



WINOOSKI SCHOOLS
We are the future.

Winooski School District Budget 2022

* DO YOUR PART *

VOTE!

MARCH 2, 2021

VOTING DAY is on **Tuesday, March 2** • 7:00am to 7:00pm • Winooski Senior Center



College and Career Ready - While the Capital Project is designed to improve the overall learning environment for all students, it also provides learning opportunities during the construction phase.

“The math we are learning helps us understand the building project because we are learning about finding the area of parallelograms and triangles. For example, we can then use this to figure out how big the wall is in the new gym.” said 6th grade student Amelia Slade.

WMHS is focused on creating dynamic opportunities for students through the community-based learning program. One of the desired outcomes is to connect students to continued education, future employment, and civic life by building on their interests and the strengths of the Winooski community.

This fall, students were able to take exterior perimeter tours of the Capital Project construction site to discuss the various aspects of the building process. Students also learned about the many career opportunities available in the construction industry.

Middle School teacher Nancy Keller is thrilled about the new possibilities the final construction will open up for her students. That’s why she jumped at the opportunity to show her students exactly how the building’s blueprint was being brought to life.

“The construction process is a great example of how Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) merge together. To see our new school rise up in front of our eyes, offers students a front row seat for learning. We just had to take a closer look!” said Nancy.



Healthy, Productive, and Successful Lives - Last March, when the pandemic struck and schools were dismissed, 4th grader Jenny Paw was sad. “I thought we could never go to school again. I don’t like remote learning, but as long as I get to see my friends’ and teachers’ faces on Zoom, I feel better,” Jenny said.

Picking up school meals every week helped her feel connected to the school. “They have good and healthy food. I like it all.” Jenny participates in the afterschool activities offered through the district’s 21C program. “Sometimes my parents go to work or are busy, so I choose to do afterschool activities because it is still school... and I love school.”

JFK Principal Sara Raabe said that the children in Jenny’s family are a fantastic example of students fully engaged in their learning. “Jenny takes advantage of the continuum of services our district offers and is an emerging leader.”

When Jenny was interviewed, WSD students were temporarily in fully remote learning due to a rise in COVID-19 cases. Jenny says all Winooski residents should follow health guidelines so the schools could stay open.

“It is hard to not see friends but it’s important that we stay at least six feet apart from others, and wear a mask, so we can go back to the way life was before. That’s what I want.”



Becoming an Antiracist School – During a June WSD School Board meeting, student Stephanie Siki realized the importance of joining the Winooski Students for Antiracism (WSA). “I was inspired and saddened by the traumatic experiences people shared about racial discrimination they had faced.”

The group currently focuses much of their work on education and outreach. Stephanie said, “We are demanding systemic changes. We are persistent in our beliefs to make our school antiracist. We have been working on connecting with other students - but some still seem uncomfortable speaking about racism. We are trying to break that barrier - to give more voice to all students.”

In January, WSA members, School Board members, and leadership team members outlined plans for an Antiracism Steering Committee, which will create subgroups to address the WSA’s demands, six of which were adopted by the board in August. “We appreciate the willingness of the School Board to collaborate with us. They have provided us seats at the table, which allows us to use our voice to do this work,” Stephanie said. Read more about the demands: bit.ly/EquityAntiracismWSD.

“Racism is like a virus and being antiracist is a vaccine. You can take action by learning about your own implicit bias and privilege, and taking action to support policies that benefit People of Color. It would be great to have everyone in Winooski be part of this history we are making. Join us in becoming the first antiracist school district in Vermont.”



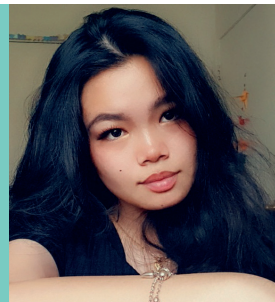
Community Engagement - Dah Ler Moo chose to focus on Restorative Justice (RJ) to complete her Communications Capstone. Through her work, she became part of the district’s Youth-Adult RJ team.

The team is working to establish a strong foundation for a restorative justice culture in the school and community of Winooski. “I know Winooski is a small place, but I was surprised that I knew almost everyone on the team. It feels like a family,” said Moo.

She plans to enter the healthcare field, and believes that RJ “is a way of life” because it teaches us how to better communicate with one another and treat each other with compassion. Moo also believes RJ “helps kids feel safe and comforted by acknowledging that their voice is heard.”

Moo says school staff have been a major source of support and connection. Teacher Anja Mosehauer said, “Moo is very dedicated to learning and will push herself to have as complete a picture of something as she can.”

