FINAL BUDGET PRESENTATION

2026-2027

VERNON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 30, 2026

The fiscal representation of our community's priorities.

EVENY DE MENDEZ
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

RAYMOND SLAMB
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

A Commitment to Every Vernon Student

Our community defined the priorities.
This budget funds them.

A budget examined with care, built with purpose,
and grounded in those priorities.

Sound stewardship of public resources
and an unwavering commitment to Vernon's children.

THE COMMITTEE BEHIND THIS BUDGET

Finance & Buildings and Grounds Committee - Vernon Board of Education

BOARD GOAL 2026-2027: FINANCE & FACILITIES

The Finance & Buildings and Grounds committee is committed to proactive fiscal and facilities planning — assessing long-term capital needs, ensuring alignment with educational priorities, and exploring all options to address the future of Vernon's buildings.

BOARD MEMBERS

John Kraus
Commitee Chair | Vice President BOE

Charles Cimaglia
Board Member

Brian Fisher
Board Member

Ray Zimmerman
Board Member

Jennifer Pellet
Board President

DISTRICT STAFF

Raymond Slamb
Business Administrator

Eveny de Mendez
Superintendent of Schools

Joseph Van Kirk
Director of Buildings & Grounds

This budget reflects the collaborative work of board oversight, administrative leadership, and community priorities.

COMMUNICATING OUR BUDGET PROCESS

Multiple channels. Consistent outreach. Open to the public.

District Website

Launched: February 2026

- Budget page published with FAQs, Budget Calendar, Common Budget Terms and Board Meeting Schedule

Budget Updates Published

Feb 19 | Mar 5 | Mar 11
Mar 18 | Mar 26 | Mar 30

State Aid Update Feb 19th

- Delay to Governor's Address and State Aid communicated, and possible date change noted

Parent Outreach

March 5th Community Letter

- 2026-2027 Budget Planning & Community Resources letter sent to the Vernon school community with key dates and resources

Updated Preliminary Budget Presentation Date

- March 5th - Parent letter sent and posted to the Budget Update Website with new Preliminary Budget Presentation date of March 26th
- March 6th - Website Popup
- Updates and legal notices shared across district and social media

Public Notice

March 6th Legal Notice

- Legal ad for the March 26th meeting change posted to district website News and Legal Notices sections and district social media pages.

March 11th NJ Herald

- Legal ad with the meeting change published in the NJ Herald.

April 24th NJ Herald

- Budget updates and legal notices published in NJ Herald and posted to District Legal Notice website

This budget reflects the collaborative work of board oversight, administrative leadership, and community priorities.

THE STUDENTS WE SERVE: 3,102

PreK through 12. 6 Schools.

The students behind every decision in this budget.

GRADE SPAN	SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT
PREK	Walnut Ridge	340
K-1	Cedar Mountain	405
2-3	Rolling Hills	420
4-5	Lounsberry Hollow	425
6-8	Glen Meadow	628
9-12	Vernon Township High School	886

+209 more Vernon students across PreK-12 this year. Preschool expansion bringing more families into our schools earlier.

266
Teachers

373
Staff

13
Instructional Leaders

State-reported student-to-staff ratio: 12:1.
This reflects all instructional settings including specialized classrooms legally capped at 8 students.

On average, our general education class sizes range from ~21 to 31.

CLASS SIZES

Where We Are, What This Budget Does, Where We're Headed

GRADE	CURRENT	GOAL	THIS BUDGET
Preschool	15 (state cap) ↓ State cap ends here	15	✓
K	21	18*	19
1-3	21	up to 21	✓
4-5	21-24	up to 23	*Future budget priority*
Core MS/HS classes	up to 31	25	*Future budget priority*

Note: Goals reflect NJDOE recommended class sizes for our district profile.
**K - State recommends up to 21.*

Protecting Our Investment — From Preschool to Graduation

Our preschool classrooms are capped at 15. This budget begins closing the gap when those same students reach Kindergarten.

