



Dr. Mark Schwarz
Superintendent

Richard Matthews
Business Administrator

2026-2027 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Board of Education



Sheila Brogan

Board President



Muhammad Mahmoud

Board Vice President



Saurabh Dani

Board Member



Mary Lou Handy

Board Member



Mary Micale

Board Member



Objectives



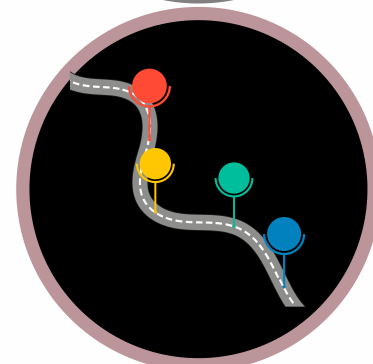
Provide context for the 2026-27 Budget.



Introduce a proposed budget for Board discussion and public comment.



Detail proposed cost-saving strategies designed to limit reliance on the local tax levy.



Clarify remaining steps to finalize the budget.

Our District

Vision 2030

Our District at a Glance

Curriculum & Instruction

Special Programs

**Student Achievements &
Highlights**

Budget Overview



Vision 2030

The Framework of Our Future



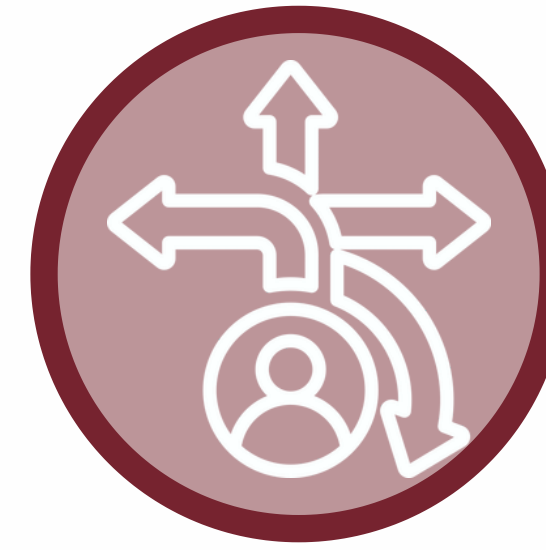
Journey of a
Graduate



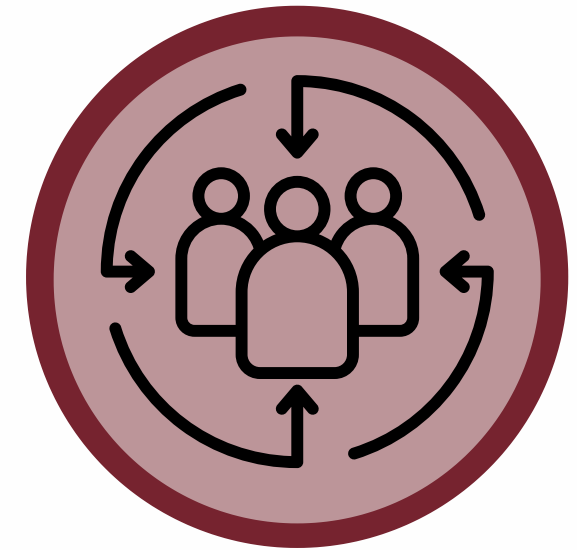
Balanced Climate
and Culture



Infrastructure |
Facilities |
Finance



Programs, Pathways
& Proficiency
(Teaching & Learning)



