



WESTBURY UFSD

2021-2022 BUDGET NEWSLETTER

BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPOSES BUDGET REDUCING THE TAX LEVY

The Westbury School District has been at the forefront of the fight to increase the amount of educational funding we receive from the State (see page 3 story about Foundation Aid). That fight began to pay dividends this year when the State committed to increasing our funding in each of the next three years before levelling off at an historically high level. This year we will be receiving an additional \$7.5 million, 20% more than last year.

The Board of Education has agreed to a three-pronged program for equitably utilizing the increased funding to benefit taxpayers, infrastructure and instruction as follows:

- 1/3 Property Tax Relief
- 1/3 Infrastructure Improvements
- 1/3 Instructional Enhancements

The proposed reduction in next school year’s tax rate is .5 percent. The Board of Education is committed to continuing annual reductions in the tax levy as increasing levels of financial aid are received. As the State does its part, we will do our part.

A portion of the increase in Foundation Aid will be combined with other funding sources to make infrastructure improvements as discussed on page 2. Improvements include ventilation projects at all six of our schools to increase the flow of air to protect our students and staff from the transmission of airborne viruses such as COVID-19.

Plans are still being developed to best utilize the increased funding for instructional enhancements. Investments in state-of-the-art technology are likely to be a significant component of the plan as is purchase of a new reading program. Summer and after-school enrichment programs are also expected to be offered to offset any losses in academic achievement resulting from the closure of schools during the pandemic.

In last year’s budget newsletter, we asked you to write to your elected representatives and advocate for Westbury’s fair share of financial aid. It’s clear now that many of you took our requests to heart, and your advocacy has paid off for our taxpayers as well as our children. Thank you for your support. Please remember to vote on May 18 on the budget and Proposition 2 (see story on page 2). Thank you.

REMEMBER TO VOTE

TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021
6 AM – 9 PM



Drexel Ave School, Dryden St. School,
Middle School and Park Ave. School

Proposition 1 – Budget proposal adds to instructional program while reducing tax levy (see story above).

Proposition 2 – Authorization to spend funds voters previously authorized to be set aside to make capital repairs (see page 2).

Proposition 3 – Election of Board of Education members.

WESTBURY SCHOOL TAXES

Before Foundation Aid Increase:	After Foundation Aid Increase:
TAX INCREASE of 2.96%	TAX DECREASE of .5%
	

Thank you Senator Kaplan and Assemblyman Lavine!

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO UPGRADE FACILITIES WITHOUT INCREASING TAXES

Like any well-managed school district, Westbury sets aside financial resources for future construction and facilities upgrades in a Capital Reserve Fund. This fund allows the District to make strategic upgrades to our buildings, grounds, security systems and technology infrastructure, without having to increase our operating budget or taxes.



Our Capital Reserve was established with voter approval, and, likewise, we need voter approval to use any amount of money from the fund. The Board of Education has determined that now is the appropriate time to use a portion of the District's Capital Reserve Fund, together with \$2.5 million of the increased state aid (see page 1) and other resources maintained by the District, for much needed facility improvements and upgrades.

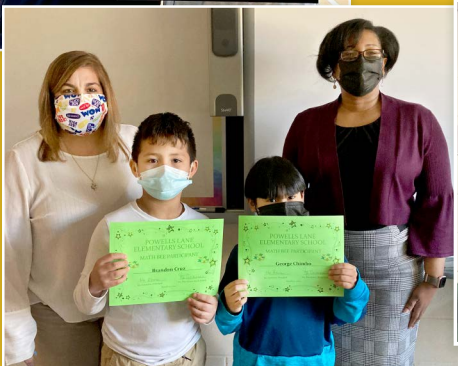
To this end, we are asking the community to vote to authorize the District to spend \$1.4 million from the Capital Reserve Fund (Proposition 2). It is important to note that the **approval of this proposition will not increase your taxes.** We are simply asking for authorization to use

money that voters previously authorized to be set aside for the purpose of upgrading our facilities.

