800 increase for field trip transportation, \$1,300 increase for MVHS tutoring, \$4,000 increase for JMG program (MVMS and MVHS)

Article 2	Special Education	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$3,281,700	\$3,496,000	214,300	6.53%

Article 3	Career and Tech Ed	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$21,996	-0-	(21,996)	-100.0%

Budget Note: Per WCTC Budget proposal #8-3, no assessment to SAU's

Article 4	Other Instruction	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$569,700	\$626,700	57,000	10.01%
•	Summer School	\$25,200	\$25,700	500	
•	Co-Curricular Elem/MS	\$24,500	\$25,600	1,100	
•	Co-Curricular High School	\$88,100	\$90,100	2,000	
•	Clifford Performing Arts Ctr	\$3,100	\$3,100	-0-	
•	Athletics MVMS	\$97,000	\$110,000	13,000	
•	Athletics MVHS	\$331,800	\$372,200	40,400	

Budget Note: Added stipends for Elementary Choral Concerts, MVMS GSA, MVHS Jazz Band and MVHS Pep Band. Added \$8,600 for uniforms, \$5,500 for field line sprayer, and \$7,000 wages for game site prep.

Article 5	Student and Staff Support	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$1,606,875	\$1,680,700	73,825	4.59%
•	Guidance K-12	\$461,700	\$456,400	(5,300)	
•	Health Services	\$214,200	\$221,500	7,300	
•	Improvement of Instruction	\$176,400	\$184,500	8,100	
•	Library K-12	\$295,300	\$321,600	26,300	
•	Technology Support	\$286,900	\$297,000	10,100	
•	Section 504	\$8,875	\$8,400	(475)	
•	Fitness Center	\$18,600	\$18,700	100	
•	School Resource Officer	\$70,000	\$93,200	23,200	
•	Student Assessment	\$71,500	\$76,000	4,500	
•	Volunteer Coordinator	\$3,400	\$3,400	-0-	

Budget Note: Added \$2,100 for Nurse Substitute and \$5,100 increase for Library database support contract

Article 6	System Administration	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$782,700	\$823,300	40,600	5.19%
•	District School Board	\$107,500	\$108,800	1,300	
•	Superintendent Office	\$287,800	\$304,200	16,400	
•	Central Services	\$387,400	\$410,300	22,900	

Budget Note: Increased budget for Prof Courses

Article 7	School Administration	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$1,139,500	\$1,338,400	198,900	17.46%
•	Office of the Principal	\$1,139,500	\$1,338,400	198,900	

Budget Note: FY23 Student enrollment per School: Monroe 68, Morse 107, MVE 219, Troy 52, Walker 63, MVMS 228, MVHS 311
 Budget includes: 1 MVE Prin, 1 MVMS Prin, 1 MVHS Prin, 1 MVHS Asst Prin*, 1 Prin and 1 Dean of Students for Monroe/Morse/Troy/Walker Schools
 *MVHS Asst Prin is an addition included in this budget

Article 8	Transportation	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$1,784,700	\$1,925,000	140,300	7.86%
•	Transportation and Busses	\$1,784,700	\$1,925,000	140,300	

Budget Note: Added Transportation Supervisor and increased Fleet Fuel +\$44,000

Article 9	Facilities	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$2,391,119	\$2,747,639	356,520	14.91%
•	Facilities, Custodial and Maintenance	\$2,265,970	\$2,622,490	356,520	
•	Building Capital/Renovation Repayments	\$125,149	\$125,149	-0-	

Budget Note: Increase for Bldg Costs (Utilities), replace Maint truck, replace Zero-turn mower
 Building Capital Renewal/Renovation is the annual repayment of: \$7,659 for Revolving Renovation Projects and \$117,490 for ESCO Projects, SRRF payment ends FY2028, ESCO payments ends FY2032
 Facility & Custodial Budget per School (not including Maint): Monroe \$107,500. Morse \$154,100. Troy \$128,500. Unity \$131,300. Walker \$138,000. MVC \$1,022,500.

Article 10	Debt Service	2022-23	2023-24	Increase or (Decrease)	
	Article Total	\$2,360,635	\$2,219,561	(141,074)	-5.98%

Budget Note: Construction Bond payment for Mount View School, final payment November 2027

Article 11	Other Expenditures	2022-23	2023-24
	Article Total	-0-	-0-

	2022-23	2023-24	Increase	
Total Budget	\$20,516,900	\$21,843,000	\$1,326,100	6.46%

Student Enrollment						
2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	School Year
1,310	1,245	1,205	1,052	1,061	1,005 estimate	Students

Revenue for 2023-24 Budget Approved by the School Board April 10, 2023

	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	
	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>	
	<u>7.10 MILL CAP</u>	<u>6.97 MILL CAP</u>	
State EPS Contribution	\$7,203,972.93	\$7,685,991.97	Mill Expectation set by the State
State Contribution Debt Service	\$2,360,634.06	\$2,219,560.03	
Local EPS Contribution	\$6,282,198.34	\$6,493,135.84	
Local Only	<u>\$3,120,094.67</u>	<u>\$3,917,312.16</u>	
			Difference
Total State Share	\$9,564,606.99	\$9,905,552.00	+ \$340,945 State Share 3.56%
Total Local Share	<u>\$9,402,293.01</u>	<u>\$10,410,448.00</u>	+ \$1,008,155 Local Share 10.72%
Total Subsidy and Taxes:	\$18,966,900.00	\$20,316,000.00	
Other Revenues and Balances:			
Balance Forward	\$990,000.00	\$990,000.00	
Additional Funds Avail from previous year due to COVID-19 situation	\$175,000.00	\$175,000.00	
MaineCare Inter-Fund Transfer	\$300,000.00	\$300,000.00	
Tuition Revenue	\$19,000.00	\$19,000.00	
Athletic Gate Receipts	\$5,000.00	\$7,000.00	
Miscellaneous	\$45,000.00	\$13,000.00	
Interest	\$6,000.00	\$13,000.00	
State Agency Reimbursement	<u>\$10,000.00</u>	<u>\$10,000.00</u>	
Sub-Total Other Revenues:	\$1,550,000.00	\$1,527,000.00	Difference
Total Budget Revenue:	\$20,516,900.00	\$21,843,000.00	\$1,326,100 6.46% Increase

