

Comparison of costs across 17 NH schools

Prepared for the Lyme Budget Committee and Lyme School Board
by the Lyme School Board Finance Committee

Presented to the budget committee: 01-18-2023

We identified 17 schools in NH that operate schools “like Lyme”

District	# schools in SAU	School Name	School operated	High School Model	FY2022 ADM***
Andover	2	Andover Elementary School	K-8	Tuition	210
Ashland	3	Ashland Elementary School	K-8	Cooperative	166
Bartlett	8	Josiah Bartlett Elementary School	PreK-8	Tuition	168
Campton	8	Campton Elementary School	PreK-8	Cooperative	318
Candia	5	Henry W. Moore School	K-8	Tuition	275
Chesterfield	7	Chesterfield Central School	K-8	Tuition	273
Chichester	7	Chichester Central School	K-8	Tuition	199
Dunbarton	4	Dunbarton Elementary School	K-6	Tuition	236
Grantham	1	Grantham Village School	PreK-6	Tuition (AREA**)	276
Hampton Falls	6	Lincoln Akerman School	K-8	Cooperative	182
Lyme	1	Lyme Elementary School	K-8	Tuition	198
Marlborough	7	Marlborough Elementary School	PreK-8	Tuition	160
Mont Vernon	3	Mont Vernon Village School	K-6	Tuition (MS), Cooperative (HS)	216
Plainfield	1*	Plainfield Elementary School	K-8	Tuition (AREA**)	213
Rollinsford	3	Rollinsford Grade School	K-6	Tuition	134
Tamworth	3	Kenneth A. Brett School	K-8	Tuition	193
Thornton	8	Thornton Central School	K-8	Cooperative	189

- To create this list three filters were applied to the full list of public schools in the state:
 - Limit to school with elementary attendance between 150-300 students, inclusive
 - Removed districts that operate a middle school
 - Removed districts that operate a high school
- Lyme and Grantham stand out on this list as being the SAU districts operating a single school. Plainfield shares administrative costs with Cornish
- This list was prepared in effort to create “apples-to-apples” comparison for cost and staffing metrics

*Plainfield shares SAU costs with Cornish, NH in a business agreement – they share costs of a superintendent and business office

** **AREA** = **A**uthorized **R**egional **E**nrollment **A**rea – negotiated tuition costs between sending/receiving districts. Grantham and Plainfield participate and negotiate together in an AREA agreement with the Lebanon School District. These contracts are typically negotiated for 10-year time periods.

*** **ADM** = **A**verage **d**aily **m**embership, this is the number of students enrolled in the listed school

Data source: NH DOE

The characteristics of the communities that operate the 17 listed schools vary

District	Median Town HHI (ACS, 2015-2019)	Town population (2019)	Equalized valuation for local tax (FY2022)	Equalized Value Per Pupil (EVPP) (FY2022)*	Local Education Tax Rate (2021)	Total Tax Rate (2021)	% local education (2021)
Andover	\$ 77,283.00	2372	\$ 398,479,177.98	\$ 1,335,682.00	9.88	16.68	59.2%
Ashland	\$ 46,184.00	2099	\$ 387,010,889.08	\$ 1,708,576.00*	9.30	18.04	51.6%
Bartlett	\$ 54,688.00	2837	\$ 1,758,884,640.06	\$ 6,512,299.00	2.74	5.87	46.7%
Campton	\$ 85,000.00	3291	\$ 683,490,641.47	\$ 1,616,838.00*	10.10	16.31	61.9%
Candia	\$ 118,698.00	3936	\$ 675,473,166.98	\$ 1,533,773.00	9.99	15.19	65.8%
Chesterfield	\$ 95,466.00	3585	\$ 724,786,968.82	\$ 1,710,781.00	8.13	16.26	50.0%
Chichester	\$ 95,398.00	2630	\$ 437,719,902.74	\$ 1,503,923.00	9.94	17.37	57.2%
Dunbarton	\$ 121,500.00	2827	\$ 522,283,548.66	\$ 1,108,338.00	11.39	17.90	63.6%
Grantham	\$ 108,571.00	2945	\$ 706,458,099.65	\$ 1,520,855.00	10.35	17.62	58.7%
Hampton Falls	\$ 85,549.00	2428	\$ 662,884,049.06	\$ 2,190,841.00*	10.89	15.86	68.7%
Lyme	\$ 112,625.00	1729	\$ 462,523,293.94	\$ 1,603,659.00	13.24	21.21	62.4%
Marlborough	\$ 71,023.00	2143	\$ 229,804,665.30	\$ 911,385.00	13.97	23.52	59.4%
Mont Vernon	\$ 120,125.00	2576	\$ 458,709,921.85	\$ 1,129,381.00*	13.55	19.97	67.9%
Plainfield	\$ 85,313.00	2443	\$ 421,520,919.46	\$ 1,454,166.00	12.02	19.45	61.8%
Rollinsford	\$ 75,682.00	2567	\$ 399,032,580.53	\$ 1,432,841.00	10.71	17.88	59.9%
Tamworth	\$ 51,354.00	2918	\$ 579,098,117.04	\$ 1,939,030.00	9.07	15.30	59.3%
Thornton	\$ 67,054.00	2611	\$ 558,294,809.73	\$ 1,902,788.00*	10.27	16.38	62.7%
Median	\$ 85,313.00	2611	\$ 522,283,548.66	\$ 1,533,773.00	10.27	17.37	59.9%

* Schools that use the cooperative model for HS costs compute EVPP as Assessed Value/ADM in the K-8 school only (i.e., HS pupil numbers aren't included in the denominator).

Equalized Value Per Pupil

(EVPP) is a metric used by NH DOE to measure a town's capacity to raise funds to support education.

To calculate EVPP, total town assessed value (including utilities, with equalization ratio applied) is divided by the total number of students that attend public schools in each given year

In general, EVPP is inversely correlated with local education tax rates.

The characteristics of the communities that operate the 17 listed schools vary

District	Median Town HHI (ACS*, 2015-2019)	Town population (2019)	Equalized valuation for local tax (FY2022)	Equalized Value Per Pupil (EVPP) (FY2022)*	Local Education Tax Rate (2021)	Total Tax Rate (2021)	% local education (2021)
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Median	\$ 85,313.00	2611	\$ 522,283,548.66	\$ 1,533,773.00	10.27	17.37	59.9%

* Schools that use the cooperative model compute EVPP as Assessed Value/ADM in the K-8 school only (i.e., HS pupil numbers aren't included in the denominator)..

Local education tax comprises ~ 60% of the total tax raised across all the towns on this list. That matches what we would see if I listed all municipalities in the state

The statewide education property tax (SWEPT) is also used to fund schools and typically is assessed at a rate of ~ \$2/\$1000.

