

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
Joint Meeting with Township Governing Bodies
Public Hearing on the Proposed 2018-2019 School Budget
APRIL 24, 2018

In accordance with the State’s Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was provided by sending a notice of the time, date, location, and, to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting on January 3, 2018, and on April 20, 2018, to *The Princeton Packet*, *The Times*, *The Home News Tribune*, and West Windsor and Plainsboro Public Libraries. Copies of the notice also have been placed in the Board Office and in each of the district schools on January 3, 2018, and on April 20, 2018, and sent to Plainsboro and West Windsor township clerks on January 3, 2018, and on April 20, 2018.

The meeting of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Board of Education was called to order by Board President Fleres at 6:30 p.m. in the Music Room of the Village School for the joint meeting of the township’s governing bodies. The following board members were present:

Mr. Isaac Cheng	Ms. Rachel Juliana	Mr. Martin Whitfield
Mr. Anthony Fleres	Ms. Michele Kaish	Mr. Yu “Taylor” Zhong
Ms. Carol Herts	Ms. Dana Krug	

Board member Louisa Ho was absent. Present also were: Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Christopher Russo, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Board Secretary; Mr. Gerard Dalton, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services/Planning; Mr. Martin Smith, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Mr. Lawrence LoCastro, Comptroller; and, Mr. Patrick Duncan, Special Assistant for Labor Relations.

Ms. Charity Fues, Director of Human Resources and Mr. Mark Toscano, board attorney, arrived during the joint meeting budget presentation.

Joint Meeting: Townships Governing Bodies

Dr. Aderhold welcomed the township leaders for a look at the proposed 2018-2019 school budget and thanked the mayors and township officials for their continuing support. Dr. Aderhold expressed his appreciation to everyone for working together through the year-long budget cycle. The Board of Education and administration have worked to construct a budget that reflects the values of the district and continues to support students through commitments to strong educational programs and high student achievement while being cost effective and sensitive to the impact on taxpayers.

Dr. Christopher Russo and Dr. Aderhold provided a brief overview of the key parameters of the proposed budget. They highlighted the district’s continued high rankings, student achievement, and commitment to financial accountability and transparency. Dr. Russo compared expenditures and revenues of the proposed budget with the current budget, showing increases/decreases and the realignment of resources. He also reviewed prior budgets, changes in township enrollment percentages, capital projects, and per pupil spending.

After reviewing the proposed budget, Dr. Aderhold examined projected residential growth in both West Windsor and Plainsboro, highlighting the impact projected growth may have on enrollment in each of the

schools in the district. He outlined the need for a referendum for facilities improvements and expansions and explained why the referendum would have little or no impact on property taxes.

At 7:35 p.m. the joint meeting adjourned.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The Board re-convened in the multipurpose room of the Board of Education at 7:50 p.m. for the Board of Education meeting. Mr. Fleres welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. He read the provision requiring the meeting be adequately advertised in accordance with the Sunshine laws.

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

Dr. Aderhold thanked everyone for attending and explained that the Board met with both West Windsor and Plainsboro Township officials prior to this meeting to review the budget. Dr. Aderhold recognized Mr. Gerard Dalton, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services/Planning, for his 8 years with the district. Mr. Dalton will be leaving the district for the position of Superintendent of Brick Township School District. Dr. Aderhold congratulated Mr. Dalton and expressed that his presence in the District would be missed.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS

Dillon Henry, High School North Student Representative, reported the following: The Mr. North contest took place this past Saturday and raised \$1250 for the March of Dimes, not including ticket and concession sales. The One-Act Festival/Freshman Sophomore Play will take place on Friday, May 4th and Saturday, May 5th, at 7:00 p.m. AP Week is quickly approaching.

Alexandra Vena, High School South Student Representative, reported the following: On Saturday, April 14th, the South and North girl's and boy's Lacrosse teams played each other on North's turf, along with the Community and Grover girl's and boy's teams. South girls' team lost a close game by a mere two points and South's boys' team won. This past Friday night, South had their Junior Extravaganza at the Camden Aquarium. PARCC testing has begun, along with AP workshops for students in preparation for the upcoming exams. Next week begins South's Spring Spirit Week with the line-up going as follows: Monday is Decades Day, Tuesday is School Spirit Day, Wednesday is Mathlete vs. Athlete Day, Thursday is Disney Day, and Friday is Class Color Day. Friday night, the Student Council is hosting South's first ever South Factor, formerly known as Mr. South. This year, the student council opened the show up to both guys and girls to compete for the first time in South history. The proceeds from South Factor will be donated to Meals on Wheels, an organization dedicated to feeding the hungry in our area.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2017-2018 BUDGET

Board President Fleres opened the 2017-2018 Public Hearing on the proposed budget at 7:56 p.m.

