BENNINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 59
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL HEARING
Monday, September 14, 2026 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 the 2026-27 Budget
III. Conduct Public Hearing on the 2026-27 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 2026-27 Budget

September 2026

BENNINGTON
BADGERS

Overview

Funds	2026-2027 Budget Request	Tax Asking	Proposed Levy
General	$61,552,945	$31,427,371	0.927000
Special Building	$54,208,891	$2,034,134	0.060000
Bond	$18,038,313	$12,115,431	0.358000
QCPUF	$705,871	$0	0.000000
Depreciation	$2,152,856		
Employee Benefit	$320,071		
Activities	$1,706,587		
School Nutrition	$3,306,591		
Student Fee	$89,413		
Cooperative	$0		
Contingency	$0		
Total	**$ 142,081,538**	**$45,576,936**	**1.345000**

About Bennington Public Schools

Growth by the Numbers

2.83% Growth - 4,538 (K-12) as of 8/6/26

- (AP-495, BE-363, HE-406, PC-483, ST-393, BMS-481, BSMS-662, HS-1,255)
- BPS is estimated to be right at 5,000 K-12 students by 2031-32

589 BPS Employees

- 191 Support Staff
- 398 Certified Staff
  - 36% of Certified Staff has 4 or less yrs.
  - 22% of Certified Staff has 10 or more yrs.

Valuation

Year	District Assessed Valuation	Yearly Increase	Percentage Increase
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%
2026	$3,390,223,538	$294,007,458	9.50%
2017-26	Ten year average	$234,052,755	12.48%
2017-21	Previous 5 Yr. Avg.	$165,122,589	12.31%
2022-26	Last 5 Year Avg.	$302,982,921	12.66%

Property Breakdown (2025): Residential/Central Assessed – 89.73%, Ag Land/Personal Property – 4.07%, Comm. and Indust. – 6.20%
County Percentage Breakdown (2026): Douglas County - 97.31%, Washington County - 2.69%

Budgeting Considerations

Current Considerations

District Growth

Over the last five years:

- + 688 students
- Opened fifth elementary and second middle school

Inflation

Increasing costs of staffing, insurance, supplies, services, utilities, transportation, etc.

Financial Planning

Supporting the Needs of a Growing District

Capacity to Support the Strategic Plan

Possibility of Paying Bonds Early

Preparing for the Future

Prepare for the Opening of Bennington South High School

- Additional staffing
- Program additions and expansions
- Budget capacity
- Prepare to open for 2028-29

About the Nebraska School Funding System

	<u>Key Points on How Nebraska Funds Public School Districts</u>	**<u>Key Points on What the State Funding Means for Bennington Public Schools</u>**	**<u>Key Points on What the State Funding Means for Other School Districts</u>**
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 35.11% of the GF budget. **<u>BPS is extremely reliant on equalization aid as it accounts for 14.39% of basic funding needs.</u>**	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 9.50% increase in valuation for 2026-27 provides additional funds, but **<u>BPS will lose an equal amount of equalization aid in 2026-27.</u>**	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 **<u>$0 extra dollars to the district.</u>**	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 **<u>$5,604,242 in SPED funding in 2026-27.</u>** This represents 9.30% 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%.	**<u>Average student enrollment growth in BPS is 3-10%.</u>** 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, **<u>revenue for BPS is up 3.55% per year over the last three years because of valuation increases in 24-27</u>**.	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.

