

Special Budget Issue 2013-2014

Native American Culture Extends Beyond Chapters in a Textbook

Native American culture came alive for Lenape Elementary School fourth graders through an artist-in-residency program and Mohonk field trip. During their study of a unit on Native Americans, each of the eight fourth grade classes cycled through a dedicated temporary classroom led by artist-in-residence, Amy McTear. During the week, they handcrafted shakers (traditional percussion instruments made out of hollowed gourds and small legumes). They painted the shakers with Native American symbols which they learned represented different tribes and concluded their week by accompanying themselves while signing Native American songs. In addition to the hands-on experience in their school, each class also visited an actual Native American longhouse at Mohonk. Pictured here, Amy McTear works with Vivian Chesky on her shaker while others work on theirs independently.



PROPOSED BUDGET DOES NOT EXCEED TAX LEVY LIMIT: Protects and Restores Programs

On Tuesday, May 21, New Paltz School District residents will be asked to approve a \$52,250,000 operating budget for 2013-2014. Unlike recent years, the proposed budget provides for the restoration and enhancement of some offerings previously reduced or eliminated. Since the District continues to realize cost-savings from recent efficiencies and received a slight increase in State Aid, the Proposed Budget falls at the District's calculated New York State tax levy limit of 4.4% and requires a simple majority to pass.

Recognizing the key role that early elementary education plays in a student's future success in school, reversing the recent increases in elementary class sizes is one of the Board of Education's priorities in the Proposed Budget. According to enrollment projections, class sizes in five of the seven elementary grade levels will decrease. Similarly, based on research that shows a strong correlation between involvement in extra-curricular activities and academic success, all clubs eliminated in 2012-13 are being restored. Program reductions in the Proposed Budget are limited to the reorganization of pupil personnel staff responsibilities and in areas of special education directly related to changes in student needs as outlined in their Individual Educational Plans (IEPs).

The community will also be asked to vote on a second proposition that provides for \$500,000 of capital projects, all related to immediate safety and security issues. The Board is currently working on a comprehensive long-range facilities plan and expects to ask for community input in June after reviews and prioritizing are done in each building. In the meantime, this proposition will cover the cost of projects that have been identified as needing the most immediate attention. The final cost to taxpayers will depend on whether the full \$500,000 will be available from reserve funds at the end of the year or if the District will need to bond for a portion of the funds.

For more details about the budget and the safety and security proposition, as well as the Board of Education candidates, see pages four through ten of this newsletter. Additional information can be found on the District's website at www.newpaltz.k12.ny.us. Please contact Richard Linden, Assistant Superintendent for Business, at 845-255-4010 if you have any questions.

More About the Budget on Page 5

VOTE

May 21, 2013
12PM-9PM • New Paltz High School

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Student-Driven Literature Circles Extend to School-wide Symposium at Middle School

This year's seventh graders at New Paltz Middle School are taking the Literature Circles they experience in their English classes to a whole new level. For the first time since teachers initiated Literature Circles several years ago, students extended their reach to a Literature Circle Symposium.

In a Literature Circle, students choose one of six similarly themed novels for which they are challenged to lead their own missions of inquiry and discovery. Students are at the center of this unit, while teachers act as facilitators and guides. Students choose their own topics to discuss, formulate individual questions to ask one-another, and help each other achieve success throughout this process.

Coordinated by English teachers Randi Rosen and Valerie Hughes, this year's Literature Circle Symposium allowed students to extend that self-driven process to a culminating experience that correlated with the activities and behaviors they cultivated throughout the unit as well as was aligned with the New York State Common Core Learning Standards. In other words, students had to demonstrate independence, innovation, and deeper understanding of their novels. Since the Symposium centers on students sharing their learning with others through a variety of media, they also needed to consider

their wider audience, realize the value of textual



New Paltz Middle School seventh graders Olivia Venier (l) and Yuvelca Laughman (r) gather their materials for the presentation they did together with Celina Morgiewicz (not pictured) during the Literature Circle Symposium. Their culminating project was a video about the novel *Matched* by Ally Condie. In the video, they portray their feelings and reactions to being set to marry someone they did not love.

evidence, and implement technology when appropriate.

For the Symposium, students were encouraged to brainstorm, create, imagine, and produce almost any project that exemplified a thorough understanding of the literature they read, while working with any assortment of peers. Students across the entire seventh grade were able to choose their partners and the creative process blossomed from there. They created scrapbooks, cookbooks, billboards, dioramas, luggage, costumes, movie trailers, cinematic spoofs, MTV-style video interviews, blogs, and more. The Symposium culminated with all of the students displaying their projects in the auditorium and classes walking through the Symposium Museum, commenting, questioning, and taking notes on their peers' work.

Overall, faculty agreed that this year's students were engaged, challenged, and excited to be the first to tackle the Symposium challenge. They plan to incorporate the Literature Circle Symposium into the Literature Circle unit of study for next year's class and beyond.



Projects included a wide variety of media in which students portrayed their literary experience, such as a diorama, picture timeline, and collection of artifacts.

New Paltz High School Students Emulate Practicing

Students enrolled in New Paltz High School's Science Research classes are experiencing science at levels unlike the traditional classroom. Across the elementary, middle, and high school science curriculum in New York State, students study a wide variety of topics such as machines, biology, chemistry, engineering, astronomy, physical states, the scientific method, food chains, living and non-living environments, weather, geology, states of matter, energy transformation, and much more. Learning a wide cross-section of content is built into the learning standards.

