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## **PARK RIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**85 PASCACK ROAD**

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**ROBERT M. GAMPER, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**ROBERT WRIGHT**  
Board Secretary and  
Business Administrator

**Dear Park Ridge Residents:**

As we reflect on this year's budget process, it is clear that school districts across New Jersey, including Park Ridge, are navigating a uniquely complex financial landscape. Rising costs, particularly significant increases in employee healthcare expenses, combined with broader inflationary pressures, are impacting nearly every area of school operations. For a small district like ours, rising insurance costs have an especially significant impact. These premiums continue to consume a larger and growing portion of our budget each year, limiting flexibility in other areas and placing added pressure on maintaining balance.

In preparing the 2026–2027 budget, the Board of Education approached this process with careful scrutiny and a deep understanding of our responsibility to both taxpayers and students. We explored every opportunity to manage insurance-related costs, including evaluating plan options and working closely with advisors to identify potential savings. While we continue to pursue new opportunities, we have not yet been able to realize meaningful reductions. We also reviewed operational efficiencies to identify adjustments that would not compromise the integrity of our schools. Health insurance alone increased by over 30% this year, more than a \$2.4 million increase over last year's budget, costs that are contractual obligations and largely beyond the district's control. Additionally, out-of-district tuition and transportation costs remain a significant portion of the budget. These placements are legally mandated to ensure all students receive the services and support they are entitled to. While the district received additional state aid, it was not sufficient to offset these increases.

As a result, the district utilized available CAP waivers, resulting in a proposed tax levy increase of 8.14% for the 2026–2027 school year. For the average Park Ridge home (assessed at \$475,000), this represents an estimated annual increase of \$597. Despite these financial pressures, we are proud that this budget maintains the high level of educational excellence our community expects and our students deserve. Importantly, this budget allows us to retain our staff and maintain optimal class sizes, especially in the early elementary grade, ensuring students receive individualized attention during these critical learning years.

We are, and continue to be, incredibly proud of our community and the opportunities we provide for our students. The following are some recent highlights:

- ◆ In the 2026 NICHE rankings, the Park Ridge School District was ranked #9 in Bergen County, receiving an overall grade of "A." Up from #10 last year.
- ◆ 93% of the PRHS class of 2025 is currently attending either a two or four year college.
- ◆ Expansion of course offerings, including AP Business with Personal Finance, AP Cybersecurity, and Guitar II.
- ◆ Continued senior internship opportunities in collaboration with Pascack Valley High School.

This budget reflects a careful balance between fiscal responsibility and our commitment to educational quality. These are not easy decisions, and we understand the weight they carry for our community. We remain committed to ongoing review of costs and will continue to pursue opportunities for savings as they become available. We welcome you to join us at the public hearing on Monday, May 4th at 7:00 p.m. in the Park Ridge High School Little Theater to ask questions and gain a clearer understanding before the Board votes at the conclusion of the meeting.

