BENNINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 59
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET HEARING
Monday, September 8, 2025 6:00 PM

Mission Statement

"The mission of Bennington Public Schools is to provide educational opportunities in a safe, caring environment that will prepare all students to meet the challenges of the future."

I. Call Special Public Budget Hearing to Order
II. Presentation of 2025-2026 Budget
III. Conduct Public Hearing on 2025-2026 Budget
IV. Adjourn

NOTICE: COPY OF OPEN MEETINGS ACT: The Board of Education makes available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room at a location accessible to members of the public. The Act is posted on the wall of the Board room.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO SPEAK DURING PUBLIC FORUM: Getting Started: When it is your turn to speak during the public forum portion of the agenda, please come forward to the table situated immediately in front of the Board, sign your name and address on the sign-in sheet and state your name to the Board of Education.Time Limit: You may speak only one time and must limit comments to 5 minutes or less. Personnel or Student Topic: If you are planning to speak about a personnel or student matter involving an individual, please understand that our policies require that such concerns initially be directed to the administration for consideration. Board members will generally not respond to any questions you ask or comments you may make about individual staff members or students. You are cautioned that slanderous comments are not protected just because they are made at the Board meeting. General Rules: Please remember that this is a public meeting for the conduct of business of the Board of Education. Offensive language, personal attacks and hostile conduct will not be tolerated.

BY: BENNINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bennington Public Schools 2025-26 Budget

September 2025

Overview



Funds	2025-2026 Budget Request	Tax Asking	Proposed Levy
General	$56,980,007	$30,188,107	0.975000
Special Building	$56,458,806	$744,054	0.025000
Bond	$17,583,315	$11,074,216	0.358000
QCPUF	$700,638	$0	0.000000
Depreciation	$3,252,725		
Employee Benefit	$318,225		
Activities	$1,485,146		
School Nutrition	$3,259,479		
Student Fee	$100,318		
Cooperative	$0		
Contingency	$0		
Total	**$ 140,138,659**	**$42,036,377**	**1.358000**

About Bennington Public Schools

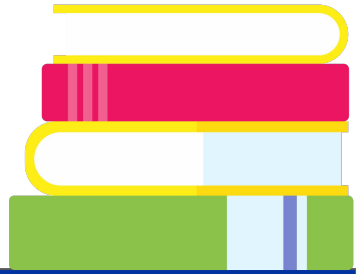
Growth by the Numbers

3.65% Growth - 4,427 (K-12) as of 9/1/25

- (AP-465, BE-373, HE-413, PC-514, ST-396, BMS-465, BSMS-650, HS-1,151)
- BPS is estimated to be right at 5,000 K-12 students by 2029-30

570 BPS Employees

- 390 Certified Staff
- 180 Support Staff
    - 51% of Certified Staff has 4 or less yrs.
    - 22% of Certified Staff has 10 or more yrs.



BENNINGTON BADGERS

Valuation

Year	District Assessed Valuation	Yearly Increase	Percentage Increase
2021	$1,875,308,934	$203,499,933	12.17%
2022	$2,128,252,110	$252,943,176	13.49%
2023	$2,574,696,225	$446,444,115	20.97%
2024	$2,832,782,814	$258,086,589	10.02%
2025	$3,096,216,080	$263,433,266	9.30%
2016-25	Ten year average	$211,777,995	12.26%
2016-20	Previous 5 Yr. Avg.	$138,674,563	11.33%
2021-25	Last 5 Year Avg.	$284,881,428	13.19%

Property Breakdown (2024): Residential/Central Assessed – 89.97%, Ag Land/Personal Property – 3.96%, Comm. and Indust. – 6.07%
County Percentage Breakdown (2025): Douglas County - 97.24%, Washington County - 2.76%

