

Academic Benefits of Walpole's Withdrawal from the Fall Mountain Regional School District

Envision a Walpole School Board able to use **100% of Walpole's financial resources prudently and efficiently** to deliver high-quality instruction tailored specifically to our students. By withdrawing from the Fall Mountain Regional School District, a locally governed Walpole School Board—working closely with Walpole administrators and staff—would regain the freedom to maintain and develop innovative programs designed for Walpole children.

Currently, Walpole does not have full authority over decisions that directly affect our students. All staffing, materials, and programming must be approved by the Fall Mountain Regional School Board, most of whose members do not live in Walpole. As a result, decisions that reflect the priorities of the Walpole schools are often denied.

On multiple occasions, the Walpole School Site-Based Committee has requested that Walpole tax dollars be used to preserve staffing and instructional materials strongly supported by Walpole parents—only to be told “no.” One example is the loss of a valued math teacher, eliminated not due to local need but to equalize staffing reductions across all district towns. Another example involves curriculum selection. Despite having veteran, award-winning educators, Walpole teachers have had limited input into curriculum decisions. New programs were implemented that replaced curricula which had already produced strong New Hampshire state assessment results in Walpole.

Walpole has long demonstrated that **education is a community priority**. From Vehicle Day—where first responders model safety for our youngest students—to CPR training for middle schoolers, to clothing and food assistance provided by local church groups, Walpole consistently puts children first. Most recently, the town reaffirmed this commitment by building a new Early Childhood Education Center.

We are fortunate to have experienced, multi-degreed, award-winning teachers serving our students from Pre-K through eighth grade. Walpole has a strong history of retaining staff because our community rallies around its students - the future citizens, leaders, and voters of our state. The results speak for themselves. Walpole schools consistently achieve strong state test scores. Full local control would allow Walpole not only to maintain this success, but to build upon it.

By supporting withdrawal, parents and taxpayers would regain direct control over their local elementary and middle schools. Walpole supports the concept of tuitioning students to the Fall Mountain Regional High School and would continue to support that institution. However, Walpole would manage its own funds, staffing, and programming based on the specific needs of its own students.

Our children are the future of our community, our state, and our country. They deserve the very best education Walpole can provide. Later this month, in another informational letter, we will make the financial case for operating our own schools.

The Walpole Selectboard

Financial Benefits of Walpole’s Withdrawal from the Fall Mountain Regional School District

Earlier this month, you received a mailing explaining why the Walpole Selectboard believes our town will be better served by operating its own schools. Educational quality will always come first, but it’s also important to talk honestly about costs and long-term financial responsibility.

Here’s the financial case for Walpole’s withdrawal from the Fall Mountain Regional School District.

Keeping Walpole tax dollars in Walpole

If Walpole operates its own schools, every education tax dollar raised here would be used to support Walpole students and facilities. Any year-end surplus would come back to Walpole taxpayers. Under the current regional structure, neither of those things happens.

A track record of responsible spending

Walpole has a long history of being a careful steward of taxpayer money. We believe a local Walpole School Board would continue that tradition, working closely with the town to control costs while maintaining strong educational programs.

High school options remain secure

Walpole would continue sending high school students to Fall Mountain Regional High School on a tuition basis. While the Fall Mountain School Board technically must agree to accept tuition students, it’s important to understand the financial reality. Walpole contributes more than **\$3.3 million each year** to the high school. There is simply no practical way the high school could cut costs anywhere near that amount if Walpole students were turned away. Doing so would place an enormous financial burden on the remaining towns. Beyond the financial impact, losing 115–120 students would dramatically reduce course offerings and threaten athletics, music, technical education, and other programs. You may hear claims that Walpole students would not be accepted, but we believe those statements are meant to create fear. The academic and financial realities strongly suggest otherwise.

Elementary costs are out of control under the regional model

Unfortunately, elementary school costs within the Fall Mountain district have grown far faster than in nearby towns that operate independently. The chart below compares Walpole’s regional costs with neighboring communities that manage their own schools.

