



Greenwood Lake Union Free School District

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GWLUFSD Budget Reconsideration Community Forum/Emailed Questions & Answers

Following the Community Forum held on May 28, residents were invited to submit questions regarding the proposed budget using index cards. Additional questions were also received through email. To make this document as useful and accessible as possible, questions covering similar topics have been consolidated and summarized into common themes. As a result, you may not see your exact question reflected below, but we have worked to ensure that the information provided addresses the substance of the questions received.

The responses included in this document are intended to provide factual, thorough, and transparent information in a written format. While we have made every effort to answer questions as completely as possible, some topics involve circumstances, discussions, or considerations that are difficult to fully capture in writing. In addition, certain matters cannot be discussed publicly due to privacy requirements, legal constraints, or personnel confidentiality.

The Board of Education takes its responsibility to the Greenwood Lake community seriously. Board members devote significant time to reviewing information, participating in committee work, asking questions, considering multiple perspectives, and evaluating the long-term impact of decisions. We recognize that not everyone will agree with every decision that is made, and some questions may lead to differing viewpoints. However, all decisions are made with careful consideration of both fiscal responsibility and the educational needs of our students.

We appreciate the engagement, questions, and feedback received throughout this process. An informed and involved community is an important part of a strong school district, and we hope the information provided below helps to answer questions and provide greater understanding of the factors considered during budget development and Board decision-making.

Q: What will/did the Board decide about which revised budget plan to adopt?

A: The Board initially considered a budget reduction of approximately \$1.1 million. During the Community Forum, there was significant support for replacing the elementary school fire alarm system, and that item received the highest level of support in the community survey for restoration to the budget.

After considering community feedback and reviewing available options, the Board adopted a revised budget of \$32,042,475, representing a reduction of \$703,605 from the originally proposed budget. The revised budget includes a tax levy increase of 4.25%.

For the average homeowner, this is estimated to result in an annual tax increase of approximately \$220.28, or about \$18.36 per month, pending the finalization of property tax assessments over the summer.

Additional information regarding the revised budget and its impact will be provided in a forthcoming newsletter.

Q: Why is the budget line for substitute teachers \$331,910?

A: The substitute teacher budget line is \$262,135 in both the original proposed budget and the revised budget. The \$331,910 figure referenced in the question does not reflect the amount budgeted for substitutes.

This budget line covers substitute staffing across multiple positions, including teachers, teaching assistants, aides, main office staff, and nurses. Daily substitute rates are approved annually by the Board of Education, typically during its July organizational meeting. A copy of the approved rates from the prior year is provided in the table below for reference.

The budget line also includes funding for long-term substitutes. Long-term substitutes are certified individuals who assume the full responsibilities of the employee they are replacing during an extended absence. These individuals are generally compensated at the entry-level salary for the position they are filling, prorated for the duration of the assignment.

For example, if a classroom teacher takes a six-week FMLA leave, a certified long-term substitute filling that role would be paid at Step 1 of the teacher salary schedule, prorated for the period of service.

2025-2026 Tutoring/Substitutes Rates

Substitute Position	Substitute Hourly Rate	Substitute Daily Rate	Retiree Hourly Rate	Retiree Daily Rate
Tutoring	\$ 40.00 per hour	-----	\$ 50.00 per hour	----
Certified Teacher Substitute	----	\$ 145.00 per day	----	\$ 160.00 per day
Non-Certified Teacher Substitute	----	\$ 125.00 per day	----	\$ 140.00 per day
Teaching Assistant Substitute	\$ 18.00 per hour	----	----	----
Teacher Aide Substitute	\$ 16.00 per hour	----	\$ 17.50 per hour	----
School Bus Driver Substitute	\$ 23.00 per hour	----	----	----
School Bus Monitor Substitute	\$ 16.00 per hour	----	----	----
Nurse Substitute	----	\$ 200.00 per day	----	\$ 215.00 per day \$ 30.72 per hour
Business Office Staff Substitute	\$ 19.00 per hour	----	\$ 22.80 per hour	----
Main Office Staff Substitute	\$ 17.50 per hour	----	----	----
Cook Substitute	\$ 23.00 per hour	----	----	----
Foodservice Helper Substitute	\$ 17.00 per hour	----	----	----
Custodial Substitute	\$ 17.00 per hour	----	----	----

Q: Why are there not substitutes for classes like Response to Intervention?

