

SAVE THE DATE!

VOTE!

Tuesday, May 19

2 PM - 9 PM

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Decreases the budget by 0.42% from last year.
- ★ Preserves class sizes, educational offerings, and student services.
- ★ Demonstrates continued line-by-line fiscal management of the budget to reduce expenditures.
- ★ Continues Summer Academic Intervention Support program.
- ★ Increases technology integration at the elementary school level.
- ★ Increases English Language Learner Instruction, as mandated.

Proposed 2015-2016 Budget Decreased from Current Year; Below Tax Levy Limit *Educational Improvements Included*

The Onteora Board of Education is presenting a \$51,656,975 proposal that **decreases the budget by 0.42%** (\$219,150) and is able to preserve, and in some cases expand, programs and services for students.

The proposed budget also meets the requirements of the New York State Tax Levy Limit legislation, requiring a simple majority voter approval. Although the District's allowable Tax Levy Limit calculation allows a 3.34% increase, the proposed budget includes a tax levy increase of only 0.87%.

Why would the tax levy go up under this budget proposal since the budget would be decreasing? The tax levy is just one revenue source for a school budget; other sources include State Aid and fund balance, for example. This year, although the budget decreased, so did the availability of some of the other revenue sources. That created a shift in the revenues, resulting in the 0.87% increase in the tax levy.

The majority of the proposed budget (81.8%) would be devoted to programs that directly benefit students. The remainder would be divided between capital (9.5%) and administrative (8.7%) expenses for operating the District.

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Historical Tax Levy Increases

2011-2012	3.48%
2012-2013	0.00%
2013-2014	0.00%
2014-2015	0.00%
2015-2016	0.87%

After three years of zero percent tax levy increases, the proposed tax levy increase is less than one percent. The five-year average levy increase is 0.92%.

See pages 6-10 for more information about the 2015-2016 Proposed Budget

Woodstock's Wonderworks playground, which does not meet current safety regulations, is in the process of being replaced. Phoenicia students can also look forward to enjoying a newer, safer play area.

New Playgrounds for Woodstock and Phoenicia *READ MORE ON PAGE 2*

New Playgrounds for Woodstock and Phoenicia

The playgrounds at Onteora’s two primary schools have delighted countless children for more than two decades.

However, both the Phoenicia and Woodstock playgrounds have exceeded their useful life spans, and neither complies with current safety regulations. As a result, the District set aside \$350,000 to replace both playgrounds, with \$30,000 of that amount being reserved for site work. (The money, which has already been allocated, was part of the 2014-2015 budget.)

Victoria McLaren, Onteora’s Acting Superintendent/ Assistant Superintendent for Business, explains that both playgrounds have experienced heavy splintering, and both have areas where small children could potentially become trapped or stuck. Moreover, Woodstock’s Wonderworks playground, built in 1989, was constructed with pressure-treated lumber, which contains arsenic.

As of press time, the design process for the playgrounds is ongoing. Building-level playground committees, composed of parents, staff members, and principals, have been finalizing the playground designs in collaboration with Parkitects, the vendor chosen to oversee the project.



Phoenicia’s current playground has experienced heavy splintering.



Woodstock student Chloe Moor enjoys recess at her school’s circa 1989 playground, which is being replaced.

Once both projects have approved designs and timelines, the schools will put out a call for volunteers, who will help keep down costs by assisting with the labor. It is expected that construction at one playground will begin this summer, with work on the other playground starting sometime in September.

Noting the huge outpouring of community support that went into the creation of the Woodstock playground, Principal Scott Richards expressed the hope for a similar response on behalf of this project. “Our students have been so lucky to have a play area as magical as Wonderworks,” he said. “With the community’s help, I have no doubt that we will be able to create a new playground that is just as magical, and safer as well!”

Phoenicia Principal Linda Sella is equally excited about the prospect of welcoming a playground that the school and community will be able to enjoy for years to come. “Final plans are still in the works,” she said, “but it will have a variety of play structures, including a play tower, slides, a “Mobius Climber” [a piece of equipment similar to a climb- ing wall], play panels, swings, and even a boogie board!”