Engagement

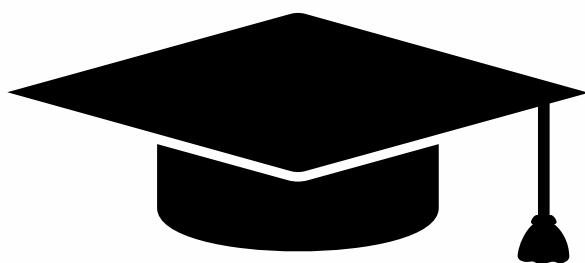
Our District at a Glance

Driving excellence across **11** schools



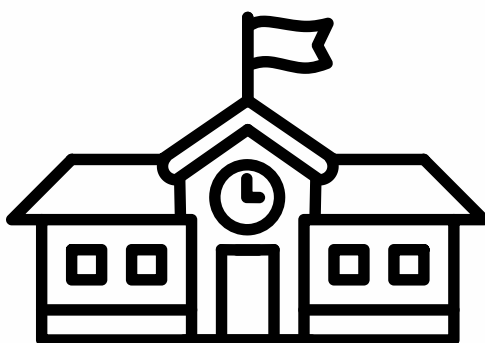
#4

Best School District
in NJ*



271

AP Scholars*



#2

Best Place to
Teach in Bergen
County



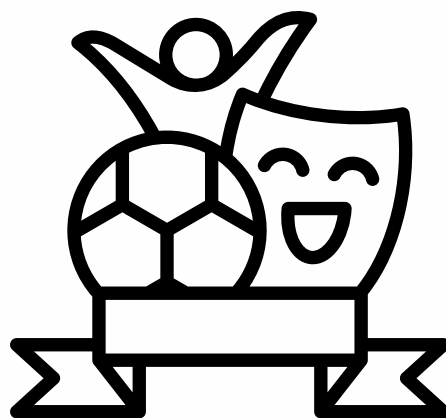
5,429

Students*



107

Seal of Biliteracy
Awards



Over **100**

Activities &
Clubs



Source: 25/26 *Students' estimate based on internal enrollment chart. Ranked school: Niche.com. AP Scholars: AP data based on internal 2025 numbers.

Advancing Curriculum & Instruction

Continue to advance district and strategic goal efforts and support curricular revisions across subject areas and integration of instructional resources.

Core Academics



K-5 ELA

Initial rollout (K-2) of a research-backed curriculum providing systematic, explicit reading and writing instruction and differentiated instruction.



6-8 Science

Implementation of evidence-based, inquiry-driven curriculum where students observe phenomena to solve problems, investigate multiple answers, and marshal evidence to support conclusions.

Student Support Framework



Transitions

Grades 5-6 and 8-9 with a focus on ELA, Math, and overall preparedness through appropriate supports and increased independence.



Gifted & Talented

Expand enrichment of all students, while identifying outlying students who require additional services.

Data & Infrastructure



Assessment

Usage of common benchmark data to inform real-time instruction. A district-wide multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), including common assessments for benchmarking, progress monitoring, and interventions for students who need additional support.



Online Tools

Currently evaluating all technology for administration and education, ensuring efficiency and positive impact.

Special Programs Objectives

Integrating our Vision 2030 and Journey of a Graduate into Specialized Support

Specially Designed Instruction



Specialized Instruction & Curriculum Alignment

Continue analysis and progress monitoring, enhancing accommodations and specially designed instruction to meet individualized students with disability needs.



Inclusive Practices

Expand and diversify co-teaching models and mentorships, increase related service support, and promote non-academic inclusion options. This aligns with creating an inclusive community and expanding equitable access to learning for all students.

Student & Family Support



Family Partnership

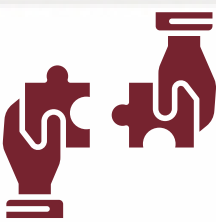
Implement a structured parent communication system, partner with SEPAG, enhance communication and partnerships, and gather/analyze feedback for improved engagement.



Early Intervention & Pre-Intervention Support

Expansion of pre-intervention programs through MTSS, while maintaining cost-effective resource allocation. This aligns with creating comprehensive & integrated systems for student success & strengthening core instruction.

Supporting the Vision



Strategic Alignment & Annual Review

Review direction with the Board of Education, ensure alignment with the district strategic plan (Vision 2030), conduct State of Special Education review, and utilize data to inform practices. This supports the overarching vision of empowering students and aligning with district goals.



Professional Development & Staff Capacity

Provide targeted, evidence-based training for special education staff and general education partners. Focus on Structured Literacy, behavioral intervention strategies, and collaborative coaching models to ensure the 'Journey of a Graduate' competencies are accessible to all learners.



