

**West Morris Regional High School District
2010-2011 School Budget
Questions and Answers**

Q: When and where is the School Budget Election?

A: The West Morris Regional High School District Budget Election is Tuesday, April 20th. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Voting locations are Black River Middle School in Chester; Mendham Borough Firehouse in Mendham Borough; Brookside and Old Ralston Firehouses in Mendham Township; and Flocktown School, Long Valley Middle School, and the Public Library in Washington Township.

Q: What is encompassed in the proposed budget?

A: The budget represents the financial plan for the district to accomplish its educational objectives. It represents all of the costs connected with instruction, facilities, athletics, extra-curricular, student support, salaries, and administration.

Q: How have recent developments on the state level affected this budget?

A: A 42% reduction in state aid, coupled with a 25% increase in health benefits premiums, have forced us to institute spending cuts totaling more than three million dollars.

Q: How does the size of this year's budget compare to last year's total?

A: This year's total budget represents a 2.71% decrease from last year's total appropriation.

Q: How is it possible that there is an increase in this year's tax levy of 3.34%, when the overall budget has been reduced by 2.71%?

A: State aid has decreased as a share of the budget from 12% last year to 7% this year (a reduction of 2.3 million dollars), increasing our reliance on local property taxes to 88% (up from 82% last year).

Q: How have these losses in state aid affected the operating budgets of our schools?

A: There have been reductions in every area of our budget including: capital projects, courtesy busing, equipment budgets, instruction and curriculum expenditures, professional development, enrichment music lesson, field trips, after school coverage in the library and weight room, personnel reductions, the elimination of some clubs and a reduction in the number of coaches available in some sports.

Q: What areas are affected by the personnel cuts?

A: This budget contains an unprecedented number of personnel cuts including 6.8% of the custodial staff, 15% of teacher's aides, 8.3% of administrative assistants, 6.3% of administration, and 4.8% of our faculty.

Q: What athletic and extra-curricular cuts are being proposed?

A: No individual sport or level (Freshman, JV, or Varsity) is being eliminated. However there will be reductions in scrimmages and tournaments, and a reduction of the number of coaches in some sports. We will also attempt to combine and consolidate some clubs and possibly eliminate some that have had very low participation.

Q: How did the board determine these cuts?

A: The WMRHSD Board of Education voted unanimously on the budgeted appropriations. Input was sought from the elected representatives on the board, the administration, and faculty. There was a determination to spread the cuts across all areas of the budget so that no one program or group would shoulder the burden disproportionately.

Q: What is the total budget amount for next year?

A: \$44,616,656. - a 2.71% decrease from last year's appropriation.

Q: How does this budget affect my taxes?

A: The average home tax value increases over the prior year are: \$68.16 for Chester Borough, \$105.25 for Chester Township, \$81.08 for Mendham Borough, \$86.04 for Mendham Township, \$81.11 for Washington Township.

Q: What happens if the budget fails?

A: Following a rejection by voters, the budget is sent to the town councils of our five communities for review. The councils can agree to further cuts or can agree to leave the proposed budget intact. A failure to agree could lead to more cuts to an already diminished school budget.

PLEASE VOTE ON APRIL 20th!