

BUDGET

The budget is planned to guide the District to accomplish the goals set by the Board of Education. On an annual basis, the budget is required to be approved by the Board of Education no later than September 30. The development and monitoring of the budget is a year-round process that is regulated through local and state policy. Due to the structure of Illinois school funding, the majority of revenues are generated from local tax dollars. Expenses are examined annually aligned with needs of the district and established strategic goals. The District’s staff and administrators are mindful when expending funds to ensure educational goals are met with responsible fiscal stewardship.

TAXING DISTRICTS* BUDGET AND TAX LEVY CYCLE

AUGUST: A tentative district budget is prepared by the Fremont School District 79 Board of Education (the taxing district).

The district budget notice is published and public hearings are conducted by the school board.

SEPTEMBER: The budget ordinance is approved by the FSD79 Board of Education.

NOVEMBER: The tax levy request is published and a public hearing is held by FSD79.

DECEMBER: The tax levy is certified with the Lake County Clerk.



ASSESSMENT VALUATION AND TAX BILL PROCESS

Assessors for each township determine a value estimate for each home/property within the township. *Note: The Township Assessor’s Office is a taxpayer’s best resource for information on the assessed value of your property.*

The Lake County Chief County Assessment Office applies township equalization factor to assessor values and mails assessment notices to all homeowners.

The Lake County Board of Review holds assessment appeal hearings during this time for homeowners contesting their home valuation.

The Lake County Clerk applies the state equalization factor and calculates the tax rate based upon budget and levy requests from all 231 independent taxing districts.*

The Lake County Treasurer mails tax bills to homeowners and collects tax revenues for all taxing districts in Lake County.

* **Taxing Districts:** There are 231 independent taxing districts (government entities) in Lake County including schools, municipalities, Lake County government, libraries, etc.

AWARDS



Meritorious Budget Award—In Fiscal Year 2025, the District was awarded the Meritorious Budget Award from

Association of School Business Officials International for **excellence in building an accessible and accurate budget to share with all stakeholders**. This report is an extensive and comprehensive budget report containing past, current and future financial data. FSD79 has earned the recognition 16 consecutive years.



ISBE Financial Designation—Our Fiscal Year 2025 Illinois State Board of Education **financial**

rating was a 4.0, the highest designation a school can receive. The rating is based on fund balance/revenue ratio, expenditure/revenue ratio, cash on hand, short-term debt and long-term debt. Due to responsible fiscal management, the District has continued to maintain a 4.0 designation.



Moody’s Rating—Due to the careful stewardship of the Board of Education and staff, Fremont is

in a sound financial position. The District continues to maintain a Aa1 Moody’s Investment Service rating. This is higher than the school district median of Aa3 and **ranks FSD79 one of the 10% of school districts nationally to be rated Aa1 or higher**.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Fremont School District 79 remains in a sound financial position, having maintained a balanced operating budget for many years and has built a healthy fund reserve. For Fiscal Year 2026, while the “All Funds” budget shows expenditures exceeding revenues, the Board approved this strategic spend-down to invest funds in projects and educational programming identified by community stakeholders as high priorities. By separating long-term construction, capital projects, and capital equipment from day-to-day costs, the District continues to maintain a balanced budget, even showing a \$208,515 surplus in core operating accounts. This approach ensures that the primary goal of educating students is funded reliably today and well into the future.

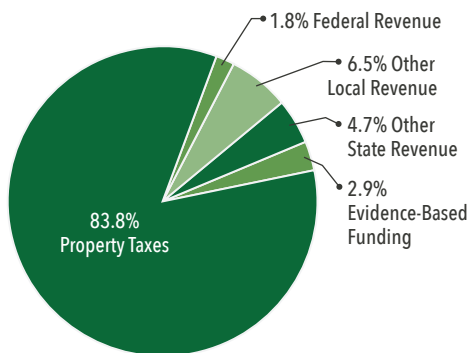
Operating Revenue:	\$38,274,572
Operating Expenditures:	\$38,066,057
Total Savings (Surplus):	\$208,515

FISCAL YEAR 2026 ALL FUNDS BUDGET

In accordance with the District’s Fund Balance Plan and Educational Long-Range Facility Plan (ELFP), the strategic use of financial reserves supports community priorities to enhance safety and security, bolster STEM programming, and address facility expansion needs. This intentional plan includes utilizing \$5.6 million of reserves for facility needs and the purchase of large school buses. Additionally, it includes a \$1.1 million debt payment that was funded by the previous year’s revenue. The District is responsibly maintaining the Fremont campus and improving student safety while remaining responsible stewards of local tax dollars.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 REVENUES: \$39,481,386

