

Plainedge School Budget Failed in 2005

What Happens if... (a look at a school district that failed its budget)

The Plainedge School Budget failed in 2005. All Middle School and High School sports, after school activities and music programs were cancelled the following year. Slowly the programs came back, but it took several years to rebuild what they had lost. Afterwards, parents realized they had to pay out of pocket so much more than the \$300 they had hoped to save in taxes. They had to do major fundraising to pay for facilities to have practices for the sports programs and after school activities. The following article appeared in the local paper immediately after the vote.

Plainedge School Budget Fails in Revote

Spending Plan Rejected by 69 Votes

Plainedge residents turned out en masse June 20 to vote on the proposed budget for the 2005-2006 school year, and for the second time the budget was narrowly defeated. With over 4,000 residents casting their votes, the budget failed for the final time, this time by 69 votes. The tally was 2,117 no votes, to 2,048 yes votes. The budget had been defeated by 331 votes in the previous election.

The defeated budget of \$59,949,303 would have increased spending by 8.38 percent and taxes by 6.93 percent. The Plainedge School District must now adopt an austerity budget under New York State Law. A contingency budget of \$57,492,449 will increase spending by 3.94 percent.

Casualties of the austerity budget could include athletics, field trips, clubs, music classes, co-curricular activities, and guidance, library, social worker and nursing services. Summer programs also stand to be affected.

"I am very disappointed. In fact, I am heartbroken," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. John Richman. "This is the most painful action I have had to take in my 30-plus years of administration--to cut programs and hurt kids. I am sorry that some members of the community were so shortsighted. In their effort to save about \$300 a year, they put this district at such risk."

The Board of Education has already begun taking the necessary steps to trim the budget by \$2.4 million. They will be meeting June 27 at 6 p.m. to continue developing the spending plan.

Reprinted from the Massapequan Observer, June 24, 2005

<http://www.antonnews.com/massapequanobserver/2005/06/24/news/revote.html>