

**The Westfield Leader**  
— Established 1890 —  
The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield and the County of Union

Member of:  
New Jersey Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Westfield, New Jersey  
P.O. Box 250 • 251 North Avenue, Westfield, N.J. 07091

Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com) • Web: [www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com) • Fax: (908) 232-0473

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at  
P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY WATCHUNG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

**Michelle H. LePoidevin**  
AGE and EDUCATION  
**Suzette F. Stalker**  
COMMUNITY  
**Jennifer Pinto**  
NEWS & REPORTING  
**Lauren S. Pass**  
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

**THE TIMES**  
of Scotch Plains - Fanwood  
— Established 1959 —  
Official Newspaper of the Borough of Fanwood and the Township of Scotch Plains

Member of:  
New Jersey Press Association • National Newspaper Association  
Scotch Plains Business & Professional Association  
Fanwood Business & Professional Association

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, New Jersey  
P. O. Box 368 • 1906 Bartle Avenue  
Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076

Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com) • Web: [www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com) • Fax: (908) 232-0473

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at  
P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY WATCHUNG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

**Horace R. Corbin**  
PUBLISHER  
**David B. Corbin**  
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER & SPORTS  
**Karen M. Hinds**  
OFFICE MANAGER  
**Ben Corbin**  
SERVICES  
SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

**Fred K. Lecomte**  
MARKETING DIRECTOR  
**Michael L. Bartiromo**  
MARKETING & PRODUCTION  
**Robert P. Connelly**  
MANAGER, BUSINESS SYSTEMS  
**Lauren A. Gruman**  
MARKETING & PRODUCTION

One-year - \$24 • Two-year - \$46 • Three-year - \$66 • One-year college (September to May) - \$16

## Methods of BOE Budget Funding, Voting Needs Altering, Though Schools Will Flourish

The public school budgets are up for vote on Tuesday, April 15, from 2 to 9 p.m. Few people vote although school cost is an issue of controversy as property taxes have risen sharply. Property taxes are expected to continue to rise. The school tax accounts for two-thirds of the local property tax. The increase in public school expenditures is the primary reason for the increase in taxes. Although frequently blamed, the amount of state aid appears to be a small factor in the property tax equation in our area.

All residents and property owners pay the school tax. About 40 percent of residents have children in school. The tax burden is becoming most difficult for seniors and for those on a fixed income. Glancing at the funding mathematics, it would be a serious problem if seniors left town and were displaced by those having children in the public schools.

The population in the area has changed little over the last 10 years. Westfield has a population of about 30,000 residents, with about 18,700 registered voters. Scotch Plains and Fanwood (SP-F) have a combined population of about 29,000 citizens, with about 18,500 registered voters. Mountaintop has a population of about 6,700 residents with about 4,600 registered voters.

Historic data regarding enrollment levels and cost increases for the schools in our area have been presented in many different ways. It can be confusing. The following data summary for the schools in Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Westfield is provided based on a review of the legal notices from the Boards of Education as published in *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* covering the years from 1997 to the present. This detailed information is available at the public libraries and at [www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com). Data in our newspapers for Mountaintop is available in articles during these years and is not discussed here.

For those who wish to do research, the legal notices for SP-F were published in our newspapers on March 20, 2003, March 14, 2002, March 22, 2001, March 23, 2000, March 18, 1999 and March 12, 1998. The legal notices for Westfield were published in our newspapers on March 20, 2003, March 28, 2002, March 22, 2001, March 16, 2000, March 18, 1999 and March 19, 1998. Each of the above legal notices, respectively, includes data from the previous year, the current year and as proposed for the coming year.

Graphs for enrollment and for expenditures are included on this page. The enrollment number reported is

for regular fulltime students only. Other special categories of students are not included for clarity. Expenditures reported are as budgets approved by the voters and as the actual amounts spent.

In Westfield, the actual amount spent exceeded the budget approval amount by an average of about 4.6 percent during each of the years reviewed. In SP-F, the actual amount spent exceeded the budget approval amount by an average of about 1.7 percent during each of the years reviewed.