In the three-year science research class, however, students identify one specific topic and go "a mile deep" explains their teacher,

Kurt Ulrich. Over the course of the three years of study, each student delves into a topic of his/her choice, applying traditional research principles and strategies in the scientific method. Almost entirely accomplished through

independent study, the students meet with Mr. Ulrich once every two weeks to plan their work, set goals, and review and evaluate their progress.

During the first year when the students are in 10th grade, they explore different areas of interest and conduct background research to identify their topics. By March of that year, each student is expected to also recruit a mentor, a practicing scientist who has agreed to help guide and support their study. "Most often, our mentors come from the higher education arena. Typically, they are college professors. But we've also involved scientists from government agencies such as the DEC as well as private enterprise," he notes.



New Paltz High School junior, Kate Gaudette (right), tags a bat together with her science research mentor, John Gumbs, of the Northeast Bat Research Center in northern New Jersey for her project on the stages of white nose syndrome in bats. Fellow student, Meghan Grant (center rear) is assisting.

Joshua DeJoy and Cora Butler Lead NPHS Class of 2013

This year's New Paltz High School salutatorian chose architecture as her college major based on her passion for both art and engineering, while the valedictorian is leaving his options open between physics and/or history. Valedictorian Joshua DeJoy will attend SUNY Geneseo and Salutatorian Cora Butler will attend University of Pennsylvania. These top students have more than just their outstanding academic performance in common — they also pursue multiple interests outside of the classroom.

As Valedictorian, Joshua ranks first in the class of 172 students with a 99.94 grade point average, and Cora ranks second with a 98.45. Among her academic honors, Cora has been named an AP Scholar, received the Rensselaer Medal and MHAL Senior Scholar Athlete Award, and is a member of the National Honor Society. Joshua received Elmira College's Key Award, was named to the Principal's List for a 90+ average in Grades 9-12, received department honors in Geometry, Calculus, Engineering Design, and AP American History, among others, and was named a Letter of Commendation recipient from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and an AP Scholar with Honor.

Among his many extra-curricular accomplishments, Joshua attended the Greater Capital Region Science and Engineering Fair at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

this past March where he presented "The Relationship between Terrestrial Gamma-Ray Flashes and Sunspots," and was awarded the Walter Eppenstein Physics/Astronomy Award, the American Meteorological Society's Award, and NOAA's "Taking the Pulse of the Planet"



NPHS 2013 Salutatorian Cora Butler (l) will attend University of Pennsylvania and Valedictorian Joshua DeJoy will attend SUNY Geneseo this fall.

Award. He served as president of Mathletes, co-president of the National Honor Society, and vice president of the Book Club. He was also active in the school's Gay Straight Alliance and Peer Leadership programs.

A student athlete, Cora is a champion jumper for the Varsity Track Team, winning first place in the long jump and third place in the triple jump in the Division II State Championships. She also played Varsity Soccer where she led the team in goals for four years and

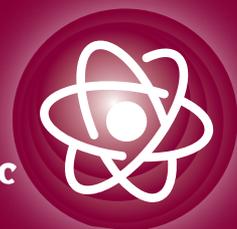
served as team captain for two years, played basketball for three years, and was on the Nordic Ski Team for one year. Other club involvement includes 4H Animals around the World, Spanish Club, and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD).

Like many high school students, both Joshua and Cora have been active in the community. Cora offered her services to the Ulster County Fair, the NHS Senior Citizens Dinner, the Freshmen Orientation program, and helping out at youth soccer practices and modified track meets. Joshua worked with the Family of New Paltz Food Drive, the New Paltz Youth Program, the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, and with a DEC eel study.

**2013 NPHS
SCIENCE
RESEARCH
SYMPOSIUM**

**Wednesday, May 29th
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

➔ Free of charge and open to the public
➔ Refreshments



Scientists in Three-Year Research Project

In years two and three, the students then immerse themselves in their actual research, earning college credit from SUNY Albany as well as high school credit for each of the two years of study. Throughout the process, they document all of their work in a large binder including their meetings with their teacher and mentor, articles they've read, resources they've accrued, and their actual research findings. The project culminates in a formal presentation in the 12th grade either on PowerPoint or a Poster as part of the annual Science Research Symposium, as well as a final research paper.

When asked how the rigorous process most benefits students, Mr. Ulrich was pressed to decide. "They gain so much from this, but if I had to say what is most valuable, it would be time management, truly experiencing the full research process, and interacting with credentialed and accomplished real-life scientists," he states. He notes with a smile how many of his students return for a visit after starting college and tell him how easy the research comes to them

compared to some of their peers.

Over the eight years since he began teaching the class, the breadth and complexity of topics researched by students has amazed their teacher. Among those currently being studied — the sprint speeds of two species of geckos in Honduras, correlating atmospheric

phenomenon with solar activity, aerobiology (remote controlled airplanes) to study fungus on apples, and the differences in food grown in tilled soil versus non-tilled soil. Former students have studied the impact of assistive animal therapy on autistic children and the differences between physiological and psychological stressors on memory.

MENTORS NEEDED

Any practicing scientist interested in serving as a mentor to a science research student, contact Mr. Kurt Ulrich at kulrich@newpaltz.k12.ny.us

While always full of ideas, very often the students are challenged to find mentors. Mr. Ulrich welcomes any and all practicing scientists who may be interested in serving as a mentor to contact him at kulrich@newpaltz.k12.ny.us. One and all are invited to this year's Science Research Symposium on Wednesday, May 29 at 7 p.m.

Three Candidates Vie for Two Seats on Board of Education

Published below are photos and profiles of three candidates running for two seats on the New Paltz Board of Education. The person who receives the highest number of votes will immediately take the seat currently held by Roderick Dressel, Jr. This term will commence on May 22, 2013 and will run through June 30, 2016. The person with the second highest number of votes will begin their term on July 1, 2013 and run through June 30, 2016, which is the seat currently held by Edgar Rodriguez. Voters may cast their ballots for up to two (2) of the three (3) candidates listed or write in the name of another person(s). IF YOU VOTE FOR MORE THAN TWO (2) PEOPLE, YOUR VOTE WILL NOT BE COUNTED.

Max Maurer, Town of Gardiner



30-year resident of Gardiner; employed locally as a software engineer; two children who are graduates of New Paltz.

"I enjoy public service – meeting people and contributing to the community. I believe that the school is the foundation of the community – training our newest community members. We are seeing difficult times and need to both preserve the quality of our school and continue to maximize the value we obtain from every dollar spent. My wife is a school social worker in special education and my brother is a professor of education. Thus, my principle concern is that everything we do must be effective and maximize value for money. I have analytic skills and the ability to balance conflicting needs that I believe are critical for a school board member. I would very much appreciate your support."

Timothy Rogers, Town of New Paltz



Duzine, Middle and NPHS graduate; MBA in finance from NYU; investment management career; parent of two children, ages four and six

"I shop around but prefer spending no money. I'm thrifty, but get a charge from making thoughtful decisions about purchases to optimize value. Research about investing in education to support local communities resonates with me. For example, see the report that Dr. Walden of North Carolina State completed for the Virginia Beach City Public School System in 2011. The report discusses the impact on local wealth, future reduction in public costs associated with educational achievement and revenues resulting from students' academic performance. I do not believe in throwing money at schools but feel money spent prudently makes good investment sense for our kids and our broader community."

Julie Tresco, Town of Esopus



Parent of two elementary-aged children; member of the Health Advisory Committee; taxpayer and supporter of quality education for all children

"I am running for the school board because at a time when taxes are increasing while programs are being cut, it's imperative that we have board members that can balance our children's educational priorities with the fiscal responsibility owed to taxpayers. I am committed to conserving a quality school system that will put our children's education at top priority, while protecting the taxpayers and property owner's interest. A quality school system preserves our children's future as well as reaps benefits to our property values. It's crucial to the community that our children continue to receive the quality of education that our district is known for."

Former SUNY New Paltz Professor Brings African Collection to Duzine

In the spirit of giving back, SUNY New Paltz psychology professor emeritus, Robert J. Presbie, brought African culture to life for second graders at Duzine Elementary School. After having two grandchildren go through the New Paltz school system, Mr. Presbie reached out to Duzine with an offer to bring his extensive collection of African masks and artifacts to the school.

School librarian Joann Martin seized the opportunity to tie the informative visit in with the students' studies on Black History Month in February. On March 29, all seven second grade classes visited the library-turned-museum,



Robert J. Presbie adorns one of the masks from his personal collection of African artifacts he shared with Duzine second graders this spring.

two classes at a time, for a session with Mr. Presbie and his collection.

During their visit, the students learned about the origin and meaning of each of the many varied masks, cups, combs, and other artifacts. Mr. Presbie explained how they came from various different countries in Africa and the symbolism behind some of the adornments. All of the pieces were hand carved from wood

and some decorated with different types of metal. Students were able to hold and share some of the pieces, making for a true hands-on experience that incited a variety of questions.

Quick Facts About the Budget

Current Budget.....	\$50,470,000
Proposed Budget.....	\$52,250,000
Budget-to-Budget Increase.....	3.5%
Tax Levy Increase Under Proposed Budget.....	4.4%
Tax Levy Limit.....	4.4%
Voter Approval Needed.....	Simple Majority
Contingency Budget.....	\$50,675,000
Contingency Budget Increase.....	1.1%
Tax Levy Increase Under Contingency.....	0%
District True Tax Rate per Thousand.....	\$18.37
County Median True Tax Rate per Thousand.....	\$19.70

New Paltz HS Makes Top List Again

For the seventh consecutive year, New Paltz High School is ranked in America's Most Challenging High Schools list in *The Washington Post* by Jay Matthews. From more than 1,900 schools on the list, NPHS is in the top 50% of the national rankings, coming in at number 707 in the nation and number 60 in New York State.

New Paltz High School offers 86 electives, 27 college level courses, 17 AP classes, 4 world language classes (including Mandarin Chinese), a SUNY science research project, a pre-engineering curriculum through Project Lead the Way classes, as well as 33 sports teams and 25 co-curricular activities.

RECENT PATTERN OF CUTS REVERSED:

Budget Provides for Some Restorations, Stays Within Tax Levy Limit

For the first time in recent history, we bring forth a Proposed Budget that minimizes program cuts and, in fact, restores and enhances some areas that were previously reduced. Through a combination of a slight increase in State Aid this year, along with efficiencies implemented in recent years, we are able to present this budget without having to exceed the mandated NYS calculated tax levy limit of 4.4%.

We are very pleased to report that the Proposed Budget provides for a decrease in average class size in five of our seven elementary grade levels. This is significant given what we know about the importance of a student's success early in his or her education. We will be able to accomplish this by deploying all of our existing elementary teachers across our projected enrollments for next year, the first time in recent history when no elementary positions are being eliminated. The Budget also provides for reductions in class sizes in technology and home and career classes in the Middle School, provided that we can recruit certified personnel in those areas. Proposed cuts in staffing are restricted to positions providing special education services and relate directly to an anticipated reduction in the number of students requiring services. Be assured that if the need for services increases, school districts are required by law to provide those services, and we are prepared should that be the case.

