



# Budget Newsletter

2025-2026

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**Budget Hearing**  
**Tuesday, May 13, 2025**  
**6 p.m.**

**Budget Vote & School Board Election**  
**Tuesday, May 20, 2025**  
**12 p.m. to 8 p.m.**



## DEAR COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

On April 8, 2025, the Willsboro Central School District Board of Education approved the proposed budget of \$11,173,349 for the 2025-2026 academic year, which community members will vote on May 20, 2025. This budget represents a modest spending increase of 1.69% and remains within the district's state-calculated tax cap limit.

The proposed budget fulfills the district's commitment to our community to utilize resources with maximum effectiveness and efficiency while prioritizing educational excellence. In addition to maintaining all existing programs and services, this budget preserves our ability to support all of our students' developmental and academic needs.



Throughout our budget development process, all decisions are guided by 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 reviewing the information contained in this newsletter, we invite you to explore the additional financial details available on our website. The comprehensive budget will be accessible to the public starting May 6, 2025, on our website and in the District Office. We also encourage community members to attend our public budget hearing on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 6 PM.

We sincerely appreciate the community's continued support of our students and staff and look forward to seeing all eligible voters on Tuesday, May 20, 2025.

Together in education,

Dr. Justin Gardner  
Superintendent of Schools

Key Facts & Figures	
Tax Levy Increase	2.96%
Estimated Tax Rate	\$8.96
Budget Increase	1.69%

For more information on the 2025-26 Budget

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

# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WCS SENIORS



The countdown to graduation is on for our Class of 2025! We want to congratulate our seniors and can't wait to see them finish their high school careers this June. We know their futures are bright, and they will experience plenty of success!

## WCS PREPARES FOR UPCOMING SCHOOL BUS MANDATE

As our school buses transport students to and from school as well as other special events, WCS prioritizes safety first.

Purchasing new school buses has become a high-priority item in the last few years following an upcoming New York State mandate that requires all schools to purchase electric busses starting in 2027.

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 the Willsboro community while allowing as much time as possible to prepare for the upcoming transition. This approach ensures a safe, reliable fleet is maintained while fiscally planning for this upcoming mandate.

Through a NYSERDA grant, WCS has undergone a transition study with an engineering and architectural company that will help further understand the impact and significant financial challenge the district is aiming to delay as long as possible to limit financial burden to the community.

Regardless of upcoming changes, the school transportation team will always continue to support students and WCS every day.

### CURRENT BUS FLEET

Bus	Year	Mileage
77	2015	151,807
78	2018	126,322
79	2016	118,381
80	2022	122,160
81	2025	8,235

**BUS: Continued on Page 5**



## VALEDICTORIAN — LUCAS DRINKWINE



### ***How has your time at WCS shaped your future?***

WCS has helped introduce me to many people who have helped me succeed in what I love to do. My teachers have always supported my passions and helped direct me to CV-TEC and also some of my closest friends and peers.

### ***What is a favorite memory you have of your time at WCS?***

The Giving Games has always been my favorite part of the year. Every year.

### ***What makes your senior class special?***

The size of our class being so small has helped us become very tight knit. Most of us have been together since pre-k, and consistently having classes of around 5 people, we have made strong friendships and bonds.

### ***What about WCS are you most appreciative of and thankful for?***

The most important part about WCS to me has always been the connections I form with my teachers. With the school being so small, I've formed close relationships with my teachers and many have often helped me in other parts of my high school and cooking career.

## SALUTATORIAN — DANIELLE REITHEL



### ***How has your time at WCS shaped your future?***

My time at WCS is one that I am forever grateful for, and I wouldn't change a thing. WCS has provided me a strong support system to guide me into my future after high school, and I know that this support won't just stop after graduation. I know that no matter what I end up doing in my future, I'll always have some of my biggest cheerleaders at WCS to push me to become my best, successful, self.

### ***What is a favorite memory you have of your time at WCS?***

Spirit Weeks! I will admit, some people still think they're too cool for spirit weeks, but I sure wasn't! No matter what the theme was, I loved going all out. It was always so fun and I loved seeing everyone else smile as I walked through the halls shamelessly looking ridiculous.

### ***What makes your senior class special?***

Everyone makes a point of mentioning the small class sizes at WCS and I can't help but highlight that as well. With a significantly small class-14-we've been "forced" to be very close. But what is amazing, is that although our class is so small, we have so many different future interests and plans. There is a lot of diversity when it comes with what we want to "do" once we get out of high school, and I think that also goes to show that WCS can open all kinds of different doors and opportunities for students.

### ***What about WCS are you most appreciative of and thankful for?***

100% the people. All of the people who have been part of my time at WCS have played a part in shaping who I am today. I know that many of the friendships I have made here will be lifelong. It's impossible to describe how thankful I am for my friends here at WCS. They have made every single day of my senior year extra special and I am forever grateful for them.

