

NPHS Drama Club Presents Spring Musical



New Paltz High School's spring musical, *Working*, delighted audiences with its compelling portraits of Americans on the job. During four performances, audiences heard the stories of a wide range of workers—everyone from a telephone operator (Caroline Joseph) to a long-distance trucker (Hugh Sweeney), a construction worker (Philip Jones) to a stay-at-home mom (Sarah LaCasse).



continued on Page 8

New Paltz

May 2017

Central School District

Special Budget Issue 2017-2018

2017-2018 Proposed School Budget Maintains Class Sizes, Restores Library Position

On Tuesday, May 16, voters in the New Paltz Central School District will cast their ballots on a \$59 million proposed budget, as well as elect two members of the Board of Education. The proposed budget carries a 2.3 percent tax levy increase and requires a 60 percent voter approval.

There are no cuts to student programs in the proposed budget, and it restores the Elementary School Library Media Specialist position that was eliminated two years ago. The budget also reflects instructional staff adjustments to address shifts in enrollment across grade levels (see chart at right).

The High School and the Grade 6 class at the Middle School will both see an increase in students next year. However, at the elementary level, both Lenape and Duzine anticipate fewer students. Our Special Education program has experienced an increase in students placed in BOCES programs, per their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In addition, changes in student IEPs also reflect a reduction in the need for in-district teacher aides.

“After carefully analyzing enrollment projections, we have adjusted instructional staffing levels in all four buildings to best serve our students and maintain K-6 class sizes that do not exceed 24,” explained Superintendent Maria C. Rice. “Commitment to maintaining elementary class size was a guiding factor in budgeting decisions.”

Further details about changes in the budget can be found in the budget summary table on page 5.

State Aid Increase

The District's State Aid increase from last year's state budget is \$172,715. Some media reports gave the impression that increases would be higher. This is because the published State Aid data compares projections for 2017-18 versus aid received so far in 2016-17 (rather than comparing projections to projections).

There are several other important factors to understanding State Aid projections.

First, most of the State

Grade Level	Projected Class Size
Kindergarten	20-21
Grade 1	22-23
Grade 2	23-24
Grade 3	23-24
Grade 4	23-24
Grade 5	22-23
Grade 6	23-24

Staffing Changes for 2017-2018

Position	Change	Comment
HS Teachers	+2.0 FTE	51 additional students
Elem Teacher-Grade 6	+1.0 FTE	Maintain average class size under 24
Grade 3-5 Elem Teacher	-1.0 FTE	Maintain average class size under 24
Grade K-2 Elem Teacher	-1.0 FTE	Maintain average class size under 24
Elem Library Media Specialist	+1.0 FTE	Restore position cut two years ago
Special Education Teacher	-1.0 FTE	Based on projected need
Special Education Teacher Aides	-3.0 FTE	Based on projected need

Aid categories are expense-driven, meaning that the less you spend, the less you earn, and vice versa. This is especially true with Transportation, BOCES, and High Cost Aid.

Also, projected expenses used to generate the State Aid levels are required to be submitted to the state nearly a year in advance. For instance, the April 2017 State Aid projections for 2017-18 are based on data submitted in September 2016. The actual expenditures for these items are frequently less than these estimates, and therefore will not generate the level of State Aid allotted. Expenses are projected to maximize aid possibilities because in some years, aid is capped at the level submitted, even if the actual expenses are higher.

To further complicate the ability to make an apples-to-apples comparison, the projected aid runs do not reflect a full year of data. April's State Aid runs are missing three months of data and do not reflect many expenses that are not submitted until the end of the school year.

State Aid is complicated, and anyone with questions is encouraged to contact Assistant Superintendent Richard Linden at 845-255-4010 or rlinden@newpaltz.k12.ny.us.

More About the Budget on Pages 4-6

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Learning Takes on New Dimension for Lenape Class

Students sometimes ask how they will use math in the real world, and this year a group of Grade 5 students at Lenape learned the answer to that question. Coordinate geometry, they discovered, has plenty of practical applications, like surveying land, or plotting objects in the solar system, or building a Chicken Swing ride.

In a project rich in math, critical thinking, creativity, and fun, students in Meredith Oppenheimer and Jane Beck's class built their own miniature amusement park, "Tinkerland," from the ground up. With support and guidance from SUNY New Paltz engineering professor Michael Otis, the class used 3D digital design software called Tinkercad to transform two-dimensional shapes into three-dimensional theme park attractions like a Piranha roller coaster, a dunk tank, and a fried dough stand.

The students visited the SUNY New Paltz 3D printing facility in January to see their designs being printed. In March, families attended a final celebration to view the completed amusement park, which was a colorful display of design thinking come to life in plastic filament.

Whether their park attraction was a Twizzler or a Tower of Terror, the students didn't seem thrown for a loop by the math concepts they employed, like area, volume, axes, and angles. Many said that all the problem-solving felt more like fun than learning.

Reflection journals and research into the history (and future) of 3D printing integrated English Language Arts and history into the project, and students also practiced their collaboration skills with visitors at the final celebration, teaching their parents and grandparents how to use Tinkercad.



Students Explore Native American History through Wigwam Project

As part of their Native American studies, a group of Grade 4 students from Lenape Elementary School helped build a wigwam on the property of the Historic Huguenot Street museum in New Paltz.

Students used branches and bark from local trees to construct the wigwam, which will be used as a platform to enhance and expand the museum's interpretation of the Munsee Native American culture.

This structure was created to help mark the 340th anniversary of the 10-acre land agreement between French settlers and the Munsee tribe in 1677. This agreement eventually led to the creation of the New Paltz community.

Builder and educator Barry Keegan, whose structures are expected to last about 10 years, guided the students. The wigwams he builds are similar to those inhabited by Native Americans hundreds of years ago.

Students enjoyed the hands-on experience and found the project enlightening, educational, and even entertaining.



Lenape Students are Glacier Detectives!

What is a glacier and how is it formed? What is the difference between an ice field and an ice sheet?

These are just some of the many questions that Lenape Elementary School's Grade 4 "glacier detectives" investigated during the course of an innovative learning experience. Co-teachers Trina Naclerio and Erin Bulson helped their students learn about Alaska's glaciers—while gaining an appreciation for our national parks.

A 360-degree interactive video introduced the students to Kenai Fjords National Park, allowing them to experience what it's like to climb into a crevasse, kayak through icebergs, and watch a glacier melt.

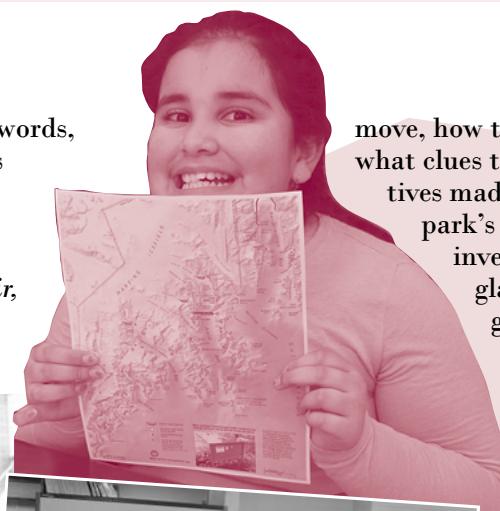
With equipment on loan from Ulster BOCES, Alaskan Park Ranger Fiona North, the daughter of New Paltz Middle School teacher Terri Ritter, joined the class for a videoconference. "Park Ranger North shared the incredible beauty and impressive glacial features of Kenai Fjords National Park with the students, and inspired a sense of wonder and stewardship for the ice that continues to shape our planet," said Naclerio.

To prepare for the videoconference, the children

learned relevant vocabulary words, studied the sequence of steps involved in the creation of a fjord, and read *The Camping Trip that Changed America: Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, and our National Parks* by Barb Rosenstock.



By examining photographs of Kenai Fjords National Park, the students learned how glaciers



move, how they affect the lands around them, and what clues they leave behind. The young detectives made observations about the retreat of the park's glaciers, graphing the data. They also investigated possible causes for the loss of glaciers, such as the rise in greenhouse gasses due to human activity.

At the end of the program, the children discussed possible solutions and created persuasive posters about protecting the Earth.

"All students were able to develop a deeper understanding through the experience," said Bulson. "They learned the importance of being a steward, and created a thoughtful representation on their individual poster projects."

The children, who received Junior Ranger badges from Park Ranger North, also received a pass that gives them (and their families) free access to all U.S. national parks, lands, and waters through August 2017.



Duzine Students Celebrate Art, Music, and History

In honor of Black History Month, Duzine Grade 2 students created African-inspired masks, which were displayed at the school's annual Art and Music Celebration on April 27. Art teacher Susan Gruschow explains that the students began the project by learning how African masks are traditionally made, and how they are used.

After listening to a recording of Pete Seeger reading an African folktale, "Abiyoyo," the mask-making began in earnest. "The children used recycled materials to build up the features of the masks, and then used earth tones to paint patterns," Gruschow explained. "We finished up the project using organic and recycled materials to create textures on the surface."

