



Budget Newsletter

2024-2025

NEWSLETTER CONTENT

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Budget Hearing
Tuesday, May 14, 2024
6 p.m.

Budget Vote & School Board Election

Tuesday, May 21, 2024
12 p.m. to 8 p.m.



DEAR COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

On April 18, 2024, the Willsboro Central School District Board of Education adopted the proposed budget of \$10,987,331 for the 2024-2025 school year, which will be voted on by the community on May 21, 2024. This budget results in a spending increase of 0.79% and is within the district's allowable state-calculated tax cap limit.

The proposed budget honors the district's responsibility to the community to use its resources as effectively and efficiently as possible while also focusing on academic excellence. While maintaining the availability of all current programs and services, the proposed budget allows for new opportunities to boost the overall well-being and academic achievement of our students.

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Throughout our budget development process, decision-making is aligned to our district mission to provide a safe and supportive community that instills students with PRIDE: PREPARED for the future that they choose, RESPECTED and valued for who they are, INSPIRED to make their community and world a better place, DETERMINED to overcome challenges, and EMPOWERED to engage with a changing world.

After you read the information within this newsletter, we encourage you to review the additional financial information available on our website. The detailed budget will also be available to the public on May 7, 2024, in the District Office.

We greatly appreciate the community's ongoing support of our students and staff and hope to see all eligible voters on Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

Together in education,

Justin Gardner
 Superintendent of Schools

Key Facts & Figures

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Tax Levy Increase | 2.20% |
| Estimated Tax Rate | \$9.77 |
| Budget Increase | 0.79% |

For more information on the 2024-25 Budget



Visit our district website

<https://www.willsborocsd.org/>

WILLSBORO CSD BRINGS STUDENTS TOGETHER

One Building — One School. That's one of Willsboro Central Schools's main initiatives this year.

Throughout the course of this school year, WCS has brought its older and younger students together for various activities that establish and grow a connection among the school community.

"We are all together in one building, and this is all about taking advantage of that," Willsboro Principal Sarah Paquette said. "When we can bring our students together and create a buddy system, it's very inspiring for everyone involved. The older students can become mentors, and the younger students can have someone to look up to."

Four days were designated this year for the One Building — One School program. Older and younger students had 90-minute blocks to enjoy working together. The partnerships featured Pre-K and 6th grade, Kindergarten and 7th grade, 1st and 8th grade, 2nd and 9th grade, 3rd and 10th grade, 4th and 11th grade, and 5th grade and 12th grade.

The days focused on elements of the Positivity Project (P2), which is a character education curriculum dedicated to empowering students to build positive relationships by identifying character strengths in themselves and others.

Around Thanksgiving, students focused on gratitude and wrote thankful cards, constructed hand turkeys, and made decoration tables for family dinners.

During the stretch of Groundhog's Day and Valentine's Day, students enjoyed plenty of time with arts and crafts, decorated doors, and made Valentine's Day cards with



little poems for retirement home residents — of course, there were some bags of chocolate compiled as well.

"The biggest thing with P2 is caring about other people," 3rd-grade teacher Heather Walsh said. "It's nice to see all our students connect, and the high school students have been incredible working with the little ones."

There's a level of energy and excitement leading up to every One Building — One School Day as the little ones wait for their big buddies.

"You can just feel the energy building in our classroom beforehand, and then when the 7th graders came to our door, things got silent as the Kindergartners looked for their buddy," Kindergarten teacher Miranda Laferriere said. "As soon as they came in, they partnered up on the rug and gave each other hugs from remembering each other."

There's a level of inspiration the entire staff feels when they see the students come together, and the teachers enjoy the time as well.

"It's a great chance for our students and staff to bond together when there is not normally the time to do so," teaching assistant Liz Becker said. "I really enjoy the time because it's a chance for the students to get to see each other as well as teachers in a different and fun perspective."

As the One Building — One School initiative continues, there are big plans for next year. The foundation of success is ready to be expanded. This year's 6th-grade and Pre-K class will be the first to spend what is hoped to be the remaining years of their school career together through P2.

"Imagine how cool it will be to see those young students and the older kids go all the way up through the grades together with this buddy system," Laferriere said. "Fast forward a couple of years, and it will be those Pre-K and Kindergarten students who will go from mentee to mentor. That's what makes the thought of this special"



VALEDICTORIAN — DANICA SANITLLO



College Plans: Nursing at the University of Connecticut

What has your time at Willsboro done for you?

