



Metuchen Public Schools

Budget Hearing Presentation

2026-2027

School Year

April 28, 2026

Budget Preparation Timeline

- July/August 2025 - Budget Preparations begin.
- September/December 2025 – Principals prepared school-based budget with input from all stakeholders.
- December 2025 - The Superintendent and Business Administrator reviewed the submitted budgets.

Budget Preparation Timeline

- January 2026 – April 2026 Presentations at Board of Education Meetings.
- March 10, 2026 – State Aid Information was received.
- March 24, 2026 – Preliminary Budget Hearing.
- April 28, 2026 – Final Budget Hearing.

25/26 Highlights

Metuchen High School

- **U.S. News & World Report Ranking - Best High Schools**
 - **Ranked 45th New Jersey,**
 - **125th New York Metro Area,**
 - **Top 5% National Ranking**
- **Niche & MyCentralJersey Middlesex County High Schools - #2 in the county**
- **2025-2027 Sustainable Jersey Schools - Silver Award**
- **School-Wide Initiatives**
 - Implementation of strategies to facilitate stronger staff-student connections, in response to 2025 NJSCI Survey Data
 - Book study and application of *Building Thinking Classrooms* concepts.
 - Implementation of sustainability initiatives including Cafeteria Share Tables, trash management, & recycling initiatives.
- **Community Outreach**
 - Soccer for a Cause Charity Festival supporting Go4theGoal and the Marisa Tufaro Foundation.
 - REPLENISH Food Drives to support local food banks in Middlesex County.
- **Academic Highlights**
 - **Class of 2025 – 91% of students pursued higher education.**
 - 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program - 7 Commended Scholars, 1 Semi-Finalist
 - Advanced Placement Program
 - 2025 AP School Honor Roll – Bronze Award
 - 555 AP Exams Taken in Spring 2025, 83.6% of students receiving a 3 or higher
- **Athletics**
 - 2025 Spring Girls Track & Field Central Jersey Group 1 Sectional Champions
 - 2025 Baseball GMC Blue Division Champions
 - 2025 Boys Cross Country Central Jersey Group 1 Sectional Champions (4-PEAT)
 - 2025 Girls Tennis GMC White Division Champions
 - 2025 Cheerleading GMC White Division Game Day Champions
 - 25-26 Boys Basketball GMC White Division Champions
 - 25-26 Girls Swimming GMC White Division Champions (REPEAT)
 - 25-26 Girls Indoor Track Central Jersey Group 1 Sectional Champions (5-PEAT)
- **Co- and Extracurricular Highlights**
 - MHS Footlighters Fall Production: *The Crucible*, Spring Production: *Shrek*

25/26 Highlights

Edgar Middle School

- **2023-2026 Sustainable School for New Jersey Bronze Level Award Recipient**
- **Sustainable Schools Jersey Grant Recipient for a hydroponic system at Edgar**
- **School-Wide Initiatives**
 - Implementation Character Education Program with monthly themes
 - Spring Musical- Moana
 - Joe Beckman Speaker Assembly
 - Implementation of the Lifelines Trilogy Curriculum in the 6th grade
 - Student Advisory Board- 8 members
 - Mental Health Ambassadors
 - Career Exploration Activities-Chatbot Career Interest Inventory and Career visits by community members during lunches
- **Community Outreach**
 - Welcome Parent Breakfast
 - Weekly newsletter...Bulldog Briefs
 - Adopt-a-Family
 - Participated in the Middlesex County Replenish Food Drive and the Sock drive
 - Career guest speakers during lunch
- **Academic Competitions**
 - First Lego League Competition
 - Students selected for Regions Honors Orchestra, Band, and Jazz Ensemble
 - 2nd Place in the 2026 AMTNJ Middle School Math Competition

