Preparing ALL Learners For A Changing World

RSU 29

CARES

Pre-K Through Community Education

RSU 29 BUDGET 2025 - 2026

Joe Fagnant
Superintendent of Schools

Jeannie Tapley, Board Chair - Monticello

Sue McLaughlin, Board Vice Chair – Houlton

Ellen Askren – Houlton
Theresa Shannon – Houlton
Mark Lipscombe – Houlton
Erica Ziegman- Hammond
Kelly Johnson – Houlton
Thomas Schools – Littleton
Christopher Cain - Littleton
Cassandra Nightingale – Houlton
Jennifer Johnston – Monticello
Gary Lovell – Houlton
Eric Schools - Houlton

District Budget Meeting Monday, May 12, 2025
HMHS Auditorium 6:00 pm

RSU 29 EMPATHY 2024-2025 WORD OF THE YEAR

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Hammond, Houlton, Littleton, Monticello
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RSU 29 EMPATHY 2024-2025 WORD OF THE YEAR

Dear RSU 29 Families and Community,

RSU 29 truly appreciates the support our towns have provided for education. The RSU 29 School Board diligently worked through some challenges these past years and understands that we must continue to be fiscally responsible to our taxpayers while still running an amazing school district.

The current state funding formula is no longer sustainable for RSU 29 and many small rural communities. Many schools around Maine are facing budget shortfalls. Our valuations have gone up, our enrollment is trending down, and the mill rate set by the state was lowered once again. The School board understands that we must turn to our towns to establish additional local funds that the state can not provide. For many years RSU 29 has not asked for additional funding, and for a few years, gave money back to the towns.

Here are 2025-2026 Budget highlights

- The budget is set at $17,781,176.74 which is a 5.24% increase with minimum cuts to student facing programs and staffing. State appropriations were $15,447,355.34, which was a slight increase.
- The required local $2,941,826.67 and additional local of $1,249,363.91 match last year's total local funds of $4,191,190.58.
- In addition, the Region Two adult ed warrant of $12,532.50 and RSU 29 adult ed warrant of $85,000 were kept the same as last year.
- **Total Local Assessment is $4,288,723.08, which is the same as last year, no increase.**

The School Board understands that additional local funds on a more permanent basis will be part of our normal budget process due to the state funding formula. It will be important for all communities to work together as our school system continues to focus on Preparing ALL Learners for a Changing World.

You are invited to the District Budget Meeting: May 12, 2025 held at 6pm at Houlton Middle High School Auditorium. This is when the budget is approved by the registered voters of Hammond, Houlton, Littleton, and Monticello. Together we can make a huge difference in the lives of our students and citizens of RSU 29. Education is the pathway for transformation and we need your support more than ever to continue the work in our Community.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Fagnant

Joseph A. Fagnant, Superintendent

***C**ommunication~**A**ccountability~**R**espect~**E**xcellence~**S**ervice*

WARRANT TO CALL
REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT NO. 29 BUDGET MEETING
(20-A M.R.S. § 1485)

TO: Alfredo Casillas, a resident of Regional School Unit No. 29 (the "Regional School Unit") composed of the Towns of Hammond, Houlton, Littleton, and Monticello, State of Maine.

In the name of the State of Maine, you are hereby required to notify the voters of each of the municipalities within the Regional School Unit, namely, the Towns of Hammond, Houlton, Littleton, and Monticello, that a Regional School Unit Budget Meeting will be held at Houlton Middle and High School, 7 Bird Street, Houlton, Maine at 6:00 p.m. on May 12, 2025 for the purpose of determining the Budget Meeting Articles set forth below.

ARTICLE 1A: To elect a moderator to preside at the meeting.

ARTICLES 1 THROUGH 11
AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURES IN COST CENTER CATEGORIES

ARTICLE 1: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Regular Instruction. **School Board Recommends $6,763,600.14**

ARTICLE 2: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Special Education. **School Board Recommends $3,859,760.39**

ARTICLE 3: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Career and Technical Education. **School Board Recommends $0.00**

ARTICLE 4: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Other Instruction. **School Board Recommends $513,398.43**

ARTICLE 5: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Student and Staff Support. **School Board Recommends $1,910,391.51**

ARTICLE 6: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for System Administration. **School Board Recommends $767,381.61**

ARTICLE 7: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for School Administration. **School Board Recommends $618,380.95**

ARTICLE 8: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Transportation and Buses. **School Board Recommends $1,147,179.17**

ARTICLE 9: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Facilities Maintenance. **School Board Recommends $2,201,084.54**

ARTICLE 10: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for Debt Service and Other Commitments. **School Board Recommends $0.00**

ARTICLE 11: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will be authorized to expend for All Other Expenditures. **School Board Recommends $0.00**

ARTICLES 12 AND 13
RAISE FUNDS FOR THE PROPOSED SCHOOL BUDGET

ARTICLE 12: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will appropriate for the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act and to see what sum the Regional School Unit will raise and assess as each municipality's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20A, section 15688.

