

January 31, 2025

Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

On January 27, our District held the second of three Town Hall sessions on the 2025-2026 school budget. I'm grateful to the many parents, employees, and residents who joined us in-person and virtually. Please click to access the [audio recording](#). Regretfully, we did experience a few technical glitches, and for that, we apologize. We will adjust our setup to provide better sound at our last Town Hall on February 26 at 6 PM at J.P. Case.

Our Board of Education members and I appreciated the opportunity to hold another meaningful dialogue with our community in a setting that fostered mutual respect, civility, patience, and understanding. During the session, participants asked valid questions and shared thoughtful comments. Thank you!

We continue to welcome the varied viewpoints, suggestions, strategies, and perspectives our community is willing to share. We are listening intently, and we appreciate that our community hears us too. We are all on the same side. We all want what is best for our students, but we acknowledge the strain school funding puts on our taxpayers. It is our continued goal to overcome our budget challenges with the support of our community.

During the Town Hall, I shared updated budget details including enrollment numbers, an overview of our demographics, a look back at state aid figures, a review of preschool expansion, a reminder about the state funding formula, similar budget challenges other school districts are facing, and forecasted budget projections. Please click to view the full [presentation](#).

Below are a few infographics from the 2024-2025 budget that put budgeting into perspective:

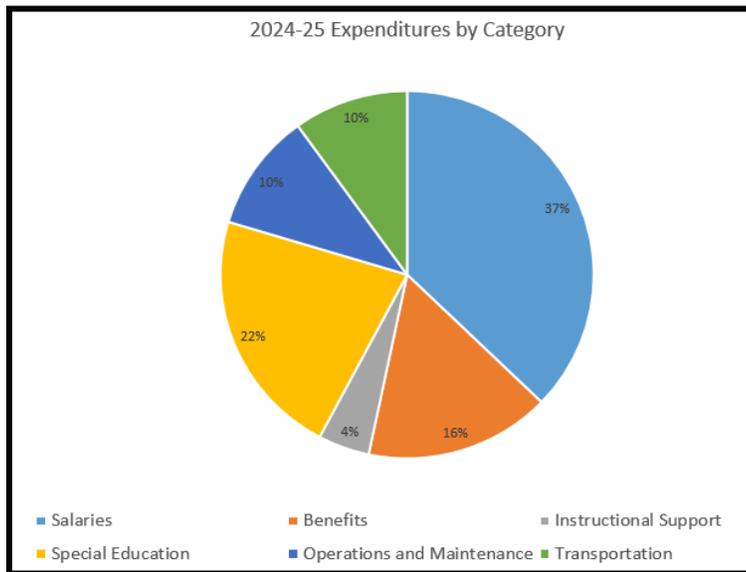


Image #1: 2024-2025 Pie Graph of Expenditures by Category

	2023-24	2024-25
Tuition	1,277,309	1,239,329
Health Services	709,373	663,858
Speech/OT/PT	1,425,019	1,307,315
Guidance	960,399	803,501
CST	1,562,155	1,718,649
Curriculum & Instruct	410,546	446,997
Lib Media	618,841	408,005
Prof Develop	746,662	607,319
Gen Admin	1,109,128	1,020,431
School Admin	3,639,533	3,457,289
Business	674,980	685,889
Technology	767,038	734,607
Custodial, Maint & Security	7,144,216	7,322,079
Transportation	6,666,099	7,017,500
Benefits	10,883,943	11,344,935
Instruction	20,204,541	19,961,996
Special Ed	8,691,176	8,756,351
Basic Skills	1,656,816	1,712,882
Bilingual	777,201	795,244
Student Activities/ Athletics	253,254	289,163
Capital Outlay	84,059	140,895
Total	70,262,288	70,434,234

Image #2: 2024-2025 Breakdown of Expenditures

As shown by Image #1, salaries and health care benefits make up the majority of district costs. Image #2 demonstrates a deeper breakdown of costs in the 2024-2025 budget categories.

Strategic Goals:

- Goal Area #1:** The District will provide a comprehensive and rigorous educational experience that connects and expands students' knowledge while engaging and empowering all learners to synthesize and apply their skills and understandings in meaningful ways.
- Goal Area #2:** Develop a continuation of a multi-tiered system of support within the district to target the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.
- Goal Area #3:** The district will create opportunities to foster unity between the community and the school district in order to strengthen partnerships and develop a shared responsibility for student success.
- Goal Area #4:** Create an enticing and competitive work environment to attract and retain high-quality candidates representative of students' diverse backgrounds in the Flemington Raritan Regional School District community.
- Goal Area #5:** Ensure the finance and facilities needs are budgeted to upkeep and meet the needs of the growing district.

Remember, as of recent school budget election legislation, without special permission from registered voters, school funding laws allow districts to increase the budget by only 2%; however, 2% of our budget is around \$1.2 million.

Due to contractual salary increases, state-required benefit costs, operations, and maintenance of the six buildings in the district, the budget increases total close to \$4.5 million (not including special education and some instructional costs). This amount exceeds the allowable 2% as shown in image #3 below. Clearly, we need our community to help us balance the scale.