25/26 Highlights

Campbell Elementary School

- **Continued with the Campbell Motto with Children, Families and Teachers, which reads:**
 - The *Campbell Kids* will help others know that they belong by doing their best to include others.
 - The *Campbell Community* will help others know that they belong by living the “Golden Rule.”
 - The *Campbell Teachers* will help others know that they belong by always being there to help the Campbell Kids.
 - *Campbell Elementary School is a GREAT place to learn and a GREAT place to BELONG.*
 - *Action based spirit days were implemented (e.g. school wide Kindness Challenge) to develop evidence of motto implementation.*
- **Additional School-Wide Initiatives**
 - American Heart Association “Rookie of the Year” recipient.
 - Implemented the monthly Bulldog Bike Brigade with overwhelming community support.
 - Implemented Bulldog Buddies to support district-wide Social Emotional Learning Competencies & Sub-Competencies.
 - PTO Sponsored Book Swap occurred monthly.
 - Bi-monthly surveys distributed to the community with data presented to staff regularly with data to support increased staff satisfaction and engagement.
- **Community Outreach**
 - Tremendous community support for school-based drives (e.g., food pantry drives, holiday toy drive).
 - “Campbell Friday Three” highlighted weekly happens and upcoming events.
 - Bi-monthly Coffee or Tea with Dr. C. at Cai’s Café sponsored by Campbell/Moss PTO.

25/26 Highlights

Moss Elementary School

- 2023-2028 State School of Character
- 2023-2028 National School of Character
- 2025 Sustainable Schools for Jersey Certification- Bronze Level
- Full Day Kindergarten 2025-2026
- Upgraded Facilities
 - Interior Courtyard Early Childhood Playground
 - New Exterior Playground
 - New Turf Field
 - Renovated Preschool/Special Education Classrooms
- Enhanced Assessment Tools
 - DIBELS (foundational skills)
 - Fountas and Pinnell (comprehension)
 - iReady Diagnostic Screener
- Foundational Skills Instructional Materials
 - Data-driven Mini-lessons on foundational skills
 - Orton Gillingham
 - Heggerty
 - NJ FOCUS Grant Recipients
- Differentiated Mathematics Approach
 - iReady
 - MyPath Personalized Learning Platform
- Community Outreach
 - PTO Book Swap
 - Assembly Programs
 - Dental Health with a Visiting Dentist
 - First Responders Program (Police, Fire, EMT's)
 - Community Members Guest Readers
 - Spring Food Drive
 - Co-Curricular Clothing Drive
 - Hosted Dignitaries from Malawi
 - Preschool Fashion Show



Special Education Focus Areas

Specialized Programs & Related Services

- Specially designed instruction, related services, specialized evaluations, consultation & collaboration with specialists, work-based learning, community-based instruction, meaningful inclusion, augmentative and alternative communication, assistive technology, targeted professional development

Counseling and Behavioral Supports

- Direct services in counseling, direct services in behavioral support, social skills groups, behavior support plans, consultation with specialists, professional development and staff training

Literacy Intervention

- Reading intervention services, targeted professional development, coaching, progress monitoring

