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VOTE

May 18, 2021

12:00pm - 9:00pm

at New Lebanon
Jr./Sr. High School
Gymnasium

2021-2022 BUDGET SUMMARY

Proposed Budget:

\$12,122,588

Budget-to-Budget Change:

\$641,463 | -5.02%

School Board Election

This year, both William Buckenroth and Michael Brutsch's seats are up for re-election. Both are running unopposed. Each seat is a three-year, non-paid term.

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2021-2022 SCHOOL BUDGET:

District, Facing Shortfall, Urges Community Members to Get Out and Vote

On Tuesday, May 18, the New Lebanon community will vote on a \$12,122,588 proposed budget for the 2021-2022 school year. This is a \$641,463 decrease from the 2020-2021 school year budget. Even with this decrease, the proposed budget will maintain high quality academic and extracurricular programs and experiences for our students. The District will be asking its community to go above the tax cap to compensate for a budget shortfall. The shortfall is due to the use of \$428,911 from last year's fund balance (or District savings) as revenue during the 2020-21 budget year, resulting in a hole in the 2021-22 budget.

Additionally, the tax error on billing which resulted in over \$382,000 in revenue lost by under-billing the voter-approved levy in 2020 (\$8,492,582) has negatively impacted the 2021-22 tax cap formula. This tax error was previously communicated out in the February 2021 district newsletter and in the recent letter that went out to the community from the superintendent's office.

As detailed in that letter, in June of 2020, taxpayers approved \$8,492,589 for the 2020-2021 budget. Due to a tax collection error, the District collected only \$8,110,335, an approximate 4.5% decrease per household. A \$382,254 gap was created, which was filled using the unassigned fund balance in order to avoid cutting District services, especially during the pandemic. This has left the District's savings at 2.2%, well below the NYS Comptroller's recommendation of 4%.

Additionally, because of state rules on tax caps, next year's tax cap calculation must be based on the amount that was actually levied (\$8,110,335) rather than what was approved by voters (\$8,492,589), further limiting the District's ability to recoup the unintended \$382,254 loss. Overall, the District is facing a budget gap of \$830,817.

Based on the shortfall and the cost of current programs, and to balance the budget, the District is proposing to go above the tax cap and raise the tax levy by 6%, for a total of \$8,596,955. The remainder of the budget consists of non-tax revenue (\$287,000) and state aid (\$3,238,633), resulting in a total of \$12,122,588. Approximately 4.5% of the proposed 6% tax increase will bring us back to the tax level approved by voters in the 2020-21 budget (\$8,492,589) and ultimately would go towards reconciling the gap left by the tax error, with the remaining 1.5% going towards cost increases in operations and programs. Measured against last year's approved tax levy amount, the 2021-22 increase represents roughly, only a \$100,000 increase.

To continue programming for our students despite the proposed 6% tax levy – the District is moving forward with several Board of Education-approved reductions in expenses, totaling over 5%. Some of these changes include cutting the business program at the high school, the elimination of the assistant principal/athletic director position and a teacher assistant position; additionally, the district will not be purchasing any school busses for the 2021-22 school year. Ultimately, the aim of the District is to maintain as high a quality experience for the students as possible while assuming full responsibility for balancing the budget and putting the District on track towards greater prosperity.

For the full list of reductions and in-depth detail about the budget process, please see the "Meetings and Presentations" section of our Budget Information webpage (www.newlebanoncsd.org/district/budget),



particularly the meeting and presentation from April 14. Above all, be sure to get out and **vote on May 18, 12-9 p.m. at the New Lebanon Jr./Sr. High School gymnasium.**

Mock Elections Teach Students About Democracy, Participation, Involvement

Every year, Walter B. Howard holds a mock election to help students learn about our Democracy, to involve them in the electoral process, help them better understand the mechanics of an election, and impress upon students how vital participation is to our form of government. This year, the mock election was all the more significant because it coincided with the 2020 Presidential Election, as well as various congressional, gubernatorial, state and local elections.

