

# 2020-2021 Budget Newsletter

# Worcester Central School District



May 2020

## WCS Board of Education adopts 2020-2021 Budget

### Proposed Tax Levy Increase at 2.17% Bus Purchases To be Voted On

As we enter budget time, it is important to note key information regarding school budgets and funding this year. In general, state funding for education has decreased significantly for the new budget year. The state deficit has already impacted our budget planning and we had to adjust to an approximate \$115,000 loss in state aid from the initial January executive budget proposal.

Additionally, the Governor has designated three 'look back periods' from April 30 to December 31, 2020, where the NYS Department of Budget will determine how much additional funding to schools could be reduced. This leads many schools, Worcester Central School included, to experience an even greater structural deficit. A structural deficit means state aid for the 2020-2021 year will fall short of the necessary operating expenses. As a result, Worcester Central School will use our fund balance, as we have had to do in the past, in order to make up the difference. If the state aid is cut significantly throughout the year we may have to look at possible program and staffing reductions as a last resort.

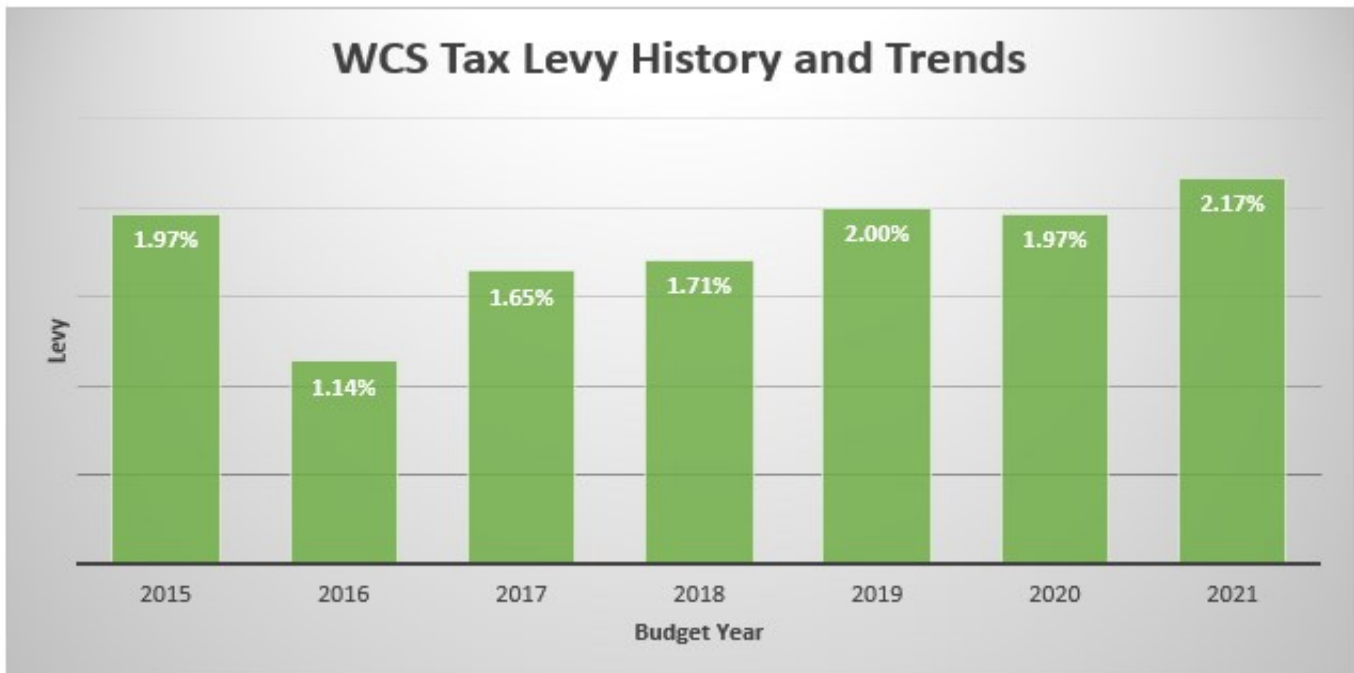
At a special meeting held May 19, 2020, the Board of Education unanimously adopted a budget for the 2020-2021 school year. The budget carries a tax levy increase of 2.17%, which is under the proposed tax cap of 2.26%.

In addition to the Budget Proposition, you will also find on the ballot a bus proposition to buy a 65-passenger school bus, at an estimated maximum cost of \$115,000 and one 35-passenger bus at an estimated maximum cost of \$61,000. Worcester Central School maximizes the trade-in value of its vehicles by maintaining a five-year bus replacement schedule. In addition to updated safety features, the maintenance and repair costs for new vehicles are much less than that of older vehicles.

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## Quick Budget Facts

- *The total proposed budget (spending) would DECREASE by .04%, which is equal to -\$4,093.*
- *State aid decreases from 2019-2020 resulted in a net aid decrease of \$78,093.*
- *WCS relies on state aid for approximately 62% of its revenue.*
- *The proposed budget includes a 2.17% tax levy increase. A majority vote (50% + 1) is required for budget approval because the proposed levy is below the tax cap.*
- *We will again need to use Fund Balance to offset any revenue shortcomings. This will allow the District to maintain our student programs.*
- *Bus replacement costs are also being voted on this year. The District has developed a five-year replacement plan, which has resulted in a regular schedule for vehicle replacement, thereby maximizing useful life and trade-in values of vehicles.*



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## 3-Part Budget Detail - Where the Money Goes...

Category		2019-20	2020-21	% Change	% of Budget
<b>Administrative Budget</b>					
Board of Education	<i>Includes Board of Education Workshops, Training, Conferences, District Clerk, BOE Meetings</i>	\$ 13,830	\$ 22,800	64.9%	0.2%
Central Administration	<i>Supervisory and Support Salaries, BOCES Professional Development, District Supplies</i>	\$ 467,028	\$ 486,056	4.1%	4.2%
Finance	<i>Includes Business Office, Auditors, Tax Collection, Fiscal Agent Fees, Treasurer</i>	\$ 228,209	\$ 232,276	1.8%	2.0%
Legal and Administrative Services	<i>Legal Fees, BOCES Labor Relations, Public Information, Records Management</i>	\$ 58,184	\$ 58,458	.5%	0.5%
Central Services	<i>District Software &amp; Support, District Internet Services, Printing</i>	\$ 106,426	\$ 109,566	3.0%	0.9%
BOCES Administration	<i>BOCES Administrative Expenses, BOCES Rent</i>	\$ 148,374	\$ 134,209	-9.6%	1.2%
Employee Benefits	<i>Administrative Employees Benefit Costs</i>	\$ 208,500	\$ 214,190	2.7%	1.8%
<b>Total Administrative Budget</b>		<b>\$ 1,230,551</b>	<b>\$1,257,555</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>
<b>Instructional Program Budget</b>					
General Education	<i>Instructional Salaries, Supplies, Equipment</i>	\$ 1,984,243	\$ 1,874,191	-5.6%	16.1%
Special Education	<i>Instructional Salaries, Supplies, Equipment, CSE Chairperson</i>	\$ 1,778,072	\$ 1,765,194	-.7%	15.2%
BOCES Career & Technical Ed.	<i>Occupational Therapy, Speech services, BOCES Tuition</i>	\$ 273,297	\$ 288,503	5.6%	2.5%
Instructional Media & Computers	<i>Library Program, Computer Hardware, Computer Software</i>	\$ 225,281	\$ 243,412	8.1%	2.1%
Pupil Personnel	<i>Guidance, Health &amp; Psychological Services</i>	\$ 290,024	\$ 286,982	-1.1%	2.5%
Student Activities	<i>Extra-Curricular Salaries and Stipends, Athletics</i>	\$ 124,693	\$ 128,723	3.2%	1.1%
Student Transportation	<i>Local Student, Out-of-District and Bus Garage</i>	\$ 579,354	\$ 580,874	.3%	5.0%
Inter-fund Transfers	<i>Cafeteria and Special Education Summer School</i>	\$ 69,000	\$ 72,000	4.4%	.6%
Employee Benefits	<i>Program Employees Benefit Costs</i>	\$ 1,848,762	\$ 1,858,153	.5%	16.0%
<b>Total Instructional Program Budget</b>		<b>\$ 7,172,756</b>	<b>\$ 7,098,032</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>61.1%</b>
<b>Capital Budget</b>					
Operations and Maintenance	<i>Salaries, Equipment, Supplies, Oil, Propane, Electricity, Phone</i>	\$ 542,648	\$ 537,349	-1.0%	4.6%
Employee Benefits	<i>O &amp; M Employee Benefits</i>	\$ 174,875	\$ 176,918	1.2%	1.5%
Debt Service	<i>Serial Bonds, Capital Project Bond Interest, Bus Serial Bonds</i>	\$ 2,507,219	\$ 2,554,072	1.9%	22.0%
<b>Total Capital Budget</b>		<b>\$ 3,224,742</b>	<b>\$ 3,268,339</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>28.1%</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>\$11,628,019</b>	<b>\$11,623,926</b>	<b>-.04%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Frequently Asked Questions...

