



782 Springdale Drive, Exton, Pennsylvania 19341 • Phone: 484-266-1000 • www.wcasd.net

Contact: Jennifer Neill
Telephone: 484-266-1170
Email: jneill@wcasd.net
Website: www.wcasd.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WCASD School Board Approves Final Budget for 2021-22 School Year

West Chester, PA - The West Chester Area School District School Board of Directors passed a final budget for the 2021-22 school year of \$279,476,796, approximately \$9.7 million increase over the current budget (3.6 percent.) Included in this increase is \$3.7 million in staffing and benefits related to the opening of Greystone, the District's 11th elementary school. Other increases include more than \$3.6 million directly related to the following state and federal mandates:

- \$2.2 million increase in state-mandated pension expenses, a 6.3 percent increase over the current year's budget.
- \$724,000 increase in tuitions and services for special education students, a 4.7 percent increase over the current year.
- \$656,000 increase in transportation expenses for both public and non-public students, 3.9 percent increase over the current year.

The budget includes a 1.8 percent tax increase for Chester County property owners (about \$76 per average household) and a .4 percent increase for Delaware County property owners (about \$19 per average household). The property tax millage rates for West Chester remain one of the lowest in Chester County. The District utilized savings from the 2020-21 operations to help offset the millage increases needed for the 2021-22 budget. The District's undesignated fund balance is approximately \$17.1 million.

The largest component of the budget is the salaries and benefits for the District's 1,493 employees, which rose \$6.5 million (4.8 percent increase). Included in that increase is \$3.7 million (2.3 percent increase) in additional staffing needed for Greystone Elementary. The 2021-22 budget includes the addition of:

- Staffing for Greystone Elementary School including; Principal, Librarian, Nurse, Counselor, two Reading Specialists, Caseworker, Psychologist, Speech Therapist, 24 teachers, a Head Custodian, and 2.5 office staff.
- Staffing for the District in-house Achieve Progress Transition Program (APT) to be located in each of the three high schools, including three special education teachers, three counselors, 1.2 regular education teachers, and three paraprofessionals.
- .2 Psychologist to accommodate increased caseload at the middle school level
- One Nurse for the Multi Disabled Support (MDS) Program
- Two Campus Security Officers
- .5 Custodian due to increased square footage as a result of classroom additions at the elementary level.

"This budget includes additional debt service to begin renovations at Glen Acres Elementary School, as well as staffing to open the new Greystone Elementary School. We have also relocated existing resources to provide the necessary supports for students as we enter a post-pandemic school year," said Superintendent Jim Scanlon.

The District is projecting a \$671,000 increase in this year's budget, which covers books, supplies, utilities, debt service, and other operating expenses offset by savings of \$1.1 million in contracted and professional services.

"The board worked extremely hard to provide the needed resources for our students while maintaining one of the lowest tax rates in Chester County. It is a difficult balance to meet the needs of our 12,000 students with the taxpayers in our community. I believe this budget accomplishes that goal," said school board president Chris McCune.

2021-22 District Tax Rates

Based on the final budget, the real estate tax rate for Chester County will increase by .40 mills to 22.06, an increase of 1.8 percent, and the rebalanced millage rate based on the county-wide reassessment for Delaware County will be 9.52, an increase of .4 percent over 2020-21. The average assessed home value in Chester County is now \$189,850, which is approximately one-half of the home's market value. The average assessed home value in the Delaware County portion of the District is \$502,336, which represents 100 percent of the market value. At the final rate, the average tax hike would be \$76 per year for Chester County residents and \$19 for Delaware County residents. The differences in county average assessments account for formula differences resulting in the differing tax rates.

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