

Frequently Asked Questions: Bloomsbury Joining the North Hunterdon-Voorhees Regional High School District

What is being proposed?

The proposal is for the Borough of Bloomsbury to become a full constituent member of the North Hunterdon-Voorhees Regional High School District (NHVR) for grades 9-12. Bloomsbury's high school students are already attending North Hunterdon High School through a sending-receiving relationship.

To move forward, the proposal must be presented to the voters through a referendum on regionalization, which will appear on the November 2026 general election ballot. If approved, Bloomsbury would formally become a constituent member of NHVR going forward. Regardless of the referendum outcome, Bloomsbury students will continue to attend North Hunterdon High School, but on a fluctuating tuition basis.

Are Bloomsbury students already attending North Hunterdon?

Yes. Beginning in September 2025, Bloomsbury's ninth-grade students started attending North Hunterdon High School. Each year, another class will be added until all Bloomsbury high school students are enrolled there. This will remain the same regardless of whether this referendum passes.

What does it mean to be a "constituent member"?

A constituent member is a community that is a full, permanent part of the regional school district. NHVR already contains 12 such member communities. As a constituent member, Bloomsbury would share equally in governance, funding, and decision-making, rather than being an outside district that pays tuition under a contract. Constituent members pay their share through a tax-apportionment formula based on equalized property values and elect representatives to the Regional Board of Education.

What is the difference between a sending-receiving relationship and being a constituent member?

Under the current **sending-receiving relationship**, Bloomsbury pays tuition under a contract that fluctuates year to year, has no seat on NHVR's board of education (its enrollment is too small to qualify under state law), must handle annual tuition calculations and financial true-ups, and its property values do not contribute to NHVR's borrowing capacity. Under the proposed **constituent membership**, Bloomsbury instead pays a predictable, formula-based share of NHVR's tax levy (similar to the 12 member communities), gains full voting representation on an expanded 13-member Regional Board of Education, eliminates all tuition paperwork, and adds approximately \$4.2 million to NHVR's borrowing capacity for capital improvements. **In both scenarios**, Bloomsbury students attend the same school -- North Hunterdon High School -- and receive the same educational programs.

What does this mean for capital improvements and school facilities?

As a constituent member, Bloomsbury would share in the costs and benefits of capital improvements to NHVR's facilities. Bloomsbury's equalized property valuation (approximately \$110 million) would contribute to NHVR's legal debt margin, increasing NHVR's borrowing capacity by approximately \$4.2 million (about 1.2%) and giving the district greater flexibility for future facility improvements. NHVR currently has approximately \$5.74 million in outstanding debt for buildings, grounds, and equipment (as of June 30, 2024), and Bloomsbury's tax allocation would contribute proportionally to that existing debt. Under a sending-receiving relationship, Bloomsbury's property values do not count toward NHVR's borrowing margin, and so regionalization strengthens the district's capacity for capital projects that benefit all students. Additionally, under a sending-receiving relationship, the principal payments for any debt are not included in the tuition calculation (only interest payments on the debt).

How does this get decided?

Under current law, Bloomsbury's entrance into NHVR as a constituent member requires approval by a majority of voters throughout the existing 12 constituent communities as a whole, and a majority of voters in Bloomsbury, through a referendum. In other words, all registered voters in Bethlehem Township, Califon, Clinton Town, Clinton Township, Franklin Township, Glen Gardner, Hampton, High Bridge, Lebanon Borough, Lebanon Township, Tewksbury Township, and Union Township vote together, and the combined total must show a majority in favor. Bloomsbury votes separately, and a majority there also must approve.

What did the experts recommend?

The independent consultants who conducted the feasibility study found educational and financial benefits to the proposed regionalization and encouraged local officials to bring this issue before the voters as soon as possible.

How will this impact the membership on the NHVR Board?

The NHVR Board of Education would expand from 12 to 13 members using the same apportionment methodology currently in place (based on population). The following would be the board membership, only slightly different from the current apportionment:

- Bethlehem Township and Hampton Borough: 1 representative (elected at-large)
- Union Township and Bloomsbury: 2 representatives (elected at-large)
- Califon Borough and Tewksbury Township: 2 representatives (elected at-large)
- Clinton Township and Lebanon Borough: 4 representatives (elected at-large)
- High Bridge Borough and Lebanon Township: 2 representatives (elected at-large)
- Town of Clinton, Franklin Township, and Glen Gardner Borough: 2 representatives (elected at-large)

Are there advantages to Bloomsbury joining NHVR rather than just continuing the sending-receiving relationship?

There are several key advantages to Bloomsbury's full membership in NHVR:

- **Financial stability for Bloomsbury.** With only 21-29 students per year in the high school, Bloomsbury's tuition costs can swing significantly under a sending-receiving relationship. As a constituent member, costs are shared through a stable, formula-based allocation instead.
- **Stability for Bloomsbury's K-8 program.** Full membership means Bloomsbury's local elementary program would no longer be impacted financially by changes at the high school level. Currently, Bloomsbury's budget and tax-levy cap include all spending K-12. In the event the cost of educating high school students rises higher than the tax levy cap, Bloomsbury has to find financial savings (including reduction in staff or programs) to balance its budget to stay within the tax levy cap. As a constituent member of NHVR, the education of Bloomsbury's high school students would be included in the NHVR budget and subject to its own tax levy cap, separate from the budget and cap of the Bloomsbury elementary school.
- **Reduced administrative burden.** A sending-receiving relationship requires managing a separate contract, annual tuition calculations, recoupment, and financial true-ups. As a constituent member, all of that goes away -- Bloomsbury is treated like the other twelve communities, with costs shared automatically through NHVR's tax formula.