Meanwhile, Kindergarten artists created quilt blocks inspired by the artists of Gee's Bend, an isolated African-American hamlet in Alabama celebrated for its unique quilts. Grade 1 students found their inspiration in the work of artist Faith Ringgold, who paints on quilted fabric. In her book *Tar Beach*, she dreams of flying over the city and the places that make her feel happiest. "The children made drawings after imagining flying over their own happy place, and then used fabric as a border," said Gruschow.



The Three Rs and 21st Century Learning Skills Merge at Duzine

Teachers from Duzine Elementary School are stimulating students' innate interest in science, engineering, and nature by combining their love of the outdoors and the world to which they are directly connected. Instructors have been collaborating on units of study that connect ideas and learning across the curriculum.

Children in Kindergarten through Grade 2 have been delving deeply into units of study, each of which strengthens real-world skills, including problem-solving, teamwork, complex thinking abilities, and research.

Students in Kindergarten classes are focusing on the theme of "Our Town," exploring places that provide shelter, care, food, learning, and fun. While integrating science, social studies, reading, writing, math, language, and the arts, Duzine's youngest learners began their journey by focusing on their community and using the information with which they are most familiar.

First grade teachers are immersing their students in an "animal island" theme that calls for research on local wildlife,

including their habitats/ecosystems, food sources, physical features, and life cycles. The children are also honing their mapping skills and are investigating the relationships between the various creatures they are studying.

Second grade students are learning about biomes, self-contained ecosystems where each organism has its own role to play. This unit gives the children the opportunity to investigate what a habitat or ecosystem is, as well as create models that replicate the water cycle and life cycle of plants. Students are able to flex their science muscles by using their measurement and data collection skills, and learning about cause and effect.

"Through interdisciplinary units, our students are able to make connections via discovery learning experiences. As we support them in these experiences, we better understand their learning lives and move them toward deeper levels of understanding," says Principal Debra Hogencamp.



The Mane Event at New Paltz Middle School

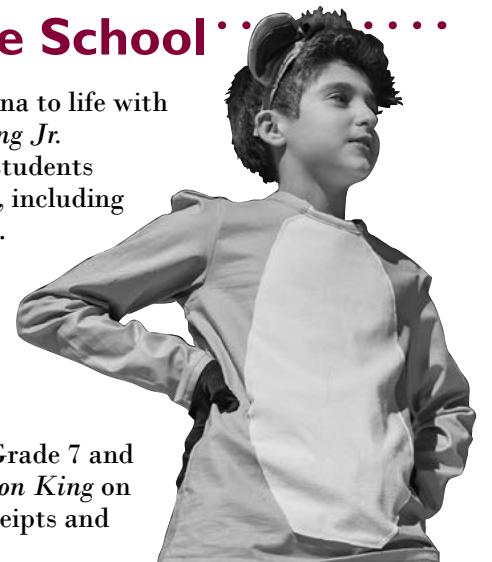
Students in the New Paltz Middle School Drama Club brought the savanna to life with their jubilant and energetic winter production of Disney's *The Lion King Jr.*

In all, more than 120 students participated in the musical, with students involved not only on stage, but in every aspect of the elaborate show, including set and costume design, stage crew, and, of course, performing.

"It was a success for all," said Director Mary Holmes, World Language teacher at New Paltz Middle School.

"Not only did the performers play to packed audiences in the Middle School auditorium, the students also went to Woodland Pond [retirement community] and Barnes & Noble to perform scenes," she said.

When the final curtain closed at the Middle School, Grade 7 and Grade 8 students headed to New York City to see *The Lion King* on Broadway, a trip paid for through their show's ticket receipts and donations.



Message from the Board of Education

Dear fellow community members:

The New Paltz Central School District has a reputation for being one of the top school districts in the region. We are very proud of the stellar academic program, the strong focus placed on social and emotional learning, and the extracurricular opportunities that are available to our children. We recognize and appreciate the investment our taxpayers have made to support this success. We are ever mindful of our responsibility to both the students and the taxpayers.

This year, our budget priorities included maintaining class size and preserving all student programs, sports, afterschool clubs, and activities that students presently enjoy. For the past two years, the Board has also heard a consistent message from many parents and community members that restoration of the Elementary School Library Media Specialist was important to them.

However, after budgeting for rollover cost increases for mandates and contractual obligations, the revenues generated by State Aid and the tax levy limit formula were not sufficient to achieve these priorities.

Instead of proposing cuts, on April 5 the Board of Education made the difficult decision to adopt a proposed school budget that carries a 2.3 percent tax levy increase and requires a 60 percent voter approval. We did so in order to give the community the option to avoid cuts.

