



## Key Takeaways from the April 20 Finance Joint Governance Meeting

Dear Pine-Richland Community,

Pine-Richland held another public finance meeting on April 20, continuing work to address a \$4.7 million structural deficit for the 2026 – 2027 budget that is driven by the Common Level Ratio (CLR). **CLR reduces real estate tax revenue as Allegheny County property market values outpace assessed values, a trend that will continue until a county-wide reassessment occurs.** The district has lost nearly \$800,000 in revenue since January 2025, including \$119,000 in the past month alone. Stakeholders are encouraged to [watch a video recording of this recent meeting](#). Note: Treasurer Marc Casciani was unable to attend and submitted written remarks read on his behalf.

### Why This is Happening

- **Local Dependence:** PRSD is more reliant on local revenue than almost all public school districts in Pennsylvania (~79% of revenue primarily from real estate and earned income tax). In Allegheny County, the district ranks 3rd lowest in state revenue and lowest in federal revenue per student. As a result, the impact of CLR over the past few years is more significantly felt. Residential and commercial growth is also slowing.
- **Millage Context:** PRSD holds the 3rd lowest millage rate among 42 Allegheny County districts and has raised taxes only once in approximately a decade. Due to rising Homestead/Farmstead Exclusions, the average homeowner today pays less than in 2017–18 at the same rate.
- **Special Ed Exception approved March 25:** The Act 1 Base Index is set at 3.5% in Pennsylvania for 2026 – 2027. Given the CLR-driven challenges, PRSD submitted a request for special education exceptions to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The request was based on the significant increase in costs related to special education. PDE granted that request which permits a millage increase of up to \$1.157M above the Act 1 index (~1.79–1.82% additional).

### Millage Options

The School Board has the ultimate authority to determine the tax rate for 2026 – 2027. That authority includes a range of 0% to approximately 5.29% (i.e., Act 1 Base Index plus Special Education Exceptions). Decisions for 2026 – 2027 will have a significant impact on 2027 – 2028.

Millage Scenario	Additional Revenue	\$250K Assessed Home	\$500K Assessed Home

Act 1 Index Only (3.5%)	+\$2.25M	~+\$129/year (\$10.75/month)	~+\$259/year (\$21.59/month)
Index + Special Ed Exception (5.29%) <i>*Admin recommendation</i>	<b>+\$3.4M</b>	~+\$259/year (\$21.59/month) <i>only 3% above 2017-18 bill*</i>	~+\$518/year (\$43.17/month) <i>only 3% above 2017- 18 bill*</i>
Treasurer Casciani's Proposal (4.2%) <i>*Treasurer's written recommendation</i>	<b>+\$2.7M</b>	~+\$180/year (\$15/month) <i>2.1% for proposed 2025-26 + 2.1% for current cycle; paired with all structural cuts = ~\$5.37M total</i>	~+\$360/year (\$30/month) <i>2.1% for proposed 2025-26 + 2.1% for current cycle; paired with all structural cuts = ~\$5.37M total</i>

\* Compared to the 2017-18 tax bill, factoring in increased Homestead/Farmstead Exclusions.

◆ Casciani home impact figures are approximate interpolations. Board finalizes millage position by May 4.

## Proposed Expense Reductions

Area	Description	Est. Savings	Type
<b>Staffing</b>	Attrition-based reductions considered with retirements/resignations (i.e., not replaced); Recommended reductions total 19.5 positions in the past two years; no furloughs/layoffs; Stakeholders encouraged to view <a href="#">April 13, 2026 Staff Services Joint Governance meeting</a> for additional background.	~\$1,100,000	Structural
<b>Healthcare</b>	Premium increase came in at 8.3% vs. projected 9%	\$98,328	One-Time

<b>Textbooks/ Resources</b>	Class sets v. Per student purchase in some cases; Delayed refresh of K–5 math text/resources until 2027 - 2028	\$398,000	One-Time
<b>A.W. Beattie</b>	Reduction in District cost for 2026 – 2027 based on enrollment-based formula	\$52,000	One-Time
<b>Technology</b>	Reduction in asset refresh device replacement schedule	\$25,000	Structural
<b>Athletics</b>	4 middle school teams eliminated; 11 supplemental positions; reduction in supplies/equipment; reduction in partially funded program contributions	\$177,000	Structural
<b>Safety and Security</b>	Specific details confidential	\$122,000	Structural
<b>Building Budgets</b>	\$104K reduction achieved collaboratively with principals and admin team	\$104,000	Structural
<b>Bond Refunding</b>	Procedural requirements complete; Market is currently unfavorable but changes to market conditions that meet a savings threshold will allow refunding; Note: Debt as % of operating budget: 14.5% (2013–14) → ~8% today. PRSD has earned an S&P Rating upgrade in the past few years.	Pending market	Structural (conditional)

<b>Budgetary Reserve</b>	Reduction in line item designed to address enrollment or student-based staffing needs in general and special education	\$25,000	Structural
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## Revenue Strategies (All Structural)

Revenue Source	Detail	Est. Est. Additional Revenue
<b>Millage (primary lever)</b>	Full 5.29% increase (index + special ed exception); As noted above, the school board has authority to make millage decisions within a range of 0% to approximately 5.29% (further small adjustments possible based on assessed value of district property in May 2026).	<b>+\$3.4M</b>
<b>Activity Fees (Option D preferred)</b>	Per-activity, \$300 cap. Athletics: \$200 first/\$100 second. Non-athletics (incl. band): \$100 each. Free/reduced: fee waiver and/or assistance. Board decision by May 4.	
<b>Ticketing Expansion</b>	\$3 adult/\$1 student → \$6/\$4 for district-managed events. Boosters retain \$3 adult/\$2 student.	<b>+~ \$165K combined*</b>
<b>Tiered Booster Advertising Fee</b>	Replaces 25% revenue share. Football: \$3,500; All other teams who compete in a digital scoreboard venue: \$2,500; non-scoreboard venues: \$1,500. Revenue above those amounts are retained as fundraising by the boosters.	
<b>PennDOT Hazardous Route Reimbursement</b>	Additional routes qualified; structural	<b>\$122,000</b>

	increase to state transportation reimbursement	
<b>Miscellaneous Cost Sharing</b>	AFJROTC program and third-party childcare program	<b>\$65,000</b>
<b>Facility Use Rate Increases</b>	Slight increases to Class 3 & 4 rates; fees for required staff presence at events to offset annual cost-of-living adjustments and utilities	<b>+\$17,000</b>
<b>Parking Fee</b>	\$100 → \$150 per student parking pass (417 spaces). Board will make a determination at the May 4th meeting.	<b>+\$25,000</b>

\*Activity fees + ticketing + tiered booster advertising fee combined est. +\$165K.

## Next Steps

- **Reassessment Advocacy:** The board may pursue a formal resolution encouraging a county-wide property reassessment. This issue impacts Allegheny County as a whole. Multiple recent news articles have addressed this serious nature of this matter. **Critical Note: PRSD must hold an appropriate millage rate before reassessment occurs to avoid being locked into a permanently low rate.**
- **May 4, 2026:** Finance meeting + Proposed Final Budget approval
- **June 8, 2026:** Final Budget adoption

[Website](#)

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