

THE 2016-2017 PROPOSED DISTRICT BUDGET

VOTE: Tuesday, May 17, 2016 • 12 – 9 p.m. • Gardner-Dickinson School

Maintaining student opportunities through efficiencies despite a tax cap that is lower than 1% is the main focus of the 2016-17 school budget, which requires no cuts to programs or staffing.

The \$9,096,145 budget increases the tax levy by an estimated 0.79%, which is within New York's Property Tax Cap. This is the sixth year in a row the tax levy increase has been 2% or lower.

"We want to provide our students with as many opportunities as we can. So we analyzed the budget line-by-line to make the best use of our resources," said Superintendent Thomas Reardon. "We also worked with faculty to create a student-centered schedule that provides students what they need to be successful."

To help address a concern about class size in 2nd grade due to a spike in enrollment, the budget would add a teaching assistant to work collaboratively with 2nd grade teachers. Administrators discussed the issue with faculty who thought the solution would work best for their students (see page 2).

The district will also continue an investment in the school's



To make learning fun, 1st graders wore surgical masks to perform "surgery" on contractions. Students were given two words and used "scalpels" to remove letters to create a contraction.

counseling services, which began last year, with a 0.2 full-time equivalency increase in the guidance department (see page 2). The budget also allocates more funding for textbooks and technology as well as special education to ensure the district can address the needs of all students.

Because the budget is within the tax cap, homeowners who qualify for the state's School Tax Relief (STAR) program should receive a \$185 check from New York State in the fall as part of the revised Property Tax Freeze program (see story below).

The ending of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) was significant for the district. For the past five years, New York State used the GEA to cut aid to schools. It was finally eliminated in the state budget passed in April, restoring \$151,301 in state aid for the district.

"We would like to thank our state legislators who listened to schools about the impact the GEA cuts have had on public education," said Dr. Reardon. "They made it a priority to end the GEA this year which helped us preserve programs for students."

Budget Helps Qualify Homeowners for Refund

Most homeowners should receive a \$185 refund check from New York State in the fall due to the school's budget staying within the Property Tax Cap.

New York State revised its Property Tax Freeze Program to provide a \$185 rebate to upstate homeowners who qualify for the state's School Tax Relief (STAR) program. In previous years, qualifying homeowners received a rebate equal to the difference in taxes they paid from different years.

"While our tax cap number was below 1% this year, it was important to the district to stay within the cap so we

could ensure homeowners qualify for New York's rebate program," said Superintendent Thomas Reardon.

To qualify for STAR, and the rebate check, a homeowner's property in the district must be their primary residence. The homeowner's total household income also must be \$500,000 or less.

New York State has indicated that the rebate checks should be mailed in the fall to qualifying homeowners. For questions about STAR or the Property Tax Freeze Program, please contact the state Department of Taxation and Finance.

TA Support to Help Enrollment Increase

To help 2nd grade teachers manage a spike in enrollment next year, the proposed budget would fund a teaching assistant dedicated to supporting their instruction.

“The decision to hire a teaching assistant to work strictly with 2nd grade was based on collaborative conversations with our teachers,” said Superintendent Thomas Reardon. “We asked them what type of support they’ll need and they felt a teaching assistant who could help them deliver instruction would be the best solution.”

A teaching assistant would have the biggest impact in reading, said Principal Mary Yodis.

“Where I see a teaching assistant as a big help is providing small group instruction, particularly in reading,” said Mrs. Yodis. “It would help our teachers break students up into small groups to enrich learning and provide individual support for guided reading. You could say the same thing about math.”

Dr. Reardon noted the solution also makes sense financially and logistically. Hiring a third teacher for 2nd grade would cost more and require another classroom.

“Investing in a teaching assistant who is dedicated exclusively to second grade will truly affect student achievement and learning in a way that is fiscally responsible and sustainable,” said Dr. Reardon.



A second grader proudly reads something she wrote to a family member.

Mrs. Yodis added the solution will work particularly well because of teachers Mrs. Carmody and Ms. Cronin.

“They work very well together. They plan their curriculum so they’re working on the same lessons. They are extremely collaborative,” said Mrs. Yodis.

