

The Litchfield Budget Committee (by consensus email) recommends that the RSU4 proposed budget in its current form for FY2023 **ought not to pass**.

1. RSU 4 School Budget has increased \$1,734,106.00 (1.73 million dollars), which is an 8.87% increase. RSU4's proposed budget for school year FY 2023 that will be apportioned to the three towns is \$9,616,317. It will be divided by town as follows:

1. **Litchfield: \$4,185,328**
2. Sabattus: \$3,927,513
3. Wales: \$1,503,476

[Using RSU4's numbers, the projected increase to property taxes on a \$200,000 home in Litchfield by \$227.52 for just the school portion (does not include the increases for county and town taxes).]

2. Litchfield pays the largest share of the school budget even though Sabattus has the most students enrolled.

Yearly average: # of Students % of Students

1. Sabattus: 731 49.4%
2. **Litchfield: 496 33.5%**
3. Wales: 254 17.2%

Percentage breakdown of what the towns pay for the school budget:

1. **Litchfield: 47%**
2. Sabattus: 38%
3. Wales: 15%

Cost per student paid by local property tax:

1. **Litchfield: \$8,438**
2. Wales: \$5,919
3. Sabattus: \$5,373

3. RSU4's large 8.9% increase* this year compared to other Maine school units that have voted on their budgets: *(*taken from news articles - most school districts have not published and voted on their school budgets. When using the numbers presented in their own report the increase apportioned to the three towns appears to be 10.2%)*

- a. RSU 2: 3%
- b. RSU 5: 2.88%
- c. RSU 9: 3.17%
- d. RSU 12: 2.5%
- e. RSU 16: 6.74%
- f. RSU 21: 2.72%
- g. RSU 23: 6.08%
- h. RSU 29: 1.03%
- i. RSU 39: 5%

4. Last year, your tax bill stated that 70% of your property taxes are for RSU 4. Because of this formula, Sabattus and Wales are able to use their property taxes on more services or lower taxes than Litchfield can offer. Is it time to consider leaving RSU 4 and join with another town with more comparable property valuations and better test scores such as Monmouth, or another school district with more comparable property evaluations and better test scores, such as RSU 2 (Monmouth, Richmond, Hallowell) or RSU 11 (West Gardiner, Gardiner)? If the RSU4 proposed new building plan for the new school/wing in Sabattus is passed in the August vote, Litchfield will be on the hook to pay its apportionment *(see #5 below)*.

5. Be prepared for the August 9, 2022 vote for a new school/addition at Oak Hills Middle School that will restructure the school district and close Libby-Tozier & Sabattus Primary. The restructuring of the remaining schools would be as follows:
 - Pre-K-1st grade: Carrie Ricker School in Litchfield
 - 2nd 5th grade: the original section of Oak Hill Middle School
 - 6th-8th: the new school/wing at the site of the current Oak Hill Middle School, would be the new middle school.No dollar amount has been given but estimates of \$13-15 million have been discussed. The rising cost of building supplies may impact those numbers, as inflation continues to rise. The full amount needed to build this new school would be the responsibility of the 3 towns (Litchfield, Sabattus, & Wales) with the Litchfield share being 47%. If the project is voted to pass, Litchfield's share could be over \$7 million dollars (at \$15 million).