



## Red Bank Regional High School District 2009-2010 Budget Q & A



**Vote Tuesday April 21  
Polls Open 2 to 9 pm**

➤ **What is the school budget and what is its purpose?**

The school budget finances every aspect of our high school students' education: building upkeep, utilities, all school materials and staff, etc. It was created with zero-based budgeting; that is, we calculated the actual cost for each line item in the budget and did not merely add increases from the prior year.

➤ **When is the school election and what is its purpose?**

1. The school election is held on Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Polls are open from 2 to 9 pm. You vote in your usual voting location.
2. The purpose of the election is to elect board of education representatives and to vote on the proposed school budget.

➤ **Can I vote on my elementary school budget as well as the high school budget?**

All registered voters in the sending school districts of Little Silver, Red Bank and Shrewsbury are able to vote on their elementary school budget as well as the Red Bank Regional School budget at the same time in the same voting location, on April 21.

➤ **What is the proposed budget for the 2009-2010 School year?**

The proposed operating budget is \$ 24,360,194 which is \$818,165 or 3.48% higher than last year and *is lower than the 4% increase* allowed by the State of New Jersey

➤ **Why does the budget go up every year?**

1. The budget goes up due to increases in contractual agreements and higher cost of utilities and other expenses similar to your own home's expenses.
2. The Board of Education utilizes significant shared service agreements, which substantively reduces our expenses. Some examples include shared services for utilities, transportation and bulk purchasing.

➤ **What are the main items that increased?**

Tuition expense increased due to an increase in out-of-district special education placements. Salaries and benefits increased due to an increase in health benefit costs, contractual salary obligations and state pension fund contributions. Several areas decreased in the budget, including the operations budget, capital expenditures and equipment and capital improvements.

➤ **Why are the academy tuition students so important to the school budget?**

The three exceptional RBR academies attract tuition students from out-of-district which enables us to run the programs offering all our students an unparalleled range of courses in the arts, finance and technology. Plus, the tuition helps reduce our overall fixed costs, thereby reducing the burden for our taxpayers. (I.E., if you have room in the car, why not welcome another passenger to share the cost of the gas? Additionally, you can now afford a premium brand of gas.)

### ➤ Is there anything new in the budget?

1. This is basically a ***maintenance budget***, with only an increase in one part-time music teacher to full-time and a new physical education/health teacher based on enrollment projections.
2. The International Baccalaureate program begins next year and is funded by a combination of grant monies and operating budget. Teacher training was accomplished over the past two years.
3. A building improvement project to enhance school safety is included in the budget and is 40% financed by a facilities grant through the Department of Education. (The actual capital outlay budget decreased 12% from the current year budget.)

### ➤ How is the budget funded?

The budget is funded with a proportion of

- a. 67.76% Property taxes
- b. 11.65% Tuition Revenue (from our academy programs)
- c. 5.86% State Aid
- d. 4.79% Federal Grants
- e. 9.94% Miscellaneous (includes transportation fees, debt repayment and fund balance)

### ➤ What is the tax levy and how is it calculated?

1. Through the equalized rate valuation formula, the tax levy for each sending town breaks out as follows:
  - Little Silver (an average assessed home of \$499,936) tax increase of \$110.02 per year
  - Red Bank (an average assessed home of \$407,320) tax increase of \$12.09 per year
  - Shrewsbury (an average assessed home of \$401,553) tax increase of \$126.61 per year
2. The Equalized Valuation formula is set by the county tax board in October of each year by comparing the assessed value of municipalities to actual property values over the last two years, and establishes a ratio to market value. Additionally, the number of students who attend the elementary school and the regional high school is factored into the calculation.

### ➤ Does RBR get its fair share of state aid?

RBR receives less than 6% of state aid, while over 50% of all state aid is given to 31 Abbott school districts in the state out of over 600 school districts.

### ➤ What happens if the budget is defeated?

1. If the RBR school budget is defeated, it then goes to all three town councils for review and recommendation for budget cuts.
2. In that case, programs, staffing and services may be negatively impacted.

### What result can I expect from my continued investment in the RBR school budget?

As one of the top high schools in the state of New Jersey (*NJ Monthly* recently listed RBR as the third top high school in Monmouth County after Holmdel and RFH), you can expect to see a continuation of our varied and expansive course offerings and the excellent progress our students make, as exemplified by our stellar New Jersey Report Card. This highlights high SAT and AP scores, low class size and a high percentage of advanced degreed teachers. Basically, your investment preserves the excellent program we currently provide RBR students.