About the Nebraska School Funding System

	Key Points on How Nebraska Funds Public School Districts	Key Points on What the State Funding Means for Bennington Public Schools	Key Points on What the State Funding Means for Other School Districts
Equalization Aid	The state determines basic funding needs for all schools. What the local property taxes can't cover, the state will provide the difference in equalization aid.	The local property taxes will cover 36.44% of the GF budget. **BPS is extremely reliant on equalization aid as it accounts for 12.71% of basic funding needs.**	Some schools do not need equalization aid because their local property taxes can cover basic funding needs.
Valuation & Equalization Aid	As valuation increases, equalization aid to the district decreases the following year.	The 9.30% increase in valuation for 2025-26 provides additional funds, but **BPS will lose an equal amount of equalization aid in 2026-27.**	For schools that do not need equalization aid, valuation increases result in additional funds for the school.
Foundation Aid	The state funding formula provides $1,500 per student of Foundation Aid.	If you are an equalized school like BPS, the $1,500 per student results in **$0 extra dollars to the district.**	Non-equalized schools receive $1,500 per student resulting in additional funds for the school.
SPED Funding	The state funding formula reimburses 80% for SPED expenses.	BPS will receive roughly **$5,256,380 in SPED funding in 2025-26.** This represents 9.46% of all GF revenues.	SPED funds will help both equalized and non-equalized schools.
Student Enrollment Growth	Average student enrollment growth in the state is 0.8%.	**Average student enrollment growth in BPS is 3-10%.** This results in additional needs each year.	Very few schools in the history of Nebraska have experienced enrollment growth like Bennington.
Levy Reductions	The added money from Foundation Aid, SPED funding, and valuation increases should lower property tax levies.	Equalized districts like BPS, are not always able to lower the levy because of the reduction in subsequent years. For example, **revenue for BPS is up 1.25% per year over the last two years because of valuation increases in 24-26**	Metro area school districts all have different circumstances including being equalized/unequalized and growth. This means their levies can vary from what BPS is able to do.

Caps/Lids/Limits

Statutory Limits for School Districts	Proposed Budget
General Fund/Special Building Fund tax levy is capped at **$1.05**	$1.00
Budget Authority (minus SPED/allowances) provided by NDE for BPS is **$48,588,172**	$48,588,172
Cash Reserve limit provided by NDE for BPS is **$14,265,263**	$14,015,863
Property Tax Request Authority (GF/SBF) provide by the state for BPS is **$34,466,060**	$30,962,160

