

Wynantskill

Union Free School District

MAY 2014

THE 2014-2015 PROPOSED DISTRICT BUDGET

VOTE: Tuesday, May 20, 2014 • 12 – 9 p.m. • Gardner Dickinson School

On Tuesday, May 20, the Wynantskill UFSD community will vote on a proposed 2014-15 school budget that requires no cuts to programs or staff, maintains class sizes and creates new opportunities for students in reading, physical education and an elective for 8th graders.

The \$8,505,104 budget increases spending by \$334,552 over the current year and requires an estimated 1.06% increase in the tax levy. This is the fourth year in a row the tax levy increase would be 2% or lower.

The proposed budget is within New York State's Property Tax Cap. The district can increase its tax levy by 2.45% and still be

"We would like to thank parents, community members, faculty and staff who helped provide guidance through our Strategic Planning Team and our two study groups."

within the cap. While state officials often tout the law as a "2% tax cap," the law actually uses a formula to calculate each district's allowable increase.

"It was important to the Board of Education and administration to keep the tax levy increase below the property tax cap while still strengthening

our existing programs with more enhanced opportunities for students," said Superintendent Lee Bordick.

The proposed budget would create a new Honors English elective for 8th graders, provide a new K-8 reading program, offer structured recess for K-5, and increase physical education time (see page 2).

"We would like to thank parents, community members, faculty and staff who helped provide guidance through our Strategic Planning Team and our two study groups," said Mr. Bordick. "Their input helped us identify areas we could strengthen."

In addition to the budget vote proposition, community members will also vote on two others. The first proposition would authorize the district to purchase one 66-passenger bus as part of the district's bus replacement program. The district is reimbursed with 71% state aid for the bus purchase (see page 3).

The second proposition is to create a Capital Reserve fund which would allow the district to set aside up to \$2.5 million over five years to address infrastructure needs. The Capital Reserve fund would have no impact on the tax levy because it would be funded largely from future reserves (see page 4).

Voting will be held from noon to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20 in Gardner-Dickinson School's band room.



Whether its 4th graders reading to kindergarteners, 8th graders teaching science to elementary students, or 2nd graders showing 5th graders the books they wrote, Gardner-Dickinson students help encourage their classmates no matter what grade they're in.

What Will I Be Voting on May 20?

A \$8,505,104 budget for the 2014-15 school year

- The budget requires a 1.06% tax levy increase.
- Fourth year in a row the tax levy increase would be 2% or less.

Two seats on the Board of Education

- Phyllis Razzano, Katrina Dinan, Jennifer Price and Patricia Gray are running for two seats on the Board of Education (see page 4).

Proposition to purchase one 66-passenger school bus

- Cost not to exceed \$110,000
- State reimburses district for 71% of cost
- No impact on local school taxes (see page 3)

Proposition to create a Capital Reserve Fund

- Used to set aside funds for long-term district building and grounds needs
- No impact on the 2014-15 school budget
- Future voter approval will be needed to use any of funding (see page 4)

Budget Builds on Reading and Writing Efforts

To conclude their class project, second graders showed off the books they wrote on April 18 by reading and discussing their work with students from other grades.

Led by their teachers Karin Carmody and Kathleen Cronin, students spent weeks researching authors using print and online materials, writing to a local author and finally writing their own books.

“The better we can prepare our students to read and write, the more successful they will be.”

“We try to do an Author Study to expose students to different styles of writing,”

explained Mrs. Cronin. “By letting them pick their own topic to write about, their interest went through the roof.”

The class project is just one example of an increased emphasis on reading and writing at Gardner-Dickinson School, where students and parents often read to students throughout the year.

The proposed 2014-15 school budget builds on those efforts by creating a new K-8 reading program. The program will provide a framework for reading K-8, allowing teachers in all grade levels to work together to help students build stronger skills.

“The better we can prepare our students to read and write, the more successful they will be,” said Superintendent Lee Bordick.



Budget Increases Physical Education Opportunities

To provide more physical education opportunities for students, the proposed 2014-15 school budget would increase the number of physical education teachers from 1.5 to two.

The addition would ensure Gardner-Dickinson School meets state requirements for physical education. It would also provide K-5 students with structured activities during their school recess.

New York State requires all K-12 students to participate in a physical education program for at least 120 minutes per week.

Students in K-3 must participate in physical education on a daily basis. Students in grades 4-6 must participate at least three times per week. Students in grades 7-12 must participate at least three times a week in one semester and at least twice a week in the other semester.

