

February 28, 2025

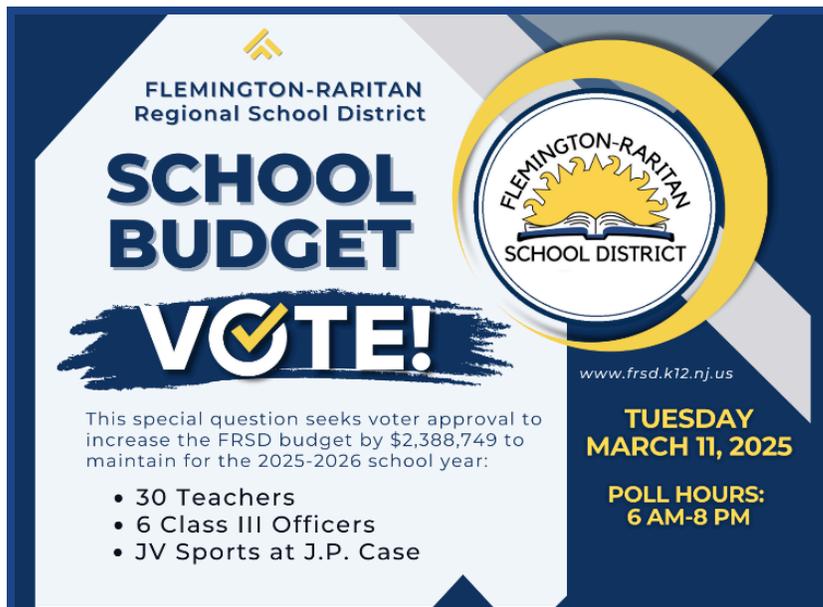
Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

On February 26, our District held our third and final Town Hall session on the 2025-2026 school budget. Once again I thank those who attended in person or virtually to learn more, ask questions, and share comments. Please click to access the [audio recording](#) or to view the full [presentation](#).

Our District has shared a lot of information about the budget, including letters, web updates, Town Hall presentations, audio recordings, and meetings with PTOs, municipal officials, and legislators. If you use social media, you might even be seeing posts and threads from sources outside of the District. It's important for every community member to sift through the facts, make an informed decision, and cast a vote on March 11.

Here are a few points worth repeating:

- Students First: FRSD is dedicated to serving our 3,311 students in preschool through Grade 8. Our student population has changed over the past six years with a 125% increase in multilingual learners from 2018 to 2024.
- The March 11 Vote: We are asking voters to approve a 6% increase in the PreK-Grade 8 school portion of the tax levy to raise the budget by \$2,388,749 to keep 30 teachers; 6 Class III Officer positions, one in each school; and junior varsity sports at J.P. Case. If the vote does not pass, we will have to eliminate all 30 teaching positions and junior varsity sports. We will not be able to maintain six Class III Officer positions, one in each school.



- Our Exceptional Staff: We invest in our 680 highly skilled and dedicated educators. We have to pay them as outlined in their contract. Salaries and benefits make up the majority of our budget, but when we cut teachers, class sizes go up. If we can retain our staff, we can maintain our class sizes of 17-24 in our elementary schools and continue to staff support programs in the intermediate and middle schools.

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.

