



Greenwood Lake Union Free School District

P.O. Box 8 • Greenwood Lake, NY 10925
(845) 782-8678 x51100 • fax (845) 782-8582
www.gwlufsd.org

Board of Education
boe@gwlufsd.org

May 24, 2026

Dear Greenwood Lake Community,

As your Board of Education, we want to reach out and give you a clear, honest look at where things stand with our annual budget. In this letter, we'll explain how the budget is made, outline the immediate steps we took right after the vote, look at our main goals, and share the critical next steps for our schools.

How the Budget is Made

Developing a school budget is a rigorous, six-month process that starts every December. For this cycle, our budget calendar timeline was set at our October 14, 2025 meeting and updated on December 8, 2025. It starts with a designated budget committee made up of three Board members, our Superintendent, and our Business Official; it meets throughout the six-month process, guiding discussions and Board direction. The full Board holds detailed workshops throughout the winter and spring. All of these sessions are open to the public, and we share regular updates at our monthly business meetings. Every presentation is shared on the District [budget website](#), posted the day after each meeting. All of this hard work leads up to the formal budget proposal we adopt in April, ahead of the public vote in May.

After adopting the budget, we hold a public hearing so everyone can review the details and voice their thoughts. This year's hearing was on May 12th. We also published official legal notices in local newspapers and mailed an informational newsletter to households the week before the vote. The timing of all these communications and the way the budget is built are strictly governed by New York State Education Law.

The Vote Results & Our Immediate Next Steps

On May 19th, our proposed budget did not pass, with 185 "Yes" votes and 252 "No" votes out of 437 ballots cast. We know a thriving school district relies on an informed, engaged community, and we want to do everything we can to encourage greater participation moving forward. Every voice matters, and we want to ensure everyone who is eligible knows they have a seat at the table. If you are a registered voter over 18 living within our district boundaries—whether your mailing address is the Town of Warwick, the Village of Greenwood Lake, or a Monroe address off Lakes Road—you are a vital part of this electorate, and your voice should help shape our schools. Right after the vote, Superintendent Hadden immediately began to set up the required legal timelines and start getting the word out to the community. Because state law gives districts a very tight timeline when a budget fails, a community update letter was sent out the very next day and held a [Special Board Meeting](#) on Thursday, May 21st, to formally accept the results and plan our next steps.

At the same time, Superintendent Hadden, Business Official Sullivan, and our district staff jumped right into action on several fronts:

- **Talking with Legal Counsel:** They worked with our attorneys to map out a lawful [timeline](#) and review the rules for the three choices available to us: putting the original budget up for a re-vote, writing a revised budget for a second vote, or going straight to a contingency budget.
- **Managing the Business Office Transition:** They teamed up with Orange-Ulster BOCES to secure administrative help during our upcoming Business Official transition. Mr. Sullivan has accepted a position in another district effective June 1st, and our incoming Business Official is scheduled to start on June 22nd.
- **Creating a Central Resource Hub:** A dedicated "Budget Reconsideration" [webpage](#) was launched on the district website. This gives you one central place to find all presentations, video recordings, official letters, and timeline details. It also has all of the presentations from across the six-month original budget development period.



Greenwood Lake Union Free School District

P.O. Box 8 • Greenwood Lake, NY 10925
(845) 782-8678 x51100 • fax (845) 782-8582
www.gwlufsd.org

Board of Education
boe@gwlufsd.org

- **Reaching Out to Staff & Families:** An informational letter was sent to all staff and district families to explain our three legal options and inform them of the new online resource hub. This was also shared to the District Facebook page.
- **Drafting Financial Models:** Initial financial frameworks were put together for all three potential paths so we'd be ready to move forward the moment a decision was made.

Developing a Revised Budget

During our [special meeting](#) on May 21st, after listening to public feedback, staff input, and board discussions, it was clear that there was overwhelming support for Option 2: creating a newly revised budget.

The biggest benefit of this route is that it allows us to really listen to the community, cut specific spending lines, and adjust revenue expectations to build a balanced budget that our community can support. The main challenge, however, is the incredibly tight turnaround time. We have to make complex decisions about programs and staffing in just one week. The Board must formally adopt the new budget proposal on June 1st to meet New York State's strict deadline for the statewide re-vote date of June 16th. You can watch the full presentation and the public comments from Thursday's meeting on our "Budget Reconsideration" webpage or the District [YouTube page](#). To get this tough work done, we've set up the following public meeting schedule for this week. You are warmly invited to attend any of these sessions, though please keep in mind that formal public comments will be reserved specifically for the Community Forum. Budget workshops will be for Board member discussion and participation only.

