

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

ECR WSS
Postal Customer Local
Park Ridge, New Jersey 07656

PARK RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2025 - 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

PUBLIC HEARING:

Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Park Ridge High School Little Theater

Visit www.parkridgeschools.org for more information

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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 2025-2026 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:

- ◆ In the 2025 NICHE rankings, the Park Ridge School District was ranked #10 in Bergen County, receiving an overall grade of "A."
- ◆ 88% of the PRHS class of 2024 is currently attending either a two or four year college.
- ◆ So far, the 2024-25 school year saw Boys Cross Country, Volleyball, Wrestling, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball and Bowling all becoming league champions.
- ◆ The District continued their 1:1 Macbook laptop program for all students in Grades 3-12.
- ◆ The District added AP Macroeconomics, Cybersecurity and Introduction to Guitar as new Electives for 2024-25.
- ◆ The District continues to offer a senior internship program in collaboration with Pascack Valley School district.
- ◆ Renovations to the High School Locker Rooms were completed. The District now has a new weight room facility and expanded Locker room space.

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 2025-26 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.

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 20% and outside tuition and transportation costs continue to represent a large portion of our budget. 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 2025-26 budget of 3.25%. The tax impact on the average Park Ridge home (\$475,000 assessed value) would be \$294 annually. The public hearing for the budget is Tuesday, 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.

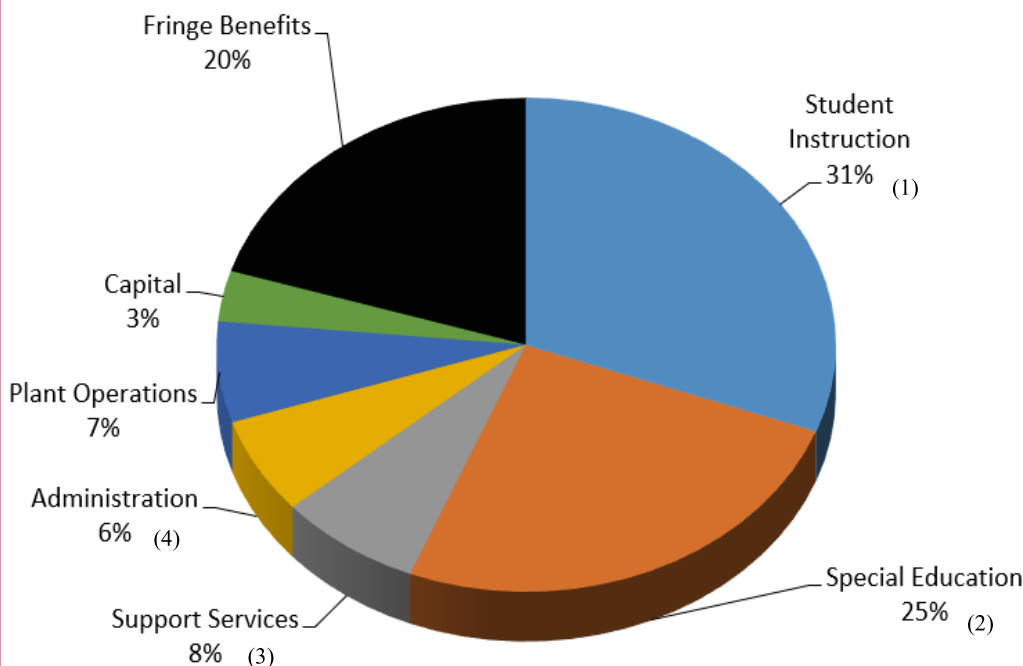
The Park Ridge Board of Education

A district "committed to educational excellence."

2025-26 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 3-12 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 in grades 7-12.
- ◆ Continues to provide an elementary guidance counselor at East Brook and West Ridge schools.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Continues to provide funding for a Therapeutic classroom at the High School which allows students to remain in the district.
- ◆ 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 improving the HVAC equipment at both Elementary schools through the participation in a State Grant Program (ROD Grant).

How The Budget is Spent



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.

The 2025-26 proposed budget maintains educational spending. The Tax levy increase is 3.25% which is at the State mandated CAP. The budget includes funds to maintain the 1:1 laptop initiative in Grades 3 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.

Budgeted Expenditures

	2024-25 <u>Budget</u>	2025-26 <u>Proposed</u>	Increase (Decrease)
Instruction	\$9,639,103	\$9,868,967	\$229,864
Special Education Instruction	2,538,420	2,464,071	(74,349)
Basic Skills /Bilingual	884,304	888,528	4,224
Co-Curricular/Athletics	1,065,979	1,104,681	38,702
Out-of-District Tuition	3,173,632	3,055,807	(117,825)
Support Regular (Health, Guidance)	849,590	868,039	18,449
Support Special (Speech, Related, CST)	3,838,900	4,105,598	266,698
Media Services	801,192	826,768	25,576
Staff Development	927,979	971,876	43,897
General Administration	573,676	586,741	13,065
School Administration	1,164,322	1,183,062	18,740
Business/Technology Services	709,008	728,703	19,695
Operation & Maintenance	2,485,779	2,606,239	120,460
Transportation	943,200	959,089	15,889
Benefits	7,270,717	7,963,931	693,214
Capital Outlay/Capital Reserve	<u>1,018,901</u>	<u>1,311,151</u>	<u>292,250</u>
General Fund - Budgeted Expenditures	37,884,702	39,493,251	1,608,549
Debt Service Fund	<u>778,883</u>	<u>776,209</u>	<u>(2,674)</u>
Total Budgeted Expenditures	<u>\$38,663,585</u>	<u>\$40,269,460</u>	<u>\$1,605,875</u>

Budgeted Revenues

	2024-25 <u>Budget</u>	2025-26 <u>Proposed</u>	Increase (Decrease)
State Aid:			
Special Education	\$1,370,057	\$1,396,813	\$26,756
Security Aid	116,795	137,747	20,952
Transportation Aid	123,220	172,116	48,896
Extraordinary Aid			0
Federal Grant:			
Medicaid Reimbursement	14,105	1,301	(12,804)
Local Revenues:			
Tuition	33,945	33,945	0
Miscellaneous	122,993	132,783	9,790
Local Tax Levy	33,891,861	34,994,748	1,102,887
Fund Balance	1,158,798	1,158,798	0
Transfers - Capital Reserve/Other	<u>1,052,928</u>	<u>1,465,000</u>	<u>412,072</u>
General Fund - Budgeted Revenues	<u>37,884,702</u>	<u>39,493,251</u>	<u>1,608,549</u>
Debt Service Fund:			
Local Tax Levy	514,061	512,295	(1,766)
Fund Balance/Transfer from Cap Res	1	1	0
State Aid	<u>264,821</u>	<u>263,913</u>	<u>(908)</u>
Debt Service - Budgeted Revenues	<u>778,883</u>	<u>776,209</u>	<u>(2,674)</u>
Total Budgeted Revenues	<u>\$38,663,585</u>	<u>\$40,269,460</u>	<u>\$1,605,875</u>