Recommended amounts set forth below:

Total Appropriated (by municipality):			**Total Raised (and Regional School Unit assessments by municipality):**		
Town of Hammond	$	112,765.69	Town of Hammond	$	57,645.00
Town of Houlton	$	12,127,718.68	Town of Houlton	$	2,104,296.67
Town of Littleton	$	1,853,682.64	Town of Littleton	$	409,005.00
Town of Monticello	$	1,353,188.33	Town of Monticello	$	370,880.00
Total Appropriated (sum of above)	**$**	**15,447,355.34**	**Total Raised (sum of above)**	**$**	**2,941,826.67**

Explanation: The Regional School Unit's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act is the amount of money determined by state law to be the minimum amount that the Regional School Unit must raise and assess in order to receive the full amount of state dollars.

ARTICLE 13: **(Written ballot required.)** To see what sum the Regional School Unit will raise and appropriate in additional local funds (**Recommend $1,249,363.91**), which exceeds the State's Essential Programs and Services allocation model by (**Recommend $1,249,363.91**) as required to fund the budget recommended by the School Board.

The School Board Recommends **$1,249,363.91**, which exceeds the State's Essential Programs and Services allocation model by **$1,249,363.91**. The School Board gives the following reasons for exceeding the State's Essential Programs and Services funding model: These additional funds are needed to fund expenses that are not covered by the State's Essential Programs and Services funding model. This model does not fully cover the costs of regular classroom instruction, special education instruction, extracurricular and co-curricular student activities, district administration and leadership, student transportation and school technology.

Explanation: The additional local funds are those locally raised funds over and above the Regional School Unit's local contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act and local amounts raised for the annual payment on non-state funded debt service that will help achieve the Regional School Unit budget for educational programs.

ARTICLE 14 SUMMARIZES THE PROPOSED SCHOOL BUDGET

ARTICLE 14: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will authorize the School Board to expend for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 from the Regional School Unit's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act, local funds for non-state-funded school

construction debt service, additional local funds for school purposes under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15690, unexpended balances, tuition receipts, state subsidy, and other receipts for the support of schools. **School Board Recommends $17,781,176.74**

ARTICLE 15 AUTHORIZES THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM AND RAISES THE LOCAL SHARE

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Regional School Unit will appropriate **$328,453.00** for adult education and raise **$85,000.00** as the local share, with authorization to expend any additional, incidental, or miscellaneous receipts in the interest and for the well-being of the adult education program.

ARTICLE 16 AUTHORIZES EXPENDITURES OF GRANTS AND OTHER RECEIPTS

ARTICLE 16: In addition to amounts approved in the preceding articles, shall the School Board be authorized to expend such other sums as may be received from federal or state grants or programs or other sources during the fiscal year for school and other program purposes, provided that such grants, programs or other sources do not require the expenditure of other funds not previously appropriated?

ARTICLE 17 AUTHORIZES THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION BUDGET

ARTICLE 17: Shall the regional career and technical education operating budget as approved by the cooperative board for the year beginning July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, be approved in the amount of **$2,923,238.96?**

ARTICLE 18 AUTHORIZES THE ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET FOR THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL REGION AND RAISES THE LOCAL SHARE

ARTICLE 18: Shall the Region Two School of Applied Technology approve a budget for adult education in the amount of **$61,437.00** for the year beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 with authorization to expend any additional, incidental, or miscellaneous receipts in the interest and for the well-being of its adult education program, and shall Regional School Unit No. 29 raise **$12,532.50** as its share of the adult education budget for Region Two School of Applied Technology?

ARTICLE 19 AUTHORIZES FUND TRANSFERS TO THE FACILITIES RESERVE ACCOUNT AND AUTHORIZES EXPENDITURES

ARTICLE 19: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer up to **$30,000.00** to the Facilities Reserve Fund from available year-end fund balances, and to expend from said Reserve Fund as needed in the discretion of the School Board?

