

Dear Residents of Franklin Township,

My message for this year's budget newsletter is plain and simple.

***The budget this year is the barest minimum to continue to provide a quality education to our children here at Franklin Township School.***

Last year, as many already know, our budget decreased to such an extent that we eliminated 7 positions and all discretionary programs, including 'pull-out' Gifted and Talented, Technology, school sponsored sports and other programs. Two grades were merged into single classes.

This year, our budget is approximately \$9,000 lower than last year and \$500,000 less than 2009-2010. We continue to reduce costs through renegotiating service contracts, maximizing shared services with Township and County offices, and prudent spending. Yet, we are seeking your support for a 2% increase on the tax levy, which is the maximum allowable amount and within the spirit of what the Governor and legislature have proposed to keep property tax burdens in check.

***Why do we still need the 2% if we've cut our expenses?***  
Our costs continue to rise and we have few areas left to cut. Healthcare costs are projected to increase 16% and will absorb most of the increase in the tax levy even after the mandated 1.5% contributions. The costs of utilities, maintenance, special education, transportation and other mandated programs continue to increase. Finally, we no longer have a surplus to tap into, as this has been returned to taxpayers in past years by funding budget shortfalls.

***Why support the school?*** We have weathered a really tough year. Yet the administration, teachers and especially our students have exemplified resiliency and optimism and have continued to strive in their educational pursuits. Construction is nearing an end. We need to stay on course and look ahead, not behind. A failed budget can lead to even deeper cuts that will affect the core education we are providing.

We hope you will come out on April 27th and exercise your right to vote on behalf of the children of Franklin Township. Thank you.

Chris Piparo  
Board President

Franklin Township Board of Education  
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Quakertown, NJ 08868

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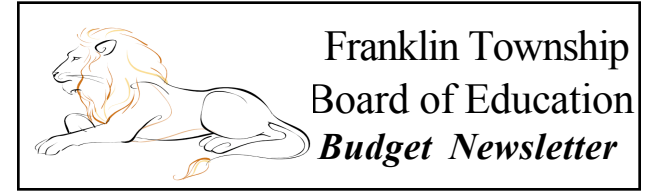
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Kenneth Weiss, Vice President  
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Colleen Ewing  
James Foran  
Kimberly Lundgren  
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Superintendent/Principal  
Raelene Catterson  
School Business  
Admin./Board Secretary

CURRENT RESIDENT OR

2011-2012 Budget Newsletter



Dear Franklin Township Community Members,

On Wednesday, April 27, 2011, the residents of Franklin Township will have the opportunity to vote on the Board of Education's proposed annual budget, for the 2011-2012 school year, and to elect three new members to the Franklin Township School Board.

This year tough economic conditions continue, and the school budget development process has been challenging given the prior three, considerably lean, fiscal years. The budget reductions of last year resulted in increased class sizes and the loss of extra-curricular activities and programs that augmented the core curriculum. These changes remain a part of our school structure while additional increases, such as double digit increases in health benefits and unpredictable transportation and mandated educational costs, burden our future budget.

Nevertheless, the Franklin Township Board of Education together with its educational community, developed the proposed budget which includes all federal and state requirements and community generated priorities. Our hope is that the community deems this budget a thoughtful, taxpayer sensitive and student oriented budget worthy of its support.

This proposed budget includes reductions in overall spending and encompasses streamlined efficiencies and revenue generating programs introduced over the last year that will save considerable dollars well into the future.

A copy of the full budget can be found on the school website at [www.ftschool.org](http://www.ftschool.org) along with mail in ballots and instructions. The Annual School Election will be held on April 27, 2011 at the Quakertown Fire House from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Please join me in recognizing education as an important American right and help Franklin achieve our *commitment to excellence*, by coming out to vote.

Chrys Harttraft  
Superintendent/Principal

## Challenges in Developing the 2011-2012 Budget

- The district had to consider reductions in programs and positions with the least impact on the overall education program
- State aid increased for the 2011-12 year but state levels are less than half of the 2009-10 levels
- No surplus available to move forward or to rely on for unforeseen special education costs and transportation
- Health benefit increase expected to be 16%
- Maintenance and operational costs will increase
- Energy costs will increase.