Kelly Smith, fifth and sixth grade Social Studies teacher and curriculum coordinator at Walter B. Howard Elementary School, noted, "During the 2016 election – with elections being part of the fifth grade social studies curriculum – I decided that I was going to heavily involve my students in project-based learning around U.S. elections."

The mock election was held on Nov. 3, the same day as the U.S. general election. Smith noted that students from the fifth and sixth grades served as poll workers, while students

in pre-k through sixth grade, participated in voting. She explained that, as with real polling stations, the students were mindful to set-up voting in a way that followed COVID-19 protocols. There were students at different



stations maintaining six-foot distance and they wore gloves while counting ballots. "We worked really hard to implement this and wouldn't let COVID get in the way of kids realizing they needed to participate in the election."

Maddie Prusky, who handed out ballots and showed students how to fill them out, said, "It was really fun, everyone had a different job to do. Even though you have to be 18, you could still vote. The most interesting thing was seeing all the kids and how happy they were to vote." Connor Dufor, who served as photographer and helped direct students, said, "It was very, very organized, going through the steps," adding that they made a slideshow with the students with their "I Voted" stickers and a thumb's up. Finn Buckenroth helped students navigate through the mock election center and kept students six feet apart. "It was really fun to help kids, to be the one who helped them, rather than be the one that used to get helped," adding, "the lessons I took out of it were, help others and always participate."

Through Pandemic, a Community is Drawn Closer Together

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended our society and brought changes in its wake that little more than a year ago would have seemed unimaginable. Mask-wearing, social distancing and other safety measures still factor heavily into planning of any type, even as we emerge from this ordeal with new hope thanks to viable vaccines; as ever, we must remain vigilant.

Despite the social distancing and challenges, we have been brought closer together in many ways, and tapped our collective resourcefulness and creativity to navigate uncharted waters. Nowhere is this more evident than in the field of education, where administrators, teachers, counselors and personnel have come together and worked harder, longer and smarter to help one another, benefit the students, and carry out the near-unworkable task of keeping schools open during a global pandemic.

"It's been an incredible challenge for teachers, who really want every student to succeed," said Matthew Klafehn, principal at New Lebanon Jr./Sr. High School. "The goal has been to have that balance where they're adequately servicing the needs of students who are in-person while at the same time trying to reach those kids who've been remote all school year. Learning loss and the concerns associated with it are real, and teachers want to minimize that as much as possible, so that hopefully, when things are normal next year, they have the ability to pick-up, move forward and progress."

Brooke Dickson, who teaches 11th, 12th and University English, noted, "Initially it was quite tumultuous, especially last year, when everything first happened, but many of us have been proactive – even though it sprung up on us, we were ready to take action for this school year."

Corie Noel, who teaches middle and high school math, noted that early on, when students were remote, it was at times a challenge to ensure that all students were involved because some students didn't

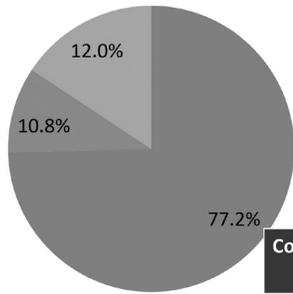
have cameras, wi-fi or devices, "so that was a difficult task, to make sure everyone was still learning and engaged," she noted. "This year is a little easier because all students are one-to-one, meaning every single child has a computer device."

Overall, she noted, "I think the kids are super resilient, I don't think they're going to be left behind anywhere or lacking any knowledge, because the teachers have done an excellent job of making sure everybody gets back to the same place and is still learning on a daily basis."

"When COVID first hit, it was one of the scariest moments of my career," said Valene Synakowski, music teacher and choir director for the Jr./Sr. High School. However, once the new reality set in, and Synakowski began to develop a new approach, she noted, "It became fun in the sense that we were learning so many new things, and we were learning to do things that we may have been too afraid to experiment with, or we would have stayed away because we thought it didn't necessarily pertain to our area."

Patricia White, school psychologist in the New Lebanon Jr./Sr. High School, noted that as with the teachers, at the beginning, the new adjustments were a challenge. "For a while it was trying to figure out what worked for the student without putting more stress on their plate. It was more about what worked for the student and is going to be effective."

"If it's brought anything, it's a different level of connection - we're being seen in a more personal in way. One time I was on with a boys' group and my two-year-old climbed on a chair and pulled something off the wall, but they were seeing a glimpse that they don't typically see and it kind of humanized us in a way that I don't know we would've gotten otherwise. So we formed a different type of connection – because we have all been going through it together," she said.



3 Part Budget

- Program
- Administrative
- Capital

Component	Amount	Percentage
Program	\$9,363,686	77.2%
Administrative	\$1,305,510	10.8%
Capital	\$1,453,392	12.0%
Total	\$12,122,588	100%



Revenue Summary

	2020-2021	2021-2022	Difference
Non Tax Revenue	\$436,518	\$287,000	(\$149,518)
State Aid	\$3,094,199	\$3,238,633	\$144,434
Tax Levy	8,110,335 actual tax error, 8,492,589 was voter approved $-(382,254)$	\$8,596,955	\$486,620
Fund Balance	\$740,745	\$0 no fund balance left	(\$740,745)
Total Budget	\$12,764,051	\$12,122,588	(\$641,463)

Budget Summary

	2020-21	2021-22	Change from 2020-21
Instruction	\$4,238,331	\$4,245,590	\$7,259
Special Education	\$1,276,803	\$1,097,591	(\$179,212)
Employee Benefits	\$3,542,180	\$3,649,500	\$107,320
Information Technology	\$212,500	\$154,500	(\$58,000)
General Support	\$696,037	\$570,334	(\$125,703)
Operations and Maintenance	\$946,000	\$917,091	(28,909)
Co-Curricular and Athletics	\$191,900	\$156,900	(\$35,000)
Transportation	\$875,800	\$716,200	(\$159,600)
Debt Service	\$729,500	\$559,882	(\$169,618)
Interfund Transfers	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$12,764,051	\$12,122,588	(\$641,463)



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2020-21 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2021-22 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2021-22 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 12,764,051	\$12,122,588	\$11,864,388
Increase/Decrease for the 2021-22 School Year		\$-(641,463)	\$-(899,663)
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		-5.02 %	-7.04%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.23%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$8,492,598	\$8,596,955	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$8,492,589	\$8,596,955	\$8,110,335
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$492,901	\$387,190	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$8,015,680	\$7,753,820	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$7,999,688	\$8,209,765	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$15,992	-\$455,945)	
Administrative Component	\$1,370,537	\$1,305,510	\$1,305,510
Program Component	\$9,632,514	\$9,363,686	\$9,116,486
Capital Component	\$1,761,000	\$1,453,392	\$1,423,392
<p>* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2021-22 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.</p> <p>The contingency budget will require reductions in equipment, all athletic programs, bus purchases, as well as a reduction of staffing.</p>			
<p>** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)</p>	Description		Amount
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$

NOTE: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to: emscmgts@nysed.gov

Under the Budget Proposed
for the 2021-22 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$373.00

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2021-22 by the qualified voters of the __New Lebanon_Central school district, __Columbia County, New York, will be held at __Jr/Sr High school(s) in said district on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at __12:00 /pm prevailing time OR between the hours of __12:00pm and __9:00pm, prevailing time in the __NLCSJ Sr High school __school(s), at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

Districts should include information according to Executive Orders and as advised by legal counsel.

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1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Potential Reductions to School Budget if Budget Vote is Not Passed

If the 21-22 school year budget does not pass on May 18th, the District will be forced to consider additional possible reductions, including:

Athletics - Modified, JV and or Varsity Programs
PE Teacher/Athletic Director Duties (.6 position)
After School Clubs
District Wide Field Trips