Woodstock Celebrates Science!



“Science,” said the famed American scientist and science communicator Carl Sagan, is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge.” A case in point is Woodstock’s annual Science Fair, which took place on March 26.

Participating students in Grades K-3 not only learned scientific facts—they also honed their observational, critical thinking, research, and communication skills. In addition, their projects

showed off their creative flair and their ability to collaborate with others.

“The Science Fair is an extraordinary opportunity for children and their families to collaborate and use their knowledge of science and their creativity,” said Woodstock Grade 2 teacher Molly Wilson, who coordinated the event. “The children not only learned about their topic, but they also learned about the process that it takes to create a scientific collection, display, model, or experiment.”



Grade 3 student Josh Kurz’s project was inspired by the question, “Does grass need sunlight to grow?”



Eleanor Wyman, Grade 2, learned about desertification while doing her Science project on the African savanna.

Primary Schools Partner with Local Artists Association

Woodstock has a long history as an arts center—a history that is still unfolding. Continuing a 10-year tradition, Onteora is collaborating with the Woodstock Artists Association and Museum (WAAM) on an arts-in-education program that is benefiting the District’s youngest artists.

WAAM Education Curator Beth Humphrey has been visiting the art rooms at Phoenicia and Woodstock Primary Schools to support the children in making art inspired by the work of local artists. This year’s collaboration, carried out with assistance from Onteora



Woodstock student Fiona Green works on a self-portrait.

Art teachers Michelle Weiss and Roberta Ziemba, focuses on self-portraits executed in a variety of mediums.

Kindergarten students used watercolors and crayons to portray their own faces, while Grade 1 students made full-body “figure in action” self-portraits on painted canvas boards. Second grade artists created self-portraits in warm and cool colors using the collagraph

printmaking process. Children in Grade 3 made Romare Bearden-inspired self-portraits on canvas boards, using collage techniques.

The Woodstock students’ self-portraits were displayed in the YES (Youth Exhibition Space) Gallery at WAAM at



WAAM Education Curator Beth Humphrey watches as Woodstock student Azi Tehrani creates a portrait using a felt board.

an April 11 art opening. The students visited the museum with their class in mid-April to see their artwork on display, participate in a hands-on project, and talk about the art on view in the Main Gallery. The artwork remained on display throughout the month of April.

The Phoenicia students’ work is being showcased at the Phoenicia Library, which hosted an art opening on May 2. During a visit to the library in early May, the students worked on an art project, toured the exhibit, and discussed their art in a museum-like setting. The artwork will remain on display at the library throughout the month of May.

The program, explains Onteora art teacher Michelle Weiss, has become part of the curriculum at the primary school level and is aligned with the New York State Visual Arts Standards. “This is a great community-building event for all involved,” she added. “It provides a connection between the schools and the local community. The children get to see how art is not something solely confined within the walls of the school, but that it is also a part of their everyday lives.”



Na'mari Keith's project focused on the life cycle of a frog.

Many of the students began working on their projects in mid-February, when they were introduced to the type of projects expected at their grade levels. Kindergarten students assembled collections; Grade 1 students created displays; Grade 2 students made models; and Grade 3 students carried out experiments.

Eleanor Wyman, a second grade student, made a colorful model of the African savannah, complete with cheetahs, lions, giraffes, and baobab trees. “I learned that the desert takes over 30 miles of land every year,” she commented.



Grade 2 student Jillian Tyler's project explained the life cycle of a butterfly.

Grade 3 student Linus Driscoll, who made a giant model of Mars, complete with volcanoes, also conducted an experiment using steel nails, water, vinegar, sand, and air. The goal of his experiment was to try to determine whether Mars was capable of supporting life. “I concluded that the answer was ‘maybe,’ ” he said. “Plain old water creates rust on steel,” he explained. “Since Mars is believed to be red due to being covered with rust, I believe there must be—or has been—water on Mars.”

