

**26/27 Budget Series:
A Recap, Advocacy Efforts &
Timeline Updates**

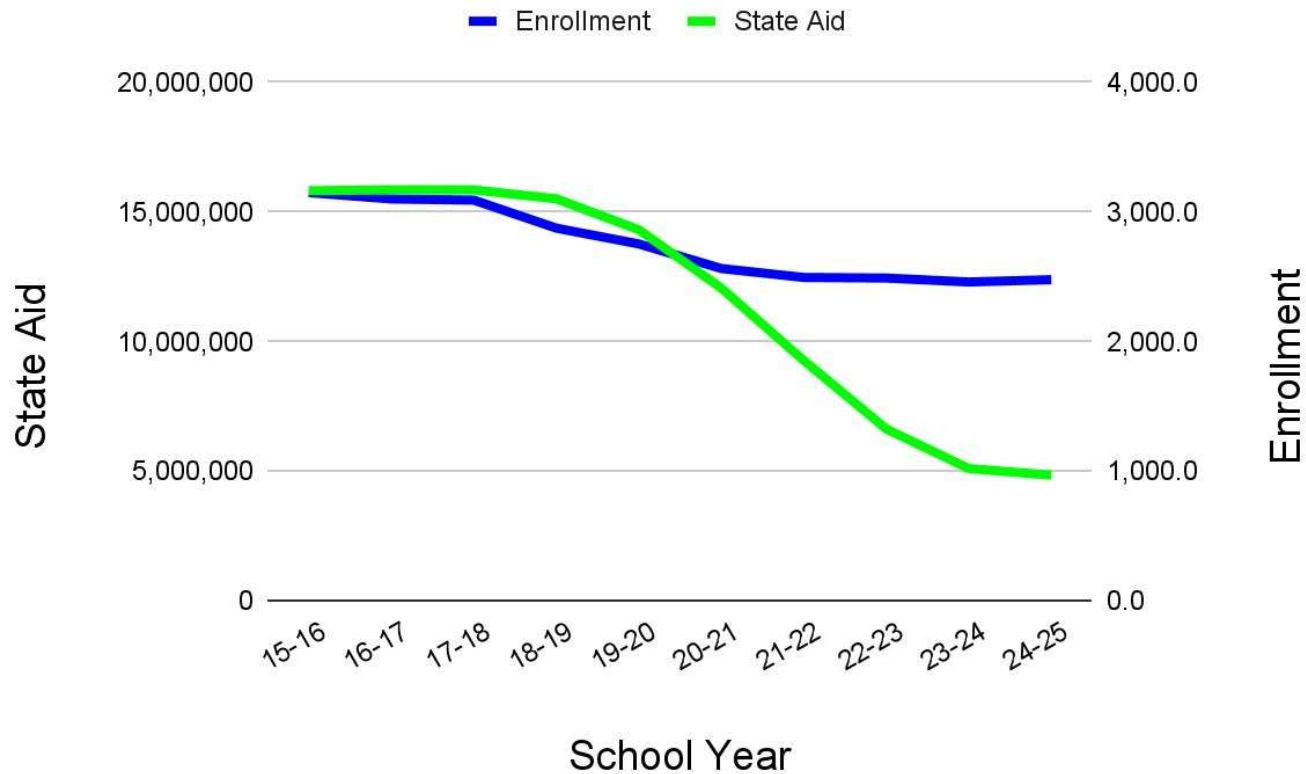
February 17, 2026

We face a projected \$4.8M budget gap for the 2026-2027 school year, even after maximizing the tax levy.

Category	Amount
Projected Benefits Increase	-\$2,628,700
Projected Payroll Increase	-\$1,309,000
Projected Reduction in Surplus (Carryover Funds)	-\$1,000,000
Other Expenditure Increases	-\$891,800
TOTAL ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES	-\$5,829,500
2% Increase in Tax Levy	\$1,034,380
PROJECTED DEFICIT	-\$4,795,120

Non-discretionary costs are significantly outpacing the state-mandated cap on revenue increases, creating a structural deficit.

The Impact of S-2



7 YEAR CUMULATIVE LOSSES = 44,696,099

2025-2026 State Aid Review

Aid Category	What the State Says We Need (Uncapped Aid)	What We Actually Got (Actual Aid)	Aid Denied Based on Arbitrary Limits
Special Education	\$4,127,686	\$3,351,738	\$775,948
Security	\$404,346	\$328,335	\$76,011
Transportation	\$1,798,692	\$1,460,563	\$338,129

JEFFERSON IS DENIED CRITICAL FUNDING AFTER SEVEN YEARS OF UNCAPPED LOSSES

Over the years, the district has taken significant, difficult steps to manage escalating financial pressures.

Past Actions

- Closed two schools & plan to sell the Central Office building.
- Net Reduction of over 100 staff positions since 2019 across all staff categories.
- Implemented user fees for athletics, extracurriculars, and parking.
- Repeatedly moved in and out of the State Health Plan to seek savings.
- Nearly exhausted Capital and Maintenance reserve funds in prior years' budgets.
- Reconfigured the district and implemented a three-tier busing system.

To close a \$4.8M funding gap, the board must consider cuts that will fundamentally alter our school district.



THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT RECOMMENDED

These cuts represent the scale and scope of reductions required to balance the budget under current constraints.

Devastating Cuts - NOT RECOMMENDED!

- Increased Class Size (K-6)
- Eliminate Gifted & Talented
- Eliminate Basic Skills Instruction
- Reduce Instructional Staff
- Eliminate High School Athletics
- Reduce HS After School Activities by 50%
- Eliminate JTIS & Elementary After School Activities
- Reduce Counseling Services
- Eliminate Courtesy Bussing & Late Bus
- Reduce Nursing, Library Services & Support Staff
- Eliminate an Instructional Supervisor

Budget Timeline

- March 10 - Governor's Address expected
- March 12 - Tentative release of state aid figures
- March 19/20 - Current Preliminary Budget Submission Deadline
- March ?? - Extended Preliminary Budget Submission Deadline

A larger deficit will require elimination of specials/electives and a reduction in the length of the school day.

As we prepare the 26-27 budget for submission, the Board must choose one of three paths.

Option 1: Make the Cuts

Implement reductions outlined previously to balance the budget internally.

Consequence:

Fundamentally alters the district's educational programs and services.

Option 2: A Budget of Increased Revenue

Hold a special election to raise the tax levy beyond the 2% cap to prevent cuts.

Consequence: Preserves programs and staff but increases the local tax burden.

Option 3: An Unbalanced Budget

Submit a budget with a deficit to the New Jersey Department of Education.

Consequence: Results in a state-appointed monitor who assumes control over finances and make decisions without local approval.

Advocacy Efforts



- Milton Tri School PTA
- Consolidated PTA

Advocacy Efforts (Continued)

- Media
- Meetings
 - Commissioner of Education, Dr. Lily Laux
 - Senator Bucco
 - Assemblywoman Dunn
 - Assemblywoman Sweeney
 - Ben Spinelli, Executive Director – NJ Highlands Council
 - Jefferson Township Mayor, Administrator & Council Members
 - Stakeholder Advocacy Group

This challenge belongs to all of us.

**Your voice is essential. Stay engaged in the
fight for the future Jefferson Township**

FALCONS 4 FAIR FUNDING

**JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP IS OUT OF MONEY,
OUT OF OPTIONS & OUT OF TIME.**