



The *landscape of education in Berrien County shifted in 2023* when our county superintendents committed to a single, cohesive vision during the inaugural Berrien County Superintendent Retreat. This collaborative framework has already yielded significant results, including the formalization of our *Three Countywide Goals* and the successful launch of the *Berrien Thrive Campaign*. As we look ahead, the *Berrien Dare to Achieve* initiative represents our next bold step in ensuring that collaborative transformation translates directly into student success across all member districts.


Key Initiative:	<h1>Berrien County Superintendents (BCS) Retreat</h1>
BCS Retreat 2023	Setting the Stage for our Collective Work in Berrien County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy, Math, Well Being <p>Outcome: Three Countywide Goals</p>
BCS Retreat 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitments / What in Berrien County Actions / So What in Berrien County Products / Now What in Berrien County <p>Outcome: Principals as Leaders</p>
BCS Retreat 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Agreement to Alignment From Alignment to Further Action <p>Outcome: Renewed Math Focus</p>
BCS Retreat 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity, Connection, and Preparation Practice, Refinement, and Commitment <p>Current Retreat Targeted Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a shared walkthrough model for observing student learning Use a common observation lens (rigor, practice, feedback) Establish a countywide schedule for 2026-27 of collaborative learning walks Commit to a clear structure and expectations for participation




Key Initiative:

Countywide Goals

Three Countywide Goals

 We are building educator capacity around common literacy standards, the **Science of Reading**, and delivery of explicitly foundational skills and strategies.

 We are building educator capacity around common math standards, the **8 mathematical practices** and delivery of explicit foundational skills and strategies.

 We are building educators' capacity around fostering **belonging and engagement** where ALL are connected and accepted.

Key Initiative:

Berrien Thrive Campaign

Feedback related to the Three Countywide Goals is that our communities haven't seen the full picture of the collaboration. To change that, superintendents asked Berrien RESA to launch a countywide awareness campaign.

Berrien Thrive Campaign

Why is the Campaign Important?

- Common language and materials
- Builds connections between school districts and community residents
- Ready-to-use content that districts can easily share out

BerrienThrives Includes:

- Berrien RESA Stories
 - [Always Learning Radio Show - Feb 27](#)
- Realtor Guide & Business Outreach
- [Berrien Thrives District Toolkit](#)

Key Initiative:

Berrien Dare to Achieve

Our Goal is to **move from Alignment to Consistent, Visible Practice** in classrooms throughout the year.

Creation of a shared model for observing student learning:

- Common observation lens (rigor, practice, feedback)
- Establish a countywide schedule for 2026-27
- Commit to a clear structure and expectations for participation

Data/Goal Discussion:

- **What** and **How** should we be tracking student learning as a county?
 - Student **Above** Grade Level, **At** Grade Level, **Below** Grade Level

How do we showcase Student Learning visually at the County Level?

- Data Dashboard:
 - [SchoolData.net](#) (Munetrix, is this our solution)

Berrien Dare to Achieve

**Berrien Regional Education Service Agency
2026-27 General Fund Operating Budget
April 13, 2026**

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>2025-26 REVISED</u>	<u>2026-27 PRELIMINARY</u>	<u>VARIANCE \$</u>	<u>VARIANCE %</u>
LOCAL	4,895,653	4,936,094	40,441	0.8%
STATE	24,407,001	24,013,421	(393,581)	-1.6%
FEDERAL	2,619,555	2,604,481	(15,074)	-0.6%
INCOME. TRANS/ OTHER	<u>1,307,278</u>	<u>1,345,278</u>	<u>38,000</u>	<u>2.9%</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	33,229,487	32,899,274	(330,213)	-1.0%
BEGINNING FUND EQUITY	4,075,830	4,034,658	(41,172)	-1.0%
EST. TOTAL AVAILABLE	37,305,317	36,933,931	(371,385)	-1.0%
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>				
ADMINISTRATION CENTER	32,389,290	31,699,470	(689,820)	-2.1%
ADMIN IMPROVEMENTS	299,000	105,000	(194,000)	-64.9%
BERTRAND INNOVATION CENTER	395,369	424,045	28,676	7.3%
BERTRAND IMPROVEMENTS	<u>187,000</u>	<u>391,539</u>	<u>204,539</u>	<u>109.4%</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	33,270,659	32,620,054	(650,605)	-2.0%
FUND EQUITY AVAILABLE	4,034,658	4,313,877	279,219	6.9%
REV - EXP	(41,172)	279,219	320,392	-778.2%

