

2026-2027 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Presented By:

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Goal 1: Academic Programming, Teaching, & Learning:

Foster academic excellence through inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices ensuring that all students regardless of background or ability receive equitable access to a rigorous curriculum and diverse learning objectives that prepare them for success in a global society.



AP School Honor Roll Distinction

Morristown High School (MHS) was named to the AP School Honor Roll for the 2024-25 school year, recognizing its work in supporting students on the path to college success.



Expansion of Advanced Placement

A strategic plan was launched to add 14 new AP-credentialed educators across eight content areas and introduce AP Business and Personal Finance for the 2026-2027 school year.



Creation of Honors Tracks

The district approved a new Honors track for World Language levels 3 and 4 at MHS and a Pre-Algebra Honors course at Frelinghuysen Middle School (FMS) to bridge the content gap between standard Pre-Algebra and Algebra 1.



Measurable Literacy and Math Gains

Mid-year data showed a "Kindergarten Literacy Surge," with students reaching the "Above" benchmark in DIBELS increasing from 22% to 31%. Additionally, the number of K-4 students at "Mid or Above Grade Level" in math more than doubled, rising from 154 in the fall to 429 in the winter.



Instructional Strategy Training

Staff began advanced training in The Writing Revolution (TWR) strategies and participated in sessions on leveraging AI tools to enhance classroom efficiency.

Goal 2: Learning Beyond the Classroom:

To create a cohesive community that builds upon our **combined strengths** to offer **more opportunities to learn** within and beyond our curriculum resulting in more well-rounded experiences and students.



Artisan Academy Planning

This year focused on the extensive planning and partnership work required for the Artisan Academy, which is scheduled to officially launch next year with initial funding from the Morris Educational Foundation (MEF).



Expanded Enrichment Grants

The MEF funded new grants for expanded mallet percussion, theatre microphones, and a "Colonial Immersion Day" at Normandy Park School to celebrate the country's 250th birthday.



Life Design Lab Showcase

Over 100 students presented their work to the public during the MHS Exhibition Night on March 4, 2026.



Elementary Science Initiatives

Every elementary school received \$1,500 in grant funding from the MEF to support their annual science days.



Community Support Drives

Students and staff organized a snack donation drive for Nourish New Jersey and a personal hygiene drive at the Lafayette Learning Center for the Interfaith Food Pantry.

Goal 3: Building Optimal Environments for Learning

Make facility investments that improve our academic ROI (return on investment).



Referendum Project Specifics: The district identified major projects for the Fall 2026 Referendum, including an eight-classroom addition at FMS to replace trailers and a three-classroom addition at Sussex Avenue School to relieve overcrowding.



MHS Pool Replacement Plan: District leaders determined the high school pool is at the end of its life and will be fully replaced if the referendum is approved to ensure it remains a community revenue source and student resource.



Implementation of Smart Pass: The district initiated the Smart Pass electronic hall pass system, which resulted in improved bathroom accessibility and better discipline data by reducing unauthorized student presence in halls.



Infrastructure Maintenance: Significant corrective repairs were completed, including replacing 40 linear feet of underslab steam piping at Alfred Vail and repairing leaking boiler tubes at Alexander Hamilton.



Safety Overhaul at FMS: The middle school completed a comprehensive overhaul of its arrival and dismissal procedures to enhance student safety and efficiency.

Goal 4: Communication to Foster Community and Partnerships

Strengthen and foster meaningful pathways within the Morris School District and the greater community to create informed and intentional partnerships.



Sharing Infrastructure Plans for the Future

Established a Referendum Communications Committee of residents and stakeholders for feedback and information sharing.



Website Re-Launch

New district website live in early 2026, serving as a "central hub" with consistent branding.



Supporting Families

Developed an ongoing, coordinated humanitarian support for families facing food insecurity



Inclusive Outreach Expansion

Integrated new QR codes and expanded social media presence to engage alumni and residents.