Local education + SWEPT comprises ~ 70% of the total tax raised in each town

We can further subdivide this list into a peer group by assigning schools that are “like Lyme” socioeconomically

- NH DOE uses eligibility for free or reduced lunch pricing (F/R) as a metric of fiscal capacity

District	K-8 School Name	School operated	ADM (FY2022)	Median Town HHI (ACS, 2015-2019)	% students economically disadvantaged (F/R)
Hampton Falls	Lincoln Akerman School	K-8	182	\$ 85,549.00	0.55
Dunbarton	Dunbarton Elementary School	K-6	236	\$ 121,500.00	3.81
Plainfield	Plainfield Elementary School	K-8	213	\$ 85,313.00	4.23
Grantham	Grantham Village School	PK-6	276	\$ 108,571.00	4.35
Mont Vernon	Mont Vernon Village School	K-6	216	\$ 120,125.00	4.63
Lyme	Lyme Elementary School	K-8	198	\$ 112,625.00	10.10
Chesterfield	Chesterfield Central School	K-8	273	\$ 95,466.00	10.62
Candia	Henry W. Moore School	K-8	275	\$ 118,698.00	13.82
Chichester	Chichester Central School	K-8	199	\$ 95,398.00	14.57
Andover	Andover Elementary School	K-8	210	\$ 77,283.00	21.90
Bartlett	Josiah Bartlett Elementary School	PK-8	168	\$ 54,688.00	23.81
Thornton	Thornton Central School	K-8	189	\$ 67,054.00	24.34
Rollinsford	Rollinsford Grade School	K-6	134	\$ 75,682.00	25.37
Campton	Campton Elementary School	PK-8	318	\$ 85,000.00	26.81
Marlborough	Marlborough Elementary School	PK-8	160	\$ 71,023.00	36.88
Ashland	Ashland Elementary School	K-8	166	\$ 46,184.00	39.76
Tamworth	Kenneth A. Brett School	K-8	193	\$ 51,354.00	52.33
Median			199	\$ 85,313.00	14.57

In household income (>100K), Lyme clusters with the following towns and may be considered demographically similar:

- Candia
- Dunbarton
- Grantham
- Mont Vernon

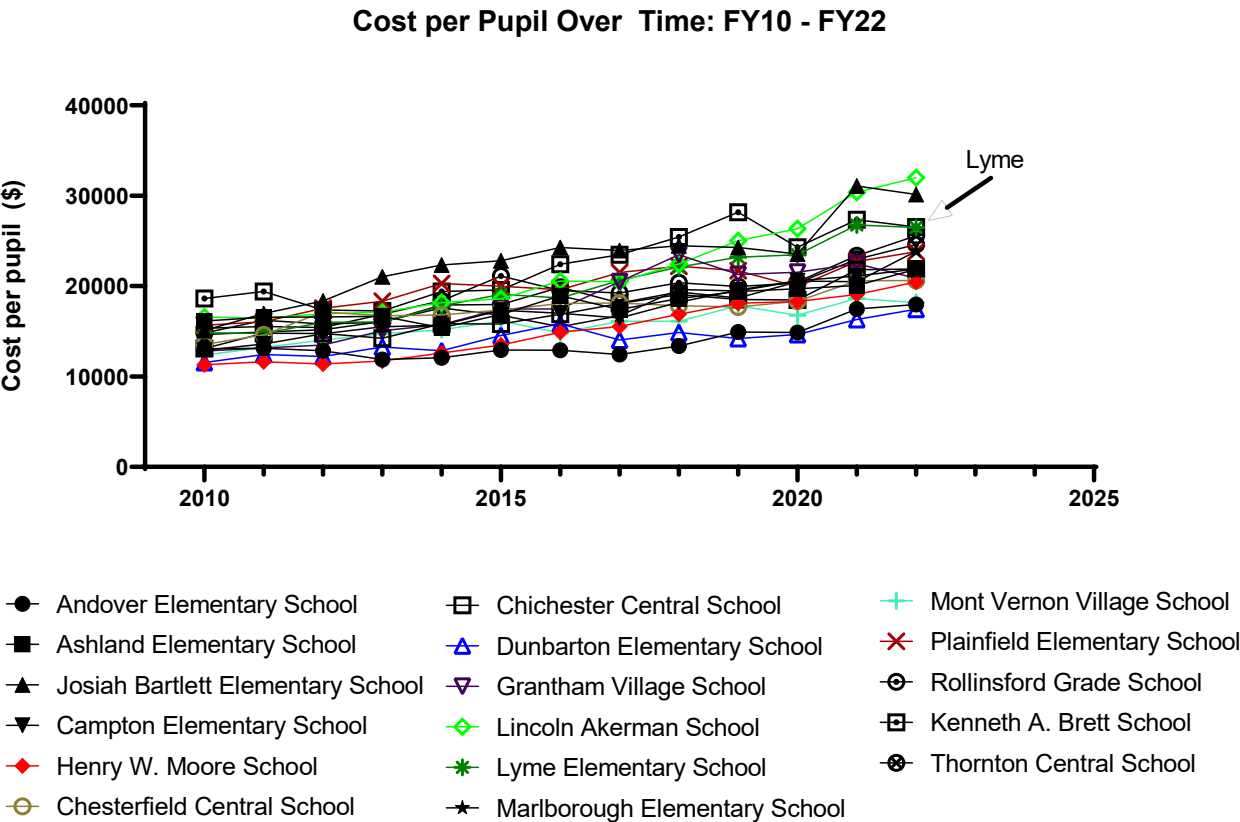
Given the facts that three more schools share characteristics with Lyme (low % students on F/R lunch, K-8 operated, similar student number) we may tier these towns for comparison:

- Hampton Falls
- Plainfield
- Chesterfield

Plainfield and Grantham are further substantiated as rational comparators as, like Lyme, they are located in the Upper Valley

Cost Per Pupil (CPP) is a metric used by NH DOE to compare costs across school districts

NH DOE calculates cost per pupil as : [(school operating expenses) – (transportation costs) – (tuition revenue)]/ADM
In FY2022, the state average CPP was \$19,399.97 (PreK-12)

