

WCSD Financial & Budget Terms for the 2025-2026 Budget

504 Plan: This is a plan developed to ensure that a child with a disability pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, attending an elementary or secondary educational institution, receives accommodations providing them access to the learning environment.

Academic Intervention Services (AIS): Services designed to help students achieve the learning standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Breakage: The term used to identify the difference in cost between a retiring/resigning staff member's salary and benefits versus a new hire's salary and benefit cost. Useful in budgeting situations when the information is readily available.

Budget: A plan of financial operation expressing the estimates of proposed expenditures for a fiscal year and the proposed means of financing them.

Budget to Budget Analysis: The comparison of budgetary data over a specified period of time. This can be from year to year or month to month for example. This comparison does not include actual expense data.

Budget Calendar: The schedule of key dates that the Board of Education and administrators follow in the preparation, adoption and administration of the budget.

CTE Pathway: A career and technical path, or Career and Technical Education (CTE), is an educational program that prepares students for the workforce by providing them with academic, technical, and real-world skills. CTE is a combination of academic classes and industry-specific knowledge and skills that prepares students for a variety of careers. CTE programs are hands-on and personalized, and can help students explore different career fields.

Contingency Budget: When the taxpayers do not approve the Board of Education approved budget, a contingency budget is adopted. This budget plan includes ordinary contingent expenses. Ordinary contingent expenses include legal expenditures, expenses specifically authorized by the State and other items necessary to maintain the education program, preserve property and assure the health and safety of students and staff. As per the Tax Cap Legislation, the prior year tax levy must be used when calculating the current year's contingency budget.

Cost Savings: Where anticipated expenses are reduced to meet the needs of the business entity to achieve a necessary goal.

Employee Benefits: Amounts paid by the district on behalf of employees. These amounts are not included in the gross salary accounting codes. They are fringe benefits, and while not paid directly to employees, are parts of the cost of operating the school district. Employee benefits include the District's cost of Medicare, Social Security, Teachers Retirement System (TRS), Employees Retirement System (ERS), workers compensation, unemployment insurance, health insurance, union welfare trust and other benefits such as shoe allowance, tuition reimbursement and other contractual items.

Employee Retirement System (ERS): ERS is a *defined benefit pension* Retirement System. Retirement pension benefits will depend on the results of a calculation at the time of retirement that takes into account the Final Average Salary, number of years of credited membership service, and age at the time of retirement.

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Equity vs. Equality: Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. Equality and Equity are not synonyms.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): This Act was signed by President Obama on 12/10/15 and represents good news for our nation's schools. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. ESSA encompasses McKinney-Vento students as well. These achievements provide a firm foundation for further work to expand educational opportunity and improve student outcomes under ESSA. Annually an allocation is provided by the Federal government and school districts prepare budgets as per grant guidelines. The District continues to learn and understand what the details of this complex Act entails. The District will be implementing the NYS School Funding Transparency Form in 2019-2020 as per this legislation.

Expenditure: Payment of cash or transfer of property or services for the purpose of acquiring an asset or service.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Fiscal Year: A fiscal year is the accounting period on which a budget is based. School districts in the State operate on a July 1st through June 30th fiscal year.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): All qualified persons with disabilities within the jurisdiction of a school district are entitled to a free appropriate public education. An appropriate education may comprise education in regular classes, education in regular classes with the use of related aids and services, or special education and related services in separate classrooms for all or portions of the school day. Special education may include specially designed instruction in classrooms, at home, or in private or public institutions, and may be accompanied by related services such as speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, psychological counseling, and medical diagnostic services necessary to the child's education.

Fund Balance: Fund balance is created when the school district has money left over at the end of the fiscal year from either under spending the budget or taking in additional revenue. Part of the fund balance (called the assigned fund balance) may be applied as revenues to the district's following year budget. A portion, called the unassigned fund balance, up to four percent of the total budget, may also be set aside to pay for emergencies or other unforeseen expenses.

General Fund: This is the major operating fund. It receives all State income, payments of property taxes, miscellaneous income and income not specified by law to be deposited in another fund. The General Fund budget (revenue and expenses) is prepared annually for voter approval.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP): Standard framework of guidelines for financial accounting in any given jurisdiction. These are used in the preparation of financial statements.

Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB): The source of general accepted accounting principles (GAAP) used by state and local governments in the United States.