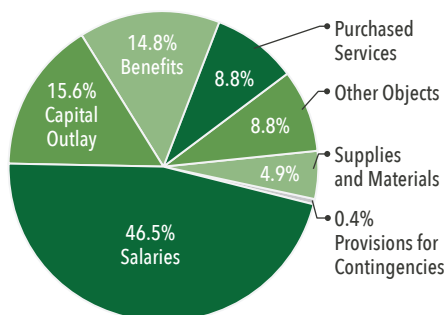
Proposed Revenue Allocation by Source



Local investment remains our most significant and reliable source of support, accounting for 90.30% of our total revenue. These funds, primarily from local property taxes, stay directly in our community to maintain our facilities and protect our educational programs. State funding contributes 7.60%, following specific formulas based on enrollment, while federal funding accounts for the remaining 1.80%, typically earmarked for specific needs such as special education programming.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 EXPENDITURES: \$46,093,981

Budgeted Expenditure Allocation by Object



FSD79 prioritizes students, staff, and the safety of our school environment. Currently, over 60% of our total budget is dedicated directly to staff, with \$21.4 million covering salaries and \$6.8 million providing essential benefits. A total of \$7.1 million of the budget is earmarked for strategic one-time capital investments such as school buses, technology devices, and capital projects designed to modernize our campus. These critical projects include the installation of secure entry vestibules to enhance student safety, a hands-on STEM lab and much-needed cafeteria expansion at the Middle School, and a new traffic exit at the Intermediate School to improve safe access and alleviate congestion.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

The Board of Education recognizes its obligation to taxpayers in fulfilling its stewardship of the District finances and reserve funds to preserve the financial integrity of Fremont School District 79. Prudent financial planning and sound fiscal management have positioned the District with a healthy financial reserve balance. To best manage the District reserves, in the fall of 2024, the Board of Education approved a fund balance plan that will maintain a healthy fund balance while managing the impending growth on the horizon. Under the plan, a minimum of 40 percent of reserve funds will be maintained for cash flow and emergencies. This allows for funds above this threshold to be allocated for facility and capital equipment needs and for operational expenses related to enrollment growth.

HEALTH LIFE SAFETY BONDS

In the fall of 2025, the Board of Education approved the issuance of \$27.1 million in Health Life Safety (HLS) Bonds to fund essential, state-mandated infrastructure projects, including roofing, paving, HVAC systems, and critical safety enhancements. By law, these repairs must be completed within a three-year window. These funds are strictly restricted and may only be used for the state-approved safety projects identified in our facility surveys; they cannot be diverted to elective renovations or operational costs. By proactively addressing these needs now, the district is avoiding the significantly higher costs of emergency repairs while ensuring our facilities meet modern safety codes and provide a secure environment for our students and staff.

STATE FUNDING

The State of Illinois funding comprises 7.6% of the annual revenue budget. The state continues to “pro-rate” Mandated Categoricals (MCATs). Although these are legally required reimbursements for services like special education tuition and student transportation, the state frequently pays only a percentage of the actual cost. Currently, transportation reimbursements often fall between 60% and 75% of expenditures. Because these services are mandated, the district must bridge these state and federal shortfalls using local operating funds to ensure our students receive the high-quality support they deserve.

The state’s funding structure also diverts a significant portion of funds (30-40%) to Prairie Crossing Charter School annually. Ultimately, these state funding reductions mean our local taxpayers remain the essential foundation for ensuring our students reach their full potential.

FEDERAL FUNDING

Federal funding comprises 1.8% of the annual revenue budget. Fremont is navigating a challenging fiscal landscape due to shifting federal funding models. The current outlook indicates significant risk to Title II (Supporting Effective Instruction) and Title III (English Learner) grants. These programs, which fund teacher training, staffing, and language support, face potential elimination or deep cuts in proposed federal spending plans, threatening a loss of critical revenue for classroom quality.

TAX RATES

FSD79 is subject to PTELL, the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law or known as “tax capped.” Legislation was passed in 1991 to control the growth of property taxes and limit the increase to the consumer price index (no more than 5%), excluding new property. The District has been diligent in monitoring the expenditures to keep the tax rate to one of the lowest in the area compared to other surrounding elementary school districts.

Local School Districts Tax Rate Comparison (2024)

Big Hollow District 38	2.5086%
Fremont District 79	2.8588%
Libertyville District 70	2.9777%
Lincolnshire District 103	3.2719%
Hawthorn District 73	3.8161%
Kildeer District 96	3.9644%
Aptakisic District 102	4.1321%
Mundelein District 75	4.1846%
Diamond Lake District 76	4.4780%
Grayslake District 46	4.6171%



FREMONT
SCHOOL DISTRICT 79

FREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT 79

28855 North Fremont Center Road, Mundelein, IL 60060

www.FSD79.org | (847) 566-0169

Lincoln Early Learning Center • Fremont Elementary School

Fremont Intermediate School • Fremont Middle School

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