

Winooski School District  
**Budget 2023**



**\* DO YOUR PART \***  
**VOTE!**   
**MARCH 1, 2022**

**VOTING DAY** is on **Tuesday, March 1** • 7:00am to 7:00pm • Winooski Senior Center





**College and Career Ready** - When she arrived from the Republic of Chad through the Refugee Resettlement program, Assia Hamana was challenged with learning another language in addition to the several other languages she already spoke at home with her family. So much was unfamiliar and confusing about her new life in Vermont. But through the support of the Winooski School District and her mentor, Alice Urban, Assia thrived. Assia graduated from WHS in 2021 and is currently enrolled in Brandeis University. She hopes to one day serve refugees and give back to the Winooski community she loves.

Assia learned about writing personal narratives, research papers, and the American education system during her time in Winooski, but credits the district with teaching her more than just academic skills. “Winooski taught me about social justice, self-advocacy, and the importance of community, which are really valuable life-long skills,” said Assia.

Other life-long skills Assia learned during her time at the WSD were how to take risks and ask for help. Her advice to current students? “Use the guidance counselors as resources and set goals for yourself. It may be hard. I applied to Brandeis almost as a joke because I heard it was very selective. I got a call that told me I got in and I couldn’t believe it. Stay positive and don’t be afraid of failure.”

While both Assia and Alice have moved out of Vermont they stay connected to Winooski, which they say feels like home. Assia sums it up, “WSD has a big heart. Anybody can find a spot here. It depends on what you want and how much work you are willing to put in. There is a sense of belonging and encourages people to graduate. It is very special.”

## Healthy, Productive, and Successful Lives

Recess is an incredibly important part of the day for JFK Elementary students. In addition to many physical benefits, outside play allows students to strengthen a variety of social-emotional skills such as sharing, taking turns, managing disappointment, solving problems, and gaining independence. In 2019, the entire 3rd grade completed an extended project about change-making. Each class identified an area of their school experience that they wanted to improve. One class decided to focus their efforts on improving recess. After conducting research and opinion polls, they wrote persuasive essays to advocate for a better playground. The Heart of Winooski Foundation included the students’ work in a Building Communities Grant application and won \$25,000 to build an inclusive play area on campus. The now 5th graders were invited to participate in a brief ceremony with Gov. Scott in Montpelier to celebrate this award. “This is an excellent example of Project-Based Learning (PBL)! Students worked on this project for months, and it combined writing, outreach, data analysis, and advocacy. Their words were not only heard by their school leadership team, they were heard by the Governor and the Vermont State Legislature. Plus, once it’s complete, they will have a recess area that is inclusive and engaging for all students,” said Sara Raabe, JFK Principal.



## Engaged with Local and Global Community

— This summer, the WSD partnered with Shelburne Farms to offer innovative, place-based learning opportunities for students on the farm. Elementary students got hands-on experience investigating the larger themes of life cycles, equity, community, and their ability to make a difference. Winooski High School students spent three weeks at Shelburne Farms while they worked on completing their Communication Capstone. Students developed a working understanding of sustainability, the various jobs on the Farm, and how each role supports a more sustainable future. In addition, students learned how people communicate to different audiences about topics such as climate change, food systems, and education. After exploring people’s roles on a sustainable farm, students developed inquiry projects. At the end of the summer, students presented their projects and summarized their experiences on the Farm. Each student expressed how their learning, and the mentoring they received, were life-changing. As one student shared, “Now, I am going to be more appreciative of the land I’m walking on and the food I eat. A lot of work happens to make sure animals are healthy and keeping the land clean and healthy.”



Each student expressed how their learning, and the mentoring they received, were life-changing. As one student shared, “Now, I am going to be more appreciative of the land I’m walking on and the food I eat. A lot of work happens to make sure animals are healthy and keeping the land clean and healthy.”

**Restorative Justice** — Our district has been committed to Restorative Justice for the past year and a half, transforming how we view relationships and harm and emphasizing community building. Advisory is a scheduled time during the school day designed to support students socially, emotionally, and academically. It’s a highly-valued time for middle and high school students to strengthen connections with their school community. This year, advisors have been working with the WSD Restorative Justice Coordinator to incorporate Community-Building Restorative Justice Circles into Advisory.

Community building circles can be fun and silly or introspective. Students are prompted to talk about their identities, cultures, and emotional responses to certain topics. Many times, students are surprised by how their classmates answer. “I don’t know how but sometimes when a question is asked, everyone’s answer is different, especially my friends because they answer in a way I never thought they would,” said 10th-grader Hawa Mayange.

They can also help students process their feelings and emotions about things like the pandemic, racism, and school construction. The circles can provide opportunities for learning with topics like the Seven Generations Principle, which is thinking about how your decisions will affect seven generations into the future, as well as the impacts of social media on mental health. Teachers and students appreciate how the circles bring them closer together. 10th-grader Passy Matendo said, “I really love circles because it gets me closer to my teacher and classmates by learning about their cultures and what they like to do.”

# What You Need To Know About the 2023 Budget

Dear Winooski Community,

As district representatives, our budget priorities are set based on our feedback from parents, students, and community members. What you see before you is a well-thought-out budget that meets our community's key priorities with the least amount of tax burden to the community.

The proposed 2022-2023 budget reflects our commitment to putting children first. We have prioritized year-round transportation to and from school and expanded PreK programming. This will increase our projected equalized pupil spending by 24.5% compared to the current year. However, we felt these are necessary investments that will serve our students and community best. Overall, the proposed FY 2023 budget will be \$21,287,921, an increase of about \$1.77 million, or 9% from the current year.