Extra-curricular programs are another aspect of education proven to correlate favorably with academic success. In the Proposed Budget, all of the student clubs cut in 2013-14 will be restored. We are also able to protect all of our athletic programs and field trips.

Two major changes to the budget are both in the area of transportation. Since New York State changed the requirements for how we assign students to buses (now based on actual ridership rather than just eligibility to ride), we are able to reconfigure our bus routes for a total estimated savings of \$65,300. We are downsizing from a total of 51 routes across all four schools to 48 with minimal impact to student ride times. In addition to the changes in routes, we are also moving the ongoing cost of vehicle replacement back into the operating budget, rather than as a separate bond. Maintaining a bus fleet is an ongoing and significant expense. In more challenging budget years, school districts often rely on bonding for larger expenses to minimize impact to the taxpayer by spreading the costs over many years. Since it is an ongoing expense, our preference is to contain the costs within the operating budget when feasible. The Proposed Budget includes the purchase of two large buses, one small bus, and one maintenance truck.

We are also putting forth a second proposition for \$500,000 to cover the cost of identified safety and security projects. As you are probably aware, we have been working on a comprehensive long-range facilities plan and are near the final stages of evaluation and plan proposal. In fact, we expect to be bringing our findings to the public for review and input this coming June. In the meantime, we have certain things that professional architects have advised should be done now (see page 10 for details). We hope to be able to cover most of the costs for the projects from our Capital Reserve Fund, but are asking for approval to bond if needed.

Please take the time to read through this newsletter and learn more about the Proposed Budget. Most importantly, please come out to vote on May 21.

Patrick Rausch
Patrick Rausch
Board President

Maria C. Rice
Maria C. Rice
Superintendent of Schools

VOTE

May 21, 2013
12PM-9PM • New Paltz High School

2013-2014 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Educational Offerings Restored or Enhanced:

- ✓ All Clubs that were eliminated in the 2012-2013 Budget
 - HS: Play/Drama Club; Snow Club, SADD, Literary Magazine, Poetry Club, Youth for Unity Club
 - MS: Rock & Soul; Art Club, Reflections
 - HS, MS, and LN: All County Band & Chorus
- ✓ Class sizes in five out of seven elementary grade levels reduced
- ✓ Class sizes in MS technology and home and career classes reduced (if personnel available)

Educational Offerings Protected:

- ✓ Elementary foreign language program for Grades 1-6
- ✓ Field trips
- ✓ AP and college credit bearing courses
- ✓ All athletic programs (modified – JV – varsity)
- ✓ Summer school opportunities for HS and MS students

Support Items Restored:

- ✓ Vehicle purchase returned to operating budget (not separate bond)
 - Two large school buses
 - One small school bus
 - One maintenance truck

Reductions Realized through Efficiencies/Enrollment Changes:

- ✗ Continued reorganization of some pupil personnel staff
- ✗ Reductions in teacher aide and speech services due to decline in need for services
- ✗ Health insurance savings due to reductions in special education staffing
- ✗ Savings in transportation costs due to reconfiguration of bus routes

PROPOSED STAFFING REDUCTIONS LOWEST IN RECENT HISTORY: Total 3.8 Full Time Equivalents

Over the past three years, New Paltz CSD has eliminated a total of 61 positions, including 24.4 FTE (full time equivalent) last year, 19.1 FTE in 2011-12, and 17.5 FTE in 2010-11. The 2013-14 Proposed Budget limits reductions to personnel providing special education services, however, does not represent a reduction in the level of services being provided to students. Based on projections of the number of students needing services and the levels of services they will need, together with reorganization of some of the mandated testing responsibilities, a total of 3.8 FTE can be reduced in 2013-14 without impact to students. District administrators note, however, that should the need for additional services arise, the District is required to provide them and subsequently obtain the necessary staffing. Here are the details on this year's reductions:

Classroom Instructional Staff Reductions: 2.0 Total

2.0 Special Education Teachers	Two less sections of classified students	Eliminated
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Other Certified/Licensed Staff Reductions: 1.8 Total

0.5 School Psychologist	Multi-year plan to restructure pupil personnel services; presently unfilled	Eliminated
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0.3 Speech Teacher	Reduction in level of services needed	Eliminated
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1.0 Special Ed Teacher Aide	Reduction in level of services needed	Eliminated
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Support Staff Changes: Net 0 Total

1.0 Custodial Worker	Reduced and 1 Maintenance Worker added	Change in need for services
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Most Class Sizes Projected to Decrease

After four years of significant staffing reductions in order to contain tax rate increases, some of which impacted class sizes, the 2013-2014 Proposed Budget provides for decreases in class sizes in five out of seven grade levels. While modest, the decreases represent a turn in the trend and reflect the District's preference for class sizes that allow teachers to better

Grade	2012-13 Average Class Size	2013-14 Projected Average Class Size
K	19.9	20.0
1	22.0	19.7
2	21.1	20.4
3	22.5	24.3
4	26.0	24.5
5	25.7	23.5
6	26.2	25.9

differentiate instruction for the different developmental levels of students in their classes. (See chart at right.) Since class size at the high school level is influenced largely by scheduling, it is not feasible to report that data here.

What Does Contingency Mean?

If a proposed budget is defeated, the school district has two options. It can either place a second proposition (either the same as the one that was defeated or a modified one) before the voters one additional time, or it can automatically adopt a contingency budget. If the school board opts to place a second proposition before the voters and it is defeated, then the District is mandated to adopt a contingency budget.