Moo believes RJ will greatly help the city to nurture and celebrate its diversity. “People in Winooski have been through a lot. It makes the community stronger and its residents should be proud.”



2021-22 Vision-Driven, Learner Investment

By Sean McMannon, Superintendent of Schools



“All students will graduate from the Winooski School District (WSD) college and career ready at a cost supported by a majority of the Winooski community. WSD students will lead healthy, productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.”

Over the past few months, the WSD administration worked with the Board of School Trustees on a student-centered and forward-thinking approach to budget development.

I gave board members a level services budget and data about enrollment, staffing, Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), Information Technology and Operations. All of this information can be found on our website: bit.ly/WSDBudgetInfo

We managed to limit our growth in expenses to 2.69% which is particularly impressive given the onset of debt service for our capital project. We worked very hard to procure financing for our capital project with the United States Department of Agriculture, and secured an incredibly low interest rate of 2.25%, a full 1.6% less than what we originally calculated. This is expected to save Winooski taxpayers over \$10 million dollars over the life of the 30 year bond.

This budget maintains current programs and staffing levels, and some winter transportation.

Over the years, your Board of Trustees has put forth fiscally conservative budgets when compared to the rest of the state as evidenced by our Educational Spending Rank being in the bottom quartile the past seven years. I think you will see that the Board of Trustees has constructed a thoughtful, vision-driven investment in Winooski children that continues to move us forward to meet the high expectations of our WSD Ends Statement. For more information about our proposed investment in Winooski students for the 2021-22 school year go to bit.ly/WSDBudgetInfo.

Voting is on March 2nd from 7am to 7pm at the Senior Center on Barlow Street, and early and absentee voting information can be found at bit.ly/WinooskiVote.

Thank you for working with WSD to benefit our students!



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The WSD COVID-19 Co-Coordinators on Life During the Pandemic

“One of the greatest blessings of my career has been to be able to build trusting relationships with our WSD students and their families for almost a decade. It is an honor to watch these children grow and be a part of their lives,” said WSD Nurse Liz Parris.

From the School-Based Health Center to the free flu clinic, nurses Liz Parris and Katharine Monje already went above and beyond their job descriptions to keep students and staff in the WSD healthy. Then, the pandemic hit.

The nurses assumed the role of the district’s COVID-19 Co-Coordinators this summer. “I wanted to make sure that in the middle of all the chaos, our Winooski School District families had someone they trusted advocating for their best interests,” said Liz. Katharine was happy to be able to support families with their COVID-19 and medical needs from home. They also manage the district’s COVID-19 Hotline 24/7, which has received over 400 calls since September.

Currently, the Nurses attend weekly meetings with other coordinators around the state, and more recently, almost daily meetings with partners in and around Winooski to address the rising cases that lead to a fully remote learning model for several weeks during the winter.

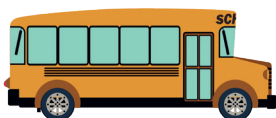
“Community partnerships between WSD, the City of Winooski, Vermont Department of Health and many more have been vital to this work. I am eager for access to vaccines for all and hopeful for COVID-19 to be a thing of the past,” Katharine added.

The Critical Role of Our Cultural Liaisons

The proposed budget reflects a modest and essential investment of \$60K to expand our home-school cultural liaison model. The WSD’s six liaisons provide critical support to approximately 49% of WSD families during the school year, assisting with everything from interpreting parent-teacher conferences, to trouble-shooting technology, to helping connect families with necessary services. Families rely on the liaisons’ help and trust them to help make good decisions.

Tul Niroula, the liaison for the Nepali Bhutanese community has 124 students on his caseload.

“People in our community have questions and concerns about what is happening with their children in the schools, and many other things. They always reach out to me at any time, including over the summer. This means I often work extra hours that I’m not paid for. I am glad the Board recognized the value of having year-round liaison services,” said Tul.



The proposed budget includes funds for transportation for students who live over .75 miles away from our campus to and from school each day for 80-90 days during the winter months.

Understanding the 2022 Budget

On January 13, the Winooski School Board approved a budget of \$19,516,240 for fiscal year 2022. This represents a spending increase of 2.69% over the current year's budget. The state formula calculates this to an estimated 6.68% tax increase. Approval by voters would allow the school board and administrators to continue providing high-quality instruction that ensures all students graduate from WSD college and career ready.

ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

For a more in depth look at our budget, visit wsdvt.org/school-board/budget. You will find our annual report which includes our auditor's report, as well as detailed explanations about this year's budget-making process. To watch this year's budget video, produced by student David Klinker, visit: bit.ly/VideosWSD



For more information about our proposed investment in Winooski students for the 2021-22 school year, **join us Monday, March 1st**. The beginning of the meeting will be held in-person at 7:30 pm following strict COVID-19 safety precautions in the WSD Performing Arts Center. Then, at 7:45 pm, there will be a Budget Information Session presented virtually. **Join the Budget Info Session via Zoom: bit.ly/WSDMeeting or call in: 1-929-436-2866.**

How Do Property Tax Credits Work?

Vermont Property Tax Credit assists many Vermont homeowners with paying their property taxes. You may be eligible for a tax credit on your property taxes if your property qualifies as a homestead and you meet the eligibility requirements.

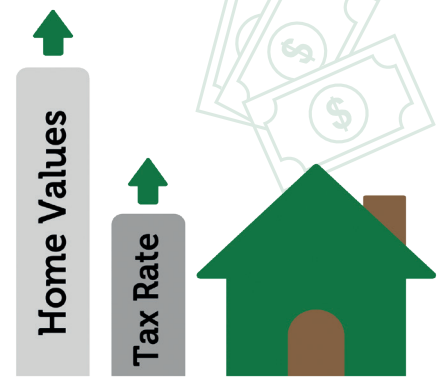
To qualify, total taxable and non-taxable household income must be \$138,500 or less.

More info at tax.vermont.gov/property/tax-credit.

Approximately **65%** of Winooski taxpayers received property tax assistance in 2020.

If your home is valued at \$200,000, you should pay \$3,672 in education taxes.

However, if your household income is \$50,000, the property tax credit would reduce your tax bill by \$2,447, making your total education tax payment **\$1,225.**



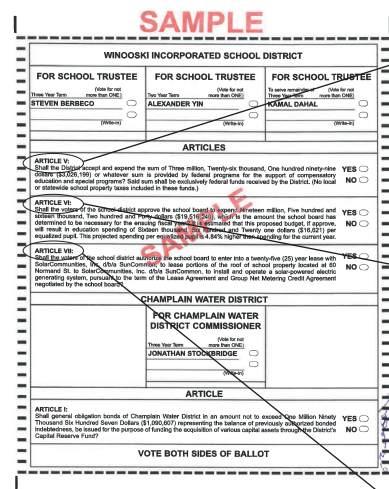
If you rent and your household income is \$47,000 or less, you may be eligible for a renter rebate. More info: tax.vermont.gov/individuals/renter-rebate

Understanding the Tax Increase

Public schools are funded in part through residential property taxes. Some communities have higher property values, so the legislature designed the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) to ensure all districts contribute their fair share to the Education Fund. Houses in Winooski have been selling for more than their appraised value, leading to a drop in the CLA. As the CLA goes down, the local property tax rate increases because homes are worth more money than their appraised value. This year, the CLA in Winooski dropped, resulting in a 5.63% tax increase unrelated to education spending.

Education tax rates are also calculated by a district's education spending per equalized pupil. Equalized pupils are the result of a law that applies weights to student counts, which are supposed to reflect the resources required to educate students based on certain demographics. A higher equalized pupil count leads to lower property tax rates. In 2020, the legislature received a report from UVM indicating that the existing weights do not reflect the costs of educating students and recommended new evidence-based weights. Using the UVM weights, Winooski's equalized pupils would increase substantially, leading to a 71 cent decrease in our education tax rates. There is currently a bill in the legislature to adjust the weights as recommended by UVM. For more information, please reach out to Reps. Taylor Small (bill sponsor) and Hal Colston.

Understanding the Ballot



ARTICLE V:
 Shall the District accept and expend the sum of Three million, Twenty-six thousand, One hundred ninety-nine dollars (\$3,026,199) or whatever sum is provided by federal programs for the support of compensatory education and special programs? Said sum shall be exclusively federal funds received by the District. (No local or statewide school property taxes included in these funds.)

YES NO

Article V - This amount will not affect your tax rates. Approval allows us to accept and spend federal funds.

ARTICLE VI:
 Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend Nineteen million, Five hundred and sixteen thousand, Two hundred and Forty dollars (\$19,516,240), which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of Sixteen thousand, Six hundred and Twenty one dollars (\$16,621) per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 4.84% higher than spending for the current year.

YES NO

Article VI - \$19,516,240 operates the three schools in our district, and provides transportation and education for over 820 students. This amount also includes debt service for the Capital Project.

ARTICLE VII:
 Shall the voters of the school district authorize the school board to enter into a twenty-five (25) year lease with SolarCommunities, Inc. d/b/a SunCommon, to lease portions of the roof of school property located at 60 Normand St. to SolarCommunities, Inc. d/b/a SunCommon, to install and operate a solar-powered electric generating system, pursuant to the terms of the Lease Agreement and Group Net Metering Credit Agreement negotiated by the school board?