ARTICLE 20 AUTHORIZES FUND TRANSFERS TO THE SPECIAL EDUCATION RESERVE ACCOUNT AND AUTHORIZES EXPENDITURES

ARTICLE 20: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer up to **$30,000.00** to the Special Education Reserve Fund from available year-end fund balances, and to expend from said Reserve Fund as needed in the discretion of the School Board?

ARTICLE 21 AUTHORIZES CONTINGENCY FUND TRANSFERS

ARTICLE 21: Shall the Regional School Unit authorize the School Board to transfer the RSUs unallocated balances in excess of 5% of the prior fiscal year's budget, as determined by audit, for periods of emergency pursuant to the section 1482-B(3) of Title 20-A to the established contingency fund; and shall the RSU delegate authority to the School Board to expend sums in the contingency fund when the School Board determines by public vote that an emergency need exists, and to transfer sums in the contingency fund to the RSUs general fund for use in school operating budgets approved by RSU 29 voters?

ARTICLE 22 AUTHORIZES TRANSFERS OF APPROPRIATIONS AMONG COST CENTERS

ARTICLE 22: Shall the School Board of the Regional School Unit be authorized to transfer amounts exceeding 5% of the total appropriation for any cost center to another cost center or among other cost centers for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, provided that transfers shall not be permitted to increase the authorized total school budget?

ARTICLE 23 AUTHORIZES THE DISPOSITION OF ANY ADDITIONAL STATE SUBSIDY RECEIVED

ARTICLE 23: In the event that the Regional School Unit receives more state education subsidy than the amount included in its budget, shall the School Board be authorized to use all or part of the additional state subsidy to **increase** expenditures for school purposes in cost center categories approved by the School Board, increase the allocation of finances in a reserve fund approved by the School Board, and/or decrease the local cost share expectation, as defined in Title 20-A, section 15671A(1)(B), for local property taxpayers for funding public education as approved by the School Board?

Given under our hand this day, April 7, 2025 at Houlton, Maine.

A majority of the School Board of Regional School Unit No. 29

A true copy of the Warrant, attest: _____

Alfredo Casillas, Resident, Regional School Unit No. 29

Motion: I move that the Vote entitled, "Vote to Call and Approve the Warrants for the Budget Meeting and the Budget Validation Referendum and to Authorize the Notice of Amounts Adopted," be approved in form presented to this meeting and that a copy of said Vote be included with the minutes of this meeting.

VOTE TO CALL AND APPROVE THE WARRANTS FOR THE BUDGET MEETING

VOTED: That the warrant for the Regional School Unit No. 29 (the "Regional School Unit") Budget Meeting presented to the meeting be approved and that a Regional School Unit budget meeting be called for May 12, 2025 for the purpose of voting on the annual budget for the Regional School Unit for the 2025-2026 fiscal year; and

That the Budget Meeting Warrant shall be signed by a majority of the School Board members, and that their signatures may be made electronically, by execution of counterparts, or in person following this meeting.

A true copy as adopted by a majority of the School Board, attest:

Joseph A. Fagnant

Joseph A. Fagnant, Secretary

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— CARES —

Pre-K Through Community Education

FY25-26 Proposed Budget

	Budget Comparison			
	24-25 Budget	25-26 Proposed Budget	Difference	% Variance
Cost Center 1 - Regular Instruction				
Regular Instruction programs	$ 6,191,432	$ 6,375,187	$183,755	2.97%
RSU29 TLC Program (Alt Ed)	$ -	$ 16,057	$16,057	New FY 25
HHS RSC Alt. Ed.	$ 266,597	$ 274,595	$7,998	3.00%
Gifted/Talented	$ 100,802	$ 97,761	($3,041)	-3.02%
COST CENTER 1 TOTAL	**$ 6,558,831**	**$ 6,763,600**	**$ 204,769**	**3.12%**
Cost Center 2 - Special Education				
Regular Special Education	$ 1,657,506	$ 1,622,232	($35,274)	-2.13%
Developmental Therapy/Out of District Tuition	$ 1,108,306	$ 1,460,954	$352,648	31.82%
Director/Administration	$ 290,368	$ 411,527	$121,159	41.73%
Occupational Therapy	$ 77,500	$ 77,500	$0	0.00%
Speech/Hearing	$ 49,196	$ 53,750	$4,554	9.26%
Physical Therapy	$ 19,500	$ 21,000	$1,500	7.69%
Psych Services/other	$ 103,773	$ 106,294	$2,521	2.43%
Transportation - Special Services	$ 99,304	$ 106,503	$7,199	7.25%
COST CENTER 2 TOTAL	**$ 3,405,453**	**$ 3,859,760**	**$ 454,307**	**13.34%**
Cost Center 3 - Career & Technical Education				
Region II School of Applied Technology	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cost Center 4 - Other Instruction				
Non-Athletic Co-Curricular	$ 112,309	$ 115,110	$2,801	2.49%
Athletic Co-Curricular	$ 405,302	$ 398,288	($7,014)	-1.73%
COST CENTER 4 TOTAL	**$ 517,611**	**$ 513,398**	**$ (4,213)**	**-0.81%**
Cost Center 5 - Student & Staff Instructional Support				
Guidance	$ 618,522.00	$ 681,531.00	$63,009	10.19%
Student Success Coordinator	$ -	$ 85,544.00	$85,544	New FY 25
Nurse/Health	$ 277,095.00	$ 267,408.00	($9,687)	-3.50%
Curriculum	$ 151,863.00	$ 153,296.00	$1,433	0.94%
Library	$ 210,562.00	$ 214,311.00	$3,749	1.78%
Technology	$ 472,304.51	$ 508,302.00	$35,997	7.62%
COST CENTER 5 TOTAL	**$ 1,730,347**	**$ 1,910,392**	**$ 180,045**	**10.41%**
Cost Center 6 - System Administration				
School Directors	$ 66,155	$ 73,533	$7,378	11.15%
Superintendent's Office	$ 633,206	$ 693,848	$60,642	9.58%
COST CENTER 6 TOTAL	**$ 699,361**	**$ 767,381**	**$ 68,020**	**9.73%**
Cost Center 7 - School Administration				
Houlton Elementay School	$ 185,886	$ 197,198	$11,312	6.09%
Houlton Southside School	$ 152,837	$ 170,408	$17,571	11.50%
Houlton Middle School (AP Academic to Federal)	$ 160,206	$ 97,586	($62,620)	-39.09%
Houlton High School (AP Academic to Federal)	$ 165,705	$ 153,189	($12,516)	-7.55%
COST CENTER 7 TOTAL	**$ 664,634**	**$ 618,381**	**$ (46,253)**	**-6.96%**
Cost Center 8 - Transportation				
Transportation	$ 1,086,545	$ 1,147,179	$60,634	5.58%
COST CENTER 8 TOTAL	**$ 1,086,545**	**$ 1,147,179**	**$ 60,634**	**5.58%**

Cost Center 9 - Maintenance/Facilities							
Houlton Elementay School	$	484,881	$	454,108		($30,773)	-6.35%
Houlton Southside School	$	465,183	$	498,838		$33,655	7.23%
Houlton Middle School	$	401,360	$	383,812		($17,548)	-4.37%
Houlton High School	$	593,538	$	575,495		($18,043)	-3.04%
HHS Maintenance - (Capital Improvements)	$	288,832	$	288,832		($0)	0.00%
COST CENTER 9 TOTAL	**$**	**2,233,794**	**$**	**2,201,085**	**$**	**(32,709)**	**-1.46%**

Cost Center 10 - Debt Service				
Debt Service				
COST CENTER 10 TOTAL	**$**	**-**	**$**	**-**

Cost Center 11 - All Other Expenditures						
Food Service Contingency Fund	$	-	$	-	$0	Not used
COST CENTER 11 TOTAL	**$**	**-**	**$**	**-**		**Not used**

TOTAL BUDGET	$	16,896,576	$	17,781,177	$	884,601	5.24%

Cost Center	24-25 Proposed Budget	23-24 Proposed Budget	Difference	% of Budget
Cost Center 1 - Regular Instruction	$6,558,831	$6,763,600	$204,769	38.04%
Cost Center 2 - Special Education	$3,405,453	$3,859,760	$454,307	21.71%
Cost Center 3 - Career & Technical Education	$0	$0	$0	0.00%
Cost Center 4 - Other Instruction	$517,611	$513,398	($4,213)	2.89%
Cost Center 5 - Student & Staff Support	$1,730,347	$1,910,392	$180,045	10.74%
Cost Center 6 - System Administration	$699,361	$767,382	$68,021	4.32%
Cost Center 7 - School Administration	$664,634	$618,381	($46,253)	3.48%
Cost Center 8 - Transportation & Buses	$1,086,545	$1,147,179	$60,634	6.45%
Cost Center 9 - Facilities & Maintenance	$2,233,794	$2,201,085	($32,709)	12.38%
Cost Center 10 - Debt Service	$0	$0	$0	0.00%
Cost Center 11 - All Other Expenditures	$0	$0	$0	0.00%
	$16,896,576	**$17,781,177**	**$884,601**	**100.00%**