Our Greatest Investment: Our Youngest Citizens

Expanding access to early learning — and putting money back in the pockets of Vernon families.

PRESCHOOL AID

$4,761,768

State funded. Fully invested in Vernon children.

366
Total Projected Students

23
Classrooms

+2
New in September

PRESCHOOL TRANSPORTATION: $382,506

Carried in LEA budget as a bridge cost. Once Vernon reaches universe, this cost becomes significantly offset by preschool aid.

THE ROAD TO UNIVERSE

Universe Target	~340 GE students
Currently serving	227 GE students **82 SE students*
Gap to universe	113* GE students
2027-2028 projected to close the gap	

**Special education seats are legally reserved for students with special needs —required by law, funded locally, not countable toward universe.*

WHAT THIS SAVES VERNON FAMILIES

Up to $24,000
per child per year, vs. private preschool

17
GE - Walnut Ridge

3
PSD - Walnut Ridge

5
Classrooms at provider sites

Strategic Plan Goal 1: Coherent Learning Pathways. Preschool is our earliest and highest-leverage intervention.

SPECIAL EDUCATION: FROM DEPENDENCE TO INDEPENDENCE

Vernon's commitment to every student with special needs and to their right to learn in the least restrictive environments.

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

25%

of Vernon students are currently classified for Special education — above state and national averages.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AID: $4,803,710

⇩ - $191, 258

The state is sending us less special education aid this year. We are investing more.
Our budget priorities remain with our students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AUDIT

Independent audit conducted by ALL IN identified specific recommendations to strengthen our approach.
This budget responds directly.

MOVING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

In collaboration with parents and child study teams, reviewing IEPs with the goal of transitioning students to least restrictive environments.

CLASS SIZES, COMPLIANCE & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Continuing to staff our special education classes in aligment with class size requirements.
Professional development budgeted district-wide.

Strategic Plan Goals 1 & 2: Coherent Learning Pathways and Academic Strength, Rigor & Support
reaching every Vernon student earlier, more effectively, and in the most inclusive environment possible.

WHAT THIS BUDGET PROTECTS

All programs and all supports are sustained. Every student served.

75% General Education | 25% Special Education | 2% Multilingual Learners

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Core instruction

Intervention and academic support

Special education services

Multilingual learner support

STUDENT WELL-BEING

School counseling and mental health services

Nursing and health services

Social-emotional and behavioral supports

CO-CURRICULAR

Athletics

Clubs and activities

Visual and performing arts

Student leadership and enrichment

COLLEGE CAREER-LIFE READINESS

Career pathways

CTE / Dual Enrollment

Advanced Placement Coursework

NEW: AP Cyber Security
AP Business & Finance

NEW: AI & Critical Thinking

Postsecondary counseling and planning

THE ROAD BACK

Understanding our starting point and the path forward.

FY 2023

52.5

positions eliminated

A responsible fiscal decision made under significant funding constraints.

three years

THE IMPACT

Class sizes increased across grade levels.
Intervention capacity was reduced.
Programs were strained.
Recovery has been gradual.

THIS BUDGET

Begins carefully and responsibly to address what was lost.
No program cuts.
Targeted investments where need is greatest.
Strategic plan funded.

THE PATH FORWARD

Full recovery will require continued commitment over multiple budget cycles.

This is a beginning - not a solution.

Funding constraints drove the 2023 reductions. This budget reflects a different fiscal reality - and a renewed commitment to Vernon's students.

This budget is a step forward, built on honest acknowledgement of where we are and where we need to go.