Expenses

General Fund Budget

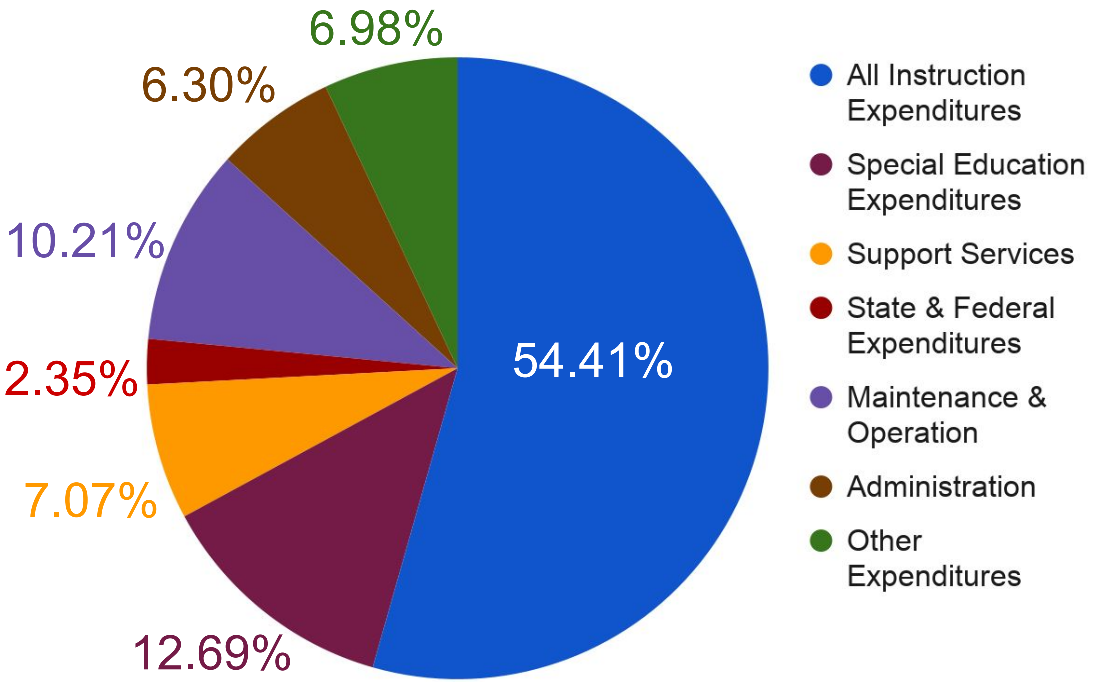
2026-27 NDE GF Budget of $61,552,945

- ✔ Personnel costs make up 79.49% of the total budget
  - Personnel increase is estimated at $3,816,269
- ✔ Accounts payable costs make up 20.51% of the total budget
  - Accounts payable increase is estimated at $775,813
- ✔ $5,030 under the state average for per pupil costs (ADM) which equates to 74% of state average
  - BPS IS THE LOWEST PER PUPIL SPENDING DISTRICT IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

BENNINGTON BADGERS

GF Financial Expenditures for 2026-27

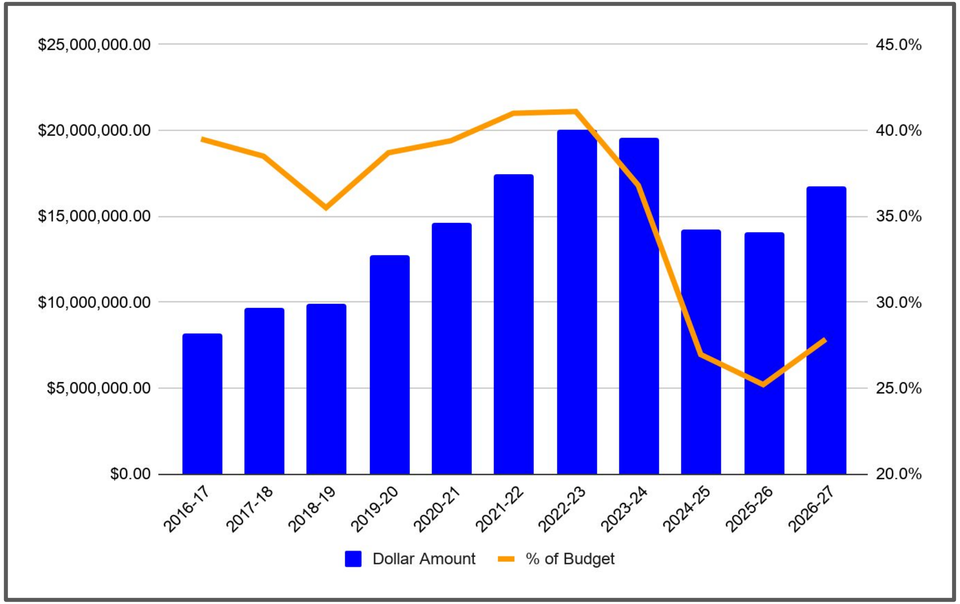
Category	Percent	Funds
All Instruction Expenditures	54.41%	$ 33,492,243
Special Education Expenditures	12.69%	$ 7,810,043
Support Services	7.07%	$ 4,349,878
State & Federal Expenditures	2.35%	$ 1,446,745
Maintenance & Operation Expenditures	10.21%	$ 6,281,935
Administration	6.30%	$ 3,878,316
Other Expenditures	6.98%	$ 4,293,785
Total NDE GF Budget		**$ 61,552,945**



Revenue

State Aid - $16,780,008

- $2,710,344 INCREASE
  - $1,110,805 One Time Correction
  - Decrease of $3,291,999 from 2022-23
- 27.84% of the total estimated General Fund Revenue



