



Pelham Union Free School District

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Board of Education Plans to Adopt 2017-17 Budget on April 18

The Board of Education completed its review of the Superintendent's preliminary 2017-18 budget on Tuesday, April 4 and plans to adopt a final budget at its meeting on Tuesday, April 18 at 8:15 pm in the Middle School library.

The preliminary budget, first presented to the Board in February, totals \$72,794,000 and would increase the tax levy by 1.98 percent, which is under the maximum allowable tax cap of 2.14 percent. Prior to budget adoption, the business office will make final adjustments based on updated information since preparing the preliminary budget, however no significant change to the final amount of the budget or tax levy is expected.

Over the course of its last three meetings, the Board reviewed each section of the budget with Interim Business Official Linda Purvis and Treasurer Jackie Vigil. The Board also heard presentations from assistant superintendents Steve Garcia and Rosemary Matthews as well as the District's program directors and building principals.

"Working with our administrative staff, we have taken a line-by-line look at the proposed budget to understand exactly where each dollar is being spent and why," said Board of Education President Marianne Gilland. "We believe that the core components of Dr. Giarrizzo's preliminary budget represent both sound fiscal policy and a systemic approach toward achieving the goals of our five-year Strategic Plan. We are excited about presenting this budget to the community and are confident it will continue to grow our instructional program."

A public hearing on the budget will be held on Tuesday, May 2 at 8:15 pm in the Middle School library and the annual referendum and Board of Education election will be on Tuesday, May 16.

The preliminary budget maintains favorable class sizes across the District and would also fund several key enhancements to the curriculum. One such initiative is the addition of the Foreign Language Elementary School (FLES) program starting in grade 2. To implement the FLES program, which was recommended by the World Language Task Force, the District would hire one Spanish teacher next year and build the program out over several years until it is in place through grade 5. The District will also

soon award a new transportation contract that may result in significant savings, which the Board could use to add a second Spanish teacher into the 2017-18 budget so that the program could begin in both grades 2 and 3 next school year.

Other notable program enhancements include the continuation and expansion of the District's mindfulness programming, including the School Yoga Project and piloting a responsive classroom at Hutchinson School. It also includes new course offerings at PMHS such as applied statistics, Calculus, Transitional Algebra, Mandarin 3, AP Computer Science Language, Instruction and Coding as well as the purchase of new social studies textbooks for grades 5 and 6.

Additionally, the District would use approximately \$200,000 from its capital reserve to bring Friendship Field up to regulation standards. This project would entail installing a turf infield, which is expected to also reduce long-term maintenance costs. The budget would also create a varsity boys swim team and hire a JV cross country coach.

"I believe this is a budget that will advance our curriculum in a very positive way," said Superintendent Dr. Peter Giarrizzo. "It builds on the substantial progress we have made over the last several years, both in terms of how we teach our students, but also in ensuring we are being fiscally responsible. I would like to thank our business office staff, our administrators and our principals for their diligent work in preparing the budget and our Board of Education for its careful consideration during this process."

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