Facilities Insight Presentation

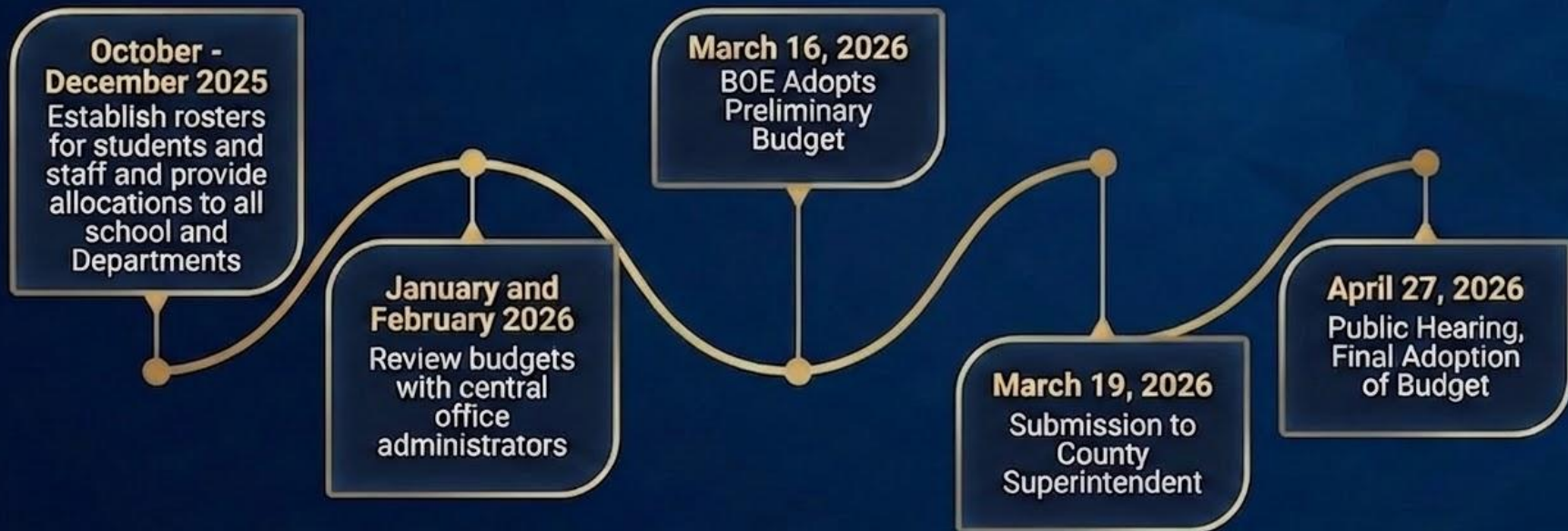
Hosted hybrid "State of Our Facilities" presentation on March 9, 2026, for a detailed understanding of building needs.

Goal 5: Career Readiness Skills

Explore career pathways through self-discovery and real-life experiences so all students are prepared for their transition from high school.

- **Morristown College Promise Expansion:** The district continued its deep collaboration with County College of Morris (CCM) to advance the Morristown College Promise Program, preparing to graduate the first cohort of students this year while maintaining three active cohorts.
- **Enhanced College and Workplace Exposure:** To bridge the gap between school and career, the district hosted multiple high-impact events, including a **Mini College Fair** on March 6 and **Mock Admissions** on **March 11**. Additionally, STEM students participated in **field experiences** and **mentoring** with **Sanofi** professionals to gain direct exposure to the workforce.
- **Technical and Vocational Pathway Growth:** Morristown High School strengthened its partnership with CCM and the Workforce Development Board to expand access to trade and apprenticeship exposure, industry credentials, and work-based learning opportunities. This includes ongoing planning for vocational pathways that align with modern industry standards.
- **Engineering and Architecture Collaborations:** Through a partnership with H2M Architects, students engaged in real-world design projects, collaborating directly with engineers and construction managers to develop professional skills in technical fields.
- **STEM Lab Advancement:** Approved the development of a **new STEM lab at FMS** specifically designed to prepare middle school students for the STEM Academy at MHS and STEM related fields.