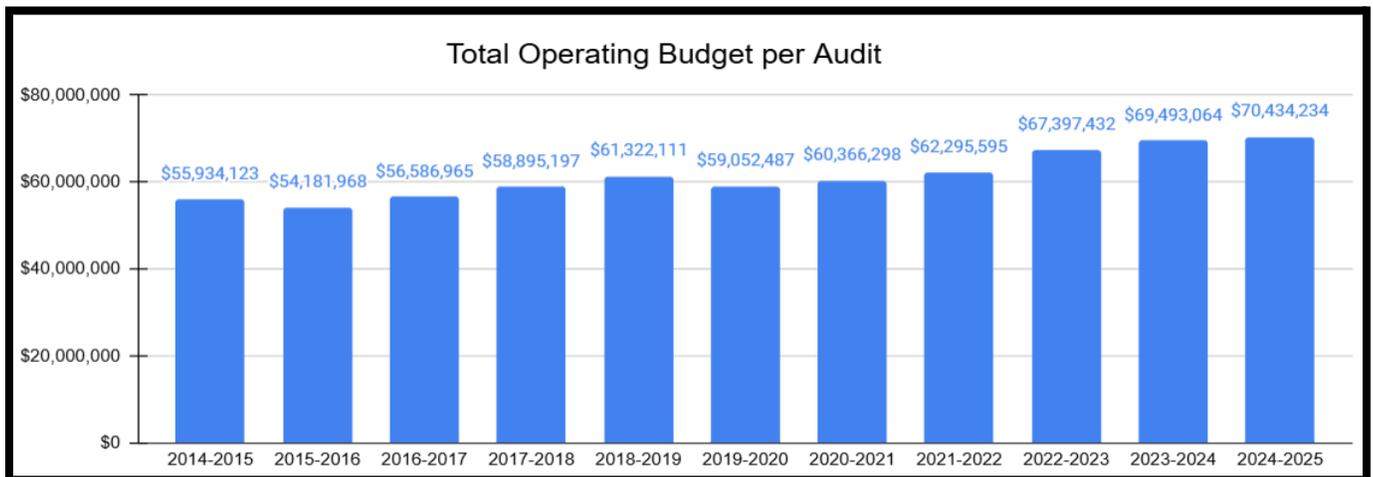
- **Your Taxes:** If the vote passes, taxes will increase for the PreK-Grade 8 portion of your tax bill. If your house is assessed at \$600,000 in Raritan Township, you'll see an increase of about \$32 a month. If your house is assessed at \$400,000 in Flemington Borough, you'll see an increase of about \$5 a month.
- **Our Buses:** We are working to renew our partnership with Hunterdon Central to reestablish a Joint Transportation agreement; however, the district has hired its own Transportation Coordinator to oversee PreK-Grade 8 bus routes for efficiency.
- **State Aid:** Our district lost over \$1 million in state funding over the past six years. We just received our state aid figure for the 2025-2026 school year. It's up \$365,749, for a total of \$6,461,590. That's an increase of 6%; however it still drastically underfunds the state and federal mandates we are required to meet.
- **Position Reductions:** Additional reductions are needed to balance the budget for the 2025-2026 school year and future budgets. At the January 23, 2025 Board of Education meeting, the District abolished three administration positions: Early Childhood Preschool Supervisor, Math/Science Supervisor, and English/Language Arts & Social Studies Supervisor. At the February 27, 2025 Board of Education meeting, the District abolished four elementary teaching positions, two guidance counselor positions, and a facility management position. More reductions are anticipated, even with the \$365,749 funding we received from the State of New Jersey.

We have heard a few public questions that warrant a response.

1. How did we get into this deficit? Did FRSD mismanage funds?

No, we have not mismanaged our funds. It costs districts more to educate students today than it did 10 years ago. Just as costs have risen for housing, gasoline, utilities, groceries, healthcare, and college tuition, so have costs for educating students in school districts throughout the state, including FRSD.

The total operating budget in 2014-2015 was \$55,934,123. In 2024-2025, the operating budget is \$70,434,234. Each month, the Board of Education reviews and approves all purchases. Bills lists and claims are reported by vendor name and payment and transfer lists are reviewed and approved. These public documents are available at Board meetings.



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Although it costs more to educate students than in years past, compared to nearby districts, we spend the least per pupil when compared to our neighboring districts.

Per Pupil Spending

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Hunterdon Central | \$24,653 |
| Clinton Twp. | \$24,553 |
| Readington | \$24,497 |
| East Amwell | \$23,510 |
| Delaware | \$22,955 |
| Kingwood | \$22,005 |
| Flemington-Raritan | \$19,310 |

2. Why is FRSD asking taxpayers to vote to increase the tax levy? Why now?

Before 2010, the community’s registered voters voted on the school budget each year with an average tax levy increase of 6.35%. In 2011, the state slashed state aid for all districts. FRSD reduced personnel and operating costs to have a 0% increase in the tax levy. From 2012 through 2021 the state placed a 2% cap, with eligible waivers, on the tax levy for districts opting out of a budget vote. Legislative school budget law changed and districts were required to keep budgets at or below a 2% increase unless the district chose to send the budget to the voters each year.

Beginning in 2016 until now, the District’s yearly budget allowed only a small percentage of the savings to be carried over to the next financial school year. Last year, the combined impact of contracted salary increases and rising healthcare costs exceeded the mandated 2% budget cap, creating significant financial strain. There have been other soaring costs in essential services and critical areas such as:

- Supplies and instructional materials
- Utilities, energy costs, and operating services
- Facility upkeep
- Transportation
- Special education tuition to meet mandated requirements.

On September 4, 2024, a new state law was signed, permitting districts to hold a special election to raise additional funds for the upcoming school budget year, exceeding the 2% tax levy cap, before the Board of Education approves the final budget. With this new option, FRSD is taking advantage of the new timeline and is now asking taxpayers for permission to increase the budget above the 2% cap. This increase, if approved, keeps teachers that help us maintain small class sizes and instructional support teachers, Class III Officers in every school, and junior varsity sports.

