

Special Budget Issue 2012-2013

New Paltz HS Students Take Science into the Real World

Each spring, transparent creatures measuring two inches in length swim over 1,000 miles from the Sargasso Sea (near the Bermuda Triangle) to Esopus and other Hudson River estuaries. These tiny glass eels live in local waters for decades before returning to the Sargasso Sea to spawn. Historically abundant, the populations have experienced significant decline

recently, and New Paltz High School students are helping to find out why.

continued on page 12



NPHS students David Weeks and Jenna Moranski clean the net used to capture glass eels as part of DEC study.

PROPOSED BUDGET IS LESS THAN 2011-12 LEVEL:

Focus on Tax Levy and Impact to Program

On Tuesday, May 15, New Paltz School District residents will be asked to approve a \$50,310,000 operating budget for 2012-2013. This proposed budget represents a 0.3% decrease from the current fiscal year's budget; however, this translates to a 4.4% tax levy increase due to the compounded impact of losses of State and Federal Aid totaling more than two million dollars annually. Although the budget is reduced from the current year, new legislation governing tax levy increases means that the budget will need a minimum 60 percent voter approval.

Decreasing the budget was a challenge and required very difficult decisions, including the elimination of 21.2 positions. Once added to prior year's cuts, this brings the total number of positions eliminated since 2010-11 to 56.8 positions. This represents twelve (12%) percent of our total staff.

In an effort to minimize the need to reduce programs and services, the District has also sought efficiencies and creativity in other areas of the budget. One such effort, which is yielding immediate savings, is the consolidation of several Business Office positions into a shared service with another school district through a Central Business Office Service offered by Ulster BOCES.

For more details about the budget and new legislation, as well as information about a bus proposition and the election of Board of Education members, please see pages five through eleven of this newsletter. Additional information can also 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.

VOTE May 15, 2012
12PM-9PM • New Paltz High School

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Knighthorse Brings Shakespeare to Life for Middle School Eighth Graders

For the third year in a row, Shakespeare has come to life at New Paltz Middle School, thanks to Knighthorse Theatre Company. Ty and Amy Lemerande, the husband and wife performance team known as Knighthorse, have brought the works of Shakespeare front and center in classrooms all over the United States, as well as internationally.



Ty and Amy Lemerande of Knighthorse Theatre Company work with NPMS students on a Shakespeare activity.

In New Paltz, eighth graders experience their introduction to the world of William Shakespeare through carefully planned sessions with the seasoned performers. Each English class has a workshop with Ty and Amy where they focus on the language and history of William Shakespeare, the Globe Theatre, and the art of performance. Students take part in interactive exercises to enrich their experience with the language and the story lines. The day culminates with a performance of scenes from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*.

In alignment with the NYS Common Core Learning Standards, the eighth grade curriculum includes studying the language and history of Shakespeare, as well as the Globe Theatre, various sonnets, and *Taming of the Shrew*. Students gain an appreciation of Shakespeare's use of comedic elements and an understanding of his manipulation of language for effect. Most students finish the day with a different, and usually more favorable, opinion of Shakespeare than they had when they entered their classroom.

FROM NYS LEARNING STANDARDS WEBSITE:

To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students' own thinking and writing. Along with high-quality contemporary works, these texts should be chosen from among seminal U.S. documents, the classics of American literature, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts.

Plants Not the Only Things Growing in New Paltz CSD Green Classrooms

Three years ago, New Paltz elementary students began experiencing an extension of their classroom learning — in the garden. As most gardeners know, the fruits of labors in the soil can grow exponentially each season. Such is the case for the Green Classrooms at Duzine and Lenape, and not just for the plants!

This past fall, Lenape Elementary School celebrated its 2nd Annual Pumpkin Fest, with students and staff rotating

through various hands-on learning stations. At one station, they used hand lenses to draw scientific illustrations of plant parts that they then combined into a huge garden illustration collage that is now posted in the school. Students also wove grasses, leaves, and berries to create a harvest wreath and garland that decorates their garden to this day. At other stations, they solved pumpkin riddles, enjoyed some local tales, created recordings for a blogspot about the garden, and enjoyed pumpkin soup made by Chef Snapper with pumpkins harvested from their own garden. The experience continued with each class subsequently receiving a corn cob and popping directions to make fresh popcorn in their classrooms.

Earlier this month at Duzine Elementary School, students and staff held their 3rd Annual Earth Day Festival, a day-long celebration involving the entire school in learning and celebrating the earth and their Green Classroom. Each hour, five classrooms circled through five outdoor stations, including garden work, a puppet show, a scavenger hunt, music circle, and story time.

At the garden work station, students dug into a host of hands-on experiences, including identifying crops, watering plants, and cutting and tasting asparagus. During story time, they read *Pickin' Peas* by Margaret Mead MacDonald and then tasted fresh pea sprouts from the school's garden. In the scavenger hunt, pairs



◀ (From left) Mark Laborde, Adrian Cardenas, Jared Bilyou, and Ashley Thacker participated in one of the activity stations at the Lenape Pumpkin Fest last fall.

Lenape students observed and assisted with an activity in one of their Green Classroom's planting beds. ▶



Charlton Tsai and Melanie Schmidt Lead NPHS Class of 2012

Charlton Tsai is New Paltz High School's Class of 2012 Valedictorian and **Melanie Schmidt** is its Salutatorian.