The program options you can get through Willsboro like CV-TEC and New Visions is great. I was exposed to it by sophomore year and junior year and knew I would have to take a chemistry course early. I wanted to go into health care, and the teachers here helped me accomplish what I needed to take the appropriate steps.

What is a favorite memory you have?

Getting into New Visions at CV-TEC. I remember getting the email and opening it. The first thing that I saw in the email was acceptance documents. I just knew right there I had accomplished something I worked so hard for, and I appreciate the support I received.

What makes this senior class special?

We all come together when it counts. We are all good friends, and everything we do in a way is together. There's a tight connection that's hard to describe. A lot of us have been together for quite a long time. When we look back, we are going to have a lot of memories that make us laugh.

What about Willsboro are you most appreciative of and thankful for?

The college courses we can take here in high school has been awesome. If you know what major you want to go to, you can research the credits you need beforehand so you can be taking those starter classes and have those done before you even get to college.

SALUTATORIAN — EMILY MITCHELL



College Plans: Human Psysiology at Boston University

What has your time at Willsboro done for you?

The teachers have helped me prepare and look into the future. Mr. Ford set up the classes I need to make sure I am fit to succeed for the future, and I really respect all the time and effort the teachers put in for us each day.

What is a favorite memory you have?

The soccer team winning the Section VII Championship was amazing. We had not won a championship in many years. Being a part of that was remarkable, and the community all came together for us and cheered us on.

What makes this senior class special?

Some of us have our ups and downs, but we are all connected. Everyone shares a memory with someone, and we all come together and do fun stuff that makes our class memorable. What's special is everyone has their own personality, and when it's combined, it makes our class really cool.

What about Willsboro are you most appreciative of and thankful for?

Sports have always been something I really love. From the academic side, I really am thankful to Mr. Ford for helping get me set up for New Visions. The fact our school is letting us go to CV-TEC for that program really helped me for the future.

LONGTIME EMPLOYEES RETIRE

KIM BUCK

Teaching Assistant

Family is everything to Kim Buck.

When her oldest son started Kindergarten at Willsboro, she began her career with Willsboro Central School.

Initially she started off as a playground monitor and substitute and then transitioned to a teaching assistant as her career progressed.

Now with a third grandchild on the way in August, she's excited for her next chapter of life and retirement.

"I have been all over and worked at every grade level in Willsboro, and I have nothing but positive memories," Kim said. "I have a great relationship with all the teachers and staff here. I am sad to be leaving in one sense but excited to have more time to be with family."

After her first day of work, Kim said there was a bit of an overwhelming feeling. The feelings of new beginnings and unknowns struck hard. As time passed, a comfort level with being at Willsboro quickly formed.

"You have to have a toolbox," Kim said. "You have to make yourself a toolbox and pull stuff out to handle the various situations you face from day to day. The most important thing is you want to support the students."

Now with 31 years under her belt, Kim's toolbox is filled with memories and inspiration handed out to each student she has connected with.

She is excited for retirement and has a paper chain she rips off every day for her retirement countdown, but as time gets closer, mixed emotions will certainly settle in.

"Right now I have a lot of excitement to get to June, but I know as those last couple days wind down, I will start to feel those emotions a bit more and cherish those memories."

Those final memories will include the time she is spending with her Pre-K students right now.

It turns out the final memories she is making with Debbie Anderson at the Pre-K level are her favorite.

Kim said they have formed a natural chemistry and are there for each other as they support the youngsters in every way possible.

"You get to see these little ones come in at the start of the year, and they miss their parents a ton," Kim said. "But



when you fast forward to the spring and then get into the summer, you really are amazed by how much these little ones grow and how independent they become. It's without a doubt my favorite part of this position."

JOHN OLIVER

Science Teacher

Willsboro is home to John Oliver.

The longest-tenured teacher at WCS is calling it a career after 30 years of teaching science to Grades 6-12.

"The days went slow, but the years went fast," John said.

When this year's senior class started Pre-K, John knew it would be the final class he would see all the way through.

"I knew when they were going to be headed out, I would be headed out, too," he said with a laugh.

As a Willsboro alumnus, John has spent roughly 75% of his life in the hallways and classrooms of the old and new campuses.

Things have changed over the years, but John's enjoyment of watching students learn has remained the same.

