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## New Jerseyans Demand Change, Reject School Budgets Across the State

Wednesday, April 21, 2010 • Tags: [Education](#)

"Yesterday was a watershed moment for New Jersey. It gives us an opportunity to achieve real fundamental change...

Our state, our families, our children cannot afford government at any level that wishes problems away."

- *New Jersey Governor Chris Christie*

NJ.com - Gov. Chris Christie says school budget election results are proof that N.J. voters want change

Bloomberg - New Jersey Voters Defeat Record Majority of School Budgets

The Star-Ledger - Majority of N.J. school budgets rejected for the first time since 1976

Asbury Park Press - NJ voters in 'no' mood for school tax hikes

The Star-Ledger - N.J. voters reject school budgets in heated elections

Press of Atlantic City - Record number of voters turn out to defeat many school budgets

Philadelphia Inquirer - High turnout in many N.J. school races

Courier-Post - [Nearly] 80% of budgets passed in districts with wage freezes, Christie notes

Home News Tribune - Passions, turnout high as school spending plans rejected in Central Jersey

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**In many districts Tuesday, voters took action...For example in...**

**ABSECON** - Voters rejected the school budget by a 446-504 vote, according to unofficial results. The proposed \$12.3 million budget is \$967,448 less than the current school year's spending plan. But because of \$615,000 in state cuts and a \$3 million drop in the city's ratable value, the budget would have raised taxes by about \$17 per \$100,000 assessed value.

**BARNEGAT** - Barnegat Township voters rejected the school budget and its tax increase Tuesday. The \$26.9 million tax levy, \$2.7 million larger than last year's, got 1,881 opponents and 1,685 supporters at the polls. The budget accounts for a \$2.3 million loss in government aid and includes 41 layoffs from a payroll of 617. Twenty-six employees were laid off last year. Barnegat residents last year voted 1,325 to 1,104 in favor of the budget, which kept roughly the same tax levy from the year before.

**BECTON** - Both East Rutherford and Carlstadt voters also had no confidence in Becton Regional High School's budget, as the \$11.5 million tax levy that would raise taxes on the average homeowner in East Rutherford by \$9 and in Carlstadt by \$60 was rejected by a collaborative 76 votes between both towns. In East Rutherford, the vote was 462-451 against the budget and in Carlstadt, 415 voters said no while 360 approved it.

**BERKELEY TOWNSHIP** - Berkeley voters haven't approved the local school tax levy since 2002...This year was no exception as 4,116 voters cast votes against the \$26,831,262 tax levy for Berkeley Township schools, while 2,116 voters approved it.

**BUENA** - Voters said no Tuesday to the proposed 2010-11 budget for the Buena Regional School District and yes to at least two of the incumbent board members...The \$36 million budget was voted down with 694 no votes and 511 yes votes.

**BUTLER** - Butler voters defeated the school budget Tuesday evening for the third year in a row, with 764 residents voting against the budget and 716 casting their ballots in support of it. School board member Jay Dean was re-elected, and newcomers Lisa O'Shea and Karen Smith also earned seats on the board. Voter turnout was 30 percent.

**CARLSTADT** - In Carlstadt...the budget proposal was shot down by a vote of 390-356. The total \$10.56 million tax levy would have raised taxes by \$105 on average.

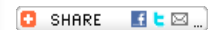
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**CEDAR GROVE** - Cedar Grove residents said "no" to their budget by a margin of 33 votes.

**CENTRAL** - Central Regional School District's proposed \$26,748,913 tax levy was rejected by voters, 4,585 to 2,550. Voters in the district - comprised of Berkeley, Ocean Gate, Island Heights, Seaside Heights and Seaside Park - have approved the tax levy for only one budget in the past two decades.

**CHESTER** - The Chester School District's budget was defeated, 1,203 to 768, for the first time since 2006. School board members Kerri Wright and Gary Lakritz were re-elected, and newcomer Heather Ronco also earned a seat on the board.

**CLAYTON** - Voters rejected (432-395) a \$7,055,151 general fund plan that would have raised the school levy to \$2.74 per \$100 of assessed valuation or \$2,664 for the owner of a property assessed at the borough average of \$97,260.

