

ONTEORA

Budget 2016

VOTE

TUESDAY

MAY 17

2 PM TO 9 PM

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ **PRESERVES** class sizes, educational offerings, and student services.
- ★ **ADDS** a Director of Technology position to increase the integration of instructional technology throughout the District.
- ★ **DEMONSTRATES** continued line-by-line fiscal management of the budget to reduce expenditures.
- ★ **ALLOWS** for the addition of a School Resource Officer.
- ★ **EXPANDS** the Summer Academic Intervention Support Program.
- ★ **REINSTATES** the Junior Varsity Football team.
- ★ **SUPPORTS** the renovation of the Bennett playground and the remediation of the playground's drainage issues.

Bennett students Virginia Potter and Sophia Odato discuss recycling during their school's Earth Day-themed Science Fair.

READ MORE
ABOUT BENNETT
& WOODSTOCK
SCIENCE FAIRS
ON PAGES 2 & 3

Proposed 2016-2017 Budget Is Below Tax Levy Limit

Proposal maintains and enhances opportunities for students

THE ONTEORA BOARD OF EDUCATION has adopted a \$53,222,778 proposed budget for the 2016-2017 school year that includes funding for a School Resource Officer, provides a summer academic support program for struggling students, restores the Junior Varsity Football team, expands the District's technology management capacity, and continues to support the half-day Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program. Renovation of the Bennett Intermediate School playground and the remediation of the playground's drainage issues are also supported.

The proposal represents a 3.03 percent increase over last year, but due to the restoration of an additional \$896,449 in State Aid, along with the availability of \$2.95 million in fund balance, the tax levy increase to support the budget is reduced to 1.16 percent, which is below the District's allowable New York State tax levy limit calculation (which is 1.61 percent).

The majority of the proposed budget (85.28%) is allocated to supporting programs that directly benefit students. The remainder is divided between capital (8.02%) and administrative (6.70%) expenses for operating the District.

■ Academic Intervention Support

The proposed budget supports the opportunity for children in Kindergarten through Grade 8 to once again participate in the Summer Academic Intervention Support Program. The program, which is open to students whose teachers believe they would benefit from experiencing intensive summer academic support, has been expanded from 15 days to 18 days. This year's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

**See pages 6-10 for more information
about the 2016-2017 Proposed Budget**



Celebrating Science—and the Earth—at Bennett Intermediate School

ALBERT EINSTEIN, WHO ONCE DECLARED, “The important thing is to not stop questioning,” would no doubt have been pleased by the Bennett Science Fair. The annual event, which took place in February, was chock-full of intriguing questions, thoughtful hypotheses, and thoroughly tested answers.

“This year’s theme was Earth Day,” said Bennett PTA officer Heather Roberts, who helped coordinate this year’s fair with assistance from Bennett Environmental Scientist-in-Residence Matt Savatgy. The theme, she noted, was inspired by the Climate Change Conference that took place in Paris. “We wanted to encourage students to go beyond the normal Science Fair experiments and to try projects that were more Earth-friendly,” she said.

In keeping with the Earth Day theme, a good number of experiments and projects were designed to answer questions about the natural world and its resources.

At what angle, wondered Jake DeRuvo, should solar panels be positioned to generate the most electrical voltage? Jake’s experiment, which used an LED flashlight and a voltmeter among other materials, found that a 90-degree angle generated the most electricity.

“Why Should You Recycle?” was the question asked by Sophia Odato and Virginia Potter’s project. “Recycling is better for the earth; animals are dying,”

remarked Sophia. “Plastic bags and other garbage thrown into the ocean kill as many as one million sea creatures a year,” added Virginia.

Austin Umhey, a student in Mrs. Bennett’s class, described how he and his classmates saved trees by making new paper from old paper. “It took a long time, and came out a different color,” he recalled.

Cody Neher, a student in Mrs. Thongs’ class, explained how his class learned about, and created, an anemometer, which measures wind speed. “I learned that an anemometer is useful because it rotates with

the wind,” he said. “Wind blows into the cups on land and on the sea. You can see where the wind is blowing and at what speed, and you can see if bad weather is coming.”

Abraham Umana Alarcon’s project involved trying to grow stalactites and stalagmites, mineral formations that are often found in caves. The experiment, which was successful, took place over the course of three days.

Other projects seemed to have less to do with Earth Day than with creativity, ingenuity, the spirit of invention, and in one case, hunger. Riley Hegeman and Caleb Frank created an oven out of a cardboard pizza box, tin foil, tape, a ruler, and a 50-watt bulb. “Our goal was to make nachos and then eat them,” said Caleb. “We really did melt the cheese!”



Bennett student Abraham Umana Alarcon shows off his Science Fair project, which involved growing stalactites and stalagmites.

LITERARY MAGAZINE SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON ONTEORA STUDENTS’ CREATIVITY

CREATIVITY ABOUNDS AT ONTEORA. The proof is in *The Esopusupose*, a compilation of Onteora High School students’ best artwork, photography, poetry, and prose. Copies of the Spring 2016 edition are now on sale for \$5 at The Golden Notebook in Woodstock. Limited numbers of the Fall 2015 edition are also available. Proceeds from sales cover production costs.

To whet your appetite, check out this excerpt from “The Process Between the Pen and the Hand,” by sophomore Alyssa Wiswall:

Drawing is an art, a skill, a gift. The sword cannot hold a candle to the strength and integrity of the pen. My mind fuels the pen with a grand plan.

