

District NEWS

WEST SHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spring 2016



Kindergarten COUNTDOWN!

Thank you to all who attended Kindergarten Registration earlier this month. If you missed this opportunity, please contact the Registration Office at 717-938-9577 to set up an appointment.

To be admitted to kindergarten for the 2016-2017 school year, children must be at least five years-old prior to October 1, 2016, possess an official birth certificate, and have proper immunization records.

Additional information, including the necessary registration forms, can be found on the District website under the Our District tab.



Our Mission

The West Shore School District is committed to providing this generation with a quality education serving as a foundation for responsible and successful citizenship.

www.wssd.k12.pa.us
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2016-2017 DISTRICT BUDGET

A Closer Look at the Budget Process

The development of the District budget includes careful long-term planning and conscientious decision making by the Board and administration. During the development of the 2015-2016 General Fund Budget, we took a conservative approach when predicting state revenues. This decision turned out to be in our best interest when, in December, West Shore received approximately 45% of the funding it anticipated from the state — less than half of what was expected to fund education in our District. Although state education funds have recently been released, anticipated state revenues related to PlanCon building projects were not included.

West Shore has carefully managed operations and continues to deliver services as normal, without the need to borrow money. Other school districts have not been as fortunate and are now burdened with the subsequent costs associated with unanticipated borrowing. Unfortunately, issues surrounding the development of a state budget for the current year has hindered our ability to forecast state funding for the 2016-2017 school year and despite our best efforts to restore the fund balance to a healthier level, we are now faced with a number of critical issues which will likely necessitate substantial use of those funds.

Two projects currently scheduled that will utilize capital reserve funds are the improvements being made to the West Shore Stadium and the replacement of the boiler system at Red Land High School with a new energy efficient natural gas system. Other issues impacted by inadequate state funding include infrastructure needs, facility improvements (including HVAC systems, roof replacements, lighting upgrades, athletic facilities, etc.), future construction, instructional needs for technology, textbooks, class size reduction, and program enhancement/restoration. Although we have made no commitment to any of the items included, an energy audit completed in 2014 identified areas and systems that should be considered for repair or replacement costing approximately \$20 million. In addition, in order to assist us in planning for future needs, the District will be completing a feasibility study in the coming year which could identify additional areas requiring funding.

The Board and administration are sensitive to the burden local taxpayers face; however, due in part to issues with the state budget impasse, the Preliminary 2016-2017 General Fund Budget includes a tax increase to the base index of 2.4%. This leaves a deficit of \$3.7 million. The District has been approved for referendum exceptions not to exceed \$1.6 million which will allow us to exceed the 2.4% index by 3.46% in Cumberland County and 1.98% in York County, without the need to seek voter referendum. Much thought has gone into the development of this budget and we will continue to review areas where expenditures can be reduced, eliminated, or covered using other funds.


A listing of Board Finance Committee meeting dates as well as presentations made to the Board during the budget process are available on the District website on the Business Office Department page. Members of the community are invited to attend the Finance Committee meetings and participate in on-going budget discussions. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, May 12 at 5 p.m. at the Administration Center for Education.

21st Century Teaching and Learning

Preparing students for today's world requires a change in what we teach, how we teach and what we ask students to do with what they learn. Learning today involves more than reading, writing, and mathematics. Students must be able to think critically, problem solve, communicate effectively, collaborate, and innovate across a variety of settings.

Our students need these essential 21st century skills if they are to be successful. What does this mean in the West Shore School District? We must:

- Engage students in addressing real-world problems, issues, and questions that matter.
- Stop being buildings defined by walls and schedules by providing opportunities to connect globally.
- Facilitate learning in the classroom rather than deliver information, so our students become effective learners wherever they go.
- Foster curiosity.
- Develop capable communicators and team players.
- Empower students to take charge of their learning.



Students in Mrs. Gallagher's computer classes at Allen Middle School accepted the Hour of Code Challenge!

Where We Are

Many of our teachers and building administrators have already embraced the concept of 21st century teaching and learning and are providing meaningful and engaging opportunities.

Several of our teachers are "flipping their classrooms." The flipped classroom is a model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed. Students view short video lectures at home before the class session, while in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, or discussions. A flipped classroom allows for a more active learning environment, higher student engagement, and more opportunities to collaborate and innovate.

In addition, several courses include customized learning tools using programs such as Math 21 in our Algebra I classes, Study Island in grades 3-8, and Raz-Kids at the elementary level. All of these are online resources that target areas of need and also offer a challenge for those who are ready. Even our kindergarten students are engaged in 21st century learning and routinely use iPads to create and learn.

While we are excited about what is happening in many of our classrooms, we want all students in every classroom and at every level to have opportunities like these.

Where We Are Going

As we look to expand opportunities for our students, we are viewing new resource adoptions through a 21st century lens. We have several new adoptions on the horizon for the 2016-2017 school year and all include technology components. For example, we are currently in the process of moving forward with the adoption of a new comprehensive literacy program for grades 3-5 called Benchmark Literacy.

Benchmark Literacy supports all of the daily components of high-quality literacy instruction. Like the enVision 2.0 math series, this adoption has a heavy technology focus. Students and teachers will have access to a wide-range of leveled texts through its e-library that will challenge our more capable readers and provide support and appropriate challenge for our struggling readers. Also similar to the enVision math series, Benchmark Literacy enables students and parents access to its resources at home.

