MOVING PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS FORWARD

Plainfield Public Schools

Plainfield Board of Education
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Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why did the district present a 0 percent tax levy increase scenario?**
   The 0 percent tax levy increase scenario was presented as a planning baseline. This allows the district to understand its financial position assuming flat state funding and no increase to local taxes. Starting with this conservative model helps identify operational adjustments that may be necessary regardless of whether additional revenue is later considered.

2. **Will the district present other tax levy options, such as a 2 percent increase?**
   Yes. While the initial presentation focused on a 0 percent increase scenario, additional options, including a 2 percent levy increase, may be explored as the budget development process continues. No final decisions have been made.

3. **Is the district planning to pursue a referendum to increase taxes?**
   At this time, the administration has not received direction from the Board to pursue a referendum. While referendums are legally permitted up to four times per year, no action has been initiated. Any decision to pursue a referendum would require Board approval and public communication.

4. **What is the status of the district's fund balance, also known as *reserves*?**
   The district's fund balance has been used strategically in past and recent years, including for the purchase of the BUF properties. A portion of reserves increased during the ESSER federal funding period due to careful financial management. Updated fund balance figures will be included in the finalized FAQ and future presentations. The current status of the district's fund balance is:

Capital Reserve	$6,474,046
Maintenance Reserve	$1,500,000
Unemployment Compensation	$1,215,404
Unassigned Fund Balance	$9,264,252

5. **Why does it appear that the fund balance is being significantly reduced?**
   The projected drawdown reflects planned usage, including previously approved expenditures such as property

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purchases. The district uses conservative projections to ensure operational flexibility. It is important to note that usage of fund balance does not mean misappropriation or misuse of funds.

6. **Was there a misappropriation of $4.8 million dollars?**
   No. There was no misappropriation of funds. Any suggestion otherwise is a mischaracterization. Financial matters are reviewed regularly through internal controls, reconciliation processes, and annual audits.

7. **How will the district rebuild its reserves?**
   The district rebuilds reserves by exercising disciplined spending practices, implementing spending freezes when necessary, making conservative budget projections, and ensuring every dollar spent is necessary and aligned to district priorities. The district will continue to be good stewards of public funds to restore and maintain healthy reserve levels over time.

8. **What reductions are currently being considered?**
   Proposed reductions are projections only and may include the elimination of vacancies, central office restructuring, consultant reductions, operational efficiencies, spending controls, and staffing realignment based on enrollment and program needs. No final staffing or program decisions have been made.

9. **Why was there no projected savings amount listed for coaching reductions?**
   The projected savings for coaching positions were intentionally left blank because many coaching positions are held by tenured teachers who ***may*** be reassigned to a classroom. Enrollment changes and staffing realignments may impact the final financial outcome. A definitive savings estimate was not available at the time of presentation.

10. **Are administrative or non-certificated staff reductions being considered?**
    The district is reviewing all staffing categories as part of its budget realignment process. Any potential adjustments will be evaluated carefully and aligned with enrollment, program needs, and fiscal sustainability. No final decisions have been made.

11. **Will the district reduce consultant and travel expenses?**
    Yes. Consultant reductions are included in projected cost saving measures. Travel and non-essential expenditures are being closely reviewed. A spending freeze has been implemented to limit non-essential spending.

12. **What is the cost per pupil in Plainfield Public Schools, and how does it compare to charter schools?**
    The cost per pupil for charter schools is $21,951. The cost per pupil for Plainfield Public Schools is $25,662. It is important to note that the district also funds transportation and the athletic program for charter school students, which impacts the overall financial comparison.

13. **What is the status of the BUF properties?**
    BUF II, now known as Plainfield Early Learning Center is operational.
    Construction at the BUF I property has been temporarily paused while the Board carefully evaluates the next steps. The Board has requested additional information from vendors to ensure that any decision moving forward is strategic, fiscally responsible, and in the best interest of the district. Our goal is to make the most informed decision possible while minimizing financial impact and protecting district resources.

14. **Are renovations for BUF I included in the current projections?**
    There has been funding allocated for bringing BUF I online. However, updated repair estimates are pending. All construction at BUF I has been halted pending updated repair estimates. The final financial impact will depend on contractor submissions and Board review.

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15. **Is the district planning to purchase additional buildings?**
    No additional building purchases are currently proposed in the 2026 to 2027 budget projections.

16. **Can the district share the data driving projected savings?**
    The district conducts weekly reconciliations and monthly financial reporting. However, savings projections may change based on emergent operational needs. Detailed projections may be premature until closer to budget adoption, but the district will continue providing updates as data becomes finalized.

17. **When will state funding numbers be available?**
    State aid figures are typically released in early to mid-March. The district will adjust projections accordingly once official numbers are received.

18. **Will there be opportunities for additional community engagement?**
    Yes. The Board is considering a community advisory committee, inclusion of stakeholder groups such as SEPAG (Special Education Parent Advisory Group), School PATT groups, town halls, and continued public comment opportunities. Community input remains an important part of the budget development process.

19. **When will final decisions be made?**
    No final decisions have been made. This meeting represents the beginning of several presentations and discussions that will occur before the preliminary and final budget hearings in March and April 2026.

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