**DELSEA** - Voters rejected (1,393-1,000) the district's \$12.5 million general fund plan.

**DUNELLEN** - The school budget's proposed tax levy was rejected 544-326, with 23 percent of registered voters turning out.

**EAST BRUNSWICK** - A proposed \$109.3 million tax levy for 2010-2011 was defeated by township voters Tuesday, 3,347 to 4,035. The levy was part of a \$129.1 million budget for the next school year. A total of 24 percent of the township's registered voters cast ballots Tuesday.

**EASTERN** - In Eastern Regional School District, which serves Berlin Borough, Gibbsboro and Voorhees, administrators reported that the \$31.6 million budget would likely be defeated (Later it's failure was confirmed), though totals were not available by press time. Superintendent Hal Melleby declined to comment. The tax levy proposed for the budget would have raised taxes by the 4 percent cap plus an additional 1.2 percent in partial waiver for reduction in state aid.

**EAST HANOVER** - East Hanover voters narrowly defeated the budget with 1,079 "no" votes and 1,060 "yes" votes, counting absentee ballots. The proposed \$19,055,987 budget was projected to result in an increase of \$86.08 for a homeowner with property assessed at the town average of \$360,500. The projected tax bill would have been \$2,580.60 with the proposed budget.

**EAST RUTHERFORD** - East Rutherford's budget...will also go to the council for amendments, as voters decided to reject the proposal put in front of them by a vote of 441-417. The proposal would have raised taxes on average by \$140.

**EAST GREENWICH** - Voters rejected (716-706) a \$9,445,187 general fund plan that called for a \$183 increase to \$2,763 on a home assessed at the township average of \$169,460.

**EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP** - Voters rejected the K-12 public school district budget Tuesday. Voters defeated the budget 2,983 to 1,855, preliminary results provided by the Township Clerk's Office showed. More than twice as many residents turned out this year than last year to reject the \$116.9 million budget, which includes \$8.1 million in cuts to offset a \$5.4 million, or 13 percent, reduction in state funding next year.

**ELK** - Voters rejected (299-276) a \$2,308,437 general fund plan that would have raised the local school bill \$64 to \$1,426 for the owner of a property assessed at the township average of \$231,704.

**EDISON** - Voters in Edison rejected the district's \$191.6 million tax levy Tuesday by a 7,366 to 4,568 vote. The tax levy would have supported a \$205 million budget. The voter turnout was 23.13 percent of the district's 53,124 registered voters.

**EVESHAM** - Voters in Evesham Township defeated their district's budget by a total of 3,792 to 3,293. The budget called for \$52.6 million to be raised in local taxes to support a \$69 million operating budget...The proposed tax rate increase for 2010-11 would have been 4.01 cents, which translates into an annual increase of \$111 for the homeowner with a property assessed at the township average of \$277,100.

**FAIRFIELD** - Fairfield's spending plan was voted down by a 12-vote margin.

**FLORHAM PARK** - Florham Park voters rejected the proposed school budget by a margin of 63 votes, though the proposed tax levy would have increased the tax on a home assessed at the average value by only \$88. The last time the district's budget was defeated was in 2006.

**FRANKLIN** - Voters in Franklin Township rejected the district's \$114 million tax levy Tuesday by 3,226 to 3,192 votes, including absentee ballots. The tax levy would have supported a total \$135.9 million budget. The voter turnout was 6,527, which was 18 percent of the district's 36,253 registered voters.

**GLASSBORO** - Voters approved (947-847) a \$16,997,715 general fund plan that calls for a \$129 increase to \$2,865 in the school bill for the owner of a property assessed at \$107,766 - the borough average.

**GATEWAY** - Voters rejected (1,088 -977) an \$8,844,558 general fund plan.

**HADDON TOWNSHIP** - In Haddon Township, the \$30.5 million budget failed by 154 votes. The proposal to increase property taxes by 10.8 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, or about \$130 for the average household, was not supported by a vote of 1127-1281, said Superintendent Mark Raivetz. Proving the vote was contentious, Raivetz noted that 1,100 more voters came out this year than last.

