

West Plains R-VII Board Meeting  
August 26, 2025



**Open Session**

- President Tyree called the meeting to order (Shealia Harper absent)
- The West Plains R-VII School District Board of Education led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Tax Rate Hearing**

- The board voted 6-0 to set the tax rate at \$3.6883 for the school year with all tax collections going into Fund I. This is a decrease from the rate of \$3.7723 from the previous school year. In past years the district had placed 75% into Fund I and 25% into Fund IV. Below is the Tax Rate Notice.

**West Plains R-VII School District  
School District Tax Rate Hearing Notice**

A hearing will be held at 5:30 p.m., August 26, 2025 at West Plains High School Library, West Plains, MO at which time citizens may be heard on the property tax rates proposed to be set by the West Plains R-VII School District, a political subdivision. The tax rates are set to produce the revenues from the property tax required by the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025. Each tax rate is determined by dividing the amount of revenue needed by the current assessed valuation. The result is multiplied by 100 so the tax rate will be expressed in cents per \$100 valuation. (\*Estimates reflect the most accurate information at the time of posting. If necessary, changes can be made by the Board of Education at the Tax Rate Hearing.)

Assessed Valuation (AV) (by categories)	2025-26		2024-25	
Real Estate	\$157,372,450		\$145,703,493	
Personal Property	\$52,923,632		\$51,415,132	
Combined Real Estate & Personal Property	\$210,296,082		\$197,118,625	
Less AV in Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	\$0		\$0	
Adjusted Assessed Valuation on Which Tax Revenue is Received	\$210,296,082		\$197,118,625	
New Construction & Improvements (Included in AV Total above)	\$1,058,330		\$1,041,600	
	Amount of Property Tax Revenues Budgeted (assumes 100% collection)	Proposed Property Tax Rate (per \$100)	Amount of Calculated Property Tax Revenue From Prior Year	Property Tax Rate (per \$100)
<b>The following Tax Rates are Proposed by Fund:</b>				
Incidental	\$7,756,350	\$3.6883	\$5,661,838	\$2.8723
Teacher	\$0	\$0.0000	\$0	\$0.0000
Debt Service	\$0	\$0.0000	\$0	\$0.0000
Capital Projects	\$0	\$0.0000	\$1,774,068	\$0.9000
Total	\$7,756,350	\$3.6883	\$7,435,906	\$3.7723
Total New Revenue (operating funds only):	\$320,445	<b>Board of Education</b>		
New Revenue from New Construction and Improvements:	\$94,672	West Plains R-VII School District		
New Revenue from Reassessment:	\$225,772	<b>Cindy Tyree, President</b>		
Percentage of New Revenue from Reassessment:	3.04%	<b>Erica Jones, Secretary</b>		

**Student/Staff Spotlight**

- New Staff Introductions (CSIP S5) were led by Dr. Amy Ross, Mr. Josh Cotter, Mr. Michael Davis, Mr. Seth Huddleston, Mr. Ryan Smith, Dr. Joby Steel, Mrs. Virginia Uphaus, and Mr. Matt Orchard. The administrators thanked all the new teachers for their attendance at the board meeting.
- High School Staff Climate Team (CSIP S5) led by Mr. Ryan Smith presented on their recent trip to Scottsdale, Arizona for the Solution Tree: Transforming School Culture with Anthony Muhammada Conference. The team thanked the board for giving them the opportunity to attend.

**Consent Agenda - (Board Approved 6-0)**

- Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s) (CSIP S3)
- Approval of Monthly Finance Reports (CSIP S7)

## Year End - Revenues

	Fund I	Fund II	Fund IV	Total
2021-22	\$15,611,502.87	\$15,000,971.02	\$4,851,710.03	\$34,464,283.92
2022-23	\$16,673,755.91	\$14,966,893.86	\$7,740,939.91	\$39,381,589.38
2023-24	\$17,092,361.70	\$15,135,424.80	\$3,414,880.57	\$35,642,667.07
2024-25	\$16,818,757.54	\$15,669,421.66	\$2,957,471.67	\$35,445,650.87

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## Year End - Expenditures

	Fund I	Fund II	Fund IV	Total
2021-22	\$13,613,705.96	\$16,352,161.73	\$2,953,135.53	\$35,801,352.80
2022-23	\$13,908,304.97	\$16,853,084.54	\$6,415,652.48	\$37,177,041.99
2023-24	\$13,429,676.90	\$17,488,875.69	\$5,453,652.11	\$36,372,204.70
2024-25	\$14,560,792.03	\$18,428,979.95	\$3,418,391.55	\$36,408,088.05