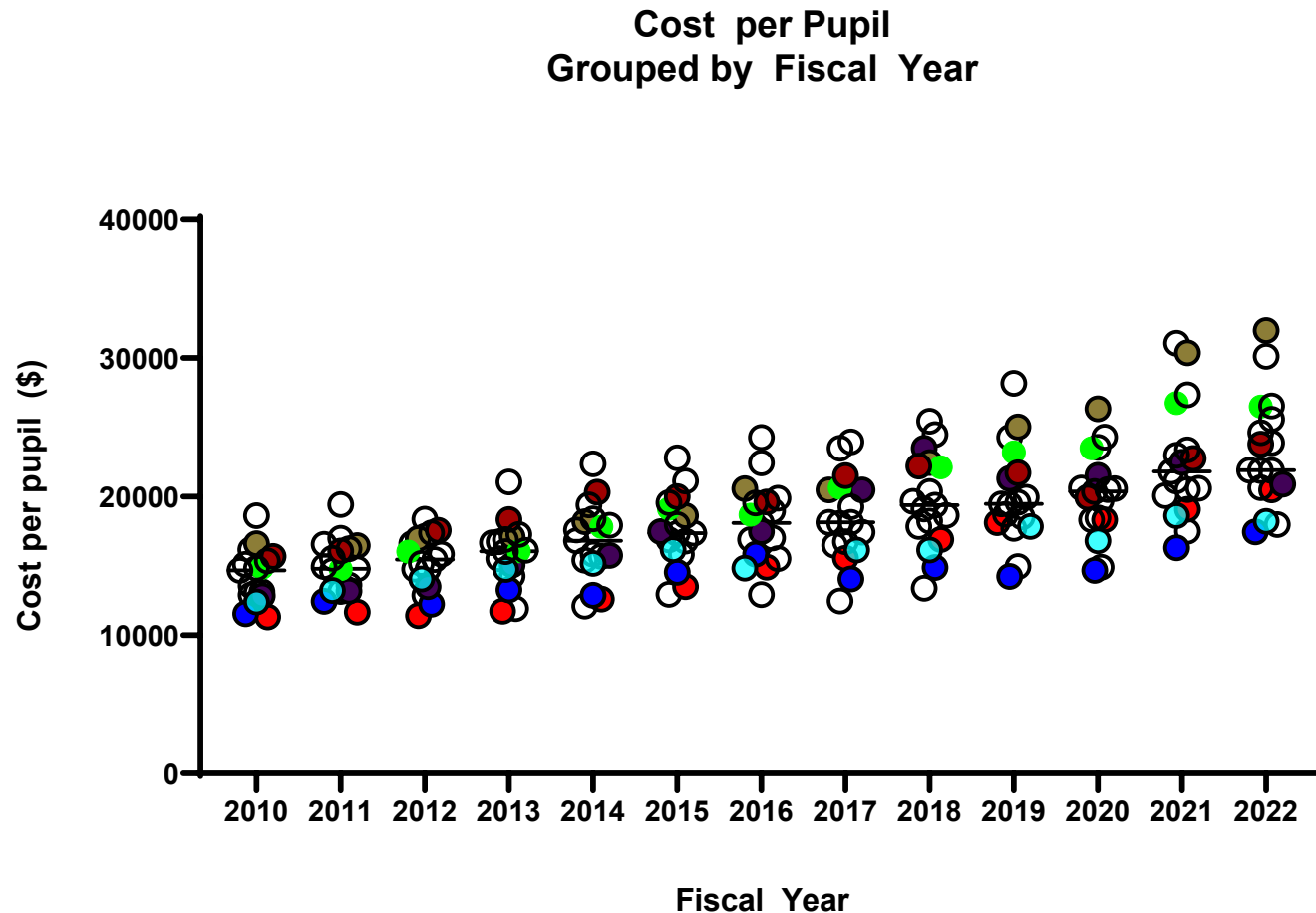


School		CPP in FY2022 (\$)	% increase FY22 over FY10
Andover Elementary School	K-8	17955.54	37.4%
Ashland Elementary School	K-8	21877.75	35.5%
Josiah Bartlett Elementary School	PreK-8	30135.71	99.8%
Campton Elementary School	PreK-8	21889.02	69.7%
Henry W. Moore School	K-8	20464.20	81.3%
Chesterfield Central School	K-8	20635.36	52.3%
Chichester Central School	K-8	21885.05	66.9%
Dunbarton Elementary School	K-6	17428.36	51.1%
Grantham Village School	PreK-6	20873.82	62.8%
Lincoln Akerman School	K-8	31982.19	92.8%
Lyme Elementary School	K-8	26484.31	78.5%
Marlborough Elementary School	PreK-8	23865.15	62.9%
Mont Vernon Village School	K-6	18189.66	46.8%
Plainfield Elementary School	K-8	23790.24	51.9%
Rollinsford Grade School	K-6	24600.11	60.4%
Kenneth A. Brett School	K-8	26538.50	42.5%
Thornton Central School	K-8	25581.47	72.6%
Median		21889.02	62.8%

Take-away points

- Over the past 12 years, some schools on the list have more tightly controlled increases in costs than others.
- The increase in cost in Lyme is greater than the median increase for all the listed schools.
- Among the sub-list of peer schools, Lyme had the second highest CPP in FY22

Another view of CPP, grouped by fiscal year



- In FY2017, Lyme's CPP begins to surpass the mean CPP for the 17 schools on the list (*Lyme is the green dot*)

NHSAS testing is a metric used by NH DOE and the Lyme School to assess student performance