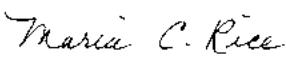
We want to encourage everyone to review the details of the budget found within this newsletter and on our website, and contact our Assistant Superintendent Richard Linden with any questions. He can be reached at 845.256.4010 or by emailing rlinden@newpaltz.k12.ny.us. We would also like to encourage all eligible voters to participate in the election on Tuesday, May 16, from 7 AM to 9 PM at New Paltz High School.

On behalf of the Board of Education, staff, and students, we want to thank our community for participating in the important decisions about the future of the New Paltz Central School District.

Sincerely,



Aimee Hemminger
Board President



Maria C. Rice
Superintendent of Schools

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The District condemns and prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you may make a claim that your rights have been denied. This claim or grievance may be filed with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services Title IX Officer: New Paltz Central School District, 196 Main Street, New Paltz, NY, 12561, (845) 256-4040.

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2017-2018 Proposed School Budget Maintains Class Sizes, Restores Library Position

Tax Levy Increase

When developing the proposed budget, the Board focused on making student-centered decisions. The revenue constraints created by the Tax Levy Limit formula (which permits a 1.2 percent levy increase with simple majority voter approval) posed a challenge. The revenues available through State Aid and generated by a 1.2 percent levy increase were not sufficient to accomplish this goal and also counter the increase in expenses to cover mandates and contractual obligations.

To close this gap in revenues, the Board made the difficult decision to propose a budget that increases the tax levy by 2.3 percent and would therefore require a 60 percent supermajority voter approval.

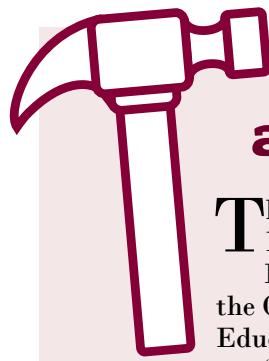
“Before making reductions, we wanted to give the voters the option of a budget that retains all current programs and restores the Elementary School Library Media Specialist,” said Superintendent Maria C. Rice. “There is a 1.1 percent difference between an

‘educationally focused’ budget and a ‘tax cap’ budget, so the Board decided to let the community decide.”

If the proposed budget does not get the required 60 percent voter approval, the Board will make reductions and hold another vote on the third Tuesday in June, a date prescribed by New York State law. Should the second proposal also fail to gain community support, the Board is required to adopt a contingency budget, which would result in cuts totaling \$940,000.

Example of Budget Impact on Tax Bill

Amount of 2016 School Tax Bill	Impact of 2.3% Tax Levy Increase	
\$2,000	\$3.83/month	\$46/year
\$4,000	\$7.66/month	\$92/year
\$6,000	\$11.33/month	\$138/year
\$8,000	\$15.33/month	\$184/year
\$10,000	\$19.16/month	\$230/year



Capital Project Remains on Track and Under Budget

The entirety of the Capital Project is currently on time and under budget, says the District’s construction manager, Luis Rodriguez, of the Palombo Group.

Plans for an addition and renovations to New Paltz Middle School, the largest phase of the Capital Project, have been given the green light by the New York State Department of Education, and bids are anticipated to be awarded in May.

“Over \$7.2 million of construction work has already been awarded, and the bids have come in \$2 million under budget,” says architect Bill Wisbauer from Tetra Tech Architects and Engineers. A redesign of the Middle School plans has also resulted in a projected State Aid increase of more than \$1 million above the amount originally estimated, he says.

Work already completed includes the replacement of:

- Duzine roof
- High School roof
- Middle School slate roof (and select flat areas of the roof)
- Lenape & High School folding walls
- Transportation septic system

Projects currently in the construction phase include:

- Infrastructure upgrades at Duzine & Lenape, scheduled for completion by September.
- Expansion and renovations at the High School. The addition will be complete in August, and the remaining work in October and November.

Projects currently out to bid include:

- Middle School addition and upgrades, which will be phased in over the next two years. The addition is slated for completion in Summer 2018, and the renovations should be completed in the Summer of 2019.
- Technology infrastructure upgrades, which are planned to begin in June, with an anticipated completion date of December 2017.

Plans for the transportation addition and parking lot paving have been submitted to NYSED and approval is pending. Work is anticipated for the Spring/Summer of 2018.



The High School’s new addition will address overcrowding. The expansion project, which broke ground in December, will add five new modern classrooms.