Budget Process



Resident Enrollment

Enrollment (October 15th)



From ASSA Records - October 15th

Budget Adjustments

Budget Adjustments necessary to stay within CAP and adjust staffing due to enrollment drop of 225 students



Staffing Reductions - saving \$2.1M

- 4 Administrative Positions
- 15 Teaching Positions (All related to student counts, no change to class size or electives)
- 9 Clerical and ParaProfessional



Health Benefits - \$334,000 saved from staffing reduction



School and Department Allocations - reduced 10% - \$735,000



PERS pension contribution - due to staffing and calculation adjustment – saving \$475K

Further reducing estimates and aligning closer to prior year actuals - saving \$600K



Key Expenditures and Budget Drivers



70 % of the District's Budget is made of Salary & Benefits

- Salary Increase - \$611K
- Health Benefits - Horizon quoted MSD 17%, approx. \$3.6M increase (County Wide increase ranges from 16.4% - 30%)
- Dental Benefit - 2% increase \$10,000



Finance Purchase of the following items:

- Chromebooks and Copiers, \$800,000 over 3 years.
- Replacement School Buses \$1.8M over 6 years.
- Also added Equipment needs for B&G including:
 - Replacement Dump Truck, New Tow Behind Lift



Maintaining Investment from the current year

- \$50,000 to replace musical instrument K-12
- \$600,000 for curriculum material and textbooks



Capital Projects

Financing Payment



Continue to Fund
Financing Payment from
Capital Reserve

\$709,861

FMS Fields



Additional Funds creating
3 fields at FMS

\$1,200,000

An additional
\$1M for annual
maintenance

Hillcrest Electrical Upgrade



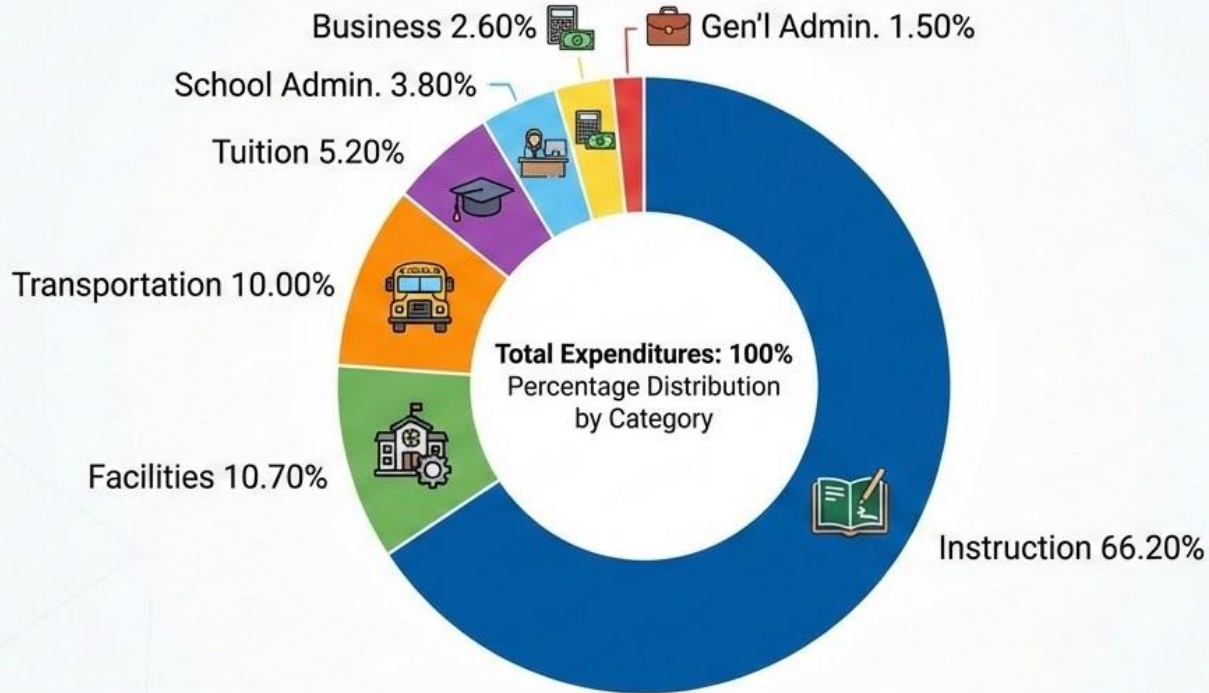
Hillcrest School Electrical
Panel Upgrade