Other Actual Receipts - $22,329,779

- $201,010 Estimated Increase Compared to 25-26 Actual
- This is 37.04% of the total General Fund Revenue
- PTC Funding accounts for 41.8% of the total OAR
  - 15.49% of total GF Revenue
- SPED Funding accounts for 25.1% of the total OAR
  - 9.40% of total GF Revenue

<u>Examples of OAR</u>:

Property and Personal Tax Credit:	$9,335,537
Special Education:	$5,604,242
Motor Vehicle Taxes:	$3,250,000
State Apportionment:	$1,200,000
Federal Receipts:	$1,020,000
Homestead Exemption:	$ 650,000
Transportation Fees:	$ 225,000
County Fines & License Fees:	$ 125,000
Learning Community	$ 100,000
Public Power District Sales Tax:	$ 50,000
Tuition:	$ 45,000

BENNINGTON BADGERS

Property Tax Request

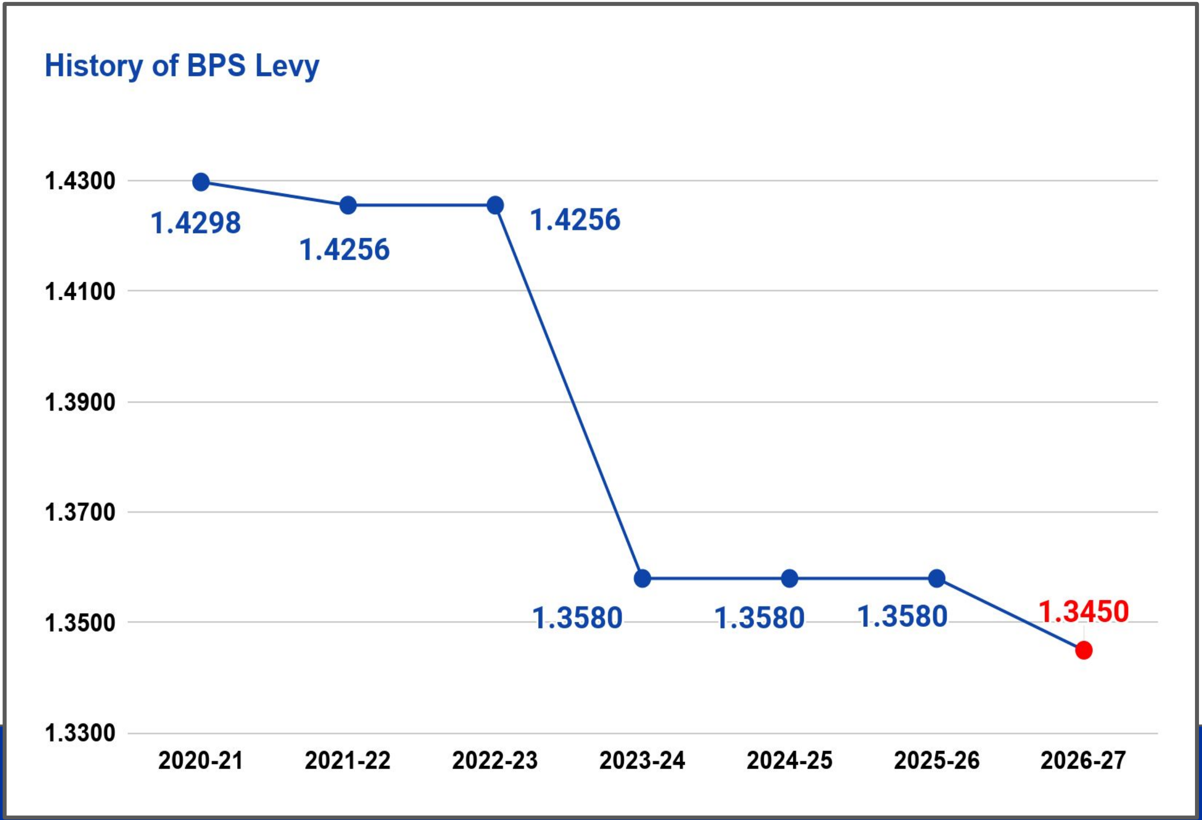
- General Fund: $31,427,371
  - $1,239,265 Increase
    - Student Growth
    - Planned $1.3 million reduction in state aid in 2027-28
  - Represents 68.95% of all tax asking
- Special Building Fund: $2,034,134
  - $1,260,080 Increase
    - General District Maintenance
    - Deferred Bond Cost on BSHS
  - Represents 4.46% of all tax-asking
- Bond/QCPUF Fund: $12,115,431
  - $1,041,215 Increase
    - Bond sales for BSHS
    - $5,765,000 principal paid this year
  - Represents 26.58% of all tax-asking