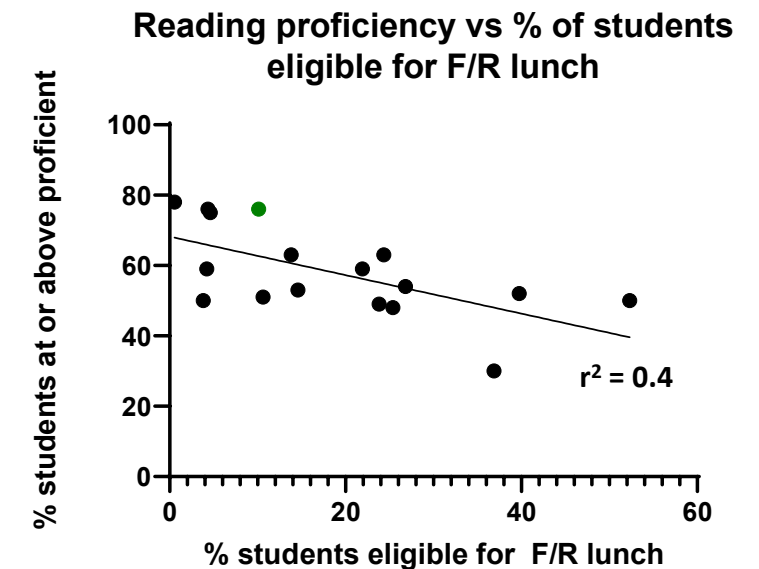
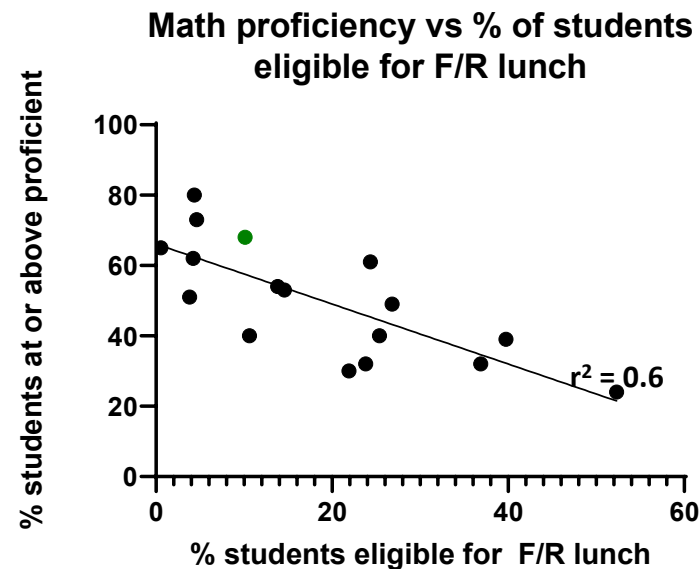
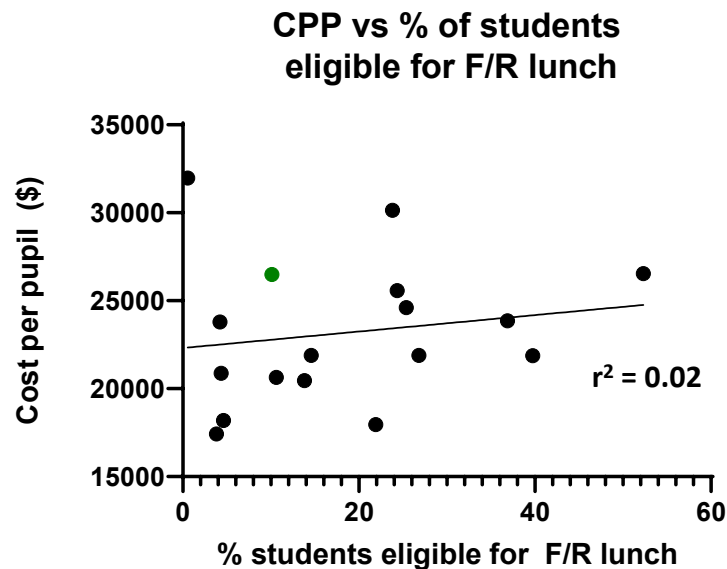
District	School Name	School Operated (FY2022)	% of students scoring above proficiency in math (FY2022)	% of students scoring above proficiency in reading (FY2022)	% participation (math/reading)	CPP (FY2022)
Andover	Andover Elementary School	K-8	30.00%	59.00%	100/100	\$ 17,955.54
Ashland	Ashland Elementary School	K-8	39.00%	52.00%	93/93	\$ 21,877.75
Campton	Campton Elementary School	PreK-8	49.00%	54.00%	99/99	\$ 21,889.02
Chesterfield	Chesterfield Central School	K-8	40.00%	51.00%	96/96	\$ 20,635.36
Chichester	Chichester Central School	K-8	53.00%	53.00%	98/100	\$ 21,885.05
Dunbarton	Dunbarton Elementary School	K-6	51.00%	50.00%	97/97	\$ 17,428.36
Grantham	Grantham Village School	PreK-6	80.00%	76.00%	99/98	\$ 20,873.82
Candia	Henry W. Moore School	K-8	54.00%	63.00%	92/93	\$ 20,464.20
Bartlett*	Josiah Bartlett Elementary School	PreK-8	32.00%	49.00%	96/97	\$ 30,135.71
Tamworth	Kenneth A. Brett School	K-8	24.00%	50.00%	74/75	\$ 26,538.50
Hampton Falls	Lincoln Akerman School	K-8	65.00%	78.00%	99/99	\$ 31,982.19
Lyme	Lyme Elementary School	K-8	68.00%	76.00%	95/96	\$ 26,484.31
Marlborough	Marlborough Elementary School	PreK-8	32.00%	30.00%	92/92	\$ 23,865.15
Mont Vernon	Mont Vernon Village School	K-6	73.00%	75.00%	98/98	\$ 18,189.66
Plainfield	Plainfield Elementary School	K-8	62.00%	59.00%	99/99	\$ 23,790.24
Rollinsford	Rollinsford Grade School	K-6	40.00%	48.00%	99/99	\$ 24,600.11
Thornton	Thornton Central School	K-8	61.00%	63.00%	100/100	\$ 25,581.47
Median			51.00%	54.00%		\$ 21,889.02

- Lyme has consistently performed above the median in math and reading proficiency scores for years.
 - Data is provided by NH DOE back to FY2009
- Lyme scores are among the highest among the 17-school cohort
- Lyme scores are most similar to:
 - Grantham
 - Hampton Falls
 - Mont Vernon

Data source: NH DOE

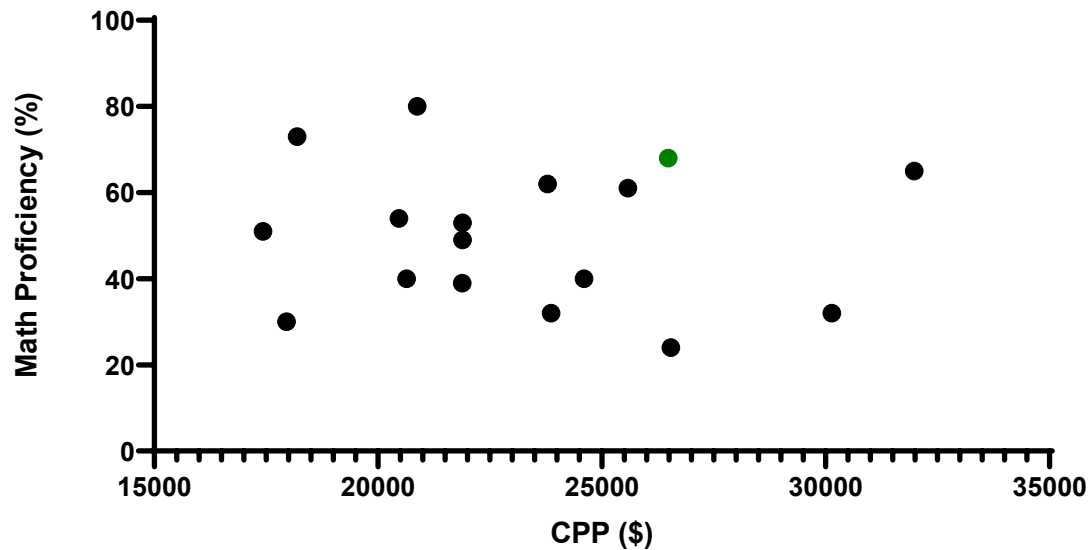
There is an inverse correlation between proficiency scores and the proportion of students eligible for free and reduced (F/R) lunch.

