



April 12, 2024

Dear Families,

As I mentioned before, our district is faced with a difficult task of balancing our budget for the 24-25 school year. As a school community we have advocated hard for our students' needs during and after the COVID pandemic, we have been focused on providing additional support for our student's mental health needs, worked to enhance our ELL services, have increased special education supports/ programs for our student's special education needs, and always support extracurricular and athletic opportunities for our children. All of these often mandated student supports and programs come at a cost to our district. With an increase in program expenses, no longer receiving COVID funding, inflationary costs, increase in employee salaries/benefits, no known district wide retirements or budget breakage, and a current decrease in state aid - our school district is looking at a budget gap of over 1.5 million dollars.

At Wednesday night's budget workshop meeting our board of education continued their conversation to balance the 24-25 school budget. The board discussed using a combination of options to balance next school year's budget: this includes a portion of district fund balance, some of the district's reserve funding, debt service funds, and not to plan for an additional capital outlay facilities project. While these options helped lower the deficit it is still not enough funds to balance the school budget.

Also at yesterday's meeting the board discussed raising taxes to help balance the budget. Raising taxes is not something our board of education takes lightly. Up until a couple years ago, our school district did not raise taxes for over a decade. At our budget workshop the board discussed the need of raising taxes and likely going over the tax cap to help balance the school budget. Without an increase in taxes the reductions in student programming that would have to be made would have enormous impacts on our student programming and extra curricular offerings.

Even with utilizing fund balance, reserves, debt service funding, and raising taxes there is still a deficit. At last night's meeting the board discussed making some difficult budget reductions. Each one of the possible reductions is going to impact our district's services and programming. Many items on this list result in some valued, hard working, and respected employee's possibly not having a position in our district next year.

The following are reductions that the board discussed making to balance the 24-25 budget:

- School Resource Deputy

- 1 day reduction of Questar Communication Specialist
- Full time Laborer
- Full time Secretary
- Jr./Sr. High School Monitor
- Jr./Sr High Technology Teacher
- 2 Aide positions - due to special education needs
- 2 Aide positions - would result in no scheduled recess for students at WBH (students will have PE daily and teachers can bring children outside for recess time)

The board of education has some difficult budget decisions to make at their next board meeting on Wednesday, April 23rd at 7pm in the WBH library. This is when the board of education will approve a school budget for the 24-25 school year. We are also hopeful that the NY State Senate, Assembly, and Governor can come together by then with a school budget that supports our school district rather than decreases state aid. At this point we are still working with a possible decrease in state aid due to "Hold Harmless" reductions.

For more information and for a copy of our most recent budget presentation please see the link below.

<https://www.newlebanoncsd.org/district/budget/>

Please reach out if you have any questions. I will continue to advocate for our district and keep you informed through this difficult process. Thank you for your support of our school district and your commitment to your child's education.

Fondly,

Andrew Kourt

Superintendent

Andrew M. Kourt  
Superintendent of Schools