



White Plains Public School District

2018-19 Budget

FAQ

In an effort to engage community members in the budget process, the District created an email (Budget@wpcsd.us) specifically for community members to submit questions about the budget. As a result, we have reflected these questions from the PTA, Finance Committee, Board of Education, and others to help inform the community regarding the 2018-19 Proposed Budget and related Propositions.

I. Budget, Tax Levy, and Tax Rate Increase:

Q. What is the Budget to Budget increase for 2018-19?

A. The budget to budget increase reflects 2.08% and will be voted upon by the taxpayers of White Plains on May 15, 2018.

Q. Is the District compliant with the Tax Levy Cap Law?

A. Yes. The District's Proposed Tax Levy is in accordance with New York State Chapter 97 of the Laws of 2011.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnpN9p8Tq9g>

Q. What is the Tax Levy increase?

A. The Allowable Tax Levy Limit is 3.42%, which is within the tax cap as permitted by law.

Q. What is the Tax Rate increase? What will the additional cost be each year?

A. The estimated tax increase is 2.88%. On an average home assessed at \$15,000, the increase is \$270 per year or \$22.50 per month.

Q. What is the difference between the Tax Rate and the Tax Levy?

A. The Tax Levy is the amount of revenue, which must be raised from taxpayers to fund the General Fund Appropriations Budget/Operating Budget.

The Tax Rate is established based on the Tax levy and the taxable assessed property value of a home.

Q. Where can voters find the line by line details for this Proposed Budget?

A. The Proposed Budget will be available on the District's website, in local libraries, and in school buildings.

Q. How much state aid did the Governor's Executive Proposal provide White Plains Public Schools?

A. 0.25% or \$33,488. The proposed increase in aid is not enough to support the contractual obligations of the District, nor is it in-line with the rate of inflation.

II. *Long-Range Planning:*

Q. Does the District prepare a five-year long-range plan?

A. Yes. The District prepares the following long-range plans in support of its Strategic Plan:

- Instructional
- Technology
- Demographic
- Infrastructure

Based on those plans, a long-range financial plan is developed and serves as the basis for the annual development of the budget.

Q. What population trends do we see in the next few years? Can the school district properly accommodate any increase in the number of students and how will this effect class-size in our primary and secondary schools? Do our schools have space to accommodate an increase in the student population?

A. Each year the District obtains an update to its demographic study and last year commissioned a space utilization study of all of its facilities. Based on this information and the 2016 Building Condition Survey report, which is required to be completed every five years by an architect/engineer, the District is establishing a Master Planning Committee to address the issues of capacity, infrastructure, and instructional program needs. Presently, the enrollment trend remains "flat." The Master Planning Committee will present recommendations regarding increases in enrollment and physical space needs.

