→ May 19, 2026

Responding to Public Comment & Communications



Topics Raised

1. Expanding Number of Homerooms

2. Examining Staffing



3. High School Tuition

1. Expanding Number of Homerooms

Request for three sections in every grade level, but especially in current grades 2 & 4

Historical Data

In the past, the District maintained three classrooms per grade level when enrollment ranged between approximately 55–75 students per grade.

Currently, our average grade-level enrollment is about 40 students.

Less students means fewer homerooms needed.

Deciding Number of Homerooms (K-5)

The District's regular education elementary level student-to-teacher ratio/ target class sizes are based on the research-based definition of small class sizes for those grade levels:

- Grades K–2: 18 students
- Grades 3–5: 20 students

**The study referred to in public comment studied class sizes of >22 students and >26 students, respectively, at the elementary levels.*

To decide number of homerooms, we take the total number of students that will be assigned to regular education homerooms, divide by the target number of students. From there, we round up or down, and also take into consideration additional factors as appropriate.

One example of this is the current sixth grade, even though the number of students in the grade level equates to two homerooms, a third class was added due to academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs of students.

ES & MS Current Enrollment & Class Sizes

Grade	Enrollment	Number of Students Per Regular Education Homeroom
K	34	17, 17
1	32	16, 16
2	41	18, 19
3	54	16, 16, 17
4	44	20, 20
5	33	14, 16
6	46	13, 14, 15
7	48	11, 17, 17
8	43	11, 12, 17 OR 17, 23

Ideal Class Size/
“Small” Classes Definition

K-2: 18 Students
3-5: 20 Students
6-8: 22 Students

For reference, a special education self-contained classroom for higher needs students has 12-15 students on average.

Community Petitions

Grade 2 - Add a Third Homeroom

77 Signatures

- 21 Second Grade Parents Signed, representing 16 out of 41 students
- Other 56 signature were a mixture of community members, staff, or unknown individuals

Grade 4 - Add a Third Homeroom

85 Signatures

- 22 Fourth Grade Parents Signed, representing 18 out of 44 students
- Other 63 signature were a mixture of community members, staff, or unknown individuals

- To add a homeroom in both grades 2&4, it would mean either hiring two additional teachers or reassigning current elementary certified teachers and eliminating initiatives / programs

- 2 new teachers: adding ~$300,000 to the budget
- Reassign teachers - initiatives/ programs
  - PreKindergarten
  - Instructional Coach
  - Project Lead the Way (PLTW)
  - Spanish (K-5)
  - Learning Activities Enrichment Program (LEAP)



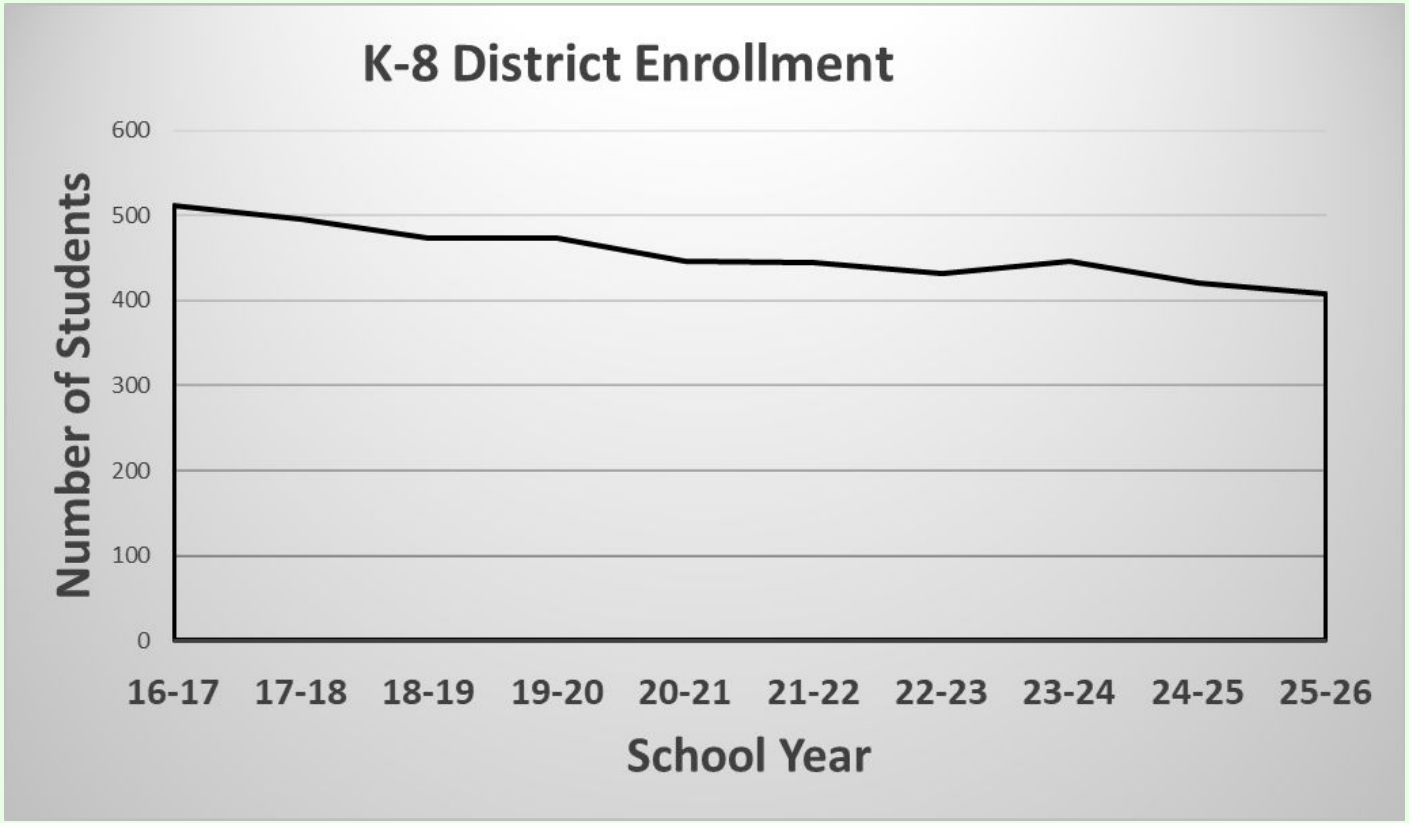
After review of all of the information (including enrollment, student discipline, academics, staff feedback, parent feedback, initiatives/programs, and more), the Board and District made the decision to keep the number of homerooms as currently allocated.

