

School Budget Update

Thank you to the nearly 400 community members who filled out our recent survey on the tax implications of the 2019 school budget. ([For complete results, click here.](#))

This survey helped direct the District and the School Board to approve a budget on January 23rd. The proposed budget includes investments in multilingual liaison staff, restorative practices work, social/emotional supports, and targeted achievement gap strategies. Reductions include cuts to property services, the restructuring of some high school courses, and more than \$500,000 in savings from operations and our administrative offices, where we have cut for the fourth straight year.

In all, these investments and reductions present a recommended spending of \$15,111.81 per equalized pupil, which is less than one percent (0.8%) more than what we spent per pupil last year.

While these investments and reductions result in a very small spending increase, the State's education funding formula means the proposal will unfortunately still lead to a significant tax increase. This increase is reflective of months of hard work to bring that number down from what we initially thought would be an ask of 11%, before bringing the number down to 9% in early January, and then, finally, to 7.99%, the rate approved at our most recent meeting.

It's my hope that residents recognize we tried very hard to provide balanced approach to this budget. While it doesn't give us everything the community and staff have asked for over the past year (which, again, would have resulted in an 11% or more ask), I'm confident this budget will allow us to stay true to our strategic goals while remaining aware of the challenge rising taxes can place on our community.

So where do we go from here? To the polls! No matter how you feel about the proposed budget, I hope all Burlington residents will take a few minutes on March 6th to cast their vote and be heard in our great democracy. For a list of polling locations, please visit www.bsdvt.org/budget

Thank you for your time, suggestions, and feedback, and thanks for reading.

Superintendent Yaw Obeng

Note from Burlington School District: This note was written by Superintendent Obeng and originally appeared on Front Porch Forum on January 30th.