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## Year End - Long Term Debt

2 payments per school year  
October 15 - Int only  
April 15 - Int. and Prin

YEAR	Lease Purchases	2017 Bus Lease	Total LT Debt	Interest Rate
2022-23	<del>\$666,432.60</del>	<del>\$112,768.00</del>	<del>\$669,200.60</del>	<del>3.260%/3.000%</del>
2023-24	<del>\$668,270.00</del>	<del>\$112,768.00</del>	<del>\$671,038.00</del>	<del>3.260%/3.000%</del>
2024-25	<del>\$339,620.00</del>	\$0.00	<del>\$339,620.00</del>	<del>3.000%</del>
2025-26	\$338,170.00	\$0.00	\$338,170.00	3.000%
2026-27	\$341,570.00	\$0.00	\$341,570.00	3.000%
2027-28	\$339,670.00	\$0.00	\$339,670.00	3.000%
2028-29	\$337,620.00	\$0.00	\$337,620.00	3.000%
2029-30	\$340,420.00	\$0.00	\$340,420.00	3.000%
2030-31	\$337,920.00	\$0.00	\$337,920.00	3.000%
2031-32	\$340,270.00	\$0.00	\$340,270.00	3.000%
2032-33	\$337,320.00	\$0.00	\$337,320.00	3.000%
2033-34	\$339,220.00	\$0.00	\$339,220.00	3.300%
2034-35	\$340,820.00	\$0.00	\$340,820.00	3.300%
2035-36	\$341,250.00	\$0.00	\$341,250.00	3.300%
2036-37	\$336,350.00	\$0.00	\$336,350.00	3.300%
2038-39	\$340,890.00	\$0.00	\$340,890.00	3.300%

Current Bank  
Interest is  
4.00%

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## Year End - Fund Balances

Year	Fund I	Fund II	Fund III	Fund IV	Total	WP Reserve %
2015-16	\$5,051,024.12	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,300,000.00	\$6,351,024.12	20.44%
2016-17	\$5,225,087.34	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,438,757.40	\$6,663,844.74	20.68%
2017-18	\$6,095,072.53	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,039,928.75	\$7,135,001.28	23.63%
2018-19	\$6,059,398.54	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,070,393.46	\$7,129,792.00	22.25%
2019-20	\$5,372,282.49	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,703,190.88	\$7,075,473.37	19.63%
2020-21	\$9,800,973.29	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,770,731.63	\$12,571,704.92	34.09%
2021-22	\$9,281,502.49	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,953,136.53	\$12,234,639.02	30.97%
2022-23	\$8,990,819.45	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,448,366.96	\$14,439,186.41	29.23%
2023-24	\$9,168,633.85	\$2,366.24	\$0.00	\$4,538,648.69	\$13,709,648.78	29.66%
2024-25	\$7,346,511.31	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,400,624.81	\$12,747,136.12	22.27%
10 Year Average	\$7,239,140.54	\$236.62	\$0.00	\$2,766,377.91	\$10,005,755.08	25.29%

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- Approval Request for employments, resignations, retirements, terminations, transfers, and volunteers of individuals as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools (CSIP S5)
- **New Hires – Board Action Required**

### Certified Positions

- Michelle Henderson - WPHS Science
- Briana Link - Communication Director
- Eli Ernst - WPHS Online Coordinator

### Non-Certified Positions

- Rodney Wood - WPHS Asst. Track Coach
- Luke Hale - Paraprofessional
- Shyanne Judd - Substitute Bus Driver
- Blake Harris - WPHS Asst. Basketball Coach
- Marilyn Pittman - WPES 10 Month Secretary
- Jason Bendon - Full Time Bus Driver

- **Transfers – Board Action Required**

- TBA

- **Volunteers - Board Action Required**

- Justin Brown
- Samuel Cobb
- Bethany Harvey
- Dalton Head
- James Laughary
- Rebecca Pruett
- Jeffrey Rylance
- Cole Shipley
- Romona Talburt

- Timothy Temple
- Alanna Temple
- David Filitruate
- Jerry Meany

- **Resignations – Board Action Required**

- Bridget Larsen - WPHS Online Coordinator/Mathematics Teacher
- Taylor Moeder - Paraprofessional
- Dustin Jennings - District Bus Driver
- Betty Brown - Custodian (9/15/25)