Continuing Opportunities for Students

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

Kindergarten to Grade 5

- Two sections for each grade
- Students study English Language Arts (ELA) 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, library research skills, physical education and art instruction throughout the school year

Grades 6 to 8

- 6th graders study ELA, math, social studies and science every day
- 6th graders study health and physical education every other day
- 6th graders study art, music, library research skills, family and consumer science 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 ELA, math, science and social studies every day
- 7th and 8th graders continue their foreign language study by taking Spanish every day
- Art, music, technology, and physical education are taught to 7th graders every other day
- 6th, 7th and 8th graders have the option of taking band or chorus
- 8th graders have the option of taking the following accelerated classes: Algebra, Earth Science, Honors English and Studio Art
- Afterschool opportunities include Odyssey of the Mind, modified sports, Builder’s Club, Homework Center and Drama Club

Increase Helps Guidance Work Collaboratively

Building on an initiative started last year to increase guidance services, a 0.2 full-time equivalency increase in the school’s Guidance Office will ensure students have two full-time staff members to serve them next year.

Superintendent Thomas Reardon noted the increase will help ensure that no matter a student’s need, the Guidance Office will be able to better address it, whether it’s general counseling services or Individualized Education Program (IEP) related.

“This is an investment in our counseling services that helps both our school counselor and school psychologist to work collaboratively to help students of all needs,” said Dr. Reardon.

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.

CATHLEEN A. CASTLE

I have resided in Wynantskill since 1977. My daughter and son both attended Gardner-Dickinson School. During that time, I was very active in the school community. I retired from the NYS Education Department in 2014, with the last 20 years of my career in the Office of Special Education. I am currently filling a one-year vacancy on the School Board. I have enjoyed being involved again in this school community and am interested in serving for a full term. I will work to ensure that all children have the tools and resources they need to love learning and grow regardless of their abilities. I will work with the administration to be innovative with programming while being fiscally responsible and responsive to the school community.

ANDREW LANESEY

My name is Andrew (Andy) Lanese and I am running for re-election to the Board of Education. I have been a nearly lifelong resident myself, growing up in the halls of Gardner-Dickinson. I am a 15 plus years employee of New York State's Office of State Comptroller. My wife Joyce and I are proud that we are able to raise our children in such a great community. As a father of three beautiful children, Anthony, Angela, and Aubrey, I feel that it is especially important for our young minds to develop excellence in essential learning habits, critical thinking, leadership skills, and the means to be successful in life, starting from an early age. I feel that the small school setting that our great district provides is key to their success. It is with appreciation that I ask for your support in my bid for re-election to a seat on the Board of Education.

Veterans Tax Exemption Proposition

Voters will help the Board of Education decide whether to consider approving a partial property tax exemption for veterans with a non-binding proposition on the May 17 ballot.

New York State provides veterans with a partial property tax exemption for county, town and village taxes but the state allows school districts to decide whether to provide a similar exemption for school taxes.

To help the Board decide whether the community would support the exemption, which could cause other homeowners' tax bills to increase, a non-binding proposition was added to the ballot.



BUS PURCHASES PART OF LONG-TERM PLAN

A proposition on the May 17 ballot would allow the district to purchase one 66-passenger and one 28-passenger bus as part of the district's long-term bus replacement plan.

The total cost would not exceed \$164,000. The district pays approximately one-third of the total cost because New York State reimburses the district for 65% of bus purchases. The local cost for both buses would be \$57,400.

The district purchase 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 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.

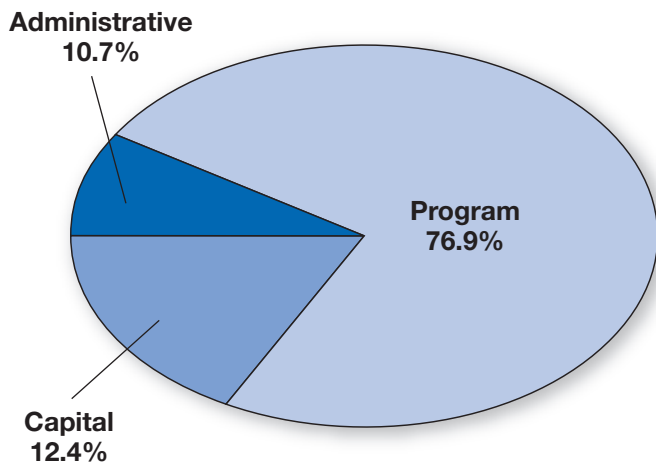
BUDGET COMPARISON

	2015-2016	2016-2017	Change	% of Budget
PROGRAM	\$6,739,615	\$6,994,367	\$254,752	76.9%
Teaching & Instruction, Instructional Media, Computer Services, Guidance/Health Services, Co-Curricular/Athletics, Special Education, Student Transportation, Bus Repairs/Maintenance				
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$983,341	\$969,152	-\$14,189	10.7%
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	\$1,140,340	\$1,132,626	-\$7,714	12.4%
Operation of Plant, Maintenance of Plant, Construction Principal/Interest, Purchase of Buses				
BUDGET TOTAL	\$8,863,296	\$9,096,145	\$232,849	100%