Will my taxes go up?

The independent feasibility study projects savings as a result of Bloomsbury's students attending school in NHVR, regardless of whether they attend via a sending-receiving agreement or as a constituent member. The difference in savings between the two options is relatively similar.

How are those savings possible?

The savings come from combining Bloomsbury's revenue contributions -- including tuition payments and a proportional share of Bloomsbury's State equalization aid -- with the fact that NHVR can absorb Bloomsbury's small number of students (an average of about 6 per high school grade level) without significant additional costs. With projected grade-level sizes at NHVR of approximately 450-500 students, the addition of a handful of Bloomsbury students will have minimal impact on class sizes.

Will North Hunterdon High School be overcrowded?

Absolutely not. North Hunterdon High School has a functional capacity of 1,848 students. In 2024-25, enrollment was only 1,211.5, meaning there were over 636 surplus seats. Even with Bloomsbury's students included, projections show 677 surplus seats for school year 2029-30. Moreover, Bloomsbury students already have begun attending North Hunterdon High School through the current sending-receiving agreement, and will continue to do so even if the proposal does not pass.

How many Bloomsbury students are we talking about?

Bloomsbury's high school population is small: 18 students in 2024-25, projected to range from 21–29 per year over the next decade.

Will regionalization change the racial makeup of North Hunterdon High School?

No. Because Bloomsbury sends so few students, the racial percentages at North Hunterdon would change by fractions of a percentage point. In addition, these students already will be attending North Hunterdon and will do so regardless of the outcome of this referendum.

Will the educational programs at North Hunterdon change?

No. The existing educational programs at NHVR will remain the same. In fact, by attending North Hunterdon Bloomsbury students gain access to a broader range of course offerings than were previously available to it at Phillipsburg, prior to moving to North Hunterdon. Additionally, a new vocational school on the North Hunterdon High School campus opened in September 2025, offering programs in HVAC/Plumbing Technology, Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Advanced Manufacturing & Aeronautical Sciences, Welding Technology, Diesel Technology, and Electrical Technology. Bloomsbury students already are attending North Hunterdon and will do so regardless of the outcome of this referendum.

What about transportation?

Bloomsbury students already are making this commute under the current sending-receiving relationship. Under regionalization, NHVR's transportation coordinator (the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission) would incorporate Bloomsbury into NHVR's transportation routing, creating efficiencies. The cost-savings analysis contained in the feasibility study accounted for any increased transportation costs, which would happen regardless of whether this referendum passes.

Will Bloomsbury have a voice in how the high school is run?

Yes. As a constituent member, Bloomsbury gains formal voting representation on the Regional Board of Education with two members shared between it and Union Township, elected at large. Under the current sending-receiving relationship, Bloomsbury has no board seat because its enrollment falls below the statutory threshold. Membership means a direct voice in decisions about curriculum, programs, and planning.

Does the proposal affect Bloomsbury's local elementary school?

No. Bloomsbury would continue to operate its own PK-8 school district independently. NHVR is a limited-purpose district for grades 9-12 only. The local Bloomsbury Public School would remain under local control. *(Please see question above as to positive financial impact on the PK-8 budget)*

What are the top benefits at a glance?

For Bloomsbury:

- **More predictable taxes.** The cost of educating Bloomsbury's high school students will stabilize rather than be subject to fluctuating tuition rates.
- **Greater voice in your children's education.** As a constituent member, Bloomsbury gains voting representation on the Regional Board, including input on curriculum, programs, and planning, rather than having no board seat under the current arrangement.
- **Protection for the local PK-8 program.** Full membership insulates Bloomsbury's elementary school budget from high-school-level cost changes, providing long-term stability for the local school.

For the existing twelve NHVR communities:

- **Continued savings and increased contribution from Bloomsbury for capital improvements.** Every constituent community continues to see savings from this partnership with Bloomsbury, regardless of the outcome of this referendum. Additionally, Bloomsbury will contribute equally to capital improvements, just as the 12 constituent communities do.
- **Less administrative hassle.** Eliminating the sending-receiving relationship removes the need for annual tuition calculations, contract negotiations, recoupment, and true-ups, freeing up administrative resources.
- **No impact on capacity or programs.** With over 636 surplus seats at North Hunterdon High School and an average of only 6 Bloomsbury students per grade level, existing students will see no change in class sizes, course offerings, or school quality.

Is there any new development that could change these projections?

In Bloomsbury, there are currently no residential developments planned, and future construction is limited due to the absence of a public sewer system and the borough's location entirely within the Highlands Preservation Area. In the broader NHVR area, there is potential for 831 new non-age-restricted housing units, but the enrollment projections in the study already account for students those developments could generate, which amounts to an estimated 50 additional high school students over ten years.

If the referendum were to pass, when would this change take effect?

The boards of education have requested that the referendum be placed on the ballot for the November 2026 general election. If approved by voters, Bloomsbury would become a constituent member of NHVR going forward, likely effective with the 2027-28 school year.