



MOUNT PLEASANT Central School District

FROM THE HEART

BUDGET ISSUE 2026

BUILDING ON SUCCESS: A COMMITMENT TO LEARNING, SAFETY, AND OUR FUTURE



Dear Mount Pleasant CSD Residents,

This year's budget tells a story of progress. The investments our community made in recent years are paying off. Our students are reading more and better, achieving more in math, and accessing opportunities made possible by the programs and practices put in place over the past several years. The 2026-2027 budget builds on that momentum

while remaining firmly grounded in our mission: Educating Each Student Today for Endless Possibilities Tomorrow.

The community will vote on May 19, 2026, on a tax-cap compliant budget of \$82,851,333. For the first time in district history, the proposed levy comes in more than \$691,000 below the allowable tax cap limit. The estimated tax rate increase of 2.18% is lower than this year's Consumer Price Index, representing an estimated annual increase of \$272.51 based on an average assessment of \$8,500. This marks the 15th consecutive year the district has presented a budget within the state-mandated tax cap.

Key investments for 2026-2027 include:

- **Academic enhancements** - continued implementation of literacy and math programs already producing measurable gains districtwide, FLES (Spanish and Italian instruction) expansion to grades K-2 at Hawthorne, additional sections of Algebra, Biology, and Spanish at Westlake Middle School, launch of Syracuse University Project Advance dual enrollment at Westlake High School, Personal Finance Education at the middle and high school levels, and The Harbor, a new structured support program for students experiencing emotional challenges
- **Comprehensive security measures** - continued School Resource Officer, full-time security coordinator, expanded cameras, 30 additional radios, formalized threat assessment teams, an additional security officer, and a new security booth at the Westlake campus entrance
- **Strategic facility improvements** - construction underway at Hawthorne and Westlake High School, classroom additions at Hawthorne and Columbus, and finalization of an Energy Performance Contract to bring air cooling to Westlake Middle School through savings made possible by solar energy

Guided by our mission, and with your support, we will continue to provide expanded opportunities for excellence and innovation while safeguarding our district's long-term financial health.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peter Giarrizzo, Superintendent of Schools

VOTE!

May 19, 2026 • 7am - 9pm

Westlake High School Gym
825 Westlake Drive • Thornwood, NY

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

Three candidates for two open seats:
Laura Michalec Olszewski, Sara M. Beaty, Tracey Pisano

VOTER INFORMATION

Visit mtpclsd.org for all questions, please call the District Clerk at 914-769-5500 x5105

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM Revenue Sources

	2026-2027 Budget	2025-2026 Budget	% Change
Property Tax Levy	\$65,730,276	\$63,430,059	3.63%
State Aid	\$14,361,403	\$13,742,536	4.50%
Sales Tax	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000	0.00%
Other Revenue	\$1,109,654	\$854,617	29.84%
Appropriated Fund Balance*	\$350,000	\$200,000	75.00%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$82,851,333	\$79,527,212	4.18%

*\$150,000 from the Employees' Retirement System Reserve and \$200,000 from Unappropriated Fund Balance

WHERE THE MONEY GOES Expenditure Summary

	2026-2027 Budget	2025-2026 Budget	% Change
General Support	\$3,781,769	\$3,578,913	5.67%
Buildings & Grounds**	\$5,198,893	\$4,647,550	11.86%
Instruction	\$42,037,580	\$40,416,767	4.01%
Transportation	\$4,397,426	\$4,556,128	-3.48%
Employee Benefits	\$18,608,144	\$18,103,576	2.79%
Debt Services & Transfers	\$8,827,521	\$8,224,278	7.33%
TOTAL BUDGET	\$82,851,333	\$79,527,212	4.18%

**These expenditures are a continued investment in our infrastructure, safety & security, and core instructional program.

**BY THE
NUMBERS**

2026-2027 Budget
\$82,851,333

2025-2026 Budget: \$79,527,212
Budget Increase: \$3,324,121

Tax Levy Increase: 3.63%
Tax Rate Increase (Est): 2.18%*
*Tax rate will be set by the town in August 2026

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

The following candidates are running for two open seats on the Board of Education. The three year term begins July 1, 2026.