## Efforts to Provide Taxpayer Relief

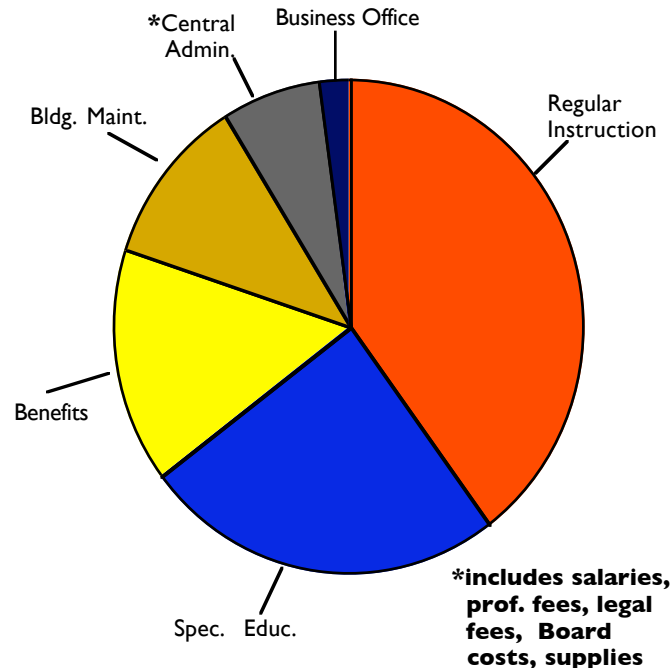
- Salary Caps in administrative positions and givebacks
- Increased employee contributions to health benefits
- Reconfiguration of school staff schedule to reduce benefit costs
- Increasing revenue generating programs
- Reduction of out-of-district placements through implementation of new comprehensive programs
- Working with employee groups to close the revenue gap
- Continued cooperative purchasing and shared services for supplies, energy, phone, insurance, utilities, transportation, snow removal, special services and staff positions
- Building use rental fees will be determined and collected to offset expenses
- Continuation of paperless communications to keep paper costs down
- Ongoing review of professional services and contracts to ensure optimal use of funds
- Collaboration with township officials to realize additional shared service opportunities
- Implementation of programs and services that reduce special education costs
- Researching federal, state and local grant programs to augment school programs
- Maintaining educational costs so that Franklin continues to be one of 5 districts in the county with lowest per pupil costs.

## The Proposed 2011-2012 Budget at a Glance

<u>Expenditures</u>	Budgeted 10-11	Proposed 11-12
Instruction	\$2,625,362	\$2,550,672
Administration	484,397	465,829
Employee Benefits	698,494	785,848
Oper. & Maint. of Facilities	508,743	561,100
Transportation	359,141	368,259
Out of District Tuition	311,645	249,810
Health and Attendance	82,479	83,033
Capital Expenditure	3,228	0
Total General Fund	\$ 5,073,489	\$5,064,551
State/Federal Grant	94,658	105,400
Debt Service	657,060	658,185
Total Budget	\$ 5,825,207	\$5,828,136

<u>Revenues</u>	Current 10-11	Anticipated 11-12
State Aid	\$ 89,716	\$ 154,795
Budgeted Fund Balance	146,659	0
Miscellaneous	30,000	6,500
General Fund Local Tax Levy	4,807,114	4,903,256
Total General Fund	5,073,489	5,064,551
State/Federal Grant	94,658	105,400
Debt Service Local Tax Levy	657,060	658,185
Total Budget	\$5,825,207	\$ 5,828,136



## Benefits for Franklin Township Students

- New spaces conducive to learning will be open for the upcoming school year
- Focus on students' individual needs continues through:
  - Use of assessments and student data to inform instruction;
  - Quality curricula using *Common Core* program;
  - Enhanced social-emotional skill development through character education and Positive Behavior Support program;
  - Commitment to high school success through K-12 curriculum alignment; and,
  - Creation and support of programs facilitating least restrictive environment for special needs students.
- Enhanced educational continuity through learning teams and *Professional Learning Communities*
- Increased staff professional development through use of external partnerships with businesses, community agencies and institutes of higher education, for a richer educational program
- Class sizes that enable personal connections between students and teachers
- Caring, highly qualified, and responsive staff at all levels
- Excellent NJ test results.

## Plans for the Future

- To date, construction is on schedule and within budget
- Efforts continue to broaden early childhood educational components to generate revenues and respond to community needs
- New educational spaces will enable the development of new programs
- Classes currently in the library will be moved out and into classrooms allowing the library to be put back in service
- School board continues to research shared administrative opportunities to reduce costs.

A copy of the budget and additional details can be found online at [www.ftschoool.org](http://www.ftschoool.org)