Preparing 8th Graders for High School



Eighth grade students and their parents met with representatives from five area high schools on Jan. 18 as part of Gardner-Dickinson’s first ever High School Fair.

“We want to help our students make well informed decisions,” explained Superintendent Lee Bordick. “This provides an opportunity for parents and students to meet in a college fair atmosphere, which they’ll be doing in another four years as well.”

“We want to help our students make well informed decisions.”

Creating opportunities to prepare 8th graders for High School has been a focus at Gardner-Dickinson School this year.

The proposed 2014-15 budget would continue the initiative including funding for an additional Honors English class for 8th graders, adding to other available electives including: Accelerated Art, Accelerated Math, Band, Choir, Public Speaking, Technology, TV Production and Yearbook Design.

“The Honors English class will provide enhanced opportunities in writing and reading to help prepare students for advanced English classes they may take in High School,” said Mr. Bordick.

District Responds to Community Concerns

In response to concerns raised by our community last summer, the Board of Education made a number of changes at Wynantskill UFSD this school year.

“The Board felt it was critical to listen to the concerns raised by our community, faculty and staff and use their suggestions to improve education for our students,” said Board President Andrea Paone. “We’ve taken some important first steps and will continue to seek community input to guide our decisions in the future.”

Initiatives this school year include:

- Involved more than 50 parents, community members, faculty and staff in an independent District Operations Study where comments and recommendations were discussed in a dozen public forum meetings. The community helped present the District Study to the Board of Education, which is available on the district website.
- Involved dozens of parents, faculty and staff in an independent Special Education and Academic Intervention Services (AIS) study which included a thorough review of current programs. The study is available on the district website.

- Hired 4.5 teachers to lower class sizes in kindergarten and fourth grade and increase support for special education and Academic Intervention Services.
- Re-established separate Superintendent and Principal positions (reappointing Lee Bordick as Superintendent and Mary Yodis as Principal).
- Created a Strategic Planning Team of parents, community members, faculty and staff to identify major initiatives that need to be achieved in order for Wynantskill UFSD to continue to provide high-quality opportunities of our students.
- Increased communication by reaching out to community, encouraging two-way dialogue, providing more school news on district website, and improving parent e-mail notification system.

“We’ve taken some important first steps and will continue to seek community input...”

New York’s Property Tax Credit Program

This fall, homeowners in Wynantskill UFSD who qualify for New York’s STAR exemption will receive an additional state rebate check.

The rebate is part of the Property Tax Credit Program created as part of this year’s New York State budget agreement. Qualified homeowners will receive the rebate because Wynantskill UFSD’s proposed 2014-15 budget is within the state’s property tax cap.

The size of the rebate will be calculated by the New

York State Department of Taxation and Finance. The rebate check will also come from the state agency, not the school district.

To qualify homeowners for the property tax rebate check next year and the following year, the district will have to continue to propose school budgets within the property tax cap and submit a plan to New York State about ways to find efficiencies by working with other schools or municipalities.

Bus Purchase Has No Local School Tax Impact

A proposition on the May 20 ballot will ask voters to approve the purchase of a 66-passenger bus at a cost not to exceed \$110,000 as part of the district’s long-term bus replacement plan.

The purchase will have no impact on local school taxes. New York State reimburses the district for 71% of the cost of bus purchases. The remaining 29% local share would

be made up with existing district funds.

The district transports K-8 students to and from school each day and transports students in grades 9-12 to their five high school choices. New York State also requires the district to provide transportation to students living in district who attend private and parochial schools.

Last year, the district’s buses traveled 143,296 miles.



VOTER INFORMATION

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 20, 12 – 9:00 p.m.

Gardner-Dickinson School Band Room

Who is eligible to vote?

Anyone who is a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and is a resident of the Wynantskill Union Free School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

How can I vote by absentee ballot?

District residents who are unable to go to the polls on May 20 can cast their votes by absentee ballot. To request an application for an absentee ballot, please call the District Office at 283-4600 ext. 14 by May 13. All completed ballots must be received by the District Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 20.

What if I have questions?

The district website, www.wynantskillufsd.org, has additional budget resources including budget presentation from Board meetings. You can also call the District Office at 283-4600 ext. 14.