\$250,000

Total Capital Reserve Spend

\$2,159,861

Expenditure Breakdown



- Instruction (66.20%)
- Facilities (10.70%)
- Transportation (10.00%)
- Tuition (5.20%)
- School Admin. (3.80%)
- Business (2.60%)
- Gen'l Admin. (1.50%)

Revenue Highlights



Proposing a 3.5% increase in Tax Levy



Increase use of Maintenance Reserve to \$1.4M



\$300,000 from NJARM Interest Income



SEMI Reimbursement of \$117,000



Morris Plains tuition \$4.6M for 207 students

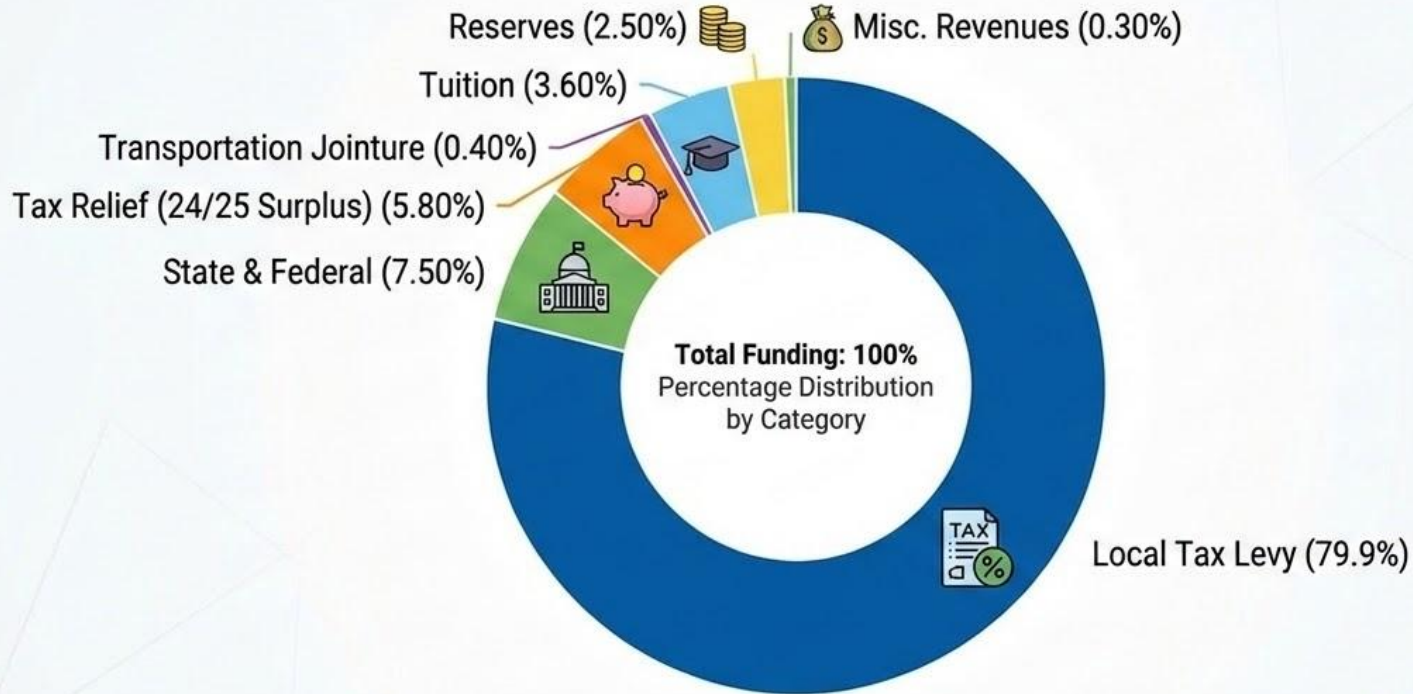


State Aid \$10.3M, reduction of \$21K
- PreSchool Aid \$10.7M + \$812K Local share



Reduction of Excess Surplus - \$8.1M (\$1.4M Less) - Per Budget Software

Funding Sources



- Local Tax Levy (79.9%)
- State & Federal (7.50%)
- Tax Relief (24/25 Surplus) (5.80%)
- Transportation Jointure (0.40%)
- Tuition (3.60%)
- Reserves (2.50%)
- Misc. Revenues (0.30%)

Tax Levy and Equalized Value



Tax Levy @ 3.5% increase - \$4,306,203 - Total 26-27 Levy - \$111,961,277
(within Statutory Cap - only Board approval no Public Vote)

