

Wynantskill

Union Free School District

MAY 2015

THE 2015-2016 PROPOSED DISTRICT BUDGET

VOTE: Tuesday, May 19, 2015 • 12 – 9 p.m. • Gardner Dickinson School

Continuing opportunities for students is the main focus of the 2015-16 school budget, which requires no cuts to programs or staffing and maintains class sizes.

The \$8,863,296 budget increases the tax levy by an estimated 1.91%. That is within New York's Property Tax Cap. This is the fifth year in a row the tax levy increase has been 2% or below.

Qualifying homeowners should receive a refund check from New York State for the difference in taxes from 2013-14 and 2015-16 through the Property Tax Freeze program. The state program rewards communities in school districts that stay within the tax cap and meet efficiency requirements, which Wynantskill UFSD fully expects to do.

"Our goal is to strengthen our existing programs and provide enhanced educational opportunities for our students," said Superintendent Lee Bordick. "This budget allows us to continue progress we've made while being mindful of taxpayers by staying within the tax cap."

The proposed budget continues a new reading program for students in all grades that started this year. It also continues an initiative to increase physical education opportunities and an 8th grade Honors English class.

Students will also have more guidance services available to them with an increase in the guidance department from 0.6 to 0.8 full-time equivalency.

Voters will also decide on a proposition to purchase two 28-passenger school buses as part of the district's long-term bus

Gardner-Dickinson School increasingly uses technology to engage students and prepare them for high school, college and careers. This year, students learned about computer programming in their technology class.



replacement plan. The district is reimbursed with 65.9% state aid for the bus purchases (see page 3).

Voters will also elect two members of the Board of Education to three-year, unpaid terms. Patricia Gray and Darcy Mack are running for the two seats.

Budget Helps Qualify Homeowners for Refund

Most homeowners should receive a refund check from New York State next school year for the difference in taxes from 2013-14 and 2015-16 through the Property Tax Freeze Program.

The state program reimburses qualifying homeowners for increases in local property taxes in school districts that remain within the NYS Property Tax Cap and meet efficiency requirements. Wynantskill UFSD qualified for the program last year and is within the tax cap again next year.

Wynantskill UFSD fully expects to meet the state's efficiency requirements through initiatives such as moving to a single morning bus run and sharing transportation with Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD for special education.

To qualify for the state program, homeowners must already receive the STAR property tax exemption. The property must be the homeowner's primary residence and the total household income must be \$500,000 or less.

For information about the program, please visit the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance's website.

New Reading Programs Continue Next Year

Next year, Gardner-Dickinson School will continue two new programs that help students at all grade levels build stronger reading skills.

“Our reading program is individualized to meet every child’s needs,” explained Principal Mary Yodis. “Whether a student needs additional help or wants to be challenged, the program helps students at every reading level.”

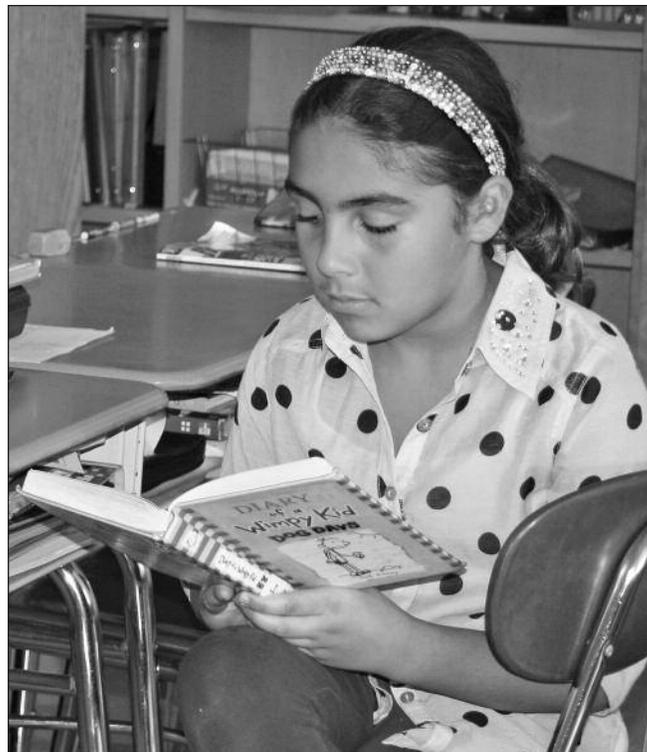
In kindergarten to grade 6, students use the Journeys program to develop stronger reading comprehension skills through whole-group, small-group and independent instruction.

Building vocabulary is a key focus to help students quickly connect with what they read. Younger grades focus on action, description and sensory words while older students progress to multiple meaning words, context and word origins.

Engaging and varied texts are used to encourage students to comprehend and enjoy writing from a variety of genres. Students are challenged to draw conclusions and make connections with what they read to help develop critical thinking, writing and communication skills.

In grades 7 and 8, students use the Code X program which challenges them further by encouraging students to analyze, question and cite evidence from what they read.