"It's the lightbulb moments," he said. "You see the kids eyes and know the lightbulb clicked on. When you see they understand and grasp what you are teaching, that's the best."

Some things, of course, have changed during his teaching career.

At the beginning of this year, he began cleaning out his desk and found a 1 gigabyte memory unit.

"That was some hefty technology back in the day," he said. "I think back to when I started — there weren't cellphones, computers were not prevalent, and it was only chalkboards."

Now as his retirement grows closer, John said he will be as nervous on his last day as he was on his first.

That nervousness will certainly go away once he starts doing some of the things he's looking forward to with more time on his hands, such as hunting, fishing and golfing.

"My wife has three more years before she retires from teaching, so she has already informed me of some things I



RETIRES CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

BUS PURCHASE REPLACEMENT PLAN

While the district traditionally purchases new buses every other year, this year's budget proposes another bus purchase to proactively address our aging high-mileage fleet. As the table shows, several buses are over 10 years old and approaching 150,000 miles.

Currently, there is a 16-month lag between ordering and receiving new buses. The bus purchase approved by voters last May is not scheduled for delivery until this June, while a bus ordered as part of the proposed budget likely won't arrive until summer 2025.

Another factor driving our bus purchasing strategy is a New York State mandate requiring all schools to purchase electric buses starting in 2027. This will result in significant financial and logistical challenges to our district. Electric models are 2-3 times more expensive than traditional diesel buses and require costly infrastructure upgrades.

By replacing older vehicles ahead of the 2027 deadline, the district can greatly reduce the cost to our community while allowing as much time as possible to prepare for our transition. This approach ensures we maintain a safe, reliable fleet while fiscally planning for this upcoming mandate.

| Bus | Year | Mileage |
|-----|------|---------|
| 71 | 2007 | 148,121 |
| 73 | 2009 | 143,642 |
| 77 | 2015 | 142,105 |
| 78 | 2018 | 115,770 |
| 80 | 2022 | 107,000 |

RETIREES CONTINUED...

will be doing that don't focus on golf, hunting, fishing and being outdoors," John said while laughing.

But even with some tasks he's not exactly looking forward to, he's ready for a new chapter and excited for someone else to fill his spot.

"Willsboro has been good to me," John said. "It let me raise a family and gave me an area I could have success in. It's given me a career, and it's time to let someone else have that opportunity."

KAREN CROWNSHIELD

School Nurse



Being there for children when they are not feeling well and helping people and their health needs is all Karen Crownshield has known for the past 55 years.

Willsboro has been fortunate to have Karen as its school nurse since 2013. She brought plenty of experience with her after working at the Elizabethtown hospital for 46 years.

Now after all this time, Karen has decided to officially retire and spend more time with her family.

"I have always enjoyed my time here at Willsboro, and I am definitely going to miss it because I enjoy being around with the kids and the great staff we

have here," Karen said.

Prior to working full time with Willsboro, Karen served as a substitute nurse. She formed a connection with the school when she started bringing her grandson to Pre-K.

One day when she was subbing, a few teachers nudged her to apply for the full-time nursing position.

"I thought about it for a little bit, and I did fill out the application," Karen said. "But I left it on my kitchen table the next few days because I was not quite sure if I really was the right fit."

What she did not know as the application sat at her table was a great opportunity awaited.

Karen then turned in her resume a day later and followed up with an interview.

"Two days after the interview, Mr. Broadwell followed up with me," Karen said. "I have been here ever since, and I have loved every minute of it."

This began a new chapter to her stellar healthcare career that has not gone unnoticed.

Karen's efforts to support students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic were honored by Essex County.

The celebrations of her career certainly will not go unnoticed by the WCS community, but to Karen, it's all part of the job.

"When I think about my responsibilities, it's all about caring for others," she said. "That's what keeps you going each day. You are caring for children, and helping them however you can to make sure their school day and time at school goes as well as possible."



WILLSBORO CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECT

The 2024-2025 capital outlay project will consist of work required to make necessary improvements to the school gymnasium. As part of this project, the gym floor will be refinished, and safety wall pads will be replaced. The gym floor will be sanded, repainted, and refinished to help extend its lifespan and ensure the district's compliance with New York State mascot regulations. This project will also include the



replacement of volleyball floor sleeves, which have become a safety concern. Additionally, the existing worn and aging wall pads

will be replaced in this space as another measure to increase student safety.