LAURA MICHALEC OLSZEWSKI

Occupation: I am the Assistant Regional Chief Judge for a Federal Government agency. Prior to my appointment, I was a trial attorney with Immigration & Customs Enforcement, working in a maximum-security prison.

Education: Proud Westlake High School graduate. I received my undergraduate degree from Bucknell University, my law degree from Fordham University School of Law, and a master's degree in security studies from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Community Involvement: I have served on the School Board since 2017, working on numerous committees and serving several terms as Board Vice President. Prior to joining the Board, I was secretary of the WMS PTA, a Cub Scout leader for Hawthorne Pack One for over 10 years, and Scoutmaster for Mount Pleasant Troop 125. I have also been involved with Westlake Players, Holy Rosary Church's adult and bell choirs, Parish Council, and annual Christmas pageant.

Why are you running? As a lifelong Mount Pleasant resident, I have dedicated my career to public service. I want to continue advocating for the best possible education for our children in a fiscally responsible manner, always with an eye on our community's values and expectations.

What is your overall vision for the school district? Our district should foster a safe environment where students develop a love of learning. I have witnessed incredible growth during my tenure, but we can do more to challenge students academically and help them think critically in an ever-changing world.

What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of the Board of Education? Ensuring fiscal responsibility, maintaining academic rigor, and remaining responsive to community concerns while holding our district to the highest standards.

What accomplishments are you most proud of during your time as a Board Member? Helping pass an instructional bond with zero net tax increase, leading to facility upgrades and improved safety and security. I am also proud of the strength of our special education department and the continued success of our graduating seniors gaining acceptance to increasingly competitive colleges and universities.



SARA M. BEATY

Occupation: I am the Principal Court Attorney for a NYS Supreme Court Justice. My legal career has entirely focused on public service.

Education: I received my undergraduate degree from Utica College of Syracuse University in 2002 and my law degree from Albany Law School in 2005.

Community Involvement: I have served on the Board of Education since February 2020. In addition, I serve on the District's Audit, Budget, and Finance Committee. I have been a member of the Mt. Pleasant Education Foundation since 2018, and now serve as their board member liaison. I served on the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee for three years before serving on the Board. I am also a member of many local bar associations, and serve on the Board of the Rockland Community College Legal Advisory Studies Board.

Why are you running? I am running for re-election because of my experience in leadership matters. This District has accomplished so much in recent years, benefiting the entire Mt. Pleasant community, and I feel blessed to have been part of the team leading our progress. However, there is still more work to do, and I feel that my experience and background, combined with my love of our children, community, and volunteerism, truly matter in this role.

What is your overall vision for the school district? I envision a future of continued growth and progress that aligns with our community's core values. For a District the size of Mt. Pleasant, the number of programs and services we offer is amazing, and I see that trend continuing, especially with the help of all of our tireless parent volunteers.

What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of the Board of Education? To enhance programs and opportunities for every student, including general and special education students, in a transparent and fiscally responsible way while preserving the qualities and characteristics that make Mt. Pleasant unique and special.

What accomplishments are you most proud of during your time as a Board Member? During my time on the Board, our District has added over \$50,000,000 in tax-neutral capital and instructional improvements, and increased our credit rating to an AA+. I am proud of the District's many improvements, including enhanced safety and security, a stronger focus on the trades and science research, expanded foreign language instruction in elementary schools, new math and literacy programs, growth in our music and arts programs, and the addition of UPK. I am also encouraged by the many ways the District has increased student and parent engagement.



TRACEY PISANO

Occupation: For the past 22 years, I have worked as a special education teacher in The Bronx, teaching students from kindergarten through eighth grade. In the last few years, I have focused on fourth grade inclusion.

Education: I received my bachelor's degree from the Laboratory Institute of Merchandising and my Master's in Early Elementary & Special Education from Mercy College.

Community Involvement: I have coached AYSO soccer for several seasons, which has taught me the value of teamwork, perseverance, and providing kids with a positive outlet to grow and have fun. I have also volunteered for PTA events over the years, including collecting donations and selling raffles at the annual Father-Daughter Dance. Currently, I'm collecting book donations to keep our town's lending libraries well stocked.

