



**Public Budget Hearing
April 24, 2023**

Mission Statement

The South Hunterdon Regional School District, a small, close-knit school district working in partnership with our community, provides dynamic and innovative educational experiences that challenge and empower each student to strive for personal excellence and positive global citizenship.

District Goals

Goal 1: Blended/Personalized Learning techniques will be utilized to meet the needs of diverse learners within all classrooms throughout the district.

Goal 2: Introduce Priority Practices to our teaching staff and utilize a self assessment tool to identify specific and targeted practices for educator professional development.

Goal 3: Identifying and removing institutional barriers, and creating access and opportunities to foster the success of our students. Promote equality of educational opportunities and reduce the disparity of results between diverse groups of students.

Goal 4: Continue to expand and refine Social Emotional strategies and programs through data driven practices to meet the specific needs of students, families, and staff.

Goal 5: Begin the transition of preparing for a new district configuration during the 2024-2025 school year. ³

Board Goals

Goal 1: Provide support and resources to the Superintendent toward the achievement of the district goals.

Goal 2: Begin the Strategic Planning Process to develop a new 5 year plan.

What is a School Budget?

- **A Budget Is:** A Planning Tool that Reflects What We Value
- **A Budget Is:** Fiscally Responsible to those we serve
- **A Budget Is:** A Planning Tool that...
 - Considers Contingencies and Manages Risk

What do we value?

For Students and Staff

- Providing academic opportunities for all students.
- Providing extra and co-curricular opportunities for all students.
- Developing the whole child with social-emotional supports.
- Supporting and developing staff for excellence.

For the District

- Long-term planning for academics
- Long-term planning for staff
- Long-term planning to address aging facilities

Return On Your Investment

- Resources for staff to implement the district instructional vision focusing on blended/personalized learning (emphasis on small group instruction) with the goal of improving student achievement.
 - Hiring of two instructional coaches with the focus on analysis of benchmark/state assessment scores as well as supporting teachers in the classroom.
 - Cohorts of teachers working with an outside consultant.
 - District focus on a systematic intervention system that can be used by all students.
- Excellent class sizes for PreK-12.
- Program review of the ESL and Special Education Programs.
- Preschool expansion (60 free preschool seats for 2023-2024)
- Program expansion - Dual enrollment program with Seton Hall, National Equity Lab and TCNJ.
- New master schedule for students in grades 7-12 (2023-2024)
- After school tutoring and summer academic program

Return On Your Investment

- Additional mental health supports for students and staff.
 - Addition of a counselor (Children's First)
 - Therapy Dog Program
 - Youth Mental Health First Aid training for staff and students
- Plan to address long standing facility issues.
- Upgrade to the auditorium (audio, visual, lighting)
- Over 65 extra/co-curricular/club/enrichment opportunities for students district-wide. Most ever offered by SHRSD
- Late buses four days a week for ALL 7-12 students.
- Home internet access for any student/family that has a financial hardship.
- Cybersecurity training for all staff on an annual basis.

Return On Your Investment

- Addition of Winter Dance Team, Student Unions, Flag Football
- Computer Science and Podcasting
- LED Lighting Upgrade for MS/HS
- iPads for PreK, K, 1st grade
- Chromebook upgrade 2nd - 12th grade
- Curriculum updates

Budget Calendar

2022

- Budgeting Discussions with Administrators
- Meetings with BA and Superintendent as needed
- Administrators submit Budgets to Business Administrator

By End of October
November/December
December 22

2023

- District Office Review and Development of Preliminary Budget
- Budget Review: Superintendent - BA with Admin.
- Budget Review: County Superintendent and BA
- BOE Budget Work Session
- Superintendent Submits Preliminary Budget to Finance Committee
- Finance Committee Review of Budget
- Governor's Budget Address
- NJDOE Releases State Aid Notices
- Approval of Preliminary 2022/2023 Budget (BOE Meeting)
- Submit Budget to Executive County Superintendent
- Public Hearing and Adopt Final Budget

December/January
January 2023
January 23, 2023
February 13, 2023
February 16, 2023
February/March
February 28, 2023
March 2, 2023
March 27, 2023
March 28, 2023
April 24, 2023

Key Factors that Affect the Budget

- ◆ Fixed costs
 - ◆ Staffing
 - ◆ Benefits
 - ◆ Special Education programs and services
 - ◆ Extra/Co-Curricular activities
 - ◆ Maintenance and Operations
 - ◆ Transportation
 - ◆ Ratables and State Aid
- 75.38% of the budget with increases over 2%**
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Quick Terms

General Fund - The total amount of money required to pay for current-year programs, staffing and services at next year's prices — i.e., what the next year's budget would be if the current year's budget were simply “rolled over.”

Tax Levy - Total sum to be raised by the school district after subtracting out all other revenues including state aid. The tax levy is used to determine the tax rate for property owners in each of the cities, towns or villages that makes up a school district.