With a GPA of 101.7% (over 100% due to weighted averaging for AP and college-level courses), Charlton will leave NPHS not only as their leading academic student, but with a host of other academic awards and honors. Over the course of his high school tenure, he has been named a National Merit Scholarship Finalist and an AP Scholar with Distinction, as well as earned the NPHS Excellence in Mathematics Award. He is a member of the National Honor Society and the Mid-Hudson Athletic League All-Academic Team. In addition to excelling in the classroom, Charlton was a member of both the Varsity Cross Country and the Track and Field Teams all four years at NPHS, with his Track and Field relay team advancing to the NYS qualifier. He also participated in the Nordic Ski Team in tenth grade. In addition to academics and athletics, this year's valedictorian also excels in music as a member of the NPHS Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, and Marching Band. Among his honors in this arena are



NPHS 2012 Class Valedictorian Charlton Tsai (l) and Class Salutatorian Melanie Schmidt (r).

All County Band (2005-2010), Area All State Band (2009-2010), and winner of the 2008 Hudson-Catskill Music Teachers Association Piano Competition. An active leader, Charlton served as president of his class in his sophomore year, treasurer of his class in senior year, treasurer for the National Honor Society, and editor for the school newspaper, *The Maroon*. He also participated in the 2011 Ulster County Championship Mock Trial Team. Charlton is planning to attend Cornell University and will major in pre-medicine.

As of press time, Melanie Schmidt was planning to attend University of Vermont. While undecided on a major,

Melanie's interests span a wide spectrum. While at NPHS, she was a member of both the Marching Band and the Drum Line as well as the Poetry Club. A believer in giving back, she volunteered her time as a peer tutor in the school, helping other students with their studies, and at Historic Huguenot Street, the National Historic Landmark District right here in New Paltz. Melanie's GPA was 99.5. She was also a National Merit Scholarship Commended Student and member of the National Honor Society.

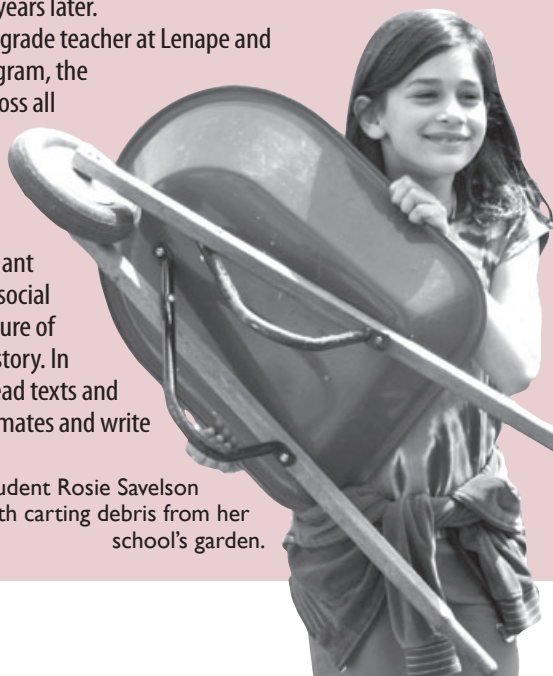
of students set out to find a wide host of items, including things that were "pointy" such as a spiked leaf on a plant or "brown" like a bird's nest. In the music circle, groups sang songs about the earth and how important it is to take care of it.

The puppet show, titled *Clean the Earth Every Day*, was a collaborative effort between the kindergartners and students from New Paltz High School. Organized through Kindergarten teacher Rebecca Burdett, NPHS students in the PIGLETS class (Participation in Government, Literature, and Economics for Today's Students) worked with the children to create and produce the show. In the story, people from different walks of life are faced with situations where the earth is being harmed and they find ways to protect it, while engendering the help of others. The kindergartners performed as the puppets while the PIGLETS students constructed the stage and scenery, which they subsequently donated to Lenape for future puppet show projects. Two of the NPHS students were former Kindergarten students of Ms. Burdett's, returning to the school 13 years later.

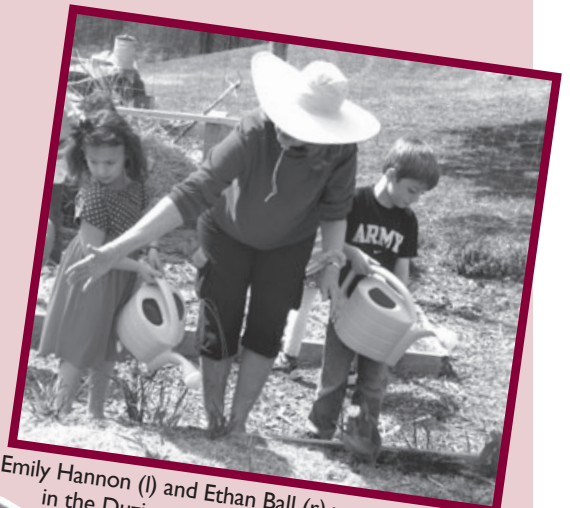
According to Matt Elkin, second grade teacher at Lenape and organizer of the entire Earth Day program, the Green Classroom infuses learning across all subjects. Not only do students learn about the science of the earth and growing living things, they also apply their math skills in activities such as counting seeds, measuring plant beds, and weighing their harvest. In social studies, they learn about the agriculture of different geographies throughout history. In English language arts classes, they read texts and fiction about gardens, plants, and climates and write

about their experiences. For example, during the school's Scarecrow Festival this past fall, each class built and subsequently wrote a biography for their own scarecrow.