Students are taught to recognize the most important ideas and elements of more challenging texts, including full-length novels. Writing skills are also developed by creating opportunities for students to record and elaborate on their thinking while reading.



Continuing Opportunities for Students

Here are some examples of the education Gardner-Dickinson School students receive:

Kindergarten to Grade 5

- Average classroom size: 20 students
- Two sections for each grade
- Students study English two hours every day
- Students study math for an hour every day
- Students study social studies, on average, 30 minutes each day
- Students study science, on average, 30 minutes each day
- Students receive music and art instruction throughout the school year



Grades 6 to 8

- Average classroom size: 20 students
- 6th graders study English for 90 minutes each day
- 6th graders study social studies, science, physical education and health every other day
- 6th graders study art, music and library researching skills throughout the school year
- 6th graders begin learning foreign language by taking Spanish every other day
- 7th and 8th graders are taught core classes in English, math, science and social studies every day
- 7th and 8th graders continue their foreign language study by taking Spanish every day
- Art, music, technology, family and consumer sciences, and physical education are taught to 7th graders every other day
- 7th and 8th graders have the option of taking band or chorus
- 8th graders have the option of taking accelerated math, accelerated studio art, or honors English
- Afterschool opportunities include Odyssey of the Mind, modified sports, Builder’s Club, and chorus

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

Two candidates are running for two open seats on the Board of Education. Both seats are three-year, non-paid terms.

PATRICIA GRAY

Prior to my retirement, 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 26 years, my husband and I have 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 keeping the district affordable.

DARCY MACK

I have lived in Wynantskill for 13 years with my husband Tom, daughter Brigid (6th grade) and son Cooper (Kindergarten). I currently work for St. Peter's Health Partners' Foundations and I have extensive experience in education and training. Last May, I completed my master's degree in Educational Psychology – Program Evaluation. Many of you know me as the GD's Got Talent Show Coordinator, PTO member and Girl Scout Leader. As a board member I will work to ensure that all our kids have the tools needed to develop a love of learning. I will look for ways to be innovative with good fiscal responsibility and will always keep in mind that I am representing the whole school community including children, parents, teacher, administrators and residents.

Budget Increases Guidance Services

Preparing 8th graders for High School remains a focus for Gardner-Dickinson School with an increase in guidance included in the 2015-16 school budget.

The school's guidance department will increase from 0.6 to 0.8 full-time-equivalency in the proposed budget to increase services for students.

Over the past couple years the school has focused on creating additional opportunities for 8th graders. A new Honors English class started last year will continue next year. Elective options also include Accelerated Art, Accelerated Math, Band, Choir, Public Speaking, Technology, TV Production and Yearbook Design.

Gardner-Dickinson also held the 2nd Annual High School Fair this year where 8th graders and their parents met with representatives from their five high school choices.

"Our students are already successful when they get to high school but we feel like we can always do better," said Superintendent Lee Bordick. "It's important that our students and their parents have as much information as possible to make well informed decisions about where they go after graduation."



BUS PURCHASES PART OF LONG-TERM PLAN

A proposition on the May 19 ballot would allow the district to purchase two 28-seat school buses as part of the district's long-term bus replacement plan.

The local cost for both buses would be approximately \$35,805. The district pays one-third of the total cost because New York State reimburses the district for 65.9% of bus purchases. The total cost would not exceed \$105,000.

Why does the district purchase buses on a regular basis?

The district purchases school buses as part of its long-term bus replacement plan to keep the district's fleet in safe, working order. New buses replace old buses based on the vehicle's mileage, age, repair history and condition.

As buses age they become more costly to maintain and less efficient to run. Older buses can average only about six miles per gallon while new buses should average closer to 10 miles per gallon. That difference can add up to considerable savings given the number of miles our school buses travel each year.

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.

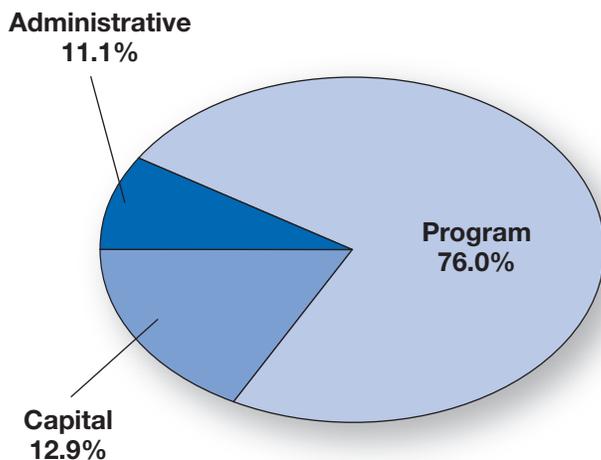
BUDGET COMPARISON

	2014-2015	2015-2016	Change	% of Budget
PROGRAM	\$6,727,206	\$6,739,615	\$12,409	76.0%
Teaching & Instruction, Instructional Media, Computer Services, Guidance/Health Services, Co-Curricular/Athletics, Special Education, Student Transportation, Bus Repairs/Maintenance				
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$982,974	\$983,341	\$367	11.1%
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	\$794,924	\$1,140,340	\$345,416	12.9%
Operation of Plant, Maintenance of Plant, Construction Principal/Interest, Purchase of Buses				
BUDGET TOTAL	\$8,505,104	\$8,863,296	\$358,192	100.0%