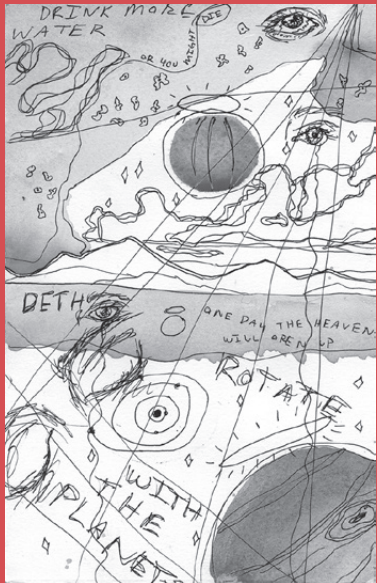
Making art is about communication, it’s a conversation. Every stroke, line, and curve is a statement.

My pen shakes with fervor, the paper, enticement, seduction, like the forbidden fruit. Impulsive, desperate, the pen and I give in.

The pen, cold and gleaming, glides across the paper with the grace of a dancer. It weaves a pattern, a master plan, radiant, confident, the pen pauses and marvels at its progress.

I smile.

The pen dives back into the paper’s milky white depths.



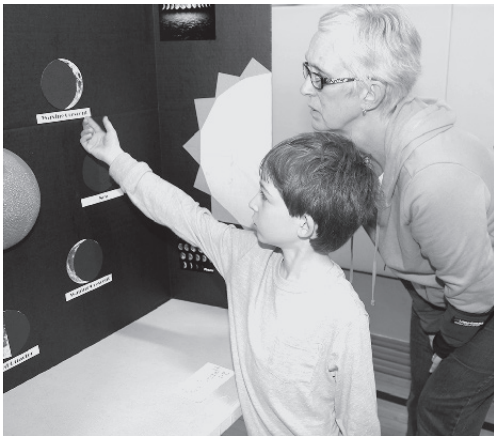
Artwork featured in the Spring 2016 issue of Onteora’s literary magazine, *The Esopusupose*, includes this piece by junior Catie Lomoe-Thompson.

Woodstock Students Show Off Their Love of Science

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF EXPLODING TOOTHPASTE? Can you visualize what a black hole looks like? Do you know what happens when a white flower is put in a container of colored water? Have you ever seen a collection of mounted moths and butterflies? If you attended Woodstock's Science Fair this year, then you could answer affirmatively to all these questions, and many, many more. This year's fair, which took place on March 31, featured more than 190 projects.

"Primary school science fairs are a time to display enthusiasm, creativity, and knowledge through the lens of science," said Grade 2 teacher Molly Heekin, who has been coordinating the school's fair for seven years. The type of projects varied according to the students' grades, she noted. Kindergartners displayed collections, first graders created displays, second graders made models, and third graders conducted experiments.

Ms. Heekin began publicizing the event at the beginning of February. She created a web page devoted



Lucas Laidlaw and Teaching Assistant Carol Carboni study the Phases of the Moon project by Grade 2 student Yana Bennett.



Grade 3 students Kelsey Gray and Emma Propec pose in front of Emma's soap experiment.

to the fair, sent a letter home to parents, and went to each classroom, dressed in her lab coat, to promote interest in the event. Classroom teachers also discussed the fair and gave examples of possible projects.

During the school day, students set up their projects in the cafeteria, the gym, and the library. Then, each grade visited the venues of the other classes' projects in order to view and appreciate what other grades had done. In the evening, family members and friends were able to tour the exhibits and listen to the young scientists' explanations of their work.

"The impact of these science fairs is really to cultivate in students a love for the sciences," explained Ms. Heekin. "Working on their individual projects helps each student to embrace the creative side of science."

Onteora Celebrates Foreign Language Week

ONTEORA RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ITS STUDENTS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, so they can compete in the global market when they graduate. "Learning new languages will open doors for our students to travel abroad and, most importantly, they will learn

to accept and appreciate other cultures," said Valerie Stewart, Onteora's LOTE (Languages other than English) Liaison.

Last year, Onteora extended its foreign language program to the seventh grade. "Research has proven that the earlier a student learns a foreign language, the easier it is to acquire and retain," remarked Mrs. Stewart. This year also marks the first time that Onteora High School has offered an Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish course, she noted.

In March, the High School/Middle School celebrated Foreign Language Week, an event that helped generate enthusiasm for foreign-language learning. Students made colorful, amusing posters to illustrate

French and Spanish proverbs like "Feliz como lombris" (Happy as a worm), "Il faut prendre le taureau par les cornes" (Take the bull by the horns), and "A diario una manzana es cosa sana" (An apple a day keeps the doctor away).



In honor of Foreign Language Week, Onteora students in Valerie Stewart's and Elena Garcia's 7th period High School Spanish classes learned to make empanadas.

The posters were just one opportunity for the students to show off their knowledge of other languages and cultures. Students also competed in a trivia competition, answering questions like "The Spanish holiday Cinco de Mayo celebrates the Mexican army defeat of what country?"

Foreign foods were also on the menu that week. Grade 9 students in Valerie Stewart's and Elena Garcia's 7th period High

School Spanish classes learned to make empanadas, a dish popular in Spain.

Grade 9 student Lindsay Voelker thoroughly enjoyed the cooking class. "Food is a big part of someone's culture and so is language, and enjoying them both is like tying it all together," she explained.

Onteora Students and Teachers Participate in National Oral History Project

“PRESERVE THE VOICES AND STORIES OF AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF AMERICANS OVER A SINGLE HOLIDAY WEEKEND.” That was the ambitious goal of “The Great Thanksgiving Listen,” a national oral history project carried out last November with the assistance of a number of Onteora Middle School students and teachers. Onteora’s young oral historians celebrated their work with family members at a March 31 gathering held at the High School/Middle School.

English teacher Denise Maltese had asked her Grade 8 students to participate in the project, which was sponsored by StoryCorps, a nonprofit organization. Students were asked to record the voices and stories of elderly relatives or acquaintances over the holiday weekend.