Both schools are gearing up for another prolific growing season for both their gardens and their students. They are tracking and evaluating their progress to date and using that information to help them develop future plans. Some of the new ideas include planting gourds, a pizza garden, and luffa for sponges to take home. Parents and others are welcome to visit the Green Classroom gardens. Both schools also invite families and others to sign up for a week this summer to weed, water, and harvest the garden for community donations to families in need. For more information, contact Lenape Elementary School at 845-256-4300 or Duzine Elementary School at 845-256-4350.



Duzine student Rosie Savelson helped with carting debris from her school's garden.



Emily Hannon (l) and Ethan Ball (r) watered plants in the Duzine garden with direction from substitute teacher Bobbie Stratton.

Six Candidates Vie for Three Seats on Board of Education

Published below are photos and profiles of six candidates running for three seats on the New Paltz Board of Education, those currently held by KT Tobin-Flusser, Daniel Torres, and Barbara Carroll. Voters may cast their ballots for three (3) of the six (6) candidates listed or write in the name of another person(s). IF YOU VOTE FOR MORE THAN THREE (3), YOUR VOTE WILL NOT BE COUNTED.

Marvin Birnbaum, Town of New Paltz



Family law attorney with accounting experience; father of two boys who will be attending Duzine shortly

"As a school board member, I will seek to ensure that our school taxes are spent wisely so that we receive maximum value for each dollar spent. I will pursue greater communication between the school board and various civic and political groups. I believe good schools are vital to our community. They attract better residents, produce better citizens, and enhance property values. I will make sure any proposal crafted by the school board explicitly states what the alternative is and highlight why we are making these choices. I will seek to make the alternative choices available to the public."

Brian Cournoyer, Town of New Paltz



Village of New Paltz resident; parent of two elementary students; involved in the community; regularly attends school board meetings

"I am running for school board because I believe that no public service is more important than a high quality public education. It is the greatest public good of all, affecting the lives and future of both our children and our community as a whole. New Paltz Schools offer great educational opportunities to our children, but we didn't reach this level of excellence overnight. In these times of economic stress and reduced state and federal aid, it's important that we don't lose sight of what really matters. We need to find innovative and fiscally responsible ways to maintain this excellent educational program. I am committed to helping reach these goals."

Tanya Marquette, Town of Gardiner



32-year Gardiner resident; life-long education activist; mother of two NPHS graduates and grandmother; construction business owner

"Many people have encouraged me to run for the school board because of the controversy concerning facilities needs and the seeming conflict between building needs and quality education. My background as a building contractor, along with many years of active involvement in our school district's finances, educational program, and students' social-psychological development, equip me to collaborate on coordinating all these needs into completing a single Comprehensive District Plan. We can balance our problem of the community's finances and our desire for high quality education for our children by advocating meaningful community involvement in decision-making with the district. Completing the Comprehensive District Plan, balancing education finances with finances of the community, and permanently incorporating community involvement in decision-making are my commitments."

Dominick Profaci, Town of Gardiner



20-year resident; parent of three children; current Vice President of NPCSD Foundation for Student Enhancement; strong background in engineering and finance

"I am running for the NPCSD Board of Education because I believe the education and opportunities provided in our district are exemplary and I don't want to see these dismantled in any way. I am running with a focus on preserving the education currently afforded to the children of our community. One of the largest challenges facing the concept of preservation is the state's continued reduction in financial aid to public schools. The bulk of the costs have been shifted to the taxpayers through an inequitable property tax based system. This needs to become a focus of the BOE. My work experience will go a long way to help our district be as streamlined and efficient as possible. Please support me on May 15th."

Ruth Quinn, Town of Esopus



Mother of three elementary-age students, including one with autism; over 20 years of non-profit leadership, educational programming, grant-writing, and advocacy

"I am a website administrator and advocate vested in community agency collaboration. The education budget should not simply be the answer to the question 'How much will my taxes go up?' Each issue that comes before the board must be addressed from the perspective of how it impacts students. We are in a fiscal crisis and our community is dividing at a time when cooperation is essential. If we do not confront this crisis head on, our children will be the losers. I am an advocate for students who deserve a quality education and also for a community that needs to continue to be a desired and affordable place to live, work, and play. I will bring extensive knowledge of educational mandates to this challenge."

Julie Tresco, Town of Esopus



15-year resident; parent of two young children; taxpayer and supporter of quality education for our 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 taxpayer's 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."

New Paltz

May 2012

2012-2013 Budget

Central School District

Quick Facts About the Budget

Current Budget.....	\$50,480,000
Proposed Budget.....	\$50,310,000
Total Budget Decrease.....	-\$170,000
Budget-to-Budget Decrease.....	- 0.3%
Tax Levy Threshold.....	3.4%
Tax Levy Increase Under Proposed Budget.....	4.4%
Voter Approval Needed.....	60%
Loss of State/Federal Aid.....	Over \$2 Million per year
Contingency Budget.....	\$48,810,000
Contingency Budget Decrease.....	- 3.3%
Tax Levy Increase Under Contingency.....	0%
District True Tax Rate per Thousand.....	\$17.28
County Median True Tax Rate per Thousand.....	\$18.42

We've Got a Lot to Be Proud Of!