THIS BUDGET FUNDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL 1
Coherent Learning Pathways

K-8 ELA alignment

Instructional Materials
- Algebra I (Gr. 8-9)
- Algebra II
- Science (K-8)
- Social Studies (K-8)

PreK-12 ELA instructional support

Kindergarten class size: 21 → 19 Goal: 18

Preschool expansion toward universe

GOAL 2
Academic Strength, Rigor and Support

MTSS initiative launching early intervention

Professional development response to Special Education Audit and PreK-12 District Coherence

Resources redirected to intervention

HS world language class sizes addressed

GOAL 3
Student Well-Being & Climate

Specials class sizes addressed (Art, Music)

Counseling, mental health sustained

Safe, supportive schools

Student independence and LRE supported

GOAL 4
Strong Partnerships & Communication

University and consultant partnerships

Technology platform alignment

ESL supports added

GOAL 5
Facilities & Stewardship

Transportation and maintenance

ESIP energy savings applied

Strategic additions to meet student and operational need

2026-2031 Strategic Plan - Defined by our community - The fiscal translation of Vernon's priorities.

STRATEGIC STAFFING. STRONGER SUPPORT.

Funded through realignment and attrition. Aligned to student need. Net savings to the District.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA	POSITION TITLE	STAFFING ACTION
Special Services LRE / Independence	Paraprofessional Reassignment	Funded other strategic additions
Special Services Child Study Team Evaluations	School Psychologist	Conversion from Outside Provider Supports OOD Case Management
Special Education Class Size Compliance	2 Special Education Teachers (Lounsberry Hollow & Cedar Mountain)	Conversion
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	2 Interventionists (Glen Meadow) 2 Interventionists (Lounsberry Hollow)	Realignment
Class Size	Specials Teacher (Rolling Hills)	Realignment
Class Size	Kindergarten Teacher (Cedar Mountain)	Realignment
Class Size	Spanish Teacher (VTHS)	Realignment
PreK-12 ELA Coherence	PreK-12 ELA Supervision (District)	Realignment

MAJOR COST DRIVERS IN THE 2026-2027 BUDGET

HEALTH BENEFITS

Significant increase in renewal costs

FY 26 (+25%) | FY 27 (+15%)

OUT OF DISTRICT TUITION

Tuition and services

+7.24%

CONTRACTUAL INCREASES

Salary and wage obligations

Staffing investments are subject to the collective bargaining process.

TRANSPORTATION

Route, contractual, and service pressures

+5.36%

OPERATIONS & UTILITIES

Utilities, materials, and contracted services

+9%

These structural cost pressures are consistent with trends facing districts across New Jersey and significantly shape this budget recommendation.

ACTIONS TAKEN TO CONTAIN DISTRICT COSTS

Before the levy. Before the state aid. The district went to work.

starting gap
~$1,000,000

→ district action

closed internally
~$800,000

→ remaining

remaining gap
~$200,000

STAFFING & HEALTH BENEFITS

Realignment of staffing

Health plan marketing and review conducted

Negotiated January 2026 renewal from 34% down to 25% increase

TRANSPORTATION

Contracts renewed at CPI (3.58%) where possible

Routes consolidated based on changing out-of-district placements

Title I utilized to offset homeless transportation

REVENUE & OFFSETS

PEA offsets were utilized for allowable expenses

ESIP energy rebates added to revenue

E-Rate and SEMI reimbursements maximized

OPERATIONS

Projected ESIP savings applied to projected 26-27 utility costs

Vendor and contract review conducted

Cooperative purchasing and shared services

Sound fiscal stewardship before asking anything of Vernon taxpayers.

FY 2027 STATE AID UPDATE

Welcome relief with important context.

TOTAL K-12 AID FY 2027

$19,631,900

INCREASE FROM FY 2026

+$1,078,487

This increase provides meaningful relief, but it does not offset the full cost pressures driving this budget.

THE FORMULA GAP

State formula uncapped calculation: $22,227,736.

What Vernon receives: $19,631,900.

Gap between what the formula says Vernon needs and what it receives -$2,595,836

Vernon's state aid formula calculation exceeds what growth cap provisions allow us to receive.

The gap between what the formula calculates and what we receive contributes to the need for a levy increase.

HOW VERNON'S SCHOOLS ARE FUNDED

Vernon relies primarily on local property taxes, and the state aid formula has historically not kept pace with our district's actual needs.