YES NO

Article VII - Approval will allow the district to enter into a lease agreement with solar company SunCommon for the purposes of producing renewable energy and receiving a guarantee of utility cost savings.

Remote City/School Budget Presentations - Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at 6 pm. Attend online at <https://zoom.us/j/97318597419> or by phone at 1-646-558-8656.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS: Equalized pupil - When calculating spending per student, Vermont uses "equalized pupils" rather than the actual headcount in each school. While based on a straight student count, the formula for "equalized pupils" gives less weight to pre-kindergarten pupils and extra weight to students in secondary school, those from economically deprived backgrounds, and those whose first language is not English. The principle behind the weighting is that it costs more to educate students in certain categories. *Source: Public Assets Institute*
NOTE: 4.84% is the equalized pupil increase from the FY21 budget, not the tax increase.

The information below shows estimated education tax increases if your household applies for and receives tax credits based on income eligibility.

Impact of Proposed Tax Increase After Tax Credits

Household Income	FY 2021 (current budget)	FY 2022 (proposed budget)	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$40,000	\$936	\$980	\$44	\$4
\$50,000	\$1,170	\$1,225	\$55	\$5
\$60,000	\$1,404	\$1,470	\$66	\$6
\$70,000	\$1,638	\$1,715	\$77	\$6
\$80,000	\$1,872	\$1,960	\$88	\$7
\$90,000	\$2,106	\$2,205	\$99	\$8

The information below shows estimated education tax increases if you don't receive any tax credits and pay solely on property value.

Impact of Proposed Tax Increase Without Tax Credits

Property Value	FY 2021 (current budget)	FY 2022 (proposed budget)	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$150,000	\$2,582	\$2,754	\$172	\$14
\$175,000	\$3,012	\$3,213	\$201	\$17
\$200,000	\$3,442	\$3,672	\$230	\$19
\$225,000	\$3,872	\$4,131	\$259	\$22
\$250,000	\$4,303	\$4,590	\$287	\$24
\$275,000	\$4,733	\$5,049	\$316	\$26
\$300,000	\$5,163	\$5,508	\$345	\$29

Publication of the Winooski School District

60 Normand Street
Winooski, VT 05404

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Out of town on Town Meeting Day?

- **You can vote early** at the City Clerk's Office (27 W Allen St) 9:00am to 3:00pm starting on February 10, 2021 or call and request a ballot be sent to your home (802-655-6419).
- **Vote March 2, 2021** at the Senior Center at 123 Barlow Street, between 7am and 7pm.
- Did you know that **you can register to vote at the polls the day of the vote!**

POSTAL PATRON

*****ECRWSS**

WINOOSKI, VT 05404

Photos by Rebecca Savage and Emily Hecker. Construction photos courtesy of ReArch Company.

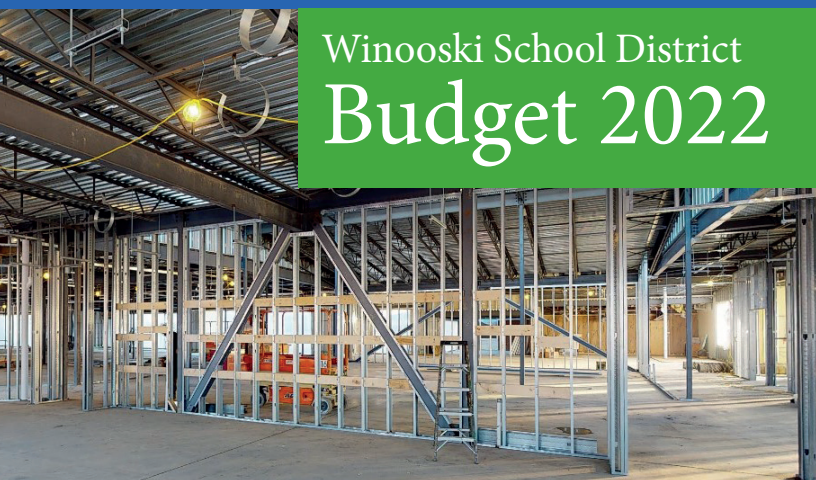


Winooski's Capital Project

The district broke ground on the Capital Project this summer, after months of planning and preparing. As of January, ReArch Construction Company has already completed much of the new construction, including the new middle and elementary school wings, as well as the new gymnasium. Fortunately, disruptions have been fairly minimal for students and staff.

The project is slated for completion in the summer of 2022. Follow along on the construction: cp.winooski.org

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Budget 2022