- ★ New Paltz HS listed on *Newsweek/Washington Post* Best High Schools in the Nation list for five consecutive years
- ★ Highest Regents diploma rate and lowest dropout rate in Ulster County
- ★ Highest performance on Grade 3-8 NYS ELA test in Ulster County in five of six grades
- ★ Highest performance on Grade 3-8 NYS Math test in Ulster County in three of six grades and second highest in another

BUDGET DECREASES SPENDING, MINIMIZES IMPACT ON PROGRAMS:

Requires 60 Percent Voter Approval

Each year, we use this opportunity to communicate with you about the challenges we face in trying to build a budget that maintains academic and support programs offered to students while trying to contain costs for our taxpayers.

In recent years, we have been faced with dramatic increases in some of our expenses, including pension funds and health insurance. Coupled with significant cuts in State and Federal aid and declining interest revenues, the situation has forced some extremely difficult decisions including staff reductions.

Adding to these challenges, school districts in New York State must now operate under new legislation that sets a base tax levy threshold and changes the corresponding level of voter approval necessary. Referred to by Governor Cuomo as a "two percent tax cap," this new legislation is neither a cap nor two percent. Instead, it is a complex formula used to establish a limit on the tax levy increase that a school district can propose to voters without needing a supermajority voter approval of at least 60 percent. The tax levy represents the total amount of money collected through local property taxes. It does not mean the amount an individual's taxes would increase, which is determined by the tax rate in relation to the individual's assessed value. In 2012-2013, the allowable thresholds across the State vary from less than zero percent to over six percent. Each school's formula is specific to them and is based on ten pieces of data.

Districts that propose a budget within their calculated tax levy threshold require a simple majority vote for the budget to pass. Those opting for a budget proposal higher than their calculated threshold require a 60 percent supermajority to pass.

The base tax levy threshold for New Paltz is 3.4 percent. This translated into a \$510,000 reduction from our current budget year. In our earlier budget meetings, the Board had to consider significant program reductions and eliminations in order to reach this number. After weighing the impact of the cuts to students relative to the costs, the school board approved a \$50,310,000 budget proposal for 2012-2013 that represents a 4.4 percent increase on the tax levy and will require a 60 percent supermajority approval.

While the budget still represents a \$170,000 decrease in spending from the current year, it protects a number of programs previously slated for reduction or elimination, including our prekindergarten class, foreign language in the elementary grades, class sizes around 23 in kindergarten through grade four, and all levels (modified, JV, and varsity) of sports teams. Details on the budget and how it is affecting staffing and program are on pages 6 and 7.

Please take the time to read through this newsletter and become familiar with these important issues. Most importantly, please come out to vote on May 15.

Sincerely,

Patrick Rausch
Patrick Rausch
Board President

Maria C. Rice
Maria C. Rice
Superintendent of Schools

After weighing the impact of the cuts to students relative to the costs, the school board approved a \$50,310,000 budget proposal for 2012-13.

VOTE
VOTE
VOTE

May 15, 2012
12PM-9PM

New Paltz High School

2012-2013 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Educational Programs Eliminated or Reduced:

- ✘ One less section in Grades 5 and 6 resulting in increased class sizes
 - ✘ Corresponding reductions in art, music, and physical education for reduced sections in Grades 5 and 6
 - ✘ Elementary library program reduced (Lenape and Duzine to share library media specialist)
 - ✘ Increased class sizes for MS and HS classes
 - ✘ 24% clubs/co-curricular activities (10 out of 41 advisor stipends)
- HS:** Play/Drama Club; Snow Club, SADD, Literary Magazine, Poetry Club
MS: Rock & Soul; Art Club, Reflections
Lenape: All County Band & Chorus

Support Programs Eliminated or Reduced:

- ✘ Streamline/reorganization of some special education services
- ✘ Reduction of one mail/courier run daily
- ✘ Elimination of scheduled Saturday custodial coverage (groups using buildings will be charged)
- ✘ Elimination of System Operator stipends (staff will start shift later in day)
- ✘ Reductions in supplies, textbooks, and library books
- ✘ Reductions in some contracted services budgets
- ✘ Movement of 50% of Business Office functions to a Central Business Office through BOCES (shared with other school districts)

Programs Maintained:

- ✓ One Pre-Kindergarten class
- ✓ Elementary class sizes for Kindergarten through Grade 4
- ✓ Elementary foreign language program for Grades 1 through 6
- ✓ Field trips
- ✓ AP and college credit-bearing courses
- ✓ All athletic programs (Modified – JV – Varsity)
- ✓ 76% of clubs/co-curricular activities
- ✓ Summer school opportunities for HS and MS students

Staffing Reductions Needed to Contain Costs

Because of the staffing levels required to run schools, a district's largest expense is almost always its payroll. New Paltz is no exception, with salaries and benefits comprising 77% of the total budget. When faced with multiple years of declining revenues, districts eventually find themselves having to eliminate staffing. Since 2010-11, a total of 35.6 positions have been eliminated. For 2012-2013, an additional 21.2 full-time equivalents (FTEs) are slated for reduction, for a total of 56.8 positions. (School districts employ some staff part-time, thereby equating those positions to anywhere from 0.1 to 0.9 of a 1.0 FTE.) Some reductions are being realized through attrition, while some positions are being moved to BOCES and others are layoffs. Here are the details:

Classroom Instructional Staff Reductions: 5.8 Total

2 Elementary Teachers	Reductions in one section in each of Grades 5 and 6	Layoff
0.4 Elementary Music, Art, PE	Corresponding reductions in Grades 5 and 6	Part-Time/Retirement
1 MS Teacher	Increase in core class sizes in Grades 7 and 8	Layoff/Part-Time
2.4 HS Teachers	Increase in core class sizes in Grades 9 through 12	Layoff/Part-Time

Other Certified/Licensed Staff Reductions: 3.5 Total

1 Elementary Library Media Specialist	Share services of one library media specialist for two schools	Layoff
0.5 School Psychologist	Multi-year plan to restructure special education services	Reduction to Part-Time
1 Occupational Therapist	Based on reduced caseload and outsourcing services	Layoff
1 Special Ed Teaching Asst	Based on reduced caseload	Retirement

Support Staff Reductions: 9.7 Total

1 Clerical Worker	Reorganizing duties in Facilities & Operations Department	Layoff
1 Custodial Worker	Elimination of scheduled Saturday coverage	Retirement
0.5 Courier	Reorganize duties and reduction of one daily mail run	Assignment Adjustment
2.2 Monitors	Reorganizing to ensure coverage	Layoff/Part-Time
4 Teacher Aides	Reduction in Special Education caseload	Layoff
1 LPN/Teacher Aide	Reduction in Special Education caseload	Currently Unfilled

District Office Staff Reductions: 2.2 Total

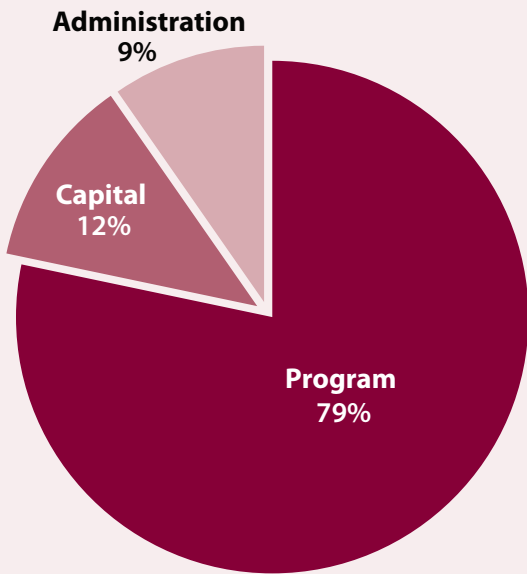
1 Principal Account Clerk	Services to be provided through BOCES	Moving to BOCES
1 Account Clerk/Typist	Services to be provided through BOCES	Moving to BOCES
0.2 Claims Auditor	Services to be provided through BOCES	Layoff

Some Staffing Reductions Translate to Class-Size Increases

When faced with shrinking revenues year after year, finding where and how to reduce staff while protecting instructional programs becomes increasingly challenging. School districts look to those positions that will have the least impact first. The 2012-2013 school budget marks the fourth year in a row that New Paltz CSD has had to make significant staffing reductions in order to contain the tax rate increase. As a result, class sizes at most levels will be impacted. Because the school board opted to put forth a budget that carries a 4.4% tax levy increase, class sizes in Kindergarten through Grade 4 will not significantly increase as a result of reduced staffing and sections. In each of Grades 5 and 6, one section will be eliminated, which will increase the class size in each. (See chart.) Because class sizes at the High-School level are influenced largely by scheduling, it is not feasible to report class sizes here.

Grade	2011-2012 Average Class Size	2012-2013 Average Class Size
Pre-K	16.0	16-18
K	20.5	19.9
1	20.6	22.0
2	22.2	21.1
3	22.3	22.5
4	21.6	22.8
5	21.6	25.7
6	25.4	26.2

The Three-Part Budget

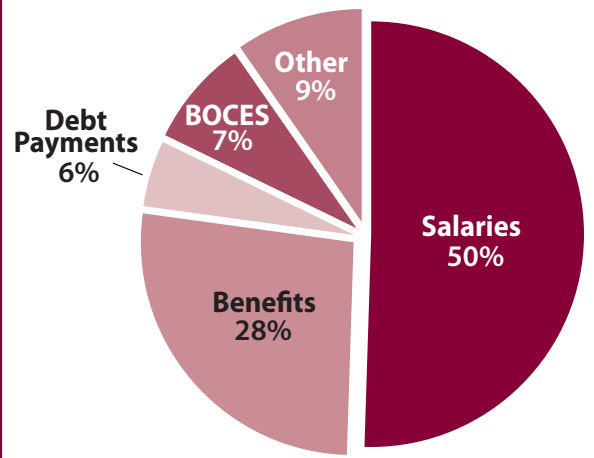


Administration Budget: This section includes school building offices and central administration, along with clerical support, salaries and benefits of all school administrators, Board of Education expenses for planning, and other administrative activities.

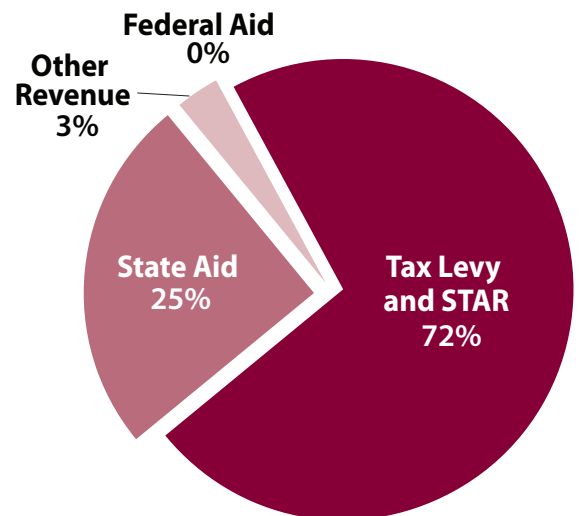
Capital Budget: This area refers to all facilities costs such as custodial salaries and benefits, maintenance salaries and benefits, service contracts, custodial and maintenance supplies, utility costs for heating, electricity, communication, water, and annual capital project debt service.