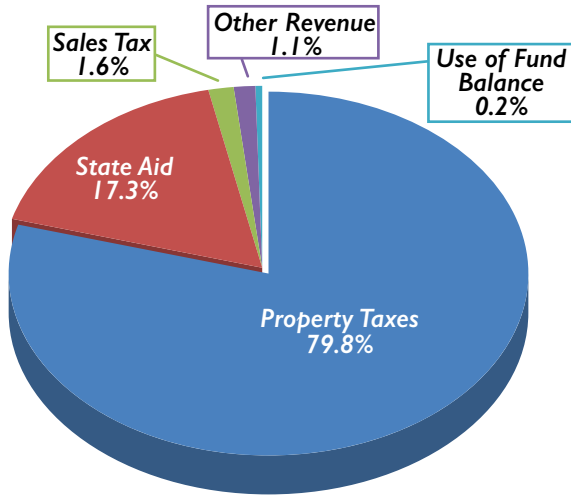
Why are you running? I want to be a voice for our students, our teachers, and our families. I want to ensure every child, no matter what their background, has access to excellent teachers, safe learning environments, and the resources they need to succeed.

What is your overall vision for the school district? I want our school district to be one where every child has the chance to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, and graduates ready for college, career, and a meaningful life. At the heart of it all are strong teachers who are empowered and respected, and a system that puts students first in every decision we make. That's the kind of district I want to help build.

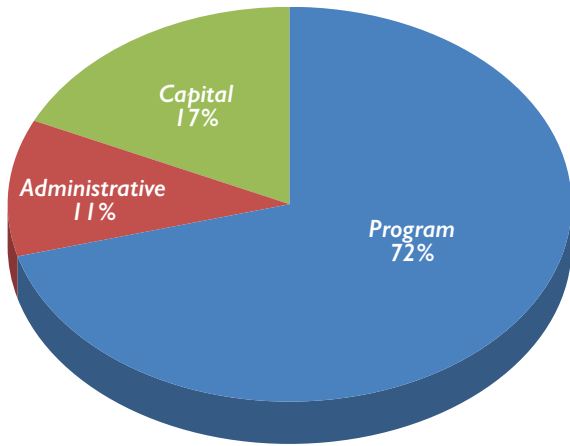
What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of the Board of Education? To set a clear vision and high standards for every student's success and then hold ourselves accountable to meet them. We must also be careful stewards of taxpayer dollars, ensuring our budget prioritizes classrooms, teachers, and students' needs. Above all, we must ensure that every child in our district has access to a safe, equitable, and excellent education.

What do you hope to accomplish during your time as a Board member? I believe every child in our community deserves excellent schools that prepare them to succeed in life. My vision is simple: safe, equitable, high-performing schools where every student feels valued and supported, and where families and teachers are true partners. If elected, I will focus on setting high standards, being a responsible steward of our resources, listening to our community, and putting students first in every decision. I'm ready to bring fresh energy, real-world perspective, and a deep commitment to making our schools the best they can be. I'd be honored to earn your support.

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



IMPACT ON HOME VALUES IN THE MOUNT PLEASANT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 2026-2027 (vs. last year)

Full Value	\$750,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,250,000
Annual Increase in Taxes (Estimated)	\$257.28	\$343.04	\$428.80

Please note: The numbers may vary based on the actual assessed value of your house.



Q: IS THIS BUDGET COMPLIANT WITH THE TAX CAP?

A: YES. The proposed budget is tax-cap-compliant for the fifteenth consecutive year. Mt. Pleasant Central School District's proposed tax levy increase is 3.63%, which is \$691,258 less than the maximum 4.72% allowable under the tax cap formula. When a budget is tax-cap-compliant, a "simple majority" of voters (50% plus one) is required for it to pass. If the District proposed a tax levy that exceeded the tax cap, it would require approval by a "supermajority" (60% or more) of voters.

Q: HOW DOES OUR TAX RATE COMPARE WITH SURROUNDING DISTRICTS?