The proposed budget also includes tough fiscal decisions. As has been the case over the previous year, we continue to tackle significant economic pressures due to the inequitable funding based on an outdated pupil weighting formula, Capital Project debt, and operational and financial challenges caused by the uncertainty of COVID-19.

Our board worked with the school district Leadership Team to develop strategic priorities so we can take advantage of opportunities to ensure fiscal responsibility with our investments. This includes school board members spending time advocating at the State Level for changes to our education formula and the school administration securing a USDA loan for the Capital Project that will potentially save \$34 million to taxpayers over the life of the 30-year loan.

Your vote matters, so please do your part and cast your ballot. Your ongoing support helps us address the immediate needs of our community and set a long-term vision for our district. We look forward to your support and your continued partnership as we work together to educate students to become lifelong learners in an ever-changing world.

— With heart, Kamal Dahal and Alex Yin, WSD School Board Members

\* DO YOUR PART \*

# VOTE!

MARCH 1, 2022

## Understanding the Tax Increase

Public schools are funded in part through residential property taxes. Some communities have higher property values, so the legislature designed the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) to ensure all districts contribute their fair share to the Education Fund. Houses in Winooski have been selling for more than their appraised value, leading to a drop in the CLA. As the CLA goes down, the local residential property tax rate increases because homes are worth more money than their appraised value. This year, the CLA in Winooski is the lowest in the State at 75.65% resulting in a 5.95% tax increase unrelated to education spending. Public schools are also funded by state sales, use, meals, and rooms taxes. This year these revenues to the Education Fund are projected to be very healthy, which is why the WSD Board is able to propose a budget with a 9% expense increase and property tax payers will only see a 6.03% increase in tax rates.

**Again, 5.95% of that increase is due to the CLA, meaning .08% of the increase is due to local spending decisions.**

For more information about our proposed investment in Winooski students for the 2022-23, school year, visit [wsdvt.org/school-board/budget](http://wsdvt.org/school-board/budget).

## Understanding the Ballot

On January 12, 2022, the Winooski School Board approved a budget of \$21,287,921 for the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23). This represents a spending increase of 9.08% over the current year's budget. The state formula calculates this to an estimated 6.03% tax increase. Approval by voters would allow the school board and administrators to continue providing high-quality instruction that ensures all students graduate from WSD college and career ready.

The information below shows estimated education tax increases if your household applies for and receives tax credits based on income eligibility.

### Impact of Proposed Tax Increase *After Tax Credits*

Household Income	FY 2022 (current budget)	FY 2023 (proposed budget)	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$40,000	\$996	\$1,020	\$24	\$2
\$50,000	\$1,245	\$1,275	\$30	\$3
\$60,000	\$1,494	\$1,530	\$36	\$3
\$70,000	\$1,743	\$1,785	\$42	\$4
\$80,000	\$1,992	\$2,040	\$48	\$4
\$90,000	\$2,241	\$2,295	\$54	\$5

The information below shows estimated education tax increases if you don't receive any tax credits and pay solely on property value.

### Impact of Proposed Tax Increase *Without Tax Credits*

Property Value	FY 2022 (current budget)	FY 2023 (proposed budget)	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$150,000	\$2,850	\$3,026	\$176	\$15
\$175,000	\$3,325	\$3,530	\$205	\$17
\$200,000	\$3,800	\$4,034	\$234	\$20
\$225,000	\$4,275	\$4,538	\$263	\$22
\$250,000	\$4,751	\$5,043	\$292	\$24
\$275,000	\$5,226	\$5,547	\$321	\$27
\$300,000	\$5,701	\$6,051	\$350	\$29

To qualify for Property Tax Credits, total taxable and non-taxable household income must be \$136,900 or less.

More info at [tax.vermont.gov/property/tax-credit](http://tax.vermont.gov/property/tax-credit).

## Our Priorities

The proposed budget includes funds for **transportation** for students who live over .75 miles away from our campus to and from school each day for the entire school year. **Early education** is the foundation of our learning community. This budget allows us to expand PreK programming to better serve the youngest in our community and their families.



## Publication of the Winooski School District

60 Normand Street  
Winooski, VT 05404

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BURLINGTON, VT  
PERMIT #361

### Voting Information for Winooski Residents

- **You can vote early** at the City Clerk's Office (27 W Allen St) 7:30am to 4:30pm Monday - Friday starting on February 10, 2022 or call and request a ballot be sent to your home by calling 802-655-6419.
- **Vote Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at the Senior Center at 123 Barlow Street, between 7am and 7pm.** You can also register to vote at the polls on the day of the vote!
- **All legal residents, regardless of citizenship status, may vote on local, municipal, and school (Winooski only) ballot items.** To vote on state and federal ballot items, you must be a legal citizen of the United States. To find information about voting in Winooski, available in multiple languages, visit this website: [bit.ly/voteWinooski](https://bit.ly/voteWinooski)

POSTAL PATRON

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*

WINOOSKI, VT 05404

to 7:00pm • Winooski Senior Center

### Building a Better School - Saving Millions with a Strategic Budget

The 2023 proposed budget includes a \$500,000 investment for Capital Project (CP) debt service. The Winooski School District (WSD) School Board has budgeted \$1,400,000 for CP debt service for FY23. In FY24 our district will begin full repayment of the CP loan, which is estimated to cost \$2.5 million per year, so we will see another \$500,000 investment per year for the next two years.

The Board is relying on the district's fund balance to cover the difference in budgeted costs in FY24. WSD is hoping to be able to lower this cost by applying federal COVID relief funds to cover the costs of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) equipment, as well as raising additional funds through philanthropy and grants, which would save taxpayers over \$200,000 per year over 30 years.

Winooski School District  
**Budget 2023**