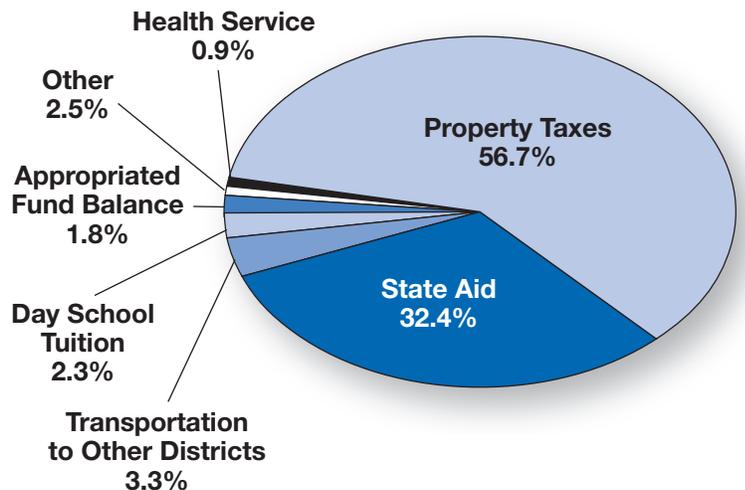
REVENUE ESTIMATES

	2014-2015	2015-2016	Change	% of Revenues
Property Taxes	\$ 4,935,336	\$ 5,029,833	\$ 94,497	56.7%
State Aid	2,682,999	2,873,349	190,350	32.4%
Transportation to Other Districts	293,029	297,950	4,921	3.3%
Other Revenues	190,000	210,864	20,864	2.4%
Day School Tuition	163,240	200,800	37,560	2.3%
Appropriated Fund Balance	156,000	156,000	0	1.8%
Health Services	75,000	85,000	10,000	1.0%
Tax Interest and Penalty	5,000	6,000	1,500	0.06%
Interest	4,500	3,500	-1,500	0.04%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 8,505,104	\$ 8,863,296	\$358,192	100.0%

EXPENSES:



REVENUES:



Wynantskill Union Free School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2014-15 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2015-16 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2015- 16 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$8,505,104	\$8,863,296	\$8,642,531
Increase/Decrease for the 2015-16 School Year		\$358,192	\$137,427
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.2 %	1.62%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.62 %	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$4,935,336	\$5,029,833	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable			
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **			
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy			
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$4,935,336	\$5,029,833	\$4,935,336
F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$0	\$0	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$5,003,041	\$5,097,538	
H. Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, Excluding Permissible Exclusions and Levy for Library Debt, Plus Prior Year Tax Cap Reserve (E - B - F + D)	\$4,935,336	\$5,029,833	
I. Difference: (G – H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$67,705	\$67,705	
Administrative Component	\$982,974	\$983,341	\$930,031
Program Component	\$6,727,206	\$6,739,615	\$6,614,890
Capital Component	\$794,924	\$1,140,340	\$1,097,610
To reach contingency budget amount, the District would reduce or eliminate the following: equipment purchases, non-union salary increases, field trips and certain other contractual services.			

NOTE: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to:
emscmgts@nysed.gov

Under the Budget Proposed
for the 2015-16 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$630

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2015-2016 by the qualified voters of the Wynantskill Union Free school district, Rensselaer County, New York, will be held at Gardner-Dickinson school(s) in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 between the hours of Noon and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Gardner-Dickinson School Band Room, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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

POSTAL CUSTOMER
Wynantskill, NY 12198

Superintendent

Lee Bordick

Principal

Mary Yodis

Board of Education

Ann Marsh, *President*
Andrew Lanese, *Vice President*
Katrina Dinan
Patricia Gray
Andrea Paone

Produced by Questar III Communications Service

www.wynantskillufsd.org

VOTER INFORMATION

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 19, 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 19 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 12. All completed ballots must be received by the District Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19.

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.

What Will I Be Voting on May 19?

A \$8,863,296 budget for the 2015-16 school year

- The budget requires a 1.91% tax levy increase.
- Fifth year in a row the tax levy increase would be 2% or less.

Two seats on the Board of Education

- Patricia Gray and Darcy Mack are running for two seats on the Board of Education (see page 3).

Proposition to purchase two 28-passenger school buses

- Cost not to exceed \$105,000
- State reimburses district for 65.9% of cost
- Local cost approximately \$35,805 (see page 3)

Follow District on Facebook and Twitter

As part of the district's efforts to continue to improve communication with our community, Wynantskill UFSD now has a Facebook and Twitter page. Please note, these social media accounts are at no cost to the district.



Follow us at www.facebook.com/WynantskillUFSD or www.twitter.com/WynantskillUFSD to receive regular



updates about upcoming school events and stories about Gardner-Dickinson students.