Phoenicia Inventors Display their Ingenuity

It's been said that necessity is the mother of invention. That was certainly true at the Phoenicia Invention Convention, where many of the young inventors came up with inventions that met a particular need.

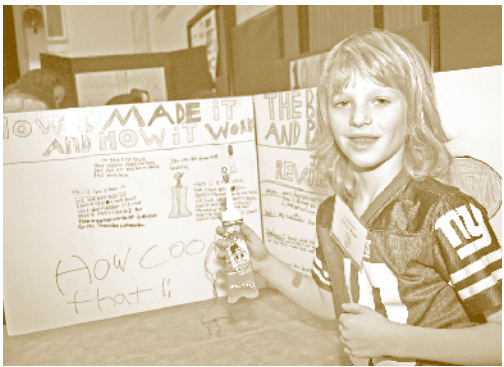
Grade 2 student Shelly Hoyt, for example, came up with "Back Pack Buddies," an ingenious way to help keep backpacks sweet-smelling even if they're packed with well-used sneakers and gym clothes. Materials for her invention included craft felt, body spray, and absorbent beads known as Orbeez.

Jonimaya Huber, Grade 3, developed plans for an automatic bed-maker, while Grade 2 student Waylon Brown thought up a way to make tooth-brushing more efficient.



Phoenicia student Eve Batista came up with the idea of scented bus seats.

Grade 2 student Keegan Burkhardt's invention was inspired by the fact that he sometimes forgot to pack some of his swimming gear. Moreover, his swim bag was too bulky to move in and out of cars easily. Keegan's solution was to devise a "Swim Caddy" made out of waterproof tarp and a hanger. "It holds all of my things," he said. "It's designed to



Waylon Brown's invention was inspired by his desire to make brushing his teeth easier.

hold my flippers, kickboard, goggles, and swimsuit." Prior to the Convention, parent and PTA member Heather Roberts coordinated a Young Inventors Club with the help of many parent volunteers. During the club meetings, the students participated in brainstorming activities, kept inventors' journals, studied famous inventors (as well as child inventors), and took apart "junk" items to see how they work. "I love Science and I love seeing the kids get so excited by learning and brainstorming," said Ms. Roberts. "The Invention Convention is a great way of demonstrating how Science can be so multidisciplinary. The inventors' journals bring English language and fine art together with ideas in writing and drawing. Parents and students from the Young Inventors Club collaborated on beautiful timelines of inventions to display in the hallways, bringing History into the mix. And of course the inventive process and how things work bring Science and technology all into the same project."

Scenes from the Bennett Science Fair

Take a look at some of the fabulous projects and experiments showcased at this year's Science Fair at Bennett Intermediate School.



Bennett Grade 4 student Marena Quick performed an experiment using food coloring, water, oil, and dish soap.



Bennett student Liam Bertheaud tried to create a perpetual flowing flask like the one envisioned by 17th century scientist Robert Boyle.



BELLEAYRE BASH FOR GRADUATING SENIORS



For more than 20 years, Onteora's seniors have celebrated the end of their high school years in style and safety with an all-night graduation party at Belleayre Mountain. More than 90 percent of past graduating classes have attended the post-graduation celebration, which is chaperoned by parents and school staff, with assistance from local police and emergency medical technician (EMT) services.

A committee of parents, teachers, students, and community members is organizing this year's festivities, which will take place from 11 PM on Friday, June 26, until 6 AM on Saturday, June 27. Members of the Class of 2015, who will arrive by school bus, will be treated to a fabulous evening of food, music, dancing, and prizes.

According to Belleayre Bash advisers Amy Russell and Michelle Martin, "It takes an entire village of students, teachers, staff, and community members to organize and run this awesome event." If you're interested in volunteering, serving as a chaperone, or helping out with fund-raisers, please contact Ms. Russell at arussell@onteora.k12.ny.us or Ms. Martin at mmartin@onteora.k12.ny.us.

