

Wadsworth City Schools
Fiscal Year 2026 – Four-Year Projection
February 2026
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first two + pages of this report comprise the Executive Summary, which presents an overview of our organization’s projected performance for the next four years. In this document, we outline key assumptions and highlight changes to the financial forecast. For a complete overview of the Forecast, readers are encouraged to read the Assumptions that follow the Executive Summary.

Property Tax Reform

- **Medina County underwent a full property reappraisal in Tax Year (TY) 2025**, which resulted in a 19.25% increase (\$205,660,450) in the assessed valuation.
- The reappraisal resulted in the district's effective operating millage reducing from 28.413 mills to 24.122 mills, a total reduction of 4.29 mills. Under Ohio’s House Bill 920 provisions, voted levy revenue growth is limited from inflationary increases in valuation.
- Property tax reform continues to be at the forefront in Columbus and locally in Medina County. In December, the Governor signed four property tax reform bills. Two of these pertain to the 20-mill floor and currently do not affect Wadsworth Schools. A third bill, HB 335, limits the growth on inside mileage to a GPD deflator calculation. Fortunately, the bill will not impact the 2025 reappraisal for Medina County, but the 2028 Triennial update will be limited, and our 5.1 inside mills will be rolled back limiting revenue growth on inside mills.
- The need for property tax relief is a combination of thirty-plus years of policy changes that have shifted the burden of education costs from the State and Business community to the local property owner. Moving from 46% of the education cost by local property owners in 1991 to 67.5% in 2025. This, combined with skyrocketing home values, has created an anti-property-tax mentality in Ohio.
- Locally, the Medina County Commissioners passed the Homestead Piggyback exemption in 2025, which was allowed under HB 96, providing reimbursement credits to select Medina County residents. This legislation will reduce property tax collections in Wadsworth CSD by \$555,000 in CY 2026. This legislation is implemented into the current forecast for CY 2026 ONLY.

State Aid

- **State Aid:** FY 2026 New Biennial budget
 - Due to declining enrollment, the district remains on the guarantee, and therefore, projected state aid is stagnant. Future state aid assumes the guarantee remains a part of state funding.
 - HB 96 - 2026-2027 Biennial Budget: Public Education weathered the storm as it relates to HB 96, with the Governor vetoing many of the property tax reform initiatives included in the bill from the legislature.

Since signed by the Governor, two of the vetoes have been overridden by the legislature. Fortunately, neither of the overrides impacts the Wadsworth City School District.

- The budget provided little relief to the Wadsworth City Schools. Projections indicate that the district will receive approximately \$250,000 in additional state aid over the two-year biennium, as the district continues to be a guaranteed school district.
- **Interest Income:** Interest rates remained high; however, the district has a declining cash balance available for investments. The major source of declining local revenue (line 1.060) is due to a decline in interest income. This trend continues throughout the forecast.
- **Federal Grants:**
 - FY 2026: Projected \$2.2M federal grants.
 - Future federal funds could be at risk
- **Enrollment:**
 - The district's enrollment continues to decline, impacting state aid and staffing decisions.
- **Staffing:**
 - – Professional Teaching Staff reductions due to declining enrollment (see line 3.010 for additional detail)
 - FY 2027 new WESPA/WEA contracts (1 year)
- **Healthcare Expenses:**
 - FY 2026 15.56% healthcare premium increase.
 - Projected between 11 and 15% increases in the next three years.
 - Last 24 months loss ratio of 118%
 - Healthcare claims continue to outpace inflation and are a critical part of our financial issues.
- **Deficit Spending:**
 - **The district began deficit spending in FY 2024. This is projected to continue in all years of the forecast.**
 - **The forecast projects a negative cash balance during FY 2028.**

Other:

Property Taxes: Historical Property Taxes Increases

FY 2020: 3.05%	FY 2023: 12.54% (Levy)
FY 2021: 2.01%	FY 2024: 0.93%
FY 2022: 15.44% (Levy)	FY 2025 2.41%

● Projected:

<u>Fiscal Yr.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$ Increase</u>
○ FY 2026	1.50%	\$394,193 (reappraisal yr. less homestead piggyback)
○ FY 2027	2.90%	\$902,097 (reappraisal yr. less Homestead piggyback)
○ FY 2028	2.50%	\$692,758 (homestead Piggyback removed)
○ FY 2029	2.90%	\$818,721 (tri update/homestead piggyback removed)

ASSUMPTIONS

Wadsworth City Schools
Fiscal Year 2026 - Four-Year Projection
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Overview

This financial report is published by the Treasurer of the Wadsworth City School District in good faith and within the scope of his employment. The forecast and the underlying assumptions will be presented to the Wadsworth City Board of Education at its Regular Meeting on February 9, 2026.

The Forecast and Assumptions are intended to provide the Board of Education and the Wadsworth Community with information about the district's current financial status and its projected future. The information presented in the Four-Year Projection is supported by the underlying assumptions. The Board and Community are encouraged to read and understand the supporting assumptions.

The Forecast is based on the first year of HB 96 (the biennial budget), passed by the legislature in June 2025. HB 96 continues the phase-in of the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP). However, as part of the legislation, the input factors to the formula were NOT updated and still reflect FY 2022 levels. **Therefore, in fiscal years 2026 and 2027, the state continues to fund public education at FY 2022 costs.** The Fair Schools Funding Plan, like previous formulas, incorporates new caps and guarantees. See the Unrestricted Aid Section for more information on the 2025-2027 Biennial Budget and State Aid.

This Forecast includes the General Fund only. Information related to all other district funds can be found in the Certificate of Revenue and the Annual Appropriations Resolution. This fiscal year, the General Fund is projected to account for 76.1% of all expenditures.

As with any projection, accuracy diminishes the further one speculates into the future. There are two State Biennial Budgets within the four years of this projection.