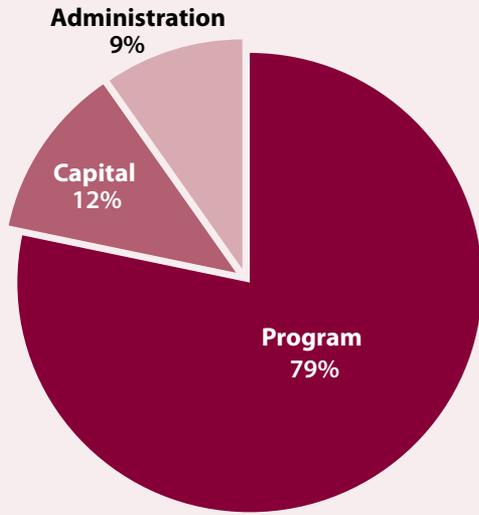
NYS mandates a 0% tax levy increase for contingency budgets and limits what can and cannot be included. For example, all legal obligations such as contractual salaries, insurance, and debt obligations are protected, while items such as class sizes, support services, equipment purchases, extra and co-curricular activities are not. For 2013-14, the contingency budget level for New Paltz CSD is \$1,575,000 less than the proposed budget. In order to arrive at this mandated spending limit under a contingency budget, cuts could include the elementary foreign language program, an elementary library media specialist, a guidance counselor, all musical instrument, furniture and equipment purchases, all vehicle purchases, all student clubs and athletics, as well as transportation for athletics, secondary summer school, one maintenance worker, one night custodian (which translates to no after-school building access to the Middle School and the two elementary schools), one office aide, and reductions in supplies and administrative clerical support.

VOTE

May 21, 2013

12PM-9PM • New Paltz High School

The Three-Part Budget

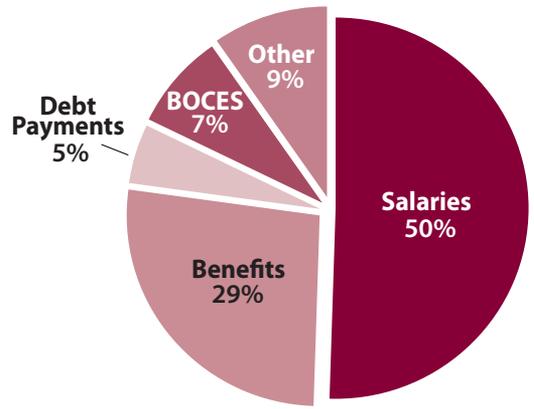


Administration Budget: This section includes school building offices and central administration, along with clerical support, salaries and benefits of all school administrators, Board of Education expenses for planning, and other administrative activities.

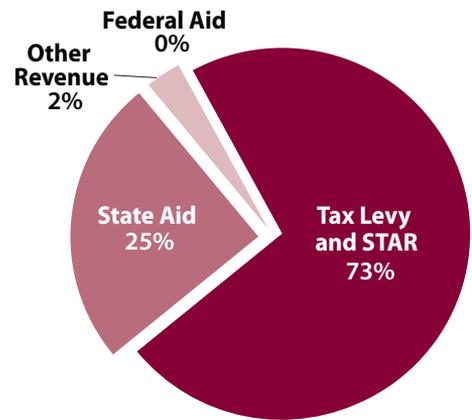
Capital Budget: This area refers to all facilities costs such as custodial salaries and benefits, maintenance salaries and benefits, service contracts, custodial and maintenance supplies, utility costs for heating, electricity, communication, water, and annual capital project debt service.

Program Budget: This portion covers classroom supplies and equipment, teacher salaries and benefits, all related educational costs, and costs for student transportation services. This program area makes up the largest portion of the budget.

Expenditures



Revenues



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2012-13 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2013-14 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2013-14 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$50,120,000	\$52,250,000	\$50,675,000
Increase/Decrease for the 2013-14 School Year		\$1,780,000	\$555,000
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.5%	1.1%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.1%	
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Including Levy to Support Library Debt, if applicable	\$35,570,000	\$37,145,000	\$35,570,000
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$1,621,329	\$1,850,000	
A. Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Not</u> Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt	\$33,948,671	\$35,295,000	
B. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Not</u> Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$33,948,671	\$35,295,000	
Difference: A - B (Positive Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$4,684,000	\$4,755,000	\$4,645,000
Program Component	\$39,656,000	\$41,355,000	\$40,380,000
Capital Component	\$6,130,000	\$6,140,000	\$5,650,000
Total Budget	\$50,470,000	\$52,250,000	\$50,675,000

* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2013-14 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

Assumptions used for projecting a contingency budget:

- 1 Eliminate all musical instrument, furniture & equipment purchases
- 2 Eliminate all vehicle purchases
- 3 Eliminate all remaining Student Club Stipends
- 4 Eliminate all Athletics
- 5 Reductions in Transportation associated with Athletics
- 6 Eliminate Elementary Library Media Specialist (1.0)
- 7 Eliminate Guidance Counselor (1.0)
- 8 Eliminate Grade 1-6 Foreign Language Program (2.8)
- 9 Eliminate Secondary Summer School
- 10 Eliminate One Maintenance Worker (1.0)
- 11 Eliminate Night Custodian (1.0) - no after school building access for MS, LN, DZ
- 12 Reduce supplies
- 13 Eliminate one Office Aide (1.0)
- 14 Reductions in Admin Clerical Support (1.0)

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2013-14 School Year*

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$633

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

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2013-2014 by the qualified voters of the New Paltz Central School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at New Paltz High School on Tuesday, May 21, 2013 between the hours of 12:00 noon and 9:00 pm prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine or ballot.