A: There are several reasons for this. First and foremost, the District believes students are best served by remaining with one of their regular, fully certified classroom teachers whenever possible. When students receive Rtl services, they are typically working with a fully certified teacher who has received additional training and professional development to support students with academic needs. Because very few of our substitute teachers hold the same certifications, or have knowledge regarding the student's needs, the District has directed Rtl teachers who are absent to provide work for students to complete in their homeroom classrooms under the supervision of their regular classroom teachers. In some cases, students simply rejoin their classmates for the homeroom activity taking place during that time. The District believes this approach provides greater continuity of instruction and support than assigning students to work with a substitute teacher unable to meaningfully deliver the interventions needed for students being serviced.

In addition, there are rarely enough substitute teachers available to cover all staff absences on a given day. When substitutes are limited, the District prioritizes filling absences for homeroom and special area teachers (such as art, music, and physical education) to ensure appropriate safety, supervision and maintenance of students' daily schedules.

There is also contractual language in the Teachers' Contract that states, "A substitute teacher will be provided to cover for any classroom teacher's absence, unless the teacher teaches students who are pulled-out of regular classes for instruction." The contract then provides examples such as social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, instrumental music lessons, and speech and language services. Because Rtl services involve students being pulled from their regular classrooms for instruction, the District has a longstanding practice of applying the above referenced contractual language to Rtl teachers as well as the other titles that are enumerated as examples within the Teachers' Contract.

Please note that this matter is currently at the arbitration step of the contractual grievance process.

Q: Why is tutoring on the list for being cut? Isn't that paid out of grant money?

A: Tutoring is funded through a combination of Title grant funds and district budget funds. While tutoring was identified as a potential area for reduction, the revised budget does not eliminate tutoring services. Instead, the district-funded portion of tutoring has been reduced by approximately 50%.

In addition, the District may need to maximize the use of available grant funding to help offset budget reductions in other areas where legally permissible and aligned with grant requirements. However, because grant funds are restricted to specific purposes and uses, they cannot simply be used to replace all reductions made to the general budget.

Q: Can a District go out for a capital project vote while under a contingency budget?

A: Yes. Under New York State law, a school district may present a capital project or bond proposition to voters for consideration even while operating under a contingency budget.

That said, feedback received through the Community Forum survey showed strong support for including the elementary school fire alarm replacement in the revised budget. As a result, the

Board intends to adopt a revised budget that continues to include funding for the fire alarm project.

If the revised budget is not approved by voters and the District is required to operate under a contingency budget, the District would need to pursue a separate bond vote to complete the fire alarm replacement project. Bonding a project means borrowing the funds needed to complete the work and repaying that debt over time, with interest.

Q: Is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Pupil Personnel Services in the revised budget?

A: Yes. The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Pupil Personnel Services position is included in the revised budget.

This position was created by combining the responsibilities of two previous administrative roles: the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. Consolidating these positions resulted in cost savings for the District while maintaining oversight of both instructional programming and student support services.

To provide additional context on the scope of responsibilities, a link to the prior Director of Curriculum and Instruction job description and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services job description is included [here](#). These descriptions reflect the foundation of the responsibilities now largely housed under the Assistant Superintendent title. A final page has also been added to outline additional duties assigned to the Assistant Superintendent, including responsibilities that will be reassigned due to the elimination of the Assistant Principal position.

Some updates and annotations reflect changes in how duties are currently structured, including responsibilities now supported by the CPSE/CSE Chair, a teacher leadership position. Because the Assistant Superintendent role carries a broad scope of responsibilities, it is also supported by an instructional coach, another teacher leadership position.

Teacher leaders serve as a bridge between classroom instruction and administration. They support instructional improvement, contribute to school culture, and help strengthen student achievement through collaboration and leadership within the school community.

Q: How was the restructuring of the administration team decided? How was the recent change to eliminate the Assistant Principal decided?

A: The restructuring of the administrative team has occurred over time through Board action as part of the District's annual budget and organizational planning process.

In 2024, based on a [restructuring plan](#) developed by the Superintendent, the Board approved changes to the organizational chart that eliminated two Director positions and replaced them with an Assistant Superintendent and an Assistant Principal position. At the time, the proposal identified several intended benefits, including cost savings, increased stability for students and staff, expanded opportunities for teacher leadership and career advancement, and additional administrative support for student discipline. Opportunities for advancement do not guarantee placement into any position. This proposal was presented publicly in July 2024 and also posted

on the District website. Additionally, a [Q&A document](#) specific to the administration restructuring plan addressing follow-up questions was developed.

