



TUPPER LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 2024-25 BUDGET INFORMATION

Newsletter

The 2023-2025 Tupper Lake CSD Budget

Budget season is upon us, and I'd like to provide some information on the development and the details in this year's process. I feel like it's important for me to make clear where we are as a District financially and how we got here. There is a lot of information floating about, and unfortunately not all of it is fully accurate. I don't think I can blame anyone too harshly for that, the specifics of NYS School Finance are overwhelming when you live in them every day, for those that do a drive-by once a year or so it can easily boggle the mind.

First, here are some important pieces of information intended to put what we do here at TLCSD into context:

District	2023-24 PPE
Long Lake CSD	\$ 51,775.00
Lake Placid CSD	\$ 27,622.00
St. Regis Falls CSD	\$ 25,331.00
Salmon River CSD	\$ 23,602.00
Saranac Lake CSD	\$ 22,898.00
Malone CSD	\$ 20,500.00
TUPPER LAKE CSD	\$ 19,897.00
Chateaugay CSD	\$ 19,806.00
Brushton Moira CSD	\$ 18,439.00

This is the **Per Pupil Expenditure** (PPE) for all of the districts in the FEH BOCES region. You'll see that Tupper Lake is 7th out of 9 schools... and to be clear, that isn't a number I'm particularly proud of. I am, however, overwhelmingly proud of the work our teachers and staff do given the resources we are provided. We are used to doing more with less, but there are limits to what we can ask them to do effectively.

District	2023-24 PPE	2024-25 Increase
Long Lake CSD	\$ 51,775.00	4.20%
Lake Placid CSD	\$ 27,622.00	3.38%
St. Regis Falls CSD	\$ 25,331.00	-2.81%
Salmon River CSD	\$ 23,602.00	4.80%
Saranac Lake CSD	\$ 22,898.00	3.50%
Malone CSD	\$ 20,500.00	9.09%
TUPPER LAKE CSD	\$ 19,897.00	-2.08%
Chateaugay CSD	\$ 19,806.00	7.93%
Brushton Moira CSD	\$ 18,439.00	11.11%

The two Districts who spend less than we do are increasing their expenditures significantly in the coming year while ours are decreasing. My concern is that this trend could leave our students falling behind over time. Education is a manpower-based business. Salaries and benefits are, by far, our most significant cost. In the current climate with the teacher shortages that exist, how does a district with fewer resources attract educators in a highly competitive market?

Here are some questions I think you want answers to:

How did we end up with a \$1.7M deficit?

This can be answered in a fairly straightforward manner, but it comes in three parts:

- a. Roughly \$1.1 M in Federal COVID funds that we began receiving in 2021 are set to run out in September. You might have noticed that we haven't replaced many positions that have become vacant in the past year or two if we could help it. Yes, we have replaced a couple... because there is always hope that we will be able to retain the things that we offer kids. But alas, it was not to be. So if you add up all of the positions that have been left vacant from 2022 to today, what appears on paper to be 16 or 17 cuts, actually resulted in roughly 5 or 6 of those "terrible conversations" that every administrator hates having and every teacher hates thinking about. The majority of these positions have been vacant or will become vacant at the end of this year without someone "losing their job" in many cases.
- b. A few years ago we proposed a budget with a modest 3.06% tax levy increase and it passed **by a margin of only 8 votes**. In subsequent years, portions of the District's fund balance (roughly \$350,000 in each of two years) were used to offset the tax levy and we did not levy the full tax cap amount available out of fear that a budget with the full levy might not get the support it needed to pass. In an effort to minimize the financial impact on the community, we "left money on the table" as they say in the business office. And now the full impact of those decisions is at our doorstep. We were always going to get to the point we are at right now, but we're there now in one larger step instead of a few smaller steps. You always hope that election cycles will offer up more funding as they sometimes have in the past, but that hasn't happened recently.
- c. Voters also approved a Capital Project referendum in October of 2023 to improve, repair, and replace a number of TLCSD's facilities and structures. This year's tax levy includes a portion of that project's previously discussed increase in costs.

Okay, get to the bottom line. What's the impact?

A tax levy increase of 8.75% equates to an increase of (and this is an estimate, since the final property valuation figures aren't approved until August, but we can predict with a reasonable degree of certainty) **roughly \$137 per year, per \$100,000 of home value**. I don't want to minimize that figure, because it hurts everyone who has to pay it. But it's important to remember that schools are buying food, supplies, fuel, paying the electric and heating bill, etc... at the same rate as everyone else. The rising cost of everything is passed on to us as well.

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year *										
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 22,383,780	\$ 21,918,837	\$ 21,083,387										
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-25 School Year		\$ (464,943)	\$ (1,300,393)										
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		(2.08) %	(5.80) %										
Change in the Consumer Price Index		3.88 %											
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$9,548,000	\$ 10,383,450											
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable													
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **													
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy													
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$ 9,548,000	\$ 10,383,450	\$										
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 693,824	\$ 1,328,100											
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 8,854,566	\$ 9,096,503											
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$ 8,854,176	\$ 9,055,350											
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$ 390	\$ 41,153											
Administrative Component	\$ 2,726,546	\$ 2,006,253	\$ 2,006,253										
Program Component	\$ 15,864,054	\$ 15,277,007	\$ 14,441,557										
Capital Component	\$ 3,793,180	\$ 4,635,577	\$ 4,635,577										
<p>In the event that it is necessary to adopt a contingency budget, the district would need to cut an additional \$835,450 including those items required to be removed by education law.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 20px;"> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>													

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$ 398

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Tupper Lake Central school district, Franklin County, New York, will be held at Tupper Lake Middle/High school in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 12:00pm and 8:00pm, prevailing time in the Tupper Lake Middle/High School Library, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.