Excellence Beyond the Classroom

2024-2025 Fall & Winter

Boys Soccer: Freedom Division Champs, State Sectional

Boys XCountry: Freedom Division Champs, Bergen County, Bergen County Team of the Year, State Sectional

Girls XCountry: Freedom Division Champs, Bergen County, Bergen County Team of the Year, State Sectional

RHS Marching Band: 2025 US Bands Division 4A NJ State Champs, 2025 US Bands Group 4A National Champions, Best Overall Effect, and Best Color Guard

Boys Basketball: Freedom Division Champs, Bergen County, Bergen County Team of the Year, State Sectional

Girls Basketball: Freedom Division Coach of the Year-Mike Mitchell

Girls Alpine Ski: State Champs

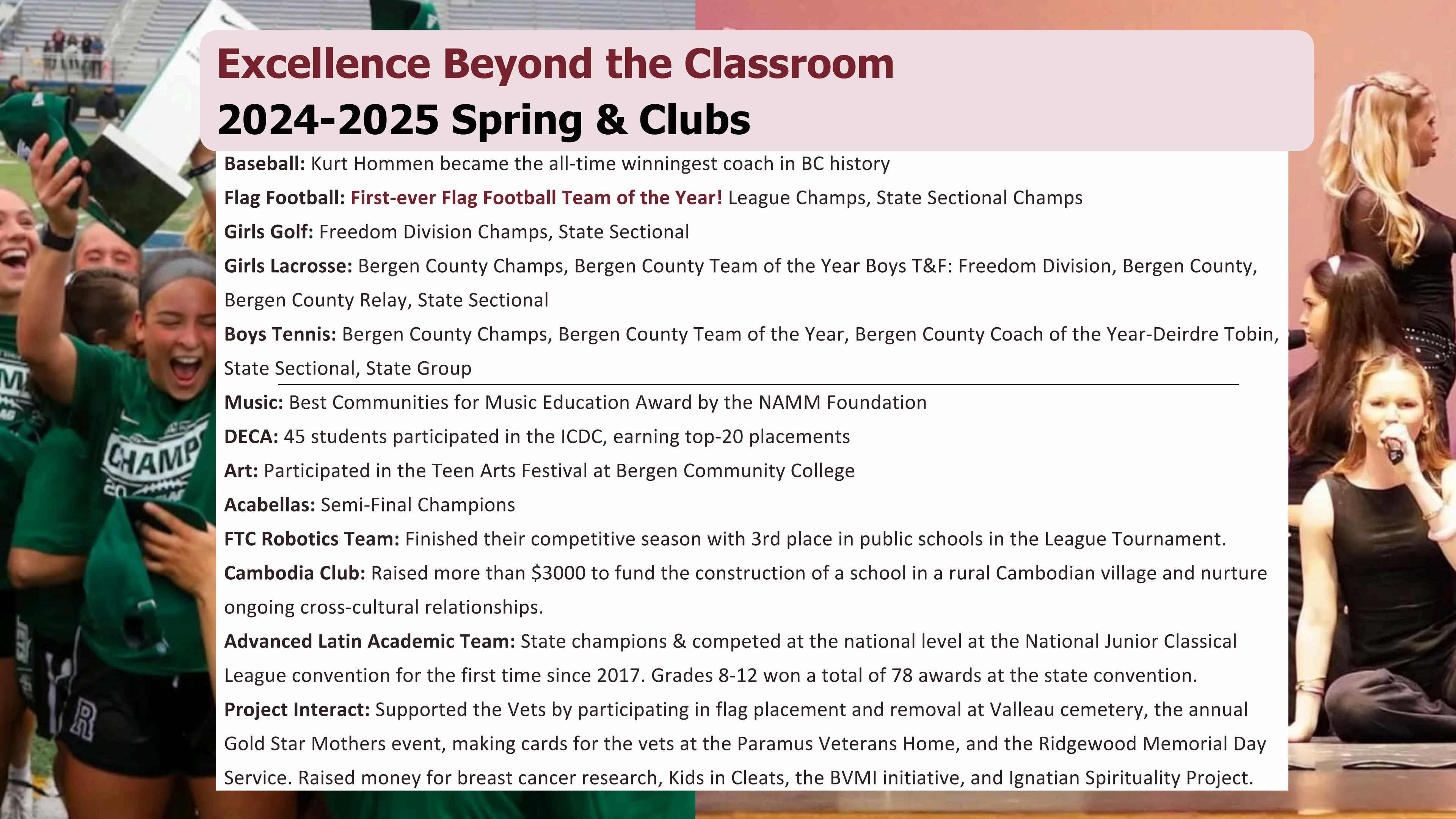
Ice Hockey: Coach of the Year-Mike Lucchesi, State Sectional Champs (1st ever)