Approval of the budget and Proposition 2 will allow us to embark on a comprehensive program to enhance the learning environment in addition to providing benefits for the greater Westbury community including:

- Installing a generator at the high school that will enable school to continue in the event of a power outage as well as providing shelter for residents, if necessary, during an emergency;
- Upgrading air filtration systems to protect against the transmission of airborne viruses;
- Renovating 60-year-old auditoriums at Park and Drexel Avenue schools to make them future-ready;
- Making improvements to athletic fields to reduce maintenance costs and generate event rental fees;
- Initiating a study to assess the feasibility of establishing an Early Childhood Center.

Once again, **the proposed projects will not increase your taxes**, but your approval of the budget and Proposition 2 will allow your investment in our facilities to be protected and maintained at a high level.





WESTBURY'S FIGHT FOR MORE STATE AID ENDS IN VICTORY

A struggle that has been waging for more than a decade came to a momentous end this past April. The New York State Legislature finally committed to fully fund Foundation Aid, the state's mechanism to fairly distribute money to school districts based on the needs of its students. The legislature's commitment brought a successful climax to Westbury's fight for its rightful share of Foundation Aid, ending a string of years during which we received less than half of what we were owed. The additional funding will provide additional resources for our schools and tax relief for our residents (see cover story).

The legislature's commitment to fully fund Foundation Aid comes as a result of years of advocacy by the District and the Westbury community. One of the original complainants in a lawsuit that led to the creation of Foundation Aid was Westbury resident Chester McGibbon. However, when the state continually defaulted on providing full funding for Foundation Aid, the Westbury School District stepped up to continue the fight McGibbon started by:

- Supporting a demonstration led by 39 Westbury high school students, each representing \$1 million of the \$39 million shortfall in funding, which brought attention from leaders across the state;
- Filing a Complaint with the federal government asserting that New York was in violation of the Civil Rights Act in its inequitable distribution of financial aid;



- Spearheading a massive community letter writing campaign that resulted in almost 1,000 letters being delivered to the governor and key state legislators demanding full funding of Foundation Aid;
- Organizing a rally attended by over 400 people with other underfunded districts to protest the lack of funding; and
- Hosting a tour by state legislators to observe the overcrowding in our schools created by insufficient funding.

The unyielding efforts of the Westbury community has ended in our receiving more financial aid. This year's state budget includes an increase of \$7.5 million. Another \$10 million increase is projected for the following year and an additional \$6.4 the year after that. **We are thankful to Senator Kaplan and Assemblyman Chuck Lavine for supporting our fight.**

2021-2022 EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION

Component Budget by Percentage	Approved Budget 2020-21	Proposed Budget 2021-22
BOARD OF EDUCATION	\$ 190,462	\$ 218,014
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE	\$ 463,318	\$ 480,930
FINANCE & BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	\$ 1,384,884	\$ 1,672,024
STAFF & PERSONNEL	\$ 775,205	\$ 818,485
CENTRAL SERVICES	\$ 10,284,092	\$ 10,971,561
SPECIAL ITEMS	\$ 2,296,491	\$ 1,325,838
ADMINISTRATION & IMPROVEMENT	\$ 4,682,646	\$ 5,926,205
TEACHING - REGULAR SCHOOL, CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, SPECIAL SCHOOLS	\$ 79,164,068	\$ 81,894,691
INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA	\$ 4,278,717	\$ 4,650,011
PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 6,519,185	\$ 7,199,522
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	\$ 10,577,710	\$ 10,615,812
COMMUNITY SERVICES	\$ 5,358	\$ 5,500
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$ 31,604,152	\$ 32,975,607
DEBT SERVICE & INTERFUND TRANSFERS	\$ 4,837,859	\$ 10,023,598
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 157,064,147	\$ 168,777,798
BUDGET TO BUDGET INCREASE	0.74%	7.46%
TOTAL TAX LEVY	\$ 82,628,431	\$ 82,218,241
LEVY INCREASE/(DECREASE)	2.96%	-0.50%

REMEMBER TO VOTE

TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021 • 6 A.M. TO 9 P.M.

Westbury Middle School, Drexel Avenue Elementary School,
Dryden Street Elementary School and Park Avenue Elementary School

Congratulations to the Class of 2021

We would like to recognize the Class of 2021 for their successes during difficult times. We wish you good luck and continued achievement on your journey!

