

OPERATIONAL PLANNING ANALYSIS

Prepared for Kearsarge Regional School District

September 2026

HANOVER RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Kearsarge Regional School District (Kearsarge) is seeking a quantitative operational planning analysis that examines key data related to enrollment, staffing, facilities, student services, and resource allocation. This analysis provides district leaders with a comprehensive understanding of current conditions and operational realities, helping identify opportunities, constraints, and tradeoffs associated with potential future scenarios. Findings will be designed to inform district planning and contribute to transparent communication with stakeholders regarding the operational impacts of potential decisions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How are enrollment, staffing, facilities, and resources currently allocated across the district, and what patterns emerge regarding operational efficiency and service delivery?
- What are the current costs associated with current facilities, with regards to staffing, transportation, and resource utilization?

REPORT OUTLINE

- **Section I: Data and Methodology** describes the data provided by Kearsarge and the methodology used by Hanover in these analyses.
- **Section II: Descriptive Analysis** describes trends in enrollment, facilities, and staffing data as well as the current costs of facilities and staffing.
- **Section III: Appendix** presents additional tables referenced in Section II which provide more detailed data at the building level.

KEY FINDINGS

District enrollment has steadily declined over the years, with building-level trends revealing uneven shifts that affect operational planning and service delivery.

- Total enrollment declined steadily from 1,882 students in 2022 to 1,660 in 2026. However, this districtwide decline masks important building-level differences, including notable enrollment declines at the high school, KRES – New London, and Simonds, as well as smaller declines at the middle school, Sutton Central, and KRES – Bradford.
  - These enrollment patterns suggest that capacity, staffing, and resource-use decisions may need to be evaluated at the building level rather than only through districtwide totals.
  - Student-to-teacher ratios declined from 8.8 in 2022 to 8.1 in 2026, indicating that staffing levels have not declined in proportion to enrollment.
  - Because ratios and staffing changes vary across buildings, the district's operational realities include both systemwide staffing stability and localized mismatches between enrollment trends and staffing allocations.

Staffing and spending patterns indicate that personnel costs are a central driver of current operations, while staffing allocations vary by building and position type.

- Overall staff counts declined from 2022 to 2023 before increasing to 380 staff in 2026, while teacher counts decreased from 214 to 204 teachers over the same period. Paraeducator counts in 2026 were slightly above 2022 levels after experiencing fluctuations, administrative assistant counts remained largely stable, facilities staffing declined slightly overall with small increases since 2024, and SAU staffing increased sharply between 2025 and 2026.

Facilities' capacity and real estate value differ considerably across the district, creating distinct operational constraints and tradeoffs among buildings.

- The high school and middle school have the greatest classroom and assembly capacity, while elementary facilities vary substantially: KRES – New London has the most classrooms and highest estimated real estate value among elementary buildings, Simonds has the largest elementary cafeteria capacity, and Sutton Central has the fewest classrooms, no auditorium, the smallest cafeteria, and the lowest elementary real estate value.
- These differences suggest that facilities decisions should consider not only enrollment counts, but also physical capacity, program needs, and the relative costs of operating smaller buildings.

Operating costs have increased across the district, with per-pupil spending patterns highlighting the financial implications of enrollment shifts and building-level scale.

- Total wages and benefits increased from approximately $32 million in 2022 to $36 million in 2026, and staff spending per pupil rose from nearly $17,000 per pupil to nearly $22,000. Maintenance spending also increased from $4.1 million in 2022 to $6.1 million in 2025, declining to $5.3 million in 2026, with nearly all buildings experiencing increases.
- Per-pupil costs are highest at smaller elementary buildings such as Sutton Central and Simonds, suggesting that current facility and staffing configurations create different cost pressures depending on school size and utilization.

SECTION I: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

DATA OVERVIEW

To support the analysis, Kearsarge provided Hanover with data on student demographics and enrollment, special education rosters, facilities information, staff information, wages and benefits expenditure, and maintenance costs. Figure 1.1 summarizes these data sets and the key variables that Hanover extracted from each file for the analysis.

Figure 1.1: Summary of Data Sets

DATA SET	SCHOOL YEARS	KEY VARIABLES	
Student Enrollment and Demographics	2021-22 to 2025-26	▪ Enrollment School	▪ Enrollment Dates
Special Ed District Rosters	2022-23 to 2025-26	▪ Special Education Participation	
Facilities Data 2026	2025-26	▪ Number of Classrooms ▪ Real Estate Value	▪ Auditorium Capacity ▪ Cafeteria Capacity
Staff Data	2021-22 to 2025-26	▪ Staff Position Code	▪ FTE Status ▪ Salary
Wages Benefits Only General Fund	2021-2022 to 2025-26	▪ Wages and Benefits Spending	
Maintenance Summary	2021-22 to 2025-26	▪ Maintenance Spending	

METHODOLOGY

Given the scope and availability of the data, Hanover completed this analysis using descriptive methods, calculating totals and averages addressing the research questions around enrollment, staffing, facilities, and resources in the district as well as the cost associated with district operations.

Many measures are simple sums of values computed at the district level as well as at the building level. Below is a table of the measures used in this report along with a description of how these were calculated. All measures are calculated at both the district level and building level when possible. Please note the language surrounding calculations involving staff counts are provided with FTE (full-time equivalents) for staff listings. These values were used to weigh staff numbers appropriately. For example, a teacher who is listed as .8 FTE will be counted as 8/10th of a teacher compared to a teacher who is 1.0 FTE, counted as 1 full teacher or staff member.

Figure 1.2: Measures Created for Analysis

MEASURE	CALCULATION
Student Enrollment Count	Count of students enrolled.
Student-to-Teacher Ratios	Students are divided by teacher count, accounting for teacher FTE.
Proportion of Students in Special Education	Special education enrollment is divided by total student enrollment.
Staff Counts (All Staff and by Position)	FTE-weighted staff count, rounded to nearest whole number.
Facilities Measures	Facilities measures provided directly by the district.
Staff Spending (Wages and Benefits)	Sum of all staff salaries and benefits.
Staff Spending Per Pupil	Staff salaries and benefits divided by student enrollment.
Maintenance Spending	Sum of all maintenance costs.
Maintenance Spending Per Pupil	Maintenance spending is divided by student enrollment.
Salary Measures	Average, median, minimum, and maximum salaries, weighted by inverse FTE.

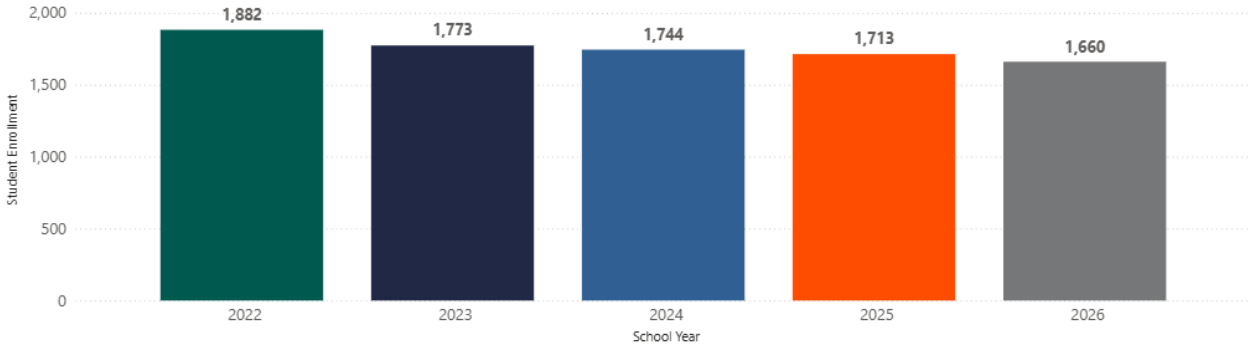
SECTION II: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

This section examines districtwide and building-level trends in enrollment, staffing, facilities, and spending. Findings emphasize current operating conditions, resource allocation patterns, and cost considerations relevant to future district planning and decision-making.

ENROLLMENT

Figure 2.1 presents district enrollment trends from 2022 through 2026. Over the years, total district enrollment declined steadily from 1,882 students in 2022 to 1,660 in 2026.

Figure 2.1: District Enrollment Overall

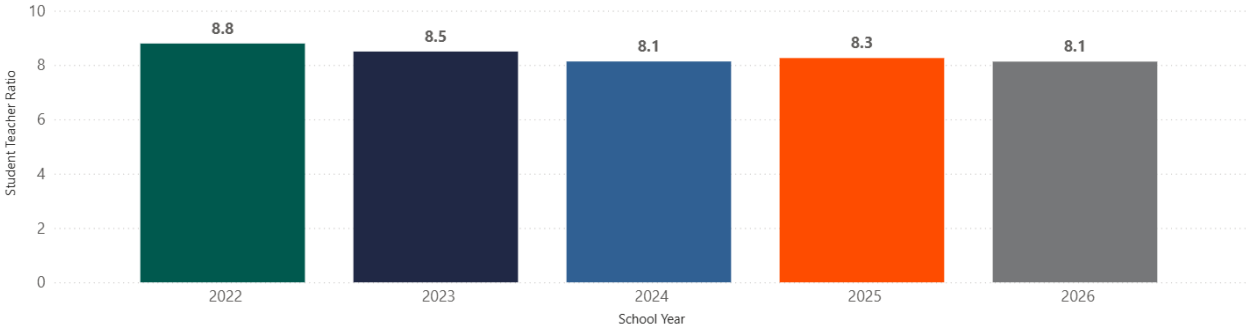


Building-level enrollment trends vary across schools (Figure 3.1 in Appendix). Declining enrollment was most notable at the high school, from 576 students in 2022 to 480 in 2026. There was also a decline at KRES – New London, from 374 students to 306, and a decline at Simonds from 176 students to 128. Smaller declines occurred at the middle school (442 students to 431), Sutton Central (90 students to 78) and KRES – Bradford (decreasing by 9 students, from 180 students to 171).

STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS

Figure 2.2 presents districtwide student-to-teacher ratios. Overall, the student-to-teacher ratio declined from 8.8 students per teacher in 2022 to 8.1 in 2026. However, this does vary by building, similar to enrollment. Figure 3.2 in the Appendix presents the student-to-teacher ratios for each school over time. The student-to-teacher ratio has increased at Sutton Central, counter to the overall pattern in the district. At the middle school, the ratio has remained steady over time. Decreases are seen at all other schools.