Expenses

General Fund Budget

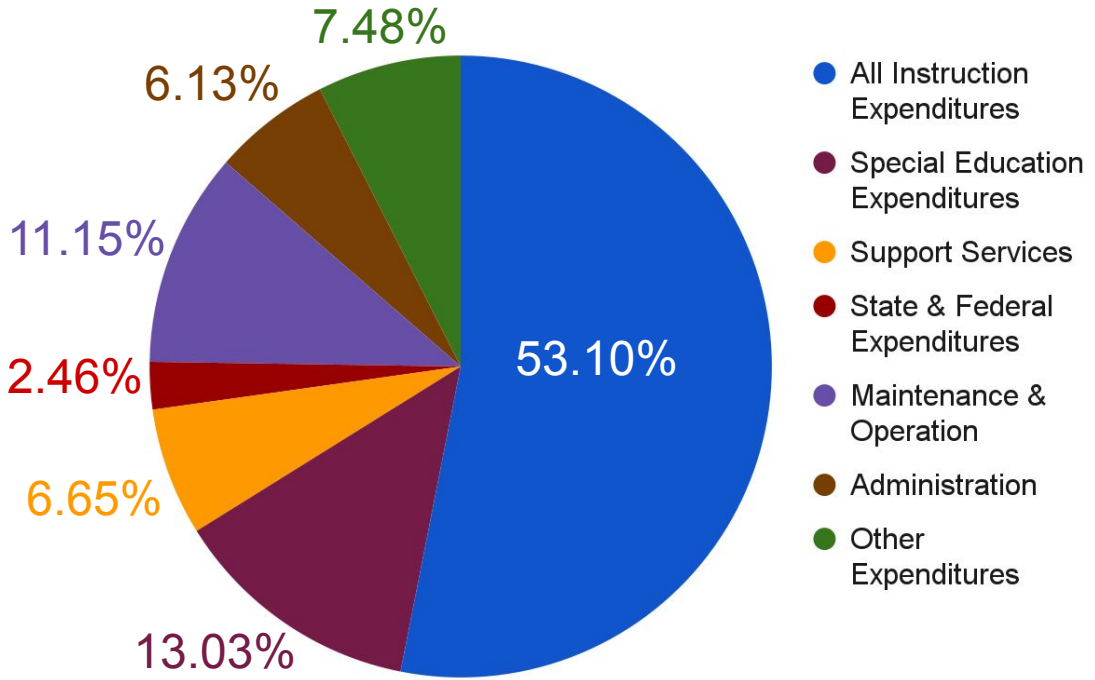
2025-26 NDE GF Budget of $56,980,007

- ✔ Personnel costs make up 81.54% of the total budget
- ✔ Personnel increase is estimated at $3,102,333
- ✔ Elementary class size decreased to 19.1
- ✔ Payroll increase of 7.37%
- ✔ Accounts Payable decrease of 13.97%
- ✔ $4,508 under the state average for per pupil costs which equates to 76% of state average
  - FOURTH LOWEST IN STATE OF NEBRASKA

BENNINGTON BADGERS

GF Financial Expenditures for 2025-26

Category	Percent	Funds
All Instruction Expenditures	53.10%	$ 30,257,119
Special Education Expenditures	13.03%	$ 7,423,616
Support Services	6.65%	$ 3,786,375
State & Federal Expenditures	2.46%	$ 1,402,479
Maintenance & Operation Expenditures	11.15%	$ 6,353,542
Administration	6.13%	$ 3,492,014
Other Expenditures	7.48%	$ 4,264,862
Total NDE GF Budget		**$ 56,980,007**

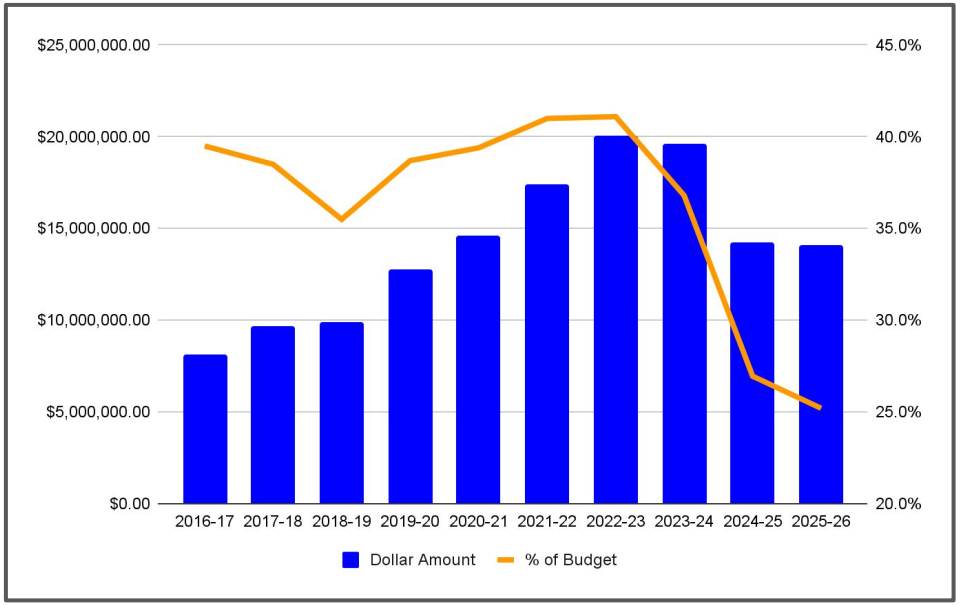




Revenue

State Aid - $14,069,664

- $153,650 DECREASE
  - Third Consecutive Decrease
- 25.23% of the total estimated General Fund Revenue
  - Lowest in School History