Budget Summary

Expenditure Budget	2016-2017 Budget	2017-2018 Proposed Budget	Change from 2016-2017	Comments
Board of Education	\$34,500	\$44,300	\$9,800	Increased cost of voting machines and software
Superintendent's Office	\$288,200	\$253,600	-\$34,600	Includes superintendent/secretary and office expenses
Business Office	\$486,700	\$497,200	\$10,500	Business office staff and office expenses
Personnel, Legal, Printing, Postage	\$361,500	\$368,300	\$6,800	Increase in personnel ads and records management
Insurance, BOCES Admin Fees	\$659,500	\$685,500	\$26,000	Increase in BOCES administrative fees
Curriculum and Staff Development	\$413,000	\$453,900	\$40,900	Includes assistant superintendent/secretary/staff development
Principals' Offices	\$1,409,600	\$1,457,900	\$48,300	Reflects two years of salary increases
Special Education	\$139,700	\$136,400	-\$3,300	Based on actual salary
Employee Benefits	\$1,372,300	\$1,387,900	\$15,600	Increase in health insurance
TOTAL - Administration	\$5,165,000	\$5,285,000	\$120,000	2.3% Increase
Regular Instruction, AIS, and ESL	\$14,703,700	\$15,352,700	\$649,000	Contractual salary increases. Addition of 2.0 HS teachers for 51 new students, +1.0 Grade 6, -1.0 Grades 3-5, -1.0 Grades K-2 based on enrollment shifts. Also includes existing Coordinator of Student Support Services (0.5 elementary, 0.5 secondary)
Occupational Ed, Summer School	\$814,000	\$888,800	\$74,800	Increase in number of vo-tech students
Special Education	\$7,944,100	\$8,328,400	\$384,300	Increased out-of-district (BOCES) placements/reduced need for teacher aides/ based on student IEPs
Libraries and Educational TV	\$390,500	\$478,400	\$87,900	Restores elementary Library Media Specialist
Computer-Assisted Instruction	\$1,159,000	\$1,188,200	\$29,200	Technology including Internet, BOCES support, phones
Guidance, Health, Psychologists	\$1,596,000	\$1,678,200	\$82,200	Contractual salary increases
Extracurricular and Sports	\$412,400	\$456,700	\$44,300	Retain all sports and student clubs as in 2016-2017
Transportation	\$3,975,800	\$4,129,500	\$153,700	Increased special education runs
Employee Benefits	\$13,894,500	\$14,109,100	\$214,600	Increase in health insurance
Interfund Transfers	\$360,000	\$370,000	\$10,000	
TOTAL - Program	\$45,250,000	\$46,980,000	\$1,730,000	3.8% Increase
Facilities and Operations	\$2,742,000	\$2,647,000	-\$95,000	Eliminate all equipment lines for one year
Judgments and Claims	\$32,000	\$25,000	-\$7,000	
School Buses	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Employee Benefits	\$668,200	\$705,000	\$36,800	Increase in health insurance
Debt Service	\$3,627,800	\$3,358,000	-\$269,800	Decrease due to no Bus BANS
Interfund Transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0	No change
TOTAL - Capital	\$7,070,000	\$6,735,000	-\$335,000	-4.7% Decrease
Total Budget	\$57,485,000	\$59,000,000	\$1,515,000	
% BUDGET INCREASE ==>				2.6%
Revenue Budget	2016-2017	2017-2018	\$ Change	Comments
Tax Levy including STAR	\$40,120,000	\$41,060,000	\$940,000	2.3%
Other Revenue - includes BOCES refund, Interest, Charges to other districts, Rentals, Donations, Admissions	\$1,055,000	\$1,045,000	-\$10,000	Slight decrease in anticipated BOCES refund
State Aid	\$15,310,000	\$15,395,000	\$85,000	Based on executive proposal in January 2017
Federal Aid	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total Revenues	\$56,485,000	\$57,500,000	\$1,015,000	
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$500,000	Increase to support current educational program
Revenues and Fund Balance	\$57,485,000	\$59,000,000	\$1,515,000	
% TAX LEVY INCREASE ==>				2.3%

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	\$57,485,000	\$59,000,000	\$58,060,000
Increase/Decrease for the 2017-2018 School Year		\$1,515,000	\$575,000
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.6%	1.0%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.26%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$40,120,000	\$41,060,000	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$40,120,000	\$41,060,000	\$40,120,000
F. Permissible Exclusions	\$2,447,977	\$2,324,078	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$37,247,023	\$38,275,922	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$37,672,023	\$38,735,922	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	-\$425,000	-\$460,000	
Administrative Component	\$5,165,000	\$5,285,000	\$5,085,000
Program Component	\$45,250,000	\$49,980,000	\$46,240,000
Capital Component	\$7,070,000	\$6,735,000	\$6,735,000

*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: Tax Levy increase would be 0%.

