



## MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA

City of Northampton

Office of the Mayor

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

[mayor@northamptonma.gov](mailto:mayor@northamptonma.gov)

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EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:00 PM - April 4, 2023

### **Mayor Sciarra Prepared to Use City Emergency Funds to Stabilize Northampton Public Schools Budget** *Some Cuts Still Necessary to Close Fiscal Shortfall Going Forward*

NORTHAMPTON - Today, Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra announced she is prepared to use \$1.2 million from the city's stabilization fund to cover a large portion of the \$2.3 million shortfall in the FY2024 Northampton Public Schools (NPS) budget as part of a two-year plan to balance the school budget and return to strong fiscal principles.

"The school budget must be balanced using stable, recurring revenues to pay for recurring expenses," said Mayor Sciarra, "but the gap that has been created by relying on temporary emergency relief and depleting the School Choice fund is too large to responsibly solve through drastic cuts in a single year."

To put Northampton schools on a path to fiscal stability, the proposed FY2024 NPS budget will still require some cuts to address the amount in the proposed budget dependent on the current FY2023 budget being underspent, which is not a guarantee. These cuts can be achieved mostly through attrition, without a significant loss of staff or any existing programming. Unrealized tailings from underspent budget lines would necessitate additional cuts mid-year. To ensure a balanced budget in FY2025, Mayor Sciarra will ask the new school administration to produce a plan with additional spending reductions by this December, earlier in the annual budget process than usual. For the resulting two-year plan to succeed, it will have to end the practice of spending School Choice funds—which come from students who live outside Northampton and choose Northampton schools—faster than revenues are received. The plan will also have to end the reliance on one-time ESSER funds from the federal government's pandemic relief program.

Additionally, Mayor Sciarra and the Northampton Association of School Employees (NASE) have pledged to work together with State Senator Jo Comerford and State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa to increase state funding for NPS.

"I am deeply committed to ensuring that our children receive the best public education possible from our excellent schools," shared Mayor Sciarra, "These stabilization funds provide the right balance between keeping our schools strong and avoiding drastic deep cuts, while at the same time responsibly addressing unsustainable budget practices."

"As the President of the Northampton Association of School Employees, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Mayor for stepping in to address the budget shortfall in our public schools," said Andrea Egitto, "This funding is critical for our students and their future. We stand with the Mayor in her

commitment to excellence in our public schools while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Together, we are committed to retaining the highest quality staff and maintaining our vibrant school communities. We are eager to work with her to advocate for increased state funding for education and to make any necessary adjustments to the school budget without sacrificing the quality of education our students deserve."

The Northampton School Committee and the leadership of Northampton Public Schools will need to work to identify and finalize a balanced budget and present it to the Mayor by the April 14, 2023, deadline for inclusion in the citywide FY2024 budget, due to be delivered to City Council on May 17, 2023.

For more information, contact the Mayor's Office at [mayor@northamptonma.gov](mailto:mayor@northamptonma.gov) or 413-587-1249.