There is no clear relationship between spending and the proportion of students eligible for F/R lunch

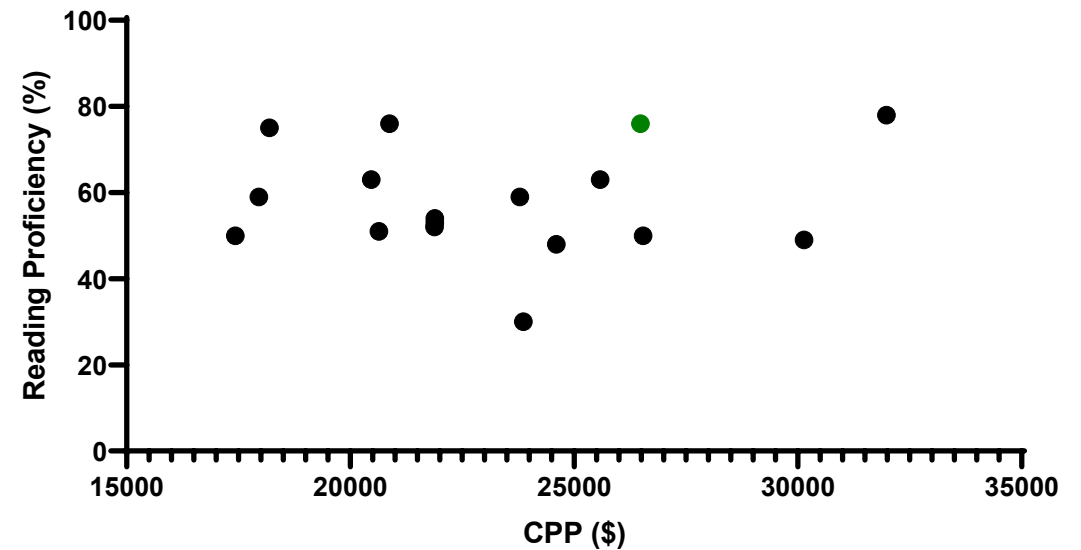


There is no correlation between math/reading proficiency and cost per pupil across the cohort of 17 schools

% of students scoring proficient in math vs cost per pupil
FY2022

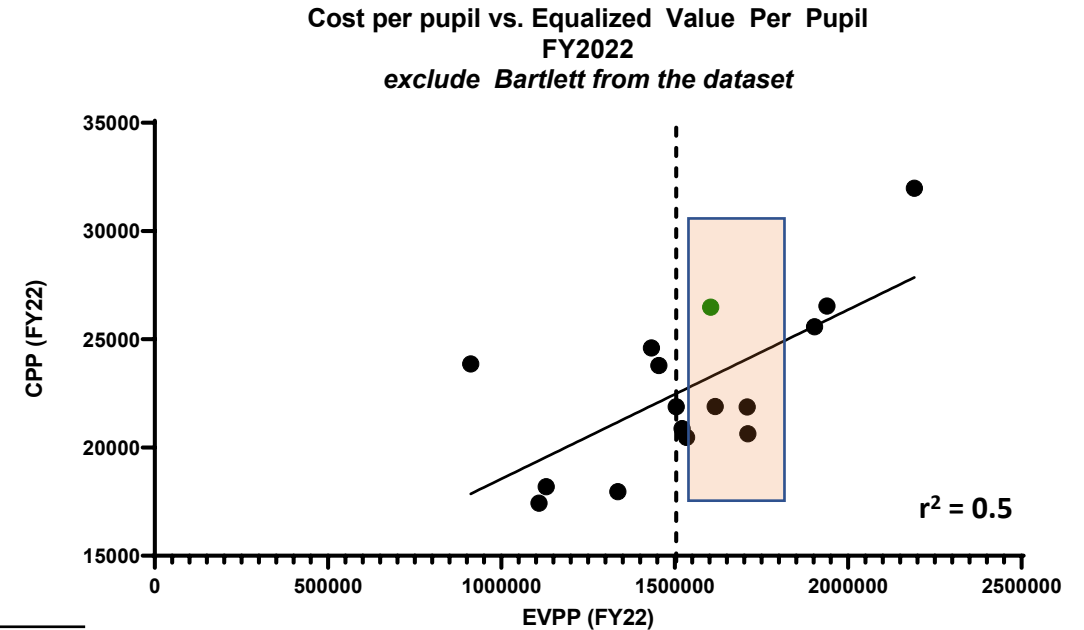
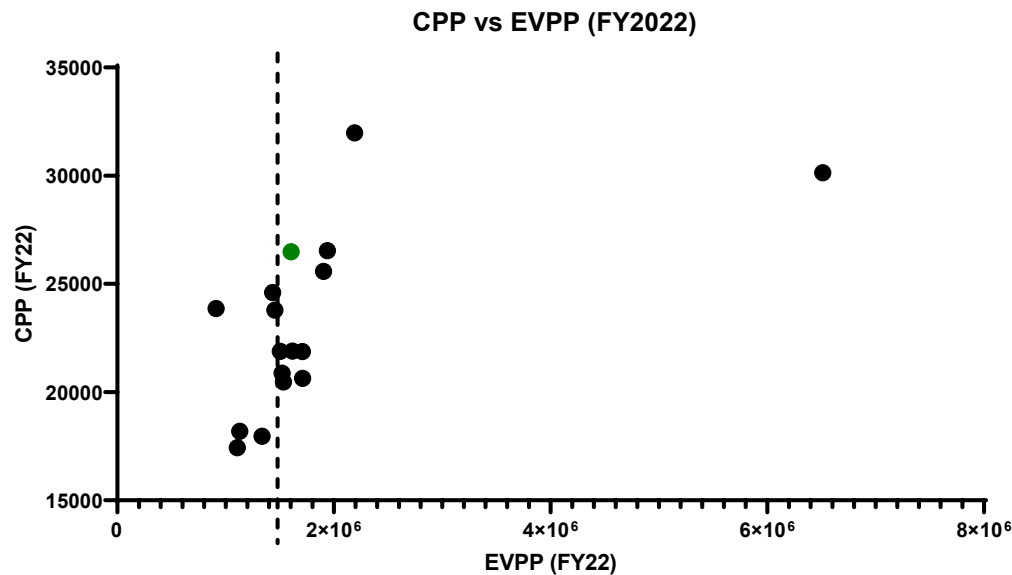


% of students scoring proficient in reading vs cost per pupil
FY2022



- This result is not surprising and matches what is seen when school spending and proficiency scores are compared statewide. Further, this result matches what is seen nationally.

