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ROBERT M. GAMPER, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

ROBERT WRIGHT
Board Secretary and
Business Administrator

Dear Park Ridge Residents:

We have prepared the enclosed brochure to provide an overview of the budget we are proposing for the 2024-2025 school year. The Board of Education continues to strive to provide the highest quality education to the children of Park Ridge while attentively remaining fiscally conscientious. It is important to us that you, our taxpayers, are informed about the accomplishments of our district and that you know that your tax dollars have been, and will continue to be, used effectively and efficiently. The following are some recent highlights:

- ◆ 96% of the PRHS class of 2023 is currently attending either a two or four year college.
- ◆ The 2023-24 school year saw Girls Soccer, Boys Cross Country, Volleyball, Football and Wrestling all having championship seasons. In addition, for the first time in PRHS history, the Girls Basketball team won a State Sectional title and Competition Cheer won the State Championship in the COED All-music Intermediate division.
- ◆ The District continued their 1:1 Macbook laptop program for all students in Grades 3-12.
- ◆ The District added four new Electives for 2023-24 (AP Environmental Science, Entrepreneurship, Social Media Marketing and Sports and Entertainment Management).
- ◆ The District continues to offer a senior internship program in collaboration with Pascack Valley School district.
- ◆ Renovations of the West Ridge bathrooms were completed. Progress continues to be made at the High School for the Locker Room renovation and addition.

The budget we are proposing will maintain the initiatives we have begun and continue to provide the high-quality education our community expects. The proposed budget will continue to provide our youngest students with a full day Kindergarten program. The 2024-25 budget continues to fund a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) initiative at the elementary schools. The district is also in the process of upgrading their fiber optic backbone which will provide faster internet speeds to support our 1:1 laptop program. A website redesign was completed in January which makes us fully ADA compliant.

In preparing the Budget this year, the Board was faced with many challenges. Due to high inflation, many of our costs rose significantly above the two percent level we try to maintain. Health insurance costs were up over 7% and outside tuition and transportation costs were up 9%. Although the district did receive additional state aid, it was insufficient to meet all our challenges. As a result, the district needed to take advantage of available CAP waivers. This resulted in a tax increase in the proposed 2024-25 budget of 2.67%. The tax impact on the average Park Ridge home (\$475,000 assessed value) would be \$305 annually. The public hearing for the budget is Monday, May 6th at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Little Theater. The Board of Education will formally vote to approve the budget at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

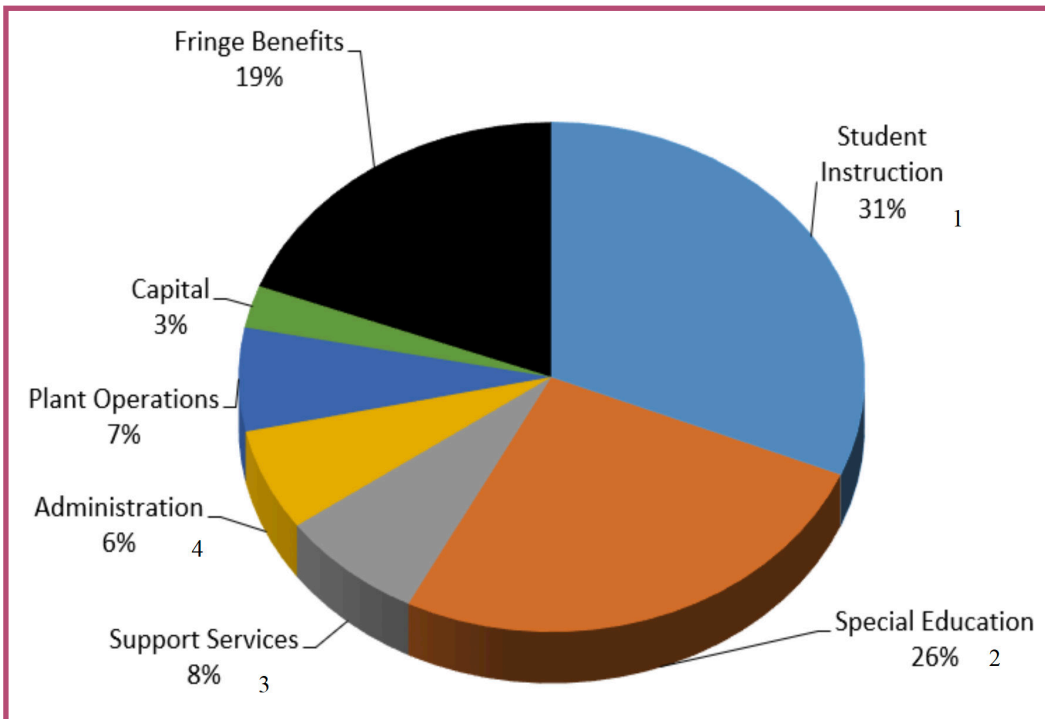
In closing, it takes teamwork to build a good school system and we know this only happens when community members, parents, students and district employees work together. We hope you are as proud of the Park Ridge School District as we are and we thank you for your continued support.

The Park Ridge Board of Education
A district "committed to educational excellence."