General Fund Revenue

1.010 Property Tax (Real Estate)

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
General Property Tax (Real Estate)	\$26,902,175	\$27,683,838	\$28,376,596	\$29,195,317

Real estate taxes account for 44.5% of our projected revenue (last year = 44.9%) in the General Fund. The assessed valuation is a core component of real estate taxes and a crucial part of the State funding formula for local capacity. Medina County experienced a reappraisal in 2025, and 2027 will be a triennial update year. The reappraisal will impact tax collections for FY 26 and 27 which resulted in a 19.5% increase in assessed valuation and a rollback of 4.29 operating mills, decreasing Wadsworth Schools' operating effective millage rate from 28.413 to 24.122. Since Wadsworth City Schools are not at the 20-mill floor, our effective millage rates are rolled back, resulting in no increase in revenue from reappraisal on voted levies.

Wadsworth City Schools Assessed Valuation (AV) historical increases are:

<u>% increase</u>	<u>Tax Year</u>	<u>Tax Collection Year</u>
1.6%	2015	2016
12.7%	2016	2017
1.47%	2017	2018
4.4%	2018	2019
15.4%	2019	2020
0.79%	2020	2021
0.12%	2021	2022
20.5%	2022	2023
0.70%	2023	2024
1.78%	2024	2025
19.5%	2025	2026

The large increase in TY 2022 AV is due to the triennial update and resulted in a total of 5.84 operating mills rolled back due to HB 920 reduction factors. The 2025 reappraisal resulted in an additional rollback of 4.23 operating mills. This represents a loss of over \$5.47 million in tax revenue due to HB 920. In other words, if Wadsworth was on the 20-mill floor our revenue would increase by \$5.47M. HB 920 rolls back (or reduces) the effective (or collected) millage on voted levies. Thus, the district receives no additional revenue or incurs no loss due to reappraisal of voted levies. The district will receive additional revenue from the inside millage and new construction.

Because many districts across the state are at or near the 20-mill floor, the state legislature passed four bills addressing property tax reform. **See the discussion related to property tax reform in the executive summary at the beginning of this report.** As a State, we are in a similar position to 1976, when HB 920 went into effect; property tax reform remains at the forefront of conversations in Ohio. Many of these bills will affect future property tax collections for the Wadsworth City Schools. HB 335 will impact inside mileage by limiting property value growth to a GDP deflator calculation, thereby rolling back inside mills once protected by the Constitution.

In addition, the Medina County Commissioners recently passed the homestead piggyback exemption for eligible Medina County property owners. The Homestead expansion is projected to result in a \$555,000 annual reduction in property tax income for Wadsworth City Schools. This has been implemented into the forecast for CY 2026, which impacts FY 2026 and 2027.

Key Components of line 1.010 of the Forecast are:

- FY 2026 – First-1/2 property tax collections are down 1.6% over the same period last year.
- 1.5% increase projected for FY 2026 (
 - Reappraisal impacts 2nd half collections + Homestead Piggyback
- 2.90% increase projected for FY 2027
 - Reappraisal impacts 1st half collections + Homestead Piggyback
- 2.50% increase projected for FY 2028
 - Elimination of Homestead Piggyback
- 2.90% increase projected for FY 2029
 - Elimination of Homestead Piggyback + Tri-Update

TIFF Proposal: The City of Wadsworth is considering a TIFF for a residential development on the west side of Hartman Rd north of Interstate 76. The current proposed TIFF would be 75% 10-year traditional TIF impacting the Wadsworth Schools, as we would see very little additional revenue from this development for the first 10 years.

1. The TIFF has not been approved
2. The associated cost of additional students served by this development is also not included in the forecast and could potentially offset a portion of the additional revenue.

1.020 Tangible Personal Property Tax and Public Utility Personal Property

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Tangible Personal Property Tax	8,220,601	8,053,537	8,134,073	8,215,413

The 2009 Biennial Budget eliminated the Tangible Personal Property (TPP) tax on the business community, thus beginning the phase-out of a major source of local revenue for school districts throughout the State of Ohio (Note: this is one of the “policy” decisions from the state addressed in the executive summary related to property tax reform). In FY 2012, the Wadsworth City Schools' local TPP revenue was eliminated, but we continued to receive TPP reimbursements from the State through FY 2016. The district continues to receive Public Utility Personal Property (PUPP) taxes.

The Nexus gas transmission pipeline, completed in **Medina County in 2018**, first appeared on the **2019 tax duplicate**, resulting in a **PUPP valuation increase of over \$24 million for Calendar Year (CY) 2019**, paid in **Fiscal Year (FY) 2020**. This substantial increase was primarily attributed to the Nexus project.

However, Nexus filed several **valuation appeals**, resulting in delays in full tax payments for CYs 2019 and 2020. These retroactive payments were received only in FY 2025, resulting in a **noticeable 8.8% increase** in PUPP revenue that year.

- **CY 2021 taxes** were paid on time in **CY 2021**.
- **CYs 2019 and 2020 payments** were retroactively made in **FY 2025**.
- **CYs 2022 and 2023 payments** were made in the **second half of CY 2025**, which corresponds to the **first half of FY 2026**.

These **retroactive payments** have been incorporated into the current forecast.

Outlook: FY 2027–FY 2029

The forecast projects a decline in PUPP collections for FYs 2027 through 2029. This anticipated drop is not due to a decrease in utility value, but rather because the recent fiscal years (FYs 2025 and 2026) included inflated collections from retroactive payments. As these one-time adjustments fall off, the net year-over-year collections are expected to normalize or decline slightly.