### ***Why is the “2% tax cap” not really 2%?***

The “2% tax cap” is actually different for every school in the State and is set by NYS through a formula using each school’s unique fiscal data. Tax levy limits will vary by district yearly. This year our District tax cap is 2.26%.

### ***What happens if the budget proposition is defeated?***

As of the publication of this newsletter the state has yet to give guidance whether there is a possibility of a re-vote date. It is probable we would have to adopt a contingency budget if the budget proposition is defeated.

### ***What happens if the Board adopts a contingency budget?***

The adoption of a contingency budget would require us to revert backward to the 2019-2020 tax levy (\$3,407,809). To make up the \$74,000 incurred of a failed budget, WCS would have to cut program expenses or increase the amount needed to draw from our fund balance. This would make it even more difficult to maintain our current academic programs and staffing.

### ***Are STAR savings still in effect?***

Yes. All eligible homeowners who have applied and are approved for the STAR savings will see the STAR exemption reflected on their school tax bill to be mailed on September 1, 2020. For questions about STAR, please contact your local assessor.

### ***How would the proposed budget affect my taxes?***

It is impossible to say for certain what each town’s tax rate will be in September. Factors outside the School District’s control, such as assessments and equalization rates, affect tax rates in each of the district’s towns; changes in one town’s tax rate affects the tax rates in the other towns.

### ***It seems that we just approved vehicle purchases. Why do we need to replace more vehicles?***

The Board of Education, years ago, established a five-year bus replacement schedule to maximize trade-in values for District vehicles being replaced. This enhances safety features on our vehicles and minimizes repair costs for maintaining buses and vehicles past their practical life. The bus and vehicle replacements being proposed are consistent with establishing and maintaining a regular replacement schedule.

### ***Why is there a separate proposition for bus purchases, if the cost of the bus purchases has been included in the budget being presented?***

Law requires bus purchases be presented as separate propositions from all other propositions on a ballot, even when no additional cost is associated with the bus purchase proposition.

### ***Are there open seats to be filled on the Board of education?***

Yes. There is one vacant seat currently held by Mrs. Michelle Francis.

### ***Who do I contact, if I have more budget questions?***

Contact Gary Pochkar, District Treasurer, at (607) 397-8785 ext.122.

## One Resident Seeks Re-Election to Board Seat

### Michelle Francis

My name is Michelle Francis and I am a candidate for the Worcester Central School (WCS) Board of Education. My service during the past six years has solidified my opinion that being on the Board of Education is an important for the success of our children. For this reason, I have chosen to run for re-election.

I strongly believe that the foundation of our community is WCS. As a mother, Worcester resident, and taxpayer, my goal is to ensure that tax dollars are appropriated judiciously. I do not believe that spending more money is the answer to all problems. It is my continued intention to be an advocate for the students, parents, taxpayers, faculty, and school employees.

Worcester is a great town and I have proudly planted roots here to raise my family. My husband and I moved to the Worcester area 24 years ago and I have been an active member of our community. My volunteer work includes involvement with the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts of America, 4-H, Worcester Youth Soccer, Worcester Youth Baseball & Softball Organization, Oneonta Soccer Club, Worcester United Methodist Church, WCS Band, and the Worcester Parent/Teacher Organization.

I have two children, both with direct ties to WCS. My daughter attended WCS from K-12 and was part of the graduating Class of 2013. She is currently enrolled at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, where she is studying to be a Nurse Practitioner. My son has also attended WCS from K-12 and graduated in 2019. He is also enrolled at SUNY Polytechnic Institute for Engineering.

I would like to thank you for your consideration and would greatly appreciate your support on Election Day.

### **BUDGET VOTE REMINDER**

Tuesday, June 9, 2020 – **Voting shall be by absentee ballot only**  
The Governor's Executive Order 202.26 declares all school budget votes shall take place remotely, and qualified voters shall vote in such adjourned election only by absentee ballot, to be provided to all qualified voters by each school district.

Worcester Central School  
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Worcester, NY 12197

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# Boxholder

## Voter Information

### PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

May 27, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. – via video conference at [www.worcestercs.org](http://www.worcestercs.org)

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### VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

Must be a citizen of the United States

Must be eighteen (18) years of age or older

Must be a resident of the Worcester Central School District for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to June 9, 2020

Not otherwise disqualified under the Election Law

### ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Anyone who meets the definition of a qualified voter, but does not believe he/she will be on the School District's poll list, which contains the names of residents who voted in recent years' elections, please contact the District Clerk by email at [wendyelliott@worcestercs.org](mailto:wendyelliott@worcestercs.org) or call (607) 397-8785 extension 116.

**All ballots must be received by the District Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2020.**