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

Four candidates are running for two open seats on the Board of Education. One seat is a three-year term and the other is a partial, one-year term to fill the remaining term of a Board member who resigned this past year. The individual who receives the most votes will fill the three-year term; the individual who receives the second most votes will fill the one-year term.

PHYLLIS RAZZANO

My husband, Joe and I have been members of the Wynantskill community for over 30 years. Our three children Tara, Dana and Joe attended Gardner Dickinson School. I have served in the past as Vice President of the Wynantskill School Board and understand the thoughtfulness, fiscal responsibility and time commitment required to be an effective Board member. Our district has undergone many changes in the past several years, which at times, has challenged even the best minds. I would like to be part of a new team that helps guide the district forward in a positive direction.

JENNIFER PRICE

Jennifer Price has lived in Wynantskill for 20 years with her husband Matt. Their son is currently in 2nd grade at Gardner-Dickinson. Jennifer has been the Director of Continuing Medical Education at Albany Medical College for the past 10 years. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the New School University – Robert J. Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy.

KATRINA DINAN

My husband and I have resided in the district since 1993. We have two grown children who attended Gardner-Dickinson and a grandson. I'm a registered nurse, focused on employee health, safety and prevention. I served on the Wynantskill Board of Education from 1997-2004, as Vice President and President. I provided leadership after a period of incivility within the school community. As a team, we sold the Main Avenue property, renovated Gardner-Dickinson, expanded high school choice, led two superintendent searches, negotiated contracts and developed policy. If elected I'll bring experience, stability, open communication and reason, all in the interest of the children and community.

PATRICIA GRAY

Prior to my retirement in August, I was a school district administrator for 17 years. I worked directly with students, developed curriculum, evaluated teachers, provided training and participated in drafting the district's budget. For the last 25 years, my husband and I've devoted a great deal of time making our house a comfortable home. We're proud of our home and would like to be able to afford to live in it for as long as we can. As a Board member, I will make every effort to assure children are afforded a quality education while assuring the district remains affordable.

Capital Reserve Fund for Long-Term Infrastructure Needs

A proposition on the May 20 ballot would create a Capital Reserve Fund that would allow the district to set aside up to \$2.5 million over five years to address building and grounds needs.

A Capital Reserve fund helps the district plan for long-term needs of the district with little impact on the general budget. Here are some frequently asked questions.

Q: What is a Capital Reserve fund?

A: A Capital Reserve fund is similar to a savings account. The district can use it to set aside money for future building and grounds improvements. Voter approval is required to create the fund.

Q: Where does the money for the Capital Reserve fund come from?

A: Money for the Capital Reserve fund would primarily come from fund balance and other reserves. If there is excess

money left at the end of the school year, due to projected revenues being greater than expenditures, money would be put in the Capital Reserve fund. The Board of Education could also decide to appropriate funds in future budgets to the Capital Reserve fund.

Q: What will the money be spent on?

A: The district has identified a number of improvements including replacing security alarms, exterior doors and copper pipes, installing energy efficient lighting and abating asbestos. The district also plans to examine building and grounds needs next year to identify other potential improvements.

Q: How will the community know what the district uses the funding for?

A: Before the district can spend any money from the Capital Reserve fund, it must receive voter approval. The district would provide details on such spending so community members could vote in future budget votes or possibly a special vote.

Q: How would the money be used?

A: New York State would reimburse the district with 72.4% in state aid for building and grounds improvements. The money in the Capital Reserve fund would be used to pay the local share, or 27.6%, of the project costs.

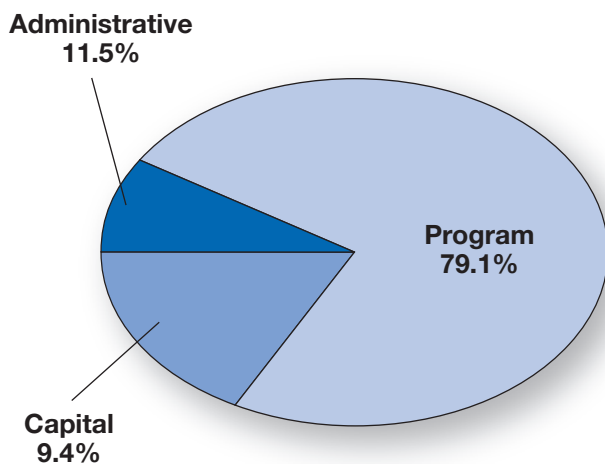
BUDGET COMPARISON

	2013-2014	2014-2015	Change	% of Budget
PROGRAM	\$6,342,385	\$6,727,206	\$384,821	79.1%
Teaching & Instruction, Instructional Media, Computer Services, Guidance/Health Services, Co-Curricular/Athletics, Special Education, Student Transportation, Bus Repairs/Maintenance				
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$931,893	\$982,974	\$51,081	11.55%
Board of Education: Clerk, Legal, Census, Treasurer, Tax Collection Superintendent: Business Administration, Purchasing, Payroll, Insurance, BOCES Administration Principal: Supervision, Staff Development & Training, Curriculum Auditing Services: External, Internal & Claims				
CAPITAL	\$896,274	\$794,924	-\$101,350	9.35%
Operation of Plant, Maintenance of Plant, Construction Principal/Interest, Purchase of Buses				
BUDGET TOTAL	\$8,170,552	\$8,505,104	\$334,552	100.0%

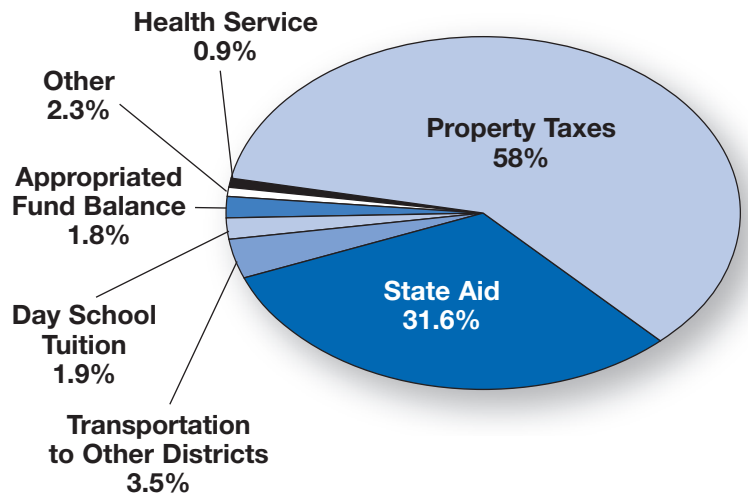
REVENUE ESTIMATES

	2013-2014	2014-2015	Change	% of Revenues
Property Taxes	\$ 4,883,471	\$ 4,935,336	\$ 51,865	58.0%
State Aid	2,560,297	2,682,999	122,702	31.6%
Transportation to Other Districts	293,029	293,029	0	3.5%
Other Revenues	50,000	190,000	140,000	2.2%
Day School Tuition	152,500	163,240	10,740	1.9%
Appropriated Fund Balance	156,255	156,000	-255	1.8%
Health Services	75,000	75,000	0	0.9%
Interest	0	5,000	5,000	0.05%
Tax Interest and Penalty	0	4,500	4,500	0.05%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 8,170,552	\$ 8,505,104	\$334,552	100.0%

EXPENSES:



REVENUES:



Superintendent
Lee Bordick

Principal
Mary Yodis

Board of Education
Andrea Paone, *President*
Ann Marsh, *Vice President*
Katrina Dinan
Matthew Hug
Andrew Lanese

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Wynantskill Union Free School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2013-14 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2014-15 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2014-2015 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 8,170,552	\$ 8,505,104	\$ 8,211,506
Increase/Decrease for the 2013-14 School Year		\$ 334,552	\$ 40,954
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.09%	0.005%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.46%	
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Including Levy to Support Library Debt, if applicable	\$ 4,883,471	\$ 4,935,336	\$ 4,883,471
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 51,129	\$ 0	
A. Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt	\$ 4,832,342	\$ 4,935,336	
B. School Tax Levy Limit, Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 4,926,292	\$ 5,003,041	
Difference: A-B (Positive Value Requires 60% Voter Approval)	\$ (93,950)	\$ (67,750)	
Administrative Component	\$ 931,893	\$ 982,974	\$ 932,814
Program Component	\$ 6,342,385	\$ 6,727,206	\$ 6,490,999
Capital Component	\$ 896,274	\$ 794,924	\$ 787,693
To reach the contingency budget amount, the District would reduce or eliminate: staff development, computer hardware purchases, non-union salary increases, field trips and the purchase of the ELA textbook series.			

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2014-15 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$ 622

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2014-2015 by the qualified voters of the Wynantskill Union Free School District, Rensselaer County, New York, will be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2014, between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Gardner-Dickinson School Band Room, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.

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