

## Pine-Richland OKs 2021-22 budget with no tax hike, program or staff cuts



TONY LARUSSA | Thursday, June 10, 2021 2:44 p.m.



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The Pine-Richland School Board has approved a budget for the 2021-22 school year that keeps property taxes at their current rate without the need to trim programs or staff.

The nearly \$96 million spending plan was approved by the board at its June 7 meeting.

The district anticipates revenues of a little more than \$94.7 million. The budget will be balanced with money left over from this year's budget and earmarked to cover the cost of capital improvements.

Of the \$94.7 million in revenue the district expects to receive next year, 65% will be generated by property taxes, with the remainder funded by wage and other local levies as well as state subsidies to cover certain operating expenses, special programs and other costs.

Revenue from the federal government funds 1% of the district's budget.

The bulk of the district's costs — 65.18% — pays for salaries and benefits.

A 1.2% increase in the district's mandatory contribution to the state-operated teacher pension fund will cost the district an additional \$290,000 next year. A 5% increase in medical insurance premiums and a 7% hike in the cost of providing vision care will add nearly \$365,000 in expenses.

District officials also noted that the requirement to pay tuition for students who attend public cyber and charter schools has increased dramatically over the past 15 years.

The cost for the 2007-08 school year was a little more than \$100,000. The district has budgeted \$1.3 million next year to cover the cost.

Operating expenses account for 20.54% of the budget, 9.26% goes for debt services and the remainder is used to fund capital projects and cash reserves.

By leaving the 19.5867 mill rate used to calculate real estate tax bills unchanged, the owner of a property assessed at the district's median value of \$258,500 will continue to pay \$5,063.16 a year to fund school operations.

By law, school districts must submit a balanced budget to the State Department of Education by the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

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