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Individualized Education Program (IEP): Students who qualify for any of the 13 classifications as indicated under the IDEA are entitled to a formal plan that describes how the school will support your child's educational needs.

Learning Loss: The lost opportunities for learning that students experienced during months of remote schooling, irregular schedules and social isolation due to the pandemic-induced absence from school buildings.

Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT): Payments made voluntarily by tax-exempt non-profits as a substitute for property taxes. These long-term agreements are negotiated with the municipality. These now include solar programs as well under the guidance of NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS): Evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. This is a district wide initiative for the WCSD.

Property Tax Cap: The Property Tax Cap was established under Chapter 97 of the Laws of 2011. It establishes a tax levy limit on all public municipalities and school districts (except the big five cities).

Proposition: NYS Education Law requires that school districts present an annual budget proposition to the voters for their approval. Additional propositions can be presented to the voters for approval such as transportation services, capital expenditures, transportation capital expenditures or educational programs.

Response to Intervention (RTI): Multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. These services are available to K-9 in WCSD.

Revenue: Sources of income financing the operation of the school district, including property taxes and State Aid, grants and other non-tax sources.

Revenue Reduction: Occurs when anticipated revenues are decreased by any means. The reasons could be governmental mandates, economic environment, market stressors, etc.

Salary: The total amount paid to an individual, before deductions, for services rendered while on the payroll of the district.

School Resource Officer (SRO): Law enforcement officer who is assigned to either an elementary, middle, or high school. WCSD currently has an SRO at each High School daily.

ST-3 Reporting: School district's report revenue, expenditures, balance sheet and fund balance report to NYS annually. The reporting format has been established by the NYS Comptroller's Office and reflects a functional unit and object of expense. The format consists of General Support, Instruction, Transportation and Undistributed. This is in conformity with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The District presents the expenditure budget to the Board of Education in the same format. Please note that the three-part budget defined below represents the same information just in a different format for the viewer.

Supplement vs. Supplant: When used in relation to Federal awards, a school district must utilize federal funds to supplement programs already in place. Federal funds are NOT to be used to supplant programs for school districts.

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Supplies: Consumable materials used in the operation of the school district including food, textbooks, paper, pencils, office supplies, custodial supplies, material used in maintenance activities and computer software.

Support Services: The personnel, activities, and programs which are necessary to enhance instruction. These include attendance, guidance, and health programs; library personnel and services; special education services; professional development programs; transportation; administration; buildings and grounds operations; and security. Related services such as speech, OT/PT, counseling, behavioral intervention and AIS are mandated by Federal and State law.

Tax Base: Assessed value of local real estate that a school district may tax for yearly operational monies.

Tax Certiorari: Property owners in NYS are eligible for formal review of their assessment as either small claims assessment review or tax certiorari proceedings. Tax Certiorari cases have several steps that need to be followed and cannot be completed without the assistance of an attorney. Tax certiorari cases are heard by the State Supreme Court and decisions are final.

Tax Levy: Total sum to be raised by the school district after subtracting out all other revenues including State Aid. The tax levy is used to determine the tax rate for property owners in each of the cities, towns or villages that make up a school district.

Teacher Retirement System (TRS): TRS administers a defined benefit plan that provides retirement, disability and death benefits to eligible NYS public school teachers and administrators. Eligibility for these benefits depends on factors such as a member's tier of membership, age, earnings and service credit.

Three-Part Budget: School districts must, by law, divide their budgets into three components: administrative, capital and program. Each year they must show how much each portion has increased in relation to the whole budget. A further definition of the three components is as follows:

1. **Administrative Budget Component:** These expenditures include office and administrative costs; salaries and benefits for certified school administrators who spend 50 percent or more of their time performing supervisory duties; data processing; public information; legal fees; property insurance; and school board expenses.
2. **Capital Budget Component:** This covers all school bus purchases, debt service on buildings, and leasing expenditures; tax certiorari and court-ordered costs; and all facility costs, including salaries and benefits of the custodial staff; service contracts, maintenance supplies and equipment; and utilities.
3. **Program Budget Component:** This portion includes salaries and benefits of teachers and supervisors who spend the majority of their time teaching; instructional costs such as supplies, equipment and textbooks; co- curricular activities and interscholastic athletics; staff development; and transportation operating costs.

Please note that the ST-3 reporting mentioned above represents the same information just in a different format for the viewer.