Boys Swimming: Freedom Division Champs, Freedom Division Coach of the Year- Kyle Schulke, Bergen County Team of the Year, State Sectional Champs

Girls Swimming: Freedom Division Champs, Freedom Division Coach of the Year- Kyle Schulke

Boys Winter Track: Big North Team of the Year, Big North Coach of the Year-Josh Saladino, State Sectional Champs

Girls Winter Track: 8th Consecutive Freedom Division Champs, Big North Team of the Year, Big North Coach of the Year-Josh Saladino, Bergen County, Bergen County Team of the Year, State Sectional, All-North Jersey Team of the Year



Excellence Beyond the Classroom

2024-2025 Spring & Clubs

Baseball: Kurt Hommen became the all-time winningest coach in BC history

Flag Football: **First-ever Flag Football Team of the Year!** League Champs, State Sectional Champs

Girls Golf: Freedom Division Champs, State Sectional

Girls Lacrosse: Bergen County Champs, Bergen County Team of the Year Boys T&F: Freedom Division, Bergen County, Bergen County Relay, State Sectional

Boys Tennis: Bergen County Champs, Bergen County Team of the Year, Bergen County Coach of the Year-Deirdre Tobin, State Sectional, State Group

Music: Best Communities for Music Education Award by the NAMM Foundation

DECA: 45 students participated in the ICDC, earning top-20 placements

Art: Participated in the Teen Arts Festival at Bergen Community College

Acabellas: Semi-Final Champions

FTC Robotics Team: Finished their competitive season with 3rd place in public schools in the League Tournament.

Cambodia Club: Raised more than \$3000 to fund the construction of a school in a rural Cambodian village and nurture ongoing cross-cultural relationships.

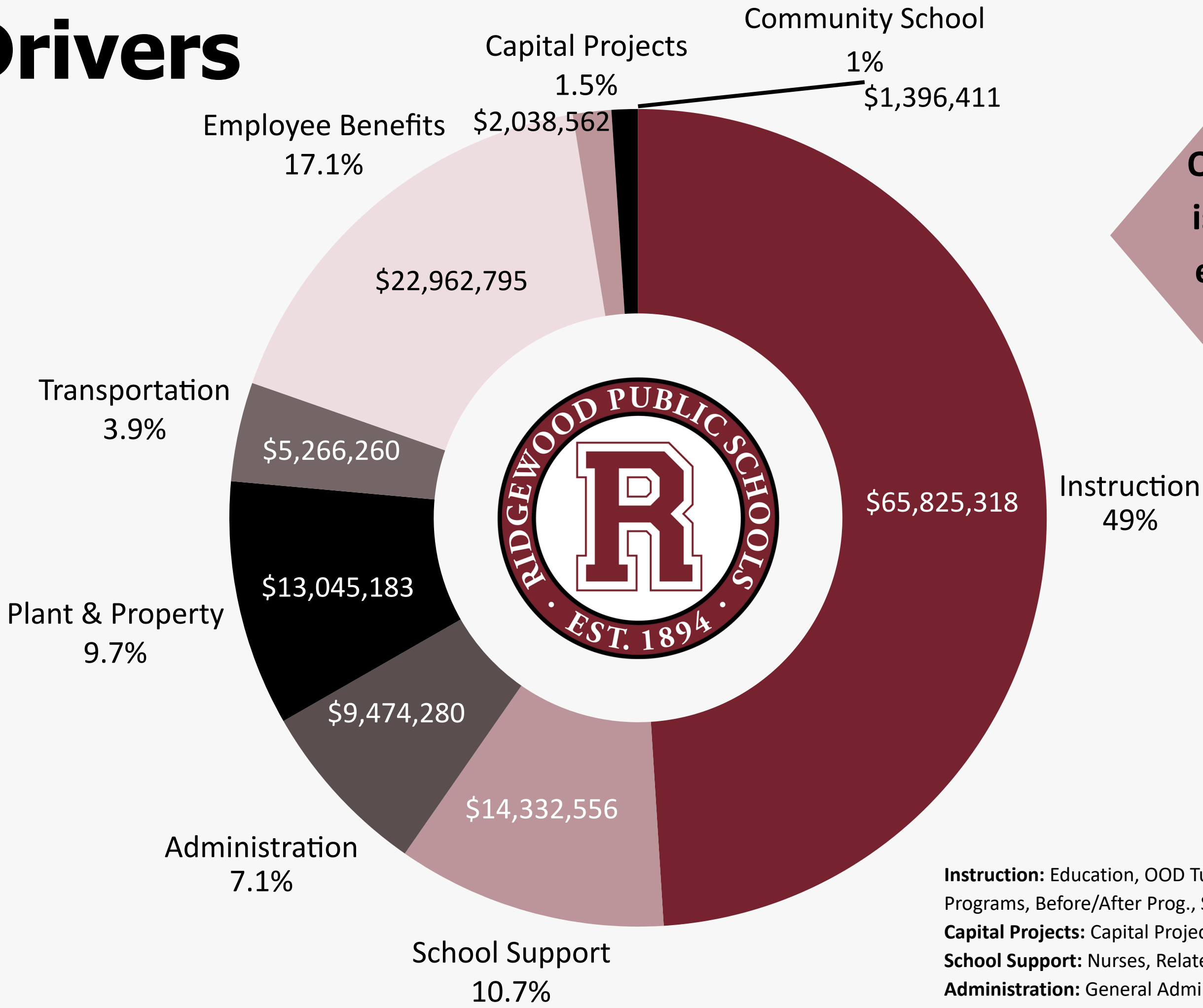
Advanced Latin Academic Team: State champions & competed at the national level at the National Junior Classical League convention for the first time since 2017. Grades 8-12 won a total of 78 awards at the state convention.

