



## News Release

### **Superintendent's Revised Recommended Budget Lowers Tax Levy by Nearly \$268K** ***Additional Discussion Focused on APPLE Program Redesign, Music Elective Component for PACE Seniors and School Food Service Improvements***

MAMARONECK, NY, April 6, 2017 – At Tuesday evening's Board of Education (BOE) meeting, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Shaps presented a revised budget that lowers the tax levy by \$267,947 from the budget initially presented on March 7, 2017. The changes come from revised employee health insurance projections and other savings, as well as use of additional fund balance.

The BOE has been regularly holding public meetings to carefully review and discuss the Superintendent's Recommended Budget. The purpose of these meetings is to provide the Superintendent with issues to explore, together with guidance on potential budget adjustments. In order to further its work, Board members have also attended various school events and community meetings to solicit feedback, questions and concerns. This process, together with new information obtained by the Superintendent, has resulted in several modifications to the initial draft budget.

Based on Board feedback, Dr. Shaps at this week's meeting discussed next steps around the redesign of the APPLE program at Mamaroneck High School. He also recommended – and the Board agreed – to postpone considering any changes in the 2017-2018 budget to the PACE 4 Music class until seniors had an opportunity to request their electives for next year. The change had initially been proposed as a result of a steady enrollment decline due to students' interest and enrollment in a vast array of other elective offerings at the high school.

Since Tuesday's meeting, Dr. Shaps has learned that a sufficient number of seniors have signed up for PACE 4 Music to warrant maintaining the class for next year. "Throughout the budget process, many decisions are made. Sometimes decisions revolve around seeking efficiencies. Sometimes they are based on a belief that we can better serve students' needs. And other times decisions are based on enrollment numbers, which give us one concrete measure as to the level of interest in a given program," Dr. Shaps said. "As a huge PACE fan -- I attend nearly every PACE show – I am interested in understanding how to promote greater interest in the PACE 4 Music class as a culminating experience moving forward. At the same time, in the broader context, I've asked Principal Clain to look at enrollment across all classes offered at the high school to align our thinking about budget and educational opportunities."

Also presented at last night's meeting was an overview of the District's School Lunch Program, including program improvements already made this year as a result of collaboration between the District Wellness Committee, parents and administration, and next steps as the District prepares to solicit bids for future food service management services. Although the District is required by law to take the low bid, the District has the ability to customize certain parts of the bid request and proposed contract, and has been working to solicit and incorporate parent recommendations where feasible. All food services must meet Federal and State guidelines. The Board agreed to adopt many of the recommendations suggested by interested parents, including:

- Add bottle filling stations over the summer to all cafeteria-assigned water fountains
- Add fresh-portioned crudite vegetables
- Offer vegetable protein daily, plus add vegetarian entrees on Wellness Wednesdays
- Add whole grain variety as recommended by parent committee
- Replace Snapple, Izze and Gatorade with flavored sparkling waters
- Eliminate juice in elementary schools at lunch
- Eliminate hot dogs (nitrates)
- Eliminate preservatives and additives in baked goods

The Board agreed with the recommendation to eliminate flavored milk at breakfast, but decided to continue to offer flavored milk at lunch to assure that students consume adequate calcium at the mid-day. Similarly, the Board added made-to-order salad offerings at the elementary schools, but declined to approve self-serve salad bars and grab and go breakfast kiosks, both of which had been requested by some parents.

The Board also agreed to increase school meal prices by ten cents to support the recommended additions and changes to the school menus. The District is working to further explore parent recommendations regarding snacks and will use snack items suggested by parents as feasible.

As required by State law, the BOE will adopt a Proposed Budget on April 18; the Proposed Budget is the budget that will be voted on by the community May 16, 2017. (Although the budget has been further reduced, it will still require a tax levy increase that requires a 60% approval vote.) Between now and April 18, the Board continues to be interested in community feedback. Visit the [budget section of the District website](#) to learn more or email the Board at [board@mamschools.org](mailto:board@mamschools.org).

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