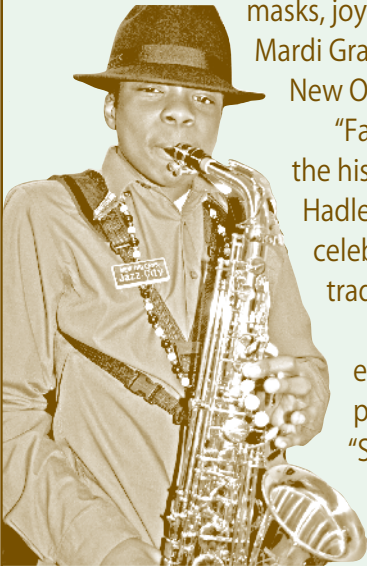
If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make checks payable to Onteora Belleayre Bash and mail them to: Amy Russell/Belleayre Bash, Onteora Central School, PO Box 300, Boiceville, NY 12412.

**Bennett
Intermediate
School Celebrates**
Mardi Gras

The Bennett Intermediate School cafeteria looked—and sounded—like a street scene from the “Big Easy,” as Grade 5 students celebrated Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). The celebration, which featured colorful beads and



Grade 5 student “DJs” from Bennett Intermediate School are pictured during their visit to WKZE studios in Red Hook. The students co-hosted the “Saturday Gumbo with Susan Shaw” show, which featured a performance by the Bennett Jazz Ensemble.
Photo courtesy of Michael Wentland



Maxwell Barnes, a member of the Bennett Jazz Ensemble, was among the student musicians participating in a live radio broadcast on WKZE 98.1 FM in February.
Photo by Karen Hadley

masks, joyful New Orleans-style jazz, the serving of a traditional dessert, and the crowning of a Mardi Gras king and queen, was part of a two-week project-based learning immersion unit on New Orleans.

“Fat Tuesday marks the end of the Mardi Gras season, and it ties together so much of the history of converging cultures in the Crescent City,” explained Grade 5 teacher Karen Hadley, who served as emcee for the event. “In true New Orleans fashion, the best way to celebrate this learning is with a party, complete with music, masks, beads, and traditional king cakes!”

The weekend after the Fat Tuesday event, the Bennett Jazz Ensemble performed in a live radio show, “Saturday Gumbo with Susan Shaw,” at the WKZE 98.1 FM studios in Red Hook. Student DJs, who had been coached by Ms. Shaw earlier in the week, selected the playlist and co-hosted the rest of the two-hour show.



Bennett students Darrah Allison, Kate Davis, and Abigail Persons enjoy “king cakes” during the school’s Mardi Gras celebration.

Onteora Stages “Ghost the Musical”

Onteora High School/Middle School’s production of *Ghost the Musical* lit up Harry Simon Auditorium for three performances in April. *Ghost the Musical* is the stage musical adaption of the popular 1990 film, starring Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze, about a love so strong that it reaches beyond the grave.

Onteora’s production starred Daniel Foster as a banker named Sam Wheat, Shannon Sperl as Molly Jensen, the sculptor who is the love of his life, and Alexandra Toro as Oda Mae Brown, the psychic who helps the couple communicate after Sam’s death. Iwan Traeger-Payne played the role of Carl Bruner, a friend of Sam’s, and Sammy Corwin played Willie Lopez, Sam’s murderer.

The production featured a student cast and crew of 40 under the direction of Onteora community member Victoria McCarthy. Onteora Music teacher Krista Cayea was the show’s musical director, while community member Amber McCarthy served as choreographer. Members of the Onteora High School Band and Orchestra, under the direction of former Onteora Music teacher Wini Baldwin, provided musical accompaniment.



VOTE! Tuesday, May 19
2 PM - 9 PM



Message from the Board of Education President

Dear Onteora Community Members,

As we approach the annual Budget Vote and Trustee Elections on May 19, I'd like to update you on recent and ongoing Board activities.

