

WARREN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS BUDGET FAQ UPDATE

What is the proposed tax levy compared to last year?

The tax levy is \$36,911,808, which is 1.61% more than last year. The state allows us to increase the tax levy no more than 2%, but the Board made the decision to present a budget that was under the 2% cap.

What is the increase in the proposed budget compared to last year?

The total proposed budget is \$40,319,301, which is 3.44% more than last year. The increase is a result of the district receiving additional state aid and a larger withdrawal of \$720,000 from Capital Reserve to fund 5 projects in the district.

Are any programs being cut as a result of the budget?

No programs are planned to be cut at this time. If the budget fails and the Township directs the district to make cuts, the Board will have to make decisions on what items/programs to be cut.

Are any programs being added as a result of this budget?

The district is implementing a new Mandarin Language pilot program at Warren Middle School. Our incoming 6th graders will have the option of choosing Mandarin as their World Language choice. This represents a 0.5 teacher position increase (approximately \$30,000). Additionally, a pre-engineering program in grades 4-8 will be implemented with no additional cost (restructuring of curriculum and teacher schedules).

Why should I vote for this budget?

Voting for this budget ensures the continued excellence of the Warren Township Schools, provides for the support of our students as they grow and learn, protects our assets and resources for future years, adds to property values in town, and continues to enhance the town of Warren's reputation as a desirable place to live.

What could happen if the budget is defeated again this year?

If the budget fails, the Township can recommend cuts of any size. These cuts not only threaten planned purchases and programs for next year, but also reduce our base for future years. With a 2% cap on tax levy increases, a reduction in the base could be problematic for future years.

What budget lines have increased and why?

Although some of our line items show above a 2% increase, these increases are misleading. Additional staff members were hired in the 2010-2011 school year, as needed, in both special education to bring programs in-district rather than out-of-district, and regular education. These positions were not in the original 2010-2011 budget. Therefore, the percentage increase is

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based on a lower number, includes the increased staff from 2010-2011, with the addition of a small percentage for next year as well. The accounts that show these increases are instruction in general and special education, transportation, and child study team. You may have also noted that the Summer School line shows a large increase. This, too, is misleading. Our Summer School is a revenue-generating program and this increase will be offset by increased revenue.

What lines have decreased and why?

The Employee Benefits line has decreased by 5.4%. This decrease is due to the reduction and in some cases elimination of health benefit waiver payments to employees as well as to the employees' contribution of 1.5% of their salaries toward the cost of their health benefits.

What capital projects are included in this budget?

The Board has been very responsible in making regular deposits to the district's capital reserve accounts. These funds can only be used for capital projects. We will use \$720,000 of the money in this account to cover replacement of bleachers at WMS, the renovation of the all-purpose room at CS, the expansion of the playground at WS, automatic temperature control units at MH, and brick façade repairs across the district.

How does the budget affect my taxes?

On an average household (calculated by the Township at \$617,027), the 2011-2012 budget proposes a tax increase of \$98 per year or \$8.17 per month.

What costs-saving measures are included in this budget?

The district continues to seek opportunities for shared services. Already, we share lawn maintenance and technology maintenance with the Township. We have entered into a cooperative purchasing plan for gas, electricity, and gasoline. Our teachers regularly participate in a teacher-teaching-teacher program, rather than going out for professional development. The district is involved in an energy conservation program, which has lowered our energy costs by thousands of dollars. Finally, the district has moved from a private health insurance program to the State Employee Health Benefits program.

What is the update on the resolution of the WTEA-BOE collective bargaining agreement?

The teachers and the Board continue to work toward resolution, but have not yet reached an agreement. The Board has planned for very conservative increases in salary lines.