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SCHODACK

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



MAY 2014

2014-2015 SCHOOL BUDGET:

No Cuts to Programs or Staffing

For the first time in six years, Schodack Central School District will offer essentially the same programs as the year before without any cuts to student opportunities or staffing with the proposed 2014-15 budget.

The \$21,217,292 budget increases the tax levy by an estimated 1.41%. Voters will also decide on two additional propositions, one for a \$1.25 million project to address three critical infrastructure issues and another to purchase two school buses (see page 4).

“It is relieving to all of us to be able to offer the same programs for kids next year,” said Superintendent Bob Horan. “I can’t say enough about my faculty, staff and administrators who have done so much with fewer resources the past few years. Their focus is always on what’s best for students.”

The proposed budget is within New York State’s Property Tax Cap. The district can increase its tax levy by 1.41% and still be within the cap. While state officials often tout the law as a “2% tax cap,” the law actually uses a formula to calculate each district’s allowable increase.

For the fourth time in five years the district is projected to receive less state aid next year. However, five employee retire-

ments, use of fund balance and additional revenue help offset the lost state aid.

Shared transportation agreements with neighboring school districts will bring in additional revenue. Schodack CSD will again share its superintendent of buildings and grounds, transportation supervisor, dispatcher and mechanic next year with other schools to reduce costs for both districts.

Additional revenue will also come from leasing more classrooms. Story Place Preschool currently leases two classrooms at Castleton Elementary School; they will increase to four classrooms at CES and three at the Middle School next year. Questar III BOCES currently leases three Middle School classrooms for their special education program; they have requested up to eight classrooms next year.

The district also continues to take advantage of all grant opportunities. Next year, a total of \$441,317 in employee salaries will be paid for by state and federal grants, not local taxes.

“We continue to look for opportunities to bring more revenue into the district to help offset the impact to our taxpayers,” said Mr. Horan.



BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 20

6 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Maple Hill High School Gym

◀ Craig Wilkinson was honored for his incredible volunteer work in Schodack schools and the community at the April 9 Questar III Board meeting. “The joy you get from volunteering, when you see a smile on a child’s face or an acknowledging nod from a parent is priceless. I was totally overwhelmed by the award and by the support of the Schodack superintendent, each of the Schodack school principals and the Schodack school board members who came to the ceremony. I will never forget it,” Mr. Wilkinson said.

Elementary Students to Have Same Schedule

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A NUMBER OF YEARS, Castleton Elementary School expects to offer the same schedule for students next year under the proposed 2014-15 school budget.

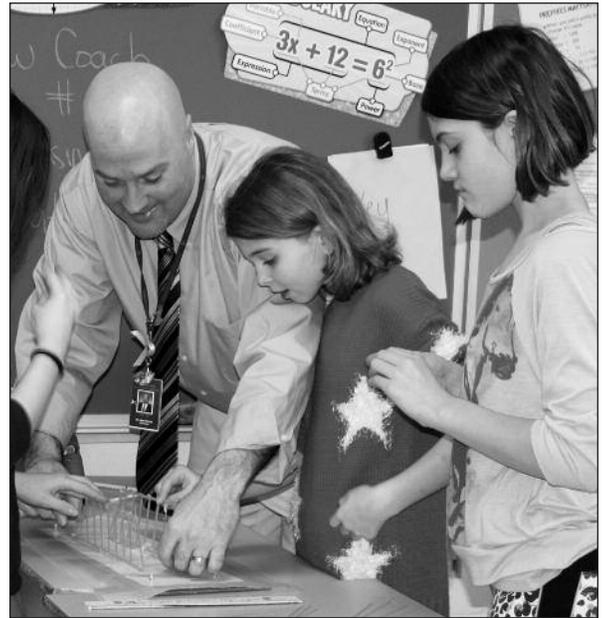
Principal Jason Chevrier said it's relieving to everyone at the school to have consistency next year. But for all the changes in recent years, Mr. Chevrier noted the school has done a remarkable job teaching students the fundamental skills they need in collaborative ways that meets the needs of diverse learners.