**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):

Description	Amount
NO SEPARATE PROPOSITIONS	

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ \$673

¹ The 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 2017-2018 by the qualified voters of the New Paltz Central School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at New Paltz High School in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM prevailing time in the New Paltz High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

Sample Ballot

Proposition #1 Vote YES or NO

Shall the Board of Education of the New Paltz Central School District be authorized to expend \$59,000,000.00 which will be required for school district purposes for the year July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 (The Budget), and to levy the necessary tax therefor?

Voter Eligibility

All qualified voters may vote on 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 participate on the day of the vote.

VOTE TUESDAY MAY 16, 2017
7 AM - 9 PM at
New Paltz High School

Election of Board of Education Members

You may vote for any two (2) of the candidates listed or write in the name of another person(s) in the spaces provided.

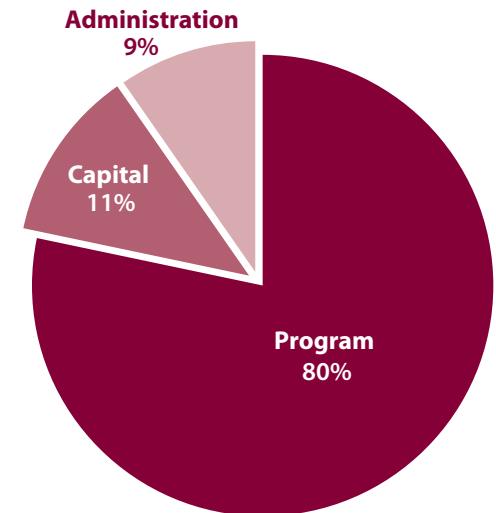
IF YOU VOTE FOR MORE THAN TWO (2) YOUR VOTE WILL NOT BE COUNTED

- Kathy Preston
- Teresa Thompson
- Steven Greenfield
- Write-In _____

Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are 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.

The Three-Part Budget

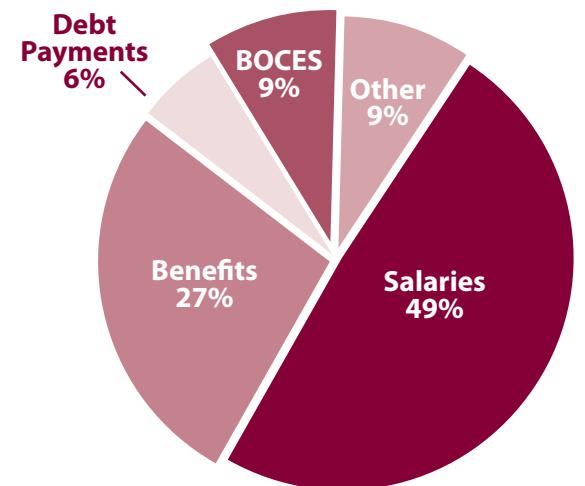


Administration Budget: This section includes school building offices and central administration, along with clerical support, salaries and benefits of all school administrators, Board of Education expenses for planning, and other administrative activities.

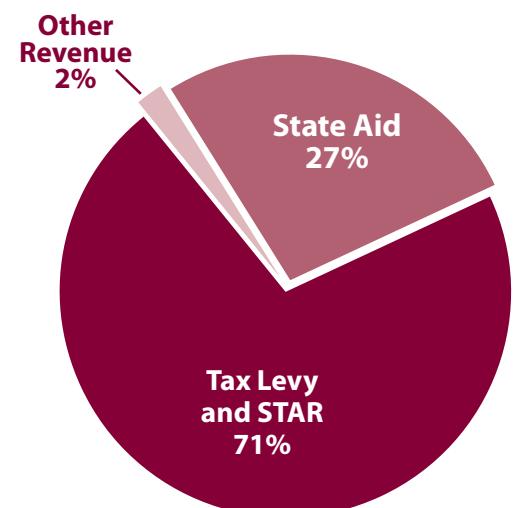
Capital Budget: This area refers to all facilities costs such as custodial salaries and benefits, maintenance salaries and benefits, service contracts, custodial and maintenance supplies, utility costs for heating, electricity, communication, water, and annual capital project debt service.

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



Algorithms—and Robots—Come to Life at the Middle School



Robots aren't just found in science fiction movies; they have also invaded New Paltz Middle School. Using skills learned during an "Hour of Code" event, Laura Bryant's Grade 6 students recently programmed an array of robots, which were on loan from the Ulster BOCES Technology to Go program. The unit was designed to teach and reinforce programming concepts.

To prepare for their upcoming technology experience, Bryant and school librarian MaryAnn Lis-Simmons had the students work on off-line, unplugged coding activities that introduced them to the concepts of algorithms and conditional statements—otherwise defined as if-then statements in which a hypothesis leads to a true or false conclusion.