***Should new information arise or enrollment change, the decision will be revisited. ***

2. Examining Staffing

Budget Impact for Professional Staff (Teachers and Administrators)

Salary Increases								
Superintendent			Certificated Administrators			Teachers		
Year	% Increase		Year	% Increase		Year	% Increase	Actual Increase
July 2022	2.5%		July 2022	2.5%		July 2022	2.5% plus step	Equates to 4% - 8% increase per year
July 2023	2.5%		July 2023	equity adjustment		July 2023	2.5% plus step	
July 2024	0.0%		July 2024	2.5%		July 2024	2.0% plus step	
Jan 2025	2.5%		July 2025	2.0%		July 2025	2.75% plus step	
Jan 2026	1.5%		July 2026	TBD		July 2026	2.5% plus step	


K-8 District Enrollment
Number of Students
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
16-17
17-18
18-19
19-20
20-21
21-22
22-23
23-24
24-25
25-26
School Year

With declining enrollment, it is not fiscally responsible to maintain the same number of staff and classes.

The Board is, and has been, committed to assessing staffing needs and organizational structure every time an employee leaves the District.

Eliminate Through Attrition

The District and Board of Education have reduced positions through attrition when possible. Attrition means positions are not filled when they become vacant. This approach, when appropriate, allows the ability to manage costs without impacting current staff.

- **Elementary Certified Teachers & MS Subject Specific Teachers (last year 3 teachers not replaced)**
- **March 2nd Budget Workshop: Board decision to eliminate an administrative position through attrition at next opportunity, when it comes.**

Administration Review

Retirement of Asst Supt of Curriculum, Instruction, and Pupil Personnel Services Amy Petrassi

- Position responsible for key aspects of the running of the organization, if not filled, would need to fill with two directors.
- Interview Process, right person not found
- Will re-advertise the position

Retirement of Asst Supt for Business (Dec 2025)→Reduced to a School Business Official Position (Jan 2026) → Resignation of School Business Official Scott Sullivan (April Agenda)

- District must have a Business Official
- Appoint Walter Kaufmann (May Agenda)

Resignation of Elementary Principal Michelle Ring (May Agenda)

- Review building level academic administrators
- Appoint S. Melo-Ramos as ES Principal, effective July 1
- Abolish Assistant Principal Position, effective July 1
- AP position still in budget as resignation came after final budget adoption, funds will be reallocated by the Board



3. High School Tuition

Q: Paying the State formula for high school tuition (Seneca Falls Rate) was a concern when our students attended Tuxedo. Why did we agree to use the State formula for Chester and Warwick?

For districts like Greenwood Lake and Tuxedo, the formula is skewed or disproportionate and does not accurately reflect the cost.

For typical Districts, the formula is an accurate representation of cost to educate.

New York State sets clear rules for how school districts charge tuition when they educate students from another district. The key principle is straightforward: **a district cannot charge more than the actual cost (State Formula) of educating a student.**

State Rules for Determining Tuition Rate

1. Using a district's own financial records

A district may calculate its own per-student cost, but only if:

- Its financial records clearly identify the cost per student, and
- The amount charged does not exceed that actual cost

In practice, it is very difficult for districts to track costs with this level of precision. When they cannot, they are required to use the State's standard formula.

2. Using the State's standard formula (Seneca Falls Formula / SA-10 Form)

This is the most commonly used method. The New York State Education Department calculates tuition rates each year based on financial data submitted by districts. These rates are published and serve as the standard.

