

Semi-Annual Report of the Fiscal Monitor to  
the Wyandanch Union Free School District

January 1 – June 30, 2021

Albert T. Chase, NYS Fiscal Monitor  
October 2021

## Introduction / Executive Summary

The November 2020 Fiscal Improvement Plan for the Wyandanch UFSD contained recommendations for actions to be undertaken by the school district, to enable it to develop operational and fiscal efficiencies. I can report that the vast majority of the recommendations made at that time have been enacted in full, while others have been partially enacted and are on their way to completion.

It must be noted that many of the recommendations made in the plan submitted to the Commissioner in December 2020 were not one-time actions, but are continuing activities where the recommendations need to become integral components of District operations.

The Administration and School Board have been fully cooperative in enacting change and moving the school district in a positive direction. A comprehensive partnership in this effort has been forged between the Fiscal Monitor and the Superintendent of Schools. As Fiscal Monitor, I continue to be consulted with regard to any and all fiscal matters as well as any operational issues that relate to my area of oversight. While there initially was a degree of reluctance and apprehension as to my involvement on the part of individual members of the school board, I believe that we have been able to forge a better relationship, one where my role is now largely viewed as assisting the school district rather than being adversarial.

number of positions that had been eliminated in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school year budgets. --  
-The proposed 2021-22 school year budget was overwhelmingly passed by the Wyandanch community, with a 70% voter approval.

-The budget is being actively monitored weekly by the Business Office. Doing so allows the school district to recognize potential issues early on, and deal with them before they become problematic.

-The school district ended the last two fiscal years with a significant financial surplus. The availability of reserves will allow the school district to attain greater financial stability and provide increased options for the use of funds going forward. As a result of better controls and the availability of reserves, the Wyandanch UFSD was able to obtain a credit rating upgrade, thereby reducing borrowing costs. (A further improvement in its financial outlook also came about in its most recent ratings for 2021-22).

- The Wyandanch UFSD has begun planning for the long-term improvement of its facilities. It is hoped that these initiatives will result in a bond proposition being put forth within the next two years.

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***-Continue to ensure that backup personnel are up-to-date with current functions and ready to step in when called upon.***

The staffing in the Business Office is relatively lean. While I have been assured that backup personnel will be in a position to assume the duties of any staff member who may be out for a period of time, I remain concerned that this process would not be problem-free. Having spoken extensively with the new Business Administrator about this, we are determined to work together to ensure that operations can continue in the temporary absence of key personnel.

***-Obtain payment schedules for each of its PILOT payments to allow the district to accurately project its income from this source.***

The Wyandanch UFSD has made significant strides in obtaining necessary aggregate data for its PILOT payment schedule. I would like to see the Business Office obtain the individual payment schedule of each PILOT so as to be able to determine which properties will be returning to the tax rolls on a year-to-year basis. I realize that obtaining this information may largely depend on the extensive cooperation of the Town of Babylon assessment office.

***-Make every effort to submit required information regarding student populations and expenditures on a timely basis to the NYS Education Department.***

This had been a chronic problem under the previous Business Administrator, which in some cases led to erroneous information being submitted, or in the case of STAR information, not being submitted in a timeframe that allowed for the timely receipt of that funding. As a result, a \$1.5 million payment was delayed from 2020-21 into the 2021-22 fiscal year. There has been a significant improvement and adherence to timelines under the new Business Administrator, but this must continue as an important practice.

***-Continue the services of the Internal Auditor to assist the Business Office in achieving greater operational efficiency.***

The Superintendent of Schools and the previous Business Administrator met with the internal auditors on several occasions. However, it does not appear that the internal auditors have been actively working in the school district. No reports were issued by the internal auditors concerning 2020-21 school year operations.

***-Submit an updated five-year financial plan to the Monitor by September 1 each year. The financial plan will be balanced as to revenues and expenditures. The plan shall include statements of all estimated revenues and expenditures, including a cash flow plan.***

It is agreed that the District should work in collaboration with the Monitor to update the financial plan. However, I have realized that September 1 is not a realistic date due to the fact that the

November 1 may be unrealistic for this year. A long-range plan should be completed by November 2022, covering the 2022-23 school year through 2026-27.

Focus for the 2021-22 School Year

With the hiring of a very competent and experienced Business Administrator, I fully expect that the Business Office will not only get on track, but will flourish. The office had been in need of qualified and respected leadership, both of which it now has, and I expect that day-to-day operational matters will now be handled both timely and professionally.

such choices. Going forward, I would like the topics to be directed by board member request, so that issues of their interest / concern are addressed.

### Summary

I wish to thank the Wyandanch Board of Education, administration, and community for their support in my efforts to assist with meaningful and positive change for the Wyandanch schools. I look forward to the future of the Wyandanch UFSD and the opportunity to contribute to the continuing progress of the school district.

cc: Dr. Kimberly Young-Wilkins, Deputy Commissioner, P-12  
Dr. James Baldwin, Deputy Commissioner,  
Wyandanch UFSD Board of Education  
Dr. Gina Talbert, Superintendent of Schools

Attachment: List of Approved Contracts – January -June 2021



Opportunity School	SEDCAR IDEA Part B allocation agreement	4/21/2021
Western Suffolk BOCES	Technology lease agreement	5/19/2021
MetTel	phone and communications service agreement	5/19/2021
Horizon Healthcare Staffing	Nursing services	5/19/2021
Curriculum Associates, Inc.	Professional development (i-Ready)	5/19/2021
EAC Network	Crisis counseling (no cost)	5/19/2021
Youth Enrichment Services (YES)	Covid-related counseling (no cost)	5/19/2021
JSlichko Consulting	Professional development	5/19/2021
Hauppauge UFSD	Health & Welfare services to non-public students	5/19/2021
Deer Park UFSD	Health & Welfare services to non-public students	5/19/2021
Amityville UFSD	Health & Welfare services to non-	

Central Islip UFSD	Special Education services, 2020-21	6/16/2021
Hicksville UFSD	Special Education services, 2021-22	6/30/2021
Eden II / Genesis	Special Education services, 2021-22	6/30/2021
O'Brien Speech, Language and Learning	Special Education services, 2021-22	6/30/2021
Babylon UFSD	Special Education services, 2021-22	6/30/2021

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