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

Assumptions used for projecting a contingency budget:

- 1 Eliminate all musical instrument, furniture & equipment purchases
- 2 Eliminate 50% of remaining student club stipends
- 3 Eliminate modified & JV interscholastic athletics
- 4 Eliminate Pre-K program (2.0)
- 5 Eliminate Grade 1-4 teachers (4.0)
- 6 Eliminate Grade 1-6 foreign language program (2.8)
- 7 Eliminate guidance counselor (1.0), social worker (1.0)
- 8 Eliminate Grade 7-8 teacher (1.0), Grade 9-12 teachers (2.0)
- 9 Reduce elementary art, music, physical education (-1.0)
- 10 Eliminate night custodian (1.0) - limiting building access
- 11 Reductions in Admin clerical support - (1.0)
- 12 Reductions in Admin BOCES lines
- 13 Eliminate building clerical support (1.0)

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget adopted for 2011-2012	Budget Proposed for 2012-2013	Contingency Budget for 2012-2013
TOTAL BUDGET AMOUNT	\$50,480,000	\$50,310,000	\$48,810,000
Increase for the 2012-2013 school year		(\$170,000)	(\$1,670,000)
Percentage increase in proposed budget		-0.3%	-3.3%
Change in consumer price index		3.2%	
School Tax Levy Limit		\$33,948,671	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy (without permissible exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit)		\$34,288,671	\$34,060,000
Total Permissible Exclusions		\$1,271,329	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy (including permissible exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit)	\$34,060,000	\$35,560,000	\$34,060,000
Administrative component	\$4,810,000	\$4,790,000	\$4,620,000
Program component	\$39,370,000	\$39,720,000	\$38,450,000
Capital component	\$6,300,000	\$5,800,000	\$5,740,000
Total Budget	\$50,480,000	\$50,310,000	\$48,810,000

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings

Basic STAR Savings

Budget Proposed for 2012-2013

\$621



The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2012-2013 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 15, 2012 between the hours of 12:00 noon and 9:00 pm prevailing time, at which time the polls will be open to voting 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). Despite the fact that the overall budget is less than last year, the 2012-2013 proposal calls for a 4.4% increase in the tax levy, which is 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 2011 total tax bill. Multiply it by 0.044 for your estimated September 2012 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 2011 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 2011 Tax Bill: _____

Multiply by 0.044: _____

Equals Annual Increase: _____

Divide by 12 for
Monthly Increase: _____

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.

Under the new legislation, NYS mandates a zero percent 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, and extra and co-curricular activities are not. For 2012-2013, the contingency budget level for New Paltz CSD is \$1,670,000 less than the 2011-2012 budget. In order to arrive at this mandated spending limit under a contingency budget, additional cuts over and above what is already projected in the proposed budget could include the Pre-Kindergarten program, the elementary foreign language program, class sizes in all grades, all musical instrument, furniture and equipment purchases, 50% of student clubs, additional administrative and school clerical and custodial positions, a guidance counselor, a social worker, and reductions in BOCES administrative support.

Why Does the Proposed Budget Exceed the Governor's Promised Two Percent "Tax Cap"

Earlier this year, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation limiting school districts to what he called a "two percent tax cap." While this language seems simple to understand, it does not completely represent the actual legislation. The legislation provides for a formula to calculate a tax levy limit. The tax levy is the total amount of money that the District receives in property taxes from all of the properties contained within its boundaries. The new formula for the tax levy includes ten different variables of which the "two-percent" is just one. Almost all districts come out with a final tax levy limit other than two percent. In New Paltz, our tax levy limit based on this formula is 3.4%. If New Paltz were to adopt a 2012-2013 budget at this 3.4% tax levy limit, it would require deeper program cuts. The school board opted to propose a budget that protects as many student programs as possible while containing the tax levy increase to 4.4%. This decision under the new law means a change in the minimum percentage of yes votes required for the budget to pass. As of this year, the percentage of yes votes required to pass a school budget is attached to the tax levy limit. Districts that choose to stay within their calculated tax levy limit require a simple majority of yes votes (50% plus one vote). Those who choose to exceed their tax levy limit require 60% of yes votes, which is the case in New Paltz this year.

VOTE
VOTE
VOTE

May 15, 2012

12PM-9PM

New Paltz High School



Sample Ballot

Proposition #1 YES * NO *

“Shall the Board of Education of the New Paltz Central School District be authorized to expend \$50,310,000 which will be required for school district purposes for the year July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 (The Budget), and to levy the necessary tax therefor?” Adoption of this budget requires a tax levy increase of 4.4% which exceeds the statutory tax levy increase limit of 3.4% for this school fiscal year and therefore exceeds the state tax cap and must be approved by sixty percent of the qualified voters present and voting.

Proposition #2 YES * NO *

Shall the Board of Education of the New Paltz Central School District, Ulster County, New York, be authorized to purchase one 65-passenger or larger school bus at a maximum estimated cost of \$113,000, and four 20-passenger or smaller school buses at a cost of \$47,500 each, for a maximum estimated cost of \$190,000; and one 7-passenger or smaller vehicle at a maximum estimated cost of \$36,000, for an aggregate maximum estimated cost of \$339,000; and that the sum of \$339,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of said School District and collected in annual installments, as provided by Section 416 of the Education Law, and, in anticipation of such tax, obligations of the District shall be issued.

