



CommunityLink

Budget 2014

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Budget Proposal Presented to Community

Focus on fiscal responsibility and educational excellence

By Timothy P. Connors,
Superintendent of Schools

Each year as we prepare the budget, we strive to balance the challenges of responsible fiscal management with the promise of an excellent educational experience for the more than 7,000 students in our school district. Working within the confines of the 2% tax cap mandated by New York State law, we believe we are delivering an innovative, intelligent budget proposal to the community.

The proposed budget of \$199,900,000 will be presented for a vote on May 20th. Thanks to the efforts of State Legislators, this includes restoration of \$1,000,000 in state

aid, for a total increase of \$3,115,071 from Albany, allowing us to maintain our programs and services. The budget is a 3.36% increase over last year, and includes major expenditure increases of \$1,850,000 for health insurance and \$1,220,000 for New York State Teacher Retirement System pension costs, over both of which the district has no control. The property tax increase is 2.55%, and is in full compliance with the mandated property levy tax cap. (See the back page of this newsletter for more information about the tax cap.)

“Preparing the budget is a thoughtful, strategic process, requiring us to consider and weigh the needs of many stakeholders and ultimately develop a

program that serves the best interests of both the students and the community,” said Fred Seiler, Assistant Superintendent for Business. **“We don’t just think about what’s right around the corner – we look beyond that, and do our best to anticipate and prepare for the needs and challenges we will face for years to come.”**

Since 1989, district enrollment has increased by 2,207 students, or 45%, while assessed valuations continued to decline during that same period. Each year, we strive to offer the best possible opportunities within that reality.

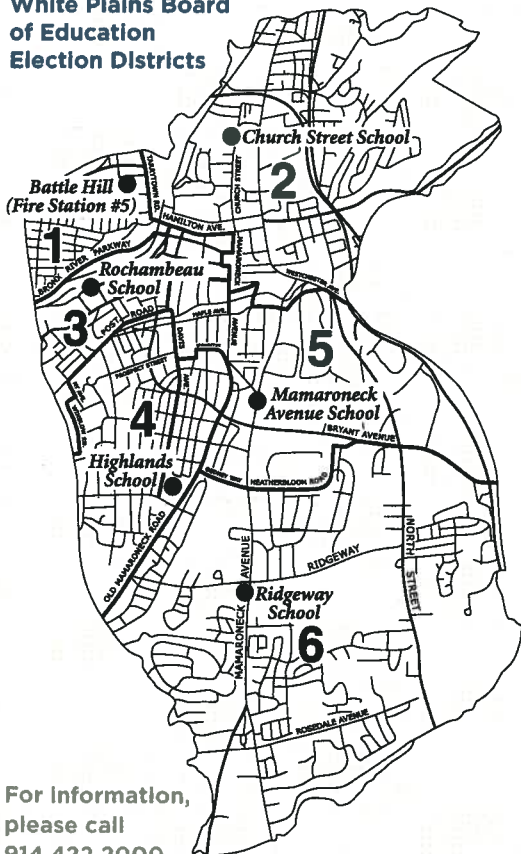
The May 20th vote also includes the election of two School Board members. The two incumbents, Rosemarie Eller and Randy Stein, are running unopposed.

The proposed 2014-2015 budget was developed with input from staff members, parents and other residents of White Plains, through public forums, numerous other meetings, and via phone calls and letters. We are grateful for this advice and guidance and thank you for your support of the students of the White Plains Schools.

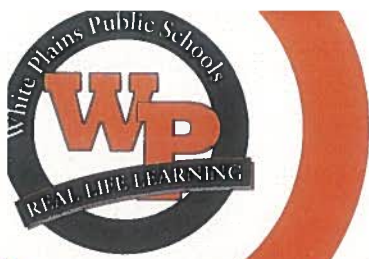
Highlights of the Proposed Budget:

- Stable class sizes, among the lowest in Westchester County, below 22 students on average in the elementary schools and between 20 and 21 in Kindergarten classes.
- Increased staffing in the middle schools: a new social worker will join the team at the Highlands Campus, and the librarian at the Eastview Campus will move from part-time to full-time.
- Additional staff and resources to support and grow the Advancement via Individual Determination Program (AVID), Project Lead the Way (PLTW), and the Mandarin Chinese program.
- New musical instruments and instructional materials.