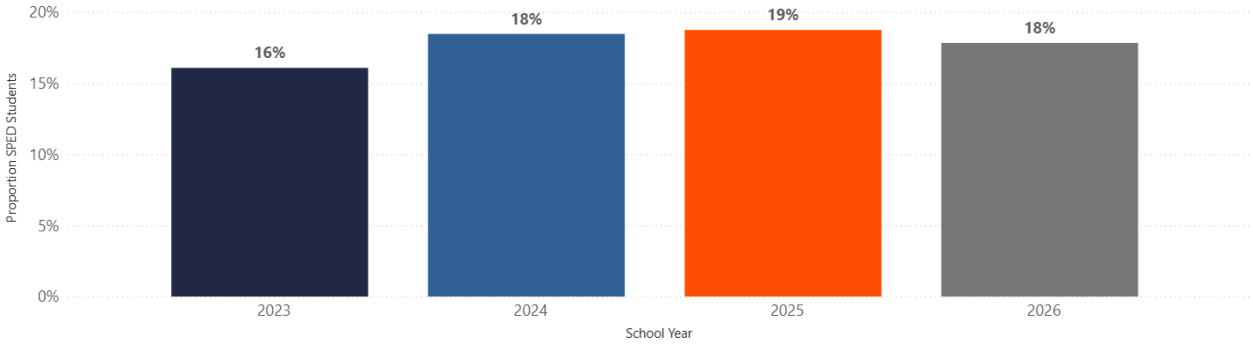
Figure 2.2: District Student-to-Teacher Ratio



STUDENTS WITH IEPS

Figure 2.3 shows that the proportion of students receiving special education services increased modestly from 16 percent in 2023 to 18 percent in 2026. In Figure 3.3 in the Appendix, however, the middle school and KRES – New London stand out for having a decrease in that period. At the middle school, the proportion fell from 16 percent to 14 percent. At New London, it fell from 23 percent to 14. However, the Pre-K at New London saw a large increase, from 6 percent in 2024 to 42 percent in 2026. The high school, Simonds, and Sutton Central saw small increases in SPED student proportions as well (between 4 to 7 percentage points). KRES –Bradford had an increase from 2023 to 2024 (17 percent to 33 percent) before falling back to near 2023 levels in 2026.

Figure 2.3: District Proportion Students in Special Education



STAFFING NUMBERS

Figure 2.4 below shows the number of full-time equivalent staff (rounded to the nearest whole number) in the district over time. Following a notable decline from 2022 to 2023 (377 FTE to 352), the number of staff increased in 2024, leveling off to 380 FTE in 2026. Figure 3.4 in the Appendix shows staffing counts by school building over time. Countering the small increase in staff overall at Kearsarge, staff levels are lower at the high school in 2026 than they were in 2022 (from 96 to 87 staff positions). The middle school also had a small decrease (78 FTE to 74) as did KRES – New London (70 FTE to 66), while Simonds had a relatively large decline (from 38 FTE to 28). Sutton Central lost a few staff positions as well (23 FTE to 19). Staff positions increased at KRES – Bradford, from 36 FTE to 44, with stability in the number of positions that are districtwide (listed as "SAU", varying from 18 FTE to 23).

Figure 2.4: All Staff Count

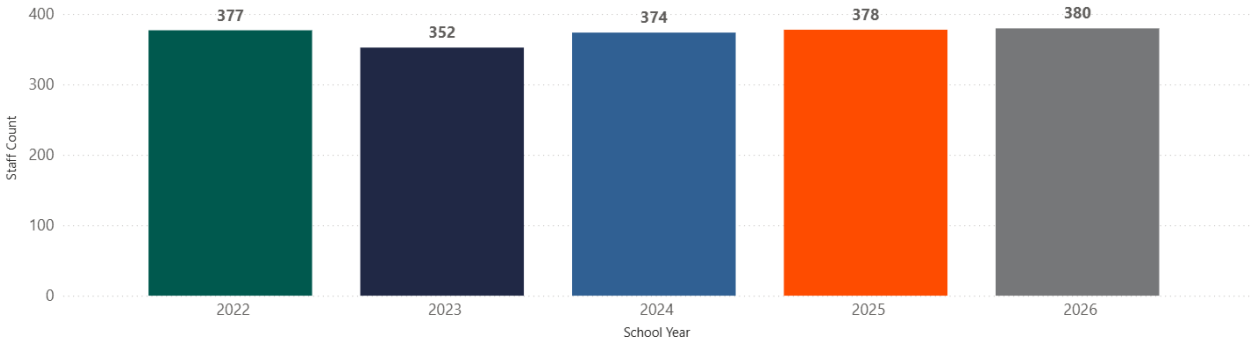
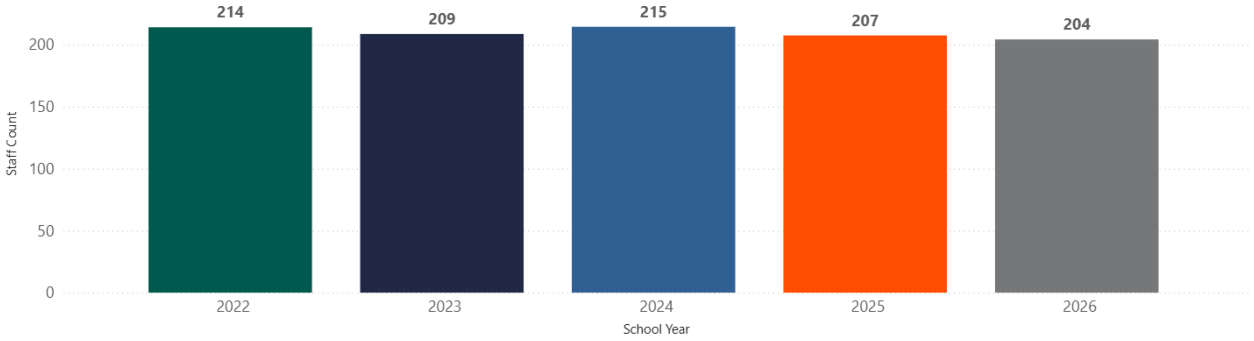


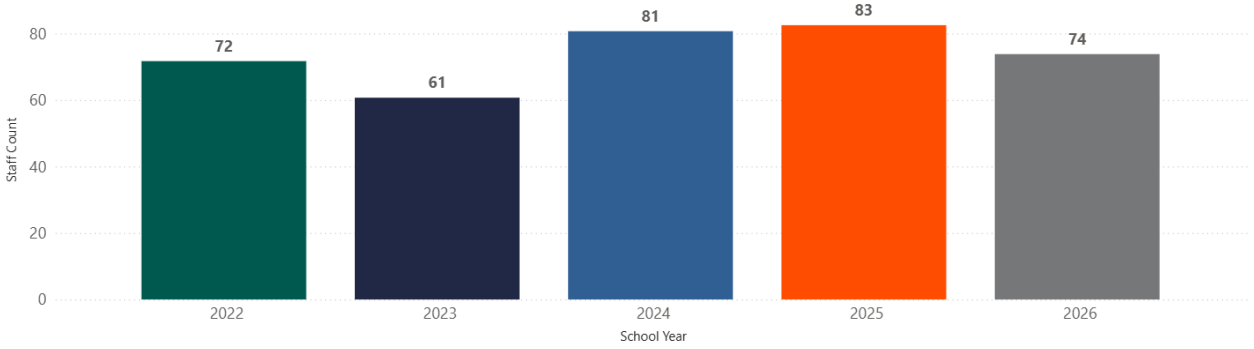
Figure 2.5 shows the variation in teacher staffing over time. The number of teachers decreased over time, from 214 in 2022 to 204 in 2026. Again, there is variation depending on the building. Figure 3.5 in the Appendix shows that the count of teachers has increased at KRES – Bradford, counter to the overall pattern in the district. At the middle school, the number has remained flat over time. Decreases are seen at the high school, KRES – New London, Simonds, and Sutton Central.

Figure 2.5: Teacher Count



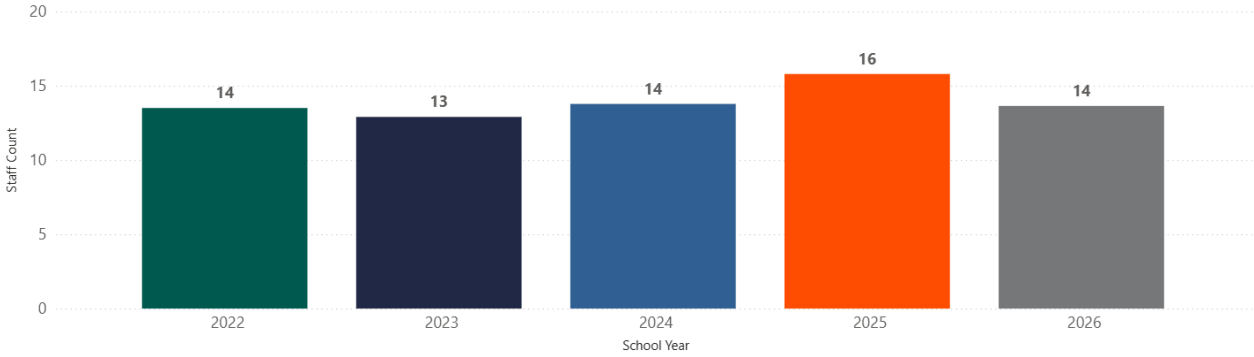
Paraeducator staffing has also fluctuated since 2022. In Figure 2.6, paraeducator counts decreased from 2022 to 2023, rising in 2024 and falling in 2026. However, this resulted in a small increase from 2022 levels (from 72 FTE to 74). While paraeducator numbers increased slightly in the district, there was variation by building, as seen in Figure 3.6 in the Appendix. Simonds and the middle school saw the largest decrease in paraeducator numbers, decreasing by 5 paraeducators each. KRES – Bradford had the greatest increase of 4 paraeducators from 2022 to 2026. While the numbers were roughly level at KRES - New London, both pre-K programs and Sutton Central.