We are also in the process of adopting a new science resource at the middle school level called Fusion Science. Fusion Science is a comprehensive print and digital curriculum that provides tools teachers need to engage students in inquiry-based learning. There are interactive digital lessons, virtual labs and hands-on activities provided in every lesson. It is a unique eLearning curriculum that provides constant interactions through simulations, animations, videos, virtual labs, video-based projects, and assessments. Teachers can assign these to individual students or use in whole class or small group instruction.

Like enVision and Benchmark Literacy, Fusion Science resources are available at school and home.

Preparing our students for the 21st century workforce begins early and involves more than access to technology. We are also looking at ways to better support our youngest learners. Studies suggest many students enter kindergarten unprepared, and West Shore is no different. Our Kindergarten Acceleration Program (KAP) serves as the first line of support for these students and their families. Students in KAP are part of a typical kindergarten classroom for half of the day and part of a smaller group where they receive additional literacy instruction for the other half of the school day.

We are looking to expand KAP for the 2016-2017 school year. Currently, there are four KAP sites in the District serving 96 students. The proposed KAP expansion would allow three additional schools to offer KAP for a potential of 168 students in the program. When children enter school with less prior knowledge and skills, it is very difficult to catch them up, especially without concentrated intervention and support. Expansion of our KAP program will provide much-needed support and will lead to greater success for these additional students moving forward.

Our middle-level learners also require supports unique to that age group. For many years, we have worked to create a cost-effective scheduling model in both middle and high school. In order to maintain the middle school model in

scheduling, administration is working to reestablish the teaming concept consistently across the three middle schools. Research and literature from the National Middle School Association and other professional institutions support teaming and the benefits it provides. Teaming in our middle schools will provide our teachers with time to meet to discuss students, analyze data, and to provide remediation and enrichment to meet the needs of all learners.

Our high school students also need expanded opportunities to learn and grow and we have added additional courses for students for next school year. In response to student interest, Ceramics II was added in the Visual Arts department. In an effort to provide our top level math students with an additional option for a mathematics course, we added Advanced Placement Statistics, which can be taken before or after Advanced Placement Calculus. In technology, Programming and Developing Code and a Metal Technology course were added.

Moving Forward

We are pleased with the work we are doing to better meet students' needs and to prepare them for college and career, but we have work ahead of us. We realize we cannot accomplish all we want to this year or next, but there is a sense of urgency in our efforts. We want to provide engaging and relevant opportunities for all students in all grades across all disciplines that will best prepare them to be successful in life. This can be accomplished through carefully orchestrated staff development that builds their

knowledge and capacity to reach 21st century learners; up to date technology infrastructure and appropriate devices for student and teacher access; resources to support teaching and learning; the creation of flexible learning spaces and a variety of options and learning platforms for students to meet their needs and match their interests. In order to provide these opportunities, we will need to pool our resources and make a commitment to realizing our goals of providing 21st century education for all students.



Special Education Public Notice of Programs & Services

The District employs certain procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating the specific needs of school-aged students requiring special programs and/or services. In accordance with federal and state regulations, the District's *Notice of Programs and Services* is available on the Special Education page of the District website.

If you are unable to access the notice online or have questions, please contact Dr. Timothy Dorsey, Coordinator of Special Education, at 717-938-9577 or email tdorsey@wssd.k12.pa.us.

WEST SHORE FOUNDATION

Building a Foundation for the Future

The West Shore Foundation is in the midst of revitalizing its efforts to enrich students in the West Shore District in the areas of academics, arts, athletics, technology and leadership. So far this school year, the Foundation has:

- provided \$10,000 to teachers and staff to implement new and innovative programs
- helped fund the District's Kindergarten Acceleration Program
- sponsored the District's annual Academic Bowl
- funded leadership training for drum majors from Cedar Cliff and Red Land High Schools

Across the country, and here at home, as education funding gets tighter, school districts with vibrant education foundations are most able to provide students with resources to succeed and teachers with tools to facilitate that success. It is our hope that the Foundation will encourage and assist the journey of athletes, artists, inventors, and leaders alike. To do this, we plan to raise \$235,000. Upcoming events to help reach this goal include a signature event in October, remove the pole campaign, and "pillars of giving" opportunities.

We need you to help foster the growth of our youth and make sure that no road is closed to them. Tax deductible donations, made payable to West Shore Foundation, may be sent to West Shore Foundation, P.O. Box 704, New Cumberland, PA 17070 or you may donate online at westshorefoundation.org



Commencement Update

Due to construction at the West Shore Stadium, this year, commencement ceremonies will be held at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center at 2300 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg.

Cedar Cliff High School seniors will graduate on Thursday, June 2 and Red Land High School students on Friday, June 3. Both ceremonies will begin at 6:30 p.m. There will be no limit to the number of guests each student may bring and parking will be free for both ceremonies. Please plan to join us as we celebrate the class of 2016!

Mark Your Calendars

The last day of school for students for the 2015-2016 school year is Friday, June 3, 2015.

There will be an early dismissal that day with secondary students being released at 11:00 a.m. and elementary students at noon.

The first student day of school for the 2016-2017 school year is Wednesday, August 24, 2016.



WEST SHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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The West Shore School District will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, or disability in accordance with state and federal laws governing educational and vocational programs and in its recruitment and employment practices. Inquiries concerning the application of Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, the ADA, and the implementing regulations may be referred to the Director of Human Resources, 507 Fishing Creek Road, P.O. Box 803, New Cumberland, PA 17070-0803, telephone (717) 938-9577.