2024-25 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Continues funding for a full day Kindergarten program at both elementary schools.
- ◆ Aligns curriculum with the updated New Jersey Student Learning Standards.
- ◆ “One to One” Macbook Laptop Initiative refreshed for Grades K-12 with newer model computers.
- ◆ Provides resources to the Elementary grades for STEAM programs (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics).
- ◆ Maintains a contract with West Bergen Mental Health to provide therapeutic counselors to meet the emotional wellness needs of students grades 7-12.
- ◆ Continues to provide an elementary guidance counselor at East Brook school and includes funding for a new elementary guidance counselor at West Ridge.
- ◆ Offers new courses at the High School including Introduction to Guitar, Cyber security, and AP Macro Economics.
- ◆ The Owl House, our 18-21 year old Life Skills program, will continue to generate tuition revenue from out of district students and save money by keeping Park Ridge students in the school district.
- ◆ Supports a wide range of Middle School and High School sports programs.
- ◆ Provides funding for a new Therapeutic classroom at the High School. This includes appropriate support staff and counselors from West Bergen Mental Health.
- ◆ Continuing to employ three Special Law Enforcement Officer’s Class III (SLEO 3’s) to provide security at each of the district’s school buildings.
- ◆ The district continues to undertake Capital Improvement projects, such as the new HS Locker Room and training facilities and anticipates they will be ready for student use in 2024-25.

How The Budget is Spent



The 2024-25 proposed budget maintains educational spending. The Tax levy increase is 2.67% which is at the State mandated CAP. The budget includes funds to maintain the 1:1 laptop initiative in Grades 4 through 12 and add a fiber optic backbone. Security will continue to include the employment of SLEO 3 officers. Capital Reserve funds will be used to address facility needs Using these funds does not impact taxes or the District’s CAP.

Notes

- 1) Includes regular instruction, basic skills, ESL, school sponsored programs and transportation.
- 2) Includes resource room, preschool handicap, out-of-district tuition, related services and transportation.
- 3) Includes health, speech, guidance, media services and staff development.
- 4) Includes legal, election, communication, Internet, printing, postage, auditing, graduation and other professional fees

Budgeted Expenditures

	2023-24 <u>Budget</u>	2024-25 <u>Proposed</u>	Increase (Decrease)
Instruction	\$9,315,395	\$9,639,103	\$323,708
Special Education Instruction	2,563,930	2,538,420	(25,510)
Basic Skills /Bilingual	792,304	884,304	92,000
Co-Curricular/Athletics	1,033,022	1,065,979	32,957
Out-of-District Tuition	2,959,050	3,173,632	214,582
Support Regular (Health, Guidance)	802,446	849,590	47,144
Support Special (Speech, Related, CST)	3,650,064	3,838,900	188,836
Media Services	792,134	801,192	9,058
Staff Development	849,661	927,979	78,318
General Administration	555,437	573,676	18,239
School Administration	1,154,891	1,164,322	9,431
Business/Technology Services	676,306	709,008	32,702
Operation & Maintenance	2,617,019	2,485,779	(131,240)
Transportation	846,333	943,200	96,867
Benefits	6,925,000	7,270,717	345,717
Capital Outlay/Capital Reserve	<u>6,261,151</u>	<u>1,018,901</u>	<u>(5,242,250)</u>
General Fund - Budgeted Expenditures	41,794,143	37,884,702	(3,909,441)
Debt Service Fund	<u>782,190</u>	<u>778,883</u>	<u>(3,307)</u>
Total Budgeted Expenditures	<u>\$42,576,333</u>	<u>\$38,663,585</u>	<u>(\$3,912,748)</u>

Budgeted Revenues

	2023-24 <u>Budget</u>	2024-25 <u>Proposed</u>	Increase (Decrease)
State Aid:			
Special Education	\$1,298,604	\$1,370,057	\$71,453
Security Aid	59,165	116,795	57,630
Transportation Aid	99,501	123,220	23,719
Extraordinary Aid			0
Federal Grant:			
Medicaid Reimbursement	10,959	14,105	3,146
Local Revenues:			
Tuition	33,945	33,945	0
Miscellaneous	122,993	122,993	0
Local Tax Levy	33,010,178	33,891,861	881,683
Fund Balance	1,158,798	1,158,798	0
Transfers - Capital Reserve/Other	<u>6,000,000</u>	<u>1,052,928</u>	<u>(4,947,072)</u>
General Fund - Budgeted Revenues	41,794,143	37,884,702	(3,909,441)
Debt Service Fund:			
Local Tax Levy	516,245	514,062	(2,183)
Fund Balance/Transfer from Cap Res			0
State Aid	<u>265,945</u>	<u>264,821</u>	<u>(1,124)</u>
Debt Service - Budgeted Revenues	<u>782,190</u>	<u>778,883</u>	<u>(3,307)</u>
Total Budgeted Revenues	<u>\$42,576,333</u>	<u>\$38,663,585</u>	<u>(\$3,912,748)</u>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

On January 17, 2012, Governor Christie signed into law, S-3148, which allowed local school districts to eliminate a vote on the school budget if the budget is at or below the statutory tax CAP. On February 13, 2012, the Park Ridge Board of Education passed a resolution adopting this provision. What this means for the voters of Park Ridge is that there will be NO ELECTIONS IN APRIL. All elections will be held in November. In addition, if the budget is at or below the statutory tax CAP set by the State of N.J., there will be no public vote on the budget. The proposed budget, as set forth inside this flyer, is at the statutory tax CAP.

Park Ridge Board of Education
85 Pascack Road
Park Ridge, New Jersey 07656

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PARK RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2024 - 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET



PUBLIC HEARING:
Monday, May 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Park Ridge High School Little Theater
Visit www.parkridgeschools.org for more information