

Winooski School District
Budget 2024

* DO YOUR PART *

VOTE!

MARCH 7, 2023

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





Healthy, Productive, and Successful

Lives — This year, WSD was able to offer our students several new and exciting services, including a state of the art **Health Office/School-Based Health Center**, a fully stocked Necessity Store, and reliable **Bus Transportation**. Alongside quality classroom instruction and an inclusive community, we know that these services will have a positive impact on students' abilities to have healthy, productive, and successful lives.

The Health Office, which on top of overseeing assessments, medication administration, first aid/injury-related visits, and healthcare plans, also offers additional services through its School-Based Health Center, and Dental Program, is an integral part of keeping students healthy and in school. By providing a wide variety of medical services on campus, students spend less time away from the classroom.

One of the more anticipated additions of the Capital Project, the Necessity Store officially opened its doors in January of 2023. The Necessity Store provides students and families with free and discrete access to basic resources such as food, clothing, and hygiene supplies.

Providing safe and reliable transportation for students who reside .75 miles from our campus, was identified as a priority in the FY23 budget. Our biggest roadblock to providing this service, a national bus driver shortage, was overcome by a collaborative effort between WSD, Mountain Transit, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and incredible community advocates, who worked together to train and license several Winooski community members as bus drivers. Bus transportation came to fruition in December of 2022, with plans to expand as more drivers and buses become available.

College and Career Ready - The Winooski High School Work-Based Learning program offers students flexible and customizable opportunities to advance the development of transferable skills through real-world, project-based, exploration. The main components of this program include field trips, informational interviews, job shadows, internships, and more. Work-based learning is a great match for students who often ask "Why am I learning this?"

The Work-Based Learning program started the school year with a focus on exposure and career exploration. Students had the opportunity to attend a variety of field trips and conferences, they engaged in informational interviews and worked on their cover letters and resumes. This spring, the focus will shift to training, setting up long-term placements, and internships. By participating in this program, students learn general employability skills as well as industry-specific skills that cannot be taught in the classroom.

In April, the Work Based Learning program will host an Opportunities Fair for local organizations, businesses, students, and families to engage in networking and explore career opportunities.



Engaged with Local and Global

Community — The youth and adults involved in the Antiracism Steering Committee (ARSC) and action teams continue to do incredible work towards achieving their goal of an antiracist Winooski School. This year a large number of middle and high school youth have joined the committee and action teams; their insights and perspectives have been invaluable, shaping and giving much-needed context to the conversations.

Mea Ree Jan, a WHS sophomore, has emerged as one of the many stand-out youths in the school's antiracism work this year. Mea Ree is a co-facilitator of Action Team two, focusing on implementing an Ethnic Studies curriculum at Winooski. In the fall she, alongside fellow students, presented at the Annual Rowland Conference about their experiences and facilitated a workshop titled "Bringing Justice Back to Restorative Justice". Recently Mea Ree was one of two students who took part in a conversation with newly sworn-in US Representative Becca Balint, where she shared her experience of co-facilitating and being a youth partner on the ARSC and Action Teams. She spoke eloquently and passionately about the work, and left everyone in the room feeling inspired! Mea Ree is an excellent example of what it means to engage with your local and global community.



Literacy — At the start of the 2022-2023 school year WSD began implementation of the EL-ELA Language Arts Curriculum for grades K-8. This curriculum is knowledge-based and designed for students to develop a deep understanding of a topic through extensive reading, writing, and speaking.

The EL-ELA Language Arts Curriculum is based on eight principles that WSD has adapted to fit the needs of our students. The goal of implementing this curriculum is to increase literacy amongst our students, setting them up for success in the future. Since the start of the school year, we have seen teachers making the curriculum work for themselves and their students through thoughtful adaptations. Throughout classrooms, we are seeing high levels of engagement in learning. Students are steadily building their stamina, engaging with complex texts, producing substantial writing, and using the academic vocabulary they're learning in speaking and writing.



What You Need To Know About the 2024 Budget

Dear Winooski Community,

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your support of our schools. We have striven to ensure that this year’s budget is responsible and reflects the needs of our students and our community. We are dedicated to providing an optimal educational experience for all of our students, and we are immensely appreciative of your investment in our schools.

For fiscal year 2024, the proposed budget is \$25,447,670, a 20% increase from last year. This 20% budget increase is a consequence of the first full debt service payment for our new building, the augmented cost to serve students with special needs, and increases in salaries and benefits. We will be utilizing \$1.4 million of our reserve funds in order to lower the tax impact, so that the estimated property tax rate increase will be 9.66%.