Dr. Aderhold opened the presentation on the proposed 2018-2019 budget by thanking the Board, the Assistant Superintendents, and the Comptroller for their work on the budget at retreats and committee meetings over the past year. He explained that creating the budget is a year-round process and described the components of a school budget. Dr. Aderhold noted that one item new to the budget that may be of interest is the allocation of funds for the possibility of utilizing Class 3 Officers. Further discussion of that topic will be held at the May 8th BOE meeting. He reviewed the big picture budget topics, including Special Services, health care costs, staff and salary increases, capital projects, security, and technology. Dr. Aderhold introduced Dr. Christopher Russo to complete the presentation.

Dr. Russo reviewed the 2018 District High School Rankings and 2018 Best New Jersey School Districts as published on niche.com. The High School Rankings show that High School South ranked 9th and High School North ranked 13th in New Jersey. Compared to neighboring high performing districts, WW-P High Schools are at the lower end of cost per student educational spending, yet have the highest SAT scores. As a district, West Windsor-Plainsboro is ranked third in the state by niche.com. A brief synopsis was given outlining student achievements including the number of National Merit Scholars awards, the number of AP Scholar awards, and the average scores for AP, SAT, ACT tests. Dr. Russo noted the achievements of the finance department, having received the Association of School Business Officials International's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for the ninth year and the Meritorious Budget Award from the Association of School Business Officials International for the fifth year.

Dr. Russo touched on the township percentage enrollment changes over the past 9 years, noting the small variation between years. This year, Plainsboro residents constitute 42.01% of student enrollment and West Windsor students makeup 57.99%.

He then provided a "snapshot" of the allocation of expenditures and revenues, touching on the operating expenditure categories. The budget includes an additional \$1,550,231 for regular instruction, adding several staff positions to assist in keeping our student:teacher ratio low. Co-curricular (athletics and clubs) received additional funding to support afterschool activities. The addition of \$957,152 to Special Education (instruction, tuition, and child study team and support services) is due to additional students needing services. Student support services (media centers, nurses and guidance) includes the addition of \$173,281, and \$156,168 was added for improvement of instruction and professional development. \$428,625 was added to Administration and includes pre-referendum expenses and some new software programs. Operations and Maintenance is increased by \$1,537,261, which includes the additional funds we received in state aid which have mostly been allocated for additional school security. Transportation increased by \$343,723 for additional routes. Benefits increased by 5.08% or \$1,490,000. Administration is looking into alternatives to the State Health Benefits Plan to counter the rising costs of benefits, which are paid by the employees and the district. Capital outlay had a negligible increase and Debt service decreased by \$208,056. The district is considering a referendum to handle additions and renovations that are needed throughout the district. With declining debt service, we can put together a referendum that would have minimal to no impact on the overall tax levy. Overall the budget-to-budget increase is 3.75% for a total budget of \$181,272,222.

Dr. Russo provided a brief review of the allocation of revenues. The four sources of revenues are: fund balance; local tax levy; state-aid; and miscellaneous. The budget provides \$7 million in tax relief and \$907,430 in state aid. Revenue from state aid increased slightly this year. The overall revenue increase matches the increase in expenditures of 3.75%. However, the tax levy increase remains at the 2% cap due to the use of fund balance. We are within the tax cap regulations of the state.

Dr. Russo reviewed the new capital projects, which include front entrance doors at Community Middle School, toilet rooms at High School South, new and replaced gutters at Millstone River School, a new gym floor at Wicoff, technology costs to continue the one-to-one initiative, the bus loop at Community Middle School and Dutch Neck School, the Town Center Addition, the carryover of the turf fields at both high school.

As an additional reference point, Dr. Russo reviewed a fifteen-year range of tax levy increase percentages for the District. He then reviewed a fifteen-year range of compared actual comparative per pupil expenditures, as per the Department of Education, and how the district compares to other high-performing districts of similar size. These comparisons clearly show that West Windsor-Plainsboro continues to maintain a high level of educational excellence at a per pupil cost below neighboring high performing districts.

Dr. Russo reviewed the tax implications of the 2018-2019 budget on both townships. Plainsboro shows a tax rate to \$1.478 per \$100 of assessed property value for an increase of 4.1 cents. For a home assessed at the township average, this would be an increase of \$175. For the owner of a home at the township average of \$450,800, school taxes are estimated to be \$6,663. The West Windsor tax rate is \$1.548 per \$100 of assessed property value for an increase of 2.6 cents. For a home assessed at the township average, this would be an increase of \$128. For the owner of a home at the township average of \$521,719, school taxes are estimated to be \$8,076.

