

FY 2027 Superintendent's Recommended Operating Budget Listening Session

Northwest High School, Dec. 3, 2025, 6:30-8:00 pm

The superintendent presented contextual information before taking questions and comments from the audience. Those slides can be viewed [here](#). You can watch a video of that presentation [here](#).

The superintendent discussed

Last year's budget and what it means to correct some significant issues of focused work for students and operations

This year is much less complicated; it is about maintaining the commitments we made last year.

He first spoke to the timeline of the budget process.

Date	Event
December 1-3, 2025	Operating Budget Community Listening Sessions
December 17, 2025	Superintendent's Recommended Operating Budget Release
January 6, 2026	Board of Education, Operating Budget Work Session #1
January 15, 2026	Board of Education, Operating Budget Hearing #1 <i>*Governor releases FY 2027 Recommended Operating Budget for State of Maryland</i>
January 20, 2026	Board of Education, Operating Budget Work Session #2
January 27, 2026	Board of Education, Operating Budget Hearing #2
January 29, 2026	Board of Education, Operating Budget Work Session #3 (if needed)
February 19, 2026	Board of Education Tentative Adoption of the Operating Budget
February 27, 2026	Board of Education Transmittal to County Executive/Council
March 13, 2026	County Executive Releases the FY 2027 Operating Budget Recommendations
April-May 2026	County Council Budget Public Hearings/Education and Culture Committee Work Sessions
May 2026	County Council Action on the County's FY 2027 Operating Budget
June 25, 2026	Final Adoption of the FY 2027 Operating Budget

He then spoke to the Board of Education's priorities for the operating budget.

- Emphasizing Math Supports
- Staffing/Reduce Class Size
- Educational Support Staff
- Safety and Security
- Wellness and Mental Health
- Special Populations and Closing Gaps

Carry-forward items in the next budget will need to be

- Employee Benefit Plan
- Employee Compensation
- Differentiated School Site Allocation - Equity Add-On
- Maintenance
- School-based safety positions
- Shift grant items to the local budget due to federal funding reductions

What we have heard from members of the community

- Mathematics and Literacy
- Staffing Standards
- Support for Special Education
- Professional Development
- Facility Maintenance
- Accountability measures

Following the presentation, the superintendent then took comments and questions from those in attendance. The following are notes on the questions, comments, and answers throughout the evening.

Question: Investments to support actual needs for students. My child is an accelerated learner, but could not get into a program that he qualifies for. Shouldn't there be investments for them to be in classes that he should be in? He has access to virtual learning, but it's not the same.

Answer: I do need to address our declining enrollment and what that may mean for the number of schools in the future. But reducing the number of schools can mean more resources, providing greater access. It is actually how we plan and implement. Also, when done well, virtual can be a valuable tool.

Question: What about the equity-addon? I'm interested in this resource expanding for schools.

Answer: I'm so glad you asked about that. As a reminder, implementing the equity-addon means more money for schools that can really use it, schools with higher levels of FARMs, special needs, or English learners. This is absolutely not about taking away from anyone, but about ensuring that resources are available to enhance the learning experience, from classroom materials to even paying for field trips.

Comment: How will you measure the effectiveness of this?

Response: In our first year, we provided schools with guidance on how to use these resources. We expect to receive some anecdotal feedback and build on it from there. Schools need to enhance, not substitute, with these resources and ensure a greater learning experience, really an enhanced learning experience.

Question: In terms of accountability and tracking... are measuring, investing, and implementing based on the data.

Answer: You have a good point there. We set our rules and follow them. Staffing standards are an example of that. We need staff who match our actual needs.

Question: Had a problem supporting her child and found there were so many layers of people she needed to work with to get any level of support. Why does it have to be this way? What can be streamlined to support families better?

Another commenter supported the community members' comments. Pointing out high levels of frustration and sometimes not getting a resolution to problems.

Answer: Please send me a list or chart of the layers you had to work through because we are focusing on improving SOPs (standard operating procedures)

Question: A staff member is seeking enhanced training opportunities and the necessary funding to provide comprehensive support for students with adaptive needs. They are also inquiring about staffing allocations to ensure that programs are adequately resourced to meet the diverse needs of these students effectively. The goal is to equip staff with the skills and resources needed to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Answer: Having the resources for many necessary items, including training, should not be an afterthought but really a forethought and something we really plan for.

Question: Please raise my taxes—the county needs to be able to provide the money for so many needs across the county, including the needs for schools and students. Is there a way to calculate more accurately to ensure the actual need is funded? If you do raise taxes, can you tell me how it will be spent?

Answer: I agree—

Question: Declining enrollment means declining dollars, right? How will you address this?

Answer: There is good and bad news with the enrollment decline. We have been growing for so long that we have been chasing capacity. We've added buildings and staffing. The benefit then is that declining enrollment allows you to examine and realign. The county is not shrinking, but the number of students is, so the tax base is not shrinking. Some areas of the county are growing, while others are declining. We have seen a steep drop in our international enrollment, which is a significant factor in our overall enrollment. This is a perfect time to talk about staffing. We cannot grow the central office when we are losing students through declining enrollment. What we need to do is make sure the positions we have better support the schools and students we have. We can indeed find better ways to do what we do, and it must be about continuous improvement. We must solve our problems today, not in the future.