In December 2025, the Assistant Superintendent of Business retired. Following that retirement, the Board restructured the business office, reducing the position to a Business Official and reassigning oversight responsibilities for Buildings and Grounds, Food Services, and Transportation to the Superintendent's Office. These changes further reduced administrative costs and are expected to generate additional savings once the Assistant Principal position is eliminated at the next available opportunity.

In March 2026, during a budget workshop, the Board of Education discussed and ultimately decided to eliminate the Assistant Principal position at the next available opportunity (such as a resignation or retirement). This decision was made in the context of ongoing budget planning.

Q: For the revised budget, how did you decide what additional positions to cut beyond the assistant principal? Can you tell us what positions?

A: The Superintendent met with all department heads and academic administrators to review the impact of the failed budget and to develop a revised budget that met a lower tax levy target and reduced reliance on reserves and other one-time funds. During these meetings, each leader was asked to identify potential cost-saving measures, including reductions or eliminations of programs, services, supplies, and equipment.

Through this process, it became clear that the targeted budget reduction could not be achieved without also considering reductions in staffing. As a result, discussions took place regarding positions, roles, and responsibilities, with a focus on minimizing the impact on students, staff, and the District's ability to maintain essential services.

After review, the Superintendent accepted the recommendations provided by each department and administrative leader as part of the revised budget development process.

Staff reductions are governed by state laws and applicable collective bargaining agreements for each bargaining unit, which outline the procedures for position eliminations and notifications to affected individuals. In accordance with these agreements and standard practice, individuals are informed of potential impacts before specific details are made public.

The list of positions affected by reductions will be made public prior to the budget vote, but only after all impacted employees have been notified directly.

Q: Can you please publicly post the salary ranges for the teachers? How does their salary get determined? How does GWL compare to other Districts? Do any Board members benefit from these contracts?

A: Below are the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 salary schedules for teachers. These schedules reflect the publicly negotiated salary rates for members of the teachers' bargaining unit.

Teacher salaries are determined through a negotiated collective bargaining agreement between the District and the teachers' union. Pay is based on two factors: educational level (such as BA,

MA, or additional graduate credits beyond a degree) and years of service (referred to as “steps”). Teachers advance one step each year, and a new salary schedule is established for each contract year.

In addition to the salary schedule, teachers may receive contractual benefits and additional compensation for certain assignments and responsibilities. Depending on an individual's role, compensation may also include health insurance and other negotiated benefits, longevity payments, club advisorships, coaching positions, tutoring, curriculum writing, summer work, and other approved extracurricular or supplemental assignments.

For a base salary example, a teacher at MA Step 13 in the current school year earns \$94,907. The following year, that same teacher would advance to MA Step 14, with a salary of \$98,915, based on the adopted schedule.

As for Board members, there are currently two Board trustees whose spouses are employed within the teachers’ bargaining unit. These trustees do not participate in the monetary aspects of negotiations related to that contract. When matters involving the teachers’ unit are discussed, they recuse themselves from any financial or compensation-related deliberations to avoid any conflict of interest.

The District does not keep contracts of other Districts nor maintain a comparison of District to District salaries.

25-26							
Step	BA	BA30	MA 25-26	BA60	MA30	MA60	PHD
1	64,161	69,088	70,883	74,029	75,807	80,751	84,914
2	66,667	71,601	73,386	76,536	78,315	83,264	87,424
3	68,368	73,307	75,087	78,239	80,019	84,966	89,125
4	70,223	75,162	76,942	80,094	81,875	86,818	90,980
5	72,905	77,842	79,623	82,773	84,556	89,498	93,662
6	74,108	79,048	80,831	83,981	85,761	90,704	94,867
7	75,314	80,252	82,039	85,186	86,966	91,909	96,074
8	77,729	82,664	84,450	87,600	89,373	94,318	98,483
9	78,937	83,871	85,655	88,806	90,581	95,525	99,689
10	80,142	85,076	86,860	90,010	91,791	96,730	100,894
11	82,552	87,485	89,271	92,421	94,199	99,140	103,308
12	84,959	89,894	91,685	94,831	96,611	101,555	105,719
13	87,374	92,305	94,097	97,245	99,020	103,966	108,126
14	89,784	94,718	96,503	99,656	101,429	106,375	110,538
15	92,196	97,128	98,915	102,065	103,843	108,787	112,947
16	94,606	99,540	101,326	104,476	106,253	111,200	115,365
17	97,120	102,060	103,843	106,993	108,769	113,718	117,875
18	102,393	107,328	109,113	112,263	114,037	118,982	123,145
19	105,180	110,118	111,901	115,049	116,829	121,771	125,938
20	107,972	112,907	114,698	117,840	119,619	124,565	128,729
21	111,588	116,525	118,308	121,461	123,238	128,184	132,346
22	115,206	120,142	121,926	125,076	126,856	131,799	135,962