Project Interact: Supported the Vets by participating in flag placement and removal at Valleau cemetery, the annual Gold Star Mothers event, making cards for the vets at the Paramus Veterans Home, and the Ridgewood Memorial Day Service. Raised money for breast cancer research, Kids in Cleats, the BVMI initiative, and Ignatian Spirituality Project.

Budget Overview



Cost Drivers

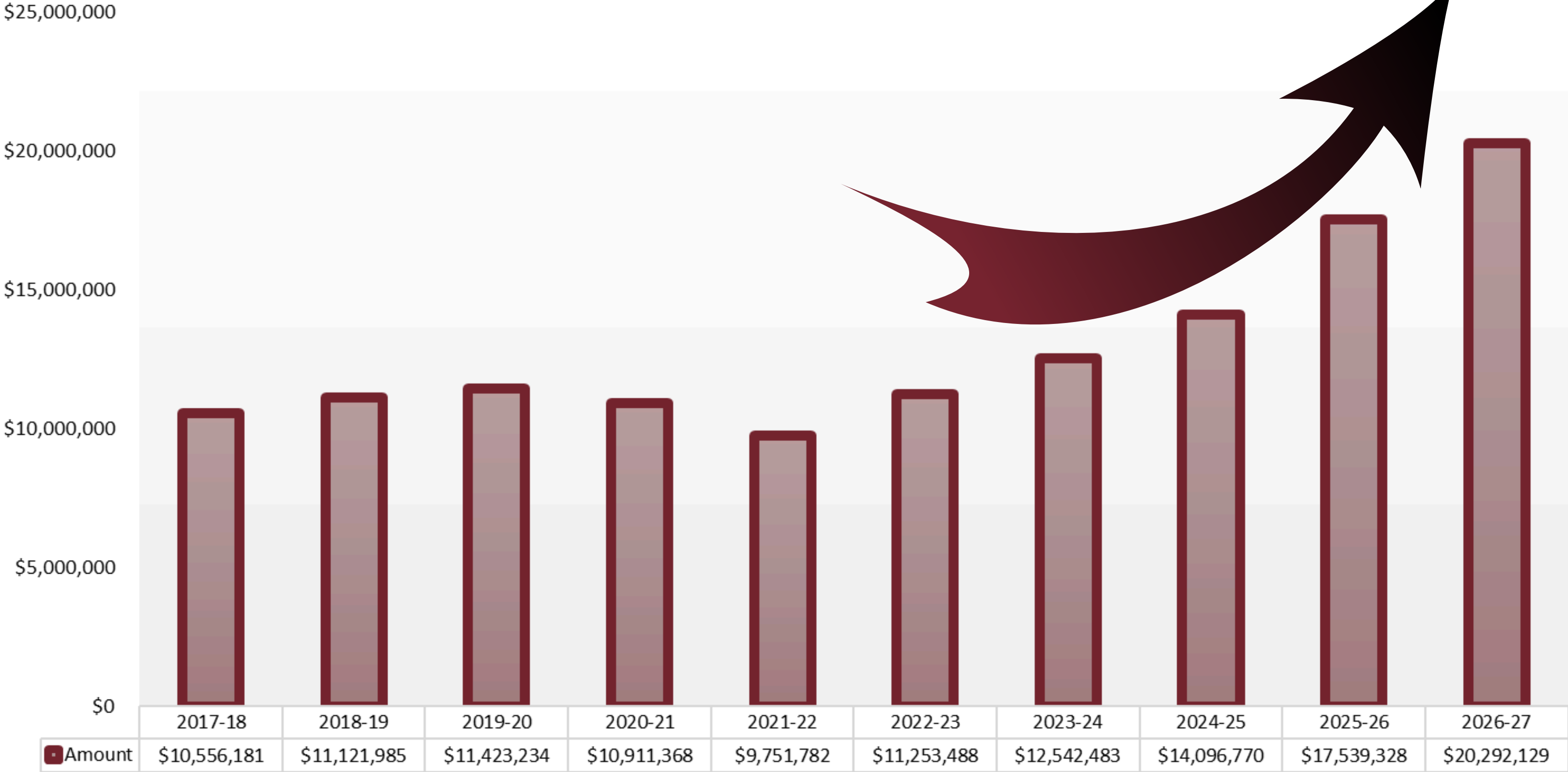


Over **76%** of our budget is directly invested in the expert staff teaching our students.



Instruction: Education, OOD Tuition, Co/Extracurricular, Athletics, Other Programs, Before/After Prog., Summer School
Capital Projects: Capital Projects & Outlay, Equipment
School Support: Nurses, Related Services, Guidance, Staff Training
Administration: General Admin., School Admin., Central Services, Info. Tech.
Plant & Property: Maintenance, Custodial, Fields/Grounds, Security

Primary Driver: Health Benefits



Appropriations/Expenses General Fund

	2025-26 Adjusted	2026-27 Original	Change \$	Change %
Instruction	\$64,274,890	\$65,825,318	\$1,550,428	2.41%
School Support	\$14,857,602	\$14,332,556	(\$525,046)	-3.53%
Administration	\$9,995,495	\$9,474,280	(\$521,215)	-5.21%
Plant & Property	\$14,202,594	\$13,045,183	(\$1,157,411)	-8.15%
Transportation	\$5,655,201	\$5,266,260	(\$388,941)	-6.88%
Employee Benefits	\$19,970,805	\$22,962,795	\$2,991,990	14.98%
Capital Outlay	\$2,149,205	\$2,038,562	(\$110,643)	-5.15%