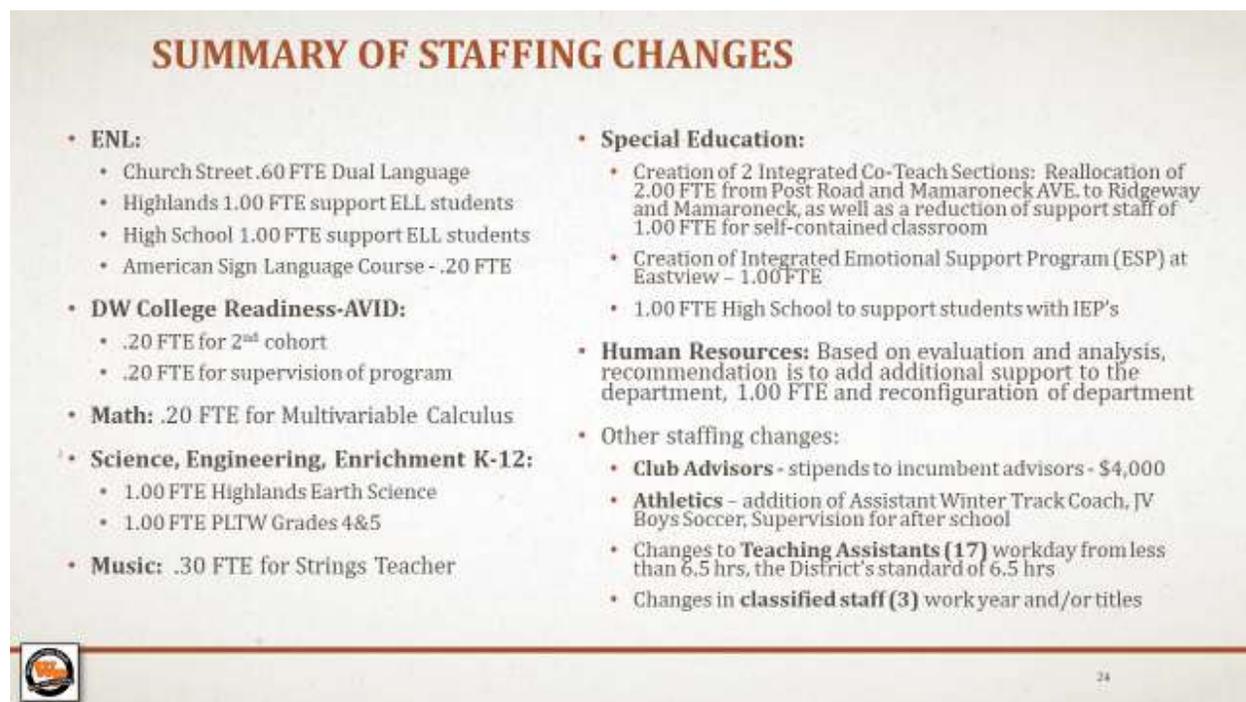
Q. With the addition of dual language section at Church Street Elementary School, is the District now meeting the demand of incoming ENL students? Are we in compliance with state regulations? Are any additional funds included in the proposed budget for the expansion of the dual language program?

A. Yes. The District is in compliance with the state regulations for ENL students.

Yes, there are additional funds for a dual language .60 FTE teacher at Church Street Elementary School.

Q. What are the total number of additional staffing positions included in the proposed budget and is it sustainable?

A. The proposed budget includes 7.70 FTE positions. The long-range financial plan was updated based on the proposed budget for the next five years to ensure sustainability.



SUMMARY OF STAFFING CHANGES

- **ENL:**
 - Church Street .60 FTE Dual Language
 - Highlands 1.00 FTE support ELL students
 - High School 1.00 FTE support ELL students
 - American Sign Language Course - .20 FTE
- **DW College Readiness-AVID:**
 - .20 FTE for 2nd cohort
 - .20 FTE for supervision of program
- **Math:** .20 FTE for Multivariable Calculus
- **Science, Engineering, Enrichment K-12:**
 - 1.00 FTE Highlands Earth Science
 - 1.00 FTE PLTW Grades 4&5
- **Music:** .30 FTE for Strings Teacher
- **Special Education:**
 - Creation of 2 Integrated Co-Teach Sections: Reallocation of 2.00 FTE from Post Road and Mamaroneck AVE. to Ridgeway and Mamaroneck, as well as a reduction of support staff of 1.00 FTE for self-contained classroom
 - Creation of Integrated Emotional Support Program (ESP) at Eastview - 1.00 FTE
 - 1.00 FTE High School to support students with IEP's
- **Human Resources:** Based on evaluation and analysis, recommendation is to add additional support to the department, 1.00 FTE and reconfiguration of department
- **Other staffing changes:**
 - **Club Advisors** - stipends to incumbent advisors - \$4,000
 - **Athletics** - addition of Assistant Winter Track Coach, JV Boys Soccer, Supervision for after school
 - Changes to **Teaching Assistants (17)** workday from less than 6.5 hrs, the District's standard of 6.5 hrs
 - Changes in **classified staff (3)** work year and/or titles



24

III. Cost Containment:

Q. What is the District doing to reduce costs and enhance efficiencies?

A. The District is constantly reviewing its operations in order to realize efficiencies in an effort to reallocate resources to enhance and improve the instructional program.