The assignment, explained Onteora Pupil Personnel Director Cindy Bishop, had several educational benefits. “We wanted to foster connections between the home and the school, improve speaking and listening skills, and enhance literacy,” she explained.

The interviewers loaded a specially designed recording app onto their smartphones or school-issued iPads. The app helped the students choose their questions, record the answers, and edit their interviews. It also allowed them to upload their interviews to the StoryCorps archive, located in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

“Students conducted interviews with grandparents, parents, teachers, and other influential people in their lives,” explained Ms. Maltese. “The interviews were touching and sweet.”

Megan Davis interviewed her grandmother, who talked about the houses she had lived in when she was a child. “My great-grandmother was a maid and a chef, and my great-grandfather was a butler and a chauffeur, so they lived in rich people’s houses,” Megan recalled.

Mateo Childs also interviewed his grandmother, who shared memories of her aunt, who had lost her legs to amputation.

Erin Downs interviewed her father, Kelly Downs, about his mother. “I learned that she did what she wanted to do,” Erin reported. “She wasn’t afraid to get arrested!”

Shane Ballard learned that his grandmother was a fan of Elvis Presley. “I also learned that she lives in the same house that she grew up in, in Margaretville,” he said.

Ms. Maltese was thrilled that interviews by two of her students – Corey Chun and Emily Salem – were featured in a StoryCorps podcast on December 30. Corey interviewed her grandmother about her grandfather’s death, and Emily interviewed

her father about his own father, whom she had never met.

The podcast also featured an interview conducted by Ms. Maltese with Math teacher Michael Kocher. Mr. Kocher spoke about his grandfather, who never failed to show his appreciation for “Bucky,” his family’s hardworking mailman. “Whenever Bucky would come to the door, if my grandparents were in, they would invite him in and they’d give him a glass of iced tea and a sandwich,” he said. “That’s how my grandfather was; he always cared about people.”

To listen to the podcast, visit <https://storycorps.org> and scroll down to #452.



Akanksha Robison (center) shows her mother, Wendy Drolma, how to use the StoryCorps recording app.

MURAL-MAKING AT PHOENICIA PR

FLOWERS AND FISH, HEARTS AND H₂O— all this, and more, can be found at Phoenicia Primary School, where students recently completed a vibrant mural with the guidance of local artist Kelli Bickman.

“The theme of the new mural is “H₂O Makes Things Grow,” explained Phoenicia Principal Linda Sella. The mural, she added, was dreamed up by the students. “They created it, and we brought in an artist who helped make their dream come true.”



Professional artist Kelli Bickman supervises Phoenicia students as they create a mural in their school's hallway.

Bickman, whose work is held in private and public collections worldwide, is the founder and director of a community-based mural program that has connected thousands of young people and adults with large-scale art-making projects. “I seriously have the best job ever,” said Ms. Bickman. “Working with these kids is such a blessing. They crave art making and free expression. They jump up and down squealing with delight when working on

these projects and are so proud to share their art with the entire school.”

More than 30 students signed up for the

“Continents in a Box” Project Inspires Global Learning at Woodstock and Phoenicia

WHEN YOU'RE A CHILD, there are few things more exciting than opening a great big, mysterious box. After all, who knows what treasures may be hidden inside?

Those feelings of excitement and discovery are very much in evidence at Phoenicia and Woodstock Primary Schools, where Grade 3 students are happily immersed in a unique Social Studies learning unit entitled “Continents in a Box.” The yearlong project, led by Library Media Specialist Steve Patschke, complements the Grade 3 Social Studies curriculum, which teaches students about the maps, oceans, and continents of the world.

“Students begin their learning experience by opening one of our seven Continents in a Box,” Mr. Patschke explains. “Each box contains a book that we all read together, as well as several objects that are connected with that continent.”

The children thoroughly examine the contents of each box, a process that may involve trying on a kimono from Japan, playing a Kalimba thumb piano from Africa, or discovering the many figures hidden inside a Russian nesting doll. These objects, in turn, generate research questions, ranging from “Why did aboriginal Australians use boomerangs instead of other hunting tools?” to “What is the history behind the fez headdress worn in Morocco?” The young scholars use the library’s computers and books to answer their questions and increase their knowledge of the world’s people, places, and cultures.

The schools’ special area teachers are also contributing to the globally inspiring learning activities,

notes Mr. Patschke. Physical Education teacher Patrick Burkhardt is planning to teach his students to play cricket (which hails from Great Britain), while Woodstock P.E. teacher Sonja Rothe is teaching the students a German game called Brunt. Music teacher Paul Schubert taught the children an African folk song. In April, Michelle Weiss’s Grade 3 art students will learn about Chinese artist Wang Yani and use traditional bamboo brushes to paint Chinese-inspired scrolls.

Culinary explorations are also part of the curriculum. Onteora Food Services cooks Robert Kothe and Ella Gille recently taught students how to make Australian Outback Biscuits, a type of cookie originally baked by the wives, mothers, sisters, and sweethearts of soldiers serving during World War I. The hardy biscuits were intended to withstand the rigors of time, travel, and postal systems.

The children are also helping to make a video of their activities, which will be posted on the school websites and shown on the District’s television station. “When a student holds an object in their hand from another culture, time and distance grow smaller,” remarks Mr. Patschke. “The children find themselves imagining faraway lands and people. They are transported into the realm of wanting to know more, do more, see more—and that’s a wondrous thing to be a part of.”

The project received funding from the Woodstock and Phoenicia PTAs, as well as from a grant obtained from the Lily Sarah Grace Fund with the assistance of the Ulster BOCES Grant Coordinator.



Onteora Food Services cook Robert Kothe teaches Woodstock students how to make Australian Outback Biscuits as a part of a Social Studies learning unit.

IMARY SCHOOL

Dante Guido, a Grade 1 student, outlines the letter “H” in Phoenicia’s new mural, which was designed around the theme “H₂O Makes Things Grow.”



after-school mural-making sessions, said Art teacher Michelle Weiss, who helped coordinate the project. The students started their collaboration with Ms. Bickman in late February, meeting to brainstorm ideas. Subsequent work sessions involved sketching ideas, painting on paper, and priming the wall.

The students, aided by a few adults, then transferred their ideas—and a good deal of colorful paint—to a long stretch of wall to the left of the school cafeteria, next to a 10-year-old mural depicting the earth’s “living network.” Adult volunteers, including several parents and Phoenicia staff members, were on hand to work on some of the mural’s higher spots.

The students are understandably proud of their work. “I made flowers and squiggly lines,” recalled Grade 1 student Alena Grant. “I tried to make a frog, but it didn’t really work.” Dante Guido, another Grade 1 student, said that he outlined the letter “H” and made a fish. “Art is one of my favorite subjects,” he shared. Another artist, Grade 2 student Jen Albright, helped paint a tree and added blue polka dots to a giant umbrella. “The mural is awesome!” she concluded.



Message from the Interim Superintendent

DEAR COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

Our school district serves a unique and diverse community, and I am often humbled by the commitment our community has to providing meaningful, enriching educational opportunities that are not available in many other districts. Our students benefit from exceptional programs taught by skilled teachers who are dedicated to promoting student achievement. We are very fortunate.

Creating the annual school budget is a multi-month process that involves closely examining our educational and operational goals and determining the most effective ways to support them. The administration spends many hours discussing priorities and making decisions, with the goal of building a budget that considers both students and taxpayers.

**OVER THE PAST
FIVE YEARS,
THE AVERAGE
ANNUAL TAX
LEVY INCREASE
FOR ONTEORA
HAS BEEN
0.4 PERCENT.**

This year's budget focuses on maintaining and expanding student opportunities, enhancing safety, and establishing fiscal strategies to support future building needs.

The budget represents a 3.03 percent increase; however, due to an increase in available revenues, the tax levy increase needed to support these initiatives is held at 1.16 percent. **This is less than the allowable increase calculated under**

the New York State tax levy limit formula. Over the past five years, the average annual tax levy increase for Onteora has been 0.4 percent.

The Board of Education is also asking the community for approval to establish a Capital Reserve Fund, which is a long-term budgetary tool that allows the District to save unexpended funds at the end of the year for the specific purpose of offsetting the cost of future building projects. Establishing a Capital Reserve does not increase the tax levy, and voters must approve the future use of the saved funds.

Within this publication, you will find details of the 2016-2017 proposed school budget, biographies of the candidates running for the Board of Education, and more details about the proposed Capital Reserve. I encourage you to review this information carefully, ask questions, and participate in the vote on Tuesday, May 17.

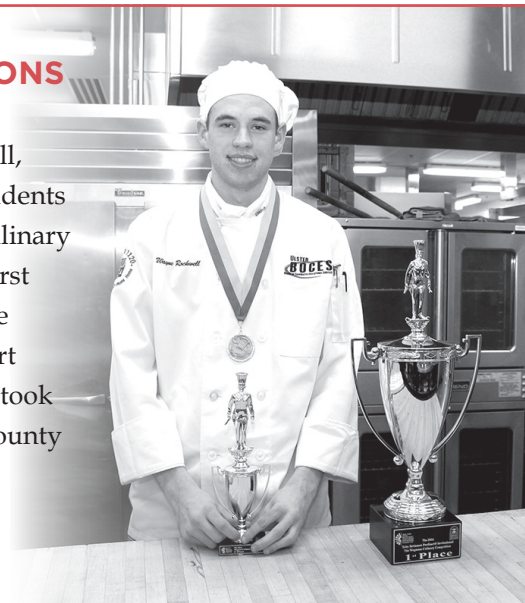
Sincerely,

Victoria McLaren

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

CONGRATULATIONS

to Onteora High School student Wayne Rockwell, who was one of five students on an Ulster BOCES Culinary Arts team that placed first in New York State in the prestigious 2016 ProStart competition. The event took place at Schenectady County Community College on February 26 and 27.



TAX RELIEF FOR SENIORS AND VETERANS

THE DISTRICT HELPS TO REDUCE the school tax burden for qualifying senior citizens and veterans.

A provision in the New York State Real Property Tax Law allows the Board of Education the opportunity to grant qualified senior citizens an exemption on a portion of the assessed value of their residential property, which in turn lowers their tax bill. The exemption is determined by income level and is based on a sliding scale, providing up to a 50 percent reduction in assessed value. The lower the income level, the greater the reduction granted.

Tax relief for local veterans under Section 458-a of the Real Property Tax Law is also available and provides partial exemptions to eligible veterans.

For more information on these programs, contact the local assessor's office in your town of residence.

ONTEORA EARNS PLACE ON LIST OF BEST U.S. HIGH SCHOOLS

KUDOS TO ONTEORA HIGH SCHOOL, which was awarded a silver medal in *U.S. News & World Report's* listing of the best U.S. high schools in 2016. Onteora, which ranked 163 within New York State, is the only school from Ulster County to appear on this year's list.



Gold, silver, and bronze medals were awarded to schools based on a number of criteria, including graduation rates, performance on state tests, and students' readiness for college. Among the factors taken into account in Onteora's ranking was the school's Advanced Placement (AP) participation rate, which is 37 percent.

For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/1AIy6OX>.

PROPOSED BUDGET

Proposed 2016-2017 Budget Is Below Tax Levy Limit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

program will be coordinated through the office of Curriculum and Instruction. The program will focus on reading, writing, and math. Classes will be kept small to ensure that instruction will be targeted to meet individual student learning needs. At the program's conclusion, students will participate in a culminating celebration.

■ Staffing

The addition of a Director of Technology will allow Onteora to increase the integration of instructional technology throughout the District.

The Junior Varsity (JV) Football team is also restored in the proposed budget. During the coming school year, Onteora's Varsity Football players will continue to play on a combined Kingston/Onteora team. By fielding a JV Football team, the District hopes to rebuild student interest in the sport, laying the groundwork for the possible restoration of the Onteora Varsity Football team in the future.

The proposed budget also provides funding for the addition of a School Resource Officer (SRO) to enhance student safety and to build positive relationships with students.

In addition, Onteora will continue to offer half-day Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK), which serves 20 students, and will re-apply for the grant to offer full-day UPK, which may serve 20 additional students.

■ Playground and Site Work

The Board is applying \$450,000 of fund balance as an additional revenue in the budget to help offset the cost to the taxpayer for the planned renovation of the Bennett Intermediate School playground and the remediation of the playground's drainage issues. This one-time expense accounts for almost one-third of the budget increase (0.9 percent), but since existing funds are available to offset the cost, it will not impact the tax levy.

Last year, the K-3 playgrounds at both Woodstock and Phoenicia were replaced. The planned replacement of the Bennett playground is intended to provide older students in Grades 4-6 with age-appropriate space for outside play.

■ State Aid

The final New York State-adopted budget included a restoration of \$896,449 in State Aid for Onteora due to the elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). Every year since the 2010-2011 school year, the State used the GEA to withhold State Aid from schools in order to address its own budget deficit. This action had resulted in year after year of State Aid reductions to school districts across the State. The cumulative impact of this reduction in Onteora has resulted in a loss of \$8,213,089 in State Aid over the course of six years.

■ Savings

Onteora's mandated employer contribution to the New York State Teachers' Retirement System for 2016-2017 was reduced by nearly \$700,000. This savings was used to help offset other annual contractual budget increases.

■ Fund Balance

This year, the Board applied \$2.95 million of fund balance as an additional revenue in the budget to help offset the cost to the taxpayer. This includes the \$450,000 specifically related to the proposed Bennett playground renovations and site work to address the drainage issues.

■ Capital Reserve

A Capital Reserve is a financial savings method created to provide funds for large expenses associated with major repairs, renovations, and construction projects. The fund is not established for routine operation and maintenance, but rather for larger, more costly expenses, like replacing a roof.

Establishing a Capital Reserve does not increase the budget. It allows a district to set aside funds that may become available at the end of the school year after all expenses have been paid.

Voter approval is needed to establish the account, as well as when the time comes to apply the funds to a proposed project. Districts establish these reserves in order to lower bond payments or avoid borrowing altogether, thereby saving interest costs.

The Capital Reserve proposition is a multi-year savings tool. Voters are being asked to approve the establishment of a Capital Reserve fund that would allow a maximum of \$8 million to be saved over the course of seven years.

Possible future capital work that may be addressed through funds accumulated in the Capital Reserve would be identified within the District's Building Condition Survey (BCS), which is a comprehensive professional architectural report that is conducted every five years, per New York State mandates. The District's architects and engineers are in the process of finalizing the current BCS. This document becomes a tool for the Facilities Committee to prioritize facilities needs and maintain our buildings.

■ Please Vote

The community is encouraged to participate in the school budget vote and Board of Education election on Tuesday, May 17, from 2 PM-9 PM. Candidates are seeking election to five available seats. Two are three-year terms, effective July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2019. Three are for terms commencing May 17, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017. The two candidates with the highest number of votes will serve the three-year terms, while the candidates with the third, fourth, and fifth highest number of votes will serve the one-year terms.

Eligible voters can vote at the four elementary school locations: Bennett, Phoenicia, West Hurley, and Woodstock.



2016-2017 Budget Summary

	Administrative	Program	Capital
Instruction	\$1,623,522	\$26,020,670	
General Support	\$1,895,859		
Employee Benefits	\$46,536	\$14,969,498	\$116,915
Operations & Maintenance			\$3,133,691
Transportation		\$3,935,687	-
Debt Service & Interfund Transfers		\$460,000	\$1,020,400
TOTAL	\$3,565,917	\$45,385,855	\$4,271,006
Percentage of Budget	6.70%	85.28%	8.02%

TAX INFORMATION

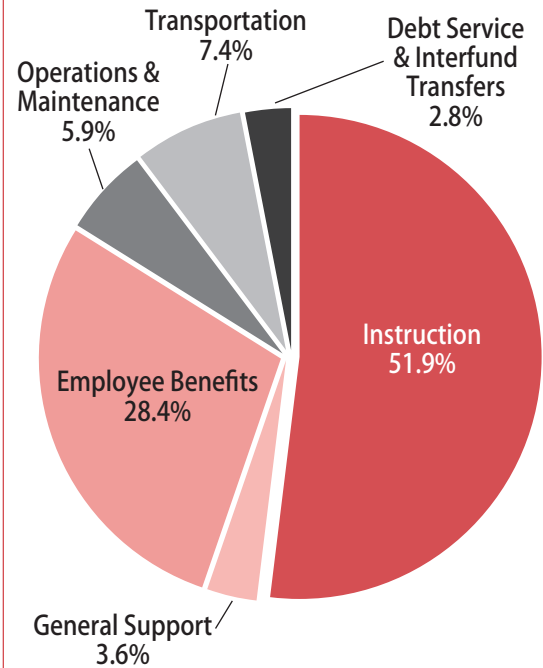
What is the Tax Levy?

The tax levy is the total amount of taxes a school district raises to help fund its budget, after accounting for all other revenue sources. The tax levy is the basis for determining the tax rates for each municipality within a school district. Tax rates are impacted by changes in town assessments and state equalization rates and are not determined by the school district. The Board of Education has adopted a budget that contains a 1.16 percent increase to the tax levy.

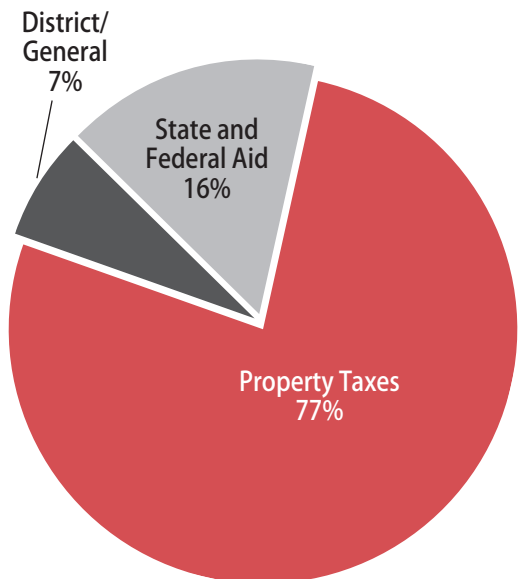
Since the budget is below the State Tax Levy Limit, why do I have to vote?

Even though the District's proposal is below the New York State Tax Levy Limit parameters regarding the levy increase, voter approval is still needed. The 2012 legislation commonly called the Two Percent Tax Cap law made many changes to the school budget approval process. One of the major changes was the method for computing a contingency budget. If the proposed budget is defeated two times, the District would have to make further budget reductions to reach a zero percent tax levy increase. This would require \$703,060 to be removed. In addition to making reductions to reach the zero percent levy increase, the District would also be prohibited from spending any money in certain areas, including community use of school facilities (unless all costs are reimbursed to the District); new equipment purchases; non-essential maintenance; capital expenditures (except in emergencies); salary increases for non-instructional, non-unionized employees; and some student supplies.

Proposed Budget by Expense



2016-2017 Budgeted Revenues



ONTEORA PROPOSITIONS

PROPOSITION #1: 2016-2017 BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Onteora Central School District Board of Education be and is hereby authorized to expend the sums set forth under the various headings which are voted upon in gross and not in detail in the total amount of \$53,222,778 (which includes \$20,000 to support public library) for the year commencing July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017, and the Board is authorized to levy and collect the necessary tax thereof on the taxable property of the District.

To vote on any other proposition legally proposed, including the following:

PROPOSITION #2: CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Shall the Onteora Central School District Board of Education be authorized to establish a Capital Reserve Fund in the ultimate amount of \$8 million, pursuant to Section 3651 of the Education Law, for the following objects and purposes: renovate buildings and improvements that are identified in the District's building condition survey, which amount shall be raised from unexpended and unencumbered funds levied upon and collected from the taxable parcels of property situate, lying and being in the District over a probable term not to exceed seven years?

PROPOSED BUDGET

Questions & Answers About Voting

Am I Eligible to Vote? In order to be eligible to vote you must be:

- 18 years of age.
- A resident of the Onteora Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.
- A U.S. citizen.

If you are not registered to vote in the general election with the Ulster County Board of Elections but are an eligible Onteora voter, you may register to vote at the voting location of your residence on May 10 between 2 PM-8 PM. You will need to bring valid proof of residency. Any questions should be directed to the District Clerk at 845-657-6383 ext. 1010.

Absentee Ballots Eligible voters who cannot make it to the polls to vote may request an application for an absentee ballot. The District Clerk must receive the application by May 10 if the ballot is to be mailed to the requestor. If the ballot is being picked up personally by the voter, the application must be received by the District Clerk on or before May 16, 2016 (the day before the election and vote).

Applications for absentee ballots are available on the District website (www.onteora.k12.ny.us/AbsenteeApp) or at the Central Administration Office between 8 AM-4 PM Monday through Friday. Applications are to be mailed to: District Clerk, Onteora Central School District, P.O. Box 300, Boiceville, NY 12412.

Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5 PM on the day of the election and vote, May 17.

Where are Copies of the 2016-2017 Proposed Budget Available? Copies of the 2016-2017 Proposed Budget are available for review at the following locations:


- High School/Middle School Offices
- Bennett Intermediate School
- Woodstock Primary School
- Phoenicia Primary School
- The Business Office at Central Administration
- Public Libraries within the District
- The District Website, www.onteora.k12.ny.us

School Budget Notice			
OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL	Budget Adopted for the 2015-2016 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2016-2017 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2016-2017 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$51,656,975	\$53,222,778	\$52,519,718
Increase/Decrease for the 2016-2017 School Year		\$1,565,803	\$862,743
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.03%	1.67%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		0.12%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount, Net of Reserve	\$40,607,444	\$41,077,250	
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)	\$40,607,444	\$41,077,250	\$40,607,444
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$141,214	\$178,140	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$40,915,177	\$41,081,554	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$40,465,930	\$40,899,110	
I. Difference: (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$449,247	\$182,444	
Administrative Component	\$4,513,670	\$3,519,381	\$3,514,381
Program Component	\$42,247,798	\$45,549,306	\$45,510,246
Capital Component	\$4,895,507	\$4,154,091	\$3,495,091

*Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2016-2017 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law:
1. Eliminate Equipment. 2. Eliminate Transfer to Capital Fund

** List 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
Create a Capital Reserve Account	\$0.00



Under the Budget Proposed for the 2016-2017 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ **\$382.00**

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 2016-2017 by the qualified voters of the Onteora Central School District, Ulster County, New York, on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 between the hours of 2:00 pm and 9:00 pm, prevailing time in the Phoenicia Elementary School, the Bennett Elementary School, the Woodstock Elementary School, and the West Hurley Elementary School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.



Messages from the Board of Education Chair

Bennet Ratcliff

The son of a public school teacher, Bennet lives in Bearsville with his partner Jacqueline Kellachan (co-owner of The Golden Notebook bookstore) and six children.

In education, Bennet created branding and positioning strategies for philanthropic initiatives supporting blended learning and closing the achievement gap. He also advised public school officials in leadership searches and on policy issues. In politics, Bennet created TV and radio ads for Bill Clinton's Presidential campaigns. He also advised the Presidents of Mexico, Honduras, Colombia, and Ecuador, as well as His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet.

In the private sector, Bennet created a methodology for identifying obstacles and opportunities during times of crisis. Collaborating with CEOs, community activists, and government leaders, he finds solutions that integrate public policy, communications, crisis management, legal actions, advertising, and social media.

Bennet graduated from Princeton University and did post-graduate studies at the Université de Grenoble in France.

Laurie Osmond

Laurie Osmond is currently serving her eighth year on the Onteora Board of Education. Since 2008, she was elected Board President for two years, Vice-President for one year, and has been a member of the Facilities Committee, Policy Committee, Communications Committee, Health and Wellness Committee, and Green Committee.

She has been a resident of Willow for the last 12 years and has a child attending Onteora High School. She attended Brown University and San Francisco State University and holds a B.A. in Broadcast Communication Arts.

Ms. Osmond says that she serves on the Board of Education because she is passionate about the education and welfare of our young people. She says she is running for re-election because she wants to contribute to the continuous growth of Onteora's excellence, and believes

in maintaining a stable, positive, and respectful Board, working with teachers, administration, and staff to maintain and grow the best possible environment for our kids.

Kevin Salem

Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Salem attended the University of Pittsburgh, where he studied psychology and anthropology. After pursuing a career in Boston and New York City as a musician, composer, and record producer, he moved to Woodstock in 1998.

Salem's daughter is currently enrolled at Onteora Middle School. From 2012-2014, he served as Bennett's PTA president. In addition to joining the Board as an interim appointee last October, he has served on several District committees and is a fervent believer in public education, school sports as a community-building apparatus, and progressive political causes. Since 2009, he has worked with Operation Respect in international anti-bullying and peace-building efforts, particularly in the Middle East and the Ukraine, touring schools and working with government agencies, the Department of State, and recording artists to develop a music-based initiative to foster an atmosphere of openness and respect among youth living in areas of conflict.

Lindsay Shands

Lindsay Shands was born and raised in Shokan, New York. She and her husband attended Onteora schools; however, she moved to Portland, Oregon, in her junior year and graduated from Westview High School. She received a bachelor's degree in Anthropology from SUNY New Paltz and a paralegal certificate from Marist College. Lindsay currently works for an attorney in Kingston. She has two children, an infant and an eighth grader. She has always been very involved in her children's education. Lindsay served as the PTA president of Chambers Elementary School in 2010-2011 and was vice president of the Bennett Intermediate School PTA in 2013-2014. She also served as facilitator of the Shared Decision

Making Committee. She is a dedicated animal lover and volunteers for Curly Tail Pug Rescue. Lindsay loves to travel with her family and explore the outdoors.

Leo Warren

Leo Warren, who is also known as L.J., was born in Queens, New York, and raised in the Onteora School District. He was an avid member of DECA and track during his time in High School. Leo was a store manager for many years with many companies in several states. After a short time in North Carolina, Leo and his wife returned to the area to raise their family in our community. Leo currently lives in Shokan with his wife, Denise, and three children, two of whom are enrolled in Phoenicia Primary School. Leo is an active member of the Phoenicia PTA and enjoys being able to make a difference in the community. When Leo is not working, he enjoys spending time with his family, camping, and playing sports.

Rob Kurnit

Rob Kurnit has been a resident of Woodstock for 25 years. He says he decided to run for the Onteora School Board so that he could try to help our students succeed in school and in life. He is now completing his seventh year of board service, having been active both locally and on a State level. Rob has been the co-chair of the Facilities Committee, a member of the Policy Committee, and a member of the Ulster County School Boards Association. In 2016, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York State School Boards Association. "My interest has always been to try to use a balanced and unified approach regarding our large geographical district," he said. "Ultimately, our focus as board members is to try to make public education a great experience for all Onteora students."

Dale Allison

Dale was born, raised, and currently resides in West Shokan, New York. She and her husband, also born and raised in West Shokan, are both graduates of Onteora. Currently her son is in the Middle School and her daughter will graduate from Bennett this June. Dale graduated from SUNY New Paltz with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. She is in her 23rd year of employment with Cabinet Designers,

Candidates

where she works as a Kitchen Designer and Interior Specialist.

She is involved with the Olive Soccer Program and is currently serving on the Onteora Babe Ruth Board and running the Onteora Football Booster Club.

Due to her deep family roots in the area, she has a love for our beautiful area and the outdoor activities it has to offer. Dale loves spending time camping with friends and being with family.

VOTE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TUESDAY

MAY 17

2 PM TO 9 PM

SAMPLE BALLOT:
ELECTION

BOARD OF EDUCATION
CANDIDATES
(VOTE FOR FIVE)

■ Five (5) Vacancies

■ TWO are three-year terms -
Effective July 1, 2016 to
June 30, 2019

■ THREE are for terms
commencing May 17, 2016
and ending June 30, 2017 (to
fill the unexpired terms of Ann
McGillicuddy, Gideon Moor, and
Tanya Davis)

The candidates as they will
appear on the ballot are:

(VOTE FOR FIVE)

Bennet Ratcliff

Laurie Osmond

Kevin Salem

Lindsay Shands

Leo Warren

Rob Kurnit

Dale Allison

The two candidates with the
highest number of votes will serve
the three-year terms, while the
candidates with the third, fourth,
and fifth highest number of votes
will serve one-year terms.

