

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

A COMMUNITY OF
21ST-CENTURY LEARNERS

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR SCHOOLS

SPECIAL 2016-2017 SCHOOL BUDGET EDITION



WTS NEWSLETTER- APRIL 2016



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A Message for the WTS Community

Board of Education: Cathleen Compoli, President; Kathleen Koop, Vice President; Kevin Daly, Al DiGabriele, Kristin Gallagher, Chance Healy, Perry Kwok, Michelle Munley, & Michael St. Jacques
Liz George, School Business Administrator; Jeffrey S. Mohre, Superintendent

WTS is pleased to present to you the 2016-2017 School Budget which was adopted by the Washington Township Board of Education on Tuesday evening. The spending plan reflects a sound commitment to ensuring that the many fine programs and services designed and delivered during the past five years are preserved. Our fine school district has continued to evolve in a positive direction in spite of the fact that rising costs and State mandates are perennial challenges.

Many of you will recall the fiscal crisis school districts faced here in New Jersey in the spring of 2010. At that time State Aid to schools was reduced significantly and the Washington Township Schools examined every facet of school district operations to pledge continued quality education and fiscal responsibility moving forward. Since that time, WTS has been able to implement more than 20 educational programming and facilities enhancements while realizing a slight average annual budget increase during the past 5 years, 2011-12 through 2015-2016, of one half of one percent. We are proud of the fact that during that time your school district has been awarded the *High Performing School District* designation by the Department of Education and the *Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting* by the Association of School Business Officials International. Our faculty, parents, community members, and school leaders have been steadfast in their commitment to Washington Township's children and we deeply appreciate everyone's extraordinary effort and support.

As you peruse the details that comprise the 2016-2017 School Budget, you will notice that the overall spending plan will increase for next school year by 1.02% and that the tax levy will rise by 2.86%, or \$8.⁵⁰ per month on the average assessed home. This is an unusual number for the Washington Township Schools considering the tax levy impact has ranged from a -1.0% to 1.8% during the past five years. The primary budget cost driver this school year has been the rising rate of health insurance premiums, even with our faculty contributing nearly 1.5 million dollars to offset those costs this past year. Considering the Board's most recent, positive history of fiscal responsibility and program enhancement, the Board decided not to eliminate any of the educational opportunities, programs, and services for the coming year. This meant exceeding the 2% budget cap by applying for (and receiving) a Department of Education *tax levy cap waiver* due solely to the rising cost of health insurance premiums.

WTS is well-positioned to continue providing our community's children with a high quality education in the coming year. As our faculty, parents, and community members continue to share in the awesome responsibility of teaching, guiding, and developing children, rest assured that the Board of Education remains committed to identifying efficiencies that will enable your school district to progress and succeed. Thank you parents, educators, and community members for your support of the children and their schools!

~ Jeff Mohre, Superintendent & The Washington Township Board of Education

HIGHLIGHTS: The 2016-2017 School Budget ...



- Maintains Educational Programs and Services for Students*
- Provides Instructional Resources to Support Curriculum Delivery (NJCCCS)*
- Ensures Professional Development Opportunities for Faculty and Staff*
- Affords Access to Instructional Technologies (Students & Faculty)*
- Fortifies the Schools' Wireless Network by Replacing Aging Ports*
- Supports Average Elementary Class Size of 19 Students*



Scroll down ...



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Second and final page



School Budget Q and A

Will the new school budget support all of the district's current programs?

Yes, all educational programming and services for our district's students will be maintained.

Is WTS' school budget below cap?

No, the 2016-17 school budget reflects a 2.86% increase in the local tax levy which is above the State's 2% tax levy cap. The primary reason is the rising cost of health insurance. The Department of Education has approved the increase.

Has WTS exceeded the tax levy cap before?

No. This is the first time WTS' budget has exceeded the 2% cap. Here's the history:

- 2011-2012 ~ +.41%
- 2012-2013 ~ -1.0%
- 2013-2014 ~ +.51%
- 2014-2015 ~ +1.8%
- 2015-2016 ~ +1.35%

Will my school taxes decrease or increase as a result of the new school budget?

Taxpayers will see an increase of 8 dollars and 50 cents per month on the average assessed home.

What does the school budget pay for?

The school budget encompasses all costs related to curriculum and instruction, plant operation and maintenance, transportation, personnel, fiscal operations, & board governance.

Where does the money come to fund the school budget?

In the Washington Township Schools 78% of the budget is funded through local property taxes, 18% from State aid; 2% from local fund balance, and approximately 2% from other sources including Federal.

Sources of Revenue

OPERATING BUDGET

Tax Levy	\$32,451,543
General Fund Revenue	\$ 878,617
State Aid	\$ 8,064,202
Misc.	\$ 151,000

GENERAL FUND REVENUE \$41,545,362

RESTRICTED

Federal Projects	\$ 511,227
Debt Service	\$ 1,468,850
RESTRICTED REVENUES	<u>\$ 1,980,077</u>

TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES \$43,525,439



Questions?

Contact **Jeff Mohre**, Superintendent @ jmohre@wtschools.org

or

Liz George, School Business Administrator @ lgeorge@wtschools.org

- 908.876.4172 -



How does the 2016-17 School Budget Compare to Current Year's Budget?

2015-16	2016-17
\$43,085,657	\$43,525,439

The 2016-2017 school budget is **\$439,782 more** than the current year's.

WTS Enhancements What's New the Last 5 Years?

- Full-Day Kindergarten*
- Literacy Coaches*
- Gifted and Talented Enhancements*
- Increased World Lang. Time - Gr. 6*
- LVMS Counseling Enhancements*
- Expanded Clubs/Organizations - LVMS*
- ESL Programming*
- Widespread Wi-Fi Access*
- Fiber Optic Connectivity*
- Empowering Writers Program*
- Mobile & Handheld Technologies*
- Math Support Services*
- Increased Literacy Instruction- Gr. 6*
- RaZ Kids - Reading A to Z*
- STEM Education (Robotics/Coding)*
- School Security Enhancements*
- New Boilers at LVMS/OFRS/FRS*
- Bus Maintenance Garage*
- Floor Tile Replacements OFRS/FRKS*
- Roofing Projects OFRS/LVMS*