A: Per \$1000 of assessed value, Mount Pleasant taxpayers have a lower tax rate than five other surrounding schools, including Tarrytown, Briarcliff Manor, Pleasantville, Valhalla, and Chappaqua. This has been consistent for several years.

Q: HOW WILL THE PROPOSED TAX LEVY INCREASE AFFECT MY TAXES?

A: Based on the most recent assessment information, the average taxpayer in Mount Pleasant will see an increase in their taxes for the 2026-2027 school year. A homeowner with an average assessed value of \$8,500 will see an estimated increase of \$272.51 for the year.

The proposed budget includes the following multi-year transportation contracts: Home-to-School - Fourth year of a five-year contract, the total five-year estimated cost of which is \$16,910,625, Field and Sports Trips - Fourth year of a five-year contract, the total five-year estimated cost of which is \$1,334,717, MVP Consortium Home-to-School - Fifth year of a five-year contract, the total five-year estimated cost of which is \$2,991,036.

INVESTING IN EXCELLENCE

ACADEMICS

- Class of 2026 submitted 1,380 applications to 268 schools in 35 different states
- WHS offers 20 AP courses, 11 honors, and 10 college credit courses
- In 2025, 89% of graduates attended 4 year colleges and 11% attended 2 year colleges
- In 2025, 51% of students in grades 10-12 are enrolled in AP courses
- 90 AP scholars in 2024-25
- 8 AP Capstone Diplomas awarded

ATHLETICS

- 55 Athletic Teams: 26 Varsity, 13 Junior Varsity, 16 Modified
- 100% of Varsity Fall and Winter teams earned the NYSPHSAA's Scholar-Athlete Team Award (90% or better team average)
- 1x State Champion - First in Westlake High School history
- 2x Section 1 Individual Champions
- 3x Section 1 Team Finalists
- 3x League Champions
- 3x Con Edison Scholar-Athlete Award Winners
- **Football** - Section 1 Runner Up, League Champions, 10 All-League, 4 All-Section, 3 All-State, 5 Positional Players Of-The-Year, 1 Con Edison Award Winner
- **Girls Soccer** - Mount Pleasant Cup Champions, 2 All-League
- **Boys Soccer** - League Champions, 7 All-League, 2 All-Section, 1 Con Edison Award Winner
- **Game Day Cheer** - Section 1 Runner-Up, 9 All-League, 2 All-Section, 12 All-Americans
- **Cross Country** - 2 All-League
- **Volleyball** - 1 All-League
- **Girls Basketball** - 3 All-League
- **Boys Basketball** - Section 1 Final 4, League Champions, 4 All-League, 1 All-Section, 1 League Player of the Year.
- **Indoor Track** - 7 All-League
- **Boys Swim** - 1 All-League, 1 All-Section
- **Wrestling** - 1 State Champion, 2 All-State, 2 Section 1 Individual Champions, 2 All-League, 2 All-Section
- **Competitive Cheer** - Section 1 Runner-Up, 6 All-League, 3 All-Section
- **Boys Ice Hockey** - 1 All-League

FINE & MEDIA ARTS

- 500+ K-12 students participated in the district art festival
- 14+ WHS seniors participated in the Katonah Museum of Art Young Artists Exhibition, which included a graphic design workshop and hands-on experience with the show's installation process.
- 1 winner/2 finalists - 2026 U. at Albany HS Science Research Symposium Art Contest
- Art classes in grades 3-5 created work that "Honors Our Veterans" during the Veterans Day celebration
- K-2 art classes created 400 + cards for

- those in need during the school-wide Hat and Mitten Drive, donated to Knights of Columbus of Thornwood
- All 5th grade students participated in "Kindness Rocks" creating artwork to contribute to Gia's Garden
- 152 students participated in the 2026 "Together As One," Peace Poster Competition sponsored by the Thornwood Lions Club
- 28 Video Media Students enrolled in the National 10-Day Film Challenge
- The W - Won Best Community Feature at The BASH Awards (spring 2025)
- 30 WHS students visited the Shen Wei exhibition "Still/Moving" at the KMA, learning about and experiencing the connection between dance, music and visual art.
- The W - Westlake's Broadcasting Instagram/@whs_the.w hit a new view record of over 5,242!
- 422 enrolled in HS art electives for the 2026-27 school year
- 143 students enrolled in HS foundational art courses 2026-2027
- Over 100 students enrolled in MS and HS art clubs
- 7 graduating seniors will be enrolling in college art programs 2025-26