TOTAL FY 27 BUDGET

$78.7 M

TAX LEVY
$55,165,220 ~70%

STATE AID
$19,631,900 ~25%

FUND BALANCE
$2,418,360

OTHER REVENUE
$1,513,787

Fund Balance from the Audited 2024-2025 School Year is used to help close the funding gap.

Each year the District works to maximize Other Revenues and manage Fund Balance in order to provide Revenue Consistency and avoid a Fiscal Cliff.

WHAT IS FUND BALANCE?

Think of the Fund Balance as the district's total savings, verified each year by an independent audit

Fund Balance is made up of four main categories

- **Tax Relief (Excess Surplus)**: Savings from previous years that are used as revenue to balance the budget and lower the amount needed from local property taxes.
- **Targeted Savings (Reserves)**: Money set aside for specific long-term needs, such as building renovations (Capital), required repairs (Maintenance), or Unemployment Compensation.
- **Fund Balance (Unassigned)**: A cash reserve that ensures the district can pay teachers and vendors on time while waiting for state aid or tax payments to arrive. It also covers unexpected financial emergencies.
- **Committed Payments (Encumbrances)**: Money already "promised" to pay for goods or services ordered during the previous year that haven't been delivered or invoiced yet.

There are many variables that can lead to savings or higher expenses during the school year.

RECAPITALIZATION OF BALANCES

Fund Balance as of June 30, 2025

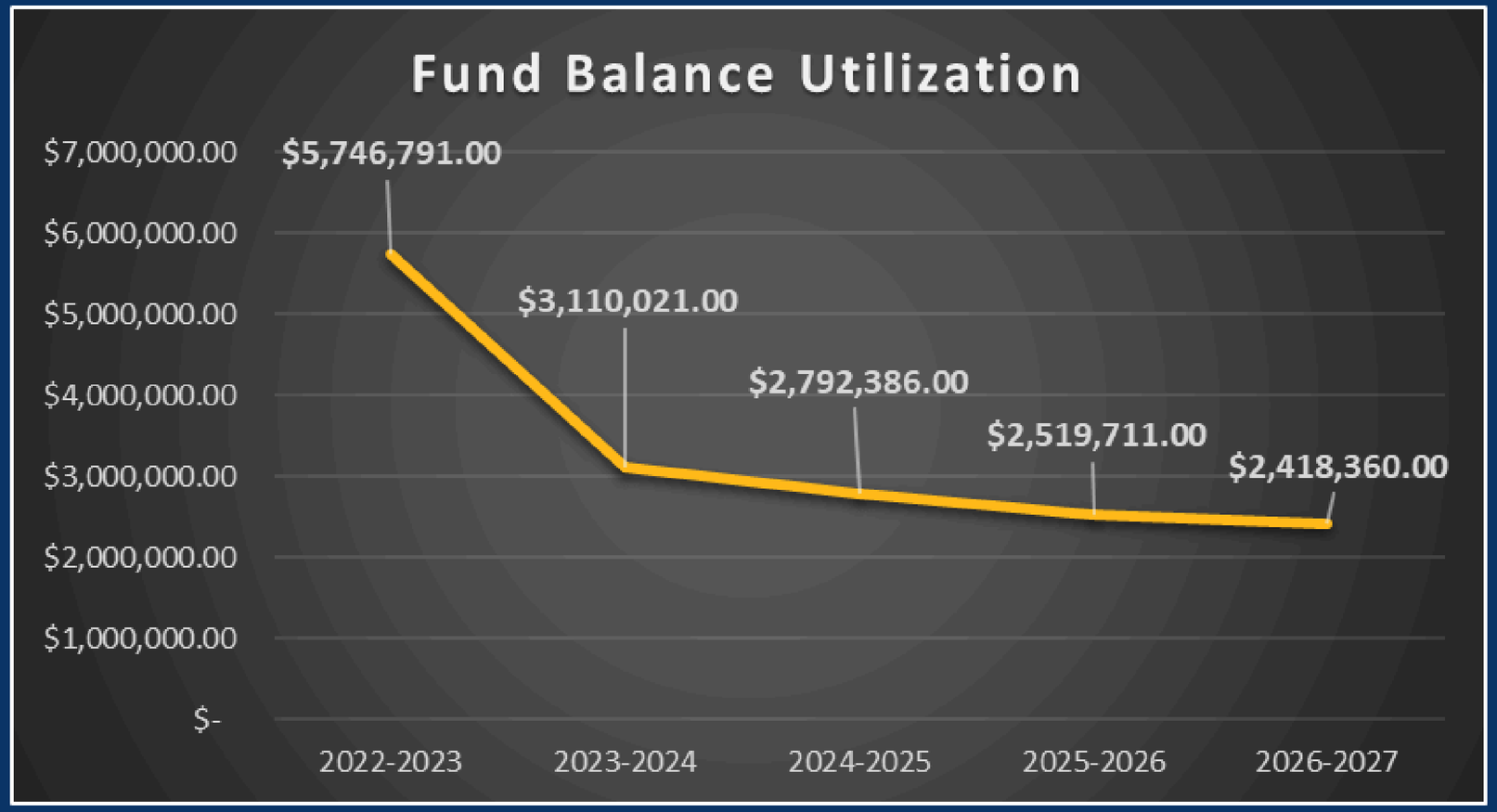
Recapitulation:		
Restricted Fund Balance:		
Excess Surplus - Restricted For 2026-2027	$	2,211,432
Excess Surplus - Restricted For 2025-2026		2,268,526
Capital Reserve		1,799,536
Maintenance Reserve		402,470
Unemployment Compensation		143,629
Assigned Fund Balance:		
Year End Encumbrances		1,188,467
Designated for Subsequent Year's Expenditures		251,185
Unassigned Fund Balance		1,654,906
		9,920,151
Reconciliation to Governmental Funds Statement (GAAP):		
Last State Aid Payments not Recognized on GAAP basis		(1,814,919)
Fund Balance per Governmental Funds (GAAP)	$	8,105,232

