



2026-2027 Final Budget Presentation

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Hunterdon Central Regional High School District



Recent Accolades

- Two National Merit Scholarship Finalists
- Silver AP School Honor Roll from College Board
- 1:1 Dual Enrollment Partnership with RVCC for Biomedical Science Academy
- Two students made NJ All State Treble Choir
- Robotics Team qualified for Worlds
- Girls Winter Track - Group 4 State Champions
- Cheerleaders - Group 4 State Champions
- Dance Team - State Champions
- Girls Pole Vault and Girls Diving State Champions





Our Priority - STUDENTS!

#1 priority of all schools is to educate students and teach the NJ Student Learning Standards. We are here to help students learn, succeed and grow, preparing them for their future after high school.

- **Central's 2026-2027 budget maintains all academic programs** and even adds two new academies in the Magnet Program: Performing Arts Academy and Early Education Academy.
- Our budget also funds academic assistance such as multi-tiered system of supports, counseling and mental health support, and special education services.
- Hunterdon Central students also succeed outside of the classroom, and we are happy to **maintain all athletics and club offerings** in the 2026-2027 budget.





Changes to Final 2026-2027 Budget

Tentative Budget was approved by a majority of the Board of Education on March 23rd and has been approved the Executive County Superintendent. With new information received, the following changes are being recommended for final budget:

- Change of prescription plan provider, resulting in savings.
- Using Emergency Reserve funds to offset some health benefit costs

These two changes will lower the proposed increase to local tax levy from **3% to 2.27% .**

(Note: Central is eligible for 5.73% tax levy increase with healthcare adjustment state allowance.)

Local Tax Levy



Hunterdon Central has approved exceeding the local tax levy cap of 2.00% only two times in the past 8 years.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Debt Service Levy	2,199,707	2,167,006	2,158,553	2,152,199	0	0	0	0	0
Tax Levy	52,598,796	53,973,852	55,668,443	55,668,443	57,917,438	58,959,952	59,991,751	61,191,586	62,583,216
Total Tax Levy	54,798,503	56,140,858	57,826,996	58,934,001	57,917,438	58,959,952	59,991,751	61,191,586	62,583,216
Change (\$)	1,016,454	1,342,355	1,686,138	1,107,005	-1,107,005	1,042,514	1,031,799	1,199,835	1,391,630
Change (%)	1.89%	2.45%	3.00%	1.91%	-1.72%	1.80%	1.75%	2.00%	2.27%

To mitigate rising costs that are exceeding revenue, 2026-2027 budget includes a 2.27% tax levy increase using healthcare adjustment in order to maintain all programs and staffing needed to run those programs.



Tax Levy Increases Comparison

Among the county high school districts and our sending districts, our proposed tax levy increase is the lowest.

District	% General Fund Tax Levy Increase
Flemington-Raritan	7.20%
Delaware Valley RHSD	5.48%
North Hunterdon-Voorhees RHSD	4.29%
South Hunterdon RSD	3.50%
East Amwell Township	3.82%
Readington Township	3.61%
Delaware Township	3.50%
Hunterdon Central RHSD	2.27%

Why Keeping Surplus Stable Matters

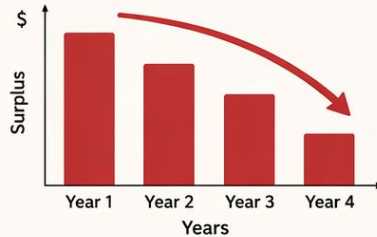
Using surplus wisely today helps protect students, staff, and your wallet tomorrow.



IF SURPLUS IS NOT KEPT STABLE...

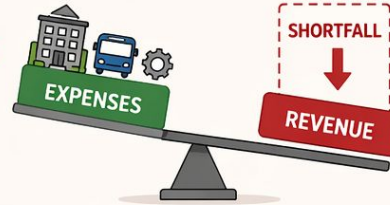
1. SURPLUS GOES DOWN

Spending more than we bring in reduces our surplus savings.



2. SHORTFALL IN THE FUTURE

Less surplus means less money to handle unexpected costs or revenue loss.



3. HIGHER TAXES OR CUTS

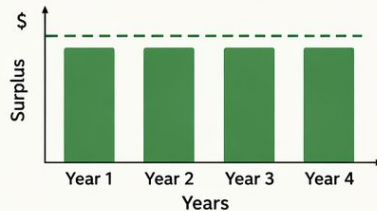
To cover the shortfall, we may need to raise taxes in the future...



WHEN SURPLUS IS KEPT STABLE...

1. SURPLUS STAYS STEADY

Living within our means helps us keep a healthy cushion.



2. WE'RE PREPARED

A stable surplus helps us handle unexpected costs and changes in revenue.



3. STUDENTS & COMMUNITY BENEFIT

We avoid tax spikes and protect programs and staff.



Bottom Line: A stable surplus today helps avoid higher taxes and painful cuts tomorrow. **Plan today. Protect tomorrow.**



Capital Projects Timeline

80 projects are included in 5-year (2025-2030) long range facilities plan, estimated at \$66,534,234 (which drives capital reserve account balance).

Projects scheduled for the next three budgets include:

26	Site	Pave back drive (DEP approved)	\$666,750
26	IMC / Music	Roof Replace @ IMC & Music (ROD grant)	\$240,300
26	11/12	New HVAC- Faculty Dining (ROD Grant)	\$100,125
26	11/12	New HVAC Weight Room (ROD Grant)	\$460,575
26	11/12	Create Industrial Arts space	\$1,719,000
26	9/10	New HVAC- 100's wing (ROD Grant)	\$3,270,750
26	9/10	New HVAC Wood Gym (ROD Grant)	\$1,551,938
26	9/10	New Roof Wood Gym (ROD grant)	\$492,615
26	IMC	New HVAC IMC (ROD grant)	\$1,385,063
26	Music	New HVAC Music (ROD grant)	\$1,435,125
26	Site	Add sidewalks at 11/12 Parking Lot	\$306,000
26	Site	Add site lighting at Lot E by cafeteria	\$312,500

27	11/12	Upgrade science labs in 900's with gas and water	\$2,756,250
27	11/12	New Architectural Studio	\$708,750
27	11/12	Create (2) cooking classes with shared prep room	\$1,264,800
27	11/12	Expand Sewing / Fashion Classrooms	\$1,192,500
27	Site	New turf at lower fields	\$4,375,000

28	11/12	Replace Walk-In Ref/Freezers	\$75,000
28	11/12	Renovate Guidance suite reception	\$320,625
28	11/12	Upgrade serving area	\$297,000
28	9/10	Window Replacement 200's wing	\$1,116,875
28	9/10	Window Replacement 300's wing	\$471,000
28	9/10	Team Room - Upgrade space (inc. plumbing & HVAC)	\$1,050,000
28	11/12	Locker Room Alterations	\$4,875,000
28	Site	New concession stand / bathrooms @ stadium	\$1,250,000



Capital Reserve Account vs. Referendum

Large facility projects can be completed and financed through two different avenues: District's capital reserve account or a referendum, which requires taking out a loan.

- **Referendum** : timeline dependent, requires loan - districts normally wait until previous loan expires before taking another loan. Debt service added to annual tax levy for length of loan.
- **Capital Reserve Account** : Account generates interest (over \$1 million last year). Projects can be completed in line with LRFP. Districts are required to show their share of funding in order to apply for 40% grants from the state.



The Numbers

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Revenue, Expenditures and Tax Rates



2026-2027 Revenue Sources

Tax Levy	\$62,583,216
Local Sources	\$1,423,131
State Aid	\$4,934,236
Federal Aid	\$31,631
Fund Balance	\$3,923,342
Grants	\$497,133
Capital Reserve	\$12,133,457
Total	\$85,526,146