Community School	\$1,515,950	\$1,396,411	(\$119,539)	-7.89%
Total Operating Budget	\$132,621,742	\$134,341,365	\$1,719,623	1.30%

- From 2024-25 to 2026-27, employee health benefit premiums have increased by an estimated \$6.2M (~\$3M in the current year).
- Changes in transportation costs reflect a projected reduction of courtesy bussing.
- Instruction, support, and administration lines reflect the consolidation of positions for efficiency.



Revenue General Fund

	2025-26 Adjusted	2026-27 Original	Change \$	Change %
Tax Levy	\$107,392,191	\$111,447,199	\$4,055,008	3.78%
Tuition	\$2,777,811	\$3,383,332	\$605,521	21.80%
Other Local Sources	\$4,021,722	\$3,405,225	(\$616,497)	-15.33%
Total State Revenues	\$10,070,977	\$9,858,848	(\$212,129)	-2.11%
SEMI	\$3,185	\$36,425	\$33,240	1043.64%
Fund Balance	\$2,700,000	\$2,708,236	\$8,236	0.31%
Capital Reserve	\$1,773,629	\$1,740,000	(\$33,629)	-1.90%
Maintenance Reserve	\$1,749,651	\$1,400,000	(\$349,651)	-19.98%
Emergency Reserve	\$500,000	\$250,000	(\$250,000)	-50.00%
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$1,632,576	\$0	(\$1,632,576)	-100.00%
Transfers from Other Funds	\$0	\$112,100	\$112,100	0.00%
Total Operating Budget	\$132,621,742	\$134,341,365	\$1,719,623	1.30%

- State aid is declining for the second year in a row.
- The proposal calls for drawing on reserves to fund district maintenance.
- Appropriation reductions, use of reserves and revenue strategies have limited the proposed tax levy increase to 3.78%.