Proposition 2: Bus Fleet Maintenance Continues

As part of a multi-year cycle to spread costs and minimize tax impact, voters are being asked to approve an additional \$339,000 in spending next year for transportation vehicles. The funds will cover purchase of one large bus, four small buses, and one seven-passenger vehicle. They average 152,000 in mileage and have become very costly to maintain. The seven-passenger vehicle is a new purchase to more cost-efficiently cover an extended weekly run to Batavia, NY. New Paltz CSD shares this run and the costs with another district.

In the past, the District included funds for the purchase of vehicles in the general operating budget. However, when fiscal challenges amplified, the school board decided to give the community greater flexibility in its voting decisions. This marks the second consecutive year for a separate proposition on transportation. The proposition requires a majority vote to pass.

What Will the Transportation Proposition Cost?

If approved, the \$339,000 will translate to an additional one percent increase in the tax levy.

COST VS. PERFORMANCE

How NPCSD Compares to Other Districts

A common mantra in organizations of all kinds and sizes is “doing more with less.” School districts up and down the Hudson Valley are struggling with how to reduce costs while improving student performance. One way that schools measure their cost-efficiency is through the annual per-pupil-expenditure (PPE). This measure is arrived at by taking the annual school budget and dividing it by the total number of students enrolled. For the current 2011-2012 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 2011-12, the New Paltz true tax rate was third lowest in the county and below the median.

Ulster County Regents Diploma Rates 2010-2011

Source: NYS Report Card 2010-11

	% Graduates with Regents Diploma	% Graduates with Regents Diploma w/ Distinction
Highest in Ulster County	94%	48%
Lowest in Ulster County	80%	30%
Ulster County Average	89%	39%
New Paltz High School	94%	44%

Ulster County Dropout Rates 2010-2011

Source: NYS Report Card 2010-11

	% Dropping Out of HS	% Students Not Completing HS
Highest in Ulster County	3%	6%
Lowest in Ulster County	0%	1%
Ulster County Average	1.6%	2.5%
New Paltz High School	0%	1%

Through this data analysis, New Paltz CSD tracks its fiscal efficiency against academic achievement with the goal to continue to contain costs while maintaining student performance.

Ulster County Per Pupil Expenditures 2011-12

Data Analysis from Mid-Hudson School Study Council (MHSSC)

Highest PPE in Ulster County	\$32,614
Lowest PPE in Ulster County	\$18,113
Ulster County Average PPE	\$22,420
New Paltz CSD PPE	\$21,796

Ulster County True Tax Rates 2011-12

Data Analysis from MHSSC

Highest True Tax Rate in Ulster County	\$21.40
Lowest True Tax Rate in Ulster County	\$11.36
Ulster County Median True Tax Rate	\$18.42
New Paltz CSD True Tax Rate	\$17.28

For the 2010-2011 school year, New Paltz students ranked highest on many comparative academic measures. Elementary students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 outperformed their counterparts in Ulster County in five out of the six grades tested in English language arts and in three out of the six grades tested in math. New Paltz High School graduated the highest percentage of students with Regents diplomas (94%) in the county and had the lowest dropout rate (0%).

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 anticipated increase equates to \$7.33 per month or \$88 annually. For homeowners paying \$6,000 a year in school taxes, the anticipated increase equates to \$22.00 per month, or \$263 annually. See the worksheet on page 9 to calculate your projected increase.

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

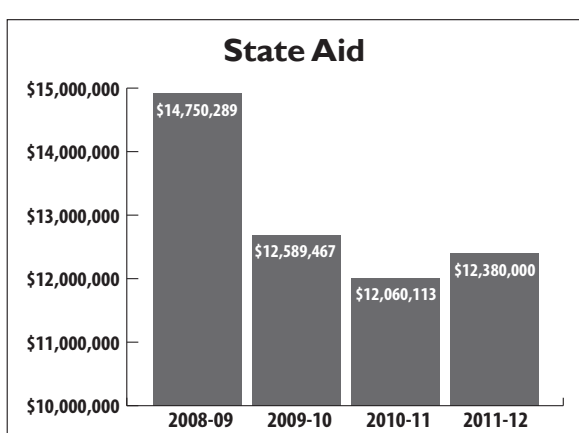
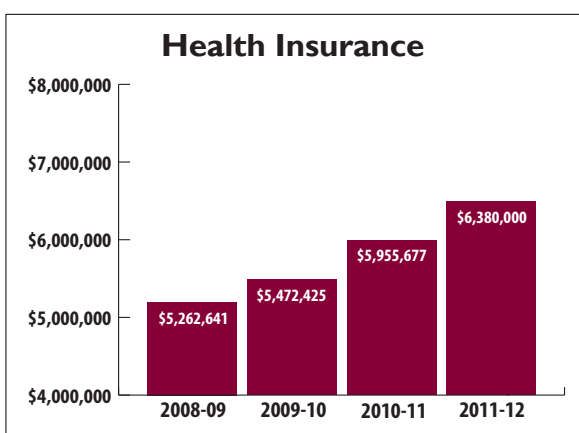
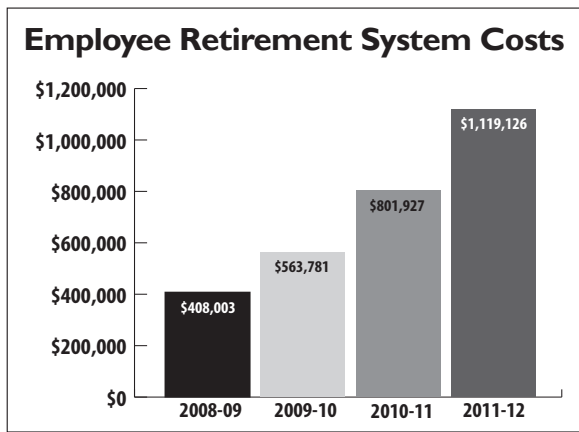
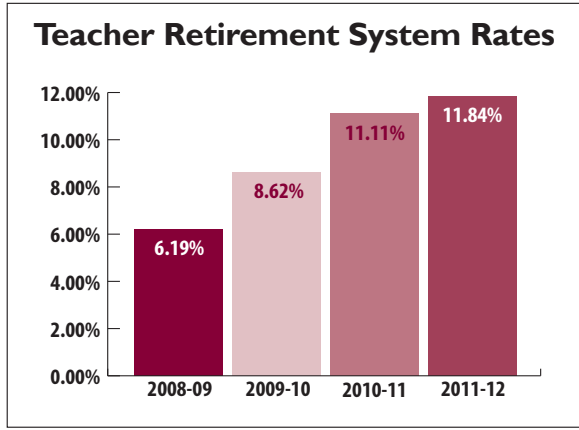
In actuality, the new “2% tax cap” law is more complex. This is explained in more detail on page 9. Under the new laws, school districts have two options when building their budgets. They can either propose a budget with a tax levy increase that falls at or below the limit imposed by the new laws or 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. Because of the formula and the exclusions, the tax levy threshold limit for New Paltz this year is 3.4%. Proposing a budget with a 3.4% tax levy increase would have meant significant reductions to many student programs, so the school board opted to exceed the tax levy threshold. The budget being proposed carries a 4.4% tax levy threshold.