Key Components of line 1.020 of the Forecast are:

- Nexus has made all its retroactive payments:
 - FY 2024 = \$350,776.75
 - FY 2025 = \$446,065.33
- 2.00% decrease projected in FY 2027 (Reappraisal/ Nexus retro payments)
- 1.00% in FYs 2028 and 2029

1.035 Unrestricted Grants in Aid (State Aid)

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Unrestricted State Grants-in-Aid	17,893,963	17,892,016	17,897,617	17,903,330

History:

Prior to the 2021-22 school year, the State funding formula was called the School Foundation Payment Report (SFPR). The formula followed the basic premise of enrollment (known as ADM) multiplied by Basic Aid (\$6,020) multiplied by the State Share Index. Based on the output of the formula, districts were either on the guarantee, formula or capped.

- **Guarantee** - If your formula aid was less than what you received in FY 2019, you were guaranteed to receive at least your FY 2019 funding.
- **Capped** - If your formula amount was higher than a percentage determined by the legislature, then you were capped at that amount.
- **Formula** - If you fell in between and were funded at the formula amount, you were considered a “Formula District”.

Present: FY 2026 and 2027 Biennial Budget (HB 96)

HB 96, the current Biennial budget, continues the phase-in of the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP) that began with HB 110 (the 2021-23 Biennial budget). Instead of funding a basic aid amount, as previous funding formulas did, the FSFP calculates a Base Cost unique to each district. The Base Cost is determined based on four funding areas. These are Direct Classroom Instruction (DCI), Instruction and Student Services (ISS), Building Leadership and Operations (BLO), and District Leadership and Accountability (DLA). An example of DCI is regular classroom teachers. The chart below demonstrates one of the calculations for funding regular education teachers:

Base Cost:

<u>Grade level</u>	<u># of Students / Teachers for funding</u>
K	20
1-3	23
4-8	25
9-12	27
Career Tech	18

As an example, a district with 110 kindergarten students would receive funding for 5.5 teachers at \$68,022 + 16% for benefits and \$13,894 for health care insurance per teacher. Therefore, under the formula, this district would receive \$510,397.36 to fund regular education teachers for kindergarten. This is just one example of DCI. A similar formula is used for the other components of DCI, as well as ISS, BLO, and DLA. The district is not required to spend \$510,397.36 on kindergarten. This is simply their funding amount when combined with all the other components of the formula that develop the district’s unique base cost.

However, the key component of the FSFP is the input factors, or the amounts associated with the cost of educating a student in Ohio. HB 96 did NOT update the input factors; they remain at FY 2022 levels. Therefore, the state continues to fund public education at FY 2022 amounts, not accounting for any inflationary cost over the past four years.

Local Capacity: There is still a local capacity (formerly known as the State Share Index) component to the FSFP. The FSFP assumes local funds are raised and are accounted for in the new formula. To say it another way, a district will not receive the full \$510,397 in the example above for kindergarten. A percentage of the funding is assumed to be raised locally based on the components listed below. The Local Capacity, as determined by the components listed below, will develop a percentage of the Base Cost that a district receives. This is like the State Share Index in the previous formula, but it removes the fluid comparison to other districts that made the State Share Index inadequate:

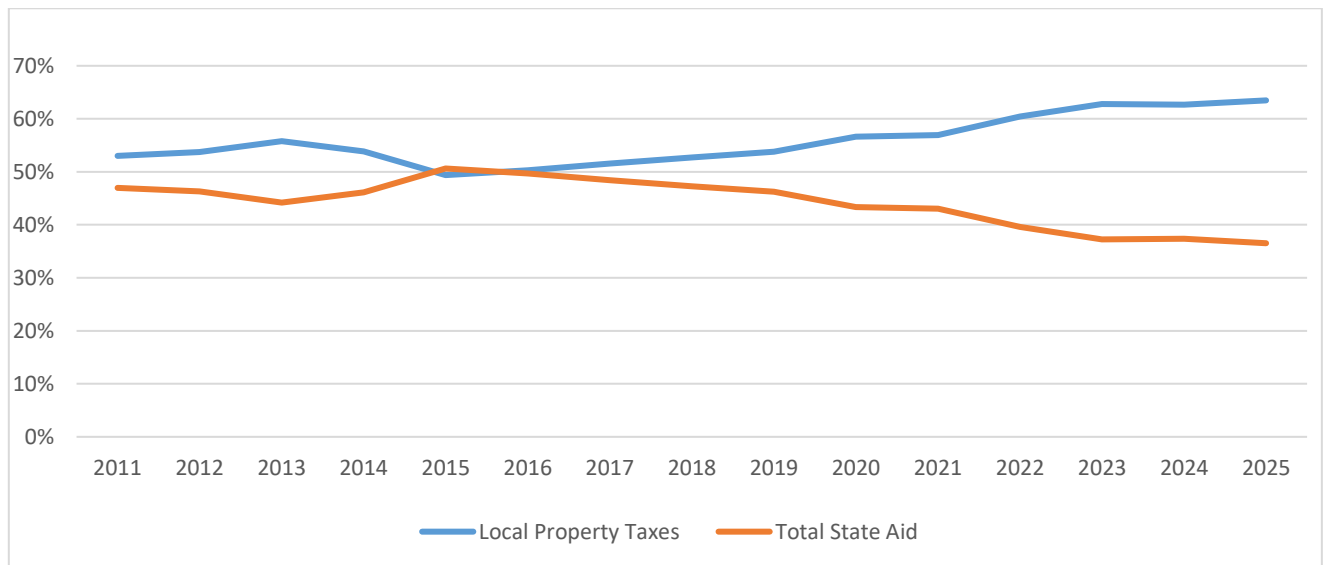
- Total Assessed Valuation per pupil (60%)
- Median Adjusted Gross Income per pupil (20%)
- Weighted Adjusted Gross Income per pupil (20%)

Under the previous funding formula, Wadsworth’s State Share Index (SSI) was about 48%, meaning we received 48% of the **\$6,020** basic aid amount per student or **\$2,890**.