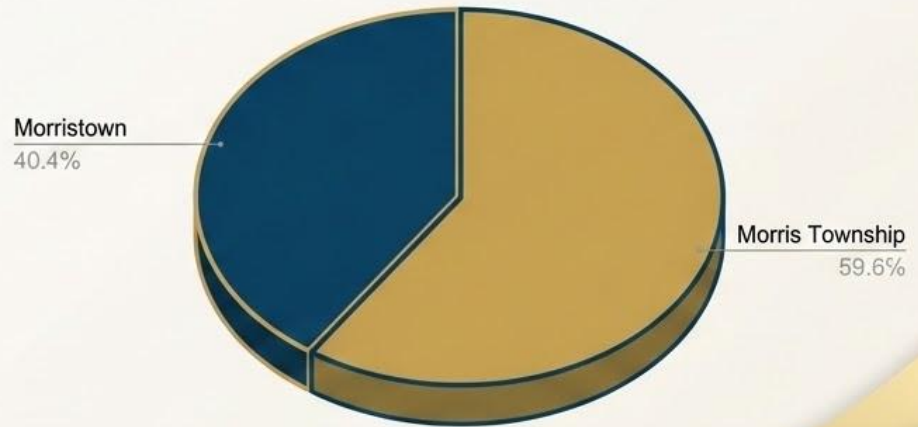


Banked Cap Available for 26/27 - \$788,970 (\$1.7M is expiring)



Equalized Value - State formula that values property across different municipalities to their
"True Value" / Market Value

These estimates are based on the
January 2026 Ratables



Prior Year - Morristown 41.7%, Township 58.3%

Household Impact

Town	2024	2025	2026
Total to be Raised	\$37,285,710	\$43,194,940	\$44,968,345
Net Valuation	4,784,035,300	4,753,525,000	4,680,496,500
Home Value	635,443	635,443	635,443
Tax Rate per \$100 Taxable Value	0.7794	0.9087	0.9608
Total Based on Assessed Value	4,952.50	5,774.22	6,105.08
Increase		821.72	330.86
Township	2024	2025	2026
Total to be Raised	\$ 65,028,784	\$ 62,543,875	\$ 64,570,694
Net Valuation	5,431,337,038	5,452,857,800	5,562,052,900
Home Value	560,500	560,500	560,500
Tax Rate per \$100 Taxable Value	1.1973	1.1470	1.1609
Total Based on Assessed Value	6,710.80	6,428.89	6,506.93
Increase		(281.91)	78.03

Questions

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