**JACKSON** - Local voters overwhelmingly rejected a \$71.6 million local tax levy while re-electing the two incumbents for the school board...The proposed spending plan, which was \$4.5 million less than last year's, was rejected 5,620 to

4,320.

**JAMESBURG** - Voters in Jamesburg turned down a proposed \$6.7 million tax levy that would have supported a \$11.9-million school budget by 315 to 284 votes. The unofficial percentage of voter turnout was 24 percent after 742 voters went to the polls.

**KINGSWAY** - Voters rejected (2,257-1,882) a \$16,736, 649 general fund plan. Voters in all four members of the district rejected the budget - East Greenwich (728-694); South Harrison, (390-292); Swedesboro (167-119); and Woolwich (972-777).

**LACEY TOWNSHIP** - Voters on Tuesday rejected a school budget that includes no tax increase and no layoffs. The vote was 2,568 against, 2,282 in favor. The budget assumed a pay freeze among all 692 employees for 2010-2011, but teachers have yet to agree to this. About 30 employees would be laid off otherwise. The district lost \$3.2 million, 14 percent, of its state aid compared to last year. The tax levy of \$38.4 million is about \$1.4 million larger than last year's, but savings from the district's solar-panel project helped cover enough of the district's outstanding debt to leave the 93-cent tax rate alone. Lacey Township voters approved last year's budget, which also included a \$1.4 million increase in the tax levy, by a tally of 1,368 to 1,052.

**LAUREL SPRINGS** - Laurel Springs voters rejected a property tax increase and turned out in larger numbers than last year. The budget for a general fund of \$2,593,472 was defeated 157 to 138.

**LINDEN** - The district's \$77.8 million tax levy was rejected by a vote of 1,670-1,442. The tax levy would have supported a \$102 million budget.

**MADISON** - In an unusually large turnout Tuesday, Madison voters rejected the proposed \$41.4 million base budget...Thirty percent, or 3,012 of the 9,929 registered voters in the borough, turned out for the election and a majority heeded the call of Gov. Chris Christie, who urged voters to reject school budgets in the towns where teachers had not opted for a pay freeze.

**MAPLE SHADE** - More than twice as many Maple Shade voters turned out than last year to give the budget a resounding defeat by hundreds of votes. More than 60 percent of the nearly 1,900 voting rejected a tax increase of more than \$260.

**MANCHESTER** - Voters in the township gave a resounding "no" Tuesday night to the question of whether a \$37.6 million tax levy should help fund a \$44.7 million school district budget. Fifty-seven percent of the votes, or 3,887, were against it, with 42.8 percent, or 2,901, in favor of the spending plan, according to unofficial results from the Ocean County Clerk's Office.

**MANTUA** - Voters rejected (1,083-1,063) an \$11,205,608 general fund plan that called for a \$61 increase to \$1,971 for the owner of a property assessed at \$121,754 - the township average.

**MAINLAND REGIONAL (LINWOOD, NORTHFIELD AND SOMERS POINT)** - Voters rejected Mainland Regional High School District's budget by a 1,974-2,048 margin on Tuesday, sending the budget back to the three towns that make up the district for further cuts. The \$24.1 million budget is \$405,000 less than the current budget, but it would have still led to a 6.5-cent increase for Northfield residents, 9-cent increase for Linwood residents and an 11.1-cent increase for Somers Point residents.

**MEDFORD** - Medford voters narrowly rejected the budget by less than 50 votes of nearly 5,000 votes cast. The budget would have raised taxes on the average home assessment of \$201,202 by an estimated \$200.

**MEDFORD LAKES** - Medford Lakes voters rejected a \$5.18 million tax levy that would have increased school taxes \$148.47 for the owner of a property at the \$289,864 borough average. The budget failed 522 to 480, according to municipal clerk Mark McIntosh.

**MIDDLESEX BOROUGH** - Voters Tuesday soundly rejected a school budget that maintains current programs and services for students without the level of layoffs that many districts face because of steep reductions in state aid. The vote was 1,360 to 775. The district's proposed \$30.3 million spending plan would have raised local property taxes by \$157 a year for a home assessed at \$92,227, the borough average.

**MIDDLETOWN** - Taxpayers voted down a \$123.8 million tax levy in support of the district's \$140.3 million budget for the coming school year, and elected three newcomers to replace incumbents on the Board of Education Tuesday night.

**MILLTOWN** - Voters rejected the \$12.7 million tax levy Tuesday by a 963-551 margin. The tax levy would have supported a \$14.9 million budget. The voter turnout was 1,525, which was 30 percent of the borough's 5,082 registered voters.

**MONROE** - Monroe Township voted down a proposed \$80,584,528 tax levy, that would have supported a \$100.2 million proposed school budget by 5,637 to 4,474. Turnout was 34.4 percent as 10,113 voters went to the polls, among 29,388 registered voters.

**MONTVILLE** - Three years after the school budget was last defeated, voters soundly defeated the proposed \$68.8 million spending plan that featured an overall 4.01 percent tax increase but cut 66 positions in the K-12 district. If the budget had passed, taxpayers with the township average-assessed home of \$332,800 would have seen a \$281 increase in school taxes with a school tax bill of \$7,276.

**MOUNT LAUREL** - In Mount Laurel, voters delivered a strong rejection of a proposed \$65.8 million budget. The budget was rejected 3,438 to 2,878. **MOUNT OLIVE** - The 2010-2011 budget was defeated 2,291 to 1,889 votes, continuing

the township's record of defeating school budgets. Since 1990, Mount Olive voters have defeated school budgets nine times, including four in the past six years.

**NORTH ARLINGTON** - North Arlington voters followed suit and rejected the district's proposed budget, but by a much slimmer margin; only eight votes. The \$21.4 million total tax levy that stood to raise the average taxpayer's school tax bill by \$221 received 946 no-confidence votes, while 938 voters approved of it.

**NEWFIELD** - Voters rejected (110-61) a \$1,936,742 general fund plan that called for a \$341 increase to \$2,765 for owner of a property assessed at \$205,104 - the borough average.

**NUTLEY** - Nutley's budget failed by a margin of eight votes.

**OLD BRIDGE** - Voters in Old Bridge rejected the district's \$89,271,729 tax levy Tuesday by a 3,240 to 2,745 vote. The tax levy would have supported a \$137,455,169 budget. The voter turnout was about 15.5 percent of the district's 38,503 registered voters.

**PARSIPPANY** - Parsippany voters rejected the \$127.4 million budget. Officials in the K-12 district had grappled with a \$6.2 million loss in state aid, prompting a budget calling for a \$219 increase on the average homeowner despite the reduction of 25 teaching positions and various program cuts.

**PLEASANTVILLE** - The Pleasantville school budget was defeated, 287-255, in unofficial results Tuesday. The budget now goes to City Council, which may make additional cuts or leave the \$86.8 million budget as is. If the city makes more cuts, the district stands to lose more than 52 positions the proposed budget would have eliminated.

**PERTH AMBOY** - City voters rejected the district's \$21.7 million tax levy Tuesday by a 625 to 437 vote. The tax levy would have supported a \$184 million budget. The voter turnout was 5.2 percent of the city's 22,320 registered voters.

**PITMAN** - Voters rejected (771-769) an \$11,715,562 general fund plan that called for a \$215 increase to \$3,363 for the owner of a property assessed at \$109,173 - the borough average.

**ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP** - Rockaway Township voters defeated, by 2,282 to 2,197, the proposed \$45.8 million budget. Under the budget plan, taxes on the average home would have risen by \$144.

**ROBBINSVILLE** - In Robbinsville, Tuesday's budget rejection was a double-blow for the school district, which last month saw its referendum to build a new school and for repairs to two other schools soundly defeated.

**SAYREVILLE** - Voters rejected the district's \$56,090,487 tax levy by a vote of 2,554 to 2,174. The tax levy was to support a total \$79,277,991 budget. The voter turnout was about 20 percent of the district's 24,028 registered voters.