Under the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP), Wadsworth’s local capacity as of October 2025 is **\$5,834**. Therefore, while the base cost of **\$8,213** is significantly greater than the basic aid amount of \$6,020, our local share is much higher (state share is less), and we are projected to receive **\$2,379** per student in FY 2026 (this is \$482 less than FY 2025). HOW? The local capacity increased with inflation (local share), but the state maintained the FY 2022 input factors, so the state's costs did not rise, resulting in lower per-pupil funding, which pushed the Wadsworth School even further onto the guarantee.

State Aid continues to put a strain on the Wadsworth City Schools' total revenue. In 2014, 50% of the district revenue came from State Aid, and 50% came from Local Sources. In FY 2025, that changed to 37% State Aid and 63% Local. In FY 2015, the district received \$19M in State aid. In FY 2025, the district received \$19.4M. A 2% increase over 10 years.

The chart below demonstrates the shift over the past ten years away from State Aid to Local Property Taxes.



HOWEVER... Due to declining enrollment, the district is guaranteed and will receive similar funding for unrestricted grants-in-aid for the current fiscal year as we did in FY 2024, despite changes in base cost and local capacity. In essence, as long as we remain on the guarantee (and the guarantee remains part of the formula), the base cost, local capacity, and our enrollment don't matter.

Categorical Funding: The FSFP also includes categorical funding not included in the base costs. These include Special Education, Career Tech, ELL, Gifted, Disadvantaged Pupils, Targeted Assistance, Transportation, and Preschool. Categorical funding is restricted in nature.

Student Count: The other major change in the FSFP is the method used to count students. In previous funding formulas, a student was counted based on the district of residence, not the district of attendance. For example, a Wadsworth resident student attended a public charter school; the student was first counted in Wadsworth. Then we would receive our State Share of funding for that student. We were then charged "tuition" for that student to attend the public charter school. In the case of Wadsworth, this resulted in a net loss of about \$3,000 per student who attended a charter school. Under the FSFP, students are counted in the district of attendance. Therefore, a Wadsworth resident attending a public charter school will no longer be included in our count, saving the district nearly \$1 million in tuition costs but also reducing our state aid. See the purchased services for additional information on this change.

House Bill 96: The 2025-27 Biennial Budget included three important components:

- 1) The final phase-in of the FSFP
- 2) The input factors for the formula (DCI, ISS, BLO, and DLA) remain at FY 2022 levels.
- 3) The continuance of the guarantee

a. The forecast assumes the guarantee will continue in future years as enrollment declines. If the guarantee is removed from the formula in future years, the district's forecast will change dramatically.

Casino Funding: The law mandates that casinos pay a 34% tax rate, and 33% of the tax is earmarked for school districts in Ohio to be distributed on a per-student basis. The law also implies that this money goes to education outside the funding formula and should not be part of the FSFP formula, but is included on line 1.035.

- Historical Casino Tax Collections

FY 2022 = \$278,013	FY 2024 = \$289,093
FY 2023 = \$284,415	FY 2025 = \$274,580

Over \$1.13M in revenue is projected over the life of the Forecast from the Ohio Casino Tax.

1.040 Restricted State Grants in Aid

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Restricted State Grants-in-Aid	1,901,775	1,904,732	1,913,562	1,922,481

The Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP) added components to Restricted State Aid. Historically, restricted State Aid was primarily used for career technical education and special education related to Threshold Costs (previously known as catastrophic cost) reimbursements. With the implementation of the FSFP, restricted aid is expanded beyond Career Tech and Threshold costs to include

disadvantaged pupil impact aid (DPIA) and student wellness and success funds (SWSF). Under the SFPR, SWSF was accounted for outside of the General Fund and Four-Year Forecast in fund 467. In the FSFP, SWSF funds are part of the General Fund and are included in the Four-Year Forecast. The district is required to track and demonstrate that these funds are spent properly. Additionally, categorical funding (restricted aid) for career and technical education and special education is calculated using weights rather than dollar amounts. Under the SFPR, these categories were funded using a flat dollar amount as determined by the legislation during the budget process. Using weights will allow the amount of funds growing toward these restricted categories to increase naturally as the Base Cost (see discussion in Unrestricted State Aid) increases.

The second primary source of revenue is Threshold Cost reimbursements for Special Education students. Threshold Costs are reimbursements from ODEW for qualifying special needs students, for whom the district provides services above a certain price point, depending on their disability.

- In fiscal years 2026-2029, the Forecast is not projecting an increase in Threshold Cost reimbursements. Under the FSFP, the amount of funding allocated to special education for every district is reduced by 10% to fund Threshold Cost reimbursements. Prior to the FSFP, districts applied for Threshold Costs reimbursements to generate additional funds for special education.

FY 2024

- **District Deduction (10% Share):** \$170,808
- **State Reimbursement Received:** \$669,079
- **Return on Deduction:** 390% more

FY 2025

- **District Deduction (10% Share):** \$163,362
- **State Reimbursement Received:** \$518,143
- **Return on Deduction:** 317% more than the district’s share

In both fiscal years, the district received **significantly more in reimbursements** than it paid through Threshold Cost deductions. This highlights the exceptional work the Threshold Cost team, led by Christine Chase, does to maximize every eligible reimbursement to the district.

1.050 State Reimbursement for Property Tax Credits

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
State Reimbursement for Property Tax Credits	2,644,715	2,644,715	2,644,715	2,644,715

Homestead Exemption: The 10% and 2.5% rollback of property taxes changed with the 2009/2010 Biennial Budget. The State expanded eligibility for this credit for seniors. In addition, HB 59 (2014-15) eliminated this reimbursement on future levies. All levies, except the 2021 levy, continue to receive this reimbursement.

- The Forecast projects flat funding for Homestead Exemption for each year.
- **The Medina County Commissioners increased this tax credit. However, unlike the initial credit, the expended credit does not include a hold harmless reimbursement from the state. Current legislation allows the County Commissioners to piggyback on this credit without reimbursement to the local government agencies.**

1.060 All Other Revenues (Local Income)

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
All Other Revenues	3,522,119	2,735,216	2,573,443	2,611,803

There are six primary revenue sources for All Other Revenues:

1. Tuition (open-enrollment, special education, preschool, and summer school)
2. Extracurricular activities assessment
3. Student-paid fees and fines
4. Investment income
5. Medicaid reimbursements
6. Revenue Sharing Agreements with the City of Wadsworth related to Tax Abatements

With the implementation of the FSFP and the change in the way students are counted (district of attendance vs. district of residence), the calculation for open-enrolled students is also impacted. No longer will school districts receive tuition payments for incoming open-enrolled students, and we will no longer pay tuition for students leaving their district through open enrollment. Open-enrollment students are now counted in our base costs.

The activity assessment fee is projected to be stable over the life of the Forecast. There are currently no plans to increase or eliminate the activity assessment fee.

Investment income has played a significant role in our financial forecast in recent years, driven by high interest rates and healthy fund balances. Interest rates remained higher than projected this past year, resulting in over \$1M in interest income. However, we anticipate a decline in investment income starting in FY 2027, with a continued decrease in the following years. This decrease is due to the Federal Reserve’s recent rate cuts and a reduction in fund balances resulting from projected deficit spending. To maximize investment returns, the district partners with Fifth Third Securities, utilizing a laddering strategy to ensure investments mature as needed to support the district’s ongoing financial requirements.

Medicaid reimbursements for FY 2025 were less than projected. The forecast projects these reimbursements to return to normal levels in FY 2026.

2.50 Advances – In

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Advances-In	2,899,762	200,000	200,000	200,000

Advances in (FY 2026) are the result of advances out to both federal grants and the 004-construction fund. While not included in the forecast, we do anticipate the need to advance money to the construction fund as well as federal grants at year-end.

2.060 Other Financing Sources

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
All Other Financing Sources	51,000	55,000	55,000	55,000

Other sources include the Sale of District Assets and Refunds of Prior Year Expenditures. Historically, the primary funding sources are:

- Ohio BWC rebates
- Medina County Auditor’s Office refund of Auditor fees
- Refund of prior year expenses from the Medina County ESC

The district is not projecting rebates or refunds from BWC or the County Auditor’s office during the life of the Forecast. With the change in leadership in the County Auditor’s office, it is unknown if the new auditor will issue similar refunds. Therefore, the projects in the category have been dramatically reduced from previous years.

2.080 Revenue Summary

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources	64,036,110	61,169,054	61,795,006	62,748,059

The Forecast projects an increase in FY 2026 total revenue (less advances) of \$2 million. This change is primarily driven by the increase in property tax (reappraisal on inside millage) and PUPP tax collections (Nexus retroactive payments) for FY 2026. In addition, the decrease in total revenue from FY 2026 to 2027 is primarily due to the large advance in FY 2026, and the decline in interest income.

General Fund Expenditures

3.010 Salaries and Wages

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Personal Services	38,701,459	39,110,765	40,139,188	41,744,756

Salaries and wages are projected to increase by 2.2% over FY 2025 (as compared to a 6.9% increase for the same period last year).

- The 2025-26 salaries and benefits are projected to be 81.4% of General Fund Expenditures.
- **WEA and WESPA negotiated agreements:**
 - The district and the Wadsworth Education Association (WEA) are in the final year of a three-year contract that continues through June 30, 2026. The Agreement includes step increases for eligible employees and a base increase in each year of the contract. In addition, employees pay 11% of the cost of health care insurance each year of the contract.
 - The district and the Wadsworth Education Support Personnel Association (WESPA) are also in the final year of a three-year contract that continues through June 30, 2026. The WESPA Agreement includes step increases for eligible employees and a base increase in each year of the contract. In addition, employees will pay 6% / 9% (for family or single coverage, respectively) of the cost of healthcare insurance.
 - With both contracts expiring at the end of the current fiscal year and based on the current forecast, the district can only certify a **one-year** contract with both WESPA and WEA.

- The district’s 2025-26 teaching staff consists of 289 full-time and 8 part-time teaching professionals. We have 11 licensed professionals working as tutors in the district (2.5 tutors are funded with grant money and are not part of this Forecast), 24 Licensed Administrators, and 14 Exempt Salaried employees (3 of the exempt salaried employees are not paid by the General Fund). In addition, the district has four compact employees.
- The district's total professional staffing decreased for the 2025-26 school year. There were eight teaching positions that remained unfilled due to retirements. However, the district added six teaching positions at the Grizzly Academy, resulting in a net decrease of two staff members.

The staffing projections below account for the district's proactive reduction of teaching staff as enrollment continues to decline. The following staffing changes are accounted for:

- **Fiscal Year 2026: Net decrease in staff = -2**
 - Eight open positions were not replaced for the 2025-26 school year:
 - One section at the elementary level (-1 FTE)
 - Middle School Science/Math Teacher (-1 FTE)
 - Middle School Language Arts Teacher (-1 FTE)
 - High School Language Arts Teacher (-2 FTE)
 - High School Math Teacher (-1 FTE)
 - High School Social Studies Teacher (-1 FTE)
 - High School Science Teacher (-1 FTE)
 - Six new positions were added related to the expansion of the Grizzly Academy. (+6 FTE)
- **Fiscal Years 2027 and 2028:**
 - The Forecast includes an allowance for step and wage increases each year.
 - The forecast incorporates a planned reduction in professional staff, aligned with the anticipated decline in our student enrollment.