PERFORMING ARTS

Mount Pleasant CSD has been recognized again in 2026 as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

District-Wide

- 72 students participated in NYSSMA (New York State School Music Association) adjudication festivals

Westlake High School

- 100 students in Concert Band
- 29 in Jazz Band
- 53 in Wind Ensemble
- 80 in Chorus
- 43 in Blendors
- Area All-State Chorus: 9
- Intermediate All-County Band: 2
- 49 (cast and crew) in High School Drama, *It's a Wonderful Life*
- 87 (cast and crew) in High School Musical, *Something Rotten*

Westlake Middle School

- 213 in Band
- 38 in Jazz Band
- 42 in Westlake Winds
- 228 in Chorus
- 50 in Meistersingers
- Intermediate All-County Band: 2
- Intermediate All-County Chorus: 3
- Elementary All-County Band: 6
- 113 (cast and crew) in Middle School Musical, *Newsies*

Columbus Elementary

- 274 in Band
- 18 in Jazz Band

- 43 in Honor Band
- 35 in Troubadours
- Elementary All-County Chorus: 2

SCIENCE RESEARCH

Science Research Expansion:

Program grew 17% year-over-year (2025-2026 vs. 2024-2025)

Science Research Awards

- Regeneron Science Talent Search (STS)
- **Elizabeth Singh:** STS Scholar

UHS Albany Science Research Invitational Symposium

- **Oliver Wu:** 2nd Place in Physical Sciences
- **Isabella Munnick:** Winner of Science Fiction Contest

Westchester Science and Engineering Fair (WESEF) - "The Super Bowl of Science Fairs"

- **Keira Borello:** Environmental Perspiration Award
- **Tycho Force:** 2nd Place in Animal Sciences and a WESEF Grand Prize as one of the top 20 overall scoring projects (out of 827!) to compete at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), the world's largest high school STEM competition
- **Nareh Hovsepian:** 2nd Place in Computer Science
- **Nathaniel Nolan:** 4th Place in Cellular and Molecular Biology
- **Gabe Pardo:** Teatown Young Environmentalist Award
- **Yash Parikh:** Society for In Vitro Biology Award
- **Logan Piñeiro:** 1st Place in Neuroscience
- **Christina Rodrigues:** 4th Place in Neuroscience
- **Elizabeth Singh:** Innovations in Biological Sciences Research Award
- **Oliver Wu:** Rising Scholars Award
- **Westlake Science Research Program:** Best WESEF Forms and Paperwork Award

Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) - "The Olympics of Science Fairs"

- **Tycho Force:** ISEF Finalist competing against 1,700+ science fair winners from 60+ countries in Phoenix, Arizona, in May. Tycho conducted his original research, "Sound Check: A Multi-Year Acoustic Recording Assessment of Avian Biodiversity in a Northeast Hemlock Forest vs. Wildfire Impacts, Meteorological Conditions and Geospatial Patterns," at Mianus River Gorge in Bedford, NY.

Science Research Publications - Student articles published in peer-reviewed science journals

- Elizabeth Singh in *Journal of Translational Medicine*
- Andrew Szeszko in *NeuroReport*

PROGRAM AND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The 2026-2027 budget prioritizes five key areas: strengthening academic programs with proven results, continued investment in professional growth for our educators, expanding wellness initiatives that support the whole child, enhancing safety and security measures, and strategic facility improvements. Every budget allocation represents a deliberate investment in our educational program while maintaining fiscal responsibility for both immediate needs and long-term district sustainability.

