

Budget FAQs

Why does the District need to purchase new buses?

The Pine Plains Central School District encompasses over 140 square miles. In a normal school year, our buses traveled over 600,000 miles picking up and dropping off students. Our buses deliver kids not only to Stissing, Seymour and Cold Spring, but to private schools and to required Special Education placements, some of which can be over 50 miles away. In addition, our buses transport students to field trips, extracurricular activities, and athletic events throughout the school year. In the summer we transport to special education placements and summer camps.

Each year the district replaces older buses that become costly to maintain due to frequent repairs and/or the need for replacement parts. In addition to mechanical concerns, road salt and other deicers used during our northeast winters can deteriorate bus bodies and frames. State law requires school buses to undergo rigorous and detailed safety inspections twice each year. State inspectors tell the district whether the buses are running efficiently and safely, and they also monitor body and undercarriage corrosion.

The purchases we are asking voters to approve this year is part of the District's planned bus replacement program that keeps the fleet of vehicles that transport our children in safe, working order and in line with New York State standards. The District has the funds set aside for this purchase and a percentage of the purchase is covered by state aid.

Why is the 2% Tax Cap not 2%?

The Tax Cap is a law that places restrictions on how much a school district may levy in taxes in a given year. The calculation of the tax cap is a multistep process of which 2% is just one of potentially 8 factors that go into the calculation. Other items that can affect the tax cap are growth within a district, PILOTs (payment in-lieu of taxes) for entities within a district, certain capital costs, as well as any tort settlements or pension contribution increases that exceed 2% of payroll. The law establishes a higher threshold of voter approval for a budget to pass if a district's proposed tax levy increase exceeds its tax levy limit. Pine Plains has worked very hard to remain at or below the tax levy limit since the inception of the tax levy limit law back in 2011.

If you have additional questions about buses or any other part of the budget, please feel free to reach out Laura Rafferty, Business Official, at 518-398-7181 x1402 or email at l.rafferty@ppcsd.org. Thank you.