

Property Taxes & State Funding

Where does increased property tax money go?

- Increased property taxes go to the state, not directly to the school district.
- The state redistributes funds and determines how much each district receives.
- Funding levels can be adjusted based on state finances and priorities.

How often does the state change funding structures?

- Typically every two years, but it can happen annually.
- The state is increasing investment in charter and private schools, which pulls funding away from public districts.
- A former protection that prevented funding decreases has been eliminated.
- Over 40 districts statewide (including others in Lake County) are facing similar challenges.

Fair School Funding Plan

- If fully funded, the district would still face reductions, but not to the current extent.
- State funding for the district was expected to decline regardless.

Budget Development & Financial Planning

How school budgets are made

- Each year the district projects:
 - Expected revenue

- Student enrollment
- Over 80% of the budget is dedicated to:
 - Staffing
 - Transportation
 - Operations
 - Curriculum
 - Facility upgrades and improvements
- Budgets are planned well in advance, so sudden revenue changes require major adjustments.

Recent financial impacts

- A county-level decision resulted in a \$400,000 reduction, requiring immediate cuts.
 - The district must plan for ongoing reductions year after year.
 - A 10% reduction for the next school year is difficult but allows time to plan responsibly.
-

Staff Reductions & Timing

Will staff reductions happen mid-year?

- Any reductions proposed will:
 - Occur after the current school year ends
 - Take effect before the next school year begins

Impact on classroom quality

- The goal is to make reductions without harming academic outcomes.

- Average class sizes are 22–27 students and will not be increased beyond that.
 - No radical changes planned for special education services.
 - Priority is maintaining essential support while finding efficiencies.
-

Enrollment, CCP, and Auburn Career Center

Low enrollment challenges

- Declining enrollment is the core issue driving funding reductions.
- This is a regional and statewide trend, not unique to the district.

College Credit Plus (CCP) & Auburn

- Funding follows the student.
 - Students attending CCP or Auburn are funded elsewhere, so the district:
 - Receives partial funding, not full per-pupil funding
 - CCP costs are:
 - Transparent
 - Comparable across options
 - Required by law
 - There is no significant cost savings tied to where students choose to attend.
-

Electives, Art, Music & Programming

Electives and student opportunities

- A key goal is expanding high school electives and reducing time spent in study halls.
- This will require creative scheduling and staffing solutions.

Art, music, and PE

- These programs will not be eliminated entirely.
 - Reductions are possible, but not recommended.
-

Transportation Considerations

Current requirements

- State minimum: transportation required for students living more than 2 miles from school (excluding high school).
- Current board policy includes the 2-mile rule, but the district transports students within that distance.

Potential changes being reviewed

- Reducing transportation to the 2-mile minimum would affect only some students.
- Challenges include:
 - Lack of sidewalks
 - Large geographic size (largest township in Ohio)
- Cluster stops are not fully implemented currently.
- Transportation changes may impact attendance, which is being carefully studied.

Bus pass / opt-out fees

- The district cannot charge for transportation.

- Therefore, it cannot charge families for choosing *not* to use district transportation.
-

Contracted Services & Staffing

ESC and other contracted services

- Contracted services are being reviewed for reductions.
 - Pulling back services means:
 - Work must be absorbed by existing staff
 - No additional hires
 - The focus is on reducing costs without relying solely on staff cuts.
 - District staff are highly valued and central to operations.
-

Why Funding Is Lower Than Other Districts

State funding differences

- Determined by:
 - Special education populations
 - Demographics
 - Other weighted factors
- The district receives 52% of its revenue from the state, which is higher reliance than many nearby districts.
- Fewer local levies compared to other districts.
- Greater reliance on state funding increases vulnerability when state policies change.

Federal funding differences

- Tied to:
 - Poverty levels
 - Race
 - Disabilities
 - English language learners
 - Accurate reporting through EMIS is critical and has improved this year.
 - Federal changes coming:
 - No funding for English learners next year
 - Reduced Title I funding
-

Rural vs. Urban Funding

- Urban districts often:
 - Receive more funding due to higher student needs
 - Have larger populations that reduce reliance on levies
 - Rural districts face different challenges with fewer funding offsets.
 - The state does not adjust funding expectations based on how many mills a district needs versus others.
-

Facilities, Buildings & Long-Term Planning

Current building challenges

- Significant aging infrastructure:
 - High School
 - North
 - Preschool/Admin building
- Roof replacement at North: ~\$900,000 (quote from two years ago)
- Ongoing patching due to lack of funds

Annual operating costs (older buildings)

- High School: **\$750,000**
- North: **\$350,000**
- Red Bird: **\$200,000**

LED lighting upgrades

- Already implemented
 - Home football game lighting previously cost \$25,000, now reduced through upgrades
-

Building Consolidation & Use of Space

Consolidation considerations

- All options have been discussed, including:
 - Grade reconfiguration
 - Building consolidation
- No final plan yet — only options under review.
- If younger and older students share a building:

- Separate wings or spaces would be considered
- Extensive planning would be required
- Ongoing community meetings will gather parent and student feedback.

Preschool & Kindergarten

- Preschool and full-day kindergarten are **not being eliminated or reduced**.
 - Early education is strongly supported and viewed as academically critical.
-

Use, Sale, or Repurposing of Buildings

Charging for outside programs

- Buildings are community-owned.
- Fees can cover:
 - Utilities
 - Custodial costs
- The district cannot generate significant profit from rentals.
- Annual recovery is under \$10,000, mostly custodial-related.
- Improvements are underway to ensure proper fee collection.

Selling a building

- Process is complex:
 1. Must offer to charter schools first (risk of enrollment loss)
 2. Then to village/township
 3. Then public auction

- Buildings typically sell for low value; land is more attractive.
 - Greatest benefit comes from reduced maintenance and utility costs, not sale proceeds.
-

Deficit Reduction & Timeline

\$3 million reduction plan

- Deficit just under **\$3 million**
- Reduction plan to be shared **January 21, 2026**
- Board vote: **February (tentative date, 2/17/26)**
- Changes take effect: **July** (for the 2026–27 school year)

Why early reductions matter

- Reductions that repeat year-over-year create compounding savings
 - Early action stabilizes future budgets
 - Goal: sustainable, long-term financial health
-

Long-Term Vision

- Right-size the district financially
- Reduce reliance on homeowners and state funding swings
- Build toward a plan to rebuild the High School
- Maintain academic quality while navigating short-term difficulty
- The coming year will be hard, but there is a path forward to stability and growth