- **Retirements - Board Action Required**

- Zoe Clinton - District ESL Teacher (EOY)

- **Terminations - Board Action Required**

- Michael Smith - Custodian

- Approval of Program Evaluation(s) (CSIP S5)
- Approval of CSIP Update(s) on “Portrait of a Zizzer” (CSIP S7)
- Reapprove Board Policy BBFA (CSIP S7)
- Approval of Howell County Sheriff’s Department School Resource Officer MOU (CSIP S1)
- Approval of West Plains Police Department School Resource Officer MOU (CSIP S1)
- Approval of District Wellness Plan (CSIP S1)
- Approval of OZH SWAT Agreement (CSIP S1)

### **Regular Agenda**

- The monthly bills were paid and approved. (CSIP S7)
  - The board approved 6-0
- Payment of Buro Invoice (CSIP S7)
  - The board approved 5-0-1 (RG abstained)

### **New Business**

- Approval of Surplus Property Bid (CSIP S7) was presented by Mr. Orchard. (Board Approved 6-0)
- Declaration of Surplus Property (CSIP S7) was presented by Mr. Orchard. (Board Approved 6-0)
- Approval of Board Policies (CSIP S5) was presented by Dr. Davis. (Board Approved 6-0)
  - Policy BBBA-1 Board Member Qualifications
  - Policy IGBI Home Schooling and Other Educational Options
  - Policy IGCD Virtual Courses
  - Policy IGCD Full-Time MOCAP Virtual Courses
  - Policy IGD District Sponsored Extra-Curricular Activities and Groups
  - Policy IGDA Resident Participant Student Involvement in Activities and Events

- Policy JFCD Student Use of Personal Communication Devices (CSIP S5)
- Administrative Procedure EGAA-AP Copyright Compliance
- Administrative Procedure GBEC-AP Criminal Background Checks
- Administrative Procedure IGBB-AP Programs for Gifted Students
- Administrative Procedure KK-AP Visitors to District Property and Events
- Policy EGAA Copyright Compliance
- Policy GBE Staff Health and Safety
- Policy IGBB Programs For Gifted Students
- Policy KB Public Information Program
- Policy KK Visitors to District Property and Events

### Updates & Reports to the Board

- Student School Board Member Report (CSIP S5) was presented by McKrae Brewer by video (due to a softball game conflict). Miss Brewer introduced herself and gave a few possible ideas to get student feedback on the phone policy and any issues the school board would like for her to coordinate through google forms, etc.
- Administrative Reports (CSIP S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, & S9)
  - Special Education and Federal Programs
    - Dr. Ross provided updates on federal programs, Special Education, and ESEA. She reported that Parents as Teachers already has seven families scheduled. She also shared that billing for the Local Tax Effort for publicly placed students through MSBA has been finalized for the 2024–2025 school year. This applies to children admitted to programs or facilities of the Department of Mental Health or the Children’s Division. Additionally, CPI Training was conducted during the week teachers and staff returned. The Special Olympics program had a successful first week with student involvement, and three students have applied so far. The goal is to host a basketball game at the end of the year. For August, the CSIP update includes new signage throughout the district to align with the newly adopted Portrait of a Zizzer and CSIP.
  - Communications
    - Mrs. Link shared progress on reorganizing district social media accounts and developing new social media forms. She announced the relaunch of the “Teacher Proud and Zizzer Champion” poll and introduced a new weekly series called *What’s a Zizzer Wednesday!* The goal is to give the community an inside look at what happens daily at West Plains schools.
  - West Plains Middle School
    - Dr. Steele highlighted the district’s theme for the year, “Be kind, look behind.” He reflected on the graduation speech in which “Be Kind” was referenced 13

times by Dr. Davis. He also reported that achievement scores have gone up across the board and how proud he was of the students and staff.