	2026-2027 Proposed Property Tax Request	Proposed 2026 Tax Rate
General Fund	$31,427,371	0.927000
Bond Fund	$12,115,431	0.358000
Special Building Fund	$2,034,134	0.060000
QCPUF	$0	0.000000
Total	**$45,576,936**	**1.345000**

Reduce Levy Rate - 1.3 cents

- Lowered 8.06 cents over the last four years
- Lowest in the last 16 years

Property Tax Request & Levy History



Lowest in 16 years, dropping 8.06 cents over the last four years!

- <u>2023-24 levy reduced 6.76 cents</u>
- <u>2026-27 levy reducing 1.30 cents</u>

BENNINGTON BADGERS

Total Levy and Effective Levy (24-25 Data)

Total Taxes Levied

$30,983,585

$1.00
Original Levy

–

Paid Through State Credits

Homestead Credit	**$821,264**
Real Property Tax Credit	**$1,498,621**
School Tax Credit	**$8,132,658**

Total State Credits: $10,452,543

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Paid Through Local Property Taxes

$20,531,042

Net Taxes Levied by District

Effective Tax Levy
$0.662643

Bond/QCPUF Fund

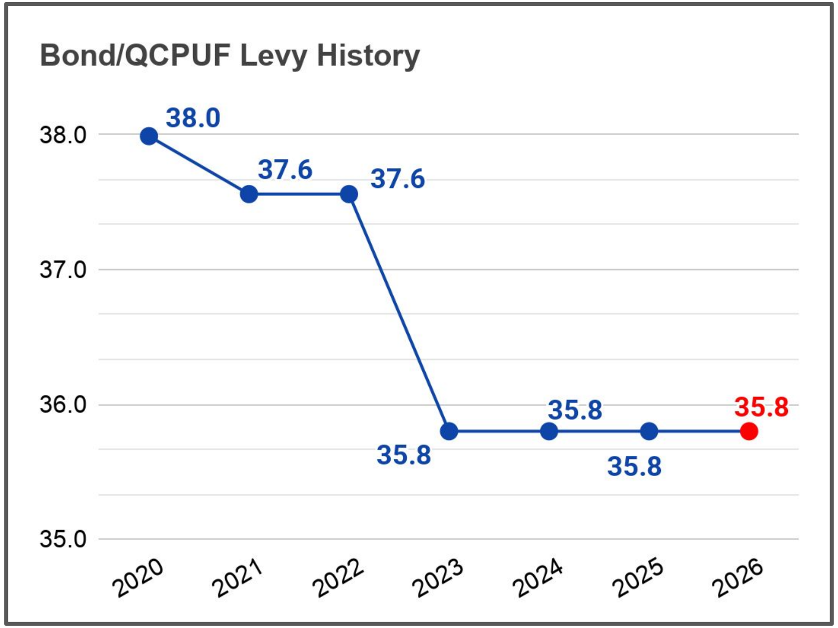
History of Bond Issues

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*



Bond/QCPUF Fund

Principal Payments

The District has $198,575,000 in outstanding debt

23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31
$7,360,000	$5,905,000	$4,610,000	$5,765,000	$6,745,000	$5,855,000	$6,165,000	$7,015,000
$4,000,000 Repaid Early	$2,000,000 Repaid Early						

$31,545,000 in the next 5 years

Projected to pay off $70,840,000 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 $136,230,000 in bond principal over the next 15 years

$31,545,000 Next 5 Years	$39,295,000 Years 6-10	$65,390,000 Years 11-15	$62,345,000 Remaining 6 Years

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

Joint Public Hearing - Green Postcard

Joint Public Hearing

- Applies to counties, cities, school districts, and community colleges
- Entity must participate in a joint public hearing if budget exceeds <u>two percent plus growth rate excluding bonds</u>
- The representative of each political subdivision must give a brief presentation at the hearing
- The county assessor will mail postcards around September 9th
- An elected official must also be in attendance

Green Postcard Questions

Why did I receive this postcard in the mail?

- <u>Answer:</u> 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?

- <u>Answer:</u> The postcard means the property tax-asking requested by the district went up more than two percent plus growth.

Did you say the levy was going down? Why did I get this postcard?

- <u>Answer:</u> While the BPS levy is lowering to $1.345, the district tax-asking is increasing compared to the previous year because of the valuation increases within the school district boundaries.

Questions?