Figure 2.6: Paraeducator Count



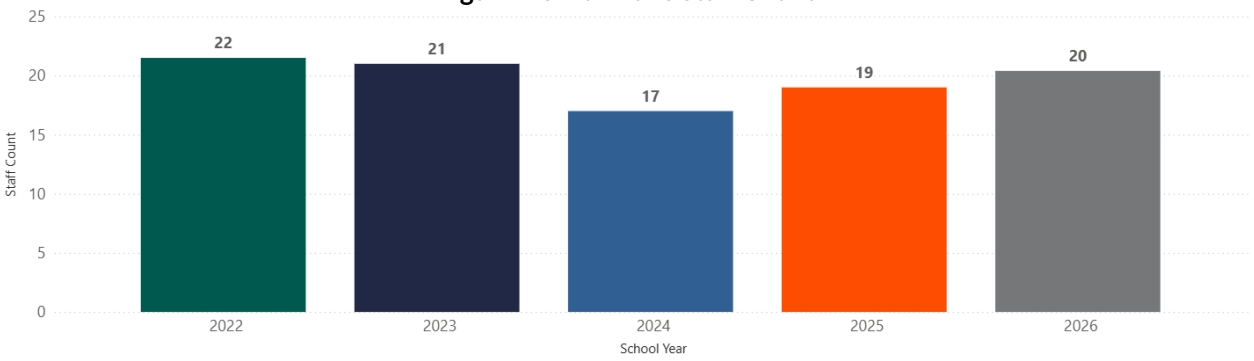
The number of administrative assistants has not substantially changed over time. In Figure 2.7, the number of administrative assistants was the same in 2026 as in 2022 (14 administrative assistants). There was an increase from 2022 to 2025 (14 administrative assistants to 16), declining back to 14 in 2026. Figure 3.7 in the Appendix shows that administrative assistant numbers remained roughly level in most locations. However, KRES – Bradford did have an increase from 1 to 2 administrative assistants, and KRES – New London also increased from 2 to 3 administrative assistants as well.

Figure 2.7: Administrative Assistant Count



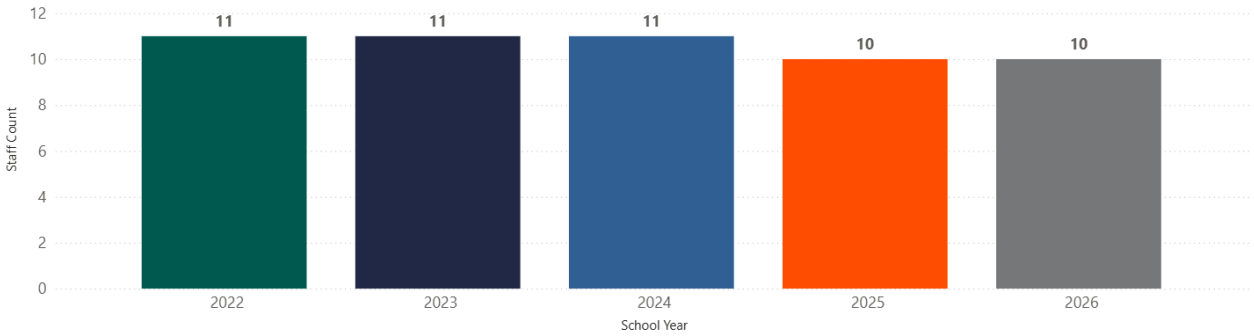
Facilities staffing fluctuated over time. Figure 2.8 shows that the number of facilities staff decreased overall between 2022 and 2026. There was a steep decrease from 2022 to 2024 (22 facilities staff to 17) with an increase through 2026 (to 20 facilities staff). Variation by building is shown in Figure 3.8 in the Appendix. At the high school, Sutton Central, and Simonds, the number of facilities staff remained roughly level. However, there was a decrease at the middle school (from 6 facilities staff to 4) and an increase at KRES – New London.

Figure 2.8: Facilities Staff Count



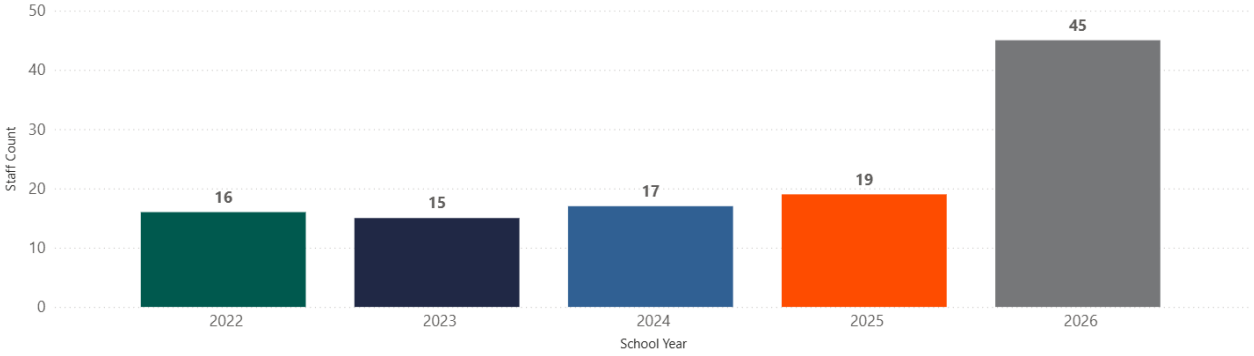
Because administration staffing varies little across schools, Figure 2.9 presents districtwide administration staffing only. Administration numbers remained level from 2022 to 2024, decreasing by only one staff member from 2022 to 2026.

Figure 2.9: Administration Count



SAU staffing is reported only at the district level because these positions are not assigned to individual schools. Figure 2.10 shows that there was a roughly level number of SAU staff from 2022 to 2025, with a large increase from 2025 to 2026 (from 19 SAU staff to 45).

Figure 2.10: SAU Staff Count



FACILITIES DATA

Figure 2.11 summarizes facility capacity and asset information across district schools and district-operated facilities, including classroom counts, auditorium capacity, cafeteria capacity, and estimated real estate value. Facilities often differ in their capacity. Behind the high school and the middle school, KRES – New London has the greatest number of classrooms (19), followed by KRES – Bradford (13) and Simonds (13). Sutton Central has the fewest classrooms of the elementary buildings (6).

Sutton Central also does not have an auditorium. Meanwhile, KRES –New London has the greatest auditorium capacity after the SAU building, the high school, and the middle school. Simonds has the greatest cafeteria capacity among elementary schools, followed by KRES – New London (160 and 144 people, respectively). Sutton Central has a small capacity cafeteria (64 people). Among the elementary schools, New London has the highest value ($9.9 million) followed by Simonds and Bradford (both around $5 to $6 million). Sutton Central has the lowest value among elementary schools ($2.5 million).

Figure 2.11: Kearsarge Facilities Data

SCHOOL / FACILITY	CLASSROOMS	AUDITORIUM CAPACITY	CAFETERIA CAPACITY	REAL ESTATE VALUE
Kearsarge Regional High School	34	650	135 seated / 250 standing	$24,855,000
Kearsarge Regional Middle School	30	900	231	$29,797,000
KRES – Bradford	13	250	128	$5,149,000
KRES – New London	19	415 concentrated / 185 sports	144	$9,978,000
Pre-K Bradford	3	N/A	N/A	$606,000
Pre-K New London	5	N/A	N/A	Included in SAU – Part of New London
SAU – Part of New London Elementary	4	1,000 standing / 332 bleachers / 467 floors	N/A	$10,302,000
Simonds	13	355 standing	160	$5,810,000
Sutton Central	6	N/A	64	$2,558,000

STAFF SPENDING DATA

Figure 2.12 below shows the total of staff wages and benefit spending for the district over time. Staff spending on wages and benefits has increased in the district over time, from 2022 to 2026, increasing from about $32 to $36 million. Figure 3.9 in the Appendix shows this spending at the building level. Spending at Simonds has grown the slowest, from $3.11 to $3.16 million, while the largest increase has taken place at KRES - Bradford and KRES - New London (both increasing about $1.2 million from 2022 to 2026). A large increase as a proportion of spending also occurred at Sutton Central (about a 25 percent increase from 2022 to 2026). Smaller increases occurred at the middle school, the high school, and for districtwide staff (around or less than a 10 percent increase).

Figure 2.12: Wages and Benefits Spending

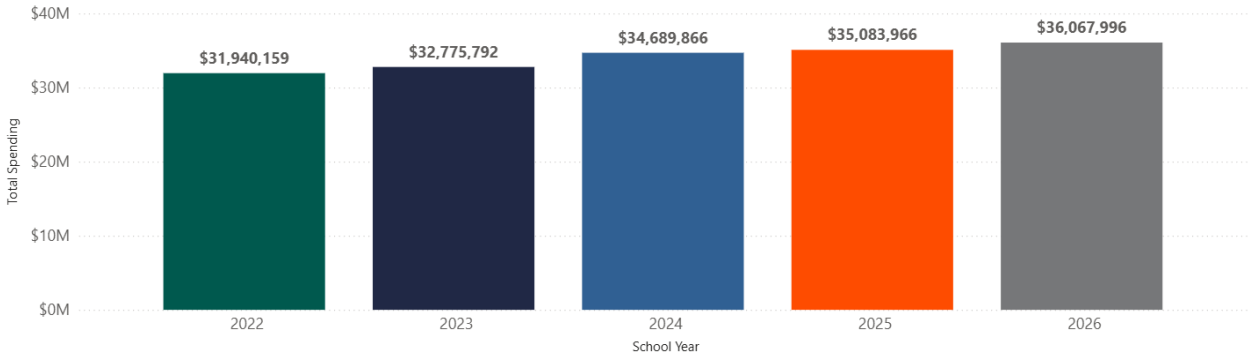
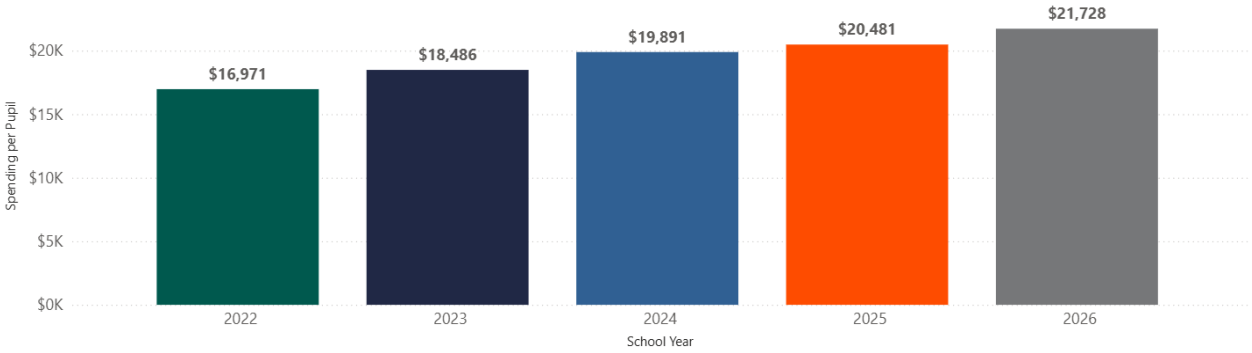


Figure 2.13 calculates this spending on a per-pupil basis. Per-pupil spending has increased substantially in the district since 2022. Among all staff, spending per pupil has increased from almost $17,000 per pupil to nearly $22,000. In the Appendix, Figure 3.10 shows that the middle school has seen a more modest increase in per-pupil spending compared to other schools, an increase from $16,249 to $17,607. All schools have increased spending per-pupil over time. The largest spending per-pupil is at Sutton Central ($28,706 per-pupil) followed by Simonds ($24,646 per-pupil). KRES – Bradford has the third highest spending ($21,647 per-pupil) while the middle school, high school, and KRES – New London have similar levels of spending per-pupil in 2026 (between $17,000 and $19,000).