KEY BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

REVENUES:

- **Local Revenue:** Assumed a 3% increase in property tax values, pending additional feedback from the County.
- **State & Federal Revenues:** Generally assumed flat, given the current uncertain budget environment. Reduced UAAL Stabilization revenues (1.5%) offset expected reduction in expense.

EXPENSES:

- **Salaries:** We looked at a number of contracts that settled over the past year, and the average was approximately 2% increase. While we are currently in the midst of contract negotiations, in order to move forward with creating a budget that can be used for decision-making in the next year, we elected to use this 2% assumption as a placeholder.
- **Insurance:** We are awaiting final insurance rates for the next year, however based on preliminary feedback from our insurance advisor, we are estimating a 5% increase in the employer contribution.
- **Retirement:** Per the State guidance, MPSERS rates are either flat or decrease (2.4%) for the next year. We have applied a decrease of (1.5%) across the employee population to reflect a weighted average of our employee base. UAAL Stabilization rates are also (1.5%) per the State.
- **Program Costs:** Program costs have been aligned with supervisors, including needs for new FTEs to support operations, as well as right-sizing of certain employee wage rates to match market increases.
- **Capital Expenditures:** Projects for planned capital expenditures have been allocated to the General Fund and Special Education fund based on the nature of the work being performed and the programs expected to benefit from the improvements.

**Berrien Regional Education Service Agency
2026-27 Special Education Fund Operating Budget
April 13, 2026**

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>2025-26 REVISED</u>	<u>2026-27 PRELIMINARY</u>	<u>VARIANCE \$</u>	<u>VARIANCE %</u>
LOCAL	29,312,367	30,219,103	906,736	3.1%
STATE	15,851,504	15,302,433	(549,071)	-3.5%
FEDERAL	8,645,374	8,645,374	0	0.0%
INCOME. TRANS/ OTHER	<u>600,000</u>	<u>600,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	54,409,245	54,766,910	357,665	0.7%
BEGINNING FUND EQUITY	15,138,694	16,979,050	1,840,356	12.2%
EST. TOTAL AVAILABLE	69,547,939	71,745,960	2,198,021	3.2%
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>				
ADMINISTRATION CENTER	26,901,172	27,280,646	379,473	1.4%
ADMINISTRATION IMPROVEMENTS	862,500	900,000	37,500	4.3%
BERTRAND INNOVATION CENTER	104,275	41,975	(62,300)	-59.7%
BERTRAND IMPROVEMENTS	0	647,162	647,162	100.0%
BLOSSOMLAND LEARNING CENTER	9,519,044	9,870,287	351,243	3.7%
BLOSSOMLAND CAPITAL	169,319	40,000	(129,319)	-76.4%
LIGHTHOUSE EDUCATION CENTER	8,348,679	8,560,419	211,740	2.5%
LIGHTHOUSE IMPROVEMENTS	938,761	1,324,100	385,339	41.0%
JUVENILE CENTER	564,552	576,932	12,380	2.2%
TRANSPORTATION CENTER	4,910,586	5,034,506	123,920	2.5%
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS	<u>250,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(250,000)</u>	<u>-100.0%</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	52,568,889	54,276,027	1,707,138	3.2%
FUND EQUITY AVAILABLE	16,979,050	17,469,933	490,883	2.9%
REVENUE - EXPENSE	1,840,356	490,883	(1,349,473)	73.3%
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENSE	2,220,580	2,911,262	690,682	31.1%
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE	50,348,309	51,364,765	1,016,456	2.0%

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