It is important to be aware that our district persists in suffering from an inequitable pupil weighting formula. The education funding formula has been corrected by the legislature but the changes will not be implemented until FY 25. Had the new formula been implemented for FY 24 our estimated property tax rate would have decreased by 15% (and that is without using our reserve funds).

The Board is confident that using reserve funds in order to limit the tax increases is prudent given the fact that the new pupil weights will take effect for the FY 25 budget. Using fund balance this year provides us with a bridge to a fairer tax system for Winooski while we absorb the costs of the capital project debt in our FY24 budget.

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

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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 one of the lowest in the State at 68.93%. If the CLA had remained the same as last year (75.65%), Winooski taxpayers would see a 0% tax rate increase to support the proposed FY 24 WSD budget. Public schools are also funded by state sales, use, meals, and rooms taxes. For the second year in a row these revenues to the Education Fund are projected to be healthy, which is why the WSD Board is able to propose a budget with a 20% expense increase and property tax payers will only see a 9.7% increase in tax rates.

Again, if the CLA had remained level, the tax rate increase would have been 0%.

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

Our Priorities

Some of the greatest priorities for FY24 budget include a continued focus on Proficiency-Based Learning, as well as implementing Literacy and Math curriculums. For more information about these and other priorities visit wsdvt.org/school-board/budget/ or scan this QR code!!



Understanding the Ballot

On January 11, 2023, the Winooski School Board approved a budget of \$25,447,670 for the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24). This represents a spending increase of 20% over the current year’s budget. The state education funding formula translates this budget increase to an estimated 9.7% increase in property tax rates. 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.

To qualify for Property Tax Credits, total taxable and non-taxable household income must be \$134,800 or less.
More info at tax.vermont.gov/property/tax-credit.

Impact of Proposed Tax Increase After Tax Credits

Household Income	FY 2023 (current budget)	FY 2024 (proposed budget)	Difference per year	Difference per month
\$40,000	\$936	\$1,048	\$112	\$9
\$50,000	\$1,170	\$1,310	\$140	\$12
\$60,000	\$1,404	\$1,572	\$168	\$14
\$70,000	\$1,638	\$1,834	\$196	\$16
\$80,000	\$1,872	\$2,096	\$224	\$19
\$90,000	\$2,106	\$2,358	\$252	\$21

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

Assessed Property Value	FY 2023 (current budget)	FY 2024 (proposed budget)	Total Increase	Monthly Increase
\$150,000	\$2,953	\$3,239	\$285	\$24
\$175,000	\$3,445	\$3,778	\$333	\$28
\$200,000	\$3,938	\$4,318	\$380	\$32
\$225,000	\$4,430	\$4,858	\$428	\$36
\$250,000	\$4,922	\$5,398	\$475	\$40
\$275,000	\$5,414	\$5,937	\$523	\$44
\$300,000	\$5,906	\$6,477	\$571	\$48

Publication of the Winooski School District

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Voting Information for Winooski Residents

- **You can vote early** beginning on February 17, at Winooski City Hall (27 West Allen St), from 7:30am to 4:30pm, Monday - Friday.
- **Call 802-655-6410** with questions or for more information about voting in Winooski
- **Vote Tuesday, March 7, 2023 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

POSTAL PATRON

*****ECRWSS**

WINOOSKI, VT 05404

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Building a Better School - Saving Millions with a Strategic Budget

The FY24 budget includes the first full payment to the USDA for our capital project loan - \$3,050,210. In 2019, when the WSD Board presented the capital project bond vote to Winooski voters, they estimated needing to borrow \$57.8m at an interest rate of 3.63%. The total cost of this 30-year loan would have been \$91,116,447, with the first year's payment estimated at \$3.7m.

In October of 2022, the WSD Board closed on a \$55m loan with the USDA at a historically low interest rate of 2.25%. The total cost of this 30-year loan is \$74,181,234. As a result, the Winooski capital project is estimated to cost taxpayers \$16.9 million less than projected back in 2019. Borrowing less than the authorized amount was made possible thanks to efforts from our Congressional delegation to secure federal funds for our School Based Health Clinic, federal COVID funds that were used to cover the costs of HVAC materials, and use of fund balance that had been strategically accumulated by the Board over the past two years.



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