

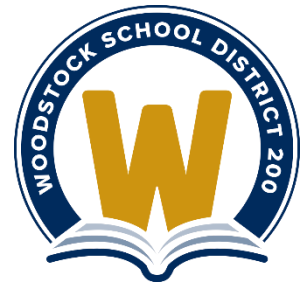
Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

For Immediate Release

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Board approves budget for 2025-2026

The Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 Board of Education on Sept. 23 approved the Budget for the 2025-2026 school year (fiscal year 2026), maintaining a positive combined fund balance in all operating funds while significantly reducing construction debt.

While the budget includes \$124.6 million in revenue and \$144 million in expenditures, the bulk of the difference is represented by the Board of Education's authorization during the 2024 tax levy discussion to use \$14.1 million in reserve funds to pay down the district's debt for the construction of Prairiewood Elementary, Creekside Middle, and Woodstock North High schools

The revenue and expenditure gap is purposeful as the District continues using reserve funds for construction debt and other capital expenditures without raising taxes on homeowners.

The construction debt payment is the second of two large payments the District has planned toward construction debt resulting from a 2006 referendum. After this payment, the debt balance will be reduced to \$66.8 million from \$91.2 million on July 1, 2025. This is a major step toward the District's goal to eliminate the debt.

"The long-term vision and leadership the Board of Education has shown in reducing the District's construction debt without overburdening our taxpayers has been outstanding," said Mike Moan, D-200 Superintendent of Schools.

"In the meantime, we've remained one of the best school districts in the area, and have never sacrificed our high academic standards, ensuring that our students have the best possible educational opportunities."

In addition to the \$14.1 million debt payment, the District is also using fund balances to pay for \$2.9 million in capital projects, mainly for the installation of the solar energy project at Woodstock North High School, which will be largely refunded through grants and eventual energy savings.

The District is also using reserve funds of \$1.6 million to maintain the District's fleet of more than 100 buses without levying additional taxes.

District 200 Chief Financial Officer Julie Dillon said the District ended the 2024 fiscal year with an overall positive balance in the operating fund. The operating fund includes the educational, operations and maintenance, transportation, social security, and working cash.

Local revenue sources, including property taxes, interest earnings, and fees, account for over 65.7%, or \$81.8 million, of District 200's budget. State sources will bring another \$36.7 million into the budget, and an additional \$6.1 million will come from federal sources. In total, the revenue budget has increased 2.3 % compared to the budgeted revenues from last year.

Under the State of Illinois' new funding formula, State revenues are expected to increase slightly. The funding formula takes into account District 200's student population and provides revenue for students based on regular education, special education, poverty, and English language learners.

The greater the student needs, the more funding a district receives. Also included in state revenues are special education and transportation reimbursements, which are based on claims submitted to the State for costs from the prior school year and are projected to remain stable.

Employee salaries and benefits account for more than 68.7% of expenditures, with the balance, approximately 31.3%, allocated to purchased services, supplies, utilities, tuition, equipment, and debt service that directly support the educational programs provided by District 200..

A complete copy of the District 200 budget can be viewed on the district website at www.woodstockschoools.org/departments/finance-business-services under the tab labeled "Budget & Reports."