Debt Service -The money that is required to cover the repayment of interest and principal on a debt for a particular project.

Fund balance/Surplus - A fund balance is created when the school district has money left over at the end of its fiscal year from either under spending the budget or taking in additional revenue.

Banked Cap - unused spending authority that can be saved for 3 budget cycles and is generated by not spending all of the allowable 2% cap or using automatic cap waivers for health benefit increases, enrollment increases, or deferred pension contributions. (**we have \$17,343 - expires after 2023-2024**)

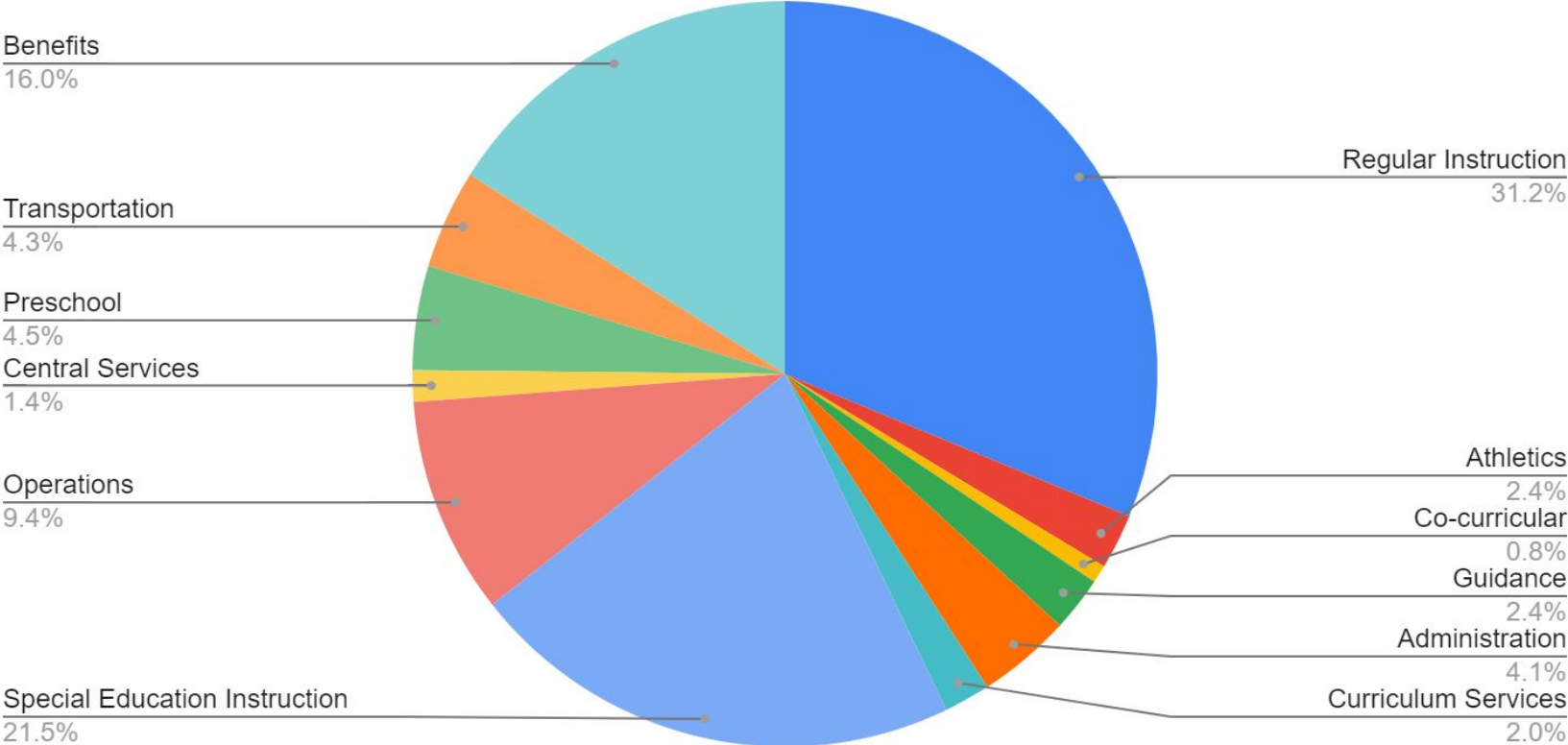
Capital Reserve - A reserve account that is to be used for approved capital projects. Money can be withdrawn by board resolution for projects otherwise eligible for state funding. Monies can also be withdrawn for projects not eligible for state funding at budget time. Capital reserve funds can also be used to pay debt service costs through an appropriation during budget time.