We are grateful to our administration—especially Assistant Superintendent of Business Victoria McLaren, who has been serving additionally as Acting Superintendent since mid-March—for crafting a budget that reduces spending while maintaining all our programming. In the last four years, the Onteora budget has increased by a grand total of just 2%, and the tax levy by just 0.87%. We are proud to have achieved this during a period when districts have been subject to decreases in funding, increases in unfunded mandates, the imposition of the Tax Levy Limit, and a continuation of the Gap Elimination Adjustment.

While budgets tend to dominate at this time of year, our District has, like most in New York State, also been dealing with the growing controversy surrounding the Grades 3-8 State Assessments. At the start of the school year, the Board's concerns on the matter were reflected in a goal that stated a desire "to avoid over-testing, 'teaching to the test,' the infringement upon instructional time, and the perception thereof." In April, using input from a task force established to address our goal, we approved a new policy, *Testing: State Assessments Grades 3 Through 8*, which clarifies the primary purposes of testing and the District's legal requirements, while noting that the State does not "expressly prohibit parents and students from refusing these assessments." The high percentage of Onteora students who did not take the State Assessments has been mirrored in many districts all over the State, and we can only hope that our educational leaders and elected officials in Albany take note of this protest movement and react accordingly.

During the last Board meetings of the school year, we will be working on a number of issues. Among our tasks will be seeking to finalize a set of "Core Values" that we began crafting last summer; working further on policies to clarify the role of recess in our elementary schools; establishing a task force to research specific environmental questions; and continuing to address the topics brought to us by our various committees. We are also starting the long-term process of a superintendent search, for which we will be seeking community input.

Like many parents and community members, Board members have calendars filled with school concerts, productions, celebrations, and ceremonies, most notably the High School Graduation on June 26, when members of the Class of 2015 will receive their diplomas at the end of their long and, we trust, rewarding journey as Onteora students, and embark on the next stage of their life journey.

Next year will see a change in the composition of the school board. After two terms totaling six years, I am not running for re-election; I have long-term travel on the horizon, and professional projects to complete before that commences. With just three names on the May 19 ballot, two of them returning Trustees, Valerie Storey looks set to join the school board; we thank her in advance for her volunteerism. For my own part, having the opportunity to serve this District as a Board of Education Trustee has been a privilege and an honor, and I would like to thank everyone in the District and around the community who helped make it so. I look forward to continuing my involvement in the District as a parent and to receiving this newsletter in my mailbox.

Sincerely,

Tony Fletcher

ONTEORA CSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESIDENT, 2014-2015

Tax Relief for Senior Citizens

The District helps to reduce the school tax burden for senior citizens, who often live on fixed incomes, through a provision in the New York State Real Property Tax Law. This provision 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.

To participate in the exemption program, eligible residents age 65 or older must meet certain qualifications, and an application must be submitted by the local assessor's office by March 1, 2016 and renewed annually. For more information or an application, contact the local assessor's office in your town of residence.

Deadline for Onteora's Pre-K Lottery is Approaching

Parents or guardians have until May 22 to complete the necessary paperwork for the lottery that will be selecting children for the District's half-day Pre-K program. Onteora residents who are the parent or guardian of a child who will be four years old on or before December 1, 2015 are eligible to apply for the 2015-2016 school year. Applications are available via the District website (www.onteora.k12.ny.us), as well as from Margaret Harkin (657-3320). Please note that if an original birth certificate cannot be produced, other proofs of date of birth may be considered.

Proposed 2015-2016 Budget Decreased from Current Year; Below Tax Levy Limit

continued from page 1

Expanded Educational Offerings

Building on the success of last year's Summer Academic Intervention Support Program, the proposed budget would once again offer this opportunity to children in Kindergarten through Grade 8. The three-week program would be open to students whose teachers believe they would benefit from an intensive summer academic program. This year's program will be run by the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Cindy Bishop. Ms. Bishop has outlined a program in which all reading and writing activities will be tied to a common theme. Students will be grouped by ability, allowing for students of all ages to work together. Instruction will be differentiated to allow for students' needs. Planning includes the possibility of services from local artists/musicians, a field trip related to the chosen theme, and a culminating celebration. The students' summer progress will be reported to their teachers for review.