In Westfield, the amount spent in 1997 was \$50.2 million and the amount budgeted to be spent in 2003 is \$68.8 million. If the same pattern holds true in Westfield for next year, the actual amount to be spent is estimated to exceed \$71 million. In general, the cost to operate the school system in Westfield has increased by 40 percent since 1997, a period of seven years.

During the same period, the Westfield enrollment as published in the legal notices has risen by 230 students since 1997. This represents an increase in enrollment of 4.9 percent over seven years. The enrollment reported in 1997 was 4,742 students. Enrollment rose to a peak of 5,144 students in 1999. In 2000, the enrollment dropped to 4,665 and has since risen to 4,972 as estimated for next year.

In SP-F, the amount spent in 1997 was \$42.2 million and the amount budgeted to be spent in 2003 is \$59.8 million. If the historic pattern holds true in SP-F for next year, the actual amount to be spent is estimated to be about \$61 million. In general, the cost to operate the school system in SP-F has increased by 42 percent since 1997, a period of seven years.

During the same period, the SP-F enrollment as published in the legal notices has risen by 667 students since 1997. This represents an increase in enrollment of 18.2 percent over seven years. The enrollment reported in 1997 was 3,716 students. Enrollment rose fairly uniform over the seven year period. The enrollment is estimated to be 4,383 for next year.

The current expenditures for both school systems include debt service amounting to slightly over \$2 million per year for recent improvements to facilities.

Regardless of the outcome of the vote this year, the school systems will continue to be properly funded and our children will continue to be well educated. However, given the trends with expenditures, it appears that the method of funding and voting must be changed to avoid serious problems in the near future.

## Westfield Parking Ticket Blitz Has Wide Range of Ramifications

There's a major parking ticket blitz in progress in downtown Westfield. Most people are well aware of this fact and have received their share of tickets. Presumably, the purpose of the enforcement program is to change our behavior and to bring some order to parking downtown. Well, maybe.

We think the parking regulations, the design changes and the ticketing blitz in downtown Westfield are resulting in unanticipated problems that need to be addressed. Based on the grumbling we hear, many of you feel the same way.

Those who live, work or operate a business in downtown Westfield are the most directly affected, and they have little that they can do to avoid receiving parking tickets. That's not because they don't want to comply with parking regulations - it's because that it's nearly impossible for them to comply.

Over the last two years, the Town of Westfield has systematically eliminated most legal options of public parking for those who need to be there for more than two hours. These include residents, business people, shoppers, professionals, visitors and workers.

An example of this is about to occur at the end of the month at the parking lot behind the Rialto Theatre. In a press release from Executive Director Sherry Cronin of the Downtown Westfield Corporation, along with the new town parking manager John Morgan, a new system to pay will soon be functional. The press release states that improvements are being made to extend the time allowed to park in the lot from the current maximum of two hours to up to four hours. The release also states that the fee will stay the same - 25 cents per half hour, and that the old meters will be removed. This is a good thing. Shopping, movie-going and dining time will be extended

to four hours.

However, it goes unsaid in the press release that the eight-hour meters in the lot will be eliminated as part of this change - spaces which people who work in town now use. These people will be displaced, with nowhere to go.

Also, is the rate the same? The new system is an electronic pay station where one looks at their space number and enters the information at a central unit. They pay for the time they want. The new machine does not tell the parker that time may be left on the spot from a previous parker - as the current meters do. It resets to zero for the new user. So, in effect, there is a rate increase.

In the past, residents might have come to Westfield more frequently to shop, to recreate or to conduct business. New visitors are presented with an unwelcome surprise - the "yellow" ticket - they are confused and chagrined. People who must live with it every day are angry.

Some are fearful to speak out. They are actually intimidated and believe that reprisals will occur. Some just walk away shaking their heads. There are others who are learning to cope in novel ways.