The state allows school districts to transfer general funds to the capital fund for building and/or reconstruction projects, not to

exceed \$100,000. Projects funded in this manner receive reimbursement from the state the following budget year, unlike traditional capital projects, which are reimbursed over time. The state will reimburse the Willsboro Central School District for 52% of this project, resulting in a net local cost to the district of \$48,000.



PROPOSED BUDGET TAX IMPACT

| Assessment | 23-24 Taxes | 24-25 Taxes | Tax Change |
|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| \$100,000 | \$955 | \$977 | \$22 |
| \$150,000 | \$1,433 | \$1,466 | \$33 |
| \$200,000 | \$1,910 | \$1,954 | \$44 |

BALLOT PROPOSITIONS

Proposition 1:
Adopt the 2024-2025 Budget \$10,987,331

Proposition 2:
Elect 2 School Board Members
Candidate: Heather Sheehan

Proposition 3:
Purchase and financing of one 65-passenger school bus at a cost not to exceed \$175,000

| 2024-25 BUDGET COMPARISON | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| EXPENDITURES | 2024-25 PROPOSED | 2023-24 BUDGET | DIFF |
| ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT | | | |
| <u>GENERAL SUPPORT</u> | | | |
| Board of Education | \$ 12,300 | \$ 11,600 | \$ 700 |
| Central Administration | 220,013 | 213,166 | 6,847 |
| Finance | 253,969 | 213,717 | 40,252 |
| Staff | 39,838 | 35,724 | 4,114 |
| Central Services | 31,500 | 31,500 | - |
| Special Items | 212,067 | 191,810 | 20,257 |
| <u>INSTRUCTION</u> | | | |
| Administration & Improvement | 77,842 | 86,500 | (8,658) |
| <u>UNDISTRIBUTED</u> | | | |
| Employee Benefits | 224,866 | 197,423 | 27,443 |
| TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT | \$ 1,072,395 | \$ 981,440 | \$ 90,955 |
| PROGRAM COMPONENT | | | |
| <u>GENERAL SUPPORT</u> | | | |
| Staff | \$ 20,000 | \$ 10,000 | \$ 10,000 |
| <u>INSTRUCTION</u> | | | |
| Instructional Improvement | 28,500 | 18,240 | 10,260 |
| Teaching Regular School | 1,841,748 | 1,836,265 | 5,482 |
| Special Apportionment Programs | 2,075,667 | 2,164,272 | (88,605) |
| Instructional Media | 306,980 | 276,200 | 30,780 |
| Pupil Services | 436,564 | 452,349 | (15,785) |
| <u>PUPIL TRANSPORTATION</u> | | | |
| District Transportation Services | 368,595 | 368,328 | 267 |
| <u>UNDISTRIBUTED</u> | | | |
| Employee Benefits | 2,699,827 | 2,655,917 | 43,910 |
| Interfund Transfer | 55,000 | 92,000 | (37,000) |
| TOTAL PROGRAM COMPONENT | \$ 7,832,881 | \$ 7,873,571 | \$ (40,690) |
| CAPITAL COMPONENT | | | |
| <u>GENERAL SUPPORT</u> | | | |
| Central Services | \$ 562,895 | \$ 587,189 | \$ (24,294) |
| <u>UNDISTRIBUTED</u> | | | |
| Employee Benefits | 380,944 | 312,098 | 68,846 |
| Debt Service | 1,038,217 | 1,047,194 | (8,977) |
| Interfund Transfer | 100,000 | 100,000 | - |
| TOTAL CAPITAL COMPONENT | \$ 2,082,055 | \$ 2,046,481 | \$ 35,574 |
| TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES | \$ 10,987,331 | \$ 10,901,493 | \$ 85,838 |

PLEASE NOTE: Budget documents, with detailed line-by-line delineation, will be available May 7th in the school's main office, on our website at www.willsborocsd.org or call 518-963-4456, ext.201 to have a copy mailed to you. The budget will be reviewed at the Public Hearing on May 14th.



PROPOSED 2024-25 BUDGET & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

Budget Vote & School Board Election

Tuesday, May 21, 2024
12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Budget Hearing
Tuesday, May 14, 2024
6 p.m.



REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

Community members may request an absentee ballot by contacting the District Office.

WHAT AM I VOTING ON

2024-25 Budget
2 Members of the BOE
School Bus Purchase

For more information on the 2024-25 Budget



Visit our district website
<https://www.willsborocsd.org/>



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