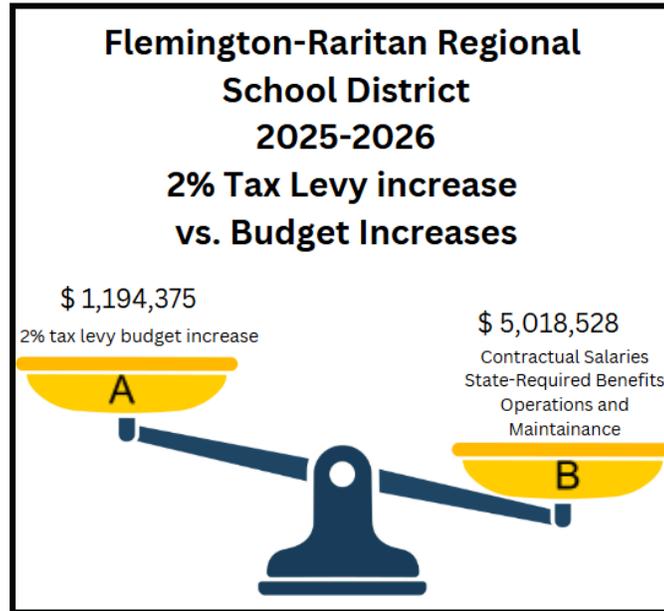


Image #3: 2% tax levy increase in comparison to major expenditure increases.

On March 11, we will ask the public to vote in a special election to raise an additional \$2,388,749 above the tax levy. If approved, this 6% increase in the budget allows the district to keep thirty (30) teachers and staff to maintain small class sizes in the elementary schools including teachers to support specialized reading programs. The passing of the special question allows the District to have a Class III Security Officer for each school in the District. The passing of the special election question allows the District to keep STEM programs alive, and junior varsity sports. On page 3, image #4 highlights the increase to the budget with the approval of the special question.

Without voter approval of the special question, the District will be forced to make significant cuts:

- **Teacher Reductions:** The District will have to eliminate 30 teaching positions, increasing elementary class sizes to an average of 24 students per classroom and eliminating positions that support specialized reading programs.
- **School Security:** The District will not be able to provide a Class III Officer in every school.
- **Junior Varsity Sports:** The District will be unable to maintain junior varsity sports programs.

Approval of the special question is essential to avoid these reductions.

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The District needs the approval of registered voters to maintain all these positions and programs. You can learn more about the vote on our [budget webpage](#). The special election is on March 11, 2025.

Our budget woes won't end with the outcome of the public vote. As shown by image #4 on page 3, even if the special question passes, the 6% increase in the tax levy still doesn't balance the scale completely. Additional cuts to instructional tools and personnel will be necessary, requiring difficult decisions and challenging conversations with affected staff. In February and March, the public will receive information about additional reductions.

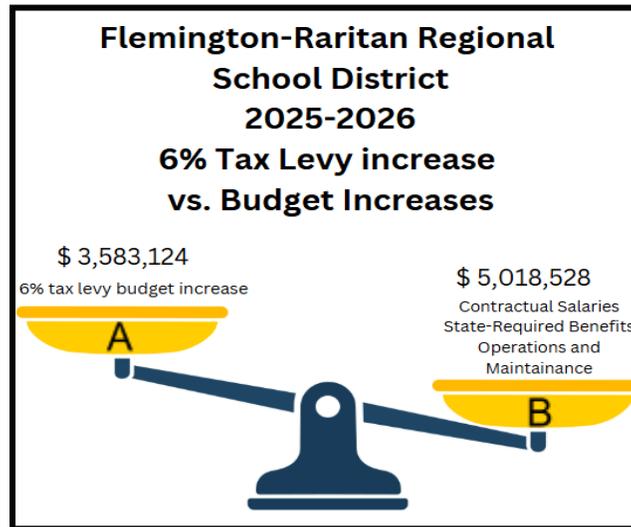


Image #4: 6% tax levy increase in comparison to major expenditure increases.

Our next Town Hall meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 26, from 6-7:30 PM at J.P. Case Middle School. Click for [Zoom](#) access with webinar ID 843 1493 5981 and code 022634. Click to view the Town Hall [flyer](#).

Please check our budget [webpage](#) for more information. On this page, you'll find:

- Sample Ballots: [Flemington Borough](#), [Raritan Township](#)
- Voter Information: [Poll Location and Vote By Mail Details](#)
- [Town Hall #3 February 26 - Flyer](#) (1/28/25)
- [Town Hall #2 January 27 - Presentation](#) (1/28/25)
- [Budget Update - January 23 - Board Meeting](#) (1/23/25)
- [Budget FAQ-Revised 1/23/25](#) (1/23/25)
- [Budget Brochure](#) (1/14/25)

Finally, do you have a question we have yet to address? Please reach out and email budget@frsd.us. We will work on including more information in our [Q&A](#) document.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our school district and student success.

Sincerely,
Kari McGann, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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