



News Release

2017-2018 Superintendent's Recommended Budget ***Invest, Improve, Innovate: Educating 580+ More Students Since '09***

MAMARONECK, NY, March 9, 2017 – At Tuesday evening's Board of Education meeting, Dr. Robert Shaps presented his [2017-2018 Superintendent's Recommended Budget](#), calling it a “financial articulation of what we value and aim to accomplish” in our schools. He began by telling the story behind this year's budget -- which follows many years of budget reductions despite significant enrollment increases across all grades and all six Mamaroneck Public Schools -- and introducing this year's theme: *Invest, Improve, Innovate*.

“Including next year's projected enrollment increase, we anticipate that our enrollment will have grown by 587 students -- or 12% -- since the 2009-2010 school year,” said Dr. Shaps, who indicated that Mamaroneck is only one of a handful of districts in Westchester with increasing enrollment. “Yet, despite our enrollment increase, we have managed to decrease per pupil expenditures for three straight years.”

Dr. Shaps provided an account of [Who We Are](#) and [How We Got Here](#) and summarized the District's [Points of Pride](#). He talked about the District's sound fiscal management, conservative annual budget increases and financial transparency with the backdrop of a high-performing school district that offers depth of educational programs and experiences to meet the individual learning needs of all students and shows unwavering commitment to quality instruction, teacher supervision and professional feedback.

“We're at a crossroads,” Dr. Shaps said. “For many years now, we have created efficiencies at every turn, working to ensure that resources are directly aligned with our District goals. My job as Superintendent is to equip our schools to support learning objectives, and we've done that through expenditure reduction and prudent budgeting. But, at the same time, I need to let the community know when cuts are no longer possible and be clear about what's at stake when a budget is unveiled.”

Staffing Significantly Lower than a Decade Ago

By targeting staff reductions based on data-driven program changes and maximizing efficiency of shared staff across schools, Dr. Shaps said the District has been able to reduce the number of certified and classified staff from 896 to 840 over the past decade. “We're simply more efficient in how we hire and employ staff,” he said.

Years of Efficiencies/Minimizing Budget Increases

For the five prior years, the District's annual tax levy growth was limited to an average of 1.57%, and the budgets fell under the State's tax levy cap. In fact, the District's budgets have come in a total of \$14 million (cumulatively) below the cap. Year-after-year, said Dr. Shaps, the District has shown it is "doing more with less" (whether it's as a result of accumulating health insurance savings by moving to a self-insured plan, renegotiating the District's prescription contract, printing curriculum materials in-house, maximizing the use of technology to save staff time and resources, or reducing transportation costs by contracting to purchase the District's own fuel through a State contractor rather than from a transportation contractor.)

Lower Per-Pupil \$ Allocation

While the District has gained 587 additional students in the past nine years, per-pupil expenses have steadily decreased, with the current year per pupil allocation lower than what it was during the 2012-2013 school year (\$24,095 this year, compared to \$24,531 in '12-'13).

What's New This Year: Piercing the Cap & Requirement of 60% Vote

Since about 80% of District costs are driven by employee salaries/contractual obligations -- and the budget's health insurance component alone far exceeds the District's allowable growth under a tax cap -- the District finds it necessary to recommend a budget for the 2017-2018 school year that goes above the State-defined property tax cap levy limit (1.04%) for our district. The 2017-2018 Superintendent's Recommended Budget represents a 1.59% budget-to-budget increase (raising the tax levy by 2.48%) over the 2016-2017 budget. With this decision comes the need for a 60% voter approval, when the budget is brought forth for a community vote on May 16, 2017.

Tax Rate Expected to Decrease

As a function of growing total property assessed valuation, it is estimated that the tax rate will go down by about 1% (0.99%).

Superintendent's Recommended Budget highlights:

In addition to maintaining favorable class sizes, some additional 2017-2018 Recommended Budget highlights include:

- Partnership with Yale University's Center for Emotional Intelligence to pilot a elementary social and emotional intelligence framework
- High school elective pathway course sequence within design, engineering, culinary arts, and computer science
- Hands-on science curriculum resources and professional development expenditures to develop and implement Next Generation Science Standards
- Classroom library resources in support of District Literacy Stretch Goal
- Additional staffing resources to address enrollment demand for the high school Original Science Research Program
- Funding to purchase District word study program
- Support for the District's Authentic Interaction Stretch Goal, adding funds to organize inter-school elementary collaborative academic projects
- Funding to expand collaboration with Sheldrake Environmental Center.

“I believe voter turnout will be more important than ever this year,” Dr. Shaps added. “To move our district forward and make sure that all of the valuable work everyone has put in over the past several years is not erased, investment in the District is critical. We must provide the necessary resources to continue to improve teaching and learning, facilitate innovation and promote authentic & relevant learning experiences.”

Between now and April 18th, when by NY State law school districts must adopt a budget, the Superintendent and the Board will review and discuss the educational plan. In the meantime, community members can e-mail the Board at board@mamkschools.org with any comments/questions/feedback on the Superintendent’s Recommended Budget. After the Board votes to adopt a budget on April 18th, the “Recommended Budget” will then become the “Proposed Budget,” which will be brought forth to the community for a vote on Tuesday, May 16th, 2017. [Click here](#) for Tuesday night’s PowerPoint presentation and [here](#) for the budget section of the MUFSD website, including voter information, absentee ballot application, and upcoming dates for additional budget meetings.

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