The user-friendly budget will be posted on the district website within 48 hours after the public hearing on the budget. Copies of budget presentations are also available on the district web site: http://www.wwp.org/about_us/budget_information.

There was a discussion clarifying the meaning of special revenue funds.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE BUDGET

Mr. Fleres, on behalf of the Board, invited the public to comment specifically on the budget. One community member questioned whether the budget includes funds for security for the use of technology and online activities.

Dr. Aderhold replied to the public comment by explaining the district’s use of Gaggle, which monitors students’ activity on the district’s google platforms. The Gaggle program flags any material that should be reviewed for content, which is then reviewed by a Gaggle employee. If a concern exists, the district is notified via a protocol. As a district, we are unable to monitor personal platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which is when it is important for the community to bring forward information.

APPROVAL OF 2018-2019 BUDGET:

Upon motion to approve the budget by Mr. Zhong, seconded by Ms. Juliana, following a comment regarding clubs, supervisors, technology, mailings, and capital reserves, with all Board members present voting yes, except Ms. Herts who voted no, the following board action was approved:

2018-2019 Budget

1. Be It Resolved, to approve a school district budget for the fiscal year 2018-2019 school year:

	Budget	Local Tax Levy
Total General Fund	\$ 213,464,173	\$ 161,896,285
Total Special Revenue Fund	\$ 2,314,275	N/A
Total Debt Service Fund	\$ 7,843,225	0
Totals	\$ 223,621,673	\$ 161,896,285

Included in the general fund budget is \$7,387,277 to be deposited in capital reserve to transfer to repayment of debt.

Included in the general fund budget is \$21,535,450 to be withdrawn from the Board of Education’s approved Capital Reserve Account to support funding of capital projects.

Included in the general fund budget is \$6,016,347 for deposit into the Board of Education’s approved Capital Reserve Account for future funding of capital projects.

The school district has proposed programs and services in addition to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards adopted by the State Board of Education. Information on this budget and the programs and services it provides is available from your local school district.

At 8:24 p.m. the public hearing on the 2018-2019 budget was concluded.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board President opened the public comment for general topic items. Two members of the public spoke regarding 1) the possibility of starting additional clubs, and 2) protecting students from issues resulting from internet use and data breaches.

Dr. Aderhold responded to the public comment regarding clubs, explaining that there are procedures in place to introduce new clubs if there is enough interest. He also responded to the comment regarding internet protections, explaining that there are laws that exist to protect children. The District and software providers are required to follow those laws, however, the protections provided are only as good as the companies that uphold the laws and protect the data.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

All committees met on Tuesday, April 17, 2018.

Administration & Facilities Committee

Ms. Kaish reported that the Committee met and reviewed the conceptual plans for the additions and renovations to various schools around the district as part of a potential referendum. The committee discussed regulations R7441 Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings and on School Grounds, and R5600 – Pupil discipline/Code of Conduct. The committee reviewed the NJSIAA Cooperative Hockey Agreement for the 2018-2020 hockey seasons and recommends its approval. The revision of the 2018-2019 school calendar was discussed and no changes are being recommended. Administration shared with the committee that they are working with Prince of Peace church on a facilities rental agreement for Kindergarten Extension for next year. The committee reviewed the administrative structure of the athletic department due to the need for greater supervision of both the growing athletic and physical education departments. The Superintendent shared with the committee the current model for administrative assistants and discussed possible changes. The committee continued discussions on the concept of Class III Officers at the schools. The Committee recommends approval of a vendor for closed captioning for the district website as required by a settlement with the Office of Civil Rights regarding website accessibility. Lastly, the Committee recommends approval of professional development travel for two Human Resources Administrators.

Curriculum Committee

Ms. Krug reported that the Committee met and reviewed the overnight field trips that have been approved for the 2017-2018 school year and discussed concerns about the costs associated with these trips. The Committee reviewed draft assessment score information that will be made available to parents in the Genesis Parent Portal. The Committee discussed the Physical Education/Health Program Review, stating that no proposals were received for conducting the external review and therefore only an internal review would be conducted. The Committee reviewed and recommends approval of the following items on tonight's agenda: Two revisions to the 2018-2019 High School Program of Studies; the adoption of the textbook EdGems Math Course, 2018; the continued use of Genesis for the District's student information system; Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) to supply web based Measures of Academic Progress