

# Network Notes



SPECIAL BUDGET EDITION



West Milford Township Public Schools: "A Special Place for Students"

Spring 2010: Volume 16

**Vote ~ Vote ~ Vote ~ Vote**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 20**  
**7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.**

## West Milford Board of Education Approves 2010-2011 Budget

### *Superintendent's Budget Message --*

The school budget vote and election set for Tuesday, April 20, 2010, marks the conclusion of a thorough and comprehensive process of financial planning and program review within the school district. Since the beginning of Fall 2009, the Administration and Board Trustees have focused on preparing a budget for the 2010-2011 school year. This has been a Herculean challenge as we have attempted to keep a cap on rising property taxes, yet still maintaining an educational program that is "thorough and efficient."

New Jersey legislation requires us to limit the growth of the proposed budget. Although we are mandated to do so, we, as fellow taxpayers, also remain cognizant of the economic demands that have been placed on all citizens throughout the state. Everyday operating costs continue to rise and the percentage of increases in areas such as utility costs and insurance premiums, surpass the state's imposed 4% cap.

We began to plan for this budget long before we received notification of the \$3.3 million dollar reduction in state aid. These reductions presented greater challenges to us as we moved forward in our plans to provide our students with a comprehensive educational program. As a result of these catastrophic cutbacks, decisions had to be made that were not originally anticipated. Despite these reductions, we have attempted to retain existing programs by reconfiguring services which will allow us to continue in our efforts to provide a quality education in West Milford.

Citizens of the community are encouraged to review our spending trends and consistent cost containment efforts. Our administrative costs per pupil, always a subject of interest, are one of the lowest of Passaic County's 20 districts and have been for the last several consecutive years!

(See **Budget Message** on Page 2)

## Professor in Residence Program

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the District's Department of Special Services is putting Federal Stimulus Grant monies to excellent use by bringing the William Paterson University Professor in Residence Program (PIR) to the West Milford Township Schools.

The PIR is a highly acclaimed school based professional development model, in which the West Milford Township School District and William Paterson University have joined together in a partnership. As the ARRA - IDEA is a Special Education Grant, the major focus is the education of classified students, with the emphasis on stronger and more effective instructional strategies and practices, in order to improve overall academic achievement, especially in the areas of Language Literacy and Mathematics.

By partnering with William Paterson University, each of the school district's eight schools is now deemed by the university to be "Professional Development Schools"

(PDS). The PDS's are, by design, a professional environment that combines the best theory, research and practice by fostering a collaborative community of learners. The Professor in Residence Program is providing on-site in-service staff training, job coaching

(See **Residence Program** on Page 2)



Hall Patrol at Maple Road School

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## SMART Board Technology

The Federal Stimulus ARRA - IDEA monies have made it possible for the Special Services Department to purchase much needed technology equipment for designated Resource Rooms and self-contained Special Education classrooms in all of the district's eight schools.

SMART Boards, which are interactive whiteboards, have gained international prominence for their ability to help teachers create lessons that effectively engage students of all ages, functional levels and learning styles. Particularly for special needs students, rather than the traditional blackboard, the intuitive touch surface encourages participation and improves student outcomes, due to the SMART Board's user-friendly interactivity, flexibility and hands-on ease of use. The SMART Boards combine the simplicity of a whiteboard, with the power of a computer to control applications by the teacher and the students, by touching the screen with a finger or writing with the pen tool provided.

The potential for teaching academics with SMART Boards is endless, as students become more excited about what they are studying, which translates into better learning experiences for students. The district's classified students are becoming highly engaged when presented with opportunities to work directly on an interactive SMART Board. Visual and tactile lessons lead to multi-sensory engagement in the learning process. There is also less chance for distraction, with special needs students focusing their attention on the interactive SMART Board lessons.

