

Budget Preview

This is the first in a series of articles that are intended to give the citizens of Bound Brook an overview of the history, process and impact of the 2011/2012 school district budget. I hope to keep these articles free of educational jargon and sound bites. They are designed to provide the public with a clear understanding of how the proposed budget was developed.

The Governor's budget message in February once again presented an austere financial picture for New Jersey. However there was a bright spot for public schools in his proposal. The Bound Brook Public School District is scheduled to receive a 1% increase in state funding (\$218K) which recoups a small portion of the state aid lost in 2010.

Last year the district saw a reduction in state aid equal to 5% of the total district budget and the take back of surplus funds by the State. Following the defeat of the proposed 2010/2011 budget, which included a 0% increase in taxes, a reduction of \$212,000 in the budget was made by the borough council. The adopted 2010/2011 budget was \$1,136,427 less than the adopted 2009/2010 budget and was the smallest budget and tax levy since 2007/2008. The defeat of the budget and subsequent cuts resulted in a reduction of the school taxes by \$203,524.

The district addressed these losses in revenue by reducing staff and cutting, deferring or scaling back various programs, projects and expenditures. The most visible reductions were in staff. The district eliminated four administrators and supervisors and ten instructional positions. Additionally, the district reduced the number of non-instructional personnel. Our goal in 2010/2011 was to minimize the impact of those reductions on students whenever possible. The district addressed these changes through the reorganization, restructuring and reduction of personnel, programs and services.

The 2011/2012 budget proposes a modest increase in taxes of 2% which is needed to maintain existing programs and services. The proposed 2011/2012 budget has cuts and additions, reorganization and restructuring with an end product that maintains the current level of personnel and continues to provide sound programs and needed services. While additional funding is sorely needed, we will continue to provide basic services with those funds available.

The **2011/2012 Budget** link on our website has the "user friendly" budget as required by the Department of Education and the public budget presentation made to the Board of Education, on March 28th.

Future articles in this series will address the following:

- What has the district done to level off or reduce costs over the last five years?
- What is the tax and budget history of Bound Brook?
- What reductions in staff and services have occurred during this time?
- What improvements have been made during the same period?
- Why is the cost of education so high?
- What will the final budget look like?