During this past year, the District has undertaken the following initiatives in terms of finding efficiencies:

- Transportation study that should yield significant savings, as well as provide transportation to grades 9-12
- Review of its copy/print services
- Use of the capital reserve fund for major renovation projects that will save taxpayer dollars in not having to issues serial bonds
- Implementation of the instructional review process

Q. What is the cost of health insurance to the District? How much do teachers contribute? How is this decided?

A. The District is part of a consortium “State-Wide Schools Consortium Health Plan” or SWSCHP. The District periodically compares this plan to other plans in the market place to ensure price competitiveness. Based on a recent review, this plan is significantly less costly than the New York State Health Insurance Plan. The total cost to the district is \$27.9.

Teachers contribute toward the premium based on the terms and conditions of their bargaining unit agreement. Currently, the contribution towards the premium is 14.25%.

Q. Are our Administrative costs too high?

A. The District actually has the lowest level of administrative expenses as compared to the Lower-Hudson Region of school districts. Most districts have administrative/general government support at 10% or more of their overall operating budget. The White Plains Public School District proposed budget includes administrative costs at 7.94% for 2018-19 school year.

Q. What is the total cost of special education? Why is there an increase in the cost of out-of-district placed students?

A. Proposed budget for Special Education:

General Fund = \$23,630,266

Special Aid Fund (611&619) = \$1,936,652 (17-18)

Students with disabilities are provided services to address their individual needs to facilitate achievement of competencies required to meet the New York State Standards. Programs are developed to accommodate the educational needs of the students currently in district programs, those returning from out-of-district placements, and those entering from pre-school special classes, as well as to support students to attain the Regents standards. Teachers offer both inclusive and special education classes. Special Education programs and services comply with all federal and state mandates.

For 2018-19, the out-of-district placed students (BOCES, Private & Public Schools) remain at 67, the same number as in 2017-18. However, the anticipated placement and related services cost per the students' IEP are different, which is the reason for the increased cost in 2018-19.

IV. *Safety and Security:*

Q. Have any funds/measures been added to the proposed budget related to the safety and security of our students?

A. Yes. On an on-going basis, the District has been addressing the safety and security of our students. In addition, the District conducted a security assessment through the summer of 2017. Enhancements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Additional security cameras
- Additional 2-way radios
- Classroom locking hardware
- Exterior speakers & lighting
- Card access and "door ajar" alarms
- Security film for glass windows and doors
- Additional shades
- Enhanced burglar alarms
- Increase cell phone coverage

Q. Are any additional funds necessary to achieve the recent Security Audit recommendations?

A. Yes. For 2018-19, based upon the recommendations of the Security Audit, the following areas will be addressed:

- District-Wide Visitor Management System
- Card Reader/Keypad
- Exterior classroom numbering
- Emergency egress maps
- Exterior door numbering
- Lock-down/panic system
- Classroom emergency management instructions
- Classroom “Go Kits”
- District Security Liaison
- Cyber monitoring

Q. Are any additional funds included in the budget, or should be considered, regarding the soft side of safety and security, i.e. emotional support, counseling, etc.?

A. Yes, the proposed budget fully supports the District’s pupil personnel services department and allows for psychological and counseling services, as well as additional emotional and social supports at all schools.

V. *Instructional Programs:*

Q. English Language Arts: With the increased usage of iPads at the middle school level, what degree of library upgrades are required? Are more students reading books/textbooks online or are they still using traditional methods? Is there any discussion on enhancing grammar, presentation skills and essay writing at the secondary levels to address colleges’ recent emphasis on communication skills?

A. Library upgrades are required to ensure that our students have access to literature for independent and small group reading.

In classrooms, iPads are used to access the internet, manage classroom files, complete assignments, and to integrate multi-media resources. Publishers of textbooks and instructional materials have increasingly supported blended environments, having both a hard copy and online component. In addition, the online component is often integrated so that hyperlinks direct students to documents, videos, and other supplemental resources.

In alignment with standards, we will continue to emphasize the development of strong communication skills at all levels.

Q. Is it anticipated that the middle and high school PTAs will still be requested to provide grants towards Shakespeare Artist in Residence programs?

