



### **What's happening?**

Due to budget shortfalls, the Middletown superintendent proposed closing three local schools, including Bayshore Middle School, Leonardo Elementary and Navesink Elementary.

The superintendent suggests a potential tax increase of "up to 10%" to prevent these closures, but this number is misleading.

### **Why is there a budget problem now?**

This is a multifaceted issue. One in particular, for many years, the Middletown BOE hasn't increased school funding enough to keep up with inflation, resulting in chronic underfunding.

Over time, this created the current financial gap requiring emergency action.

### **How does Middletown's spending compare to other towns?**

Neighboring districts like Holmdel, Colts Neck, and Freehold Regional have consistently increased their funding responsibly. Middletown spends comparatively less on education, creating these recurring shortfalls.

### **Can Middletown afford to keep schools open?**

Yes. Through community collaboration, strategic planning, and finding savings in areas that do not impact the well-being of the children, teachers, or staff.

### **Are there questionable spending practices?**

Middletown BOE approved approximately \$725,000 in financing for digital sports scoreboards without confirmed advertising revenue. Transportation savings from school closures were inaccurately presented as "zero net cost" without proper analysis.

### **What is our community proposing?**

Opening dialog for alternative funding solutions by forming a Community Budget Oversight Committee for transparency and long-term budget solutions.

### **.How would school closures impact me personally?**

School closures can significantly reduce home property values.  
Increased class sizes, overcrowded schools, reduced quality of education, and disruption to students.

### **Is the proposed increase actually 10%?**

No. The advertised 10% increase only applies to the education portion of your property taxes (~61% of total taxes). Your actual total property tax increase would be significantly lower—around less than \$1/day (~\$356 annually).

### **Is there tax relief available for seniors?**

Yes. NJ provides property tax relief programs for seniors.  
Seniors over age 65 can apply here: [nj.gov/treasury/taxation/ptr](https://nj.gov/treasury/taxation/ptr)

### **What can I do to help?**

Attend upcoming community forums and BOE meetings.  
Share accurate information with neighbors.  
Contact local officials demanding transparency and responsible funding.  
Visit our community page/social media for updates and advocacy materials.