"Teachers continue to provide great environments for students to build their fundamental skills. They're always finding creative ways for them to work together and understand what it means to be a school community."

"Teachers continue to provide great environments for students to build their fundamental skills," said Mr. Chevrier. "They're always finding creative ways for them to work together and understand what it means to be a school community. Even in tough budget times, they've been successful."

Whether its teachers volunteering time to offer afterschool activities, the PTO funding field trips and activities or community members getting involved in programs, the school community comes together to provide student opportunities.

"I'm most proud of what our school community has been able to do despite the challenges and changes we've gone through," said Mr. Chevrier. "Everyone has done a tremendous job working hard for kids to provide a top notch education for our students."



Middle School Preserves Student Opportunities

"One of the things I'm most proud of is we have a small staff but we continue to offer so many opportunities for students."

MAPLE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL will provide the same opportunities for students next year under the proposed budget as well as a new 7th grade small learning community and more Distance Learning opportunities.

The new small learning community will support 7th graders who need additional help, similar to programs already in place for 6th and 8th graders. The new option is made possible by rearranging some teaching schedules.

The Distance Learning classroom in the Middle School will continue to grow, offering students videoconferencing opportunities such as robotics, whale watching and visits to Smithsonian museums.

Principal James Derby credited the faculty, staff and supportive community for continuing to provide such strong options for students.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is we have a small staff but we continue to offer so many opportunities for students," said Mr. Derby. "Our faculty, staff and community have done a great job to make programs successful."



High School Opportunities Similar to Larger Schools

MAPLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL will continue to offer the same opportunities for students next year with the proposed 2014-15 school budget.

By scheduling electives every other year, hosting and receiving distance learning classes, offering college-credit and on-line courses and exploring new ways to deliver instruction, the High School is able to offer as many electives as much larger schools.

"What our students get here is as high a quality education as you will find anywhere," said Principal Ron Agostinoni. "Of course, I may be a little biased."

Mr. Agostinoni noted how hard faculty and staff work to provide opportunities for students, no matter their interest or how they learn the best. Faculty embraces new teaching methods like using tablets or planning project-based lessons to engage every student.

"I'm most proud of what our teachers are doing in classes and how our students work together," said Mr. Agostinoni. "I think we're ahead of the curve in how we deliver instruction. Very rarely do you see students lined up in a row. It's students working with teachers or learning from each other."

"I'm most proud of what our teachers are doing in classes and how our students work together. I think we're ahead of the curve in how we deliver instruction."



Continuing Opportunities for Students

After five years of budget cuts, Schodack CSD sometimes hears concerns from our community about what we offer students. While there have been changes, student opportunities have largely been maintained and in some cases expanded through creative and collaborative efforts.

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 or Music, Physical Education) each day for all grades
- Enrichment and intervention time each day for all grades
- Afterschool activities such as K-Kids, Drama Kids, CES Agricultural Project and intramural sports for grades 4-5
- Three sections for each grade
- Field trips, funded by CES PTO

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, Student Council, SCCP, National Junior Honor Society, Newspaper Club and modified sports
- Small learning communities for grades 6-8 to help students needing extra assistance

MAPLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL

- 10 AP classes, including: Biology, Calculus, Environmental, Government, Language, Literature, Macroeconomics, Pre-Calculus, U.S. History and World History.
- 11 college-credit classes, including: Algebra/Trigonometry, Bio Technology, Computer Applications, Creative Writing, Mass Media, Nano-Technology, Pre-Calculus and Principles of Marketing.
- 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

Proposition Would Address Critical Infrastructure Issues

A proposition on the May 20 ballot will ask community members to approve a project to address three critical infrastructure issues over the summer at a maximum cost of \$1.25 million.

The district would be responsible for 23.4% of the cost of the project because New York State would reimburse the district for approximately 76.6% of the total cost.

Replacing Water Mains in High School

The most critical infrastructure project involves replacing water mains in the High School that date back to the school's construction in 1955. The two, 4-inch galvanized pipes supply hot and cold water to the building but have been patched numerous times over the years.

The project would cost approximately \$855,300. A large portion of that cost is for asbestos abatement. The asbestos is on the outside of the pipes, which are located in a crawlspace where no students or staff can enter.

Connecting High School to Village Water

Maple Hill High School is the only school building not currently on village water. Instead, the school uses well water, which requires daily testing totaling about \$3,000 a year.

A recent agreement between the village and town allows the

village's water system to have the capacity to provide water to the High School. The school would connect to the village system through a pipe on Maple Hill Road in front of the school, at an estimated cost of \$77,200.

Resurfacing Middle School Roof

To ensure the entire Middle School roof is under warranty and to protect the building, a portion of the roof would be resurfaced over the summer at an approximate cost of \$317,500.

The district would like to resurface the roof now before grades 6-8 are moved to the Elementary and High School for 2016-17. With students still in the building, the district will receive the 76.6% state aid reimbursement for the project.

The district is also committed to repurposing the building for community, business and other uses and wants to ensure it does not become an eyesore.

Bus Purchases Part of Long-Term Plan

A proposition on the May 20 ballot would allow the district to purchase a 66-passenger and 32-passenger school bus as part of the district's long-term bus replacement plan.

The local cost for both buses would be approximately \$11,000 a year for the next five years. The district pays one-third of the total cost because New York State reimburses the district for 66.7% of bus purchases. The total cost would not exceed \$165,000.

Why does the district purchase buses on a regular basis?

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 about 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.

In addition to transporting students to and from school each day, New York State also requires the district to provide transportation to students living in district who attend private and parochial schools within 15 miles of their home.



Student Achievement

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

Here are some examples:

- 95% of the Class of 2013 went on to a college or vocational school.
- The Class of 2013 went on to attend colleges such as Albany College of Pharmacy, Clarkson University, Cornell University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Rochester Institute of Technology, SUNY Buffalo, Syracuse University, Vassar College and Wellesley College.
- The Class of 2013 was awarded \$6,490,837 in scholarships and awards.
- Senior Morgan Herrle will graduate with approximately 60 college credits this May.
- Students had their artwork selected for regional art exhibits such as The Sage Colleges, Questar III and NYS Legislature.
- Sixth graders received Student Research Awards from the NYS Archives for their research projects on their community.

Board of Education Candidates

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

MARY YURISTA

We chose a home in Schodack nearly 27 years ago because of the quality of schools and the nature of the community. Our sons have successfully pursued their life goals from their experiences here. It's been my privilege to serve the community on the Board for the last three years. I believe having private sector business experience brings a different point of view to the Board. Our community continues to face challenges that impact our ability to sustain the quality of education and everyday life for children. We must meet those challenges through technology, innovation, and careful use of resources.

PAUL PUCCIO

Despite fiscal challenges, declining enrollment and state mandates, we provide quality education, enrich community life, and innovate cost-effective programs. I cherish our schools and am proud to be part of the Schodack team. With 33 years on this Board, 14 on the BOCES Board and 8 as President of Tech Valley High School, I bring considerable experience to this work. On the Town Planning Board I seek ways to grow our tax base. I'm excited by the future and respect our taxpayers. I think "out of the box," seeking creative change to improve education. Please let me continue to serve you.

CHRISTIAN OLSEN

I am a lifelong resident of Schodack and a Maple Hill graduate (Class of 1980). 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.

VICTORIA ADLER

I have resided in Schodack for over 17 years with my husband, Howard. We have two children who attend Schodack schools. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Nursing and am currently the Executive Director of the Sight Society of Northeastern New York. I have extensive budgeting experience and have served on many community, state, and national boards for over 15 years. My background serves as a strength that will benefit the community. I believe we must work collaboratively to set academic and financial priorities to ensure our long-term financial success while still providing the maximum educational and extracurricular opportunities for children.

How the District Reduces Costs and Increases Revenue

Schodack CSD constantly looks at ways to add revenue and reduce operating costs. Here are some examples:

- The district currently leases three classes in Maple Hill Middle School to Questar III BOCES for their special education program. Questar III has been so pleased with the arrangement they have requested up to eight classrooms next year.
- The district currently leases two classes in Castleton Elementary School to Story Place Preschool. Story Place is also looking to expand its leases to two additional rooms in the school and three in the Middle School.
- The district is sharing its superintendent of buildings and grounds, transportation supervisor, dispatcher and mechanic next year with neighboring districts.
- Maple Hill Middle School recently welcomed its fourth start up company, Open Source Initiatives, to its base-ment. Companies provide opportunities for students such as internships. Teachers also work with entrepreneurs to plan real world projects for students. To ensure the safety of students, employees must undergo the same security background checks as school employees including fingerprinting.
- 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 Star buildings, meaning they are more efficient than 90% of similar buildings in similar climates. The district is working towards having the High School certified as well.
- 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

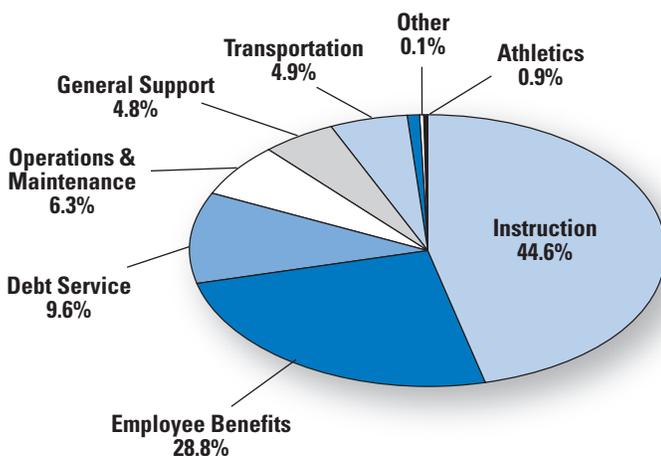
Category	2013-2014	Proposed 2014-2015	Change from 2013-2014	% of Budget
Instruction	\$9,314,132	\$9,466,901	\$152,769	44.6%
Employee Benefits	\$5,867,822	\$6,135,547	\$267,725	28.8%
Debt Service	\$2,004,261	\$2,027,172	\$22,911	9.6%
Operations & Maintenance	\$1,339,074	\$1,333,425	-\$5,649	6.3%
Transportation	\$1,019,914	\$1,031,860	\$11,946	4.9%
General Support	\$1,037,732	\$1,017,438	-\$20,294	4.8%
Interscholastic Athletics	\$171,037	\$185,874	\$14,837*	0.9%
Interfund Transfers	\$19,075	\$19,075	\$0	0.1%
Total Expenditures	\$20,773,047	\$21,217,292	\$444,245	100.0%

* Note: For the past two years, the Booster Club has donated approximately \$25,000 to support two-thirds of the cost of the modified sports program. Next year, the district has asked the Booster Club to donate one-third of the cost. The increased share of the cost for the district is the primary reason for the increase in the athletics budget.

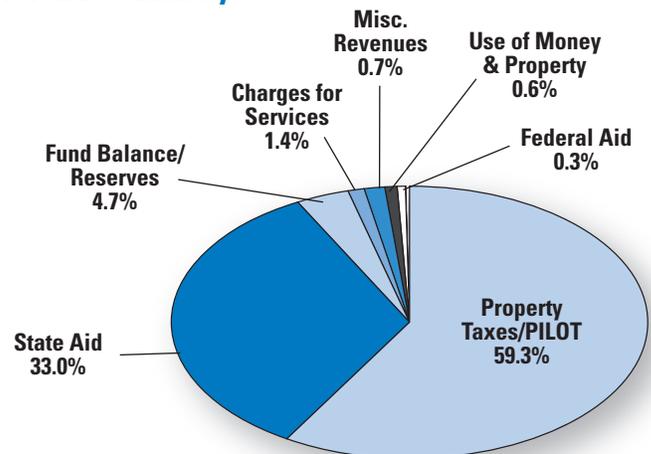
Revenues

Category	2013-2014	Proposed 2014-2015	Change from 2013-2014	% of Revenues
Property Taxes/PILOT	\$12,382,534	\$12,563,806	\$181,272	59.3%
State Aid	\$6,998,313	\$6,996,845	-\$1,468	33.0%
Fund Balance/Reserves	\$775,000	\$1,000,000	\$225,000	4.7%
Charges for Services	\$234,000	\$304,641	\$70,641	1.4%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$217,700	\$158,000	-\$59,700	0.7%
Use of Money & Property	\$85,500	\$129,000	\$43,500	0.6%
Federal Aid	\$80,000	\$65,000	-\$15,000	0.3%
Total	\$20,773,047	\$21,217,292	\$444,245	100.0%

Expenditure Summary



Revenue Summary



School District Budget Notice

School districts are required by state law to mail this information to all households within the district.

If you would like additional information about the proposed budget, please call the District Office at **732-2297**.

Definitions

The state requires school districts to present their annual budgets in three parts: administrative, program and capital.

1 Administrative costs include the salaries and benefits of all certified staff who spend 50% or more of their time in administration, plus the salaries and benefits of clerical staff. Also, school board costs, curriculum development, tax collection, legal and auditing costs, central printing, central data processing, BOCES administrative costs, research, planning and evaluation.

2 Program costs include the salaries and benefits of all teachers and staff delivering pupil services (health, guidance, library, and athletics). Also, textbooks, instructional materials, equipment, extracurricular student activities, BOCES program costs, and all costs of the transportation program except bus purchases.

3 Capital costs include the salaries and benefits of maintenance and custodial staff, plus debt service, bus purchases, utilities, general insurance, tax certiorari and other court-ordered costs.

Overall Budget Proposal	Adopted Budget for 2013-2014	Proposed Budget for 2014-2015	Contingency Budget for 2014-15 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount	\$20,773,047	\$21,217,292	\$21,029,693
Increase/Decrease Over Previous Year		\$444,245	\$256,646
Percentage Increase (Decrease) in Each Proposed Budget		2.14%	1.24%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.46%	
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Including Levy to Support Library Debt	\$12,299,777	\$12,473,355	\$12,299,777
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$758,926	\$549,530	
A. Proposed School Year Tax Levy (without Permissible Exclusion to the School Tax Levy Limit)	\$11,540,851	\$11,923,825	
B. School Tax Levy Limit (without Levy for Permissible Exclusions)	\$11,540,851	\$11,923,825	
Difference: A-B (Positive Value Requires 60% Voter Approval)	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$2,461,298	\$2,488,494	\$2,446,362
Program Component	\$14,539,466	\$14,910,967	\$14,805,500
Capital Component	\$3,772,283	\$3,817,831	\$3,777,831

*Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2014-15 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with propositions not eligible for exclusion may affect property tax levy limit and voter approval requirements)

Description	Amount
Bus Purchase	\$165,000
Capital Project	\$1,250,000

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	Budget Proposed for the 2014-15 School Year
	\$679.04

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2014-2015 by the qualified voters of the Schodack Central School District, Rensselaer and Columbia Counties, New York, will be held at Maple Hill High School in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Maple Hill High School gymnasium, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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

Schodack Central School District
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Castleton-on-Hudson, NY 12033

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New York's Property Tax Credit Program

This fall, homeowners in Schodack CSD who qualify for New York's STAR exemption will receive an additional state rebate check.

The rebate is part of the Property Tax Credit Program created as part of this year's New York State budget agreement. Qualified homeowners will receive the rebate because Schodack CSD's proposed 2014-15 budget is within the state's Property Tax Cap.

The size of the rebate will be calculated by the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. The rebate check will also come from the state agency, not the school district.

To qualify homeowners for the property tax rebate check next year and the following year, the district will have to continue to propose school budgets within the property tax cap and submit a plan to New York State about ways to find efficiencies by working with other schools or municipalities.



Follow us on Facebook

Receive information about budget news, student success stories and emergency announcements on the district's Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/SchodackCSD. Already, more than 600 community members have "liked" our page. Please note this service is at no cost to the district.

Voter Information

What am I voting on?

A \$21,217,292 budget for the 2014-15 school year, a proposition for a \$1.25 million project to address three critical infrastructure issues, a proposition to purchase two school buses, and three candidates for the BOE.

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 20 from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Maple Hill High School gymnasium.

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 20 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 20.

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.