Capital Projects



Willard Elementary
Retaining Wall



Orchard Elementary
Back Steps



Ridge Elementary
Retaining Wall



GWMS Basement
Bathroom Renovation



Rehabilitate Elementary
School Classrooms



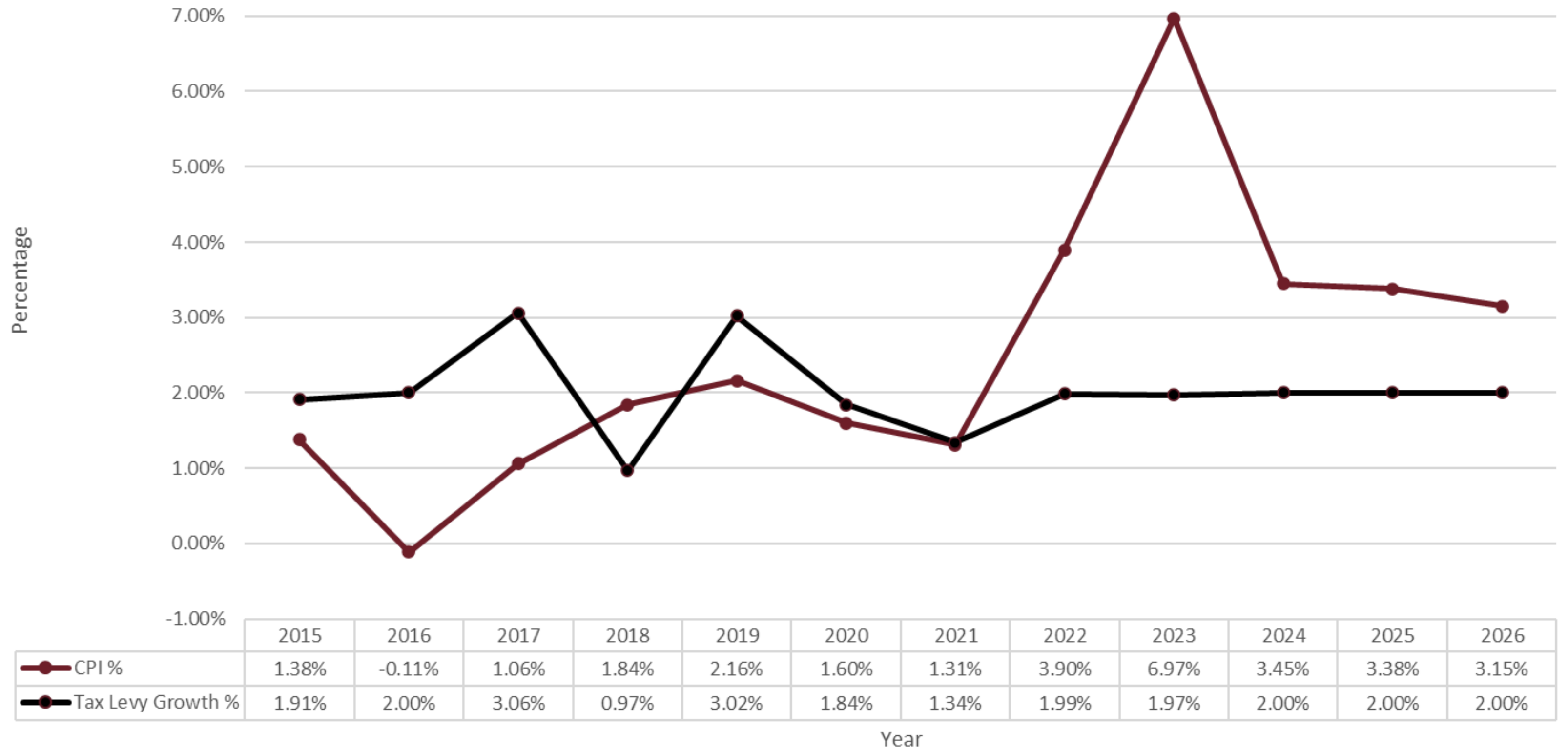
RHS Tennis Court
Replacement



Travell Elementary
Air Conditioning

Total Capital Projects Cost: \$1,740,000

Tax Levy Trend



CPI % Tax Levy Growth %

Tax Levy Impact

The proposed school tax levy increase:

3.78%

Uses 2% standard increase + 1.78% of allowable health benefits adjustment (2.80% available)



Average
Assessed
Home:
\$715,000

Estimated
Yearly
Impact:
\$499.78*

Estimated
Monthly
Impact:
\$41.65*

*Includes Debt Service



Maintaining Quality of Service

**Protecting the student experience
while enhancing efficiency measures.**

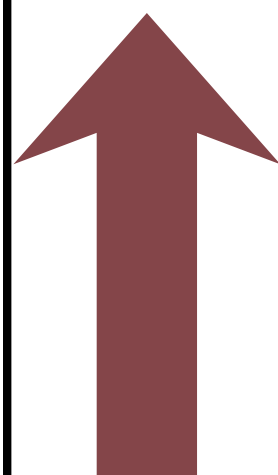
- ✓ All programs and extracurricular programs intact
- ✓ All courses and languages offered intact
- ✓ Expansion of Special Programs (PreK)
- ✓ New science & literacy programs



Tax Levy Relief Strategies

Internal Actions

Major Revenue & Cost Saving Strategies



- Health Care benefits provider change (complete)
- Zero-based budget planning (complete)
- Expand Glen School services
- Increase Pre-K tuition fee
- Boost before/after care revenue
- Vendor contract restructuring
- Consolidation of non-essential positions
- Remove some courtesy bussing (ballot)

Community Decisions

Ballot Questions



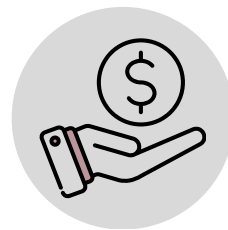
Voter Mandates:

- Elementary SROs
- Courtesy bussing

Additional Budget Savings and Impact

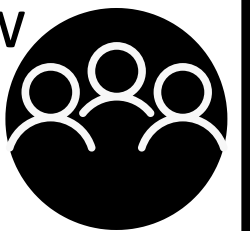
Additional Cost Saving Measures

- Class size minimum enrollment standards
- Additional controls for starting salaries for new hires
- Continued overtime management
- Continued energy management
- Increased in-house services (painting, maintenance, professional development)
- Extra-curricular cost controls
- Expanding in-district training and PD



Impacted Groups

- Some families currently receiving courtesy bussing will lose this service. It may be reinstated if it is passed via the November ballot question
- Some staff members will be impacted as positions are consolidated
- Some ITDC enrollees may lose service for the coming year
- Grades 3-5 will not transition to the new literacy program until 2027-28



Takeaways and Next Steps

Takeaways

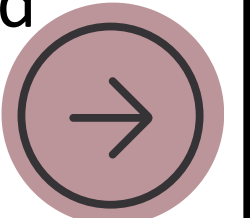
- The 2026-27 Budget Proposal was designed to absorb the impact of radical increases in health benefits premiums and decreasing state aid with a minimal impact to the student and taxpayer.
- The proposal includes only 3.78%* of the allowable 7.35%* tax levy increase.
- While the vast majority of our programs and services will remain unchanged, some groups will be impacted by austerity measures.

*Percentages corrected during BOE meeting discussion



Next Steps

- Wed. 3/18 - BOE closed session tentatively scheduled on Wednesday, 3/18, to evaluate budget-related personnel changes
- Thurs. 3/19 - Superintendent Coffee for additional budget discussion
- Mon. 3/23 - BOE Regular Meeting and Tentative Budget Adoption (sets the tax levy increase)
- Mon. 5/4 - BOE Final Budget Hearing and Adoption





Investing in Our Future

The Budget Team is confident that the proposed budget aligns with our strategic goals and ensures the financial sustainability of our initiatives.

Together, we are investing in the future growth and stability of
Ridgewood Public Schools.

We look forward to your feedback and continued collaboration.