GENERAL INSTRUCTION ENHANCEMENTS

- This year marks the full implementation of two major literacy initiatives that are already showing results. The University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) program and HMH Into Reading (K-5) were introduced last year, and screening data from fall to winter shows reading gains across every grade level from kindergarten through fifth grade.
- In math, sixth graders using the new Eureka Math² program showed a jump in proficiency from 65% to 71% in a single year.
- Students in grades 8-11 using NoRedInk for writing and grammar have collectively answered over 100,000 questions and mastered more than 3,500 topics this year alone.
- At Hawthorne, the Foreign Language Elementary School (FLES) program will expand to include grades K-2, building on the current implementation in grades 3-5 to give our youngest learners earlier exposure to Spanish and Italian.
- At the middle and high school levels, students will have access to new Personal Finance Education that equips them with practical skills in budgeting, saving, and financial decision-making.
- Westlake High School will launch Syracuse University Project Advance dual enrollment courses, giving students access to rigorous, transferable college coursework while still in high school.
- The Harbor, a new program at the Westlake campus, will provide a structured, supportive environment for middle and high school students experiencing emotional challenges, keeping them engaged in meaningful academic work with appropriate guidance.
- Continue expanding and modernizing workspace for the Career Research Academy (CRA) through the strategic development of hands-on, trades-focused learning environments that support industry-aligned instruction, experiential learning opportunities, and authentic career pathway development reflective of today's workforce demands, including working closely with the Town of Mount Pleasant Building Department.
- Making program enhancements in Special Education/Support Services, including the expansion of Special Education Class at WMS, added sections of co-teach at WHS, targeted and focused professional development in the co-teaching model K-12, and increased nursing support at Columbus.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

- The district continues to fund both a shared School Resource Officer with the Town of Mt. Pleasant and a full-time security coordinator.
- All short-term and mid-term recommendations from our comprehensive safety audit are now 100% complete, with long-term measures continuing to be implemented through the Instructional Bond.
- Recent additions include a license plate reader camera for the Westlake campus, upgraded and expanded cameras district-wide, and 30 additional radios to improve communication within and between buildings.
- Formalized district-wide and building-level threat assessment teams are operational, and a new security booth at the Westlake campus entrance will be staffed in the coming year.

FACILITIES, MAINTENANCE & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Construction is underway at both Hawthorne Elementary and Westlake High School, with work focused on expanding and modernizing instructional spaces, including libraries, science labs, makerspaces, arts spaces, and a new engineering lab.
- Classroom additions at both Hawthorne and Columbus are also part of this work, along with upgrades to ventilation and air cooling in large instructional spaces.
- The district is finalizing an Energy Performance Contract to provide air cooling at Westlake Middle School, with energy savings generated by installing solar panels.
- Capital fund priorities for the coming year include completing a dedicated space for the Career Research Academy and addressing any emerging health and safety needs across our buildings.



Mount Pleasant Central School District
 825 Westlake Drive
 Thornwood, NY 10594

Board of Education

Sara M. Beaty, *President*
 Michael Griffin, *Vice President*
 Michael Horan
 Steven Mastrosimone
 Laura Michalec Olszewski
 Christopher Pinchiaroli
 Colleen Scaglione Neglia

Superintendent

Dr. Peter Giarrizzo

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SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2025-26 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2026-27 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 79,527,212	\$ 82,851,333	\$ 80,548,144
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$ 3,324,121	\$ 1,020,932
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.18 %	1.28%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$ 63,430,059	\$ 65,730,276	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$ -	\$ -	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$ -	\$ -	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$ -	\$ -	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$ 63,430,059	\$ 65,730,276	\$ 63,430,059
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 5,251,630	\$ 5,423,205	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 58,178,429	\$ 60,998,329	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$ 58,178,429	\$ 60,307,071	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval)	\$ -	\$ 691,258	
Administrative Component	\$ 8,990,485	\$ 9,289,342	\$ 9,231,623
Program Component	\$ 56,779,634	\$ 58,608,309	\$ 58,301,310
Capital Component	\$ 13,757,093	\$ 14,953,682	\$ 13,015,211

* Should the proposed budget be defeated, the Board of Education may adopt a contingency budget pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law. The contingency budget would eliminate \$2,303,189 from the proposed budget in the areas of general support, instruction, equipment, contractual services, athletics, and capital projects.

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$ 1,280

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Mount Pleasant Central School District, Westchester County, New York, will be held at the Westlake High School gymnasium in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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