Because these rates are based on audited financial data, contracts often include a "reconciliation" process. This allows adjustments to be made later if the final calculated rate differs from the estimated rate.

A Review of Past Agreements Showed:

- In 21-22, the District paid less than the actual cost (Seneca Falls rate) : Tuition rate was $11,557 and formula rate was $11,657
- In 22-23, the District paid MORE than the formula/actual cost:
  - District paid $11,846
    - Warwick Formula/Actual: $10,303
    - Chester Formula/Actual: $9457



Bottom Line: Tuition Must Reflect True Cost - Not MORE Not LESS

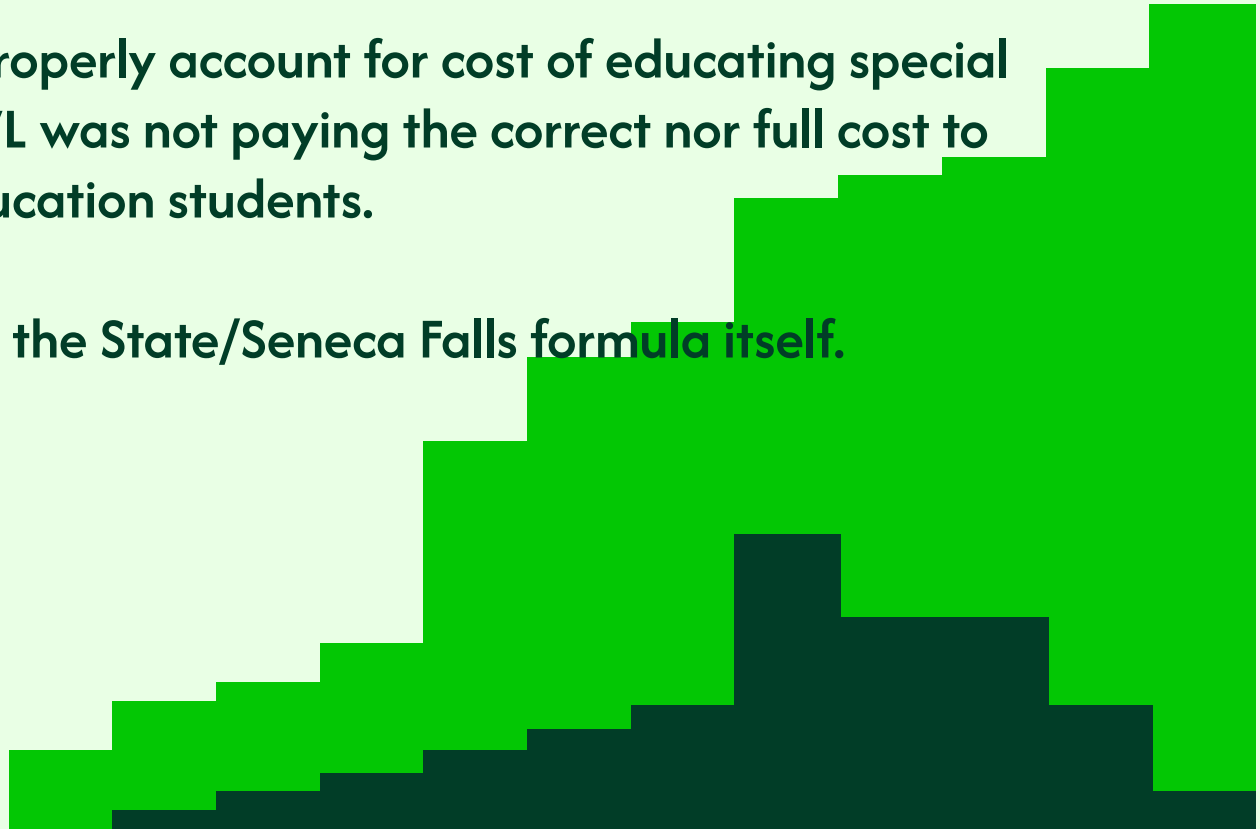
The State formula (Seneca Falls Formula) is the most fair and consistent method for both our partner districts and Greenwood Lake taxpayers. It helps ensure we are not paying more than the actual cost of educating our students.

The higher tuition rate previously seen with Tuxedo was largely due to its very small student population, which can significantly skew per-student costs. In contrast, Chester and Warwick have larger enrollments, resulting in more stable and representative tuition rates.

So why the increase in the Chester & Warwick HS tuition bills this year?

- Prior contracts did not properly account for cost of educating special education students. GWL was not paying the correct nor full cost to education all special education students.

- It has nothing to do with the State/Seneca Falls formula itself.



Current Contract Language

- The current contract reflects education law and properly accounts for special education students. It does so by applying:
  - The standard (regular education) rate for general education students, and
    - Warwick: $11,781 Chester: $11,583 *
  - The appropriate special education rate for students receiving those services
    - Warwick: $53,411 Chester: $50,011 *
- Allows for adjustment once actual cost determined when state formula calculations are finalized.

*current state formula rates

Board Questions / Comments