Fund Balance varies from year to year, but typically, the fiscal goal is to maintain consistency.

After accounting for year-end encumbrances, Vernon's Fund Balance has decreased each of the last three years as capital projects are completed.

HISTORY OF FUND BALANCE UTILIZATION

Each year *Vernon relies on fund balance as a revenue to balance future budgets*

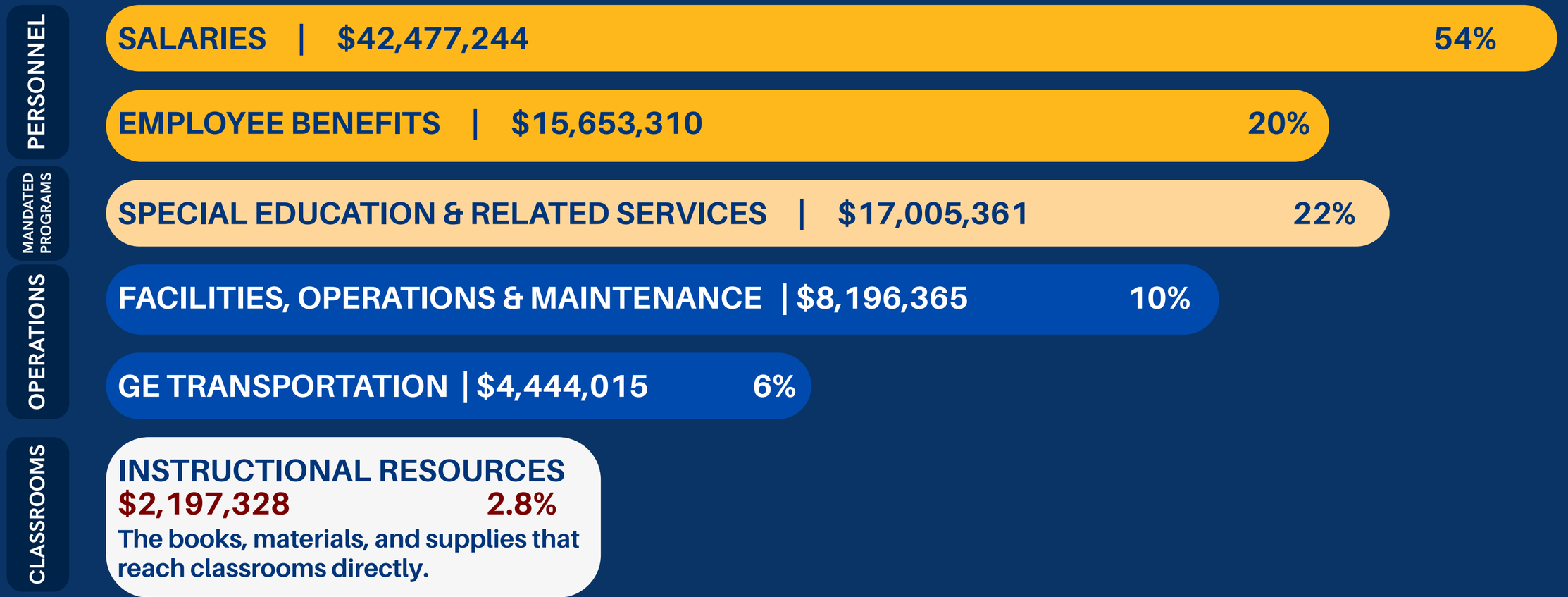


The goal is to gradually reduce the need for fund balance as a revenue over multiple budgets.

This provides greater fiscal stability.

HOW DISTRICT RESOURCES SUPPORT STUDENTS

~74%	~2.8%	$78.7M
Salaries and benefits combined	Instructional resources	Total 2026-2027 budget



2026-2027 Total Budgetary Comparative Per Pupil Cost — $23,047

The Local Tax Levy

What Vernon Taxpayers Are Being Asked to Invest

FY 26 LOCAL TAX LEVY

$55,165,220

INCREASE FROM FY26

+ $3,029,468

HOW 5.81% IS CALCULATED - TWO DISTINCT COMPONENTS

2% BASE CAP

Legislated maximum annual increase under New Jersey Law.

+

3.81% HEALTHCARE ADJUSTMENT

Allowable exception under NJ law when healthcare costs are exceptional.

2% + 3.81% = 5.81%

Utilization of this adjustment allows the District to absorb large increases in the cost of health care without negatively impacting students through the loss of programs or supports.

The remaining allowable healthcare adjustment ($676,429) to be preserved as banked cap for future budget consideration.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO VERNON HOMEOWNERS



Average Assessed Home Value
$320,700

MONTHLY IMPACT

$19.51
per month

PER YEAR

$234.16
annual increase
5.36%

WHAT $19.51 A MONTH SUSTAINS

3,102 students. Six schools. PreK through Grade 12.
All existing and mandated programs.
Every teacher, counselor, CST, nurse, and bus.
An aligned curriculum and funded strategic plan priorities.

Impact based upon aggregates, ratables, and average assessed home value provided by Vernon Township Tax Assessor.

We recognize the impact on Vernon families. This investment sustains the schools our community built together.

A Budget Built for Vernon's Students

Safe. Supported. Connected. Prepared.

Every Vernon Classroom:
Rigor. Creativity. Real-world learning. Excellence.

This is what we built together. This budget funds it.

BUDGET TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS

- March 27th — Budget submitted to the County Superintendent for review and approval.
- April 8th — County Superintendent approved budget and returned to district with no recommendations.
- April 20th — Earliest date that budget can be advertised.
- April 24th — Earliest date to hold public hearing on the budget.
- April 24th — Budget advertised publicly in local paper.
- April 30th — Public hearing scheduled 1st Thursday after April 20th. Your opportunity to speak on the record. Board adopts final budget by majority vote.
- May 2nd — User-friendly budget posted on district website for public review.

2026-2027 FINAL BUDGET *QUESTIONS*



VERNON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS