

in

south
colonie
central
schools

focus

May
2010

Preparing World Class Citizens

NEW BUDGET AT A GLANCE

- **Total 2010-11 budget: \$89,395,000**
- **Budget-to-budget increase: 0.89%**
- **State aid decrease of: \$3.7 million or 15%**
- **Estimated South Colonie property tax increase of 3.17%**
- **District continues to work toward academic excellence despite facing major reduction in state aid**

The 2010-2011 budget

South Colonie residents to vote May 18th on proposed \$89.4 million school spending plan

South Colonie Central School District residents will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 18th, to vote on a proposed \$89.4 million budget for the 2010-11 school year. The budget continues to support South Colonie's key educational initiatives despite a projected \$3.7 million cut in state aid to the district over the current school year.



The polls will be open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the district's five elementary schools (see *voting locations on page 2*).

In what has been one of the most challenging budget development processes in recent memory, the school board adopted a proposed budget in April totaling \$89,395,00. The budget represents a **less than 1 percent (+0.89%) spending increase** over

the current school year (see *complete figures on page 3*). Though equalization rates will not be known until July, the district estimates about a **3.17 percent** Colonie school residential and business property tax increase next year based on the budget submitted to voters, a **4.99 percent** increase for Niskayuna residents and a **7.09 percent** increase for Guilderland residents.

This means that the average Colonie homeowner whose property is assessed at \$150,000 would pay an additional \$113.12 in school property taxes next year or about \$9.43 more per month to finance education. This is a base increase and does not reflect any STAR exemption savings a homeowner may be entitled to.

A variety of factors hampered the 2010-11 budget development process, which got

A 'Fantastic' Performance at CCHS



The Colonie Central High School Line and Cue theater group performed "The Fantastics" as the annual spring musical to huge crowds.

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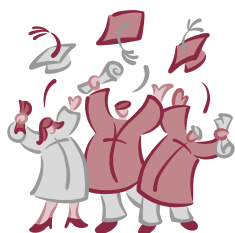


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Who can vote on Tuesday, May 18?

You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote. Residents may vote at any location listed below.

Voting Sites

FOREST PARK ELEMENTARY

100 Forest Drive (869-3006)

ROESSLEVILLE ELEMENTARY

100 California Ave. (459-2157)

SADDLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

100 Loralee Drive (456-2608)

SHAKER ROAD ELEMENTARY

512 Shaker Road (458-1440)

VEEDER ELEMENTARY

25 Veeder Drive (869-4661)

PLEASE NOTE:
All of the voting will take place in the elementary schools. Also, there is NO voting at the high school or either middle school.

... Budget

Continued from page 1

underway in January with several public planning sessions. In spite of increasing costs facing schools in 2010-11, Gov. David Paterson unveiled a New York State Executive Budget in January with significant spending reductions in order to eliminate the state's multi-billion dollar budget deficit. Those reductions included a \$1.1 billion or 5 percent year-to-year reduction in school aid state-wide and nearly \$3.7 million in aid cuts to South Colonie.

While the New York State Legislature has yet to approve the governor's proposal — once again missing the April 1 deadline — the district had no other option than to put together a budget for the 2010-11 school year based on the governor's proposal.

To make up for the loss in state budget revenues — a 15 percent reduction over the current school year — the South Colonie administration and Board of Education enacted numerous cuts across each budget area to keep next year's spending increase at less than 1 percent and reduce the burden on local taxpayers.

"As a District we are sensitive to the financial challenges that our community is facing in this recession and we realize that the massive reduction in state aid (\$3.7 million) should not result in significantly higher property taxes," said Superintendent Jonathan Buhner. "With that said, we have made approximately \$3 million in reductions to the district's overall expenses. This is certainly one of the most challenging years that school districts have faced in decades."

The 2010-11 proposed budget calls for eliminating some 50 positions in teaching, special education, guidance, monitors and clerical support. It also calls for eliminating student field trips, one school bus run, K-6 summer school, professional development, Arts in Education programs and some after school clubs and activities. *(from a full list of cuts see page 4).*

Did you know?

Over the last two years school districts have had to balance trying to maintain academic gains and important initiatives with constructing budgets which hold down local property taxes. This year, under Governor Paterson's Executive Budget proposal, South Colonie is facing a \$3.7 million or 15% reduction in state aid. To make up for those losses a number of difficult decisions had to be made on the expenditure side of the 2010-11 budget and additional fund balance was applied to offset the loss in state school aid.

In addition to these reductions, the district will use about half of its fund balance or \$4.5 million to make up for the state revenue losses. Not knowing if the economic downturn facing New York State and the nation will continue, the district administration and Board of Education will save the remainder of the fund balance in the event that the district faces another year of flat aid (0% increase) or additional state aid reductions in 2011-12.

"Our goal has always been to develop a budget which includes the quality programs parents and community members expect at a cost we hope they can support," said Superintendent Jonathan Buhner.

Estimated revenues

	2009-10	2010-11	Dollar Change
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 2,050,000	\$ 4,500,000	+ 2,450,000
Continuing Education	78,650	78,250	- 400
Interest on Investments	500,000	200,000	- 300,000
Miscellaneous	1,069,000	929,800	- 139,200
Rental-BOCES	68,500	104,500	+ 36,000
State Aid*	22,685,380	20,105,502	- 2,579,878
Local Taxes	61,681,403	62,817,925	+ 1,136,522
Youth Detention Center	367,567	359,023	- 8,544
Medicaid Reimbursement	110,000	300,000	+ 190,000
TOTAL	\$88,610,700	\$89,395,000	+ 784,300

* As required by Education Laws 1608 and 1716, the district estimates its 2010 - 2011 State Aid to be \$20,105,502 or 22.5 percent of total expenditures.

Proposed expenditures

	2009-10	2010-11	Dollar Change
Board of Education	\$ 105,213	\$ 68,344	- 36,869
Central Administration	231,391	238,440	+ 7,049
Finance	667,478	710,006	+ 42,528
Legal/Personnel/Public Information	534,797	547,406	+ 12,609
Operation & Maintenance	6,009,342	5,829,101	- 180,241
Information Technology	439,389	458,933	+ 19,544
Special Items	1,006,260	1,033,767	+ 27,507
Instructional Improvement/Admin	2,903,259	2,869,431	- 33,828
Regular Instruction	31,181,186	31,197,835	+ 16,649
Special Education	11,228,215	11,375,314	+ 147,099
Summer School	302,018	190,736	- 111,282
Library/Technology Instruction	2,137,699	2,196,801	+ 59,102
Pupil Services	2,561,789	2,582,286	+ 20,497
Community Services	446,217	437,273	- 8,944
Interscholastic Athletics/Co-Curricular	884,304	834,194	- 50,110
Transportation	4,300,138	4,178,323	- 121,815
Employee Benefits	17,966,144	19,253,303	+ 1,287,159
Debt Service/Interfund Transfer	5,705,861	5,393,507	- 312,354
TOTAL	\$88,610,700	\$89,395,000	+ 784,300

District works to control energy costs

- Since 2001, South Colonie has had an aggressive energy conservation program in place, avoiding more than \$2.7 million in energy usage.

- South Colonie has an Energy Educator who continually monitors energy usage and researches the latest technology available to keep costs under control. As a result, six schools have earned an Energy Star label from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) — signifying that they operate more energy efficiently than 75 percent of the schools in the United States.

- South Colonie is among 18 school districts, businesses and organizations recognized by the EPA for achieving significant energy savings and leading their fields in responding to the agency's Energy Star Building Challenge.

- The district capitalized on additional New York State Excel Aid available to schools in 2006 to replace antiquated roofs and approximately 35-year-old school boilers and heating systems to make them more energy efficient, thereby lowering district-wide utility costs.

- Installing energy-efficient, auto-on, auto-off lighting fixtures in many schools and offices has substantially lowered lighting costs.

- The district uses a computer-automated system to monitor and control heating and lighting in all of its schools, and expects to continue modernizing this equipment in coming years.

Budget reductions & program adjustments

District and Board of Education worked to reduce costs for the 2010-2011 school year

Many experts predict that the economic downturn facing New York State and the nation is likely to stretch out for several more years. That is why the District Administration and Board of Education have developed a 2010-11 budget with a two-to-three-year perspective in mind in regards to fiscal planning. All budget reductions and program adjustments have focused on protecting internal programs, key initiatives, and educational opportunities for our students while keeping expenses at a minimum.

▶ **Elimination of BOCES Safety Administrative position**

Duties will be rolled into existing administrative positions.

▶ **Elimination of the Operation & Maintenance Supervisor position**

Job description adjusted and responsibilities have been reallocated.

▶ **Elimination of 8 teaching positions, Grades K-6**

▶ **Elimination of 8 teaching positions, Grades 7-12**

▶ **Elimination of two Teaching Assistant positions**

▶ **Elimination of 6.9 Special Education Teaching positions**

▶ **Reduction of 20 Temporary/Probationary Monitor positions District-wide**

▶ **Elimination of one Guidance position**

The District has been working to address staffing reductions with hiring freezes, retirements and attrition. Adjustments will continue to be made.

▶ **Reduction in part time evening building monitors**

Duties to be reassigned to Head Building Custodians.

▶ **Reduction in high school clerical support**

Assignments and duties will be adjusted.

▶ **Reduction in overall District energy costs**

Due to ongoing energy management strategies, the District projects a reduction in overall utility expenses.

▶ **Elimination of one, full time bus run**

Routes will be changed to absorb previous stops and savings will be realized in fuel and personnel savings.

▶ **Reduction in Transportation Department clerical support**

▶ **Reduction in overall capital project payments**

The District restructured bond payments to get lower rates.

▶ **20% Reduction in building supply expenses**

Supplies, equipment and other expenses

▶ **Reduction in Athletic expenses/coaching positions**

All teams will remain intact, but duties will be adjusted based upon participation and overall student numbers.

▶ **Reduction in Operation & Maintenance supplies and equipment**

Adjustments have been made.

▶ **Elimination of student field trips for the 2010-2011 school year**

Adjustments to be made District-wide based upon specific building/student needs. Additionally, the District will explore opportunities through the use of technology for virtual field trips.

▶ **Elimination of K-6 summer school**

Academic intervention will be provided during the regular school year.

▶ **Reduction in professional development**

Critical training will still take place using federal funding and the District will work to develop more turn key in-house training.

▶ **Elimination of BOCES Arts in Education and enrichment programs**

In-house programming will be preserved in art and music as well as internal enrichment support in our different buildings.

▶ **A 20% reduction in after school clubs and activities**

Restructuring as needed. Academic support clubs will have first priority.

▶ **Reduction in substitute expenses**

This is a result of a reduction in conferences and field trips.

Casey running unopposed May 18 for second term on Board of Education

Board of Education President and Incumbent, Brian Casey, is running unopposed for his second term on the nine-member school board. The new, five-year term begins July

Brian Casey

Brian Casey, 13 Locust Park, a retired Colonie Police officer, has served on the school board since 2005. Casey graduated from Colonie Central High School in 1967 and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1994.

After graduating from Hudson Valley Community College, he served in the U.S. Navy for two years, completed Basic Officer Training and attended the FBI Academy's Special Tactical Training Firearms School.

He joined the Colonie Police Department in 1971 and was assigned to the Community Services Unit for many years. In 1992, he helped establish the highly successful national Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program in South Colonie which helps youngsters resist peer pressure and say "No" to drugs and alcohol. He taught DARE education at Lisha Kill Middle School for more than 10 years.

In 2001, Casey became Colonie Central High School's first Student Resource Officer and served as an additional support resource to students, parents, teachers, administrators and the community at large. He also served on the district's Safe Schools Committee and is a member of the Colonie Elks Club, the Colonie Youth



Brian Casey

Center Board of Directors, chairman of the Colonie Village Youth Council and a scoutmaster for Boy Scouts Troop 278.

Upon his retirement in 2003, the South Colonie Board of Education presented Casey with the distinguished President's Spotlight Award for his years of service to the youth of Colonie. He also received a Distinguished Service Award and Command Recognition Award from the Colonie Police Department. Today, Casey continues to work with children and teens as the coordinator of Youth and Family Services for the Village of Colonie.

ADMINISTRATION: 9.7 percent (\$8,646,056)

Administration includes: Board of Education, central administration, finance, legal services, personnel, records management, public information, central services, special items, curriculum development and supplies, regular school supplies, instruction supervision and employee benefits.

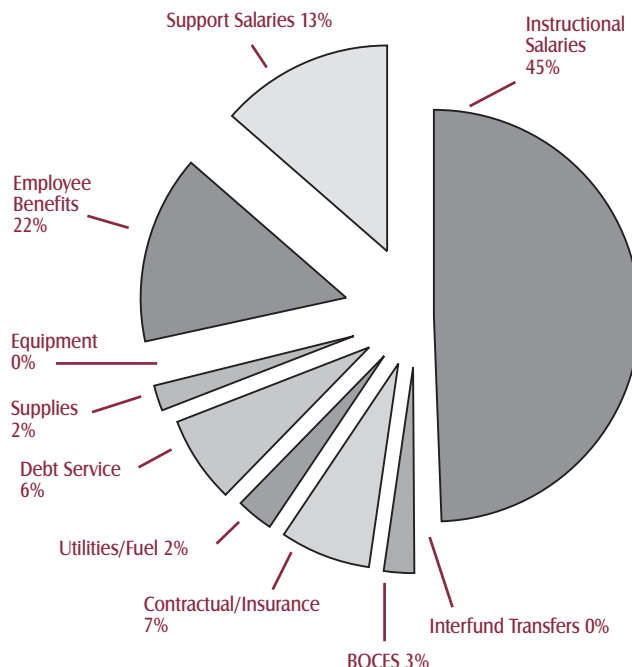
PROGRAM: 77 percent (\$68,882,587)

Program includes: instruction, transportation and garage, contract transportation, community service, employee benefits and transfers.

CAPITAL: 13.3 percent (\$11,866,357)

Capital includes: Operation of buildings, maintenance of buildings, judgments and claims, employee benefits and debt service.

Proposed Budget by Percentages





Jonathan W. Buhner
Superintendent of Schools

Tim Backus
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Beverly Miller
Assistant Superintendent/
Management Services

David Seaver
Director of Human Resources

Board of Education
Brian Casey, President
Leonard Motto, Vice President
Robert Domenici
Rick Dunn
Paul Gordon
Shelle Jaquish
Neil Johanning
David Kiehle
James (Tim) Ryan

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Please Don't Forget to Vote!
Tuesday, May 18th • 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Any of the five elementary schools

South Colonie Central School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2009-10 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2010-11 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2010-11 School Year*
Total Budget amount	\$ 88,610,700	\$ 89,395,000	\$ 88,373,270
Increase/decrease for the 2010-11 school year		\$ 784,300	\$ (237,430)
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		0.89%	(0.27%)
Change in the consumer price index		(0.4%)	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2010-11 school year		\$ 62,817,925	\$ 61,796,195
Administrative component	\$ 7,748,422	\$ 8,646,056	\$ 8,640,010
Program component	\$ 68,328,768	\$ 68,882,587	\$ 67,902,603
Capital component	\$ 12,533,510	\$ 11,866,357	\$ 11,830,657

* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2010-11 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated.

Elimination of all computer and equipment purchases. Additional reductions in instructional staffing; summer school and instructional and extra-curricular programs.

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings	Budget Proposed for the 2010-11 School Year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$ 485

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2010-11 by the qualified voters of the South Colonie Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Forest Park, Roessleville, Saddlewood, Shaker Road, and Veeder Elementary Schools in said district on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the above listed schools, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.