



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: January 18, 2023
To: Chief School Administrators
Route To: District School Business Administrators
From: Scott Henry, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Finance and Business Services

Initial Release of 2023-2024 Budget Software Application

The initial release of the 2023-2024 Budget Software Application will be accessible to authorized school district personnel on or about January 18, 2023 through the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) [Homeroom portal](#). The budget software in the Homeroom portal is named "2023-2024 Budget Statement Software." This release will include the revenue screen, appropriations screen, recapitulation of balances screen, enrollments screen, and many of the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) calculations and supporting documentation items. A list of the screens not yet released will be found on the Home screen in the budget software.

Key Steps/Actions

The 2023 school election and budget procedures calendar for 2023-2024 is available through the NJDOE's School Finance webpage at [Election Calendar](#). The Election Calendar includes dates and deadlines relevant to school budget preparation, as well as the four special election dates in January, March, September and December.

Accessing the Budget Software Application

Access to the 2023-2024 Budget Software Application is restricted to those school district employees for whom the school district's Homeroom Administrator has created a user account. Only through this account will district personnel be able to access the school district budget. First-time users authorized by the school district must contact the school district's Homeroom Administrator to create a unique User Identification and Password. Instructions for establishing a Homeroom Administrator and for establishing authorized users are documented in the "Homeroom Administrator Manual" available through the Homeroom portal. Important message to Homeroom Administrators: Once you have entered into the Homeroom Administration system, the 2023-2024 Budget Software Application is named "Budget Statement."

Guidance Documents

The NJDOE has prepared formal guidance for completing the 2023-2024 budget software. The 2023-2024 Budget Guidelines and Electronic Data Collection Manual and related appendices will be accessible through the NJDOE's [School Finance webpage](#) on or about January 18, 2023. Authorized users of the Budget Software Application are encouraged to review the manual prior to preparing the school district's budget statement.

Significant revisions and enhancements to the school district budget software are highlighted in the executive summary section of the 2023-2024 Budget Guidelines and Electronic Data Collection Manual and are detailed throughout that document.

To highlight several of the revisions and enhancements included in the 2023-2024 Budget Software Application:

- The special education programs formerly entitled Cognitive-Mild, Cognitive-Moderate, and Cognitive-Severe have been renamed Intellectual Disability-Mild, Intellectual Disability-Moderate, and Intellectual Disability-Severe, respectively, to align with special education administrative code.
- On the SFRA report for health care cost adjustment, because the 2023 School Employees Health Benefit Program (SEHBP) insurance premium increased by 15.1 percent, there will be a maximum adjustment of 13.1 percent for increases to the tax levy cap for a school district's budgeted increase in health care premium costs. This is calculated as increases in health care costs more than two percent and less than 15.1 percent, resulting in a 13.1 percent maximum adjustment.
- Pursuant to P.L. 2021, c.35, the allowable surplus for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 was four percent for regular districts, a temporary increase from two percent. The Appropriation of Excess Surplus screen has been updated to reflect the expiration of the temporary increase. Allowable surplus returns to two percent for 2022-2023 and forward.
- The estimated tuition rate for all program calculations contain a new column for the Learning and Language Disabilities-Severe program.

A message on the "Home" tab of the "2023-2024 Budget Statement Software" will indicate when an update to the software has been made subsequent to the software's initial release. As in prior years, updates may include, but are not limited to, the release of software edits and notification of the availability of the following sections of the application: the "advertised budget" file selector; the "prepare user-friendly budget document" selector; the "minimum tax levy report" selector; the report of "district status above or below the expected local levy" selector; the "printable PDF" file selector; and the "county review and approval" page. The NJDOE will also update the software to load state aid upon release of the 2023-2024 state aid numbers. Please note the NJDOE's updates will not overwrite the district's previously entered data.

Budget Planning

For purposes of developing preliminary budgets, districts should make allowances for the possibility of changes in State Aid from 2022-2023 amounts. This recommendation is for planning purposes only and is no indication of the final State Aid allocation for 2023-2024. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-5, State Aid numbers will be provided to school districts within two days after the Governor's budget message and represent the anticipated amount of aid payable to the district.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) applicable for the 2023-2024 budget year is 5.86 percent. The applicable regional administrative cost limits for 2023-2024 for the north, central and south are \$2,624, \$2,443, and \$2,434, respectively.

Contact Information

Budget related questions should be directed to the Office of Fiscal Policy and Planning at budget@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
NJ LEE Group
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