Capital Reserve

14.2%

Grants

0.6%

Fund Balance

4.6%

Federal Aid

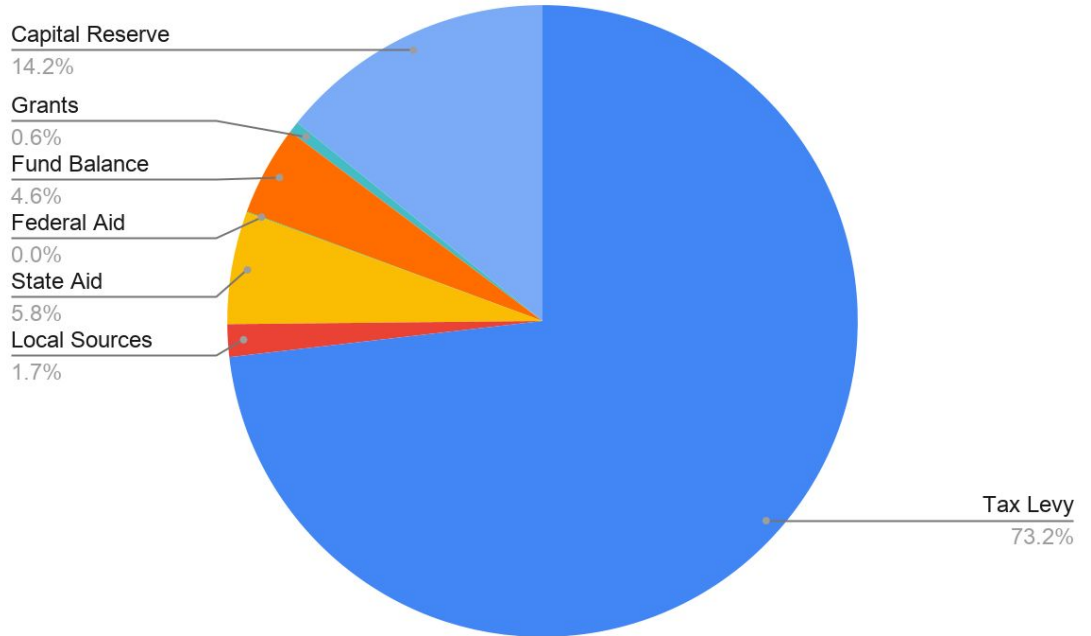
0.0%

State Aid

5.8%

Local Sources

1.7%



State Aid Reductions



State Aid in 2017-2018 was
\$5,719,700

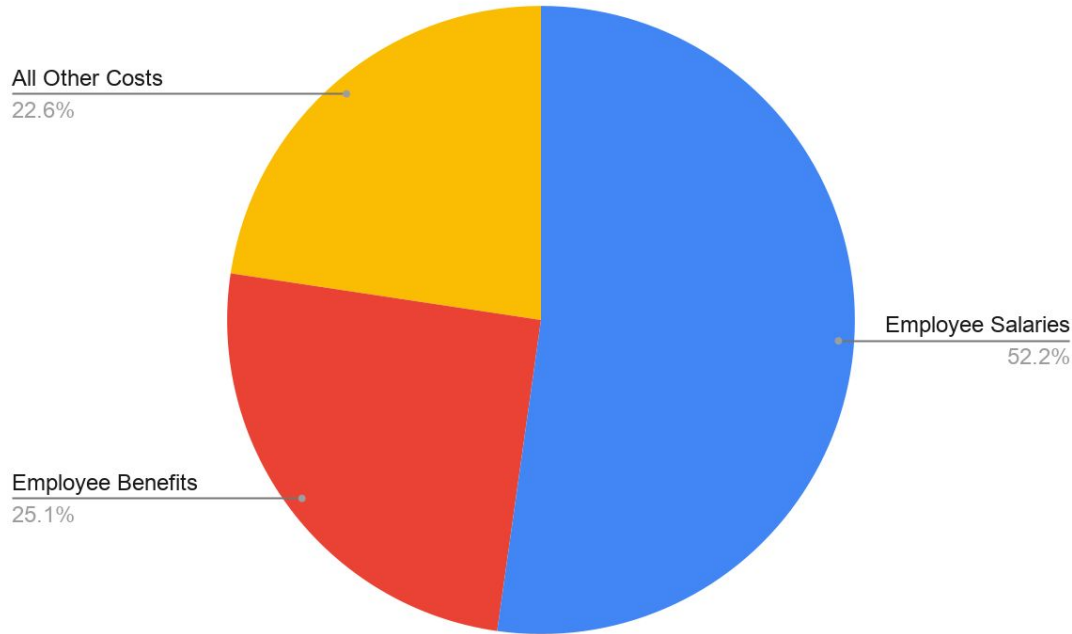
State Aid in 2026-2027 is
\$4,934,236

Since 2017-2018, the
district has seen a
\$785,464 or 13.73%
reduction in state aid.