Impact on the Taxpayer

Revenues to support the New Paltz CSD budget come from various sources: state and federal aid, earned interest, unappropriated fund balance, and local property taxes (tax levy). The 2013-14 budget calls for a 4.4% increase in the tax levy, the total amount to be collected through local property tax. Examples of estimated increases in the tax bills appear at right. To estimate your own increase in your tax bill, use the worksheet. Enter your September 2012 total tax bill. Multiply it by 0.044 for your estimated September 2013 tax increase. Divide by 12 for a monthly calculation.

Please note that a variety of other factors will influence your actual tax rate including changes in the assessments of all of the properties on your town's tax rolls and/or the equalization rates from New York State (which balances assessments through a formula). **This chart and worksheet are provided as a guide and will not necessarily equate to your final tax increase.**

Examples of Monthly Impact on Tax Bill

Amount of 2012 School Tax Bill	4.4% Tax Levy Increase
\$10,000	\$36.67 month (\$440 annual)
\$8,000	\$29.33 month (\$352 annual)
\$6,000	\$22.00 month (\$264 annual)
\$4,000	\$14.67 month (\$176 annual)
\$2,000	\$7.33 month (\$88 annual)

Calculate Your Own Monthly Increase

Amount of 2012 Tax Bill: _____

Multiply by 0.044: _____

Equals Annual Increase: _____

Divide by 12 for Monthly Increase: _____

Questions and Answers

How much is the proposed budget going to cost? What is the bottom line in my tax bill?

The proposed budget carries a projected 4.4% tax levy increase. For homeowners paying \$2,000 a year in school taxes, the increase equates to \$7.33 per month or \$88 annually. For homeowners paying \$6,000 a year in school taxes, the increase equates to \$22.00 per month or \$264 annually. See worksheet above to calculate your projected increase.

Why is the proposed tax increase 4.4% when NYS passed a 2% tax levy limit law?

In actuality, the 2% tax levy limit law is more complex. Under the law, school districts have two options when building their budgets. They can either propose a budget with a tax levy increase that falls at or below the limit imposed by the new laws, or they can propose a budget with a higher tax levy increase. The tax levy threshold limit is arrived at through a complex formula that takes into account ten different variables and allows for exclusions of certain expenses. Based on the formula and the exclusions, the tax levy threshold limit for New Paltz this year is 4.4%. The budget being proposed meets the 4.4% tax levy threshold, and therefore requires a simple majority of 50% plus one yes votes to pass.

In the past, my tax increase has ended up being different than the increase projected by the district. Why?

The school district projects the tax levy increase, not the actual tax rate. The tax levy is the total amount of all of the monies collected from all of the property taxpayers in the district. A school board typically arrives at this number after taking into account the other revenues it expects (state and federal aid, earned interest, unused funds from previous years) and deducting those from the total amount it needs for the year. After a budget is approved, the tax levy is one factor used to calculate the actual tax rate for individual towns and villages. The other two factors are assessments and equalization rates. These factors are not finalized and provided to the district by the towns, villages, and NYS until August and can vary from one town/village to another. Property owners can use the tax levy projection to estimate their tax rate increase (see worksheet above), however need to understand that the final rate could vary because of changes in assessments.

Why are the costs for replacing school buses back in the operating budget and not a separate proposition?

Since maintaining a safe bus fleet is an ongoing challenge, New Paltz historically included expenditures in each year's budget for vehicle replacement on a determined schedule. In recent years, with cuts in State Aid, increases in employee benefits costs, and the tax levy limit, this was not viable. A common option is to cover costs through bonding, which requires separate voter approval, prolongs the payments for the vehicles, and carries interest. With restoration of some State Aid and savings realized through recent cuts and efficiencies, the Board was able to return the cost for vehicle purchase to the operating budget this year and still contain the projected tax levy increase under the levy limit.

What happens if the budget does not pass?

If the budget does not pass by 50% plus one, the school board can opt to hold a second vote on the budget. They can either place the same proposed budget before the voters a second time, or they can propose a revised budget. If the budget fails a second time, then the district is required to adopt a 0% tax levy contingency budget. NYS law dictates what can and cannot be covered under a contingency budget. For details on what would need to be cut in a contingency budget next year, see page 8.

A school board can also opt to bypass a second vote and automatically adopt a 0% tax levy contingency budget if the proposed budget fails on the first vote.

Who can vote in the school budget?

All qualified voters may vote in the school budget. A qualified voter is any U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older on the day of the vote, who has resided in the district for 30 days or more prior to the day of the vote. If you are registered with the Ulster County Board of Elections, you are automatically registered to vote in school elections. If you are not, you may still register with the school district to vote. Absentee ballots are also available for any qualified voter who is unable to make it to the polls on the day of the vote. For additional information on voter eligibility and absentee ballots, contact the District Clerk at 845-256-4031.

Sample Ballot

Proposition #1 Vote YES or NO

“Shall the Board of Education of the New Paltz Central School District be authorized to expend \$52,250,000 which will be required for school district purposes for the year July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 (The Budget), and to levy the necessary tax therefor?”