## BUDGET FACTS



### Did you know . . .

- The budget failed by three votes in 2007. **Every vote counts!**
- The overall budget will increase 0.3% due to higher special education, insurance and utility costs.
- The state withheld \$1.2 million in aid this year and cut aid by 20% or \$3.3 million for next year.
- School taxes represent 54% of the entire property tax statement; the last time it was below 54% was in 1998.
- In the 1992-93 school year, state aid funded 38% of the budget. Sixteen years later, state aid represents less than 20.2% of the 2010-11 budget.
- The budget includes a student activity fee for grades 7-12 to help defray the costs of extra curricular activities and athletics.
- Other club hours will continue to run through the Community School.
- The district historically spends below the state average on overhead expenses, including administrative and custodial/maintenance costs.
- The district spends \$382 less per pupil on Administration than the regional limit of \$1,875.
- The Treasury Department commended the District for its operational efficiency in an independent report at: [www.state.nj.us/lgbr](http://www.state.nj.us/lgbr)
- A defeated budget will have no impact on teacher or administrative contracted salaries.
- 100% of West Milford teachers have been certified as "highly qualified."
- The average West Milford residential tax bill for 2009 was \$7,447, which is \$513 below the average for Passaic County municipalities.
- The district saves money in many ways, including joint insurance pools, cooperative purchasing, energy conservation projects, outside financing, health insurance incentives, deregulated utilities, and audits of phone and energy contracts.
- See [www.wmtps.org](http://www.wmtps.org) for more facts.

### Residence Program -- (Continued from Page 1)

and support for both Special Education and General Education Teachers, in meeting the educational needs of classified students within the Least Restrictive Environment. Through effective Differentiated Instruction, all students in the district, both Special Education and General Education, should benefit. The Federal Stimulus monies are covering the cost of having a William Paterson University professor assigned to each school in the district for one day per week, for a period of two years, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

### Budget Message -- (Continued from Page 1)

Before casting your vote on April 20th, I ask that you review the proposed budget with a global perspective of all that we offer the students in West Milford. Also, I want to emphasize that additional losses of financial support will seriously impact our ability to maintain our current programs.

I invite you to view the budget on our website at [www.wmtps.org](http://www.wmtps.org). Feel free to call me at 973-697-1700 with any questions you may have regarding this budget.

**Please be sure to cast your vote on April 20, 2010!**

*Thank you,  
Bernice Colefield*

# 2010-2011 Proposed District Budget — \$68,510,532

## Revenues

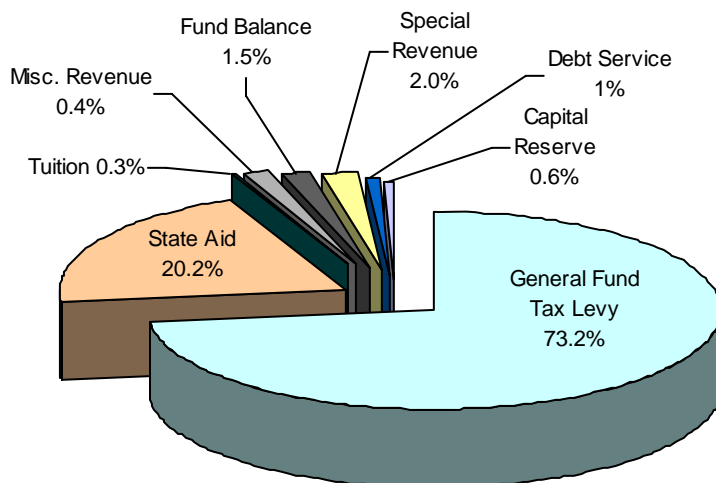
### State Cuts Aid by \$3.3 Million

In his budget message given on March 16, Governor Christie announced the reduction of school based state aid to help address an \$11 billion shortfall in the state’s budget. West Milford saw a \$3.3 million cut in aid, representing a 20% reduction in aid. This is in addition to the \$1.2 million in aid withheld by the state for the current year.

State aid now represents 20% of the district budget, down from 38% in 1993, and below the state average of 41% in 2009. The chart below provides more details on how West Milford’s revenues compares to the state average.