Mental Health Initiative Focus Areas



Mental Health Referendum Components

School Psychologists

Services expanded at all schools with two additional positions

Behavioral Support

Increased support from Board Certified Behavior Analysts district wide



Therapeutic Programs

Clinicians at Campbell & Edgar and continued at MHS

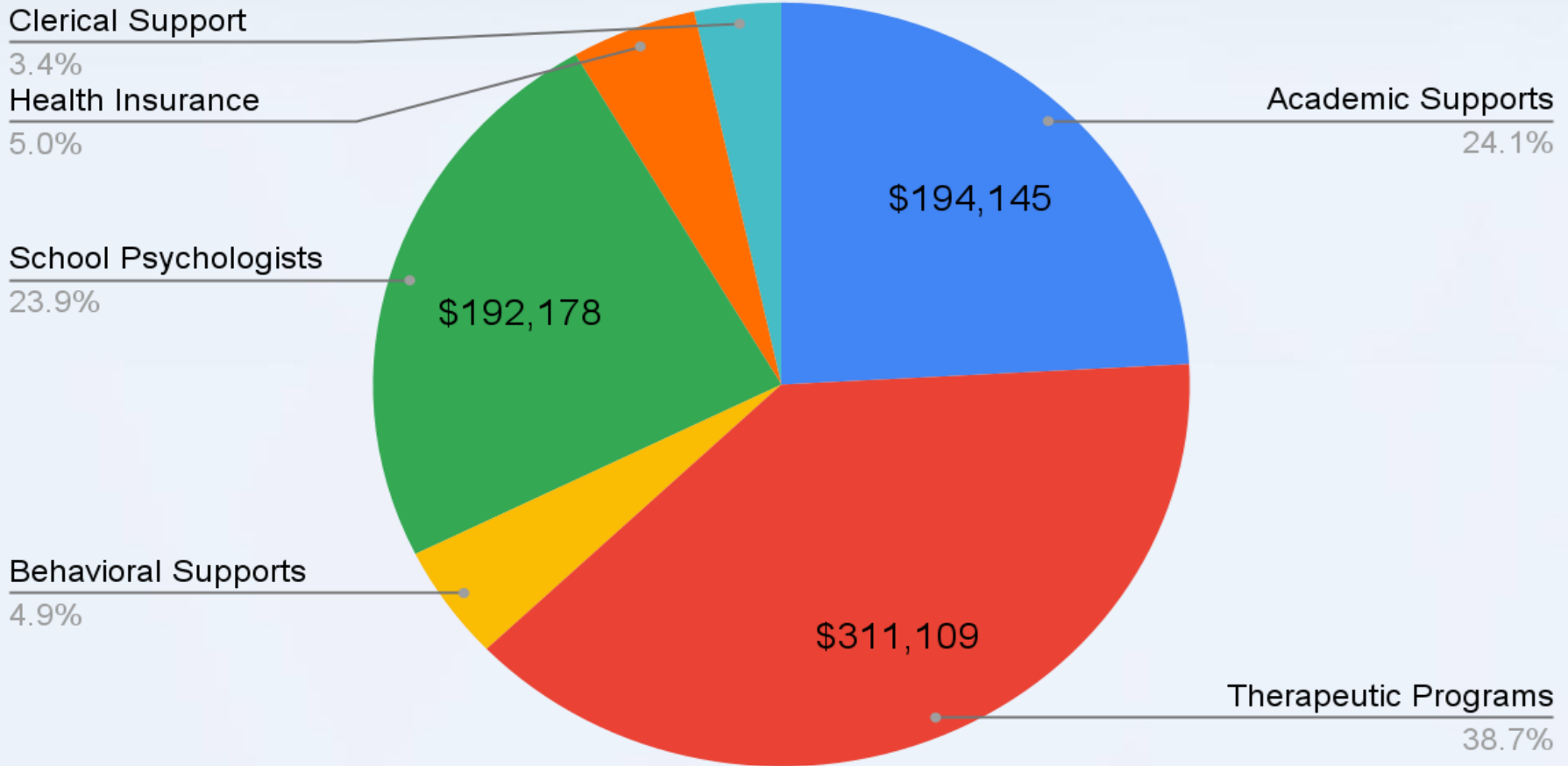
Academic Interventions

Reading Specialist
Math Intervention
Individualized intervention plans

Clerical Support

Part time secretary to increase efficiency and availability of support staff for direct services

Mental Health Referendum Budget



26-27 Proposed Budget/Curriculum

Curriculum Writing and Revisions:

- Engaging in cycles of continuous improvement

Professional Development with Consultants/Vendors

- Workshop Registration fees for content supervisors
- PD consultants in identified areas (i.e., Science, NJTSS)
- Staff training for compliance with mandates (i.e., CPR/AED staff trainers)

Systems Management

- Frontline (teacher evaluation & staff professional growth)
- Linkit Grouping

Professional Development led by District Experts:

- Teacher leader sessions for In Services, Mentoring, and PD related to district goals, mandates, and areas of need