A. Yes, the Shakespeare residencies are paid via the coordination of grant funding (Title I, HVSF, PTA, and Friends of WP). We are planning on the continuation of the same level of support so that we can maintain the existing structure.

Q. World Languages - Is the proposed sign language course a one-year course?

A. The American Sign Language course is a one-year course.

Q. AVID - The first class of AVID students graduated in June 2017. Did those students “achieve success” or were they college bound at a higher rate than their peers?

A. In June 2017, all of the students in the graduating AVID cohort were accepted into four-year and/or two-year colleges. They also received a substantial amount of funding via scholarship. The Coordinator of ELA 6-12, whose responsibilities include the supervision of the AVID program, is in the process of compiling this data.

Q. Math – Are we still using the Envisions math curriculum? Is the recommended new textbook series related to Envisions or a new program? Next year’s senior class is the first cohort of students who started the double accelerated math track. How many students have continued on this track and are there enough students for the multivariable calculus class?

A. At the elementary level, we are currently using the Envision Math program. We have convened a Math Task Force and have been reviewing and evaluating various programs for future adoption. One of the programs that we are considering is enVision Math 2.0 (which is the newer version of enVision Math). Other programs under consideration include Math in Focus, Investigations 3, Big Ideas Math, and GoMath. We are conducting lesson trials and the plan is to make a proposal to the Board of Education in May 2018. The plan is to support the implementation of a new math program in grades K-2 in the 2018-2019 school year and 3-5 in the 2019-2020 school year.

Currently, we have 37 students taking AP Calculus AB and 54 students in AP Calculus BC. (I need to double check these numbers with Al Laporte). We are estimating that 15 students will continue to the MVC/Calculus III level.

Q. Science - Do we anticipate all students will be able to succeed in 8th grade Earth Science? Is there an incremental cost for additional labs, etc.?

A. We are committed to supporting the success of all 8th grade students in Earth Science. This will be accomplished by providing the appropriate scaffolds in the classroom. Depending on need, we will also be considering extra support via extended day opportunities. There will be cost for additional textbooks and lab materials.

Q. Any thoughts on expanding alternative programs/apprenticeship/vocational studies at Rochambeau?

A. The District has been visiting schools to learn about their programming and approaches in an effort to continually improve our offerings at Rochambeau. Presently, the Rochambeau School community launched a mentoring program and will continue to study innovative opportunities to provide enriching experiences to our students.

Q. Is pre-k included in the proposed budget or do we simply oversee the program?

A. The District receives state funding for its pre-k program, which is accounted for in a separate restricted fund. The District contracts with various agencies to service our children and District administration oversees the administration of the program.

Q. Is there any money allocated to reading intervention in elementary school, teaching assistants in classes K-3, classroom teacher related services collaboration, and STEM for all students?

A. Reading Intervention: We have reading teachers and learning facilitators in each building. There are trained Wilson teachers in each elementary and middle school. In addition, our Extended Day programs are designed to provide additional support.

Teaching Assistants: At the elementary level, non-mandated teaching assistants support students during ELA instruction.

Related Services: Teachers collaborate with related service providers on an ongoing basis to support classified and non-classified students.

STEM: Next year, we plan to have the Project Lead the Way STEM program in all elementary grades. This is an enrichment opportunity for all elementary students. There are classes at the middle school that include PLTW modules, and, at the high school, there is a PLTW *Pathways to Engineering* strand and a PLTW *Computer Science* strand.

VI. *Non-Instructional Budgets:*

Q. Athletics – Discuss necessary training and accommodations for the academic study center proposed in the proposed budget.

A. Teachers will be providing academic support to students between the end of the school day and the start of athletic programs. No additional training is necessary.