Relationship between spending (CPP) and capacity to raise funds (EVPP)



District	# SAUs	School Name	School Operated	HS Model	ADM (FY22)	Median HHI
Ashland*	3	Ashland Elementary School	K-8	Cooperative	166	46,184.00
Campton*	8	Campton Elementary School	PreK-8	Cooperative	318	85,000.00
Chesterfield	7	Chesterfield Central School	K-8	Tuition	273	95,466.00
Lyme	1	Lyme Elementary School	K-8	Tuition	198	112,625.00

* Schools that use the cooperative model compute EVPP as Assessed Value/ADM in the K-8 school only (i.e., HS pupil numbers aren't included in the denominator). As such, these values may be considered to be inflated relative to actual EVPP to pay school costs in these towns.

- In FY22, Lyme spent significantly more per pupil than schools that group with Lyme as similar in EVPP

Ultimately, a question may arise – are there informative differences in school operation that explain why schools that teach children with similar economic backgrounds can spend different amounts of money and achieve similar results*?

**Caveat being that we have only one tracked metric we are using to assign “results”*

These are just thoughts

- The educational status of parents may impact results – some districts may spend less, provide fewer resources in the school, but parents are able to make up the difference at home.
- Some districts may be under more fiscal pressure to contain costs due to low EVPP. In other words, some districts may spend because they can.
 - In these cases, we might look at staffing and school resources – in some schools, individual teachers and administrators may be asked to do more than they might be asked in another district that has more fiscal capacity to increase staff numbers
- Parents and homeowners in some districts may apply pressure to a school to grow, and to provide more programming and curricular resources. These pressures may not occur evenly across towns.
- Special education needs are difficult to disaggregate in the datasets presented by NH DOE, in part because the districts we are comparing are small and specific numbers may be shielded from public view for legal reasons. That said, special education is expensive to deliver and may differ across districts
 - To help account for this, it would be better to analyze data over time, maybe in 5- or 10-year bins. This of course is more complicated to do.

Another metric we can use to compare cost across districts is staffing levels, and we present data relevant to school staff on the next few slides

Using data available on the [NH DOE website](#), we can track non-administrative school staff numbers back to FY2017

Non-administrative staff members include:

Teaching, instructional support, library, specialists, and admin support staff

District Name	School Operated (FY22)	ADM (FY22)	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY22 PER ADM
Dunbarton	K-6	236	41.9	45	38	41.3	46.5	33.8	0.143
Mont Vernon	K-6	216	33.2	33.6	35.8	36	35.8	37	0.171
Grantham	PK-6	276	41.8	41.1	43.7	45.8	47.2	51.7	0.187
Rollinsford	K-6	134	30.3	32.7	32.2	33.8	33.2	31.9	0.238
Andover	K-8	210	37.1	37.7	41	40	42.2	43.5	0.207
Ashland	K-8	166	30.5	31.5	36.3	35.2	36.2	29.6	0.178
Candia	K-8	275	55.7	59.7	56.5	55.5	57.4	51.7	0.188
Chesterfield	K-8	273	53.9	57.9	56.6	58.6	56.2	55.9	0.205
Chichester	K-8	199	34.5	42	44.5	60.2	44.8	44.8	0.225
Hampton Falls	K-8	182	53.2	54.2	54.3	58.5	43	47.5	0.261
Lyme	K-8	198	39.8	39.3	39.2	43.1	41.1	44	0.222
Plainfield	K-8	213	35.8	40.8	38.4	39.9	33.5	36.5	0.171
Tamworth	K-8	193	48.5	46.6	47.9	46.2	44.4	47	0.244
Thornton	K-8	189	37.2	41.2	42.1	42.9	42.8	41.6	0.220
Bartlett	PK-8	168	56.3	58.1	58.1	58.1	59.2	56.9	0.339
Campton	PK-8	318	54.9	55.4	58.4	53.9	55.9	57.2	0.180
Marlborough	PK-8	160	38.9	46.6	42.3	44.4	42.6	43.7	0.273
Median									0.207

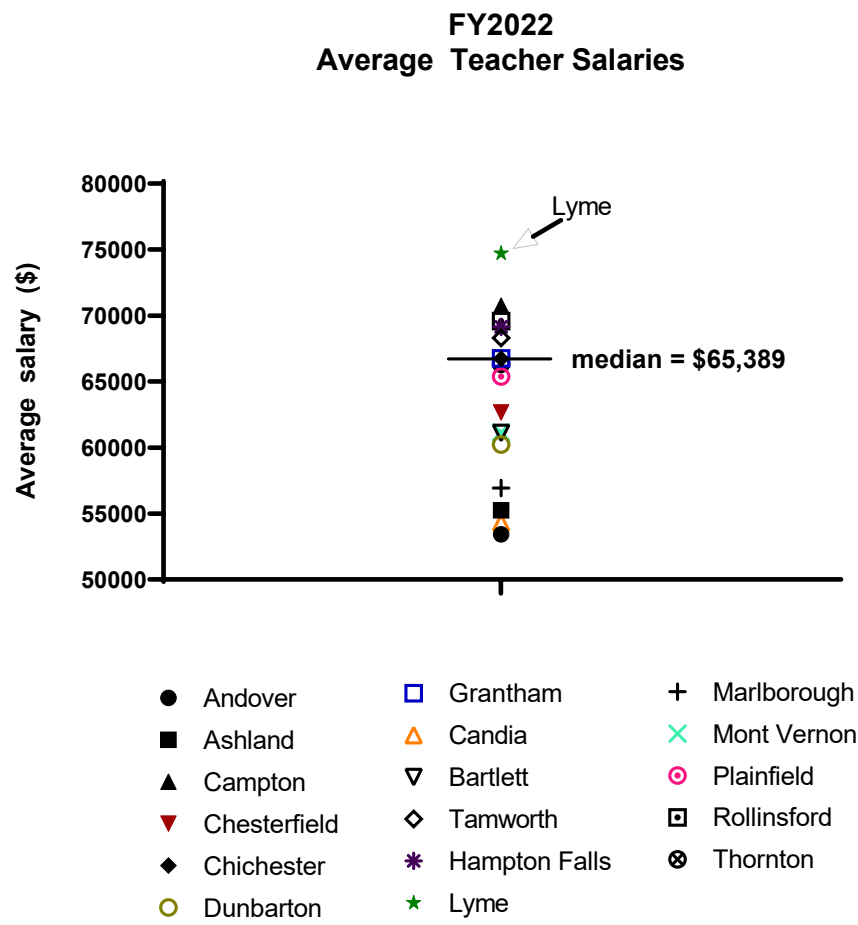
- Qualitatively, Lyme's staffing levels don't appear to be misaligned with comparable schools.
- In FY22, Lyme had an **above-median staff per student ratio**