Equalization rate: In simple terms, an equalization rate represents the average level of assessment in each community. (Equalization Rate = Total Assessed/Total Market Value) - this is determined by the county

Different Line Items in our Budget - Expenditures

- Staff salaries
- Benefits
- Special Education
- Technology (devices, software subscriptions, internet, hotspots, etc.)
- Custodial/Maintenance (utilities, insurance, grounds maintenance)
- Transportation
- Classroom supplies
- Program supplies (English, Math, Social Studies, Science, etc.)
- Textbooks
- Co-Curricular activities (clubs)
- Extra-Curricular activities (athletics)
- Curriculum and Instruction (professional development/curriculum writing/textbooks)

Where our money is going 2023-2024



Different Line Items in our 2023-2024 Budget - Revenues

- State Aid - 11.08%
- Federal Aid - 6.31%
- Tax Levy (property taxes) - 76.34%
- Preschool Expansion Aid - \$891,720
- CEA Program rent (middle/high school) - \$155,000
- Fund Balance - \$291,446
- Pay to play - \$25,000
- Interest - \$3,300

Challenges Related to our Budget

- ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding expires September 1, 2024
- Tax Levy 2% cap
- Average salary increases 3%
- Health benefits increase is projected to be 9% (SEHBP is 15%)
- Increasing energy costs
- Increasing transportation costs (Fuel, repairs, driver shortages)
- Out of district tuition (Special Education)

Capital Reserve Account

- PreK - 4 Roof Replacement
- Flooring for the PreK-4 and 5-8 buildings
- Technology for the PreK-4 and 5-8 buildings
- Security infrastructure for the PreK-4 and 5-8 buildings

What does this draft budget include?

- Maintain small [class sizes](#)
- Maintains professional development funding focused on improving student achievement
- Expansion of the Preschool Program
- Continuation of mental health supports for students
- Implementation of a new science curriculum for K-8 (McGraw Hill Inspire Science)
- Implementation of our K-12 Therapy Dog Program
- Increase in dual enrollment courses for college credit
- Maintain co-curricular and extracurricular offerings in grades K-12
- Continue with late buses 4 days a week for all students
- Supports the use of the St. John's School for the 2023-2024 school year
- New Student Information System - OnCourse
- Support the findings and recommendations from the PreK-12 Special Education Program Review
- Review of our Gifted and Talented Program
- Reduction of two FTEs

Things We Don't Control: The Ratables*

*The overall ESTIMATED value of all taxable properties in the town (determined by the Hunterdon County Tax Assessor)

Municipality	10/1/2020 use for 21-22 budget est.	10/1/2021 used for 22-23 budget est.	Difference
Lambertville	795,337,992	802,923,992	↑
Stockton	91,487,500	91,302,000	↓
West Amwell	545,474,464	572,256,038	↑

Thing We Don't Control: The Percentage Share*

*How the school tax is distributed between the towns we serve (determined by the Hunterdon County Tax Assessor)

Municipality	2020-21 Budget Share	2020-21 Enrollment	2021-22 Budget Share	2021-22 Enrollment	2022-2023 Budget Share	2022-2023 Enrollment
Lambertville	52.4791%	389	53.3476%	370	53.6911%	343
Stockton	5.6211%	35	5.2979%	36	5.6923%	45
West Amwell	41.8998%	371	41.3544%	331	40.6166%	344

Equalization rate: In simple terms, an equalization rate represents the average level of assessment in each community. (Equalization Rate = Total Assessed/Total Market Value)

Enrollment numbers above do not include our choice students (97 choice seats)

2022 Hunterdon County District/Regional School Tax Rates

2022 Hunterdon County Tax Rates	
Municipality	District/Regional School Tax
High Bridge Borough	2.793
Hampton Borough	2.780
Califon Borough	2.543
Glen Gardner Borough	2.508
Milford Borough	2.474
Holland Township	2.428
Union Township	2.248
Frenchtown Borough	2.194
Bethlehem Township	2.170
Bloomsbury Borough	2.157
Alexandria Township	2.032
Town of Clinton	1.968
Franklin Township	1.941
Clinton Township	1.930
Raritan Township	1.925
East Amwell Township	1.855
Lebanon Township	1.849
Kingwood Township	1.720
Flemington Borough	1.661
Delaware Township	1.643
Lebanon Borough	1.641
Readington Township	1.601
Tewksbury Township	1.432
West Amwell Township	1.381
Lambertville City	1.342
Stockton Borough	1.308

A General Fund Tax Levy History

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023	2023-2024
General Fund	\$18,841,727	\$19,245,663	\$19,630,576	\$20,023,188
% Increase	2.41%	2.14%	2%	2%

*The Board could increase the budget above 2% in the amount of \$99,038 due to our health benefit increase however is choosing **not** to do this to contain costs for taxpayers.

** The Board could increase the budget above 2% in the amount of \$17,343 using banked cap from a previous budget however is choosing **not** to do this to contain costs for taxpayers.

Debt Service (our mortgage)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023	2023-2024
Debt Service	\$1,369,165	\$1,351,120	\$1,346,401	\$1,981,034
% Increase	3.33%	-1.32%	-0.35%	47.14%

2021 Referendum debt payments start in July 2023

Public Comment