The best "work-around" technique on the rise is to obtain a handicap sticker. With this, under state law, you can't get a parking ticket, regardless of where you park. Last Thursday, a man was returning from playing tennis and got into his car in the train station parking lot, meter expired. No ticket, but he had a handicap sticker.

Apparently, one can go to the doctor and complain of an injury, have the doctor write a note and obtain a handicap sticker to be safe from parking tickets.

The "parking ticketing staff" has been bolstered. The hours have been expanded and enforcement is swift. We've received complaints that there isn't even enough time to get change for the meter before one gets a ticket.

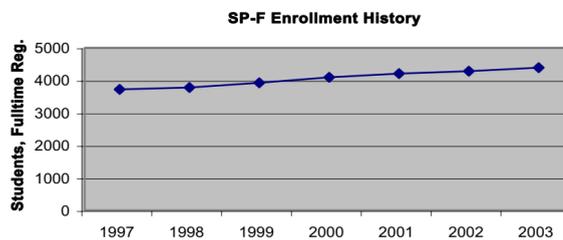
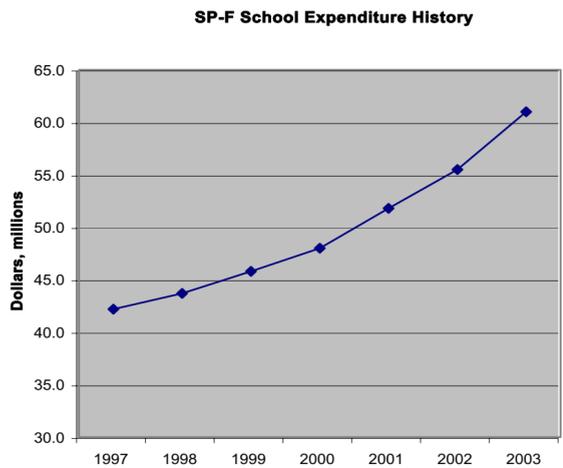
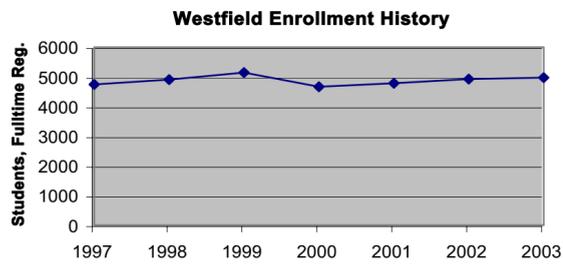
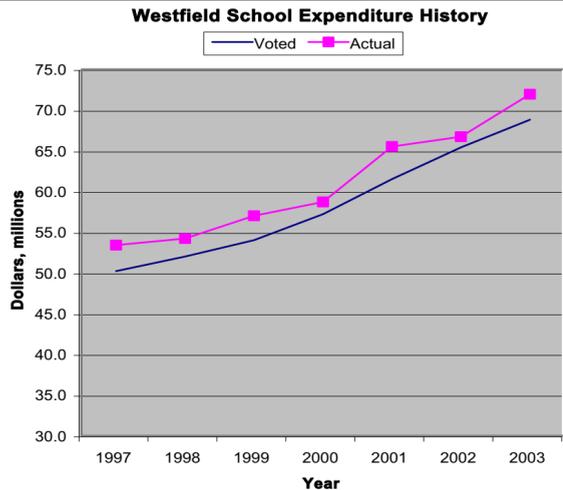
The enforcement personnel tell us that they're just following orders. Where have you heard that before? We know the orders come from the very top.

Many have commented to us that they believe that the parking ticket blitz is nothing more than revenue generation as a way to justify building parking decks. Maybe so, but a system designed to depend on fines seems like EZ-Pass all over again.

Obviously, a few hundred parking tickets a day result in several hundred thousand dollars a year. In the past, this money went to the general fund of the town to help offset your property tax. Will this money still go there? Who pays, who suffers, who benefits?

This situation should not be allowed to drag down the reputation of Westfield's finest - the real men in blue. Also, we believe that the citizens of the town should not be forgotten in the redesign of the downtown. It should be "Westfield First."