26-27							
Step	BA	BA30	MA	BA60	MA30	MA60	PHD
1	65,765	70,815	72,655	75,880	77,702	82,770	87,036
2	68,334	73,391	75,221	78,450	80,273	85,346	89,609
3	70,077	75,140	76,964	80,195	82,019	87,090	91,353
4	71,979	77,041	78,866	82,096	83,922	88,988	93,254
5	74,728	79,788	81,614	84,843	86,670	91,736	96,003
6	75,961	81,024	82,852	86,080	87,905	92,971	97,239
7	77,197	82,258	84,090	87,316	89,140	94,207	98,476
8	79,673	84,731	86,561	89,790	91,607	96,676	100,945
9	80,910	85,967	87,797	91,026	92,846	97,913	102,181
10	82,145	87,203	89,031	92,260	94,085	99,148	103,417
11	84,616	89,673	91,503	94,731	96,554	101,619	105,891
12	87,083	92,141	93,977	97,202	99,026	104,094	108,362
13	89,559	94,613	96,450	99,676	101,496	106,565	110,829
14	92,029	97,086	98,915	102,148	103,964	109,034	113,302
15	94,500	99,556	101,388	104,616	106,439	111,506	115,771
16	96,971	102,029	103,859	107,088	108,909	113,980	118,249
17	99,548	104,611	106,439	109,667	111,488	116,560	120,822
18	104,953	110,011	111,841	115,069	116,888	121,957	126,223
19	107,810	112,871	114,698	117,925	119,750	124,815	129,086
20	110,671	115,730	117,565	120,786	122,610	127,679	131,948
21	114,377	119,438	121,266	124,497	126,319	131,388	135,655
22	118,087	123,146	124,974	128,202	130,028	135,094	139,361

Q: When replacing the fire alarm, does it go to the lowest bidder?

A: District can bid capital projects, and yes, typically the work goes to the lowest bidder. Work can also be done on what’s called “state contract” which is a list of vendors approved by the state for certain services and products. The NYS Office of General Services pre-negotiate master contracts that all state agencies, local government, and local governments can then utilize.

Q: Why are custodial salaries in the budget for \$531,000?

A: The District employs ten full-time custodians. One serves as the Head Custodian, and the remaining nine are custodial staff assigned to either daytime or evening shifts.

During the school day, three custodians are on duty: two assigned to the elementary and middle school buildings, and one responsible for maintaining outside grounds at the middle school. The remaining custodians work an evening shift focused on cleaning classrooms and common areas after students and instructional staff have left for the day, ensuring the buildings are ready for the next school day.

The salary range for the Head Custodian position is \$52,000 to \$61,000. The salary range for the remaining custodial staff is \$43,000 to \$51,000. The total custodial salary budget of \$531,000 reflects the combined salaries of these ten full-time employees based on these contractual salary ranges and individual placement within them.

Q: Will police and/or security be reduced in the new budget?

A: There is no reduction to police or security items in the revised budget.

Q: Can you please share information about the following topics: request for additional homerooms to be added to grade levels, class size, high school tuition rates, and our administrator staff.

A: These topics—including additional homerooms by grade level, class size, high school tuition rates, and administrative staffing—are complex and are best understood in the broader context of a full presentation rather than a brief written summary.

A detailed [presentation](#) addressing these topics was shared at the May Board of Education meeting. That presentation is available for review, along with full commentary and explanation in the meeting video, which can be accessed [here](#), with the presentation discussion beginning at approximately the 2:50 mark.

A Note on High School Tuition:

High school tuition contract rates are determined by state regulations. As previously communicated, the District is currently paying a higher total tuition amount than in prior contracts. While this approach is designed to ensure fairness between sending and receiving districts, it has resulted in a measurable financial impact on the budget.

The District believes this cost is manageable within the current financial plan; however, it is also recognizes that earlier understanding of the full budgetary impact may have influenced how the most recent contract was structured, potentially spreading increases over a longer period.

As the District prepares for upcoming tuition contract negotiations, it will seek legal guidance and a deeper comparative analysis of how other K–8 districts structure tuition arrangements, including whether alternative calculation methods beyond the state-provided rate are used, and whether similar approaches could be considered locally in order to reduce the overall cost of tuition.