- 2026-2027 reduction of four full-time teaching staff. **In addition, an additional \$500,000 in employee cost REDUCTIONS were incorporated into the Feb. 2026** forecast to offset the homestead piggyback reduction.
- 2027-2028 reduction of three additional full-time teaching staff

- **Staffing % increases in the current forecast:**

FY 2025: 6.8% * ESSER	FY 2027: 1.1% (-4 staff + \$500K)	FY 2029 4.0%
FY 2026: 2.2%	FY 2028: 2.6% (-3 staff)	

3.020 Employee Retirement / Insurance Benefits

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Employees' Retirement/Insurance Benefits	16,135,734	17,444,813	18,670,553	20,086,433

The largest expense, aside from salaries and wages, is the Board’s share of healthcare benefit premiums. In FY 2011, the district began participating in the Summit Regional Healthcare Consortium (SRHCC) to pool administrative fees with Barberton, Copley-Fairlawn, Norton, and Revere Schools. In FY 2015, Cuyahoga Falls City Schools joined the SRHCC. In FY 2020 and 2022, Woodridge Local Schools and Dover City Schools joined. In addition, the SRHCC continues to maximize resources and implement best practices related to healthcare and wellness. The Consortium collaborates with Be-Well Solutions to offer wellness support to five districts, encouraging employees to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Employees enrolled in the district’s healthcare plan are encouraged to participate in the annual biometric screening, health risk assessment, as well as the many Grizzly Challenge Wellness programs offered throughout the year. Employees are rewarded with a credit to an HRA account based on the results of their biometric screening.

The Board of Education and members of both the teachers' union (WEA) and support staff's union (WESPA) agreed to a three-year contract that took effect on July 1, 2023. There were no changes to employee healthcare benefits in the new contract.

The district has enjoyed several positive healthcare renewals in recent years. However, for the 2025-26 plan year, the district's healthcare renewal increased by **15.56%**. In the past year, the district experienced a depletion of reserves with the Summit Regional Healthcare Consortium (SRHCC) from \$2.5M to less than half a million dollars.

In April, the SRHCC approved renewal rates for the 2025-26 plan year beginning July 1, 2025. The Wadsworth City School experienced a 24-month loss ratio of 118%, meaning for every \$100 we invested in the consortium, the consortium paid \$118 in claims. This resulted in the 15.56% rate increase for the upcoming plan year, 4.56% greater than projected.

FY 2017:	5.16%	FY 2022:	0.00%
FY 2018:	2.33%	FY 2023:	1.60%
FY 2019:	4.85%	FY 2024:	4.10%
FY 2020:	0.00%	FY 2025:	18.61%
FY 2021:	0.00%	FY 2026:	15.56%

Health Care Insurance Projections:

One of the challenges we have encountered this fiscal year is the notable increase in healthcare insurance costs for our district. Despite our best efforts to manage expenses, the rising costs of medical services and prescription drugs have contributed to a significant increase in our healthcare expenditures. Factors such as inflation and the utilization patterns of our insured members have all contributed to driving up these costs.

In response to this challenge, the Summit Regional Healthcare Consortium (SRHCC) has been diligently reviewing our current healthcare plans, negotiating with insurance providers, and exploring potential cost-saving measures. While we are committed to maintaining comprehensive coverage for our staff and their families, we recognize the importance of implementing sustainable solutions to mitigate the impact of escalating healthcare expenses on our budget.

FY 2026:

Even with the 15.56% renewal, Wadsworth City Schools' premiums within the consortium are still the lowest of the eight schools. For example, if our monthly premium were the same as the highest district in the SRHCC, our insurance spend would be an additional \$2M annually.

The increased premiums are somewhat offset by the staffing reductions (see Section 3.010, Salaries and Wages).

- Line 3.020 accounts for:
 - The staffing reductions as outlined above.
 - The staffing related to the Grizzly Academy expansion.
 - An allowance for health care plan changes (single to family) each year.
- **Healthcare premiums are projected to increase by 15% (up from the 12% projected in October 2025) in FY 2027, 11% in FY 2028, and 2029.**

Other line 3.02 expenses:

Language in the WEA contract requires retirees aged 55 or older to contribute 100% of their severance payment to a 403(b) annuity as an employer contribution. Employer contributions to a 403(b) are considered a fringe benefit. Therefore, most certified severance is paid from benefits (line 3.020), rather than salaries and wages (line 3.010). Due to the STRS changes, which reduce the number of years required to receive an unreduced pension (from 34 to 32 years), we saw a high number of certified staff retirees this year, resulting in \$634,000 in severance payments paid in FY 2026.

Currently, by State law, the Board contributes 14% of the salaries and wages to two retirement systems. Members of STRS are required to pay 14% of their earnings to the retirement system. The Board pays 10% of the Administrators' 14% employee share of STRS (10% of their salary). In addition, the Board pays a surcharge to SERS for all support staff employees whose annual income is less than \$35,800. That is, for any employee making less than \$35,800 annually, the district must pay 14% of \$35,800, not their actual earnings. SERS does have a cap of 2% of total SERS wages to be paid to the surcharge. We are above the cap. Therefore, we pay 16% of our total SERS payroll to the retirement system. A large percentage of the surcharge is paid by the Food Service Fund (006), which is not part of this Forecast. All but one employee in the Food Service Department earns less than \$35,800.

The other two items that make up our employee benefits are Medicare Tax and Workers' Compensation. Our district pays 1.45% Medicare tax on all employees hired after 1986.

3.030 Purchased Services

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Purchased Services	8,358,213	8,488,638	8,840,447	9,186,939

This category covers all our contracted services, including tuition to other schools, legal services, copier leases, property/fleet insurance, gifted services from the Medina County ESC, and special education services (such as occupational and physical therapy). In addition, it also covers professional development, utilities, contracted services, and College Credit Plus (CCP) tuition for high school students.

An area of concern is the increasing amount of tuition payments for students who attend specialized programs or schools outside our district. While we strive to provide a wide range of educational opportunities within our own schools, there are instances where students require services or programs that are not available locally. As a result, we must make tuition payments to other schools or programs to ensure that these students receive the necessary educational support. However, the growing number of students requiring such services, coupled with the rising tuition rates, has contributed to a notable increase in our tuition costs, even with the expansion of the Grizzly Academy, which is intended to reduce the number of students we need to send outside the district for services. Tuition expenses are projected to increase over the life of the forecast, even with the expansion of the Grizzly Academy.