Students began their coding ventures with Cubelets, modular robots with pre-programmed functions that can be combined to achieve a specific objective. Students also honed their team-working abilities by working in groups to accomplish their desired goals.

For their next STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) challenge, the students tried writing their own algorithms to program a Scribbler robot using a Graphical User Interface. The students relied on problem-solving skills to get their robot to obey the programming language.

Bryant says the lesson was a positive one. "This allowed students to see their algorithms come to life!"

Hour of Code is a nationwide initiative by Code.org that is designed to introduce students to computer science and computer programming during Computer Science Education Week.



High School Students Travel Various Paths to Achieve Success

Students at New Paltz High School can choose various paths to meet their graduation requirements. Some students reach their goals through the traditional classroom model, some take advantage of Advanced Placement classes, and others seek out a hands-on education in a career area related to their interests.

"Supporting students and providing diverse opportunities to meet their needs, interests, and abilities is the heart of our District's Guiding Principles," says Superintendent Maria C. Rice. "We strive to empower all students to achieve success, no matter their chosen path."

One of the paths available to students is enrollment in half-day Ulster BOCES Career & Technical programs. More than two dozen options are available in a variety of career fields. Many students enrolled this year have excelled in their respective programs.



Exploring Robotics

Applying technical and engineering strategies is second nature to six NPHS students enrolled in Ulster BOCES Career & Technical programs who recently participated in a robotics challenge held at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Chris Bendell, Steven Scribani, Maximilian Weires, and Cody Heller (Pre-University/New Visions Advanced Robotics), George Williamson (Electrical Construction & Maintenance), and Hannah Benenati (Graphic Visual Arts) were among the team members who sharpened their teamwork, problem-solving, and communication skills during the New York Tech Valley Regional FIRST Robotics Competition. Steven, pictured with teammates from Saugerties, gives a "thumbs up" during the competition.

Reaching for the Stars

The sky's the limit for NPHS students Steven Scribani and Brandon Eisgruber, who recently had the chance to launch their names into space, thanks to their roles in designing and manufacturing parts for a storage locker destined for the International Space Station. Steven, who is enrolled in the Ulster BOCES Pre-University/New Visions Advanced Robotics & Engineering program, and Brandon, who is an Ulster BOCES Custom Robotics Design & Manufacturing student, added their signatures to the locker in a ceremony attended by the director of the NASA Hunch (High Schools United with NASA to Create Hardware) program. Brandon is shown above.

Student Artists Earn National Acknowledgement

New Paltz High School junior Morgan Heidrich has earned national recognition in the 2016 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition. Morgan won a gold medal in the photography category for his print titled "Forgotten."

Morgan says his idea for the digital image was to convey the feelings of someone being lost, alone, and forgotten in the woods.

His work will be exhibited at the Parsons School of Design in New York City, and he has been invited to join other Scholastic Awards recipients at a ceremony on June 8 at Carnegie Hall.



Another talented NPHS student, Isabelle (Iszy) Szemcsak, won the silver medal for her photograph, "Valerie." The senior's goal for the haunting photo was to fuse her appreciation for Edwardian art and landscape photography.

"We are all very proud of Iszy and Morgan," said NPHS Art teacher Laurene Pountain. "Winning a Scholastic Award on the national level is quite an honor, as they are in the company of artists like Andy Warhol and Richard Avedon, who also won this award in high school."

Morgan, said Pountain, is a talented, promising artist, with an interesting point of view. "I look forward to seeing him grow as he enters his senior year, she said. "Iszy," she added, "is a very creative and independent thinker. She is a confident and dedicated young woman."

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is the nation's longest-running and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in Grades 7–12.

New Paltz Among New York's Top Public High Schools on 2017 Niche List

New Paltz High School (NPHS) is one of the best high schools in New York State, according to Niche (www.niche.com), an online database that helps users compare the relative merits of various schools and neighborhoods. According to this highly competitive list, New Paltz ranks 67th of 1,187 public high schools in New York.

Niche awarded NPHS an overall grade of A+ by taking into account a wide range of factors, including academics, teachers, clubs and activities, diversity, college readiness, and health and safety. In addition to reviews and survey responses from parents, students, and residents, the ranking process included an analysis of test scores, college data, and statistics from the U.S. Department of Education.

The New Paltz Central School District as a whole also fared well on the 2017 Niche list, notes Superintendent Maria Rice, who points out that the District received an overall grade of A+ and a ranking of 63rd among 670 New York school districts.

"I'm very proud of our teachers, administrators, and students, as well as the family and community members who support them," said Superintendent Rice. "At the High School, and at all our schools, we aim to not only uphold exceptional academic standards, but also to help create the kind of flexible, nimble, and independent thinkers who are capable of adapting to new situations and succeeding in today's world."