In FY22, The Lyme School had the second highest staff per student ratio* on our school cohort peer group list

** staff numbers do not include members of the administration*

District	School Operated	ADM	Teachers	Instructional Support	Librarians	Specialists	Admin Support	All Other Support	Total	Total per pupil	FY22 CPP (\$)
Hampton Falls	K-8	182	23	10	1	3	2	8.5	47.5	0.261	31,982.19
Lyme	K-8	198	23.4	13.6	0.5	1	1.5	4	44	0.222	26,484.31
Chesterfield	K-8	273	25.8	16.5	1	5.6	2	5	55.9	0.205	20,635.36
Candia	K-8	275	25	9	1	9.4	2.5	4.8	51.7	0.188	20,464.20
Grantham	PK-6	276	19.6	15.9	1	8	1.5	5.7	51.7	0.187	20,873.82
Plainfield	K-8	213	18	12	1	3	1.5	1	36.5	0.171	23,790.24
Mont Vernon	K-6	216	20	4	1	4	2	4.8	35.8	0.171	18,189.66
Dunbarton	K-6	236	18.8	9	0.6	2.8	1.6	1	33.8	0.143	17,428.36
Median										0.188	20,754.59

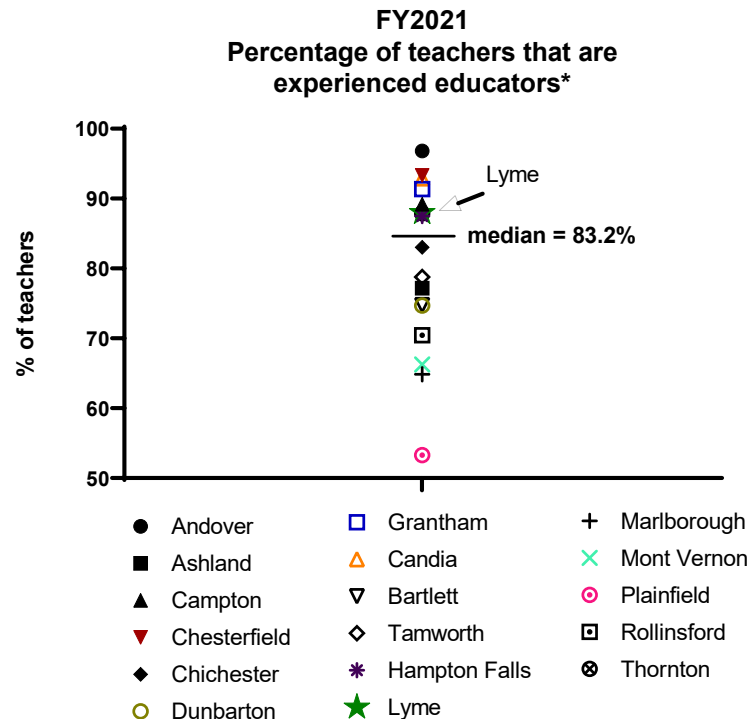
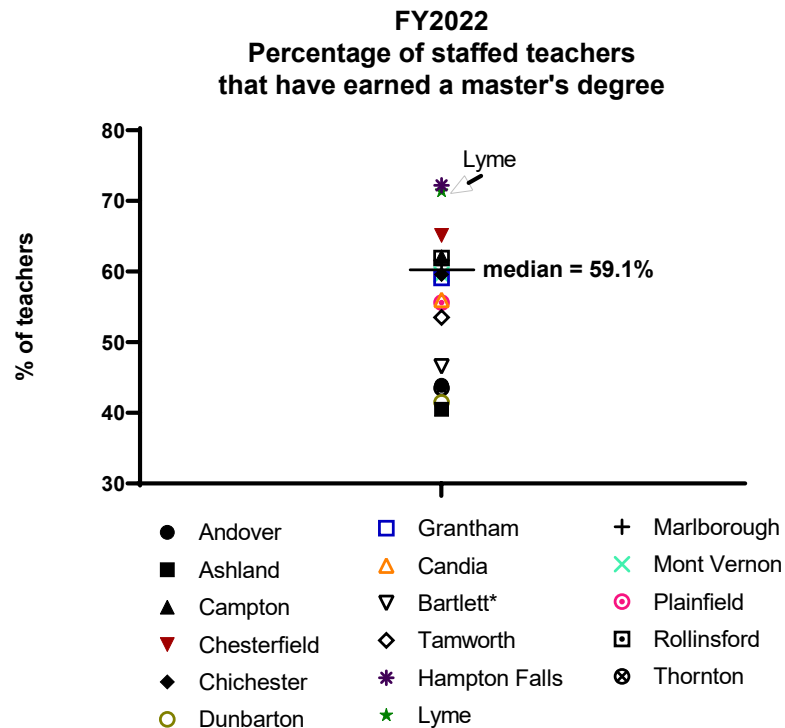
In FY22, Lyme had the highest average teacher salary among the school cohort list.



Lyme staffs more personnel per student and pays teachers significantly more than the median average salary in the school cohort

Two metrics, educational attainment of teachers and teacher experience, correlate with Lyme salaries