The Purchased Services category continues to show steady growth, driven primarily by increases in three key areas:

1. **Special Education Contracted Services** – Costs for specialized instructional and support services provided by outside agencies continue to rise, reflecting both increased student needs and higher provider rates.
2. **Building Maintenance Services (e.g., HVAC)** – As facilities age, the district is experiencing higher expenditures for contracted maintenance services, particularly in areas like HVAC system repairs and preventative maintenance.
3. **Tuition Payments** – As previously noted, payments to other districts or entities for student placements, particularly in specialized programs, have also contributed to the upward trend.

These rising costs in contracted services are a significant factor in the overall increase in the Purchased Services line item.

Utilities are a major component of this category, but are projected to remain relatively constant over the forecast. The new Intermediate School will increase efficiencies over the old CIS building.

Substitute teachers and some support staff substitutes are included in Purchased Services, as we contract with Renhill for substitute services.

3.040 Supplies and Materials (500)

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Supplies and Materials	2,828,073	2,878,661	2,906,085	2,985,420

Supplies and materials were substantially lower in FY 2022 and 2023 when textbook purchases were expensed from the Sales Tax Fund. As planned in FY 2020, textbooks are paid from the General Fund in FY 2024 and for the life of the forecast.

- Supplies are projected to decrease in FY 2026. This is primarily because the majority of the textbooks ordered for the 2024-25 school year out of the FY 2024 budget were paid for in FY 2025 (resulting in inflated expenses in this category in FY 2025).
- Bus fuel is included in supplies and can be very difficult to project. Bus fuel accounts for 9% of the Supplies Category.
- Weighted Career Tech (CT) funds from the State account for a portion of the expenses. We are required to spend CT money on CT programs within the school year (see discussion under Restricted Revenue above).

The district plans the following curriculum cycle and related textbook adoption. The expenses for FY 2021-2023 were NOT part of the Forecast (Medina County Sales Tax fund) but are still an integral part of the district’s operating budget. Textbook purchases returned to the General Fund starting in FY 2024.

Forecast Note: The items identified in the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce Pre-Caution plan for supplies are not incorporated into the forecast and remain available for future reductions, if applicable.

See the next page for the textbook adoption cycle.

Textbook Adoption Cycle

Fiscal Year	Subject	Grade Level	First Year of Use	Projected Cost
** 2023	World Language	9-12	2023-24	\$175,000
	Fine Arts	K-12		\$150,000
	Business	9-12		\$150,000
	Health	7-12		\$ 20,000
	CCP & Replacements			\$130,000
2024	Science	K-12	2024-25	\$650,000
	CCP & Replacements			\$130,000
2025	Social Studies	K-12	2025-26	\$650,000
	CCP & Replacements			\$130,000
2026	English/Lang. Arts	K-12	2026-27	\$650,000
	CCP & Replacements			\$130,000
2027	Math	K-12	2027-28	\$650,000
	CCP & Replacements			\$130,000
2028	World Language	9-12	2028-29	\$300,000
	Fine Arts	K-12		\$150,000
	Business	9-12		\$150,000
	Health	7-12		\$ 25,000
	CCP & Replacements			\$130,000
2029	Science	K-12	2029-30	\$650,000
	CCP & Replacements			\$130,000

** = Sales Tax Fund

3.050 Capital Outlay (600 & 700)

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Capital Outlay	572,415	773,594	802,023	829,593

The General Fund and the Sales Tax Fund support the district's capital needs. Approximately 48% of the sales tax proceeds go to pay debt service related to the construction of Valley View and Isham Elementary Schools, as well as the 1/2 mill maintenance levy requirement of the OFCC. This amounts to \$1,460,000 annually from the Sales Tax Fund. This debt service will expire in calendar year 2025. Then, the new debt service related to the COPs issued on November 9, 2023, for the cost overruns on the new intermediate school will begin in calendar year 2026. Due to the commitment of sales tax dollars to construction projects, the district will continue to support capital improvements to buildings, technology, and buses from the General Fund.

- School Bus Purchase Schedule:
FY 2025: 1 bus FY 2027: 3 buses
FY 2026: 2 buses FY 2028: 3 buses
 - An average of 3 buses per year over the life of the forecast. The volatility in the capital outlay line of the forecast is due to the number of buses purchased each year.
 - The ODEW Precaution plan called for the elimination of bus and vehicle purchase. Currently, these purchases remain in the forecast as an opportunity for future reductions if warranted.
- The district recently adopted a five-year strategic plan for the calendar years 2026-2030. Capital expenses associated with the plan are detailed in Appendix A of the strategic plan. Most of the capital expenses in the plan will be funded by the Sales Tax and OFCC Maintenance funds.
- Future years of the Forecast allow for an average 3-4% per year increase in all other categories (outside of buses).

If any major capital improvements funded by the General Fund are needed, it would have an adverse impact on the Forecast. Additionally, there are reserves in the Sales Tax fund to support unplanned capital needs.

The Board may want to consider allocating allowable expenses (such as textbooks/buses) to the sales tax fund in future years to extend the life of the current levy cycle.

Forecast Note: The items identified in the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce Pre-Caution plan for capital items are not incorporated into the forecast and remain available for future reductions, if applicable.

4.050 / 4.060 HB 264 Principal and Interest

There are currently no General Fund debt issues.

4.300 Other Objects (Miscellaneous)

This area covers County Auditor and Treasurer Fees, election expenses, liability insurance and membership dues for the Board. County fees charged by the County Auditor and Treasurer are the primary expense (78%) in this category.

5.010 & 5.020 Transfers and Advances Out

Advances out are primarily for cash flow purposes to other funds and will be returned in subsequent fiscal years. It is anticipated that there will be advances to federal grants and the construction fund at FYE.