Proposition #2 Vote YES or NO

(a) That the Board of Education of the New Paltz Central School District, in the County of Ulster, New York (the “District”), is hereby authorized to construct improvements and alterations to all District school buildings (the “Project”), and to expend therefor an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$500,000; (b) that a tax is hereby voted in the amount of not to exceed \$500,000 to finance such cost, such tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by said Board of Education; and that in anticipation of said tax, bonds of the District are hereby authorized to be issued in the aggregate principal amount of not to exceed \$500,000 and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said bonds as the same shall become due and payable; and (c) that the amount of not to exceed \$500,000 currently on hand in the District’s “District-wide Construction and Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund” is hereby authorized to be expended for the Project, and any of such amount so expended shall offset a like amount of the taxes herein authorized to pay for the Project, and such expenditure is hereby approved.

About Proposition 2:

To Approve Additional \$500,000 for Safety and Security Projects

While the Board of Education continues their in-depth evaluation and development of a comprehensive long-term facilities plan, there are certain safety and security projects that require attention now. These projects have been identified through both the District’s Building Conditions Report required by the NYS Education Department as well as a second external review by an independent architect. Below is a list of the projects that will be accomplished if voters approve this proposition. While the project will not impact the tax rate in 2013-14, impact in future years will depend on whether bonds will be needed to cover the costs (see *What Will the Safety and Security Projects Cost?*) The Board of Education anticipates sharing more detail and seeking resident input on the greater scope of work that will be considered for the comprehensive long-term plan this coming June.

SECURITY:

- Replace interior entry doors at Lenape and MS with security/buzzer locking door systems

SAFETY:

- Replace aging single wall fuel tank at MS
- Upgrade emergency lighting at Duzine, MS, and HS
- Install kitchen hood in central kitchen at MS
- Repair loading dock canopy at central kitchen at MS including concrete, stairs, and outside freezer cover

What Will the Safety and Security Projects Cost?

The projects will be paid for through a combination of funds from the Capital Reserve and/or possible bonds, depending on the level of Capital Reserve funds available. There will be no impact to the taxpayers during the 2013-14 school year, however, if bonds are sought, then interest on the bonds would begin in the 2014-15 school year.

COST VS. PERFORMANCE COMPARISONS

New Paltz CSD uses a variety of data sources to track value for dollar. One measure of cost-efficiency is the annual per-pupil-expenditure (PPE), arrived at by taking the annual school budget and dividing it by the total number of students enrolled. For the current 2012-13 school year, New Paltz CSD’s annual PPE is below the county average.

Schools also use the true tax rate (tax paid per \$1,000 of assessed property value) as a fiscal measure. New Paltz CSD property owners historically pay a lower tax rate than most of Ulster County. In 2012-13, the New Paltz true tax rate was fourth lowest of the nine districts in the county and below the median.

Ulster County Per Pupil Expenditures 2012-13

Data Analysis from MHSSC

Highest PPE in Ulster County	\$32,308
Lowest PPE in Ulster County	\$18,332
Ulster County Average PPE	\$23,137
New Paltz CSD PPE	\$22,352

Ulster County True Tax Rates 2012-13

Data Analysis from MHSSC

Highest True Tax Rate in Ulster County	\$22.57
Lowest True Tax Rate in Ulster County	\$11.66
Ulster County Median True Tax Rate	\$19.70
New Paltz CSD True Tax Rate	\$18.37

While costs are below the county average, New Paltz students ranked highest on many comparative academic measures in 2011-12 (most recent data available). Elementary students in grades three through eight outperformed their counterparts in Ulster County in six of the 12 NYS English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math tests given. They performed above average in all grades for ELA and in grades five through eight for math and tied for average in grades three and four for math. New Paltz HS graduated the highest percentage of students with Regents diplomas with distinction (48%) in the county and had the lowest dropout rate (0%).

Ulster County Regents Diploma Rates 2011-12

Source: NYS Report Card 2011-12

	% Graduates with Regents Diploma	% Graduates with Regents Diploma w/ Distinction
Highest in Ulster County	94%	48%
Lowest in Ulster County	88%	30%
Ulster County Average	90%	37%
New Paltz High School	92%	48%

Ulster County Dropout Rates 2011-12

Source: NYS Report Card 2011-12

	% Dropping Out of HS	% Students Not Completing HS
Highest in Ulster County	5%	7%
Lowest in Ulster County	0%	1%
Ulster County Average	3%	4%
New Paltz High School	0%	1%

Fifth Graders Choose Volunteerism over Recess

Despite three opportunities to reconsider, over 40 fifth graders at Lenape Elementary School made the commitment to give up some of their recess days in support of revitalizing their school newspaper. “The newspaper is a commitment.

If you commit, then you come here with your lunch and you work when the work needs to be done,” explained Principal Jackie Sinatra. “If you think this is too much and want to reconsider, that is absolutely fine and you are free to leave,” she emphasized.

During the rest of the kick-off organizational meeting, she offered two additional opportunities for the students to politely bow out, yet every student stayed.

“I thought it would be a good way to help – something to let people know what’s new,” said Jay Patel. His friend, Evan Dickerson, agreed, “I’ve written essays and other things, but nothing as open to the public as a newspaper.”

Last year, three students initiated *Lenape Lines* with the help of Maryann Lis-Simmons, school librarian. Realizing it needed more support to continue, Ms. Sinatra asked the New Paltz High School PIGLETS (Participation in Government, Literature and Economics for Today’s Students), who were working with Lenape classes on anti-bullying, if they had any interest in helping out. Seniors Kristen Beck and Katie

Kapulli rose to the occasion, chaired the organizational meeting, and now visit Lenape every other day to work with the budding journalists.