In 2009, the school tax portion of the total property tax bill was 54%. The last time it was less than 54% was 1998.

|         | 2008-09  |            |
|---------|----------|------------|
|         | District | State Avg. |
| LOCAL   | 70%      | 51%        |
| STATE   | 26%      | 41%        |
| FEDERAL | 2%       | 3%         |
| OTHER   | 2%       | 5%         |



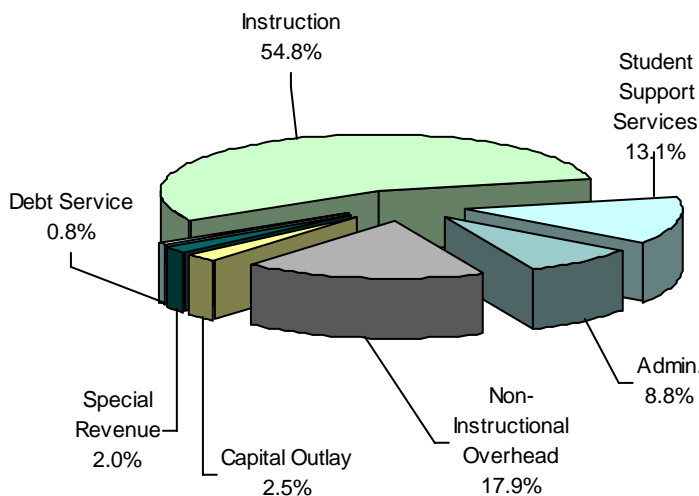
Expenditure comparisons can be found at the State’s Comparative Spending Guide website at: [www.nj.gov/njded/guide/](http://www.nj.gov/njded/guide/)

## Appropriations

### Federal Grants Advance Initiatives

The Board of Education adopted a fiscally responsible spending plan that reduced all areas of the budget. We will continue to address the state aid reductions, while moving forward on instructional initiatives using federal and state grant monies.

The budget includes several capital improvements offset by federal and state grants. Smart boards and e-readers will be used in pilot programs throughout the district. We will continue the planned replacements of textbooks, technology, school vehicles, and instruments. Other program changes can be found in the school budget section of the district’s website.



### TAX IMPACT

A home assessed at \$133,700 will have an **additional cost of \$0.75 per day**. The tax rate has been impacted by a reduction of almost \$19 million of ratable property value in the Township. Coupled with the lack of development due to the Highland’s Act, the affect of the lost property value is \$56 or 20% of the tax impact on the average assessment.

| Assessed Value | Tax 2009-10 | Tax 2010-11 | \$ Difference |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| \$133,700      | 4,240       | 4,517       | 277           |

### West Milford Consistently Spends Below the State Average

| Cost per Pupil | FY’07  | FY’08  | FY’09  |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| District       | 11,428 | 12,146 | 12,943 |
| State          | 11,939 | 12,776 | 13,601 |
| Difference     | -511   | -630   | -658   |

Source: New Jersey School Report Card

# Network Notes

West Milford Public Schools, 46 Highlander Drive, West Milford, NJ 07480

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## LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

### West Milford Board of Education

Lynda Van Dyk, President ~ Wayne Gottlieb, Vice President  
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### Administration

Bernice Colefield, Superintendent  
Steven J. Cea, Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
Iris Wechling, Director of Education  
Howard B. Heller, Director of Special Services

### DONATIONS

The West Milford Board of Education would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their generous donations during the 2009-2010 school year:

- A&P Supermarkets
- Immaculate Conception Church
- Mr. & Mrs. Steven Haggerty
- JG & Son Landscaping
- Maloney & Son Tree Service
- The Marion & Silfred DePhillips Foundation
- Mr. Ernie Oberer
- Unique Floors
- West Milford Education Foundation
- Mr. Joseph Zera
- Mrs. Barbara Zipperlein
- Apschawa PTA ~ Maple Road PTO
- Marshall Hill PTA ~ Paradise Knoll PTA
- Upper Greenwood Lake PTA ~ Westbrook PTA
- Maeopin PTA ~ West Milford High School PTSO

### What You Are Voting On

The total school budget is \$68,510,532. Federal, State, and General Fund revenues reduce the actual amount that residents fund and vote on to \$50,129,479. The tax increase translates to \$23,08 per month on a home assessed at \$133,700.

Visit our website at [www.wmtps.org](http://www.wmtps.org)

### PUBLIC QUESTION








**RESOLVED**, that there should be raised for the General Fund \$50,129,479 for the ensuing School Year (2010-2011). The school district has proposed programs and services in addition to the core curriculum content 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.

Yes  No

### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Full Term—3 Years

Vote for Three

|   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| James J.<br>FOODY   | John M.<br>KOEPE   | Albert<br>DEMAREST  | Donna<br>RICHARDS   | Gary<br>STEELE  | Marilyn<br>SCHULTZ  | David<br>RICHARDS   |
|  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |