

- Continuing Programs for CES Students
- Student Achievement
- Connected Learning & New Classes at MHHS



2017-18 SCHOOL BUDGET

Continuing Programs and Investing in Technology

Preserving programs for students and investing in technology by using state funding to minimize costs is the main focus of the 2017-18 school budget.

No cuts to programs or staff are required in the \$23,049,965 budget. The estimated 2.94% tax levy increase is below the Property Tax Cap.

"It was important to the Board of Education and administration to stay within the Property Tax Cap while still strengthening programs for students," said Interim Superintendent Lee Bordick. "This budget addresses both short-term programmatic needs and long-term financial obligations."

Tax rates for homeowners should be closer to a 2.4% increase due to the Hannaford Distribution Center's PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) agreement with the town ending this year, noted Monica Kim, Director of Business and Support Services.

"Next year, Hannaford will be fully on the tax rolls which will add \$3.2 million in assessment," said Ms. Kim. "That should help homeowners by reducing the effective tax rate."

The 2017-18 budget will fund the district's 1-to-1 Chromebook initiative, which began this past year. All students in

grades 7-12 will have a device next year, a year earlier than originally projected. The initiative is ahead of schedule due to how responsible students have been with the devices (see page 3).

Providing grade 7-12 students with Chromebooks allows each 6th grader access to a device while in school by freeing up existing laptops, tablets, and other devices already in the Middle School.

To offset the budget impact of the investment in technology, Chromebooks will be purchased through Questar III BOCES, which allows the district to take advantage of state reimbursement aid for the devices.

Schools also continue to create opportunities for students through efficiencies wherever possible. Maple Hill High School, for example, will add four classes next year by maximizing schedules (see page 3). Maple Hill Middle School will expand an independent study program to grades 6-8 (see page 2).

The community vote will also include a proposition to purchase three school buses at a maximum cost of \$293,000 as part of the district's long-term bus replacement plan (see page 4). The district receives state aid for bus purchases which helps offset the local cost.



Maple Hill High School had a graduation rate of 99% in 2016, the highest in the Capital Region according to NYS Department of Education figures.

Budget Below NYS Property Tax Cap

Most homeowners should receive a property tax relief check from New York State in the fall due to the school's 2017-18 budget staying within the Property Tax Cap.

Schodack CSD's Property Tax Cap for next year is 3.04%. While state elected officials often call the law a "2% tax cap" the figure actually changes each year due to a formula schools are required to use. Last year, Schodack CSD's Property Tax Cap was negative 0.3%.

Because the district's budget is within the Tax Cap, the community qualifies for New York's Property Tax Relief Credit Program. That program provides a credit to homeowners who receive Basic or Enhanced STAR property tax relief, have an income of \$275,000 or less, and paid school property taxes in 2016.

While last year's tax relief checks totaled \$185, this year New York is providing a credit based on a percentage of a homeowner's STAR benefit, with lower incomes receiving a higher percentage benefit.

The tax credit is calculated by New York State who also mails the checks to homeowners. For questions about the tax credit or the STAR program, please contact the state Department of Taxation and Finance or your local assessor.

BUDGET VOTE
Tuesday, May 16
6 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Maple Hill High School Gym

Continuing Programs for CES Students

WHEN CASTLETON ELEMENTARY STUDENTS return to school in the fall they will find the same learning opportunities as this year along with a more secure building entrance and expanded parent lobby.



Author Jewell Parker Rhodes was one of several authors to visit Castleton Elementary School this year, which helps create excitement for reading.

"We'll offer students a similar program that focuses on building ELA (English Language Arts) and math skills to prepare them for later grades," said Principal James Derby. "We have a lot of great things to offer students here."

An enhanced art room that meets the specific needs of the district's youngest learners is also part of the Capital Project renovations at Castleton Elementary, which are expected to be completed for the opening of school in September.

Students will also have a more comfortable learning environment as air conditioning units will be installed in classrooms in the newer section of Castleton Elementary.

"It can get very warm and uncomfortable during the warm months, especially when you have 410 students in this building," said Mr. Derby.

The school's library program will also continue to create collaborative opportunities for students along with the excitement for reading that author visits provide.

"Our library is probably one of the more exciting libraries in the Capital Region if not the state," said Mr. Derby.

MHMS Expands Access to Technology and Independent Study

EVERY STUDENT AT MAPLE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL will have access to a portable device next year as the district completes its 1-to-1 Chromebook initiative.

While only 7th and 8th graders will be able to take Chromebooks home, the devices will free up existing laptops, tablets, and other portable technology so 6th graders will have access during school.

"That's exciting because the devices allow students to communicate more, edit each other's work, and work more collaboratively," said Principal Jacqueline Hill.

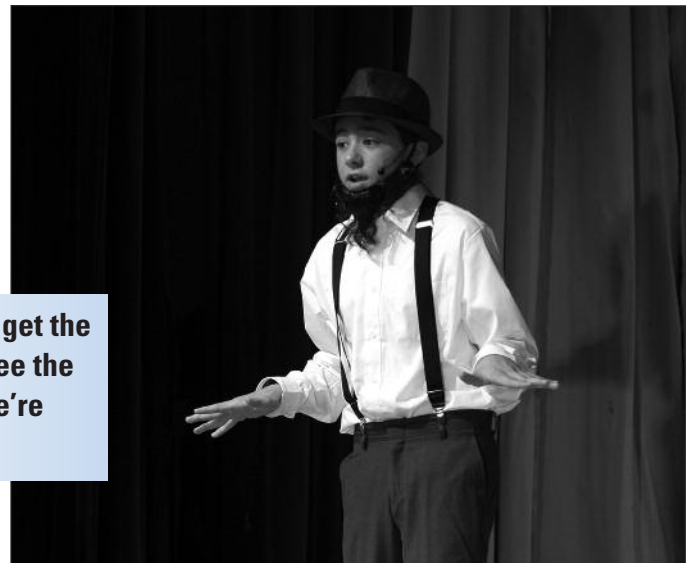
Ms. Hill also plans to expand a pilot program she started this year which provides enrichment for high-performing students. Sixth graders on the Principal's List this year were able to complete online work through Khan Academy.

"I hope to expand that to the other two grade levels next year," said Ms. Hill. "It's an opportunity to provide enrichment without the cost of creating a program. It's something students can do on their own when they have study hall or when they're at home."

The Middle School also expects to continue to welcome Capital Repertory Theatre to the school and put on its own Drama Club production, which returned this past year.

"We look forward to having the play again next year," said Ms. Hill. "It's a great way to get the community in to see the amazing things we're doing here."

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The Middle School Drama Club performed "Rumpelstiltskin – Private Eye" this year. The school plans to continue the school play next year

Connected Learning and New Classes at MHHS

NEXTYEAR, MAPLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL will finish the phase-in of its 1-to-1 initiative as every student will have a Chromebook to help their education.

That's a year earlier than expected, largely due to how responsible students have been with the devices. Only 1% of devices have been damaged in the first year.

"We prefer the term Connected Learning to 1-to-1 because it better describes how the devices help students learn," said Principal Ron Agostinoni. "If you want technology to be a seamless part of your curriculum you can't bring students to it, it has to be a part of the classroom."

To help offset the cost of providing students Chromebooks, the district is moving away from desktop computers. "There is a budgetary cost but we're eliminating our computer labs," noted Mr. Agostinoni.

The High School will also add four new classes next year by maximizing schedules, including an elective co-taught by Chemistry Teacher Kaitlin McGann and ELA Teacher Heather Flood.

"They asked if they could offer Scientific Communication because the writing you do in science is different than the writing you do in English," said Principal Ron Agostinoni. "Part of the focus will be on deciphering information to ensure our students can tell what resources are credible."

Other new classes include Honors Chemistry, College and Career Ready? and Economics Through Sports. Students will also have 11 AP classes and nine college-credit courses to choose from.



A new Career Exploration Internship Program creates real-world experiences for High School students, including performing research at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Continuing Opportunities for Students

Here are some examples of what our schools will continue to provide students next year:

CASTLETON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Average classroom size: 24 students
- Two hours of reading time each day for K-3
- 75 minutes of core instruction (Math, Reading, Science/Social Studies) each day for grades 4-5
- Specials (Art, Music, Physical Education) each day for all grades
- Enrichment and intervention time each day for all grades
- Afterschool activities such as K-Kids, CES Agricultural Project and intramural sports for grades 4-5

MAPLE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Average classroom size: 24 students
- Music opportunities for all students beyond what is mandated
- Art opportunities for all students beyond what is mandated
- Advanced classes in earth science and math
- Exploratory classes offer additional opportunities in technology, research, culture and other areas
- Co-curricular activities including Drama Club, Builder's Club, Computer Club, Robotics Club, Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, Newspaper Club, Maker Club and modified sports

MAPLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL

- 11 AP classes, including: Art History, Biology, Calculus, Economics, Environmental Science, Government, Language, Physics, Psychology, U.S. History and World History
- 9 college-credit classes, including: Calculus, Chinese I, Computer-Aided Design, Creative Writing, Environmental Science, Media and Culture, Pre-Calculus, Spanish IV and Topics in Biology.
- Sequence in Art, including classes in: Drawing & Painting, Advanced Drawing & Painting, Photography, Sculpture & Ceramics, Studio Art and Advanced Studio Art.
- Music opportunities include band and chorus, electives such as Music Theory 1 & 2, Music in Our Lives and History of American Pop Music
- Co-Curricular Activities, including: Environmental Club, Key Club, National Honor Society, Newspaper Club, SADD, Science Olympiad, Student Council and Yearbook
- Small learning communities for students who require more engagement

Community Conversations About Changes a Top Priority

Next year the district will hold numerous community conversations to not only explain what student programs will look like in 2018-19, but to listen to parent questions and concerns about the move to two schools.

"It will be important for parents to hear what the buildings will look like with the new K-6 and 7-12 configuration but it's just as important for parents to be able to ask questions and for us to get their feedback so we can hear their concerns and consider ways to address them," said Jason Chevrier, who will become superintendent on July 1.

The district's Capital Project is expected to be completed for the 2018-19 school year, when grade 6 will learn at Castleton Elementary and grades 7-8 move to the Maple Hill High School building.

While the change will create new opportunities for students, Mr. Chevrier stressed the district understands parents may have

apprehensions about the move.

"We need to articulate to our community how we're going to first and foremost take care of students because that's going to be the priority," said Mr. Chevrier. "Then, once we do that, we can share what are the opportunities and benefits for those students."

Mr. Chevrier noted the district's leadership team has already started conversations about programming, including conversations between building-level teams. But he noted there will be many more conversations in the fall as educators consider specific program details.

"We have to think carefully about how we integrate and how the environment will be respectful and encouraging," said Mr. Chevrier. "Parents need to know that their kids are going to be taken care of. That's on us. But we know our outstanding faculty, staff and principals will do it."



Bus Purchases Part of Replacement Plan

A proposition on the May 16 ballot would allow the district to purchase two 65-passenger buses and one 25-passenger bus as part of the district's long-term bus replacement program.

The total cost would not exceed \$293,000. The district pays approximately one-third of the total cost because New York State reimburses the district for 64.3% of bus purchases. The local cost for both buses would be \$104,601.

The district purchases school buses as part of its long-term bus replacement plan to keep the district's fleet in safe, working order. New buses replace old buses based on the vehicle's mileage, age, repair history and condition.

As buses age they become more costly to maintain and less efficient to run. Older buses, can average only six miles per gallon while new buses should average closer to 10 miles per gallon. That difference can add up to considerable savings given the number of miles our school buses travel each year.

Student Achievement

The best measure of the education Schodack CSD offers is the success of our students.

Here are some examples:

- **Maple Hill High School had a graduation rate of 99% in 2016, the highest in the Capital Region according to figures released by the Department of Education in February.**
- **90% of the Class of 2016 continued their education after graduation. They earned \$5,134,890 in scholarships and awards.**
- **The Class of 2016 went on to attend colleges such as Hartwick College, Clarkson University, SUNY Geneseo, Paul Smith's College, Fordham University, University of Rochester, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and LeMoyne College.**
- **Students had artwork selected for regional art exhibits such as The Opalka Gallery and The Legislative Student Art Exhibit.**
- **Organizations such as Rotary International and Veterans of Foreign War honored students for leadership and patriotism.**
- **7th grader Liam Dowling won the MAAC Gives Back Essay Contest for writing about what it means to be a good teammate.**

Board of Education Candidates

This year there are three people running for three open Board of Education seats. Each seat is a three-year non-paid term.

CHRISTIAN OLSEN

I am a lifelong resident of Schodack and a Maple Hill graduate (Class of 1980), and seeking my second term on the Schodack Board of Education. I am married to Beth (Kasky) Olsen (Maple Hill Class of 1989). We have four daughters; Hali, Class of 2012; Lauren, Class of 2014; Victoria (Tori), Class of 2017; and Ryleigh, class of 2021. I hold a Bachelor's degree from SUNY Empire State College's Forum Management program. I am employed by the University at Albany as the Director of Technical Services where I oversee the finances and management of the Life Sciences Research Facility, Scientific Store, Machine Shop and Electronics shop.

CHARLES PETER

I am a lifelong resident of Schodack who along with my wife, Cathleen, graduated from Maple Hill High School in 2002. After which I attended Hudson Valley Community College and started working full time on my family's dairy farm. I have held numerous positions in our dairy cooperative and Farm Bureau ranging from county board member to President of the Young Cooperators. These positions have given me opportunities to sit in on the cooperative's board of directors to representing fellow farm bureau members at state meetings. As both a father to two daughters that will be attending district schools and part of a family farm my main concern is ensuring the continued high level of academic success the district has accomplished while doing all I can to ensure taxpayers are respected and get the most for the money they spend.

PAUL PUCCIO

I have been privileged to serve this community for 36 years as a Board member. I've worked to improve the quality of education for my children and now grandchildren, while being mindful of the burden on taxpayers. My 17 years on the BOCES Board and 11 years as President of the Tech Valley High School Board add to the experience I bring to Schodack. But, it is mostly my passion for this community and the reality that this School District is in many ways the center of our community life that drives me to once again seek to serve you and the children of this community. I want to see our schools grow academically, and our community life be enriched, while we are being fiscally responsible.

How the District Reduces Costs and Increases Revenue

Schodack CSD constantly looks at ways to add revenues and reduce operating costs to minimize impact to taxpayers. Here are some examples:

- The district leases 10 classrooms in Maple Hill Middle School to StoryPlace Preschool and five classrooms to Questar III BOCES. The agreements brought in \$228,500 in revenue for the 2016-17 school year.
- The district's Transportation Supervisor and Head Bus Driver are shared with Rensselaer City School District to reduce costs.
- The bus garage's Mechanics also work on Rensselaer City School District's school buses as part of a shared services agreement.
- Solar panels on all three school building roofs and a ground mounted system next to the bus garage help reduce the district's electrical costs.
- Castleton Elementary School and Maple Hill Middle School are both certified Energy Smart buildings. The designation means they are more efficient than 90% of similar buildings in similar climates.
- To minimize increases in health insurance costs, the district participates in a BOCES health insurance consortium to take advantage of increased purchasing power to lower premiums.
- The district purchases natural gas and electricity at a reduced rate by joining more than 170 schools and municipalities through a consortium to increase purchasing power.

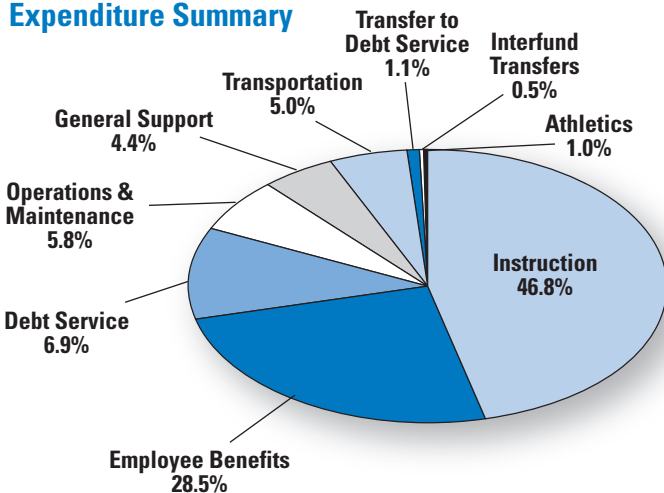
Expenditures

Category	2016-2017	Proposed 2017-2018	Change from 2016-2017	% of Budget
Instruction	\$10,522,568	\$10,789,427	\$266,859	46.8%
Employee Benefits	\$6,312,735	\$6,576,952	\$264,217	28.5%
Debt Service	\$1,431,617	\$1,596,593	\$164,976	6.9%
Operations & Maintenance	\$1,338,314	\$1,325,361	-\$12,953	5.8%
Transportation	\$1,128,341	\$1,146,874	\$18,533	5.0%
General Support	\$1,008,788	\$1,010,631	\$1,843	4.4%
Transfer to Debt Service	\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	1.1%
Athletics	\$211,168	\$231,977	\$20,809	1.0%
Interfund Transfers	\$122,150	\$122,150	\$0	0.5%
Total Expenditures	\$22,075,681	\$23,049,965	\$974,284	100.0%

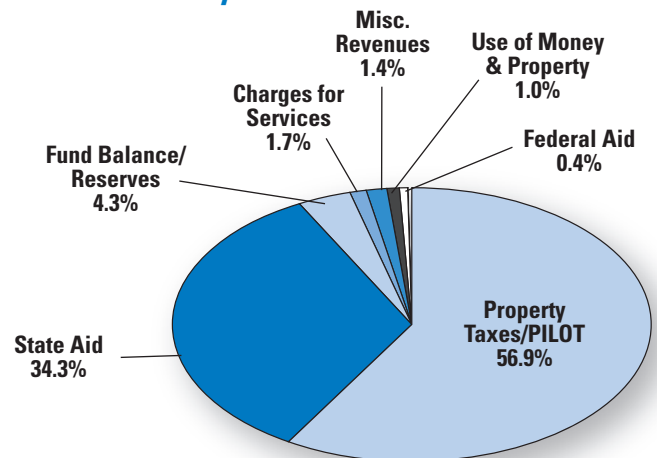
Revenues

Category	2016-2017	Proposed 2017-2018	Change from 2016-2017	% of Revenues
Property Taxes/PILOT	\$12,815,312	\$13,121,918	\$306,606	56.9%
State Aid	\$7,423,424	\$7,913,654	\$490,230	34.3%
Fund Balance/Reserves	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	4.3%
Charges for Services	\$375,500	\$391,838	\$16,338	1.7%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$170,445	\$310,555	\$140,110	1.4%
Use of Money & Property	\$206,000	\$227,000	\$21,000	1.0%
Federal Aid	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$0	0.4%
Total	\$22,075,681	\$23,049,965	\$974,284	100.0%

Expenditure Summary



Revenue Summary



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2016-17 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2017- 18 School Year *										
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 22,075,681	\$ 23,049,965	\$ 22,675,131										
Increase/Decrease for the 2017-18 School Year		\$ 974,284	\$ 599,450										
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.41 %	2.72%										
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.26%											
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$12,747,084	\$13,121,918											
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable													
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **													
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy													
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$12,747,084	\$13,121,918	2.94%										
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 422,840	\$ 523,473											
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$12,324,244	\$12,614,446											
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$12,324,244	\$12,598,445											
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$ 0	\$ 16,001											
Administrative Component	\$ 2,715,903	\$ 2,863,640	\$ 2,763,640										
Program Component	\$15,978,794	\$ 16,384,821	\$ 16,155,987										
Capital Component	\$ 3,380,984	\$ 3,801,504	\$ 3,755,504										
<p>* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2017-18 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.</p> <p>In making reductions for a contingency budget, equipment and other non-contingent items would be removed from the proposed budget and the Administrative Cap would be applied in accordance with New York State Education Law requirements. The Tax Levy will remain at the 16-17 school year level as required by Law.</p> <p>** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Description</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Purchase of 1 small and 2 large buses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 293,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Description	Amount	Purchase of 1 small and 2 large buses	\$ 293,000						
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NOTE: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to: emscmgt@snyed.gov

Under the Budget Proposed
for the 2017-18 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$ 649

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2017-18 by the qualified voters of the Schodack Central School District, Rensselaer and Columbia Counties, New York, will be held at the Maple Hill High School in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 between the hours of 6:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Maple Hill High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Produced by Questar III Communications Service

Why Is a 2.94% Increase Within the Tax Cap?

When New York State passed the Property Tax Cap law, elected officials often touted the new law as a "2% tax cap".

But the law they passed instead requires schools to use an eight-step formula to determine how much they can increase their tax levy by. Not a single school district in Rensselaer County had a tax cap equal to 2% in 2017-18 or 2016-17.

This past year, Schodack CSD actually had a negative tax cap of -0.3%. That was due largely to a low Consumer Price Index where many school district tax cap numbers were near 0%.

For 2017-18, New York State set Schodack CSD's property tax cap at 3.04%.

VOTER INFORMATION

What am I voting on?

A \$23,049,965 budget for the 2017-18 school year, a proposition to purchase three school buses, and three candidates for the BOE.

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 16 from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Maple Hill High School gym. **Please note, New York State requires schools to use optical scanners, similar to other elections.**

Who is eligible to vote?

Anyone who is a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and a resident of the Schodack Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

How can I vote by absentee ballot?

Qualified district residents who are unable to go to the polls on May 16 can cast their votes by absentee ballot. For an application, visit the district website or call the district office at 732-2297. All completed ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 16.

What if I have questions?

For further information, please call the District Office at 732-2297 or visit our school website, www.schodack.k12.ny.us, and click on our "Budget Information" link.