

School Article 2 – Operating Budget

This article will raise and appropriate \$31,651,240 for the Raymond School District's 2025-2026 Operating Budget, or, if the article fails, will raise \$31,314,295, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Raymond School Board or by law (1). The amounts above do not include other money Warrant Articles on the school ballot this year. If the Operating Budget Warrant Article fails and the Default Budget is in place, the School Board may revisit the Operating Budget and call one special meeting so voters will be able to vote on the revised budget per State statute (2).

The proposed budget represents a 3.02% increase over last year's Operating Budget and is \$336,945 more than the Default Budget.

As presented to the Budget Committee at their public hearing, the main increases in the budget are \$221,324 for four Behavior Coaches, \$419,274 for three Board Certified Behavior Analysts, \$121,399 for one Curriculum Coordinator, and \$74,797 for one Athletic Trainer; \$222,966 for Transportation, \$302,507 for Student Tuition, and \$335,440 for Repairs & Service contracts. In terms of revenue, State aid revenue last year was \$7,928,042 and this year is projected to be \$7,339,935, or \$588,107 less. Federal revenue is projected to be \$50,000 less (\$1,095,000 in 2024-25 and \$1,045,000 in 2025-26).

The main decreases in the budget are \$62,784 for eliminating one teacher position, \$300,000 for Salaries & Benefits, and \$300,886 for district-wide Contracted Services (partly by bringing the Behavior Analysts and Coaches in-house instead of contracting for the service). Per pupil costs and enrollment of similarly sized schools can be found in the December presentation to the Budget Committee. (3)

For background, the Budget Committee made a cut of \$927,379, making the proposed budget equal to the 2024-25 operating budget as adopted. (1)(4)(5) At the Deliberative Session, after some discussion, a third and final amendment brought the operating budget back to what the School Board initially proposed to the Budget Committee. (6)

The estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$16.14 per \$1000 assessment, or \$3,228 on a \$200,000 home, which is an increase from the previous year of \$1.14 per \$1000 assessment, or \$228 on a \$200,000 home.

The estimated tax impact of not passing this article is \$15.89 per \$1000 assessment, or \$3,178 on a \$200,000 home, which is an increase from the previous year of \$.89 per \$1000 assessment, or \$178 on a \$200,000 home.

A YES vote raises \$31,651,240 to fund the 2025-2026 Raymond School District's Operating Budget.

A NO vote raises \$31,314,295 to fund the Default Budget, and gives the Raymond School Board the option of revising the Operating Budget and calling a special meeting for Town citizens to vote on the new proposal.

Reasons why some voters might vote yes:

- To support the proposed Operating Budget
- To agree with the staffing changes, curriculum, and equipment deemed necessary in the school budget
- To prevent the Default Budget from taking effect

Reasons why some voters might vote no:

- To support the Default Budget
- Disagree with the staffing changes, curriculum, and equipment deemed necessary in the School budget
- To allow the School Board the option of revising the Operating Budget and calling a special meeting for voter action

References:

1. Presentation made during the Budget Committee public hearing 1/7/2025 by Superintendent Terry Leatherman and Business Administrator Marjorie Whitmore, RCTV link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8xs6m8> and slide presentation link: <https://tinyurl.com/36aazc8n>
2. RSA 40:13, X and XVI, <https://tinyurl.com/mujd9wu7>
3. Per pupil costs and enrollment are shown comparing Raymond to other school districts of similar size (Div. III), Terry Leatherman and Marjorie Whitmore initial presentation to the Budget Committee, 12/03/2024, pp. 27-28 in presentation: <https://tinyurl.com/mur7xtsc> and RCTV link: <https://tinyurl.com/wwspfz2z>
4. 2024 MS-27 Budget, p. 9, <https://tinyurl.com/349w4tme>, note that 2024 operating budget passed 980-282, <https://tinyurl.com/4mzpw9cu>
5. 2025 MS-27 Budget, <https://tinyurl.com/ydbr65ut>
6. Discussion about the operating budget at the School District Deliberative Session, three amendments were proposed, discussion begins at [12:26] and final prevailing amendment is proposed at [1:50:48], amendment passed on a secret ballot 65-38, School District Deliberative Session 02/01/2025 RCTV link: <https://tinyurl.com/37zr2jpi>