



Key Takeaways from the January 12 Finance Joint Governance Meeting

Dear Pine-Richland Community,

The Pine-Richland School Board and district leadership met on January 12 to review Pine-Richland's financial outlook for the 2026–2027 school year. Here are the highlights:

Why the Budget Is Challenging

- Declining county property assessments and the common level ratio (CLR) have reduced PRSD's real estate revenue by over \$600,000 since last year and reflect a three-year adverse trend.
- New housing growth is slower than in past years.
- State funding remains nearly flat.
- Fund balance is declining as previously approved capital projects are completed, which also negatively impacts revenue from interest earnings.

Current Budget Picture

- Without action, the 2026–2027 budget shows a projected \$4.7 million deficit, with even larger deficits projected in future years due to the CLR-driven structural concern.
- Through reductions and updates, the district has already lowered the deficit by \$270,000 since December.

Steps the District is Taking to Reduce Expenses

- **Staffing Efficiencies:** Additional reduction of positions through attrition beyond those eliminated in the last two years
- **Curriculum and Technology:** Extending resource lifecycles, shifting to digital materials where appropriate and adjusting device replacement cycles
- **Athletics and Activities:** Reviewing program structures, participation fees, transportation and revenue opportunities
- **Operations:** Lower substitute staffing costs, reduced contracted services where possible and ongoing monitoring of utilities and transportation expenses

- **Potential bond refinancing** could save an additional interest expense annually.

Tax Options Under Review

The board discussed three possibilities:

1. No tax increase
2. Increase up to the state index (3.5%)
3. Apply for state exceptions*, which would allow a higher maximum increase if needed

**Applying for exceptions simply preserves options; it does not determine next year's tax rate.*

Other Community Resources

The Board and Administration are committed to transparency and ongoing communication on this important topic. For additional background information, community members are encouraged to view video archives of recent Finance Meetings.

- [September 15, 2025](#)—Finance and Staff Services / Educational Programs
- [October 6, 2025](#)—Finance and Student Services / Educational Programs
- [October 20, 2025](#)—Finance and Buildings & Grounds / Capital Funding
- [November 10, 2025](#)—Finance and Operations / Transportation / Tuition / Utilities / Purchasing
- [December 8, 2025](#)—Finance and Independent Audit / Debt Refinancing Update
- [January 12, 2026](#)—Finance and Preliminary Budget / Exceptions / Closing the Deficit

Timeline

- February 9: Board votes on preliminary budget
- June: Final budget approval

The [preliminary budget is available for public review on BoardDocs](#).

Pine-Richland remains committed to maintaining high-quality programs for students while making responsible, long-term financial decisions. Additional updates will be shared as the budget process continues.

Sincerely,
Pine-Richland Board of Directors

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