



HIGH BRIDGE
SCHOOL DISTRICT
The Few, The Proud, The Hilltoppers!

High Bridge School District 2025 - 2026 Budget

May 5, 2025

Dr. Gregory Hobbaugh, Superintendent
Karolina Cywa, Business Administrator

High Bridge Board of Education Members

Karyn Gove, President

Robert Imhoff , Vice President

Caitlin Bowring

Gregory Hodges

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District Priorities

- Continue Social Emotional Learning activities and programs to meet current student needs.
- Ensure students are meeting grade level expectation.
- Reinforce district commitment to student and staff security.
- Maintain low class size:
 - Grades K-3 = 16
 - Grades 4-6 = 20
 - Grades 7-8 = 18
- Full-Day Kindergarten, Preschool and Extended School Year programs.
- Increase and improve security throughout the district

Budget Objectives

- Support programs to raise student achievement.
- Address wellness and safety needs.
- Minimize tax impact on residents.

Explanation of Funds

- General Fund
 - Operating budget Revenue (State Aid, Property Taxes, Local Revenue) and Expenditures (Salaries, Benefits, Utilities, Maintenance, Transportation)—Fund 10
- Special Revenue Fund
 - Title, IDEA, PEA Expansion and other Grants – Fund 20
- Debt Service
 - Principal and Interest payments on Bonds Outstanding – Fund 40

Revenue

CATEGORY	2024-2025 BUDGET	2025-2026 BUDGET	INCREASE/ DECREASE	% CHANGE
General Fund Tax Levy	\$7,109,036	\$7,296,930	\$187,894	2.64%
State Aid	\$660,713	\$682,899	\$22,186	3.36%
Extraordinary Aid		\$150,000	\$150,000	n/a
Debt Service Aid	\$80,348	\$80,385	\$37	0.05%
Tuition, Misc., Interest on Reserves	\$47,575	\$48,100	\$525	1.10%
Special Revenues (Grants)	\$1,466,905	\$1,781,441	\$314,536	21.44%
Maintenance Reserve	\$90,000	\$150,000	\$60,000	66.67%
Debt Service Tax Levy	\$465,402	\$465,615	\$213	0.05%
Sub Total Revenue	\$9,919,979	\$10,655,370	\$735,391	7.41%
<u>Fund Balance/Capital Reserve</u>	<u>\$651,018</u>	<u>\$610,610</u>	<u>-\$40,408</u>	<u>-6.21%</u>
Total Revenue	\$10,570,997	\$11,265,980	\$694,983	6.57%

Appropriations

CATEGORY	2024-2025 BUDGET	2025-2026 BUDGET	INCREASE/ DECREASE	% CHANGE
Instruction	\$3,701,807	\$3,847,730	\$145,923	3.94%
Support Services	\$1,439,344	\$1,531,985	\$92,641	6.44%
Employee Benefits	\$1,772,842	\$1,982,458	\$209,616	11.82%
Facilities and Transportation	\$1,066,658	\$1,052,333	-\$14,325	-1.34%
Capital Project/Equipment/Interest	\$50,008	\$60,008	\$10,000	20.00%
<u>Administration</u>	<u>\$527,683</u>	<u>\$464,025</u>	<u>-\$63,658</u>	<u>-12.06%</u>
Subtotal General Fund	\$8,558,342	\$8,938,539	\$380,197	4.44%
Grants	\$1,466,905	\$1,781,441	\$314,536	21.44%
<u>Debt Service</u>	<u>\$545,750</u>	<u>\$546,000</u>	<u>\$250</u>	<u>0.05%</u>
Total Appropriations	\$10,570,997	\$11,265,980	\$694,983	6.57%

Cost Reductions/Savings

- Shared Services : Business Administrator/Speech Therapist/Spanish/Art
- Municipality snow plowing/tech services
- Membership in Educational Services Commissions
 - Discounted supplies & shared services
- State Contract Pricing
 - Discounted supplies
- Discounted Utility costs through participation in ACES
- In-house Special Education Programs



2025 - 2026 School Year Academics

- New Elementary School Principal
- Revise Student Handbook to coordinate with chronic absenteeism, tardiness , and discipline
- Identify ways to incentify attendance and promote positive behavior
- Expand of SEL Opportunities
- Renew Middle School Social Studies (digital)
- Purchased Promethium Boards
- Increase Physical Education (MS to full time)

2025-2026 Planned Facility Improvements

- Installation of four Airedales (heating units) one at elementary school three at middle school
- Replacement of rear stairs/ramp at middle school
- Hiring a building and grounds/day custodian to facilitate project management
- Update website with new provider

2019-2026 State Aid History

SCHOOL YEAR	General Account STATE AID \$	TAX LEVY and STATE AID	% STATE AID
2019-2020	\$1,416,733	\$7,797,309	18.17%
2020-2021	\$1,375,815	\$7,943,465	17.32%
2021-2022	\$1,408,435	\$8,107,438	17.37%
2022-2023	\$1,098,420	\$7,931,403	13.85%
2023-2024	\$750,671	\$7,720,314	9.72%
2024-2025	\$660,713	\$7,769,749	8.50%
2025-2026	\$682,899	\$7,979,829	8.56%

State Aid excludes Extraordinary Aid and Preschool Expansion Aid. 21-22 State Aid does not include \$20,000 from Alyssa Law Grant. Tax Levy is Local Tax Levy for the General Account and does not include Debt Service Tax Levy .

State Aid Comparison 2025 -2026

Town	24-25 Levy	25-26 Levy	Difference	Percentage
High Bridge	\$660,713	\$682,899	\$22,186	3.36%
Bethlehem Twp.	\$799,396	\$855,761	\$56,392	7.05%
Califon Boro.	\$116,783	\$107,691	-\$9,092	-7.79%
Lebanon Twp.	\$1,379,435	\$1,390,591	\$11,156	0.81%
Lebanon Boro.	\$148,500	\$157,410	\$8,910	6.00%
Tewksbury Twp.	\$1,466,480	\$1,433,018	-\$33,462	-2.28%
N Hunt/Voorhees	\$3,630,666	\$3,848,506	\$217,840	6.00%

* Amounts exclude debt service aid and extraordinary aid

Tax Levy 2025 - 2026

2024-2025 Tax Levy	2025-2026 Tax Levy	\$ Difference	% Difference
\$7,109,036	\$7,296,930	\$187,894	2.64%
2024-2025 Debt Service	2025-2026 Debt Service	\$ Difference	% Difference
<u>\$465,402</u>	<u>\$465,615</u>	<u>\$213</u>	<u>0.05%</u>
\$7,574,438	\$7,762,545	\$188,107	

TOTAL TAX LEVY = \$7,762,545

OVERALL INCREASE = 2.48%

2025 - 2026 Tax Levy

Budget Year	Average Property Value *	Calendar Year Tax Rate *	Property Tax (HB schools portion)
2025 - 2026	\$339,452	.015752	\$5,347.14

Annual Tax Increase on Average Home = \$141.07
Or Monthly Increase on Average Home = \$11.76

* Average Property Value provided by High Bridge Borough.
Total Rateable used for tax rate calculation was \$493,154,500
per 2025 Hunterdon County Final Equalization Table.

2025 -2026 Tentative Budget

Historical Tax Rate % Increases

School Year	Total Tax Levy	YOY Inc. %	Average Home Value	Per Home Monthly Increase
17 -18 Audit	\$6,254,228	5.33%	\$228,221	\$18.57
18 -19 Audit	\$6,565,706	4.98%	\$227,040	\$16.36
19 - 20 Audit	\$6,832,760	4.07%	\$227,380	\$15.45
20 - 21 Audit	\$7,020,901	2.75%	\$227,737	\$7.07
21 - 22 Audit	\$7,152,466	1.87%	\$229,605	\$7.57
22 - 23 Audit	\$7,290,071	1.92%	\$232,656	\$3.94
23 - 24 Audit	\$7,429,290	1.91%	\$260,417	\$9.72
24 - 25 Budget	\$7,574,438	1.95%	\$334,815	\$12.84
25 - 26 Budget	\$7,762,545	2.48%	\$339,452	\$11.76

Conclusions

Total recommended operating budget of
\$11,265,980

- Expands existing programs, positions and services including:
- Paraprofessionals:
 - 1:1 classroom
 - Additional paras to meet student needs
- Educational Software Programs to support student achievement and identify areas in need of extra support
- 1:1 Chromebook and/or iPads for all students
- Professional Development for all staff to help nurture student development and success
- No fee extracurricular, co-curricular and sports activities
- Tuition reimbursement for teacher growth
- Facility maintenance

School Board Members Questions?