



School District Election and Budget Vote

Governor orders vote by absentee ballot only; Completed ballots must be received by the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9

The Great Neck Board of Education has adopted the proposed 2020–21 school budget in the amount of \$241,395,571. This amount is a 2.98 percent increase over last year’s budget. The proposed tax levy increase is 2.57 percent, which is below the tax cap limit of 4.16 percent.

“This is an unusual budget season during an unprecedented time,” explains Superintendent Dr. Teresa Prendergast. “This global pandemic has affected our school operations in every way. As we look ahead to next school year, the Administration and the Board have worked very carefully to present a prudent budget that maintains support for our students and preserves our high-quality academic and extracurricular programs.”

Vote Information

Due to health and safety concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, an Executive Order from the New York State Governor requires the 2020–21 budget vote to be conducted via absentee ballot only. Every registered voter will automatically receive an absentee ballot with a postage-paid return envelope. Absentee ballots must be received by the Office of the District Clerk, Phipps Admin. Building, 345 Lakeville Rd., no later than 5 p.m. on June 9, 2020.

Budget Overview

After months of preparation, with input from stakeholders across the District, administrators completed the preliminary working budget. In early March, the Board of Education held its first informal budget hearing. Just two weeks later, the Governor closed schools across the State as the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic came to light.

In April, administrators revised the budget and eliminated more than \$1.4 million in planned additions for the 2020–21 school year. Further, additional funds were allocated from the District’s fund balance and reserves to offset increased costs and reductions in state aid. These changes reduce the tax burden on residents.

“We must be sensitive to the tax impact that our school district budget has on our community members who are facing financial challenges during this difficult time,” explains Assistant Superintendent for Business John Powell.

The proposed budget maintains academic offerings, extra-curricular programs, Board of Education elementary class size guidelines, and opportunities for all learners. It also provides added support for the district’s growing number of special education and English as a new language (ENL) students.

“In light of the severity of what is going on all around us, it seems an inopportune time to focus on a school budget, however we have obligations to meet,” says Board President Barbara Berkowitz. “Our children need the continuity of instruction now more than ever with all the other changes in their young lives. These students deserve the same high standards of educational opportunities as those who came before them, and those who will follow. As a Board of Education, that is our responsibility.”

Substantial Services for Nonpublic School Students

The district, in accordance with State law, allocates more than \$6.5 million to provide services to private and nonpublic school students, including bus transportation, textbooks, health services, special education services, school library materials, and computer software loan programs.

New York State's Property Tax Cap

The 2020–21 school year is the ninth in which school districts must abide by New York State's tax-cap legislation. Multiple factors affect the actual limit, and our school district's tax levy limit for 2020–21 is 4.16 percent.

This tax-levy limit incorporates changes to the tax base, the rate of inflation, payments in lieu of taxes, debt payments, capital project expenditures, transportation equipment purchases, and pension increases above a certain percentage.

The proposed tax levy increase of 2.57 percent is well below the state-mandated tax cap. Residents may refer to the Tax Calculator tool on the district website (www.greatneck.k12.ny.us/budget) to estimate their 2020–21 school tax liability.

Validation of Fiscal Practices

Great Neck is among a select few school districts in New York State to earn an "Aaa" rating from Moody's Investors Service. This rating means that the district's financial obligations are judged by Moody's to be of the highest quality and, therefore, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.

Fifth-Lowest Class I Property Tax Rates

Great Neck's 2019–20 school tax rate for single-family homes, or Class I properties, was the fifth-lowest of all the school districts in Nassau County.

Voter Registration

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting closure of school buildings, and for the health and safety of our community, the Board of Registration will not meet for the purpose of registering qualified voters of the district. Qualified voters who have voted in any school election or general election between 2016 and 2019, or have registered with the school district since that time, will automatically receive an absentee ballot with a postage paid return envelope.

If you are not registered, you may register if you are 18 years of age or older, a citizen of the United States, have lived in the district for at least 30 days, and are not otherwise prohibited from voting under the provisions of Section 5-106 of the Election Law. Registration to vote may be accomplished remotely through the New York State DMV website by May 26 at <https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/electronic-voter-registration-application>.

Residents can confirm their registration status using the online Registration Verification tool at www.greatneck.k12.ny.us/voting. This information is also available by contacting the District Clerk by email (jlizza@greatneck.k12.ny.us) or by phone (516-441-4020).

For More Information

The 2020–21 proposed budget may be viewed on the district website at www.greatneck.k12.ny.us/budget. Additional questions about voter registration, absentee ballots, and voting, may be referred to the District Clerk by phone (516-441-4020) or email (jlizza@greatneck.k12.ny.us).

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