Thrilled to see the project they initiated continue, two of the *Lenape Lines* founders, Ainslee McMahan and Olivia Benedict, attended the organizational meeting. The third founder, Marco Fusco, attended the follow-up meeting. “There are so many things we can write about,” commented Ainslee, and evidenced by the students identifying and signing up for different assignment areas including interviewing teachers, school news, sports, riddles and cartoons, poetry, surveys, student art, and current events (including politics, national and international news, and the economy).

“We both attended Lenape and we really liked working with the students earlier in the year on the anti-bullying project,” noted Kristen and Katie. “They needed help, so we came.”

“We announced the meeting and opened it to all 181 fifth graders. We had no idea how

many would participate, especially since it is during lunch and recess,” said Ms. Sinatra. “Needless to say, we are thrilled with the response and grateful to the PIGLETS for their leadership.”



Two of Lenape Elementary School newspaper’s originators, Ainslee McMahan (front left) and Olivia Benedict (front right) share copies of last year’s editions of *Lenape Lines* with New Paltz High School seniors in the PIGLETS program (Participation in Government, Literature and Economics for Today’s Students) Kristen Beck (rear left) and Katie Kapulli (rear right) during their kick-off meeting to revive the publication. A third originator, Marco Fusco, is not pictured.

Middle Schoolers Experience Dramatic Arts Both Onstage and Off



Students at New Paltz Middle School immersed themselves in the dramatic arts with their recent production of *Alice in Wonderland*. Over 80 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students took part in the show, working both onstage as performers and backstage on lighting, sound, costumes and scenery. Faculty and staff directed and supported the production along with parent volunteers. “Involving 80 students in a full-fledged stage production takes hours and hours of dedication and hard work from many people,” explains Mary Holmes, Drama Club advisor and foreign language teacher. “We are grateful to all who helped and to all of the community members who supported us and came out to see the show.”

Following the production, the seventh and eighth grade members of the Drama Club went on a field trip to Broadway to see *Annie*. “Experiencing Broadway right after doing their own production made the experience all that more meaningful for our students,” noted Anthony Tantillo, assistant principal. Pictured here, some of the Drama Club members stop for a pose on Broadway before heading into the show.

Choral Music Program Participation Triples in Three Years; New Paltz Alum Living Her Dream as High School Music Teacher

In the three years since Nicole Ferrante returned to New Paltz High School as their choral teacher, participation in the three choral elective classes has tripled. Students enrolled in the Mixed Choir increased from 22 to 60, enrollment in the performance art class, Glee, grew from six to 32, and 22 students opted for small group Voice classes this year, up from four in 2010-11.

The jumps in enrollment coincide with Nicole Ferrante's first three years teaching music after graduating from Syracuse University with both a bachelor's and master's degree in music education. The 2005 New Paltz High School (NPHS) graduate remembers with fondness her involvement in the music program during high school and dreaming of returning as the teacher one day. Upon graduating, the position became open and after three rounds of interviews, the rest is history.

"I definitely feel a sense of accomplishment," admits Ms. Ferrante. "At the same time, I think of all of the things that I still want to do," she explains. One of those is to grow the Mixed Chorus to 100 students with 25 boys. "While I am thrilled that we now have 60, the challenge for vocal music programs is typically involving male students," she continues, noting the need for a balance of voices in all ranges to maximize the group's potential.

Many NPHS students also opt for the small group Voice classes the school supports. In Voice, students experience a broader and more structured learning experience. In addition to increased performance opportunities, the curriculum includes the basic mechanics of singing such as posture, breathing, confidence, tone, and the structure of the larynx. Students conduct research projects on topics related to singing and then prepare and perform a full solo song for the end-of-year project as a culmination of all they have learned.



To emphasize and reinforce singing up and down the musical scales, Nicole Ferrante has students perform wide arm circles to coincide with the notes.



Nicole Ferrante leads students in opening exercises in their Mixed Choir class.

When Ms. Ferrante was hired and learned of NPHS' plans to start a Glee program as a credit-bearing course (and not a club), she was thrilled. In order to support continuity, the course will return to a full-year course next year after two years as two half-year courses. Open to all students without an audition requirement, the Glee course focuses primarily

on performance and includes both vocal instruction as well as choreography. Students give input into song choices from pop, rock, and musical theater genres. They learn how to emote while both singing and dancing, which Ms. Ferrante explains is much harder than it looks.

"While it's great to hear my students grow vocally, I have seen so many of them grow and mature on so many other levels through their involvement in music," she observes, acknowledging this as one of the benefits of working with students across Grades 9-12. In addition to the three classes she teaches at the High School, Ms. Ferrante also leads

the three grade-level Choirs at New Paltz Middle School, a new challenge she took on this year and one that she hopes will support her vision of growth at the High School.

As if teaching across seven grades in two schools is not enough, Ms. Ferrante also serves as musical director for the High School plays and actively supports her students in regional and state music competitions

through the New York State School Music Association, of which she herself is an active member. Just like in her classes, both participation and award levels are increasing exponentially.

Ms. Ferrante is also quick to cite the varied instrumental music offerings taught by her colleague, Ralph Schroer, including Music Theory, Concert Band, Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Lab Band, and Brass Quintet, as well as African Drumming. "I am so grateful to be living and working in a community that supports the arts to the extent that New Paltz does," she summarizes.



Vocal music students Christina Tortorici (left) and Alexa Kane (right) perform one of the lip sound exercises during warm up.

On the Calendar

Tuesday, May 21st

New Paltz HS Student Art Show, 5:00 p.m.

New Paltz HS Spring Concert, 7:30 p.m.

Open to the Public