Figure 2.13: Wages and Benefits Spending Per Pupil



MAINTENANCE SPENDING DATA

Figure 2.14 below shows maintenance costs overall have increased in the district, from $4.1 million in 2022 to $6.2 million in 2025, before declining to $5.4 million in 2026. In the Appendix, Figure 3.11 shows that spending on maintenance decreased in the middle school. All other schools experienced an increase in maintenance spending. The largest increase was at KRES – New London (from $571,000 to $924,000), followed by large increases at the high school and KRES – Bradford.

Figure 2.14: Maintenance Spending

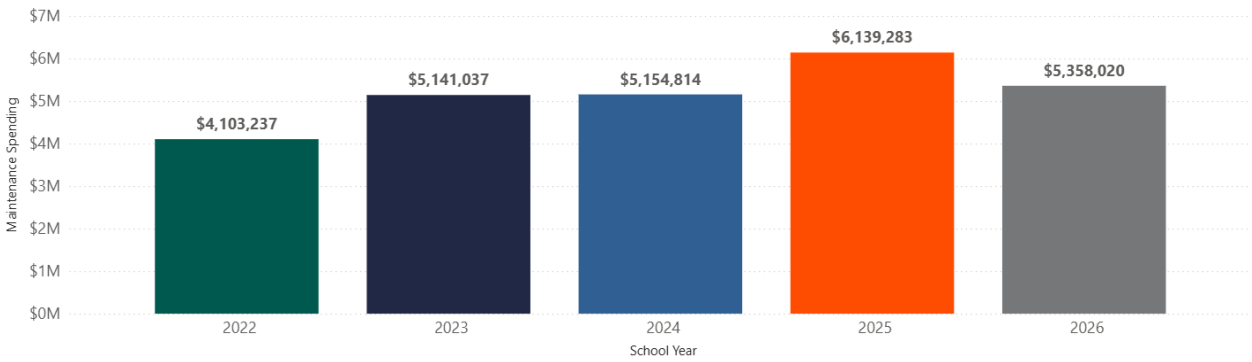
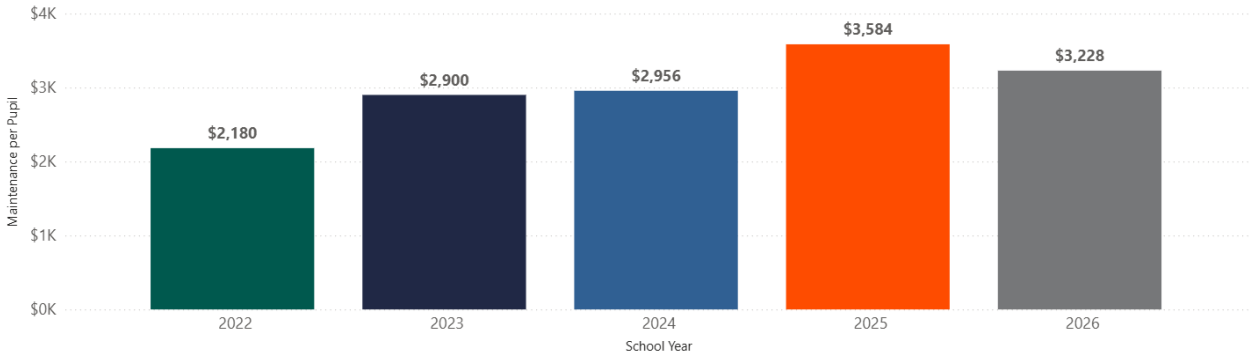


Figure 2.15 breaks down this spending in the district overall per pupil. Maintenance costs per pupil rose in the district over time. As shown in Figure 3.12 in the Appendix, these costs rose in every school except for a small decrease at the middle school. Sutton Central and Simonds had the highest per-pupil maintenance costs in 2026. The lowest per-pupil maintenance cost was at KRES – Bradford.

Figure 2.15: Maintenance Spending Per Pupil



SALARY SPREAD DATA

Figure 2.16 presents the distribution of staff salaries by building in 2026. The top line represents the maximum salary, the bottom line represents the minimum salary, and the middle line represents the median salary. The dot represents the average. In 2026, both the median and average salary were around $60,000, with wages as low as $500 and as high as $170,000. The highest salaries were found for employees who are districtwide (SAU). However, these salaries also had the largest range. Salaries were generally lower at the pre-K programs. KRES – Bradford, Sutton Central, KRES – New London had similar median salaries (between $58,000 and $62,000), while Simonds had the highest among elementaries (about $69,000). The middle and

high school ranges and medians are typically larger than those at the elementary (except for the outlier of Simonds).

Figure 2.16: Salary Data by Building

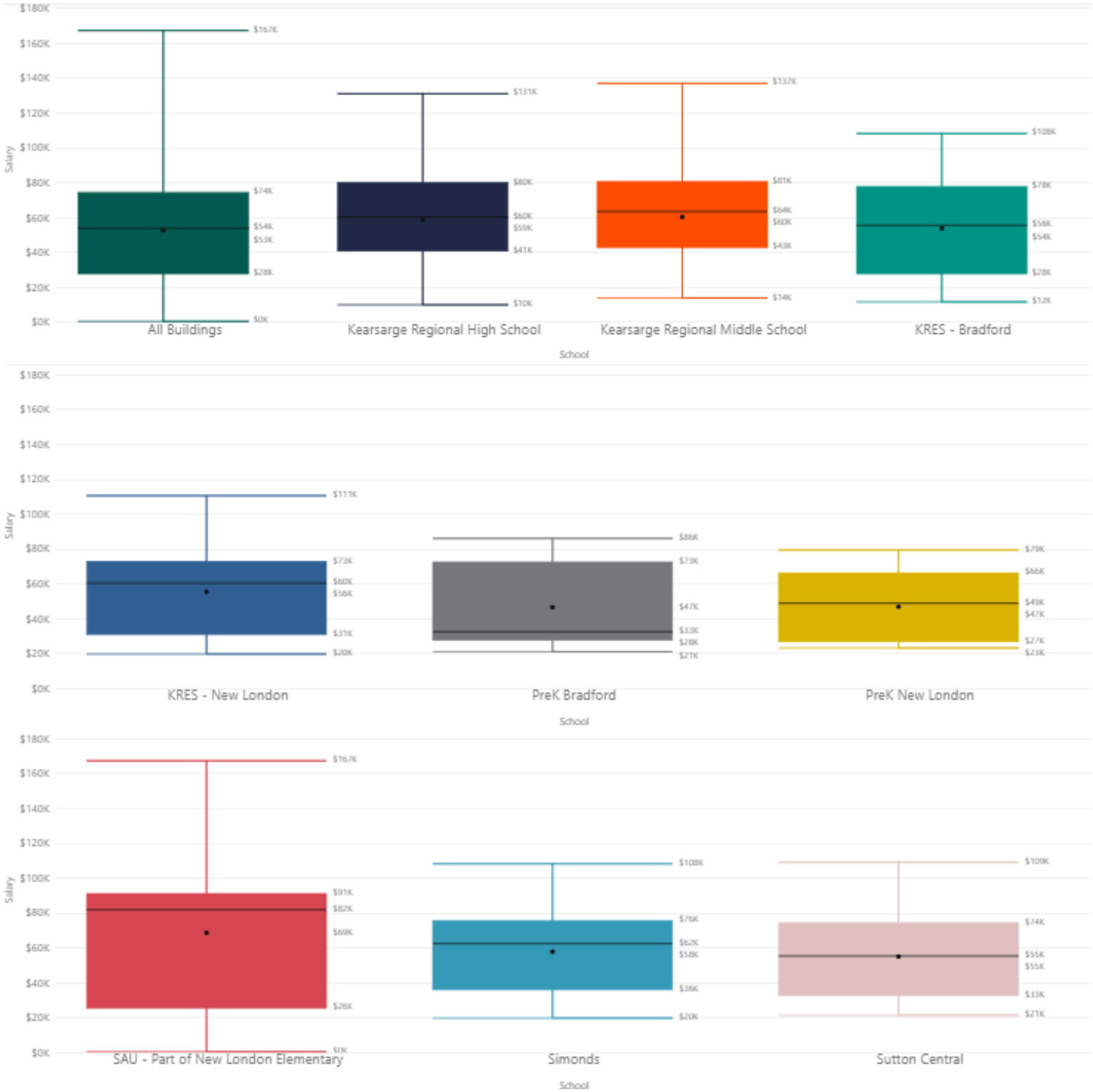
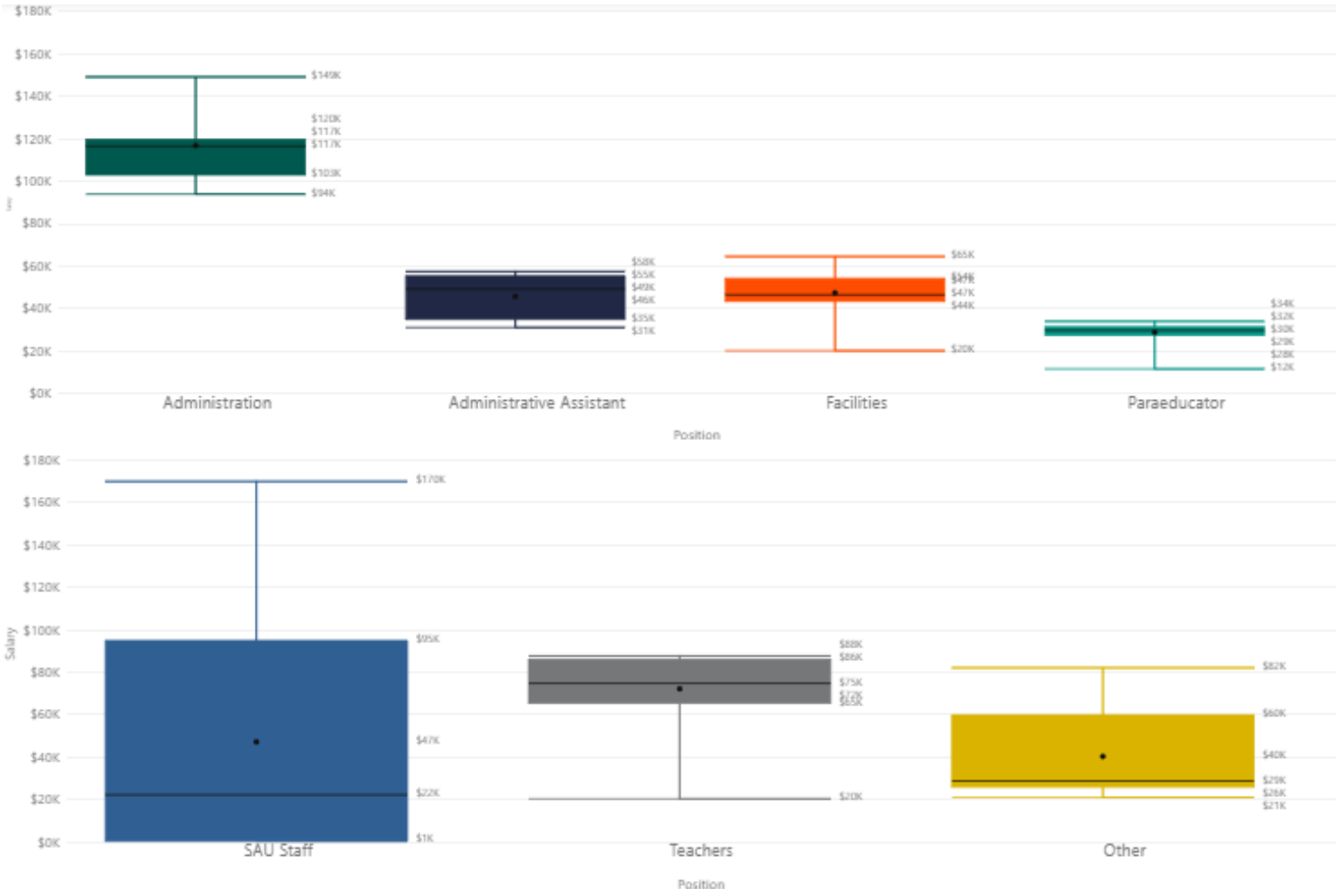