UPDATE ON ONTEORA'S
CAPITAL PROJECT WORK

IN MAY 2014,

Onteora voters approved a \$7 million Capital Project to
address several aged building conditions. By leveraging \$5 million from
the District's Capital Reserve, along with \$2 million in unappropriated fund
balance, there is no tax increase related to the work.

Consulting architects and engineers helped identify building needs
with input from the Facilities Committee and then developed preliminary
estimates for the work. Contingency funds were built into these estimates
to account for escalations in costs (often due to changes in the labor or
materials markets) or the discovery of unforeseen building conditions after
the work has started. This is standard practice for estimating facilities work.

The voter-approved project included much-needed bathroom
renovations, new classroom doors, and the replacement of plaster ceilings
in the Middle/High School, as well as a new roof for the Transportation
Garage, among other necessary repairs.

After voter approval, several steps needed to be taken before the
work could begin. First, the architects and engineers performed their
design work and formal plans were submitted to the New York State
Education Department (NYSED) for review. Once plans were approved,
bid documents were developed to solicit qualified bidders at competitive
prices. These bids must be reviewed and approved by the Board of
Education before they can be awarded and work can begin.

Our architects submitted our project designs to NYSED for its approval
in the summer of 2014; however, due to a serious backlog in Albany, there
was a long delay in the approval process. The District did not receive
the final approval until June of 2015, nearly a year later. The District
immediately began preparing bid specifications and advertising for
qualified bidders.

Unfortunately, the initial bid proposals that were received in the
fall of 2015 came in significantly above budget. At the architects'
recommendation, the work was scaled back and rebid in hopes of
reducing costs. When the second round of bids were opened in
December 2015, the proposals were even higher than the initial bidding a
few months earlier.

Since the project cannot exceed the voter-approved amount, the
District's Facilities Committee has reviewed the list of proposed work
and identified the most critical work that can be accomplished with the
available funding.

"Unfortunately, the long delay in State approval and escalating
construction costs — likely due to the spike in large school construction
projects across the State — created unfavorable market conditions and
we received very disappointing bids," said Victoria McLaren, Onteora's
Interim Superintendent.

Current plans call for focusing on the most pressing work items,
namely converting the Middle School/High School's 62-year-old steam
heating system to an efficient hot water system, and replacing Phoenicia's
1964 oil boiler with an energy-efficient, dual-fueled oil and biomass (wood
pellet) heating system. Some of the initial ceiling work also remains.

"We are all very disappointed," says Director of Facilities and
Operations Jared Mance. "The Facilities Committee did its best to address
the buildings' needs, given the confines created by the excessive bid
amounts."

The work is expected to start this summer. Plans for addressing the
omitted work will be developed.

ONTEORA

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

Bobbi Schnell, President
Rob Kurnit, Vice President
Laurie Osmond, Trustee
Valerie Storey, Trustee
Kevin Salem, Trustee
Lindsay Shands, Trustee
Bennet Ratcliff, Trustee

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Victoria McLaren

NEWSLETTER EDITING & DESIGN

Ulster BOCES Community Relations



This publication was printed on recycled paper

To Postal Customer

Middle School Students Inducted into Honor Society

KUDOS TO THE 26 ONTEORA MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS who were inducted into Onteora’s chapter of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) during a candlelit ceremony on March 31. The new inductees are: Maxwell Barnes, Zachary Calinda, Megan Elbadwi, Alayna Fisher, Natalie Horberg, Nicole Lane, Archie Lewis-Harris, Jonah Lindsay, Maxwell Mielcarek, Toni Nguyen, Emily Peck, Simon Rands, Ava Ratcliff, Axel Roberts, Sophia Roberts, Isabel Stern, Mikayla Stock, Fiona Stuart, Margaret Turck, Colin Vernet, Giovanna Wall, Maia Weiss, Dylan Wiswall, Alana Wood, Justin Wu, and Brooklyn Zeh.

Faculty co-advisors Brian Schaffer and Corey Cavallaro note that although students with an average of 95 and above for two consecutive quarters are eligible to apply for membership, the NJHS is more than just an honor roll. “Applicants are also required to show leadership, citizenship, and community service involvement,” Mr. Schaffer explains. “In addition to school support activities, NJHS members conduct two major service projects each school year.”



The newest members of Onteora’s chapter of the National Junior Honor Society.

“GOLDEN ALUMNI” INVITED TO WALK AT GRADUATION

GRADUATION TIME is almost here, which means it’s time for Onteora’s “golden alumni” to consider joining the festivities. All alumni who graduated from Onteora 50 or more years ago (1966 or earlier) are eligible to walk with this year’s graduating seniors. Graduation will be held on June 24 at 6 PM. For more information or to sign up for the “Golden Walk,” contact Rita Vanacore at imagineonteoragmail.com.



USEFUL DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

www.onteorak12.ny.us

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Interim Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Instruction
Marystephanie Corsones..657-6383 x1012
District Clerk
Fern Amster.....657-6383 x1010
Acting Asst. Supt. for Business
Don Gottlieb.....657-6383 x1030
Director of Pupil Personnel
Cindy Bishop.....657-3320

Universal Pre-Kindergarten
Cindy Bishop.....657-3320
Interim Athletic Director
Lou Cioffi657-2373 x2113
Director of Transportation
Nicole Sommer.....657-2537
School Lunch Manager
Christine Downs.....657-6383 x2181
Director of Facilities and Operations
Jared Mance.....657-6384

HIGH SCHOOL • 657-2373
Principal, Lance Edelman
Asst. Principal, Dieter Schimmelpfennig
MIDDLE SCHOOL • 657-2373
Principal, Jennifer O’Connor
BENNETT INTERMEDIATE • 657-2354
Principal, Gabriel Buono
PHOENICIA PRIMARY • 688-5580
Principal, Linda Sella
WOODSTOCK PRIMARY • 679-2316
Principal, Scott Richards