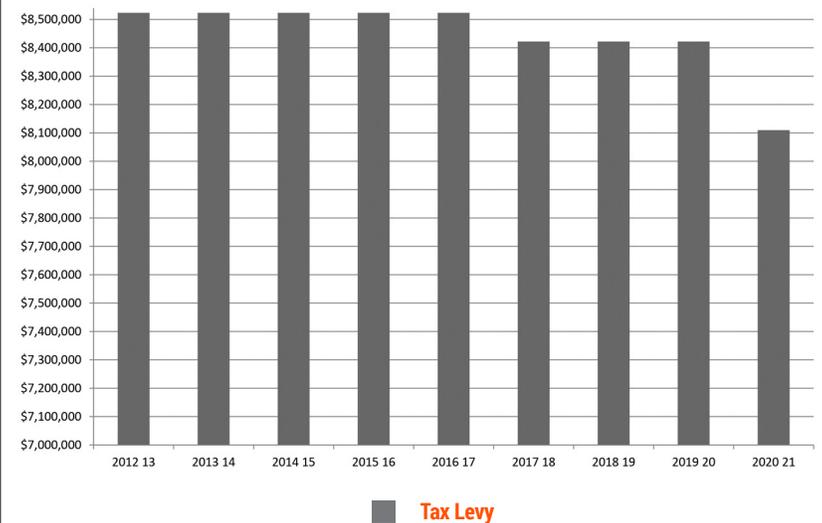
Reductions Already Made to the 21-22 School Year Budget

Ahead of the 2021-22 school budget vote, the District and School Board have already made the following reductions to administrative costs, programs, materials and positions, with the aim of balancing the budget:

Assistant Jr/Sr High School Principal and Athletic Director	\$93,000
District Office Account Clerk (.4 position)	\$20,000
Mechanic Position (Reduction of Hours)	\$18,250
Curriculum Coaching	\$40,000
Bus Purchase	\$171,000
Teacher Supplies	\$10,000
.6 Business Teacher (Elimination of Business Program)	\$69,000
District will no longer outsource payroll and accounting services. This will be done in house.	\$40,000
Less SPED students attending out of district placements	\$92,500
Grade 5 & 6 Curriculum Coordinator Position	\$1,000
Conferences	\$1,800
1.0 Teaching Assistant	\$26,000
School resource Officer (SRO)	\$40,000



Tax Levy



District Office
14665 State Route 22
New Lebanon, NY 12125

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
New Lebanon, NY 12125
Permit #1

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Timothy Lambert, *President*
Michael Brutsch, *Vice President*
William Buckenroth
John Kalisz
Robert Long
Sharon Putnam
Richard Sime

*Board meetings are held at 7 p.m.
Please visit our website for specific dates.*

www.newlebanoncsd.org/district/boe

SUPERINTENDENT

Andrew Kourt

Produced by Questar III Communications Service

POSTAL PATRON

BUDGET VOTE & BOARD ELECTION

May 18, 2021

12:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

New Lebanon Jr./Sr. High
School Gymnasium

OUR PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

- 92% Class of 2020 graduation rate (state average is 85%)
- 54% Class of 2020 with regents degree with advanced designation (state average is 39%)
- 93% Class of 2019 graduation rate (state average is 83%)
- 43% Class of 2019 with regents degree with advanced designation (state average is 34%)
- 100% of New Lebanon teachers provided with a growth score from NY State who were assessed as effective or highly effective
- 37 - The number of college credits available to students for 2020-21 through dual credit courses
- 100% of graduates who have confirmed college or employment plans upon exiting
- 81% participation in music and the arts
- 19,000 meals distributed through breakfast and lunch programs
- Walter B. Howard Elementary 2019-2020 school of recognition by NYSED

Voting Information

Voter Eligibility: You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older and a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

Absentee Ballots: At present, the 2021 election and budget vote is scheduled to go forward with voting occurring in-person, while also allowing voters to request an absentee ballot based upon fear of contracting COVID-19. Executive Order 202.81 modifies the Education Law to the extent necessary to include the potential for contraction of the virus that causes COVID-19 as an illness for purposes of requesting an absentee ballot. That Order is valid through April 20, 2021. The Governor's office has indicated support to continue the validity of this Executive Order beyond that date, through his authority granted by Chapter 71 of the Laws of 2021. Absentee ballots are also available to residents who will be out of town or unable to vote in person because of illness or disability. You may request an absentee ballot from the District Clerk. For information, call 794-7600 opt. 3, opt. 1. Return deadline – **Tuesday, May 18, 5 p.m.**

Copies of the itemized budget are available online, in the school's main office, and in the town libraries.