Curriculum Office Supplies

26-27 Proposed Budget/Technology

- 1:1 devices for rising 3rd and 9th grade students
- Hardware upgrades
- Savings through:
 - Choice of laptop and desktop platforms
 - Use of various interactive whiteboard models
 - Extension of Chromebook life expectancy

Status of Network Infrastructure

- Network wiring – 10Gbps across all network
- Switches – All switches linked at 10Gbps throughput districtwide; new construction will maintain this standard.
- Servers – Server NICs upgraded to 10Gbps
- Firewall – Plans to replace firewall in 26-27
- Internet – service will be increased from 3Gbps to 5Gbps bandwidth
- Access points – rolling upgrades of older devices continue; new construction outfitted with new equipment
- Fiber backbone – All switch closets connected by fiber for 10+Gbps speeds throughout each building; new construction maintains this standard.
- WAN – 10Gbps between buildings over WAN links.

Budget/Facility/Safety

- Continued proactive maintenance of all district buildings and athletic fields.
- Continued parking lot maintenance at all buildings.
- HVAC Upgrades
- Roofs – repairs

THE SCHOOL BUDGET INCLUDES

FUND 10 – The General Fund or Operating Fund

Provides for:

- support of programs and services
- day-to-day operations

2025-2026 Budget Appropriations

Fund 10 \$54,371,455

2026-2027 Budget Appropriations

Fund 10 \$53,535,072

THE SCHOOL BUDGET INCLUDES

FUND 20 – The Special Revenue Fund

- Federal and restricted state aid
- Legally restricted for special purposes such as Special Education
- No Child Left Behind monies

2025-2026 Budget Appropriations

Fund 20 \$1,551,514

2026-2027 Budget Appropriation

Fund 20 \$1,511,199

THE SCHOOL BUDGET INCLUDES

FUND 40 – The Debt Service Fund

- Accounts for money to be set aside to pay the interest and principal on long-term debt such as bond issues

2025-2026 Budget Appropriations

Fund 40 \$6,138,640

State Aid Amount \$836,338

2026-2027 Budget Appropriations

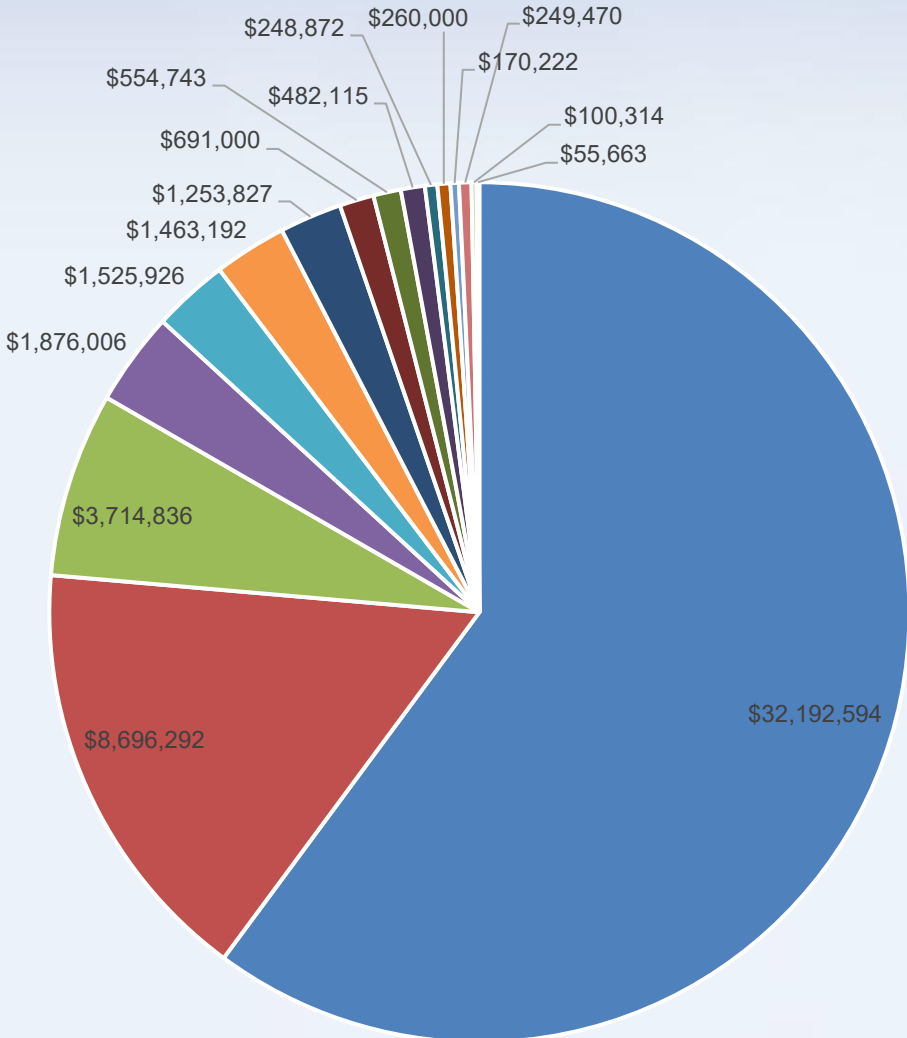
Fund 40 \$5,983,350

State Aid Amount \$809,159

Summary of Appropriations

Salaries	\$ 32,192,594
Health Insurance	\$ 8,696,292
Tuition/OT PT, Speech, Mental Health / Charter School	\$ 3,714,836
Transportation Contracts	\$ 1,876,006
Instructional Supplies/Textbooks	\$ 1,525,926
Payroll Tax/Pension	\$ 1,463,192
Utilities	\$ 1,253,827
Insurance P&C etc.	\$ 691,000
Transfer to Fund 30 Increase in Capital Reserve	\$ 554,743
Contracted Services	\$ 482,115
Supplies	\$260,000
Professional Development FFPI	\$ 248,872
Legal/Audit/Architect	\$ 170,222
Athletic Operating, Environmental, Camping Trip Costs	\$249,470
NJ DOE Assessment	\$ 100,314
Charter School	\$ 55,663
Total	\$53,535,072

Total Appropriations

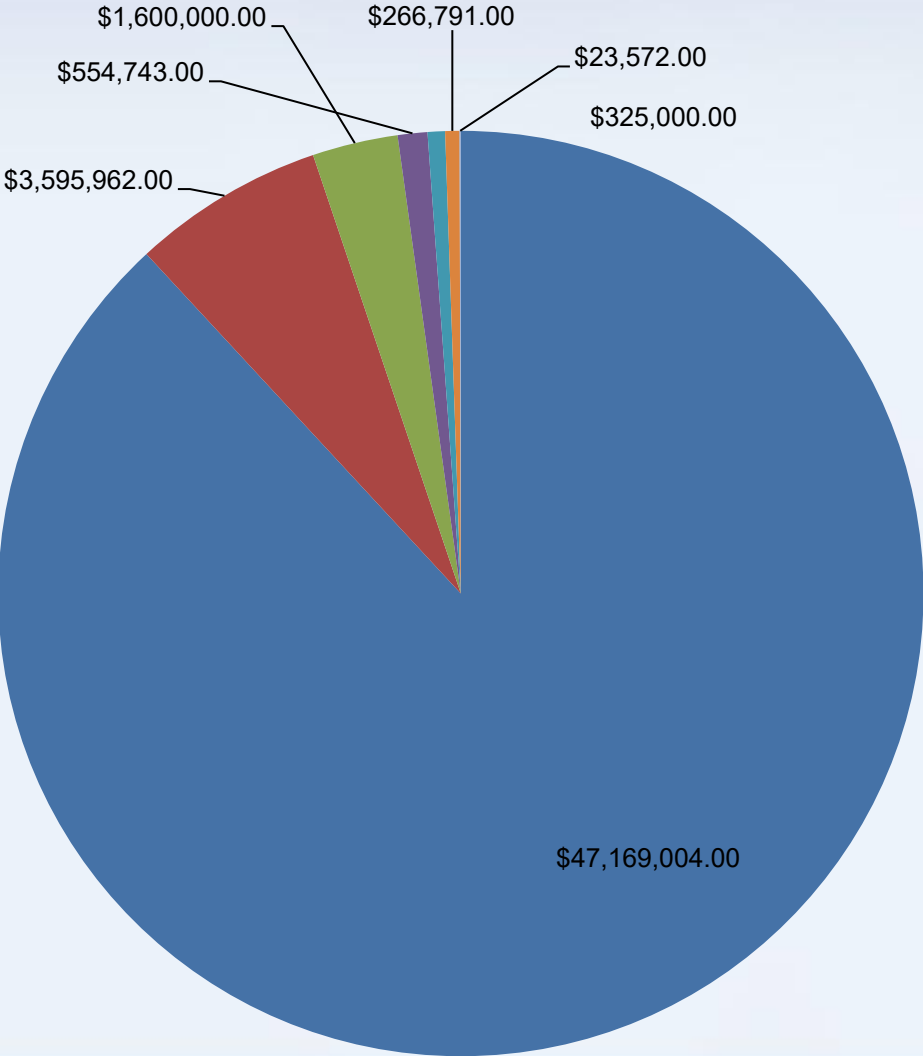


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- Charter School \$55,663

Revenue – Fund 10

Local Tax Levy	\$47,169,004
State Aid	\$3,595,962
Budgeted Fund Balance	\$1,600,000
Transfer from Capital Reserve	\$554,743
Transportation Revenue	\$325,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$266,791
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$23,572
Total	\$53,535,072

Revenue



- Local Tax Levy \$47,169,004
- State Aid \$3,595,962
- Budgeted Fund Balance \$1,600,000
- Transfer From Capital Reserve \$554,743
- Transportation Revenue \$325,000
- Miscellaneous Revenue \$266,791
- Medicaid Reimbursement \$23,572

State Aid

Special Education Aid	\$2,886,900
Categorical Transportation Aid	\$362,071
Categorical Security Aid	\$346,999
Total 2026/2027 Aid	\$3,595,970

TAX IMPACT – FUND 10 AND FUND 40

Metuchen Ratables	\$1,097,954,900
School Tax Levy – Fund 10 and Fund 40	\$51,478,096
School Tax Rate per Hundred (=51,478,096 / 1,097,954,900 * 100)	4.69
School taxes on a house assessed at \$211,143 (=21.11 * 4.69 * 100)	\$9,898
School tax increase on a house assessed at \$211,143 (9898-9567)	\$330
Percent increase over 2025/2026	3.45%

Tax Levy Analysis – Fund 10 and Fund 40

<u>Year</u>	<u>% Increase to Taxpayer</u>
2012/2013	1.7%
2013/2014	2.3%
2014/2015	2.9%
2015/2016	1.4%
2016/2017	2.4%
2017/2018	1.5%
2018/2019	0.3%
2019/2020	2.0% includes \$700K Mental Health Separate Proposal
2020/2021	0.4%
2021/2022	1.0%
2022/2023	3.2% Includes \$800K Separate Proposal
2023/2024	3.9%
2024/2025	6.79% First Year Paying Debt Service New Bonds
2025/2026	2.79%
2026/2027	3.45%
Average Over 15 Years	2.4%

Budget Efficiencies

- Developing and Implementing an Energy Savings Improvement Plan (ESIP)
- Solar Panel Power Purchase Agreement
- Integrated Preschool Program
- Refinanced bonds whenever cost effective
- Participation with the ESCNJ for mandated services to non-public schools, transportation jointures, and out-of-district special education placements
- Participation in Federal E-Rate program
- Natural gas and electricity consortia with other high-volume users
- Gasoline purchases through the Borough
- Cooperative purchasing with other school districts
- Implementation of least restrictive self-contained programs at all schools
- Participated in the New Jersey Clean Energy Program
- Completion of Energy Audit