



## MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA

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Media Advisory - June 13, 2025

### **Mayor Sciarra Identifies an Additional \$217,711 for Northampton Public School Budget**

Last night, on June 12, 2025, at the Northampton School Committee meeting, I shared that I had asked Chief Information Officer Luigi Ottaviani about one-time expense possibilities for the Northampton Public Schools (NPS) during my regular meeting with him on Wednesday, June 11, as I knew a discussion would be held at the School Committee the next day. He said he thought there were some possibilities, and he would look. The next morning, Thursday, he mentioned that he had some ideas, and we delved into the tech lines in the NPS budget to creatively explore ways to find savings, much like the process we follow when creating the city's departmental budgets. We identified 11 lines that can adjust that total by \$101,000. We then confirmed that our analysis was sound with Dr. Bonner and NPS School Business Administrator Jones.

The items include a service that the district canceled that wasn't removed from the budget; two lines that can be reduced because ITS has negotiated a better phone contract; the shifting of some smaller equipment costs to the ITS NPS capital budget to help the NPS operational budget; the postponing of some costs and a removal of a redundant internet connection that we will consolidate with the city connection.

These proposed changes free up \$101k in the budget.

I also shared at the School Committee meeting that I am concerned about the proposed list from the Budget and Property subcommittee, which was presented as one-time expenses, and other items from Superintendent Bonner that are largely recurring costs and not one-time expenditures. If we use one-time funds for recurring costs, it will result in a deficit the following year.

Instead, I proposed to increase the base budget by \$116,711. This increase is based on the release of the State Senate budget, the last of the three state budgets to be voted on, which was released after the city budget was due and presented.

The Massachusetts State Senate budget's state aid for the City of Northampton is \$116,711 higher than the State House budget. The House budget was the latest available data source when I built the city budget. The increase in the Senate budget is not for Chapter 70 school state aid or other school funding. In fact, in the Senate budget the Charter School Sending Tuition assessment charged to the city is increased by an additional \$48,978 for a total of \$3,190,195. Therefore, the actual net increase in revenue to the city is \$67,733. There is no guarantee that the Senate budget increase is the budget that will prevail and is ultimately signed by the governor. But, to add some additional funds, I will gamble that it will be approved and the city will absorb the Charter Sending increase as it always does, and I will commit the full hoped-for increase in state aid to the city of \$116,711 to NPS for the FY26 budget.

With these two actions, I have freed up \$101,000 for other operational uses and increased the budget by \$116,711 for the NPS administration to determine how to best utilize the total of \$217,711 for next year's school budget.