



Outlook

7 District ACFR Dashboard

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I am sharing our [7-District ACFR Dashboard](#) to support the Board and our new Superintendent in it's efforts to improve our Budget. Unlike past leadership, she appears to welcome constructive feedback without defensiveness and prioritizes the District's well-being over social cliques.

This spreadsheet offers valuable insights for budget discussions, providing year-over-year comparisons against six other districts.

Key Highlights:

- **More Efficient Spending:** Berkeley Heights demonstrated the **smallest per-pupil cost increase since 2021** while still achieving a **\$1 million surplus**.
- **Reduced Administrative & Legal Expenses:**
 - **\$40,000** reduction in General Admin Support Services spending.
 - **\$300,000** decrease in General Admin Miscellaneous spending.
 - **\$37,000** reduction in legal fees, thanks to a more competent attorney now in place.
- **Inching Towards Student-Centered Budgeting:**
 - Transportation costs increased as expected due to policy adjustments, yet the District **spent \$200,000 less than budgeted** and maintained the **second-lowest per-pupil cost** in this category.
 - Funding for **student instruction and co-curricular activities** increased, while **Athletics and Special Education funding remained stable**.

Key Concerns:

1. Declining Enrollment & High Per-Pupil Costs:

- Despite promises that **Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK)** would address enrollment declines, the issue persists.
- The District now operates under a **less effective configuration for student achievement**, yet our **per-pupil cost remains the highest** among the seven districts on the Dashboard.

2. Soaring Security Costs Without Clear Accountability:

I urge BOE members who support this spending—along with the Town Administrator and Mayor (cc'd on this email)—to explain why **an additional \$130,000 is better spent on retired police officers rather than tutors, counselors, or extracurricular support** for economically vulnerable students. Can you make that case without feeling nauseous?

- o **Security spending doubled** in one year, from **\$130,000 to \$260,000**, despite declining enrollment.
- o The Town Administrator, Mayor, Recreation Chair (who also serves as the Board of Election Chair, Municipal Tax Collector, and Complainer-of-people-who-use-sound-logic-during-council-meetings-in-Chief), and Police Chief continue to advocate for an **open-ended arrangement**, shifting overtime and sick pay burdens onto the District.
- o Additionally, security expenses **reported in the audit do not align** with Township income statements. The **Business Administrator and Town Administrator must provide records** to account for discrepancies in SLEO and SRO spending.

3. Persistent Administrative Bloat & Unjustified Spending in Athletics:

- o **Highest per-pupil cost in Support Services General Administration** (\$562 per pupil).
- o Athletics spending remains the **highest among all seven districts**.
- o A simple fix? **Eliminate the unnecessary \$100,000 boutique position** added last year.

4. Facilities & Surplus Management:

- o Since 2019, the District has accumulated **\$4,541,672.60 in surplus**.
- o Given this, why aren't these funds being used for **facility improvements**, rather than relying on Ad-Hoc committees that circumvent democratic processes or pushing for an unnecessary referendum?
- o Furthermore, why not allocate a portion of these funds to **expand tutoring services** to help students recover from prior administrative missteps, ensuring we restore academic proficiency to pre-pandemic levels?

I appreciate your time and consideration.

[Link to ACFR Dashboard](#)

District	2022 Enrollment	2023 Enrollment	2024 Enrollment	2022 Cost Per Pupil	2023 Cost Per Pupil	2024 Cost Per Pupil
New Providence	2,968.00	2,380.00	2,399.00	23,914.00	23,433.00	24,441.00
Summit	3,870.00	3,012.00	3,692.00	24,229.00	24,499.00	25,234.00
Violetfield	5,897.00	5,875.00	5,851.00	26,796.00	26,533.00	26,811.00
Madison	2,526.00	2,625.00	2,492.00	23,817.00	25,113.00	27,203.00
Chatham	3,784.00	3,594.00	3,580.00	22,294.00	25,906.00	27,489.00
Milltown	4,758.00	4,746.00	4,689.00	25,170.00	27,275.00	26,292.00
Berkley Heights	2,472.00	2,444.00	2,395.00	26,239.00	28,138.00	29,520.00

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John Migueis

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