# MRS. ANDERSON REFLECTS ON WCS

As this school year winds down, WCS Pre-K teacher Debbie Anderson is soaking up all the final memories with her students and colleagues.

Debbie is wrapping up her 30th year at WCS and will retire at the end of June, finishing up the final chapter of a memorable teaching career.

"I have loved my time here at Willsboro because of the students," Debbie said. "They are truly my inspiration every single day, and they are what I will miss the most once I retire."

Following a year being a building substitute in her hometown of Middletown, Debbie moved to the area and continued serving as a substitute in Elizabethtown-Lewis, Moriah and Westport.

Not much time passed before she accepted a full-time position as a 4th-grade teacher at WCS and began her long-tenured career with the district.

"I remember that first day very well," Debbie said. "You have all those butterflies, but you settle down and just believe in yourself and know that you are trusted to do a job and do it well."

Her first classroom was located in the bus garage before the new WCS Campus was built, but it did not matter where her classroom was. All that mattered was she got to work with her students and make a difference.

"I love when it all comes together for a child because they are learning and growing and becoming more confident as little human beings and learners," Debbie said. "It's really exciting



being part of that process for people. You get to see their starting point and take them as far as they go and watch them develop. That makes for a very rewarding career."

After her first seven years, Debbie moved to Kindergarten where she continued to positively impact her students.

For the past seven years, she has worked with Pre-K students where her final chapter will come to a close.

During her teaching career, Debbie has had the pleasure of working with two full-time volunteers — Beverly Rizzon and Cindy Estus. The two have a combined 24 years of time with Debbie, who is extremely thankful for their time, support and dedication toward her students.

Debbie has certainly thought about what her last day will look like in June and knows there will be mixed emotions as she says her final goodbyes to her students.

"Every last day of school, we all

go outside and wave to the school buses and say goodbye, and I know that will be a little bit extra special this year, but it's all exciting at the same time," she said.

There are still plans to visit from time to time, however, and Debbie has already asked her friends and colleagues if she can come to school every now and then to read a story to students.

"I can't be away forever. I have to read a story every now and then," Debbie said.

As for the next chapter, there will certainly be some traveling, and she hopes to use her skillsets to her advantage in future opportunities.

First up in the retirement plans will be a cruise.

"I know during the first day of school this upcoming fall, I want to be doing something so I am not thinking about what I am missing here," Debbie said. "My goal is to be doing something epic on that first day, but my heart will always be here in Willsboro."





## BUS: Continued from Page 2

Coordinator of Transportation and Facilities Lucas Strong, along with Charlene Lobdell, Peter Sayward and Todd Gerding are the core of WCS transportation in addition to several dedicated substitute drivers.

"As a bus driver, you are the first person from school to have an interaction with a student to start the day," Strong said. "Saying 'Good Morning' to them means something. It brightens your day when you hear the kids on the bus and their stories. It makes you smile and laugh and starts the day off on a good note."

While days begin early and end late, the quartet of drivers commits itself to students. Whether it's an early-morning bus run or a late-night trip to and from a sporting event, the drivers' dedication never wavers.

"I feel very fortunate to have the team that I do," Strong said. "They are the backbone of the school."

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. Several buses are over 10 years old and approaching 150,000 miles.

WCS relies on its community to provide the support needed to acclimate to the pending mandates from NYS and needs further assistance to add to its fleet of busses.

"As a school district, having newer school buses enhances the safety of our students and community," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Justin Gardner said. "We want to ease the financial burden of our community through additional school bus purchase approvals before the 2027 mandate kicks in. Most importantly, we will continue to rely on our team of drivers and are thankful for their never-ending dedication to WCS."

## WHY IS A NEW BUS NEEDED?

The district is proposing the purchase of a new bus to proactively address our aging high-mileage fleet & to reduce future costs as a result of a NYS mandate to purchase electric buses starting in 2027

### ADDRESS AGING HIGH-MILEAGE FLEET

Almost all of our current buses have over 100,000 miles and we have multiple buses currently being used daily that are over 15 years old.

### DELAY COSTS AHEAD OF NYS E-BUS MANDATE

Starting in 2027, all NYS schools will only be able to purchase electric buses, which are 2-3 times more expensive than our current buses.

To learn more visit: [www.willsborocsd.org](http://www.willsborocsd.org)

**Willsboro**  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT







# WILLSBORO CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECT

The 2025-26 capital outlay project will consist of work required to make necessary improvements to the district's clock and public address systems. As part of this project, aging and unreliable classroom clocks and public address speakers will be replaced with new digital models. The current equipment is over 20 years old and is no longer serviceable.

