

# Vote NO on Override & Stabilization Fund (Articles 1,2,3)

Can you afford to live in Westford with these increases?  
Keep Westford affordable!

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- An unprecedented 3-year \$6.8M override is being proposed (Article 1).
  - The Community Preservation Fund adds 3% to the total; so it's a \$7,004,000 override.
  - Most of your tax dollars will be used in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). The remainder = \$2.6M will be saved in an "Override Stabilization Fund" managed by the Select Board with no criteria for its management (Articles 2 & 3).
  - Residents are asked to pay 3 years ahead of time even with uncertainty that exists with inflation & commercial revenue decline.
  - A 3-year override circumvents our rights to limit tax increases granted to us under Prop 2.5% law.
- Currently, Westford has amassed a \$4.2M deficit that must be eliminated.
- The override will permanently increase the tax burden on the average home in Westford by \$746 that will grow by 2.5% every year in perpetuity (at current assessed values) in addition to the increase incurred Jan. 2024<sup>1</sup>.
- Westford should budget using ongoing receipts for ongoing expenses instead of a multi-year override.

Table 1: **Annual tax**<sup>1</sup> you'll pay in next 10 years, if the override passes when we include the compounding effect **at current assessed values**

Home Value	Tax FY25	Tax FY 26	Tax FY 27	Tax FY 28	Tax FY 34
\$ 558,000.00	\$ 8,593.59	\$ 8,846.16	\$ 9,170.56	\$ 9,399.80	\$ 10,858.67
\$ 625,000.00	\$ 9,627.44	\$ 9,909.67	\$ 10,271.93	\$ 10,527.59	\$ 12,159.81
\$ 756,500.00	\$ 11,656.58	\$ 11,997.04	\$ 12,433.60	\$ 12,741.11	\$ 14,718.79
\$ 891,000.00	\$ 13,732.01	\$ 14,132.03	\$ 14,644.60	\$ 15,005.15	\$ 17,333.97
\$ 1,082,000.00	\$ 16,679.28	\$ 17,163.86	\$ 17,784.36	\$ 18,220.21	\$ 21,059.89

1) FY25-28 Budget Forecast, Kristen Las, Town Manager, Feb. 27, 2024.

Table 2: **Total tax** you will have paid in FY25, FY25-28, FY25-30 & FY25-34 if the override budget passes when compounding is included **at current assessed values**

Home Value	Tax FY25	Tax FY 25 -28	Tax FY 25-30	Tax FY 25-34
\$ 558,000	\$ 8,593.59	\$ 36,010.11	\$ 55,500.58	\$ 97,409.94
\$ 625,000	\$ 9,627.44	\$ 40,336.63	\$ 62,162.55	\$ 109,093.69
\$ 756,500	\$ 11,656.58	\$ 48,828.33	\$ 75,247.04	\$ 132,054.37
\$ 891,000	\$ 13,732.01	\$ 57,513.79	\$ 88,626.93	\$ 155,527.90
\$ 1,082,000	\$ 16,679.28	\$ 69,847.71	\$ 107,629.53	\$ 188,897.75

2) Values are sum of the dollar values in Table 1 based upon information as of Feb. 27, 2024.

Attend Town Meeting April 27th 9:00 a.m. at Westford Academy football field.  
Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. Go early & stay to end!  
Vote in May 7th Town Election (State Law requires both votes to Pass/Defeat).

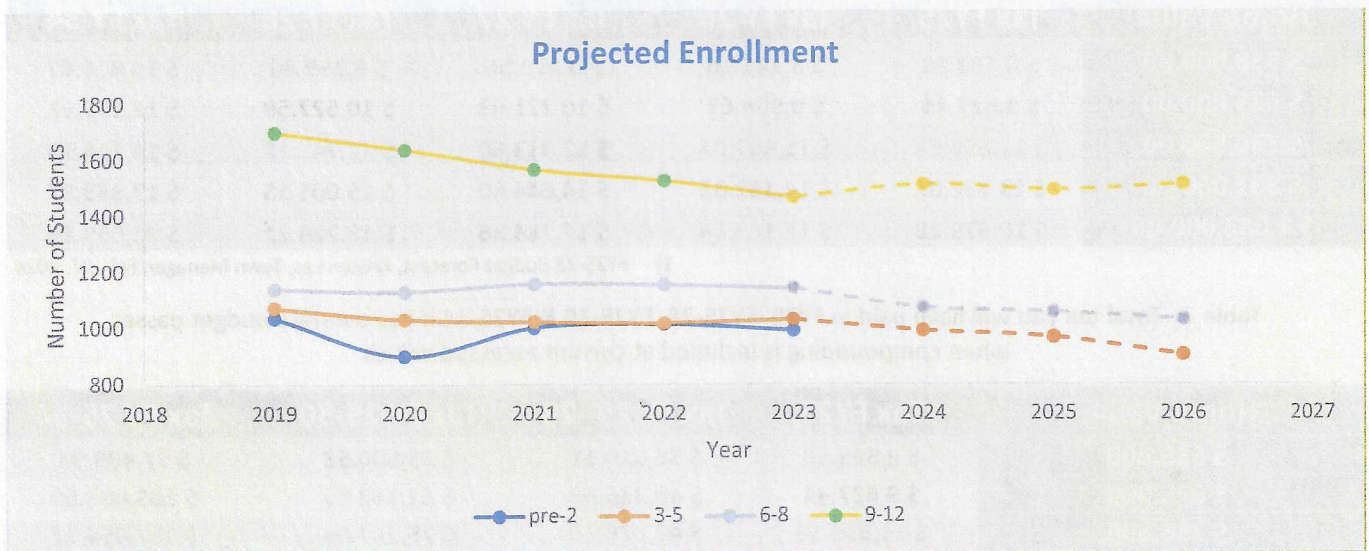


# The Override WILL NOT Save Our Schools

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- With override staffing, decreases are planned during the 3-year term.
  - The override plan calls for a reduction of 8 in FY26; 18 in FY27 and 18 in FY28<sup>a</sup> = 43 total.
  - A reduction of 43 FTE nearly matches that of the non-override plan stated at 44 FTE in FY 25.
  - **Therefore, changes should be made to the school infrastructure to save the school system.**
  - **Expenses must be decreased .**
- Total enrollment in the school system has dropped dramatically in the last 4 years.
  - Decreased 8% from 2019 – 2023.
  - Decreased 2.5% from 2021 – 2023.
  - School system size should reflect these changes.
- The non-override school budget is understated.
  - The non-override budget is set at a 2% increase over FY24; rather than 2.5%.
    - ◆ The school budget in FY24 was an increase of 2.89% over FY23;
    - ◆ The average for the last 5 years is 2.5%.
  - The non-override budget is understated by between \$330,000 - \$589,000 (saving 4-8 FTE).
- Schools have over \$3.0M in reserve funds that are not being utilized.
  - The final plan does use \$450,000 from non-compensation funds.
- The staff reductions proposed for WA are not distributed across departments or linked to need.
  - Staff reductions must be negotiated with the unions, so it is not determined at this point.
  - Pay increases are targeted to be comparable to communities with a per capita income of \$96,000 whereas Westford's per capita income is \$72,000.

a) FY25-28 Budget Forecast, Kristen Las, Town Manager, Feb. 27, 2024.



b) From Superintendent's Enrollment Reports to School Committee, 2019 – 2023.

For more information, visit <https://in-case-u-missed-it.com/home>.