White Plains Board of Education Election Districts



For information,
please call
914.422.2000



SEATED:
 Rose Lovitch
 Sheryl Brady
 Randy Stein

STANDING:
 James Hricay
 Rosemarie Eller
 Charlie Norris
 Peter Bassano

Message from the Board of Education

We are grateful to the community for the input received at the various public budget forums and presentations. Your opinions are valued greatly and taken into serious consideration as we work, under the leadership of Superintendent Timothy Connors and Assistant Superintendent for Business Fred Seiler, to put together a smart budget that supports student achievement and advancement while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

We also wish to thank our State Legislators for their successful efforts to increase our State Aid. These funds are critical to our ability to maintain the excellent programs and services that make White Plains Schools

among the most innovative, challenging and responsive districts in our region.

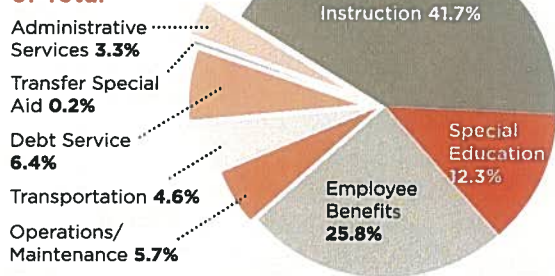
If you have not yet had a chance to review the budget presentations, you may see them online at www.whiteplainspublicschools.org/budget, or call Education House at (914) 422-2064 to request a hard copy. Additionally, please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

We hope that you will exercise your right to vote on May 20th. Thank you for your support of our efforts to maintain the high standards of academic excellence within the White Plains Public Schools.

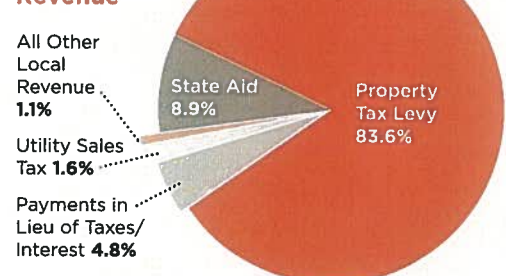
Budget at a Glance White Plains Budget Expenses by Category Proposed Expenditures 2014-2015

	2013-2014	2014-2015	\$ Difference	% Change
Instruction	\$ 81,464,072	\$ 83,305,305	\$ 1,841,233	2.3%
Special Education	24,498,958	24,546,541	47,583	0.2%
Employee Benefits	48,534,000	51,653,000	3,119,000	6.4%
Operations/Maintenance	10,220,488	11,321,692	1,101,204	10.8%
Transportation	9,070,820	9,237,321	166,501	1.8%
Debt Service	12,852,918	12,872,918	20,000	0.2%
Transfer to Special Aid	369,000	442,000	73,000	19.8%
Administration Services	6,389,744	6,521,223	131,479	2.1%
	\$193,400,000	\$199,900,000	\$6,500,000	3.4%

Expenditures as a Percent of Total



Revenues as a Percent of Total Revenue



FAQs about the Proposed Budget

Q. Does the White Plains school budget comply with the New York property tax law?

A. Yes. New York's property tax cap law establishes a tax levy limit for each school district. This limit allows school districts to increase their property tax levy from one year to the next by 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less, based on a multi-step formula. Districts are then allowed to take certain exemptions that may boost their tax levy limits to more than 2% or the inflation rate. If a school district's proposed tax levy is within its limit, a simple majority of voters is needed for budget approval. In White Plains, the estimated tax levy of \$167,062,666 for 2014-2015 represents an increase of \$4,148,336 or 2.55%, which is in full compliance with the mandated property tax cap.

Q. Does the tax levy indicate how much my taxes will rise?

A. No. The tax levy is the amount of money the school district can raise through property taxes. The amount an individual will pay to contribute to the levied amount is the tax rate. Tax rates paid by individual taxpayers may differ greatly from one household to another, based on such things as the equalization rate and assessed property values, and may exceed 2%. In White Plains, the 2014-2015 proposed budget calls for a tax rate increase of \$17.01 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, or a 2.92% increase.

Voter Information

Voting will take place Tuesday, May 20th, from 12 noon to 9:00 pm.

Voting Qualifications

To vote in this election, an individual must be a registered voter, a resident of White Plains for 30 days prior to May 20th, and at least 18 years of age.

Absentee Ballots

Registered voters who will not be in White Plains on May 20th during voting hours may vote by absentee ballot. Please call (914) 422-2000 to obtain an application or go online to www.whiteplainspublicschools.org.

Budget Information

- Watch "A Look at the Budget" on Channels 46 and 77, with airings from now to voting day.