RSU 3 School Nutrition Program – Estimated Revenue for 2023-24 Budget

	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>
State and Federal Meal Subsidy	\$792,000	\$745,000
Sale of Meals, Catering, Misc.	\$52,000	\$65,000
SNP Balance Forward	\$75,000	\$200,000
Local Assessments	<u>\$70,000</u>	<u>\$75,000</u>
Total SNP Budget Revenues:	\$989,000	\$1,085,000

RSU 3 Adult and Community Education – Estimated Revenue for 2023-24 Budget

	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>
State Subsidy	\$35,000	\$30,600
Adult Ed Course Fees	\$1,600	\$1,000
Adult Ed Balance Forward	\$25,000	\$51,400
Local Assessments	<u>\$73,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>
Total Adult Ed Budget Revenue	\$134,600	\$133,000

Total Local Assessments including SNP and Adult Ed	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>			
	\$9,545,293	\$10,535,448	\$990,155	Increase	10.37%

RSU 3 Town Assessments for 2023-24 Budget (FY24) -per Preliminary State Subsidy info ED279 dated 3-28-23
Local Share of EPS at 6.97 Mill Expectation, plus Local Only raised to support General Fund Budget, School Nutrition and Adult Ed Programs:

DRAFT: NOT FINAL – If the State increases their contribution toward the school budget, RSU#3 will reduce the amounts raised and assessed to each town, provided that the warrant article authorizing this reduction passes at the May 24th, 2023 Public Budget Meeting.

TOWN	STATE SHARE of EPS Allocation on behalf of town	2023-24 (FY24) LOCAL SHARE including School Nutrition and Adult Ed Programs	2022-23(FY23) Town Assessment	Compare FY24 to FY23 Increase	Town % Increase
Brooks	\$1,244,676	\$940,539	\$847,494	\$93,045	11.0%
Freedom	\$481,921	\$726,892	\$679,558	\$47,334	7.0%
Jackson	\$879,404	\$476,124	\$426,113	\$50,011	11.7%
Knox	\$935,048	\$659,615	\$595,360	\$64,256	10.8%
Liberty	\$250,168	\$1,827,380	\$1,626,216	\$201,164	12.4%
Monroe	\$738,184	\$1,024,778	\$939,985	\$84,793	9.0%
Montville	\$1,111,863	\$1,023,838	\$903,675	\$120,163	13.3%
Thorndike	\$796,021	\$658,621	\$594,580	\$64,041	10.8%
Troy	\$1,235,484	\$835,233	\$762,465	\$72,768	9.5%
Unity	\$1,696,011	\$1,566,913	\$1,458,593	\$108,320	7.4%
Waldo	\$536,772	\$795,515	\$711,255	\$84,260	11.8%
	\$9,905,552	\$10,535,448	\$9,545,293	\$990,155	10.37%

State Subsidy has declined from \$12,998,079 for 2009-10 to \$9,905,552 for 2023-24

BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS FOR RSU 3 DISTRICT VOTERS

ANNUAL DISTRICT PUBLIC BUDGET MEETING - Wednesday, May 24, 2023, @ 6:30 pm in the Mount View Middle School

Our eleven towns will each have a representative present with a current list of the registered voters of their town.

All registered voters must check in with their town representative and receive a voter’s card.

Any individual attending this meeting who is not a resident of our district, should sit in the seating area designated for non-residents. [Non-residents will not participate in the voting process and will need recognition and approval if they wish to speak.]

The board chair will call the meeting to order.

A moderator will be nominated and elected.

Town representative will be appointed and sworn in as ballot clerks.

Moderator will call for a vote to approve Superintendent Brown to speak. Superintendent Brown will present and speak about the proposed budget that was approved by the board of directors.

Each article will be read by the moderator and voted on by the registered voters present. (Articles may be amended up or down.)

Articles must pass by a majority vote.

The warrant article to raise additional local funds which exceed the Essential Programs and Services model must be approved by a written ballot.

BUDGET VALIDATION REFERENDUM - The results of the budget that was approved by the voters at the Budget Meeting will be presented for a Budget Validation Referendum vote on June 13, 2023 in each town.

A “Notice of Amounts Adopted at the Budget Meeting” document will be posted at all town polling locations which shows the budget article amounts that were approved at the Budget Meeting.

The budget validation questions will be:

- Do you favor approving the Regional School Unit No. 3 budget for the upcoming school year that was adopted at the latest Regional School Unit budget meeting?

ABSENTEE VOTING -If you would like to apply for an Absentee Ballot, please contact your individual town office. Please note that Absentee Ballots must be received by the town **no earlier than the date following the District Budget Meeting in order to be counted.**

Visit our website to access
up-to-date information, announcements and more

www.rsu3.org

#RSU3forME

RSU 3
Office of the Superintendent
84 School Street
Unity, ME 04988-9734

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Permit No. 12

**RSU 3 RESIDENT
And POSTAL PATRON**