Fiscal Year	Aid Received
2018-2019	-\$38,710
2019-2020	-\$163,973
2020-2021	-\$224,082
2021-2022	-\$320,193
2022-2023	-\$257,000
2023-2024	-\$98,605
2024-2025	-\$31,227
2025-2026	\$206,520
2026-2027	-\$7,246

Expenditures

Over 77% of the district's general fund expenses cover salary and benefits



	2026-2027 Budget Amount	% of General Fund Budget*
Employee Salaries	\$37,765,900.77	52.2%
Employee Benefits	\$18,179,872.00	25.1%
Total Salaries & Benefits	\$55,945,772.77	77.3%

* excludes capital reserve

Expenditure Comparison



Category	Revised Budget 2025-2026	Proposed Budget 2026-2027	Dollar Change
Regular Instructional Programs	19,011,479	18,863,529	-147,950
Special Education Programs + Tuition	9,235,142	10,445,304	1,210,162
Instructional Support Services (Library, CST, Guidance, Nurses, Curriculum, Staff Training)	8,602,017	8,236,177	-365,840
Co-Curricular Programs	2,054,967	2,060,435	5,468
Administrative Expense (General, School, HR, Business & IT Offices)	3,781,851	3,568,199	-213,652
Facility Maintenance, Custodial, Grounds and Security	7,260,306	6,799,622	-460,684
Transportation	4,089,658	4,127,712	38,054
Employee Benefits	16,566,915	18,179,872	1,612,957
Total Operating Fund Budget Accounts	70,602,335	72,280,850	1,678,515



Tax Rate Estimate for 2026-2027

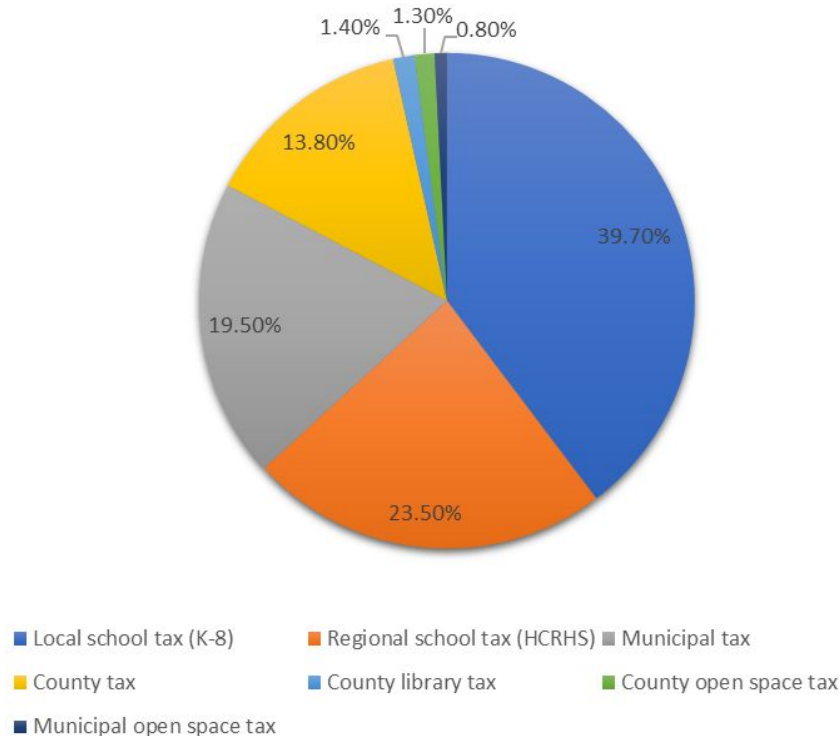
Local tax levy is split among the five municipalities within HCRHS district. Tax rates are calculated based on equalized property values and enrollment from that municipality to HC, which do fluctuate each year.

Municipality	2026 Actual Tax Rate per \$100,000 of Assessed Value	2027 Estimated Tax Rate per \$100,000 of Assessed Value	Annual Tax Rate Change	Change Per Month for a Home Valued at \$400,000 for 2027	Change (5 years) per \$100,000 of Assessed Value
Delaware	\$628.38	\$665.19	\$36.81	\$12.27	\$55.79
East Amwell	\$501.65	\$561.15	\$59.51	\$19.84	-\$122.45
Flemington	\$415.72	\$404.01	-\$11.72	-\$3.91	-\$96.44
Raritan	\$657.25	\$652.61	-\$4.64	-\$1.55	\$8.00
Readington	\$637.31	\$652.37	\$15.06	\$5.02	\$60.80

Property Tax Breakdown



The regional high school district tax is just one piece of your total property taxes, which are broken down as follows (percentages may vary slightly per municipality):



In Closing



- Though one of the most challenging budgeting years, we are able to continue to provide powerful student learning experiences by maintaining all programs and services with the staff to run them, and address aging facilities next year, all while keeping the tax levy increase low.