Figure 2.17 presents salary distributions by position type in 2026. Administration has the highest salary values on average, with a minimum value above the maximum of each position except for those at the district level (SAU positions). Paraeducators have the lowest average among all positions and second-lowest median salary (after SAU positions). SAU positions have a large range, having both the highest and lowest paying positions in the district. Teacher pay averages and medians are higher than every other type of position outside of administration, while pay for administrative assistants and facilities staff is roughly similar.

Figure 2.17: Salary Data by Position



SECTION III: APPENDIX

This section presents additional building-level figures referenced in Section II. These appendix figures provide more detailed information on enrollment, student-to-teacher ratios, special education enrollment proportions, staffing counts, wages and benefits spending, maintenance spending, and per-pupil cost measures.

Figure 3.1: Student Enrollment by Building

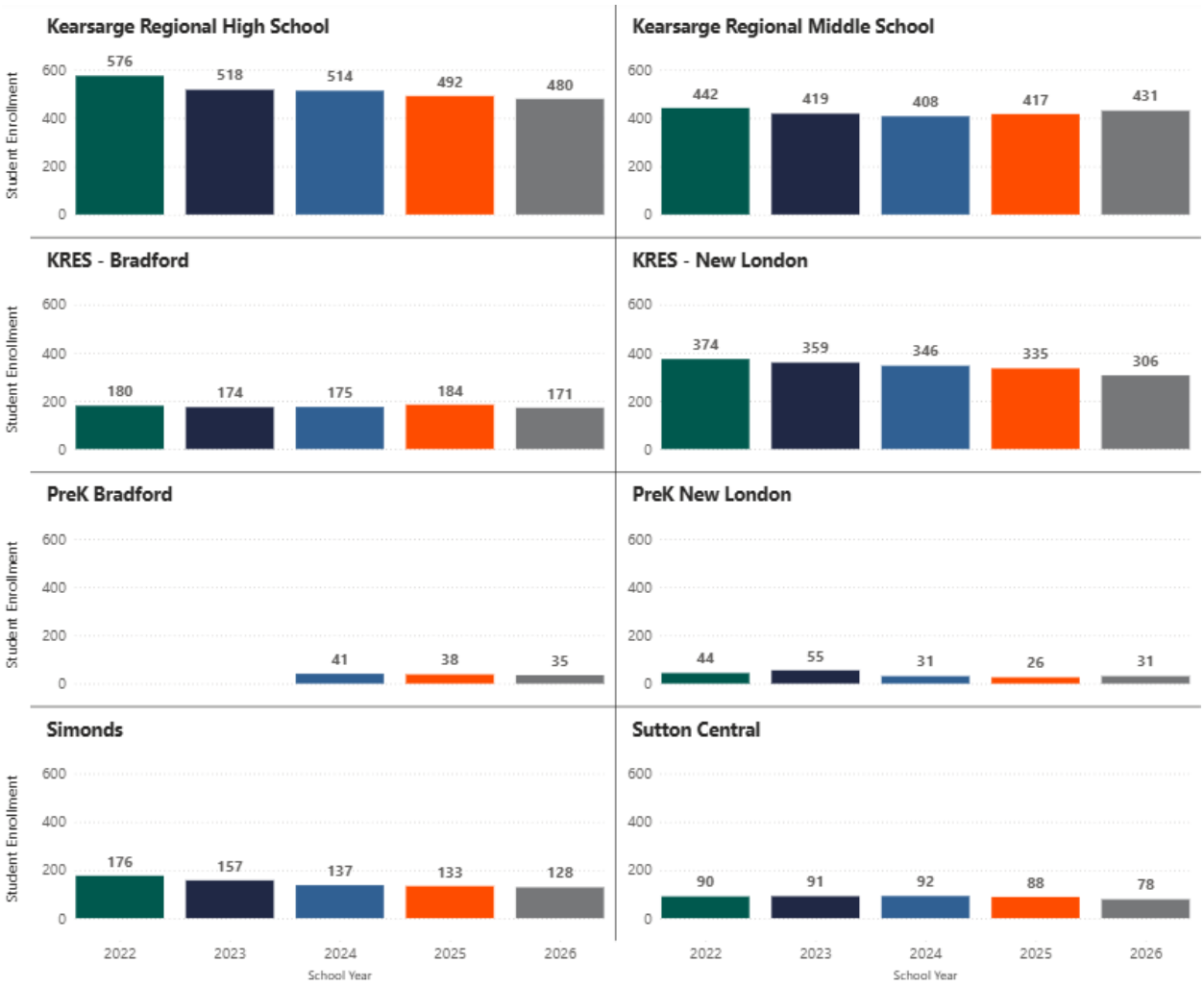


Figure 3.2: Student-to-Teacher Ratio by Building

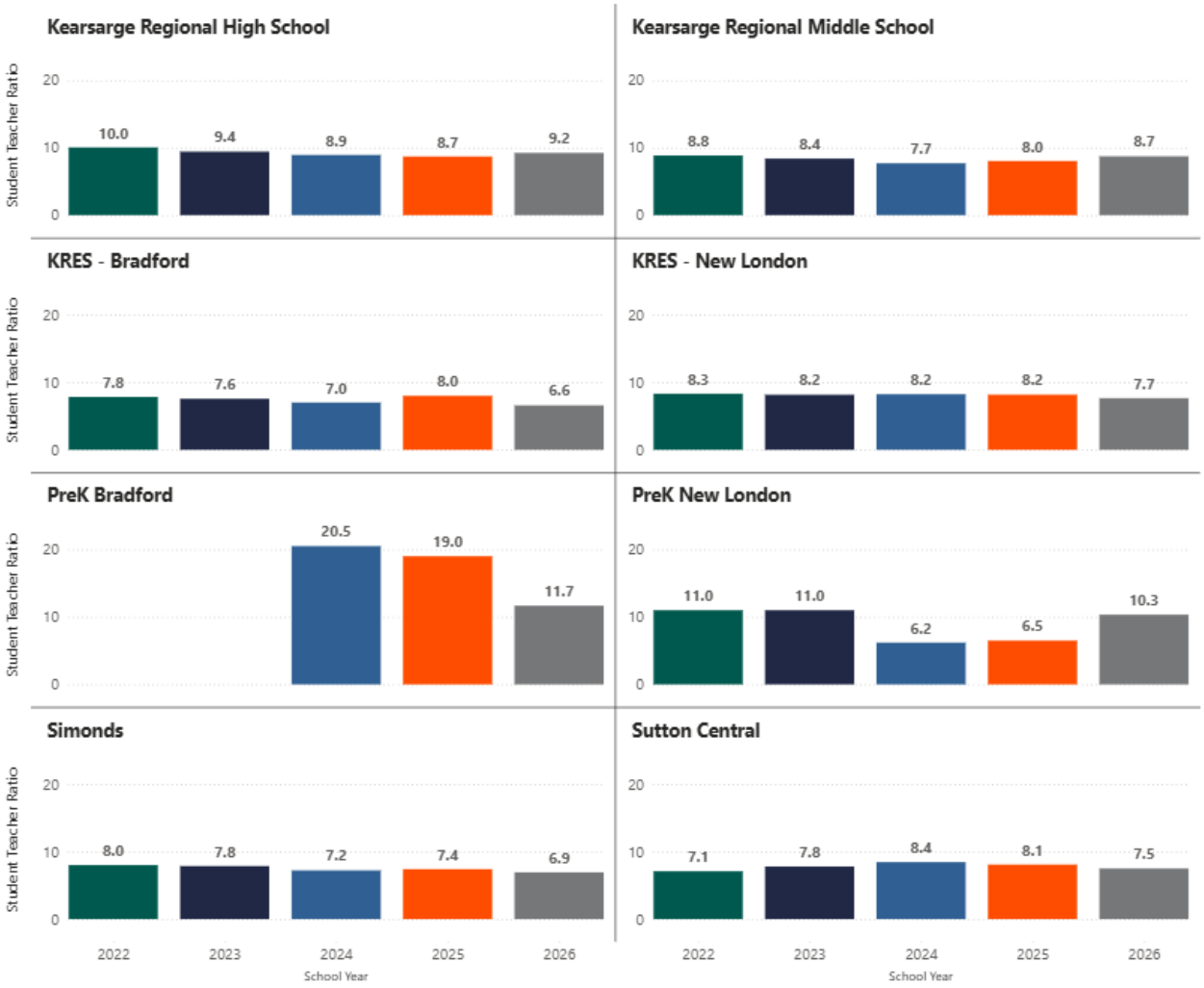


Figure 3.3: SPED Proportion by Building

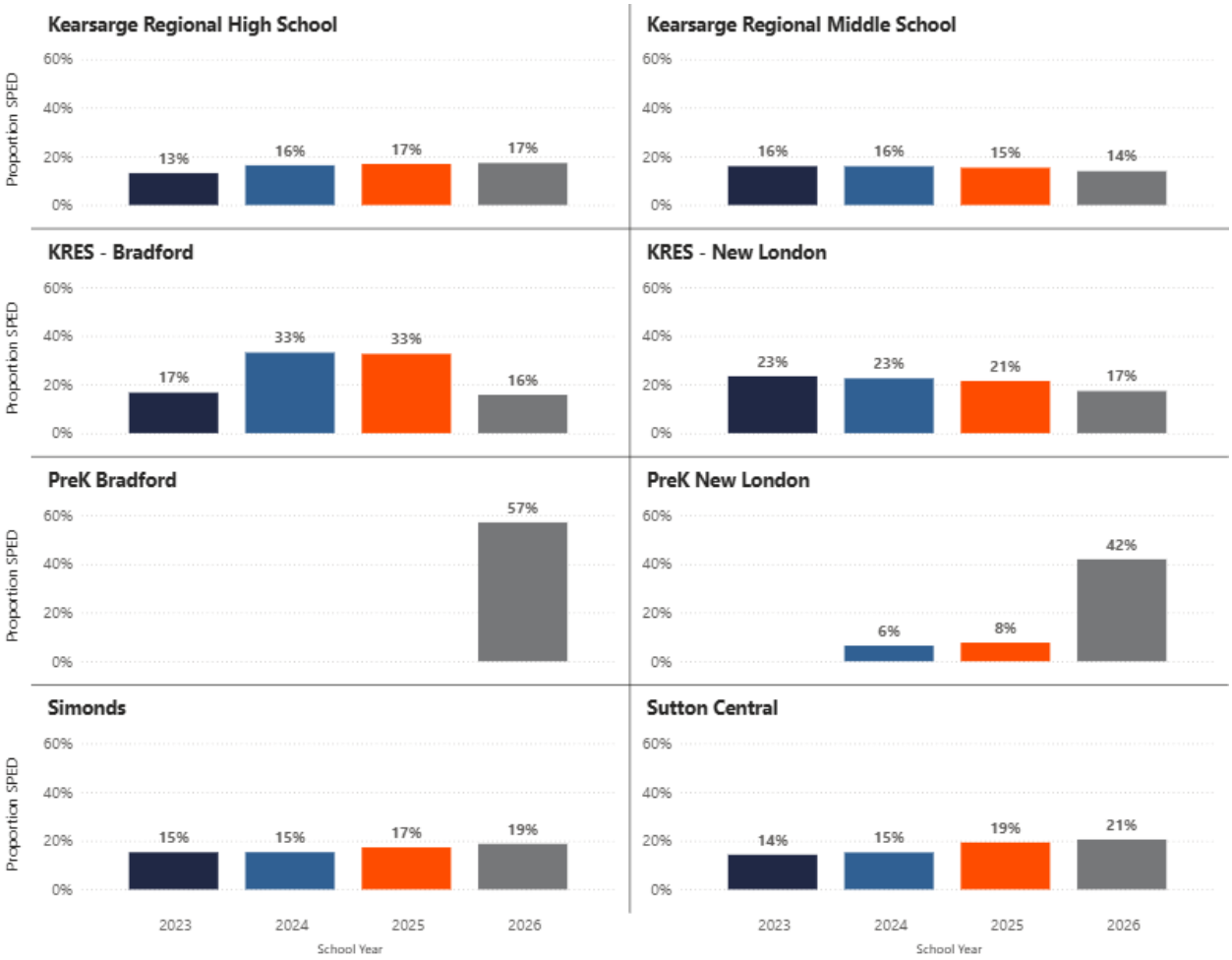


Figure 3.4: Staff Count by Building

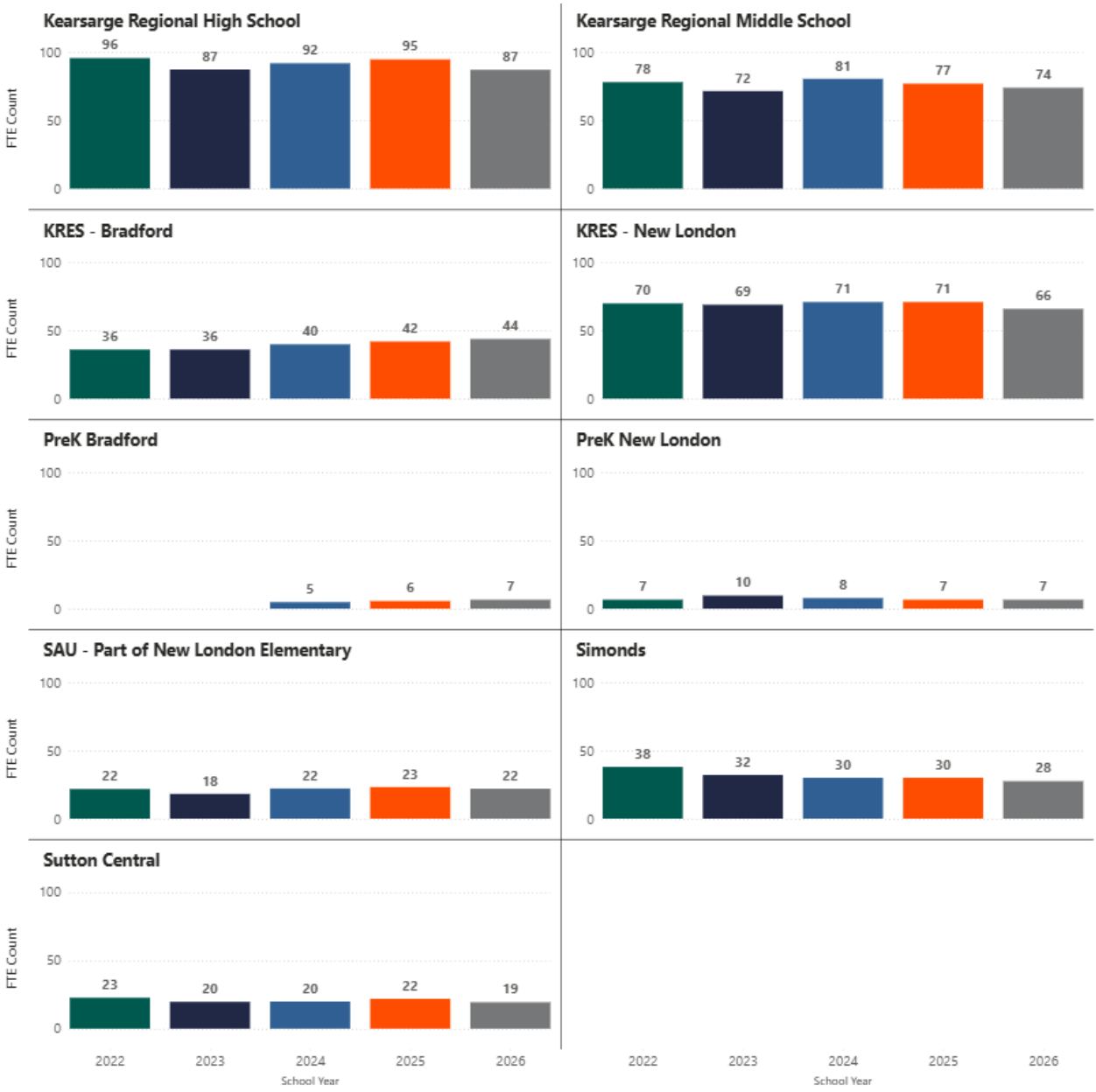


Figure 3.5: Teacher Count by Building

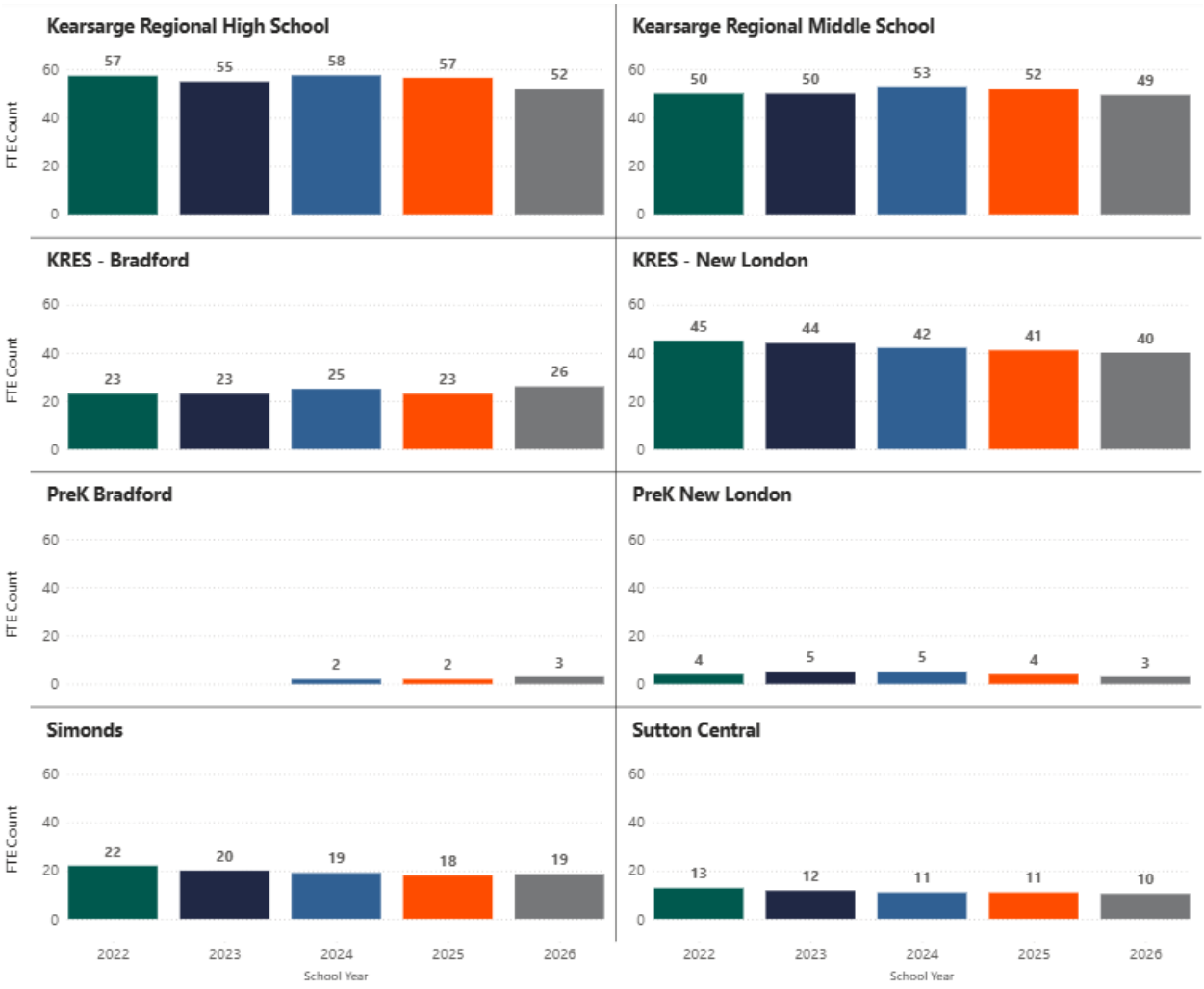


Figure 3.6: Paraeducator Count by Building

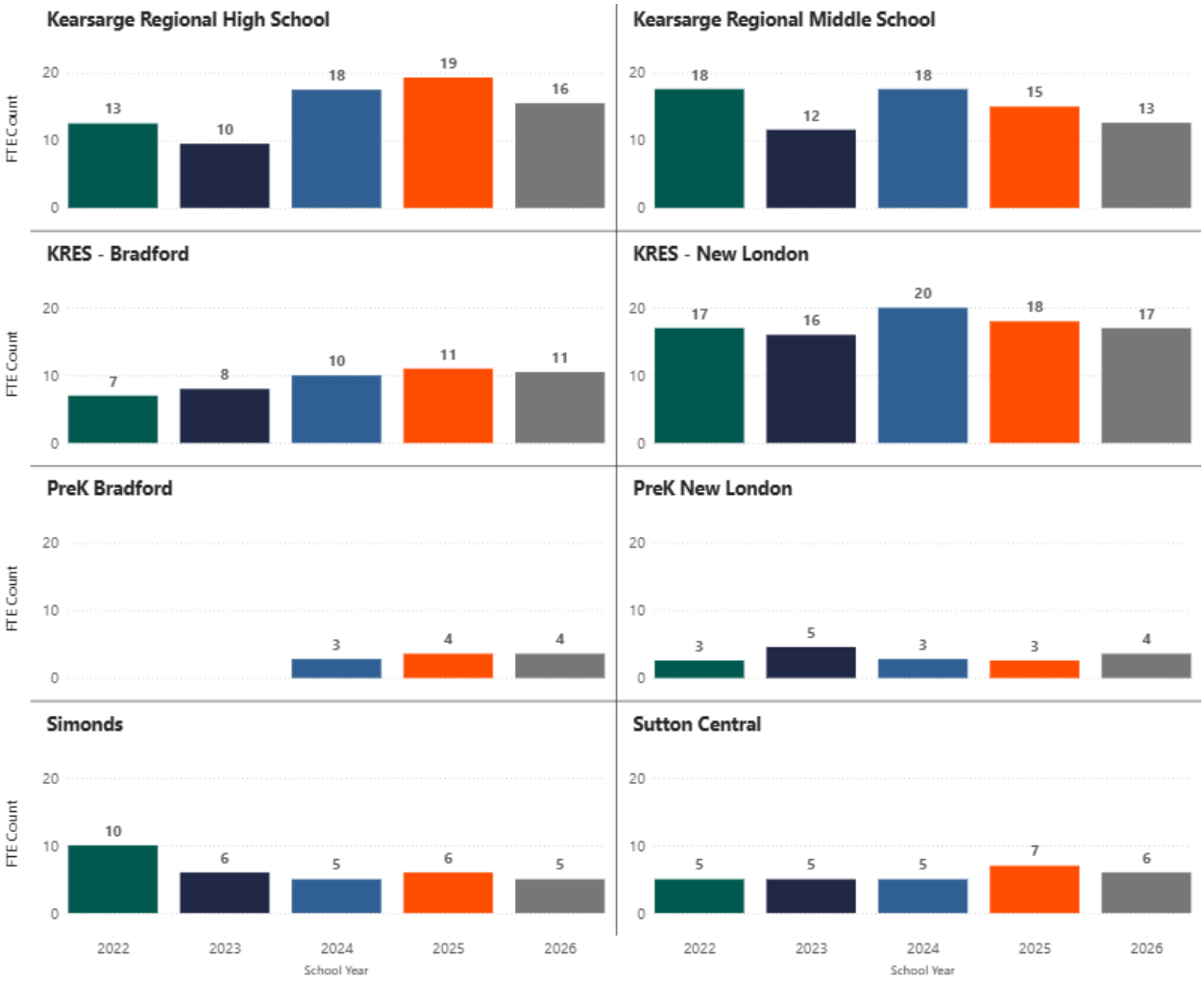


Figure 3.7: Administrative Assistant Count by Building



Figure 3.8: Facilities Staff Count by Building



Figure 3.9: Wages and Benefits Spending by Building

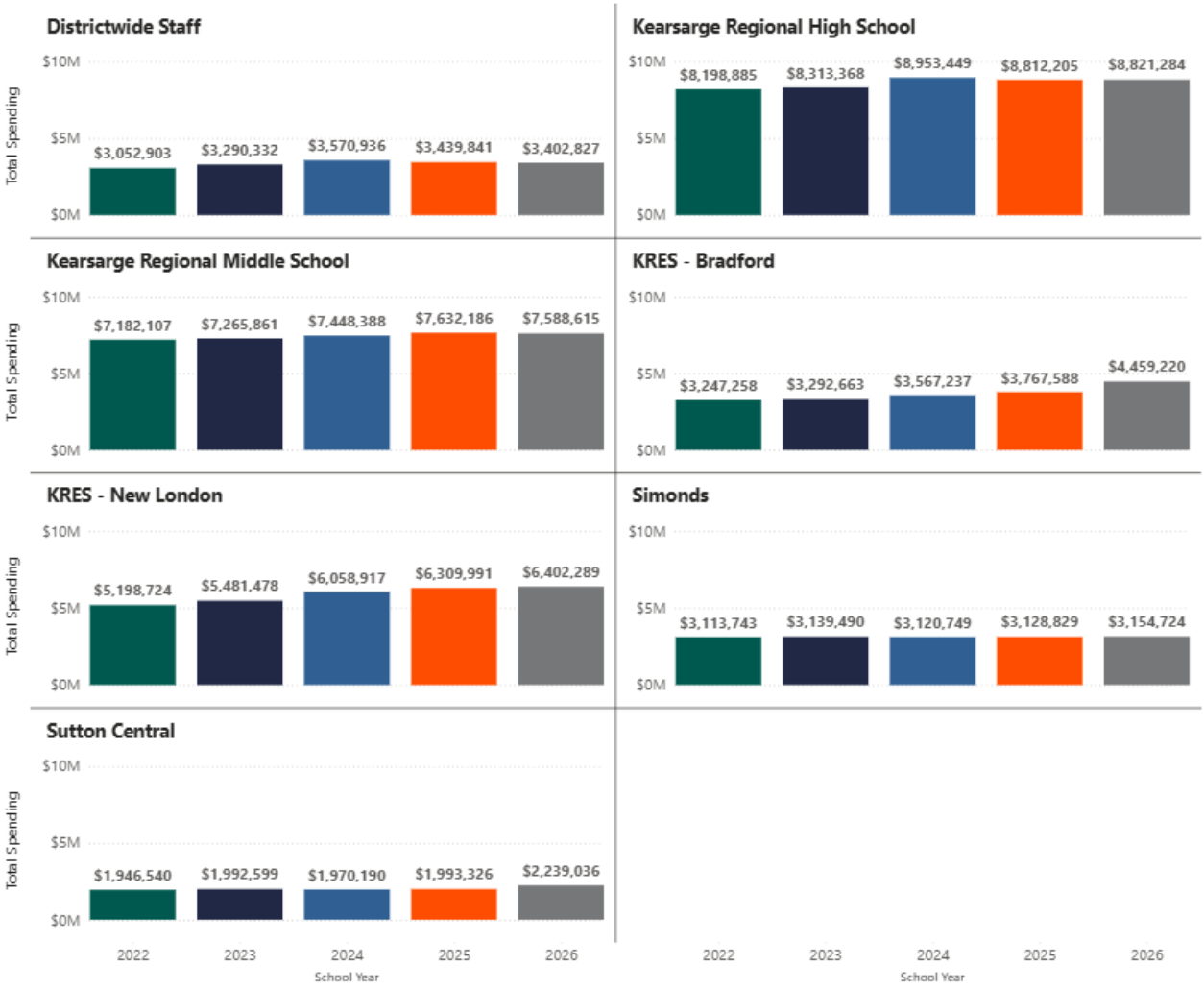


Figure 3.10: Wages and Benefits Spending Per Pupil by Building

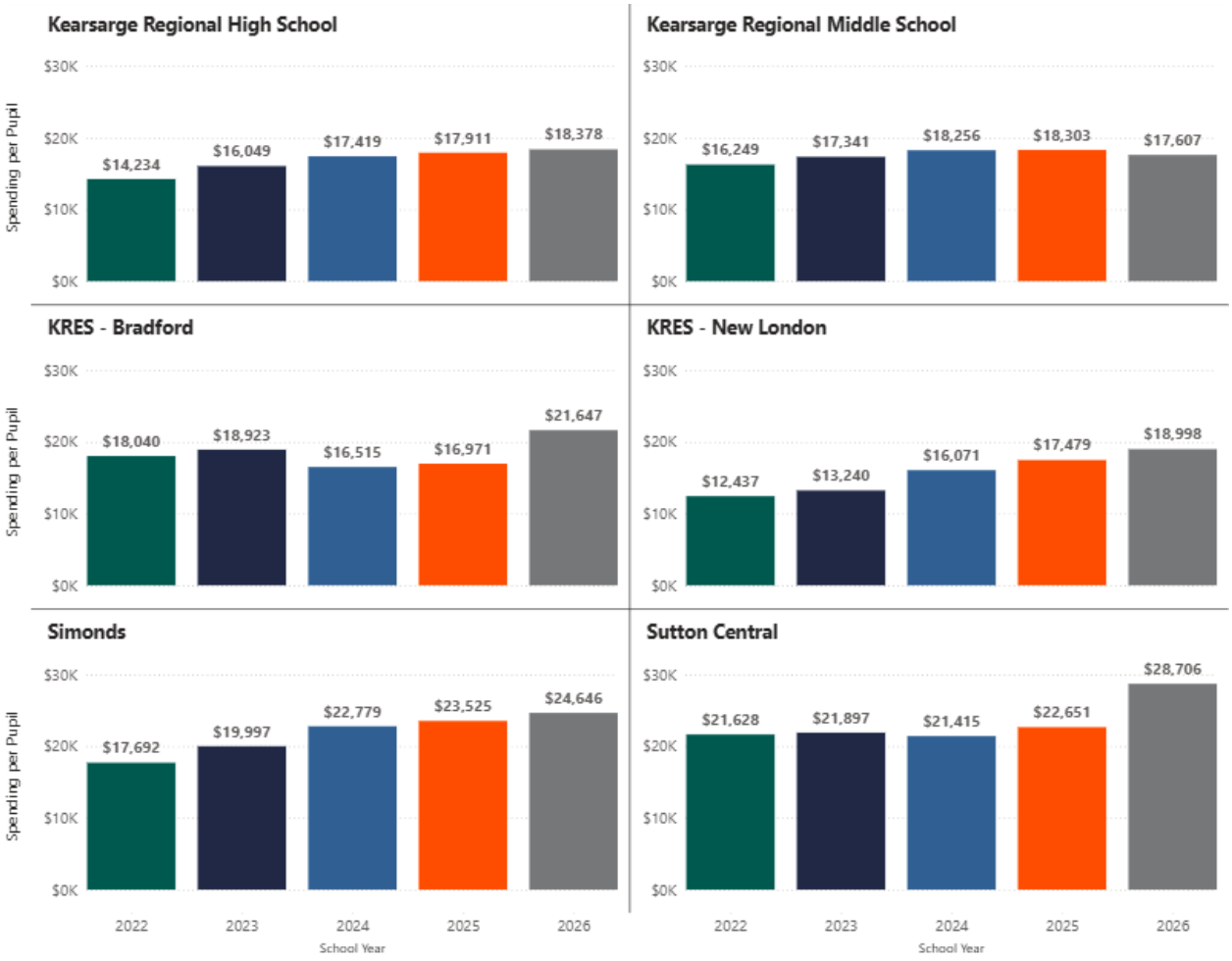