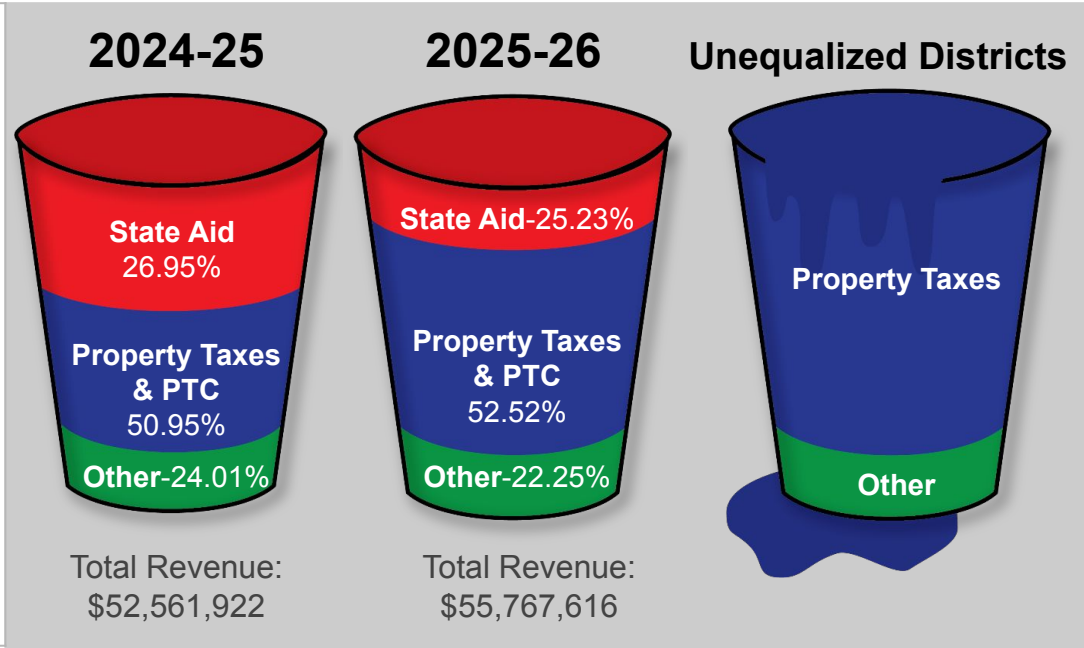


Equalization Aid System

BPS is one of the most heavily reliant districts in the state on equalization aid.

The "cup" is the needs for the district as determined by the state aid system.

Property taxes	↑	Equalization aid (state aid) ↓
No equalization aid (state aid)	=	Begin to reduce the levy
State support	↑	Property taxes ↓
New state funding front loads property tax credits	=	Reduction off the initial school property tax (30%)



Other Actual Receipts - $21,375,319

- $1,110,417 Estimated Increase Compared to 24-25 Actual
- This is 38.33% of the total General Fund Revenue
- SPED Funding accounts for 24.6% of the total OAR
- PTC Funding accounts for 41.9% of the total OAR

Examples of OAR:

Property and Personal Tax Credit:	$8,965,868
Special Education:	$5,256,380
Motor Vehicle Taxes:	$3,150,000
State Apportionment:	$1,200,000
Federal Receipts:	$1,020,000
Homestead Exemption:	$ 625,000
Transportation Fees:	$ 185,000
County Fines & License Fees:	$ 125,000
Learning Community	$ 100,000
Public Power District Sales Tax:	$ 50,000
Tuition:	$ 45,000



Property Tax Request

- General Fund: $30,188,107
  - $2,370,180 Increase
  - Represents 52.98% of the total General Fund revenue
  - Increase of 8.52% compared to prior year
    - $5.4 million reduction in state aid in 2024-25
    - Planned $1.2 million reduction in state aid in 2026-27
  - Represents 71.81% of all tax asking
- Special Building Fund: $774,054
  - $264,153 Increase
  - Increase of 51.80% compared to prior year
  - Represents 1.84% of all tax-asking
- Bond/QCPUF Fund: $11,074,216
  - $932,853 Increase
  - Increase of 9.20% compared to prior year
  - Represents 26.34% of all tax-asking

	2025-2026 Proposed Property Tax Request	Proposed 2025 Tax Rate
General Fund	$30,188,107	0.975000
Bond Fund	$11,074,216	0.358000
Special Building Fund	$774,054	0.025000
QCPUF	$0	0.000000
Total	**$42,036,377**	**1.358000**

- Same Levy Rate as 2024-25 which was lowest in 12 years!
  - 2023-24 levy was reduced 6.76 cents