FRSD is at a critical crossroads, where raising the PreK-Grade 8 school portion of the tax levy by 6% through a special election is necessary to preserve the quality of education for our students. Without this increase, the district faces significant budget shortfalls that will directly impact students by increasing class sizes, reducing essential programs, cutting after-school activities, and compromising safety measures. This tax levy adjustment is not just an investment in our schools but in our community's future, ensuring that all students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

3. What happens next?

Now that our state aid numbers were released yesterday, the District is working to finalize the budget. Coupled with the outcome of the March 11 vote, we anticipate presenting the preliminary budget to the Board of Education at the March 17 Board meeting. It’s imperative that our community take time to learn more about our budget and the impact of the March 11 vote. Please check our budget [webpage](#) for budget letters, Town Hall presentations and recordings, and an FAQ. You’ll also find Sample Ballots: [Flemington Borough](#), [Raritan Township](#), and Voter Information: [Poll Location and Vote By Mail Details](#).

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I urge you to vote on Tuesday, March 11. Polls are open from 6 AM to 8 PM. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our school district and student success.

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

P.S. Please share [this brochure](#) (below) with friends and neighbors to help remind everyone in Flemington Borough and Raritan Township to vote.



**2025-2026
School Budget**

The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District seeks approval to raise the tax levy above the 2% cap.

Public Vote

Tuesday ~ March 11, 2025
Polls open 6 AM-8 PM

Every Student - Every Day
Every Opportunity

BALLOT QUESTION

Voters will be asked to approve increasing the Flemington-Raritan School District budget an additional 4% above the statutory 2% cap; that's a total increase of \$2,388,749 beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. These additional funds will maintain 30 teachers and staff members; Class III Officers in our schools; and J.V. sports at J.P. Case Middle School. Here's a breakdown:

- 25** Teachers that maintain small class size (17-24 students) in the elementary schools and support specialized reading programs, such as elementary reading recovery, reading and math support in the intermediate and middle schools; and instruction in all support classes;
- 5** Supplemental teachers that deliver Gift/STEM instruction;
- 6** Class III Officers, one in each building;
- &** Junior varsity sports at J.P. Case Middle School, including softball, volleyball, field hockey, cross-country, soccer, lacrosse, wrestling, basketball, cheerleading, and baseball.

TAX IMPACT

Approval of the special question will result in a permanent increase in the district's tax levy. If the special question is approved by voters, for the 2025-2026 school year, FRSD's portion of local taxes are estimated to go up:

- \$5** A month for a Flemington Borough home assessed at \$400,000.
- \$32** A month for a Raritan Township home assessed at \$600,000.





**BUDGET FACT:
PER PUPIL SPENDING**

Below is a comparison of Hunterdon County school districts. Here's how much was spent per student in 2024:

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Hunterdon Central - | \$24,653 |
| Clinton Twp. - | \$24,553 |
| Readington - | \$24,497 |
| East Amwell - | \$23,510 |
| Delaware - | \$22,955 |
| Kingwood - | \$22,005 |
| Flemington-Raritan - | \$19,310 |

Source: [Hunterdon County's 2024-2025 Revenue Guide to Spending](#)

VOTE BY MAIL

If you're heading out of town or can't get to the polls in person, be sure to complete a Vote by Mail ballot.

- 1** Complete and return a Vote by Mail Ballot Request Form to the County Clerk.
- 2** Review and follow ballot instructions.
- 3** Submit your Vote by Mail ballot in time to be sure your vote counts!
- 4** Vote by Mail ballots are due by 8 PM on March 11, 2025.

Not sure where or how to vote?
Visit our district's School Budget [web page](#) at www.frsk12.nj.us to view presentations, review the ballot, access a Frequently Asked Questions sheet, check polling locations and learn more.

ABOUT FRSD

Enrollment: 3,300 students, PreK-Grade 8
6 Schools: 687,688 square feet

CLASS SIZES

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Minimum, Maximum | SCAN OR CODE FOR BUDGET INFO: |
| Preschool - <15, 15 |  |
| Kindergarten - 15, 18 | |
| Grade 1 - 15, 20 | |
| Grade 2 - 16, 22 | |
| Grade 3 - 16, 23 | |
| Grade 4 - 17, 24 | |

QUESTIONS?
www.frsk12.nj.us
E-mail: budget@frsd.us

Our Mission
As a Community of One, WE:

- Foster social, emotional, and academic growth within a connected learning community
- Respect, honor and embrace diverse family and community values by building collaborative partnerships
- Strengthen opportunities that nurture creative and critical thinkers
- Develop and inspire personal excellence.

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