To view New Paltz High School's "report card," click on <http://bit.ly/2oubJM7>. For information on how the District as a whole was judged, go to <http://bit.ly/2otNbt9>.

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NPHS Drama Club Presents Spring Musical



The New Paltz production, featuring 45 cast members, was supported by a technical crew of 12 and an orchestra of five, including two local music teachers and one student musician (who wrote her own part for the viola).

Drama Club advisor Nancy Owen was thrilled with this year's production. "It's a very different style musical, and a very timely one," she said. "The challenge was for the students to re-create these adult American workers—ordinary people with extraordinary dreams—and they really brought them to life."

Twenty-three students performed solos and/or monologues that were created from actual interviews and woven into creative vignettes, explained Owen. "The cast took the responsibility of creating real people's lives to heart, wanting to communicate the struggles and aspirations of these workers," she said.

Leads included Caroline Schroer (waitress), Caleb Sheedy (fast-food delivery person), Carmen Chu (cleaning woman), Lea Maney (community organizer), Sherap Lama (school teacher), Klaire Branche (factory worker), and Matt Gose (corporate executive).

Owen said that while every show forges a strong bond between cast and crew, "this year's show

New Paltz Announces Valedictorian and Salutatorian

Joshua Berry has been named the 2017 valedictorian of New Paltz High School (NPHS), and Stephanie Stewart-Hill the salutatorian.

In addition to excelling in the classroom with a GPA of 101.5, Joshua is president of the student government, the co-editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, *The Maroon*, and a National AP Scholar.

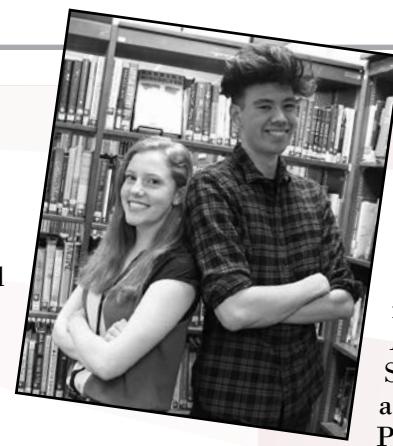
Joshua also has a passion for politics. He has worked with Assemblyman Kevin Cahill and has volunteered for the Congressional campaigns of Sean Eldridge, Will Yandik, and Zephyr Teachout, as well as the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton. He is the founding president of New Paltz High School's chapter of the Junior State of America (JSA), a group that works to prepare and educate high school students for leadership roles. He has also served as finance director on the State Executive Board of the New York High School Democrats, which oversees 21 local chapters, including the NPHS JSA. He is also the co-president of the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership organization New York East Area 1.

In addition to volunteering, Joshua has achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and has assisted Daniel Lipson, assistant professor of Political Science and International Relations at SUNY New Paltz, in his research on race relations in higher education.

Joshua has been accepted to Harvard, Yale, and Stanford Universities and plans to double major in Economics and Public Policy. He hopes to become a policy advisor.

Joshua is honored to have been selected as valedictorian. "I feel incredibly blessed by everyone who has helped me along the way."

Stephanie, with a GPA of 100.3, has been active in school sports as a member of the Cross Country and Nordic Skiing teams. She credits taking ballet classes, beginning at an early age and continuing through her Middle School years, for piquing her interest in sports. "I joined Nordic Skiing in Middle School," says the senior. "I



really liked the socialization, so I tried out in High School and I loved it."

Stephanie has earned multiple athletic awards, including the Mid-Hudson Athletic League's Senior Scholar Athlete Award and the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's Sportsmanship Award for Section 9 Nordic Skiing.

Stephanie is a member of the National Honor Society and was accepted into the National Youth Leadership Forum: Medicine program from her sophomore through her senior years. She remembers it as a valuable experience. "It was intense. I got to go to the hospital and see open knee surgery," she says.

Her extracurricular activities include photography and traveling, as well as teaching Sunday School.

Stephanie will attend the Honors College at the University at Buffalo in the fall, with a major in Psychology and minors in Spanish and Statistics. This spring, Stephanie is further broadening her horizons, this time in the ring when she pursues boxing in place of running track.



had something even more special about it." The only "down side" of this year's production, she said, was the fact that the show's musical director, Nicole Foti, went into labor on opening day and was unable to attend that night's performance. "It made for an exciting opening night!" Owen exclaimed.

The musical was inspired by a book by Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*. Stephen Schwartz and Nina Faso adapted Terkel's book, creating a musical that became a Broadway hit. The music was by Schwartz, James Taylor, Micki Grant, Craig Carnelia, Mary Rodgers, and Lin Manuel Miranda.