- Q. Technology - How much does the proposed budget include for middle school iPads and are we considering necessary computer upgrades in the next few years? Are there a funds to support lost /damaged iPads for Highlands' students? As discussed at the Feb 26th BOE meeting, will a survey be conducted for Eastview participants on iPad usage (challenges/successes)?
- A. The technology long-range plan provides for the continued roll-out of 1:1 devices for students, as well as a refresh cycle of three years for its District-Wide technology devices. A program has been in place for lost/damaged devices. Yes, the Director of Technology will be conducting a survey as described in February.
- Q. Facilities – When will the intercom and public address system be complete at the high school?
- A. The high school intercom system was one of the 2017-18 capital projects submitted to the State for approval. It is anticipated that the system will be completed by the end of September, 2018.
- Q. Does the Facilities or Capital Project Budgets call for lockers in grades 3, 4 & 5?
- A. Yes, the District has a plan for replacements at each of the Elementary schools.
- Q. Capital Reserve Fund - Are there contingency funds in the proposed spending plan to allow for overages?
- A. The District is obligated to stay within the amount approved by the voters. If there are any bids for construction projects that come in higher than the amount approved, the District will reduce the scope of projects or rebid as appropriate.
- Q. Were there any remaining funds, or significant overages, from the last debt issuance?
- A. We are currently finalizing the various projects from the last debt issuance. There were no overages, and there will likely be a small remaining balance that is required by law to be held to reduce the debt associated with the projects.
- Q. Were all buildings considered equally in the spending plan of the reserve?
- A. The proposed capital project is based upon the State required 2016 Building Condition Survey through the District's architect. The items selected as part of this project are those that ranked the highest in terms of priority in accordance with the survey.
- Q. Will all buildings have at least one air-conditioned common area to house students on severely hot days?
- A. All buildings will have air conditioned cafeterias and auditoriums with the completion of the 2017-18 and 2018-19 projects.

- Q. The Capital Reserve Fund was established in May 2016. How much money is currently in the fund?
- A. As of June 30, 2018 it is estimated that the Reserve Fund will have a balance of \$16 million.
- Q. Assuming the proposition is approved, when is the work anticipated to begin and will there be any major disruptions to the students?
- A. The majority of the project is related to roof replacements, which can only be done when school is not in session. The District approved the architect in the fall 2017 to start the design work. The goal is to have approval by the State and bidding complete in time for work to begin this summer and be completed by the start of school in September, 2018.
- Q. Pupil Transportation – In the bus rerouting analysis, what does it mean that bus routes are being consolidated?
- A. Based on the rerouting analysis, it was revealed that the District is running more bus routes in the pm than in the am. In an effort to be more efficient, the routes in the pm were consolidated to reduce the number of buses servicing the same number of students.
- Q. Will buses stop at multiple schools to pick up/drop off students?
- A. No, nothing will change. Buses will not be picking up/dropping off at multiple schools.
- Q. What consideration was included in the analysis for anticipated higher participation in high school busing?
- A. The District was conservative in its estimates of ridership in anticipation of an increase.
- Q. In the Proposition, can it read that, “... estimated annual cost of \$166,000 will be offset with savings from the reduction of buses needed”?
- A. Unfortunately, according to Education Law we cannot state in the proposition that it will be offset by other savings.
- Q. Is there any impact on the late middle school buses?
- A. There is no impact on the middle school late buses.

Q. Do we need to include busing to Stepinac?

A. Yes. The law requires us to provide the same service to students attending private schools within the boundaries of the City, as we do to the White Plains Public Schools, similar to what we currently provide for students in grades K-8. Both Stepinac and the German High Schools, have been factored into our estimates, with less than 100 students anticipated.

Q. Where there any significant additions to the proposed budget for employee health and pension benefits?

A. The health insurance plan premiums are scheduled to increase at a blended rate of 3-5%, which is substantially less than the market rate increase of 13%.

The New York State Employees' Retirement System plan rate will decrease by 2.60%.

The New York State Teachers' Retirement System plan will increase by 8.5%.

Q. When will teacher/administrator contracts be up for renegotiation?

The CSEA and Substitute contracts are expiring in June of 2018. The Teachers' and Administrators' will expire in June of 2019.

VII. Communication Plan:

Q. How will the 2018-19 proposed budget plan and the Propositions for the use of the Capital Reserve and High School Transportation be communicated?

A. In addition to regular meetings of the Board of Education, formal presentations, and useful tools such as this FAQ, the District will create newsletters to be mailed to all residents and post this information on the District's website and social media accounts. The District will also conduct information sessions with each of the PTAs, staff and local stakeholders.