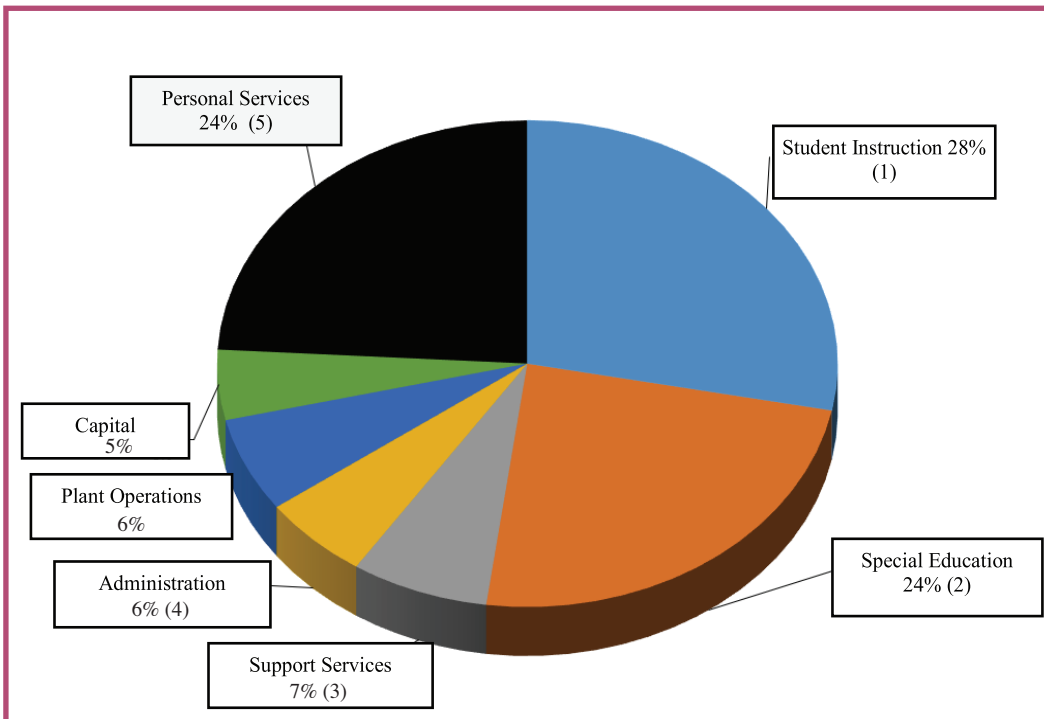
In closing, a strong school district is built through partnership. We remain committed to transparency, responsible stewardship, and maintaining the excellence that defines Park Ridge Public Schools. We are grateful for your continued support.

**The Park Ridge Board of Education**  
*A district "committed to educational excellence."*

# 2026-27 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Continues funding for a full day Kindergarten program at both elementary schools.
- ◆ Aligns curriculum with the updated New Jersey Student Learning Standards.
- ◆ “One to One” Macbook Laptop Initiative continued for Grades 3-12 with newer model computers.
- ◆ Provides resources to the Elementary grades for STEAM programs (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics).
- ◆ Maintains a contract with West Bergen Mental Health to provide therapeutic counselors to meet the emotional wellness needs of students in grades K-12.
- ◆ Continues to provide an elementary guidance counselor at East Brook and West Ridge schools.
- ◆ The Owl House, our 18-21 year old Life Skills program, will continue to generate tuition revenue from out of district students and save money by keeping Park Ridge students in the school district.
- ◆ Supports a wide range of Middle School and High School sports programs.
- ◆ Continues to provide funding for a Therapeutic classroom at the High School which allows students to remain in the district.
- ◆ Continuing to employ three Special Law Enforcement Officer’s Class III (SLEO 3’s) to provide security at each of the district’s school buildings.
- ◆ The district continues to undertake Capital Improvement projects as needed, including general maintenance and repairs at all three schools.
- ◆ Ongoing Professional Development, including Orton-Gillingham training to strengthen foundational literacy.

## How The Budget is Spent



The 2026-27 proposed budget maintains educational spending. The Tax levy increase is 8.14% which is at the State mandated CAP. The budget includes funds to maintain the 1:1 laptop initiative in Grades 3 through 12 and add a fiber optic backbone. Security will continue to include the employment of SLEO 3 officers. Capital Reserve funds will be used to address facility needs. Using these funds does not impact taxes or the District’s CAP.

Notes

- 1) Includes regular instruction, basic skills, ESL, school sponsored programs and transportation.
- 2) Includes resource room, preschool handicap, out-of-district tuition, related services and transportation.
- 3) Includes health, speech, guidance, media services and staff development.
- 4) Includes legal, election, communication, Internet, printing, postage, auditing, graduation and other professional fees.
- 5) Includes Health Insurance, Social Security, Pension costs and other employee coverages.

