



2015-16 Budget Development Update

Advocacy

1) **We are calling for an end to the withholding of state aid that is due to you, local taxpayers.** Local property taxes are approximately 15% higher than they could be, because the state is withholding money that you are due. The state did not pay Brighton over \$7 million in state aid due last year alone. This has been going on for quite some time and enough is enough. We will be forced to cut programs and services if this continues.

2) **We are calling for an end to the games being played with local control and property tax laws.** The Governor is proposing that you pay your STAR rebate upfront and then get it back later only if your district stays within the property tax cap. Although it is always our goal to do so, we think it is entirely wrong that local control is being reduced by a state government that is not even providing you with the aid that you are due. It seems completely unreasonable that you would be asked to pay STAR upfront. Again, we will be forced to cut programs and services if this continues.

3) **We are calling for an end to the use of standardized test scores in the evaluation of teachers.** The Governor is proposing a significant increase in their role and we think any use of the test in this way is misguided and inappropriate. Testing has value as one element in program and school evaluation. It is just one small measure of student growth. Using tests in this fashion could be harmful to students by exacerbating a culture focused on one small measure in a much larger picture of student growth. We also believe that the data is not yet reliable or accurate enough for this to be a fair measure of individual growth when used alone. Again, assessment has value, but only when used with many other forms of data to inform decision making.

Brighton's Budget Summary:

Proposed Budget = \$71,837,075 (+ 2.82%)

Property Tax Levy = \$49,986,176 (+ 2.23% and at Tax Cap limit)

Estimated Property Tax Rate = \$27.07 (Bri. +2.1%) \$25.72 (Pitts. -1.1%)

Est. Change in Tax Bill (Assessed at \$200,000) = + \$110 (Bri.) -\$55 (Pitts.)



Brighton Central School District 2015-16 Budget Development Update

Dear Students, Families, and Community Members:

As we develop the 2015-16 budget, the District is again faced with challenges in attempting to balance revenues and spending. In this pamphlet, we will discuss the significant challenges that the State has created for us on the revenue side and the real cost drivers Brighton contends with on an annual basis.

A major challenge this year has been the state's decision to withhold necessary information from school districts. The budget is based on significant assumptions as we still haven't been provided with state aid figures.

The State is still not fulfilling its constitutional obligation to adequately fund our school system and is limiting our ability to get revenue elsewhere through a tax cap. The state did not pay Brighton over \$7 million in state aid due last year alone. **Our taxes could be 15% lower if the State is able to fulfill its commitments to fund our system fairly and equitably.**

Furthermore, the tax cap limit for the 2015-16 school year would not adequately fund our incremental costs. The Governor is proposing that you pay your STAR rebate upfront and then get it back later only if your district stays within the property tax cap. We think it is entirely wrong that local control is being reduced by a state government that is not even providing you with the aid that you are due. It seems completely unreasonable that you be asked to pay STAR upfront.

The District is doing everything it can to stay within the tax cap, especially given the consequences of overriding the cap. However, if the State does not approve the funding we are due, the District may have to make significant reductions.

Sincerely,



2015-16 Budget Update

Revenues

- The Brighton Central School District relies on local property tax dollars to fund 70% of its General Fund Budget.
 - ⇒ Average tax levy increase for past five years = 2.6%
 - ⇒ The Property Tax Cap law would allow for a 2.23% increase in property taxes. This potential revenue coupled with other local revenues, excluding State Aid, funds a 2.4% increase in spending.
 - ⇒ Considering the voter approved override in 2014-15, Brighton's estimated tax levy at this year's Cap limit is 0.5% greater than what the cumulative Cap number would have otherwise been since its inception.
- State aid funds 17% of the budget. The State has maintained the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) to balance its budget. The GEA allows the State to withhold aid otherwise due to schools under the current formulas. Below is a summary of how much aid has been reduced to Brighton Schools:

School Year	GEA	GEA Restoration	Net GEA
2010-11	-\$2,152,429	\$730,794	-\$1,421,635
2011-12	-\$2,404,780	\$167,289	-\$2,237,491
2012-13	-\$2,181,099	\$9,748	-\$2,171,351
2013-14	-\$2,171,351	\$234,383	-\$1,936,968
2014-15	-\$1,936,968	\$273,693	-\$1,663,275
			-\$9,430,720

In 2007-08, the State adopted the Foundation Aid formula that would fairly and adequately fund public education. The State was unable to fund this commitment and has since frozen the formula and further deferred its obligation. The current Foundation Aid paid to Brighton is **\$5.57 million less** than the legislatively approved formulas require.

- 60% of State Aid received by Brighton is driven by spending on reimbursable items (e.g. transportation, construction, technology, etc.). The equates to the general aid received funding only 7% of District spending.



2015-16 Budget Update

Spending

- The proposed spending plan is focused on supporting and maintaining high levels of excellence in service that helped to achieve a 95% graduation rate in 2014.
- Below are some of the highlights included in the 2015-16 budget that exceed State mandates:

Literacy and math coaching supports K-12; Science coaching supports 7-12	Instrumental music at 4th grade
Additional reading supports at CRPS & FRES	6th grade foreign language
Academic intervention services beyond mandated levels/Strengthening supports at 6th grade with the addition of a content specialist.	Alternative education programming at BHS
Enrichment programs for K-8	Support for visual & performing arts programs for 2,900+ students
Kindergarten extension program (KEEP)	More than 85 clubs and activities at middle and high school
Wide array of electives in all content areas	An interscholastic sports program with over 1,470 roster spots

- State pension obligations have stabilized and decreased for certificated employees. The savings realized from this is partially offset by increases in health insurance. In total, employee benefits are estimated to increase <1.0%
- The 2015-16 budget continues to fund all extracurricular activities that our students demand and take full advantage of. The budget proposes to reinstate up to three modified teams that were previously reduced.
- Based on the results of a competitive bid, the District will be changing transportation providers in 2015-16. The results of the bid have increased contract transportation costs by approximately 7%.
- The Board of Education is committed to investing in our buildings and technology infrastructure. In response, the District is working on increasing our capital allocations.