- SoMoTech
  - Dr. Cotter shared that students in the summer evening class successfully completed level two and have now advanced to level three. Lineman students participated in internships during July and are now spread across the country working in the field. The adult evening welding program has around 21 students enrolled. He also noted that on the first Thursday of school, all area high school students were present and adjusting well to the new phone policy.
- Facilities/Human Resources
  - Mr. Orchard expressed appreciation for how smoothly the first week of school went, particularly regarding student release times and bus transportation. He invited the board to tour the school following the meeting. He praised the maintenance crew and custodial department for their dedication to the district. He also announced that the annual activity shooting training is scheduled for September 2. “Stop the Bleed” training will continue this year and will be scheduled soon. All seven SRO contracts have been filled through the West Plains Police Department and the Howell County Sheriff’s Department. There are currently four full-time case managers in the building, each working with approximately 25–30 students. Additionally, the Ozarks Health Care Mobile Mammogram Bus will be available to staff members on September 2.
- Zizzer Pride Academy
  - Mr. Davis reported that he attended a conference at the Lake of the Ozarks where he gained valuable classroom strategies, particularly for building relationships with students. He stated that students are staying busy, completing forms, and many are on track to graduate. He expressed gratitude to the administrative team for their support and guidance.
- West Plains High School
  - Mr. Smith highlighted that summer school enrollment increased to around 400 students. He also shared that the faculty pool party was a success and served as strong team-building ahead of the school year. Zizzer Day for freshmen went smoothly, and he thanked the Student Council for their help. He also celebrated the FFA Trap Shooting Team’s third consecutive Grand National Championship title. Additionally, he confirmed that the district’s No Cell Phone Policy continues to be implemented successfully without major issues.

- South Fork Elementary School
  - Dr. Huddleston shared his excitement about the new teachers and praised the faculty for their positive energy. He emphasized the year's motto, "Positivity Wins," reminding staff that even when challenges arise, the focus will remain on staying positive. Enrollment is currently at 194 students.
- Teaching and Learning
  - Dr. Young reported that New Teacher Orientation went well and introduced 35 new teachers to the district. Of these, 15 are first-year teachers, six are returning to the district, and seven transitioned from paraprofessionals to teaching roles. She also provided curriculum updates, including the district's adoption of Progress Learning for test prep, EOC preparation, and consistent standard tracking. She noted changes in math instruction, specifically the discontinuation of Algebra I for eighth graders, which will now be offered as Honors Math. Assessment results showed growth in 16 out of 19 categories. Celebrations were recently held across the district to recognize test score improvements. Progress Learning will also be used weekly in PLCs to help monitor and track student performance.
- West Plains Elementary School
  - Mrs. Uphaus expressed appreciation for the success of elementary summer school, which had 375 students enrolled. Teachers managed activities for new kindergarteners, including big field trips, and implemented creative strategies such as using glowsticks to keep track of students. She reported that the first week of school went smoothly, with extra attention on transportation and dismissal plans. This year, the school has three full-day preschool classes, which has shifted pickup routines. Planning for transportation began in June, and the district received strong support from staff, bus drivers, and secretaries. Mrs. Uphaus expressed excitement about assessment scores and shared that staff celebrated with a themed fiesta. The focus moving forward will be on standard mastery, especially for third and fourth graders.
- Superintendent's Report
  - The audit was conducted on August 4–8. It resulted in no findings. Board President Cindy Tyree informed the board that the auditor had spoken with her and that the district "was in very good financial shape and they should be very proud of how things were going".
  - Dr. Davis informed the board that the Fund IV has a balance large enough to pay off the lease purchase if the need ever arose.
  - He also reminded the board that during the 2024-25 school year, that some non-budgeted expenses occurred including new lights at the Zizzer Stadium

and starting the WPES roof earlier than expected. Last year marked the first use of the “Cash Accounting Method” of accounting. The auditor also provided Dr. Davis with some guidance for P-Card purchase reviews. He mentioned the possibility of card readers for concession stands and gates; but said this would be in the future and not this current school year.

- Enrollment numbers were shared by Dr. Davis. Currently there are 2,490 students excluding preschool, a decrease of 14 from this time last year. He said this could fluctuate 10 kids a day for the next two weeks but he expected the number to settle after Labor Day.
- Dr. Davis hosted a Legal Workshop on August 7 for school administrators. A total of 109 administrators participated alongside four attorneys, including R-VII’s attorney Tom Mickes. Dr. Davis announced a \$1,000 donation to Bridges program was made from attorney Tom Mickes for appreciation to the district for hosting the event. Plans are in the making for a larger event next school year.
- Lastly, Dr. Davis announced that former employee Greg Simpkins will be inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame on October 15.

#### **Tour of Facilities**

- The tour of the facilities was given by Mr. Matthew Orchard and the bus was driven by Dr. Davis.

#### **Adjournment**

- Adjournment from Open Session
  - Next Meeting - September 16, 2025