## Budgeted Expenditures

	2025-26 <u>Budget</u>	2026-27 <u>Proposed</u>	Increase (Decrease)
Instruction	\$9,868,967	\$9,903,905	\$34,938
Special Education Instruction	2,464,071	2,687,142	223,071
Basic Skills /Bilingual	888,528	839,669	(48,859)
Co-Curricular/Athletics	1,104,681	1,152,189	47,508
Out-of-District Tuition	3,055,807	3,085,707	29,900
Support Regular (Health, Guidance)	868,039	902,072	34,033
Support Special (Speech, Related, CST)	4,105,598	4,249,108	143,510
Media Services	826,768	817,219	(9,549)
Staff Development	971,876	1,081,162	109,286
General Administration	586,741	551,182	(35,559)
School Administration	1,183,062	1,191,974	8,912
Business/Technology Services	728,703	701,791	(26,912)
Operation & Maintenance	2,606,239	2,715,597	109,358
Transportation	959,089	872,168	(86,921)
Benefits	7,963,931	10,392,236	2,428,305
Capital Outlay/Capital Reserve	<u>1,311,151</u>	<u>2,011,151</u>	<u>700,000</u>
General Fund - Budgeted Expenditures	39,493,251	43,154,272	3,661,021
Debt Service Fund	<u>776,209</u>	<u>535,936</u>	<u>(240,273)</u>
Total Budgeted Expenditures	<u>\$40,269,460</u>	<u>\$43,690,208</u>	<u>\$3,420,748</u>

## Budgeted Revenues

	2025-26 <u>Budget</u>	2026-27 <u>Proposed</u>	Increase (Decrease)
State Aid:			
Special Education	\$1,396,813	\$1,488,810	\$91,997
Security Aid	137,747	158,602	20,855
Transportation Aid	172,116	161,666	-10,450
Extraordinary Aid			0
Federal Grant:			
Medicaid Reimbursement	1,301	7,784	6,483
Local Revenues:			
Tuition	33,945	33,945	0
Miscellaneous	132,783	136,300	3,517
Local Tax Levy	34,994,748	37,843,367	2,848,619
Fund Balance	1,158,798	1,158,798	0
Transfers - Capital Reserve/Other	<u>1,465,000</u>	<u>2,165,000</u>	<u>700,000</u>
General Fund - Budgeted Revenues	<u>39,493,251</u>	<u>43,154,272</u>	<u>3,661,021</u>
Debt Service Fund:			
Local Tax Levy	512,295	353,717	(158,578)
Fund Balance/Transfer from Cap Res	1		(1)
State Aid	<u>263,913</u>	<u>182,219</u>	<u>(81,694)</u>
Debt Service - Budgeted Revenues	<u>776,209</u>	<u>535,936</u>	<u>(240,273)</u>
Total Budgeted Revenues	<u>\$40,269,460</u>	<u>\$43,690,208</u>	<u>\$3,420,748</u>

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

*On January 17, 2012, Governor Christie signed into law, S-3148, which allowed local school districts to eliminate a vote on the school budget if the budget is at or below the statutory tax CAP. On February 13, 2012, the Park Ridge Board of Education passed a resolution adopting this provision. What this means for the voters of Park Ridge is that there will be NO ELECTIONS IN APRIL. All elections will be held in November. In addition, if the budget is at or below the statutory tax CAP set by the State of N.J., there will be no public vote on the budget. The proposed budget, as set forth inside this flyer, is at the statutory tax CAP.*

Park Ridge Board of Education  
85 Pascack Road  
Park Ridge, New Jersey 07656

***ECR WSS***  
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Park Ridge, New Jersey 07656

## PARK RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2026 - 2027 PROPOSED BUDGET



**PUBLIC HEARING:**  
**Monday, May 4, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Park Ridge High School Little Theater**  
**Visit [www.parkridgeschools.org](http://www.parkridgeschools.org) for more information**