



# EDUCATION



# EDUCATION

The Fiscal Year 2025 budget proposal for the Town of Hubbardston includes a significant decrease in the town's assessment for the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District. Hubbardston's assessment is projected to decline from \$447,411 in FY24 to \$357,138 in FY25, a reduction of \$90,273 or 20.2%.

This large decrease in Hubbardston's assessment is driven by a projected decline in the number of Hubbardston students attending Montachusett Tech. The Montachusett Tech budget proposal indicates that Hubbardston's enrollment is expected to fall from 40 students in FY24 to 32 students in FY25, a decrease of 8 students or 20%. This is the largest enrollment decrease in both absolute and percentage terms among all of the member towns in the Monty Tech district.

As a result of this enrollment decline, Hubbardston's share of Montachusett Tech's total foundation enrollment is decreasing from 3.14% in FY24 to 2.17% in FY25. This means that Hubbardston will be responsible for a smaller proportion of the school district's costs that are allocated based on enrollment share.

The 20.2% decrease in Hubbardston's Montachusett Tech assessment is one of the most significant changes in the town's FY25 budget proposal. It is providing some offset to increases in other areas of the budget, allowing Hubbardston's total proposed budget to rise by only 4.82% despite a 7.5% increase in town's total assessment for the Quabbin Regional School District and increases in other cost areas such as employee health insurance and retirement benefits.

However, it's important to note that changes in enrollment and assessment for one member town impact the assessments for all other towns in a regional school district. The Montachusett Tech budget indicates that several other member towns are seeing significant enrollment increases, which is shifting a greater share of the district's costs onto those communities. So while Hubbardston is benefiting from a favorable shift in enrollment patterns in FY25, future budgets could see the opposite impact if enrollment patterns shift back in the other direction. This highlights the importance of continually monitoring regional school enrollment and finances to anticipate budget impacts.





# EDUCATION

The Town of Hubbardston is facing a significant challenge in its FY25 budget due to a substantial increase in the assessment from the Quabbin Regional School District. The town's current budget proposal allocates a 9% increase for the Quabbin assessment compared to FY24, which would raise Hubbardston's contribution from \$5,820,063 to \$6,343,869. However, the most recent budget proposal from the Quabbin Regional School District, presented on February 29, 2024, estimates an even more severe increase of 11.96% for Hubbardston's assessment.

This projected increase is particularly concerning given that Hubbardston is the only member town in the Quabbin district expecting an increase in foundation enrollment in FY25. Despite a projected enrollment increase of 20 students or 3.77%, Hubbardston's state-mandated minimum contribution to the school district is rising by \$295,386 or 7.52%. As a result, Hubbardston is facing the largest dollar and percentage increase in its total Quabbin assessment among all member towns, amounting to \$214,854 or 3.69%.



Further compounding this situation is the fact that a significant portion of the increase in Quabbin's budget is attributable to rising debt service costs. The school district's debt assessment is increasing due in part to the financing of a \$100,000 HVAC chiller purchased in FY24. While this capital investment was necessary, it is placing an additional burden on member towns like Hubbardston that are already struggling to absorb the impact of rising school costs.

If the Quabbin Regional School District budget remains at the level currently proposed, Hubbardston would face a budget deficit of approximately \$168,000 in its school assessment. Closing this gap would require the town to make additional painful cuts in other critical areas of the budget, such as public safety and public works, which could jeopardize the health and well-being of Hubbardston residents.

Moreover, the current trajectory of Hubbardston's Quabbin assessment is unsustainable in the long run. Projections suggest that if current trends continue, Hubbardston will soon outpace Barre as the member town with the highest per-pupil assessment, placing an even more disproportionate burden on Hubbardston taxpayers.

Addressing this critical situation will require a collaborative and proactive approach involving all stakeholders. Hubbardston officials are committed to working closely with the Quabbin Regional School District, state legislators, and other member towns to find solutions that will bring the growth in school spending closer to a sustainable level while still providing a high-quality education for our students. This may involve exploring opportunities for cost savings, advocating for changes in state funding formulas, and making difficult decisions about budget priorities.

The severity of the projected increase in Hubbardston's Quabbin Regional School District assessment for FY25 cannot be overstated. It is imperiling the town's fiscal stability and forcing agonizing tradeoffs that could negatively impact the quality of life for Hubbardston residents. Urgent action is needed to address this crisis and put the town and the school district on a more sustainable path forward.

300 - EDUCATION								
DESCRIPTION	FY23 Actual	Requested FY24	FY24	REQ FY25	ADMIN FY25	\$ Change	% Change	
Quabbin Regional	\$ 5,424,929	\$ 5,750,424	\$ 5,820,063	\$6,512,650	\$6,343,869	<b>\$523,806</b>	9.0%	
QR Debt	\$ 28,512	\$ 30,225	\$ 30,225	\$56,318	\$56,318	<b>\$26,093</b>	86.3%	
Montachusett	\$ 497,609	\$ 447,411	\$ 447,411	\$357,138	\$357,138	<b>-\$90,273</b>	-20.2%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,951,050</b>	<b>\$6,228,060</b>	<b>\$6,297,699</b>	<b>\$6,926,106</b>	<b>\$6,757,325</b>	<b>\$459,625</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	