**SOMERS POINT** - City voters rejected both the local school budget and Mainland Regional High School budget by significant margins, dragging down the regional school district's budget. Voters voted down the local \$15.6 million budget by a 521-622 margin. That would have increased taxes by 2.4 cents. The voters also shot down the Mainland budget, 496 to 643. That budget would have raised taxes by 11.1 cents.

**SOUTH AMBOY** - Voters rejected the district's \$8,758,638 tax levy by a 783-461 margin. The tax levy was to support a total \$16,725,676 budget. The voter turnout was 23 percent of the city's 5,342 registered voters.

**SOUTH HARRISON** - Voters rejected (385-303) a \$2,784,142 general fund plan. District officials project a 5.5 cent increase in the local school levy. That increase includes 1.2 cents for debt service to cover capital projects that voters previously approved. In 2009, the typical property owner paid \$2,937 to support the local district.

**SOUTH PLAINFIELD** - The proposed \$40,688,003 tax levy, supporting a proposed \$52,299,264 budget was rejected by voters.

**SPOTSWOOD/HELMETTA** - Voters in Spotswood and Helmetta rejected the Spotswood district's \$14,823,349 tax levy by a 905-577 margin. The tax levy was to support a total \$25,776,582 budget. The voter turnout was 23 percent of the combined 6,464 registered voters in Spotswood and Helmetta.

**STRATFORD** - The Stratford school district's voters narrowly defeated that district's budget, 566 to 562. The plan called for raising \$5.8 million from local taxpayers.

**SWEDESBORO-WOOLWICH** - Voters rejected (1,118-908) a \$12,896,051 general fund plan that called for a \$287 increase to \$2,057 for the owner of a Swedesboro property assessed at \$96,105 - the borough average - and a \$502 increase to \$4,002 for a Woolwich property assessed at \$181,402 - the township average.

**UPPER TOWNSHIP** - Voters defeated Upper Township's 2010-11 school budget Tuesday, rejecting a \$34.2 million spending plan that called for a 4.67 percent increase in the tax rate. The budget sought to set a school tax rate of 1.0174 cents per \$100 of assessed value. A homeowner would have paid \$1,017 in school taxes for each \$100,000 of assessed value under the rejected spending plan. In Upper Township, 1,441 voters rejected the budget while 1,226 supported it, unofficial election results show.

**VINELAND** - Voters also shot down the zero-tax increase budget. Voters said no to the 2010-11 tax levy that holds the tax rate stable at \$1.037 per \$100 assessed property, which means the owner of a property assessed at \$100,000 will pay \$1,037 a year in school taxes, the same as this year.

**VOORHEES** - Voorhees voters rejected the \$51.4 million proposed budget 1,962 to 1,735. Taxes would have been

raised by the public schools by 3.5 cents, which would have amounted to about \$118.56 for the average household.

WENONAH - Voters rejected (285-277) a \$2,254,431 general fund plan that called for a \$159 increase to \$2,792 for the owner of a property assessed at \$353,415 - the borough average.

WEST DEPTFORD - Voters in West Deptford rejected a spending plan that would have increased their taxes by 18.5 cents. Had the budget passed, the owner of a home assessed at the township average of \$117,500 would have had to pay \$217.30 more in school taxes for a total of \$2,326.50 in 2010-11.

WESTVILLE - Voters rejected (223-222) consider a \$1,976,358 general fund plan that called for a \$106 increase to \$1,069 for the owner of a property assessed at \$87,110 - the borough average.

WOODBIDGE - Voters Tuesday defeated the school district's proposed tax levy by a crushing margin, 6,350 to 4,737. About 20.5 percent of registered voters, or 11,142, turned out ? nearly twice as many people who voted in last year's school election

WOODBURY - In Woodbury, voters defeated a \$22.3 million school budget, 451 to 359. The proposed budget was nearly \$900,000 less than the current fund, however, it would have required an 9.75-cent tax rate increase to make up for about \$1.2 million cut from state aid.

###

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