We're seeking a better understanding of this situation. We'd like to hear what you think.



## WF School Superintendent Urges Public to Examine Budget and Vote

On Tuesday, April 15, from 2 to 9 p.m., Westfield voters will once again have the opportunity of influencing the future of their schools. In addition to filling four seats on the Board of Education, the public will decide on the school budget for next year.

The district's initiatives for next year include hiring nine more teachers to instruct our growing number of students. Enrollment has increased 30 percent since 1990 and is still growing. We expect 140 additional students in Westfield High School next year. Thankfully, our high school addition is right on schedule and will be ready to accommodate more students and staff.

We will also provide adequate training for our teachers. Our classrooms will be equipped with 300 new computers for our students, as well as several new textbooks to accompany revised curriculum at all levels. Our gifted and talented pilot program will expand to fourth and seventh grades.

In response to a great deal of public support for eighth grade sports, the Board of Education is restoring that program in the school budget. To reduce the equity gap identified by last year's Equity in Athletics Committee, we will provide full funding for Westfield High School girls' lacrosse, a team that has been solely financed by parents since 1997. We're also adding assistant coaches for Winter Track, Cross Country and Field Hockey to provide safe and effective instruction to our growing number of

athletes. Beginning 2003-2004, the district will cover the cost of a coach for boys' ice hockey, the other remaining self-funded Westfield High School team. The budget for 2003-2004 accomplishes a lot, with a much smaller tax increase than last year. The tax increase for the average household will be \$342, whereas the tax impact for our current school year amounted to a \$486 increase. While our state aid is frozen again and interest rates on our revenues have declined, the district has put into effect several cost-saving measures to offset this loss of revenue.

Last year, we introduced a second self-contained special education class at our high school to keep more of our students in district. Next year, we'll hire our own occupational and speech therapists. We have also been successful in keeping our employee healthcare costs to a 15 percent increase, which is lower than national trends. In total, our operating budget is going up by about \$3.4 million dollars to a total of \$65.4 million, slightly over the state cap.

I invite Westfield residents who would like to learn more about the budget to attend our last two public presentations, which will be held at the Board of Education Candidates Forums on Wednesday, April 9, at Roosevelt Intermediate School, and on Thursday, April 10, at Edison Intermediate School.

Information is also available on TV-36, the [westfieldnj.com](http://westfieldnj.com) web site and in the district's newsletter *Emphasis*, which you should have received in the mail. I can be reached at (908) 789-4420 or at [wfoley@westfieldnj.com](mailto:wfoley@westfieldnj.com). I urge you to become informed about the budget and to cast your vote on Tuesday, April 15.

**William Foley, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent,  
Westfield Public Schools

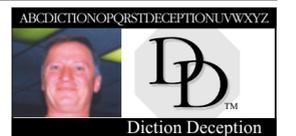
**Congress Should Be Held Accountable For Cutting Benefits For Veterans**

Hours after Congressman Ferguson voted for the resolution to support our troops in Iraq, he supported a vote to cut benefits to veterans by nearly \$25 billion over 10 years. This included an immediate cut of \$844 million from veterans health care, with a total of \$9.7 billion in cuts over the next 10 years. These cuts were included in the FY2004 budget resolution, which was passed by a vote of 215 to 212.

Recently, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that companies are not required to keep medical benefits active for reservists, who have been called to serve. Some reservist families not residing near military facilities have diminished ability to use military medical benefits while the supporting spouse is serving. It is not always easy for those families living away from military bases to find medical providers in the military network.

Instead of slashing benefits for veterans, Congress should address the immediate hardships that these families are enduring. Members of Congress who voted to cut veterans' benefits, such as Congressman Ferguson, should be held accountable.

**Carl Peer**  
Westfield



Below are four arcane words, each with four definitions - only one is correct. The others are made up. Are you sharp enough to discern this deception of diction?

If you can guess one correctly - good guess. If you get two - well-read individual. If you get three - word expert. If you get all four - You must have a lot of free time!