Elementary Cost Per Student

<u>2007–2008</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>2023–2024</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Fall Mountain	\$10,866	Westmoreland	\$21,827
Westmoreland	\$11,024	NH State Avg.	\$22,107
NH State Avg.	\$11,507	Keene	\$22,876
Winchester	\$11,724	Winchester	\$23,651
Hinsdale	\$11,847	Chesterfield	\$24,143
Chesterfield	\$12,180	Marlboro	\$24,212
Marlboro	\$13,658	Hinsdale	\$24,852
Keene	\$15,320	Fall Mountain	\$26,299

We believe that by leaving the regional district and operating our own elementary schools, Walpole can bring costs back in line with neighboring towns—without sacrificing educational quality.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this important issue. We encourage continued discussion and thoughtful questions as we look ahead. — **The Walpole Selectboard**

Why Walpole should consider operating our own elementary schools?

Walpole tax dollars stay in Walpole

All education taxes raised here would support Walpole students and facilities. Any surplus would be returned to Walpole taxpayers.

Proven fiscal responsibility

Walpole has a long history of careful financial management. Local control means greater accountability.

High school options remain secure

Walpole would continue sending students to Fall Mountain High School on a tuition basis. Walpole currently contributes over **\$3.3 million annually**, making refusal highly unlikely.

Elementary costs are too high

Fall Mountain's elementary cost per student is now the highest among neighboring towns. Independent districts operate at significantly lower costs.

We believe Walpole can maintain strong schools while controlling costs and strengthening local decision-making.

Learn more. Ask questions. Stay engaged.

We strongly urge you to vote by ballot on March 10.

Polls will be open from 7AM to 7PM.

— *The Walpole Selectboard*

Withdrawal Q&A

The following information is being provided in response to the recent survey regarding the upcoming withdrawal vote. We received over 200 questions and have carefully reviewed each one. We worked to identify common themes which hopefully we have captured here.

In March of 2025, The town of Walpole and the Town of Langdon voted to study the suitability and feasibility of withdrawing from the Fall Mountain Regional School District pursuant to [RSA 195:25](#).

The initiative to withdraw from the district was led entirely by the towns, not by the school district. While the district has a legal and professional responsibility to provide the necessary data and planning to ensure any potential transition is smooth, the impetus for this change originated at the municipal level within the towns themselves. Our role throughout this process has been—and remains—neutral and informative.

WHY?

Per the Langdon Withdrawal Plan:

"Langdon, New Hampshire has long been a cooperative and contributing member of the Fall Mountain Regional School District. As the home of the regional high school and the SAU offices, the town has played a central role in the educational life of the district since its founding in 1966. However, recent years have brought increasing concern among Langdon residents about the financial sustainability and fairness of continued participation in the cooperative model. One of the most pressing concerns has been the escalating local tax burden. Langdon's local education tax rate has risen sharply, from \$13.90 per \$1,000 in assessed value in fiscal year 2024, to \$17.17 in FY 2025, and is projected to increase again to approximately \$22.69 in FY2026. These significant increases have led residents to question whether the current arrangement continues to serve the town's best interests." (see page 3 of the *Langdon Withdrawal Plan*.)

Per the Walpole Withdrawal Plan:

"[T]he Town of Walpole's consideration of withdrawal is centered around local control over decision making for the operation of the school. The control desired is focused on determining the number of teachers and positions, curriculum, and academic experiences for Walpole's students. The Fall Mountain Walpole Feasibility Study group has found that it is feasible and suitable for The Town of Walpole to offer this decision to the voters of the five communities." (see page 8 of the *Walpole Withdrawal Plan*.)

VOTING

How does my vote count?

All district votes count.

"If a majority of the voters present and voting in the withdrawing preexisting district shall vote in the affirmative, in favor of withdrawal and a majority of the voters present and voting in the entire cooperative district shall vote in the affirmative, in favor of withdrawal..." the withdrawal passes.