Event	Date & Time	Location
Budget Workshop	Tues, May 26th 7:30 pm	MS Cafeteria
Community Forum	Thur, May 28th 7:30 pm	MS Cafeteria
Budget Workshop / Committee Meeting	Fri, May 29th 9:30 am	ES Gymnasium
Special Board Meeting to Adopt New Budget	Mon, Jun 1 6:00 pm	MS Cafeteria

**If we need to add any more meetings, we will update the district calendar and post them right away on the Budget Reconsideration page.*

Clarifying Online Misinformation

We feel it's incredibly important to directly address some inaccurate information floating around social media right now, especially in local Facebook groups and on personal pages. To make sure you're getting the actual, verified facts, we highly encourage you to stick to the [Budget Reconsideration page](#) on our website, which also includes all the presentations from the original budget development process.

While we can't respond to every single post or inaccurate piece of information, we want to clear up a few major examples, some made by AI tools and others shared by individual residents, so you can look at online claims with a careful eye:

- **Student Enrollment Numbers:** The enrollment data shown in a few online graphics changes from post to post and doesn't match our official school records.
- **Superintendent Salaries:** The Greenwood Lake School District has never had a Superintendent named Michael Reynolds, and the salary numbers attached to that name are completely made up. Superintendent Hadden's salary history is also not accurately reflected. Furthermore, our actual administrators and



Greenwood Lake Union Free School District

P.O. Box 8 • Greenwood Lake, NY 10925
(845) 782-8678 x51100 • fax (845) 782-8582
www.gwlufsd.org

Board of Education

boe@gwlufsd.org

Superintendents are not the highest paid in our area; their pay ranks in the bottom third compared to regional averages. On the other hand, our teaching staff's compensation ranks in the top of the top third regionally.

- **Proposed Budget Totals:** A graphic going around online overstates our proposed 2026–2027 budget by about \$6 million more than it actually is.
- **Superintendent Contract Status:** Allegations that Superintendent Hadden ever worked without a contract are false. A Superintendent must have an active contract to hold the position.
- **AI-Generated Budget Analyses:** Automated AI breakdowns being shared online right now are not accurately reading or understanding our school budget.

To sum it up, please take social media commentary with a grain of salt. Generative AI tools are known to "hallucinate" or invent data when they don't have access to complete, original documents. Also, AI outputs depend entirely on what the user asks them to do; if someone tells an AI to look for issues, it will write a critical narrative regardless of the facts. Similarly, parent community members have posted thoughts based on incomplete and/or inaccurate information. The school district website is always your most reliable and accurate source for the truth.

How to Share Your Feedback

Over the coming week, we genuinely want to hear from you. You can share your thoughts in two official ways: by attending and sharing your opinion at our upcoming Community Forum, or by sending an email straight to boe@gwlufsd.org. While we won't be able to send a full, individual reply to every email, we will acknowledge receipt of each one. Please know that your feedback, both via email and the upcoming forum, will be considered and taken to heart, as a part of our decision-making process.

Once the revised budget is set on June 1st, we will introduce a few new ways for the community, district leaders, and the Board to keep talking and working together. We'll post all those details on the Budget Reconsideration page, so please keep an eye on it over the next few weeks.

Public Re-Vote Details

The official budget re-vote will happen on **Tuesday, June 16th, from 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM** at the Greenwood Lake Elementary School (80 Waterstone Road). We really hope to see a great turnout from our community.

A Quick Personal Note

Before we close, we just want to remind you that as your school board trustees, we are also your neighbors, your fellow parents, and taxpayers. We care deeply about our schools, our community, and the future of our kids. The school board is a volunteer job; we give up countless hours of our own time every month to study laws, look at school operations, and handle complex issues because we truly care about Greenwood Lake.

When property taxes go up, our own taxes go up too. When decisions affect the classroom, they affect our own kids. We are fully committed to making sure your voices are represented in every single discussion we have, every choice we weigh, and every vote we cast.

Thank you so much for your partnership as we navigate this process together. Our school district is a reflection of our community, and we are at our best when we are fully engaged, informed, and working toward the same goals. Every vote on June 16th is an investment in our collective future.

Sincerely,

The Greenwood Lake Board of Education