

Press Release



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Lenape Regional High School District Releases Budget Information

Shamong, New Jersey – In preparation for submission to the New Jersey Department of Education, the Superintendent's office is sharing preliminary budget findings.

The total 2023-2024 General Fund Operating Budget is \$174,094,301 less the withdrawal from Capital Reserve of \$7,785,000 for capital outlay projects nets the General Fund Budget to \$166,309,301, which represents a 1.96% increase over the previous year. This increase is the overall net difference of a 2.18% tax levy increase and a **decrease** of State Aid in the amount of \$1,175,078.

The Debt Service tax levy is not increasing and will remain the same amount as the previous year, which reflects the current payment schedule for the 2023-2024 year for bonds issued or refunded that were previously approved by the taxpayers in 2005 and 2022.

The loss in state aid comes at a time when school districts are mitigating the impacts of the pandemic on the students they serve, and at the same time dealing with extreme inflation causing astronomical increases in supplies and services as well as unprecedented increases in transportation costs and cost of living increases. The loss in state aid is further compounded by the State's School Aid Formula calculation of Local Fair Share which determined local taxpayers in this region should be responsible for \$6 million more of the overall budget from last year to this year (which would equate to a 4.7% increase to the current tax levy). There is no mechanism for school districts to raise enough funds to fill these deficits, as all of these factors far outpace the 2% tax levy cap.

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"It is incomprehensible that elected officials responsible for the State's budget would approve any cuts to direct aid to schools at a time when students need more support than ever before," said Chair of the LRHSD BOE Finance Committee David Stow. "Not only are they considering a budget with cuts to school funding, they also support a formula which demonstrates local tax payers can somehow afford \$6 million more than they could last year as part of the Local Fair Share calculation. This, along with the year-after-year cuts to state aid, and the increases of everything else, continue to challenge us to maintain the high-quality education in safe and secure environments our families rely on for their children."

Board President Steve Lee added, "The Board welcomes the support of our community and continued willingness to advocate on behalf of the students of our school district. We encourage all community members to voice their disapproval with the State's budgeted cuts to school funding in their upcoming budget hearings." Information on the Senate and Assembly Budget Committee hearings can be found here: <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/budget-hearings-registration>.

In order for a balanced budget to be put forth for approval, school and district administration collaborated on many difficult decisions. Operational and staffing reductions as well as other cost saving measures in this preliminary budget are subject to approval by the Executive County Superintendent. Once approved, a more in-depth discussion of budget and tax impact will occur during a public hearing which will take place at the K. Kiki Konstantinos Administration and Staff Development Building, 93 Willow Grove Road, Shamong, New Jersey at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 26, 2023.

The General Fund Tax Levy increase of 2.18% and no Debt Service Tax Levy increase results in the tax impact outlined below.

Evesham Township – Tax levy increase of 2.70 cents, resulting in an increase in regional school taxes of \$76.45 on a home assessed at the township average of \$272,628.

Medford Township – Tax levy increase of 1.75 cents, resulting in an increase in regional school taxes of \$100.97 on a home assessed at the township average of \$329,349.

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Medford Lakes Borough – Tax levy decrease of 1.33 cents, resulting in a decrease in regional school taxes of \$36.59 on a home assessed at the borough average of \$288,880.

Mt. Laurel Township – Tax levy decrease of 0.77 cents, resulting in a decrease in regional school taxes of \$16.07 on a home assessed at the township average of \$238,200.

Shamong Township – Tax levy increase of 2.58 cents, resulting in an increase in regional school taxes of \$82.24 on a home assessed at the township average of \$309,768.

Southampton Township – Tax levy increase of 5.37 cents, resulting in an increase in regional school taxes of \$106.09 on a home assessed at the township average of \$192,805.

Tabernacle Township – Tax levy increase of 2.51 cents, resulting in an increase in regional school taxes of \$92.49 on a home assessed at the township average of \$274,246.

Woodland Township – Tax levy increase of 2.81 cents, resulting in an increase in regional school taxes of \$78.68 on a home assessed at the township average of \$256,300.

About LRHSD - The Lenape Regional High School District's four high schools – Lenape, Shawnee, Cherokee and Seneca – as well as the Sequoia Alternative and Transition to Adulthood Programs, educate approximately 6,800 students from eight communities in Burlington County, NJ. The communities served include Evesham, Medford, Medford Lakes, Mount Laurel, Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle, and Woodland. The Lenape Regional District is among the highest-achieving districts in the state, with an average graduation rate of 97.2% and an average combined SAT score of 1142. A leader in progressive education, the LRHSD's mission is to develop physically and emotionally healthy students who excel in an ever-changing world.

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