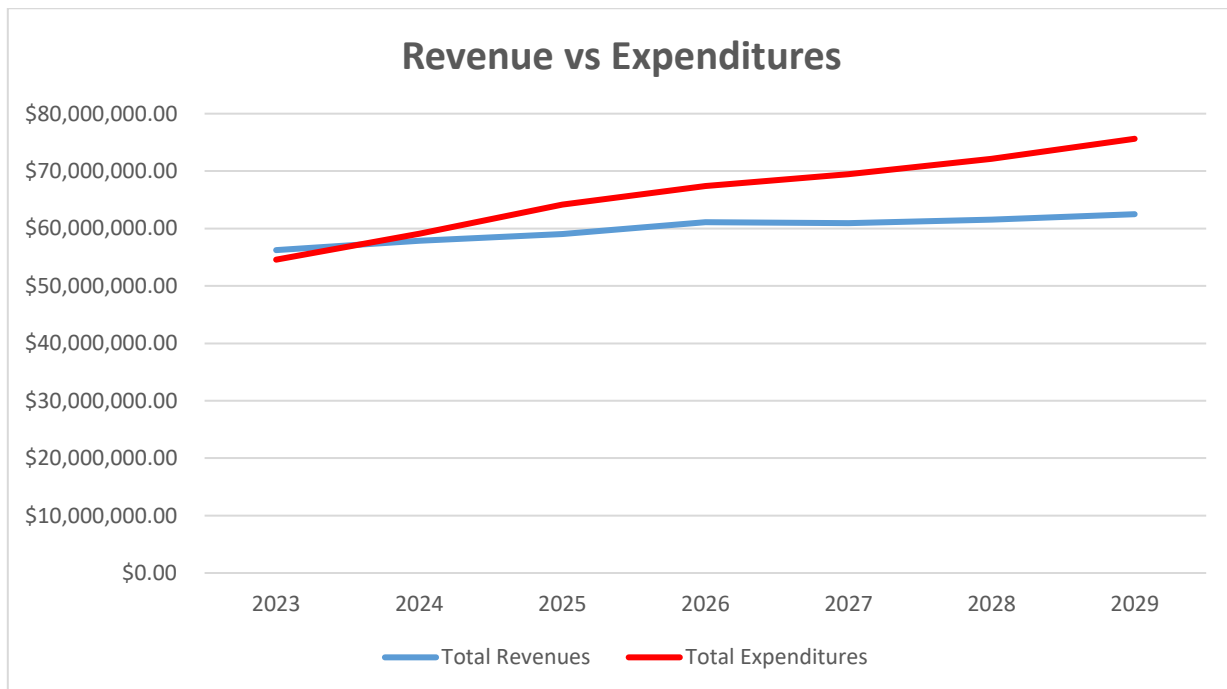
6.010 Excess Revenues over Expenditures (Deficit Spending):

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
<i>Excess of Revenues and Other Financing Sources over (under) Expenditures and Other Financing Uses</i>	3,700,420-	8,565,727-	10,626,075-	13,172,167-

This section illustrates whether the district maintains a balanced budget or engages in **deficit spending**, when expenditures exceed revenues. The district is currently in its fifth year since the passage of the 2021 operating levy and is projected to experience deficit spending for the third consecutive year.


The chart below outlines the district’s projected revenues and expenditures. As shown, deficit spending commenced in FY 2024 and is anticipated to persist throughout the forecast period. Revenue sources remain relatively flat, while expenditures are increasing due to negotiated agreements, rising health care costs, and inflation.

This trend underscores the importance of maintaining adequate cash reserves, as emphasized in the Board's recently adopted cash reserve policy.



7.020 Ending Cash Balance

	Budget FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Cash Balance June 30	13,182,640	4,616,913	6,009,162-	19,181,329-



After conducting a comprehensive review of our financial projections, it is apparent that we are at a very volatile point. There are many pressures impacting our financial picture, including, but not limited to, state and federal aid, declining enrollment, staffing reductions, healthcare expenses, contracted services, and property tax reform, all of which are contributing to our projected deficit spending in FY 2026. Our district is facing a critical path to maintaining a positive cash balance. Without change, we anticipate that our cash reserves will be depleted in FY 2028. For that reason the Board of Education continues to review reductions in staffing and services to reduce expenditures combined with a 1.5% earned income tax on the May 5, 2026 ballot.

Requirement to Address Projected Deficit:

In accordance with Ohio law, if a school district projects a deficit cash balance in the third year of its four-year forecast, it must submit a written plan to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) outlining how it will eliminate the deficit.

In December 2025, the Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board of Education prepared and submitted a precautionary plan to ODEW. Portions of this plan were incorporated into the current forecast; however, the plan was not implemented in its entirety, and the district still projects a deficit in FY 2028.

The Board of Education has also submitted a resolution to the Board of Elections to place a 1.5% earned income tax levy on the May 5, 2026 ballot. Given this levy initiative, the Board believes it would be imprudent to implement the full plan—resulting in millions of dollars in reductions—and show a positive balance in FY 2028 before allowing the community the opportunity to vote on the levy.

As you are aware, our district has been proactive in implementing various cost-saving measures to mitigate budgetary pressures and ensure responsible financial stewardship. These measures include continuous budget monitoring, with an emphasis on the staffing reductions outlined in the assumptions above. Despite these concerted efforts to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency, we continue to face significant financial challenges, with a projected negative fund balance in the 2027-2028 school year.

Moving forward, it is essential that we maintain a balanced approach, combining cost-saving initiatives with strategic investments in areas crucial to our mission of delivering high-quality education to all students.

I appreciate the dedication and commitment of our entire school community in confronting these financial challenges head-on and remain confident in our collective ability to navigate this complex landscape with resilience and determination.

The chart on the last page outlines our fiscal year end cash balances.

Cash Balance June 30