"If a 3/5 supermajority of the voters present and voting in the withdrawing preexisting district vote in the affirmative, in favor of the withdrawal", the withdrawal passes "unless a 3/5 supermajority of the voters present and voting in the entire cooperative district vote in the negative, against withdrawal."

- Majority is more than 50%
- Super majority is 3/5ths or 60%
- "Preexisting district" is the town voting to withdraw
- "Cooperative district" is the entire district comprised of the 5 towns

DISTRICT

If a town withdraws, what happens to the remaining towns?

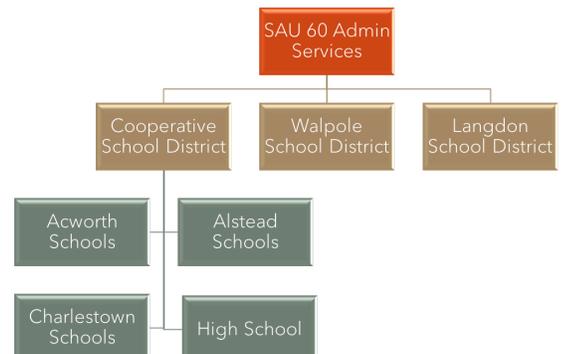
The cooperative district will continue with the remaining towns.

What services will continue through the SAU?

Withdrawing towns remain a part of the SAU 60 (RSA 195:30)

SAU provides:

- Employment and Supervision of Superintendent
- Business Administration and financial services
- Human Resources
- Curriculum Coordination and Instructional Leadership
- Special Education Administration



- AP/Payroll
- Other services required by statute or agreement

SAU services does not provide**:

- Transportation
- Facilities
- Food Services
- Legal Counsel
- Information Technology Services

**These services may be negotiated with outside contractors/districts or the withdrawing district can provide their own.

SCHOOL BOARD

What does the school board structure look like?

If any town withdraws, the new district would call for a special meeting to elect the required school board members (RSA 195:30).

- Langdon School District - 3 Board Members (per plan)
- Walpole School District - 5 Board Members (per plan)

TAX IMPLICATIONS

What will happen to tax rates if a town withdraws?

As outlined in the plans, the committees determined that there would likely be an increase in taxes. Until contracts are negotiated and new budgets are formed, actual data is unavailable.

STAFFING

What happens to staffing if a town withdraws?

Staff that choose to remain with the cooperative shall:

- Maintain their current contract
- Maintain all contractual rights as outlined in CBA

Staff seeking employment in new district should:

- Apply to be hired by the new district
- Resign from the current cooperative
- "Successor employer" honors the existing CBA

HIGH SCHOOL

What are the high school options for withdrawing towns?

As outlined in the withdrawal plans, these decisions will be negotiated and made by the newly elected school board within the withdrawing town after the vote.

Who owns the high school if Langdon withdraws?

As outlined in Langdon's withdrawal plan, the high school would remain a part of the Fall Mountain Cooperative.

If my child is currently enrolled, can they finish their education at Fall Mountain?

As outlined in the withdrawal plans, these decisions will be negotiated and made by the newly elected school board within the withdrawing town after the vote.

How will a withdrawal affect the high school sports programs?

Sports programming is contingent on participation. This will be evaluated based on enrollment and student interest.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Will students still have access to special education services and supports?

Yes. Students should have access to services and support as required by federal law.

What will happen to our specialized programs currently located in the withdrawing schools?

All specialized programs are district programs and will remain with the Fall Mountain Regional School District.

How will withdrawal impact our students with special education needs attending out-of-district placements?

Withdrawing district(s) will be responsible for the education and funding of out of district placements.

This information is provided by the SAU Administration solely for informational purposes. Copies of the Langdon and Walpole Withdrawal Plans are available at <https://www.sau60.org/page/withdrawal-committee>. The SAU Administration takes no position on the pending withdrawal articles.