The replacement system will not only provide necessary upgrades for communication within the building but



will also enable additional safety features to be implemented throughout the district. These new digital clock/speaker units will integrate

with the district's phone system, providing enhanced safety notification capabilities.

Through annual capital outlay projects, 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 a longer period of time. The state will reimburse the Willsboro Central School District for 52% of this project next year, resulting in a net local cost to the district of \$48,000.



## PROPOSED BUDGET TAX IMPACT

Assessment	24-25 Taxes	25-26 Taxes	Tax Change
\$100,000	\$869	\$896	\$27
\$150,000	\$1,304	\$1,344	\$40
\$200,000	\$1,738	\$1,792	\$54

## BALLOT PROPOSITIONS

- Proposition 1:**  
Adopt the 2025-2026 Budget  
\$11,173,349
- Proposition 2:**  
Elect 1 School Board Member  
Candidates:  
Kasey Young, Morgan Drinkwine
- Proposition 3:**  
Purchase and financing of one  
65-passenger school bus  
at a cost not to exceed \$175,000



## 2025-2026 BUDGET COMPARISON

EXPENDITURES	2025-26 PROPOSED	2024-25 BUDGET	DIFFERENCE
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT</b>			
<u>GENERAL SUPPORT</u>			
Board of Education	\$ 6,680	\$ 12,300	\$ (5,620)
Central Administration	\$ 229,354	\$ 220,013	\$ 9,341
Finance	\$ 295,547	\$ 253,969	\$ 41,578
Staff	\$ 54,314	\$ 39,838	\$ 14,476
Central Services & Special Items	\$ 248,936	\$ 243,567	\$ 5,369
<u>INSTRUCTION</u>			
Administration & Improvement	\$ 81,256	\$ 77,842	\$ 3,414
<u>UNDISTRIBUTED</u>			
Employee Benefits	\$ 214,037	\$ 224,866	\$ (10,829)
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT</b>	<b>\$ 1,130,125</b>	<b>\$ 1,072,395</b>	<b>\$ 57,730</b>
<b>PROGRAM COMPONENT</b>			
<u>GENERAL SUPPORT</u>			
Staff	\$ 16,667	\$ 20,000	\$ (3,333)
<u>INSTRUCTION</u>			
Instructional Improvement	\$ 26,413	\$ 28,500	\$ (2,087)
Teaching Regular School	\$ 1,814,380	\$ 1,841,748	\$ (27,368)
Special Apportionment Programs	\$ 2,128,713	\$ 2,075,667	\$ 53,045
Instructional Media	\$ 293,119	\$ 306,980	\$ (13,861)
Pupil Services	\$ 443,902	\$ 436,564	\$ 7,337
<u>PUPIL TRANSPORTATION</u>			
District Transportation Services	\$ 412,381	\$ 368,595	\$ 43,786
<u>UNDISTRIBUTED</u>			
Employee Benefits	\$ 2,742,554	\$ 2,699,827	\$ 42,727
Interfund Transfer	\$ 25,000	\$ 55,000	\$ (30,000)
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM COMPONENT</b>	<b>\$ 7,903,127</b>	<b>\$ 7,832,881</b>	<b>\$ 70,246</b>
<b>CAPITAL COMPONENT</b>			
<u>GENERAL SUPPORT</u>			
Central Services	\$ 543,290	\$ 562,895	\$ (19,604)
<u>UNDISTRIBUTED</u>			
Employee Benefits	\$ 388,006	\$ 380,944	\$ 7,062
Debt Service	\$ 1,094,801	\$ 1,038,217	\$ 56,585
Interfund Transfer	\$ 114,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 14,000
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL COMPONENT</b>	<b>\$ 2,140,097</b>	<b>\$ 2,082,055</b>	<b>\$ 58,042</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 11,173,349</b>	<b>\$ 10,987,331</b>	<b>\$ 186,018</b>

PLEASE NOTE: Budget documents, with detailed line-by-line deliniation, will be available May 6, 2025 in the school's main office, on our website at [www.willsborocsd.org](http://www.willsborocsd.org) or by calling 518-963-4456, x201 to have a copy mailed to you. The budget will be reviewed at the Public Hearing on May 13, 2025.



## PROPOSED 2025-26 BUDGET & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025

### REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

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

### WHAT AM I VOTING ON

2025-26 Budget  
1 Member of the BOE  
School Bus Purchase

For more information on the 2025-26 Budget



Visit our district website  
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## Budget Vote & School Board Election

Tuesday, May 20, 2025  
12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Budget Hearing**  
Tuesday, May 13, 2025  
6 p.m.



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## Board of Education

President: Kasey Young  
Vice-President: Heather Sheehan  
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Krissy Leerkes  
Laura Bridge

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