Figure 3.11: Maintenance Spending by Building

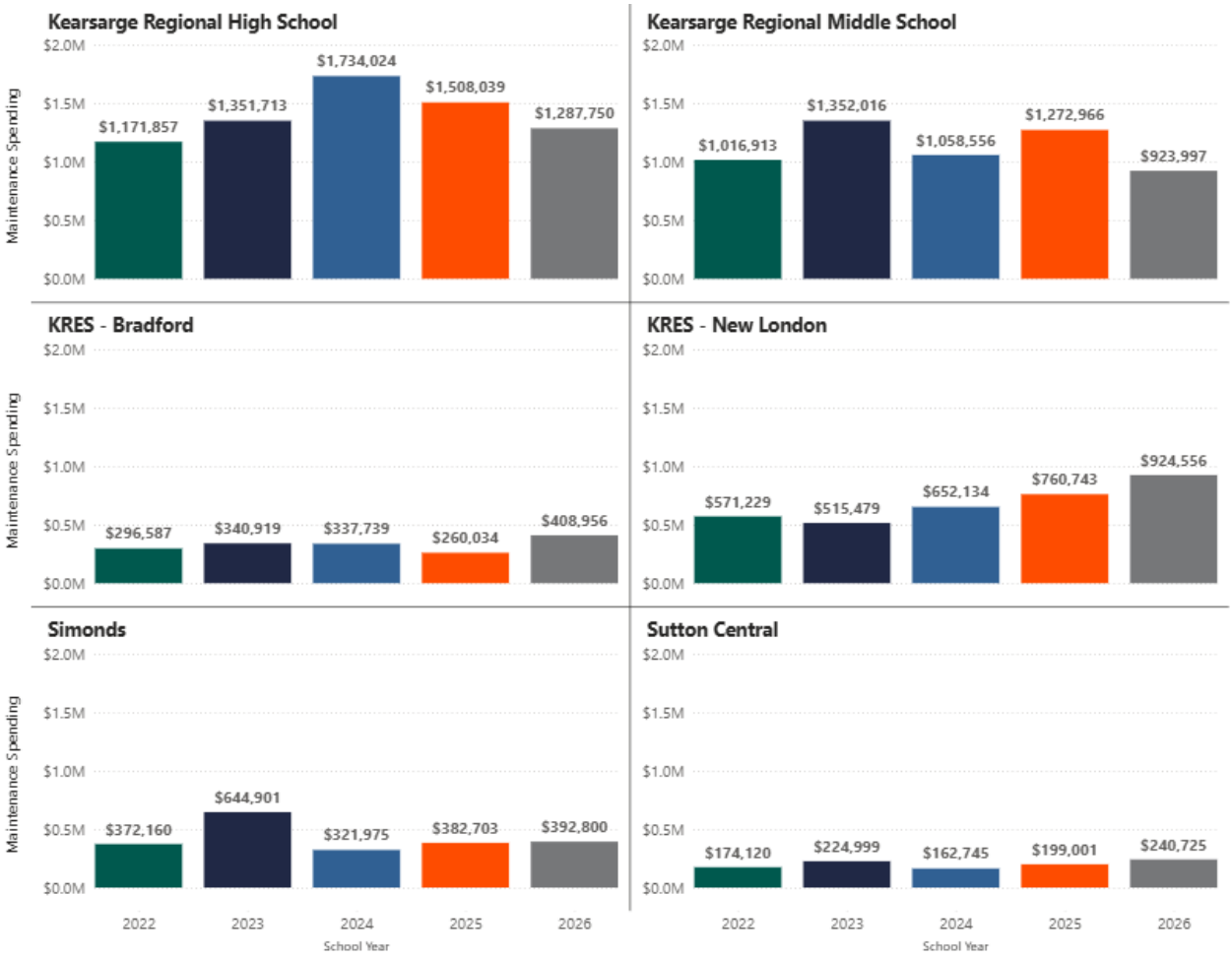
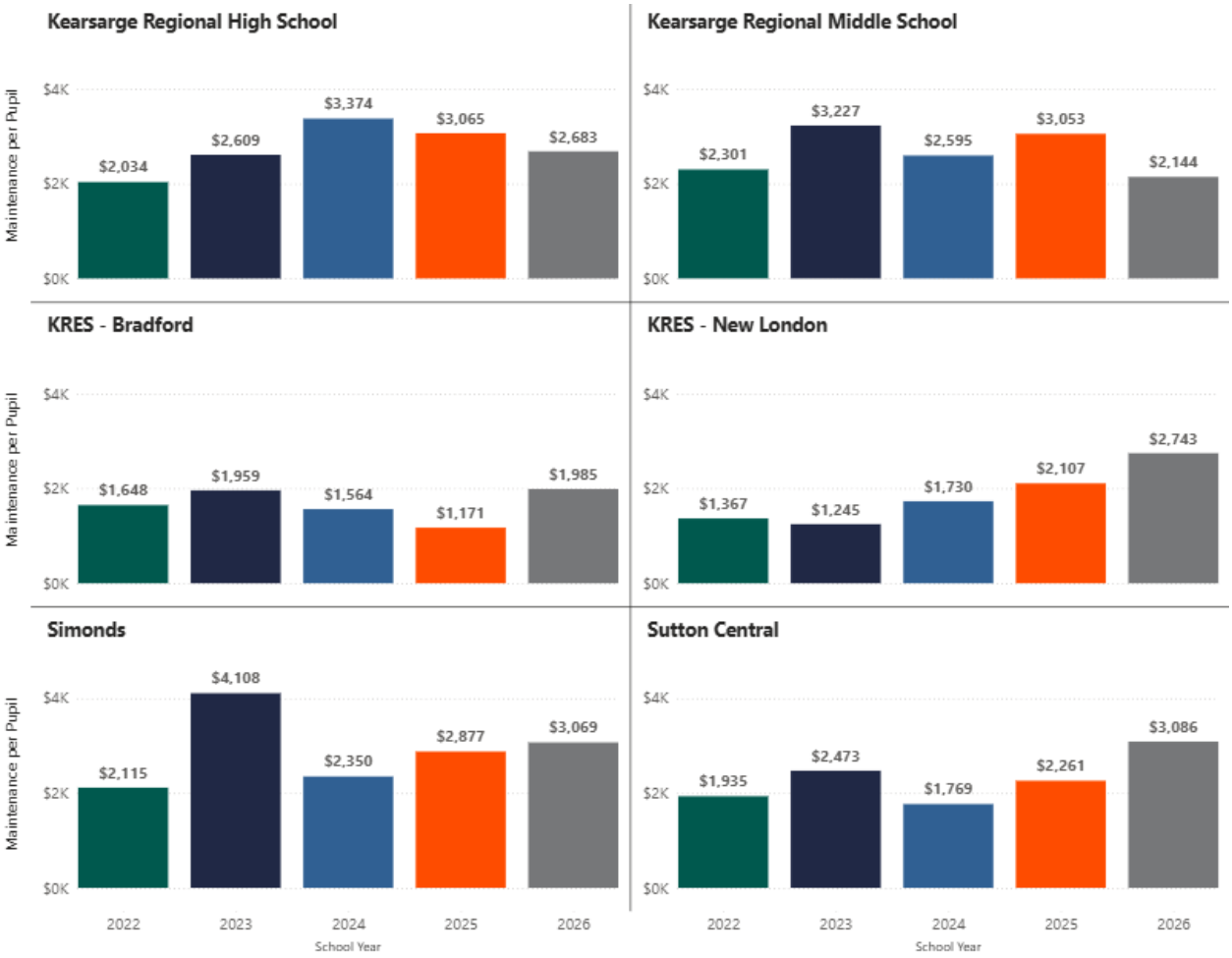


Figure 3.12: Maintenance Spending Per Pupil by Building



ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH

Hanover Research provides high-quality, custom research and analytics through a cost-effective model that helps clients make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

OUR SOLUTIONS

ACADEMIC SOLUTIONS

- **College & Career Readiness:**
  Support on-time student graduation and prepare all students for post-secondary education and careers.
- **Program Evaluation:**
  Measure program impact to support informed, evidence-based investments in resources that maximize student outcomes and manage costs.
- **Safe & Supportive Environments:**
  Create an environment that supports the academic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of students, parents, and staff through a comprehensive annual assessment of climate and culture.

ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

- **Family and Community Engagement:**
  Expand and strengthen family and community relationships and identify community partnerships that support student success.
- **Talent Recruitment, Retention & Development:**
  Attract and retain the best staff through an enhanced understanding of the teacher experience and staff professional development needs.
- **Operations Improvement:**
  Proactively address changes in demographics, enrollment levels, and community expectations in your budgeting decisions.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION

Build a high-performing administration that is the first choice for students, parents, and staff.

OUR BENEFITS



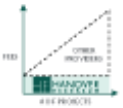
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