

Goal: Strengthen Financial Transparency of School Budget

Description: Improve how Marblehead community members understand the school budget by providing clear explanations of cost drivers (including teacher contract increases, Special Education/circuit breaker funding, enrollment shifts, and administrative/legal costs), offering opportunities for dialogue, and building trust in how resources are allocated.

Specific Goal: Successfully implement a structured financial communication plan that measurably increases community comprehension of key budget drivers before the May 2026 Town Meeting.

Metric(s) for Success:

- **Baseline:** Budget information is currently perceived as complex and reactive, with low community confidence and limited structured communication (as seen during 2024–25 strike and early override discussions).
- **Target:**
 - Publish at least 3 clear, accessible budget explainers (e.g., one-page summary, public presentation deck, online FAQ) before March 2026.
 - Host at least 2 community forums dedicated to budget Q&A.

Achievable:

- **Steps:** Collaborate with FinCom and the admin finance team to develop simplified budget visuals; host forums in partnership with PTOs/parent groups; publish explainers through district website and newsletters.
- **What's Needed:** 4–6 hours/month of committee time, material prep, and public forums; coordination with district communications staff.

Relevant: This goal addresses Marblehead's ongoing challenge of explaining repeated funding requests amid declining enrollment and increasing contractual costs. Improving budget literacy and trust is essential for community alignment and informed voting during our May 2026 Town Meeting.

Time-Bound:

- **Intermediate Review:** January 2026 - at least one explainer published and one forum completed
- **Completion:** March 2026 - all explainers and forums finalized ahead of Town Meeting.

Owner: Budget Sub-committee in consultation with the Communication Sub-committee