How come the budget requires 60% approval to pass this year?

The new laws regarding school budgets also affect the percentage of votes required for a budget to pass. If the tax levy threshold is at or below the limit (see previous question), the budget requires a simple majority to pass — 50% of the votes plus one. For a higher limit, it requires a supermajority of 60% of the votes. Because the tax levy increase for the proposed New Paltz budget is 4.4%, the budget will require a supermajority to pass this year.

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

The increase that the school district projects is on the tax levy and not on the actual tax rate. The tax levy is the total amount of all of the monies the District collects 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 on page 9); however, please understand that the final rate could vary because of changes in assessments.

Why are we still cutting programs and staff when the budget for next year is less than what we are spending this year?

Just like in a household budget, certain items in a school budget increase each year, some of which the District can control and others of which the District has little or no control. Over the past three years, NYS school districts have experienced huge increases in health insurance and pension costs. This trend continues into 2012–2013, with another \$494,500 increase in employee benefits expected for New Paltz. Simultaneously, revenues from federal aid and other sources are expected to decrease by approximately \$1,000,000. When faced with closing this huge gap, the school board had to choose between program cutbacks or passing on the gap to the local taxpayer in the form of a large tax increase. In order to keep the tax levy increase at 4.4%, they had to propose a budget that came in lower than the current year. But because revenues are down and certain uncontrollable expenses are up, additional program cuts had to be made.

What happens if the budget does not pass?

If the budget does not pass by 60%, 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 increase as a contingency budget. NYS law dictates what can and cannot be covered under a contingency budget. For New Paltz, this translates to an additional \$1.5 million in cuts, which would mean further program elimination and additional class size increases.

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.

New Paltz HS Students Take Science into the Real World

...continued from page 1

Each Wednesday after school, from March through May, a group of student volunteers board a bus and head to Black Creek in Esopus. Under the direction of science teacher Dave Thibodeau, they walk about one-half mile from the bus parking lot to the mouth of the estuary. Along the way, they retrieve a bin that has all of their supplies.

Once at the location, each student takes on a task. Some measure and record the air and water temperatures. Some don waders and enter the water to harvest the eels that have been captured in a ten-foot, cone-shaped fyke net. Others clean the nets. The team then counts the eels, weighs them, and records their findings in a log. They return the log and all of their equipment to the bin for the next volunteer group to use. On their way back to the bus, they stop upstream to set the tiny eels free in waters far from the nets.



NPHS science teacher and DEC Eel Project advisor, Dave Thibodeau (center back) with some of the students volunteering with the project this year.

Students elect to participate for a variety of reasons including meeting community service hour requirements, receiving extra credit in their science class, or fulfilling an interest in science, the environment, or marine life. According to Mr. Thibodeau, the project has attracted a wide spectrum of students in the four years since it started.

New Paltz HS is one of many volunteer groups who participate in the study at Black Creek. Still other groups monitor eight additional sites throughout Dutchess, Putnam, Ulster, Rockland, Greene, Albany, and Westchester counties. Data from this project will be

submitted to multi-state management plans for eel conservation, a valuable food and commercial resource in many states and countries. For additional information on the project and the results to date, visit www.dec.ny.gov.

◀ Dakota Reinike (l) and Jackie Cordovano (r) don waders prior to entering the Hudson.

After capturing, counting and weighing the eels, Kayla Brill (l) and Jenna Moranski (r) release them back into the Hudson upstream from the nets. ▼



(From right) Kerry Gulliksen, Jackie Cordovano, Dakota Reinike, and Owen Desmery use a fyke net to harvest the glass eels while Jenna Moranski (l) and teacher Dave Thibodeau (second from left) observe. ▶