Bond/QCPUF Fund

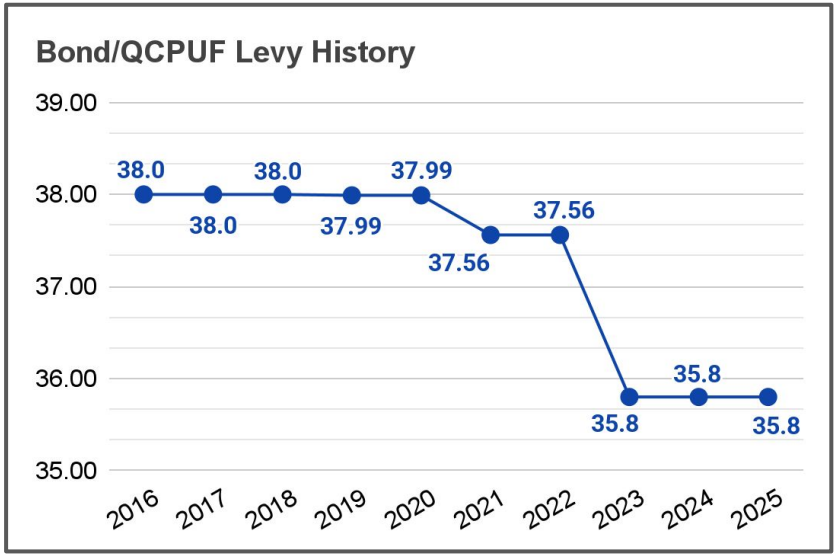
History of Bond Issues

2003	2007	2010	2015	2018	2020	2025
$15.94 Million	$15.90 Million	$19.75 Million	$38.5 Million	$36 Million	$72 Million	$112 Million

$310 Million Total

Bond/QCPUF Fund Levy

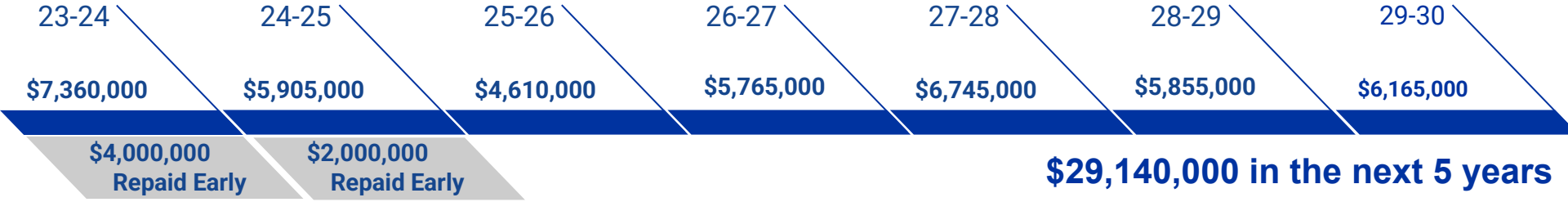
- Seven bond issues since 2003 - $310,000,000
- Since 2016 the Bond/QCPUF levy was between 37.5-38 cents
  - *Reduce Bond/QCPUF levy to 35.8 in 2023*
    - *Lowest Bond/QCPUF levy since 2014*
- QCPUF bond for $4 million in 2016
  - *Paid off early in 2023*



Bond/QCPUF Fund

Principal Payments

The District has $159,365,000 in outstanding debt



$29,140,000 in the next 5 years

Projected to pay off $66,015,000 in bond principal over the next 10 years

Opportunities to pay off principal even earlier based on valuation changes over the years.

Projected to pay off $114,445,000 in bond principal over the next 15 years

$29,140,000 Next 5 Years	$36,875,000 Years 6-10	$48,430,000 Years 11-15	$44,920,000 Remaining 6 Years

These are <u>scheduled</u> principal payments but could be accelerated

Joint Public Hearing - Pink Postcard

Joint Public Hearing

- Applies to counties, cities, school districts, and community colleges
- Entity must participate in a joint public hearing if budget exceeds two percent plus growth rate excluding bonds
  - 6.09% for BPS in 2024-25
- The representative of each political subdivision must give a brief presentation at the hearing
- The county assessor will mail postcards around September 10th
- An elected official must also be in attendance

Pink Postcard Questions

Why did I receive this postcard in the mail?

- Answer: Districts that increase their tax-asking by more than two percent, plus growth, are mandated to attend a Joint Public Hearing with all other political subdivisions that also increased their tax-asking by more than two percent. The public has a chance to provide comment to all political subdivisions at the meeting.

Does this postcard mean my taxes are going up?

- Answer: The postcard means the property tax-asking requested by the district went up more than two percent.

Did you say the levy was staying the same? Why did I get this postcard?

- Answer: While the BPS levy is remaining steady at $1.358, the district tax-asking is increasing compared to the previous year because of the valuation increases within the school district boundaries.



Questions?