- Call Timothy Connors, Superintendent of Schools, at (914) 422-2019, or Fred Seiler, Assistant Superintendent for Business, at (914) 422-2064.
- A copy of the proposed budget may be reviewed at any of our schools, the White Plains Public Library, Education House (at 5 Homeside Lane), or the Family Information Center on North Street.

Candidate Information

Two seats on the Board of Education will be filled in this year's election, each with a three-year term of office, beginning July 1, 2014. A Candidates' Meeting, sponsored by the White Plains League of Women Voters will be shown on Channels 46 and 77 and repeated. Consult the district's channel guide for specific dates.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Jump Rope for Heart event at GW



White Plains Mayor Roach looks on as students jump rope.

George Washington Elementary hosted its most successful Jump Rope for Heart in March 2014, raising more than \$10,400 to help fight heart disease. Students, parents, teachers and guests all jumped rope and enjoyed a day of healthy fun in the school gym. Now in its 35th year, the annual event is sponsored nationwide by the American Heart Association and aims to teach students how to take care of their hearts while they experience the joy of giving back to the community. Coach Stefano has hosted the event at GW for 17 years.

White Plains Faculty Honored Throughout Westchester

Several White Plains High School faculty members were recently honored by local community organizations. Will Dixon, House Administrator, received The 2014 Blazing Torch Award to honor outstanding educators in the local community, presented by The Westchester County alumnae chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Cindy Otero, School Psychologist, received the Unsung Heroes award from The Westchester Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect. Denise Tomici, Physical Education Teacher, is a runner up for the My Favorite Teacher Award presented by Barnes and Noble of White Plains.

Districtwide, Lucy Roman, Coordinator of Library Media, Business Education and Instructional Technology, was named School Library System Administrator of the Year by Southern Westchester Boces.

Spring Musical at Highlands Middle School

Forty-five 7th and 8th graders at Highlands Middle School, including many members of the Chorus, Band and Orchestra, performed "Bugsy Malone Jr." for parents, staff and other guests on March 13th and 14th. Wonderful singing, acting and dancing talents were on display, with help from a 25-member set crew and 25-member stage crew that helped the show look great and run smoothly. Several staff members worked with the students, including Jennifer Irlen as Director and Musical Director of the show, Katherine Hart as Assistant Director and Stage Manager, Sissi Johnson as Choreographer, Brian Wintersteen and Tom Hauser managing Set Design and Construction, and Tim Veeder as Sound Technician.



The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire all students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.



White Plains Public Schools
5 Homeside Lane
White Plains, NY 10605

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Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education
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Charlie Norris, *Vice President*
Peter Bassano
Sheryl Brady
James F. Hricay
Rose Lovitch
Randy Stein

Postal Patron

www.whiteplainspublicschools.org

VOTE!

Tuesday, May 20
noon - 9 pm

**School District Budget Notice
Overall Budget Proposal**

	Budget Adopted for the 2013-14 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2014-2015 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2014-15 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 193,400,000	\$ 199,900,000	\$ 195,751,664
Increase/Decrease for the 2014-15 School Year		\$ 6,500,000	\$ 2,351,664
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.36 %	1.22 %
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.46 %	
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Including Levy to Support Library Debt, if applicable	\$ 162,914,330	\$ 167,062,666	\$ 162,914,330
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 8,249,042	\$ 7,333,870	
A. Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Not</u> Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt	\$ 154,665,288	\$ 159,728,796	
B. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Not</u> Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 154,665,288	\$ 159,728,796	
Difference: A - B (Positive Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)	\$ 0	\$ 0	
Administrative Component	\$ 16,897,025	\$ 17,705,215	\$ 17,090,715
Program Component	\$ 149,386,720	\$ 153,868,124	\$ 151,455,238
Capital Component	\$ 27,116,255	\$ 28,326,661	\$ 27,205,711

* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2014/15 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated twice: The Contingent Budget requires that the 2014-15 tax levy be no greater than the previous year levy. Therefore, budget cuts totaling \$4,148,336 would be necessary, resulting in a significant impact to program offerings. Additionally, adjustments for disallowed equipment purchase are included. Non-school groups using district facilities would be required to pay the full cost of operation. Additional reductions to a contingent budget may be determined by the Board of Education.

Under the Budget Proposed
for the 2014-15 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹ \$ 1,585

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2014-2015 by the qualified voters of the White Plains City School District, Westchester County, New York, will be held at Ridgeway School, Highlands Middle School, Church Street School, Battle Hill Fire Station #5, Rochambeau School, and Mamaroneck Avenue School in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 between the hours of 12:00pm and 9:00pm, prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine. For information about the exact location of your voting place, call 422-2000.

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.