All words and correct definitions come from the board game **Diction Deception**.

**Answers to last week's arcane words.**

1. Amphoteric - Having both acid and basic properties
2. Crepuscular - Pertaining to twilight; glimmering
3. Urticaria - Hives
4. Chiliad - A thousand of anything

**ROYNE**

1. To bite of gnaw
2. A small stone; pebble
3. Of royalty; royal
4. Mean; nasty

**DADDOCK**

1. A groove or rut
2. A severe blow
3. The rotten heart or body of a tree
4. The last segment of a crustacean's limb

**DAEDALIAN**

1. A rough or coarse cover for a bed
2. Ingenious or intricate
3. A guardian spirit
4. Pertaining to the Babylonian god of the earth

**RORIFEROUS**

1. Round or oval in form
2. Producing dew
3. Boisterous; noisy
4. Snarly; tangled

**Deadlines**

- General News - Friday 4pm
  - Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm
  - Classifieds - Tuesday 2pm
  - Ad Reservation - Friday 4pm
  - Ad Submittal - Monday 12pm
- To Reach Us**  
E-Mail - [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com)

## Letters to the Editor

### WF Resident Examines School Budget Concerns

The recurring question is: Why is there such low voter turnout at school elections when the quality of public education ranks high among public concerns?

On April 15, a low percentage of Westfield voters will go to the polls to vote on an operating budget of \$65,379,525 representing a tax increase of 6.3 percent.

There are two significant problems with this budget: It lacks academic leadership, and it does not reflect financial expertise - especially in regard to facilities management.

Every tax dollar is precious these days, especially those for the schools. Over the years, the curriculum and the resources in the classroom have eroded. We have not heard Westfield described as a "lighthouse district" for a very long time. More and more expense has drifted into administration.

Several things come to mind at a time like this. In 1997, long before facility improvements for the students were even being considered (children being taught in trailers), efforts were made to encourage consolidation of surplus properties. Suggestions for curriculum restoration efforts such as field trips went unheeded. (A recent administration proposal for Internet "visits" on the Web is no substitute for the real thing. The Metropolitan area abounds in a richness of sources to be explored. Other New Jersey students visit "hands on" exhibits, witness live demonstrations and hear special presentation and lectures. Why not the children of Westfield? A child goes through school only once. Each year should be the very best we can offer; too often, time and treasure in Westfield have been spent on such things as parking lots and surplus properties. How many in Westfield know that the lease on Lincoln School by the Union County Education Services Commission expires in June 2003 and that as an incentive to the tenant, the BOE proposes to pave the parking lot at a cost of \$144,000, the cost to be split with Union County (our tax dollars again)? The Union County Education Services Commission has, for the most part, moved its operations to properties purchased on Lambert's Mill Road and Cardinal Drive in Westfield (two more properties removed from the tax rolls).

A No vote on April 15 would reflect lack of confidence in the Board of Education's ability to contain administration costs, high building occupancy costs and draining of financial resources from the school buildings and classrooms. A No vote can be for the children of Westfield. The budget then goes for review before the town council, allowing a re-organization of budget priorities more favorable to Westfield's students.

**Joanne Hone**  
Westfield

**MUNICIPAL COURT**  
TOWN OF WESTFIELD  
425 EAST BROAD STREET  
WESTFIELD, NJ 07090

**COMPLAINT - SUMMONS**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO APPEAR BEFORE THIS COURT TO ANSWER THIS COMPLAINT CHARGING YOU WITH THE OFFENSE LISTED:

COURT ID	OFFENSE	TICKET NUMBER	

**DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER**

**Name**

**Address**

**City**

**Birth Date**

**Make of**

**LIC. PLATE NO.**

**OFFER DATE**

**LOCATION OF OFFENSE**

**Municipality**

**County**

**Mun. Code (Offense)**

**2020**

AND DID THEN AND THERE COMMIT THE FOLLOWING OFFENSE

**OUCH!**