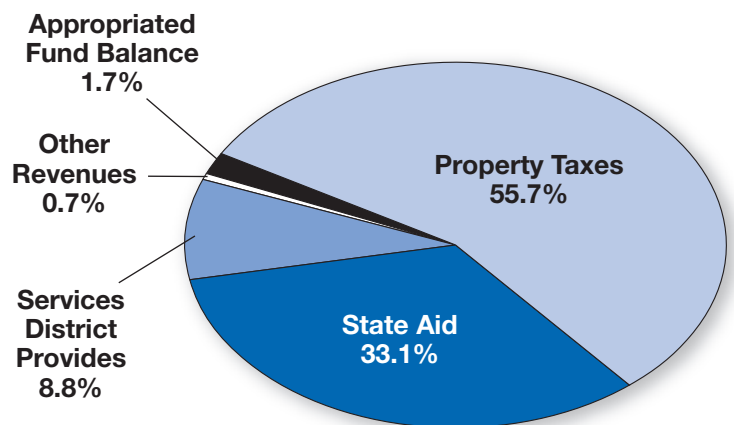
REVENUE ESTIMATES

	2015-2016	2016-2017	Change	% of Revenues
Property Taxes	\$ 5,029,833	\$ 5,069,721	\$ 39,888	55.7%
State Aid	2,873,349	3,006,494	133,145	33.1%
Services District Provides	723,750	802,930	79,180	8.8%
Other Revenues	80,364	61,000	-19,364	0.7%
Appropriated Fund Balance	156,000	156,000	0	1.7%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 8,863,296	\$ 9,096,145	\$232,849	100.0%

EXPENSES:



REVENUES:



Wynantskill Union Free School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2015-16 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2016-17 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2016-17 School Year *												
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$8,863,296	\$9,096,145	\$9,056,257												
Increase/Decrease for the 2016-17 School Year		\$232,849	\$192,961												
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.60 %	2.17%												
Change in the Consumer Price Index		0.12 %													
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount, Net of Reserve	\$5,029,833	\$5,069,721													
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)	\$5,029,833	\$5,069,721	\$5,029,833												
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$0	\$0													
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$5,097,538	\$5,103,574													
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$5,029,833	\$5,069,721													
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$67,705	\$33,853													
Administrative Component	\$983,341	\$969,152	\$958,152												
Program Component	\$6,739,615	\$6,994,367	\$6,974,726												
Capital Component	\$1,140,340	\$1,132,626	\$1,123,379												
<p>To reach contingency budget amount, the District would reduce or eliminate equipment purchases, technology and supply increases, non-union salary increases, and certain other contractual services.</p>															
<p>** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Description</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Description	Amount											
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NOTE: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to: emscmgts@nysed.gov

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2016-17 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$643

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2016-2017 by the qualified voters of the Wynantskill Union Free school district, Rensselaer County, New York, will be held at Gardner-Dickinson school in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 between the hours of Noon and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Gardner-Dickinson school, 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

Thomas Reardon

Principal

Mary Yodis

Board of Education

Katrina Dinan, *President*
Patricia Gray, *Vice President*
Cathleen Castle
Andrew Lanese
Darcy Mack

Produced by Questar III Communications Service

www.wynantskillufsd.org

VOTER INFORMATION

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 17, 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 17 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. All completed ballots must be received by the District Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 17.

What if I have questions?

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

What Will I Be Voting on May 17?

A \$9,096,145 budget for the 2016-17 school year

- The budget requires a 0.79% tax levy increase.

Two seats on the Board of Education

- Cathleen Castle and Andrew Lanese are running for two seats on the Board of Education (see page 3).

Proposition to purchase 28- and 66-passenger school buses

- Cost not to exceed \$164,000.
- State reimburses district for 65% of cost (see page 3).

Non-Binding Proposition on Veterans Tax Exemption

- Proposition helps Board of Education decide (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.