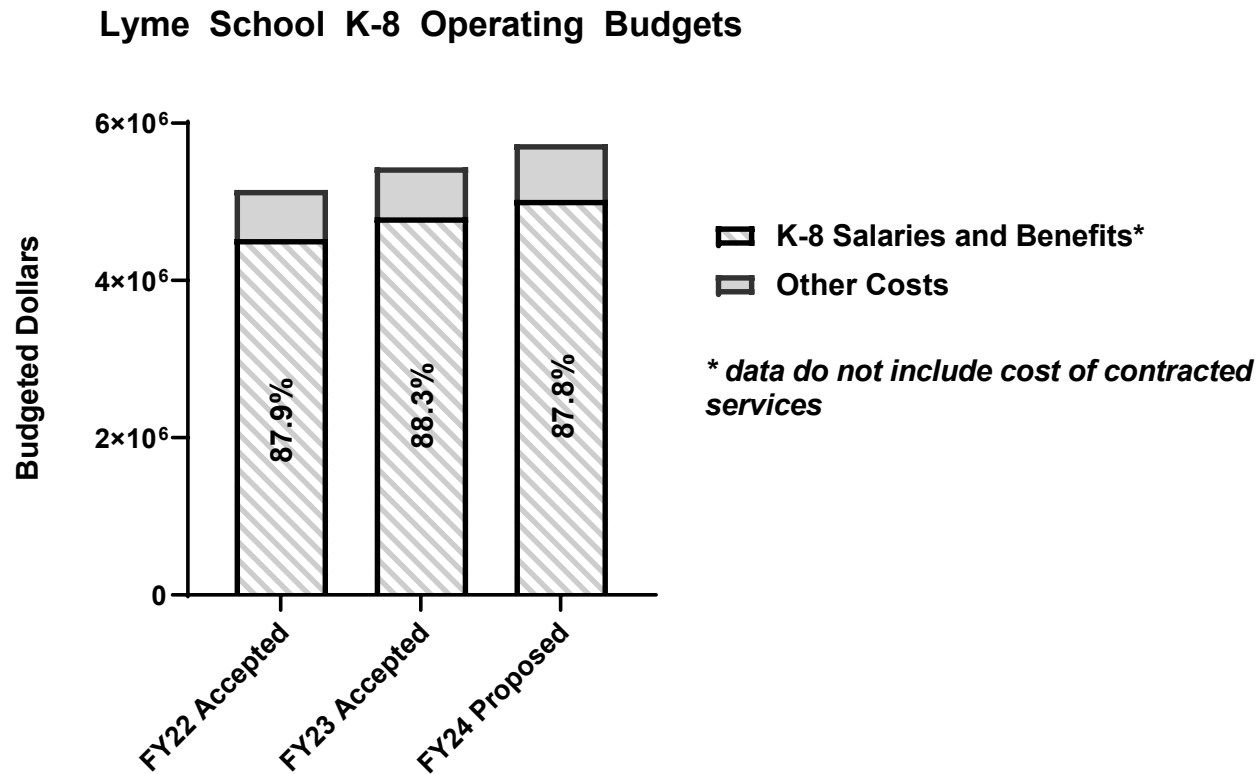
Lyme is above median on the school cohort list in both categories



The relatively high rate of teacher may relate to Lyme's ability to attract teachers with advanced degrees and further enforces Lyme's ability to retain those high-quality teachers

* NH DOE defines an "experienced educator" as a teacher who has taught for three years and been rated effective

In the proposed K-8 budget, 87.8% of the cost to operate the Lyme School is represented as salaries and benefits



- The school board finance committee asserts: to introduce a sustainable cap on budget growth and/or to decrease the school budget in a meaningful way, K-8 school personnel/staffing should be evaluated
- We believe this is true because ~ 90% of the cost to operate the K-8 school is represented in personnel costs
- This doesn't mean that the committee members do not value the staff. It doesn't imply that they do not think that the positions currently staffed at the school don't have inherent value for educating our kids.
- The members do question whether that value is substantiated by the cost. There are infinite number of courses and staff that could be added to augment the curriculum at the school. Fiscal constraints require choice, and we asked the administration to evaluate and prioritize positions

Brief contextual overview of the current conversation occurring between the school board and administration

- At the 12/15/2022 School Board Meeting, a motion was made and approved – the board asked the school administration to evaluate positions at the school and specified interest in assessing the need of two positions, both currently staffed as 1.0 FTE: Academic Director and Library Media Specialist/Technology Integrator. A board member further requested that the administration review the Specials department (Art, Music, PE/Health, Spanish, Design Lab)
- At a Finance Committee Meeting held on 01/09/2023, Principal D'Entremont presented his work and final analysis, “we do not recommend a reduction in any positions”.
- From the Finance Committee: the school lacks clear means of evaluating the impact of several positions at the school. The school administration consistently points to NHSAS test scores, and an internal testing metric (Track My Progress), as metrics of school programming success. It is true that the test scores are high and outpace state averages. However, we question whether a true correlation exists between the current school staff level and the chosen outcome metric (test scores).
 - In short, the committee does not agree that all staffed positions are contributing to the measured outcome equally
 - Peer schools are achieving measured outcomes as high as Lyme's with significantly lower cost per pupil.

Other cost-relevant factors to consider

- The finance committee accepts that the fact that Lyme operates in an SAU of one school is driving some of our costs
 - Schools in larger SAUs share costs. The board has discussed the possibility of sharing costs with neighboring districts in the past. During the 1/9/23 Finance Committee presentation, Principal D'Entremont expressed that sharing costs with neighboring districts was not feasible for the Lyme School.
 - To date, the board has not seriously considered merging with a neighboring district. In such a scenario, Lyme Elementary would become one school in a larger SAU. For various reasons, including our belief that the town of Lyme would not support this measure, the board doesn't believe this to be a feasible strategy at this time.
- The finance committee understands that Hanover High School's (HHS) tuition rate is the highest in the Upper Valley. We *could* consider the impact of modifying high school choice policy on total annual expenditures. However, the committee does not believe that there would be wide support to remove HHS from the list of sending schools. Added, the committee itself would not support such an effort.
- The majority of school board members and all members of the finance committee assert that the future trajectory of growth in the school budget will not be sustainable, as such, are applying pressure to the administration to control spending in the K-8 school

This table tracks Lyme's Math, Reading (ELA), and Science proficiency scores back to FY2010

** The dip in FY15 is seen across all schools in NH*

LYME		Math							Reading							Science		
Grade Level 0 = average across all grades		0	3	4	5	6	7	8	0	3	4	5	6	7	8	0	5	8
FY10	pAbove	85	>90	85	80	88	>90	75	86	86	75	90	71	>90	>90	54	58	50
FY11	pAbove	80	>90	81	80	79	59	81	84	88	76	76	>90	77	>90	61	67	53
FY12	pAbove	88	>90	>90	77	81	89	83	89	86	>90	77	89	>90	89	46	71	22
FY13	pAbove	87	87	>90	88	86	89	82	90	>90	86	88	81	>90	>90	61	75	45
FY14	pAbove	84	78	>90	83	83	80	82	87	>90	88	83	83	80	>90			
FY15	pAbove	69	81	67	63	63	78	63	73	73	53	75	76	89	68	59	61	58
FY16	pAbove	69	64	80	61	64	73	70	69	64	76	56	64	73	85	73	80	65
FY17	pAbove	69	72	61	71	71	81	56	75	83	74	88	47	88	60	60	74	48
FY18	pAbove	71	53	61	61	80	83	77	79	71	78	74	80	78	89	64	61	66
FY19	pAbove	69	71	63	55	78	67	72	80	81	63	77	83	84	78	63	64	61
FY21	pAbove	53	48	67	46	43	57	62	69	71	56	75	62	76	73	70	79	62