The addition of two teachers of English Language Learners is in the proposed budget to allow our District to remain in compliance with revised regulatory requirements. The addition will also allow greater instructional flexibility to address the changing needs of our growing non-English speaking population.

The budget also keeps elementary school class sizes at current levels and adds a Library Media Specialist at the elementary level to help with the integration of technology.

Staffing

At the elementary level, staffing will be reduced by one teacher due to a reduction in the number of class sections. There is currently a second vacant position that is being maintained in the budget to allow for the potential addition of a section at the Kindergarten level, pending enrollment data for the new school year. This position will be filled if needed, but if enrollment numbers do not justify the addition, the position will remain vacant.

In another staffing addition, a second Database Specialist position is being created to deal with the growing demands of data reporting as required by the New York State Education Department.

In the area of Special Education, the proposed budget would continue to take advantage of the federal IDEA 611 grant to better serve students' needs. The grant money would again fully fund a 10-month administrative position for a Committee on Special Education (CSE) Chairperson.

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.

Fund Balance

The Board is applying \$2.5 million of fund balance as an additional revenue in the budget to help offset the cost to the taxpayer. Last year, the Board applied \$3.4 million of fund balance to offset the levy in order to accomplish a number of small capital projects through the operating budget. The fund balance being utilized this year is lower because we are not including capital projects in the operating budget.

State Aid

The final New York State budget adopted in Albany on April 1 included a slight restoration of State Aid. Each year since the 2010-2011 school year, New York State has withheld State Aid from schools through the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). This action was taken to balance the State's deficit and resulted in year after year of State Aid reductions to school districts. 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.

This year the State no longer is projecting a budget deficit. In fact, they are projecting a minimum surplus of \$4 billion. Onteora was given a partial restoration of the GEA in the amount of \$473,579, but still lost \$896,449. The restoration allowed the Board to relieve some of the local tax levy burden.

We appreciate the community's continued efforts in lobbying our lawmakers to restore lost State Aid to schools and encourage you to continue these efforts. You can see that when voices unite, it does make a difference.

Please Vote

The community is encouraged to participate in the school budget vote and Board of Education election on Tuesday, May 19, from 2 PM-9 PM. Candidates will be running for three available seats. Two seats are for full three-year terms, and one seat will receive a one-year, six-week term, beginning May 19, 2015. This seat will go to the candidate with the third highest number of votes.

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

VOTE!

Tuesday, May 19

2 PM - 9 PM



SAMPLE BALLOT: BUDGET VOTE

Proposition # 1: 2015-2016 Budget

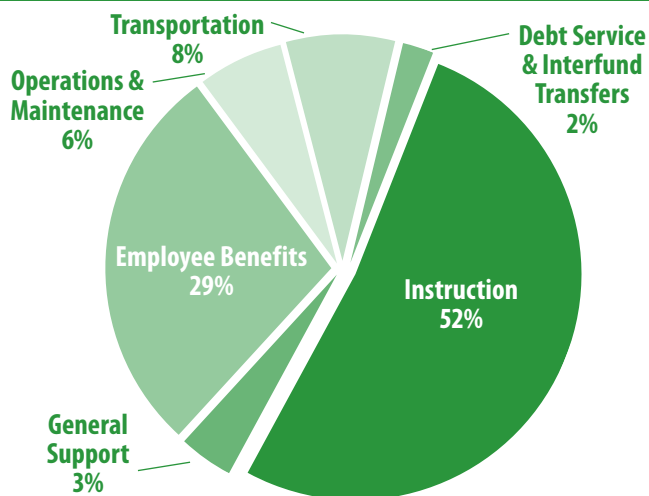
BE IT RESOLVED, that the Onteora Central School District Board of Education be and is hereby authorized to expend the sums set forth under the various headings which are voted upon in gross and not in detail in the total amount of \$51,656,975 (which includes \$20,000 to support public library) for the year commencing July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2016, and the Board is authorized to levy and collect the necessary tax thereof on the taxable property of the District.

YES _____ NO _____

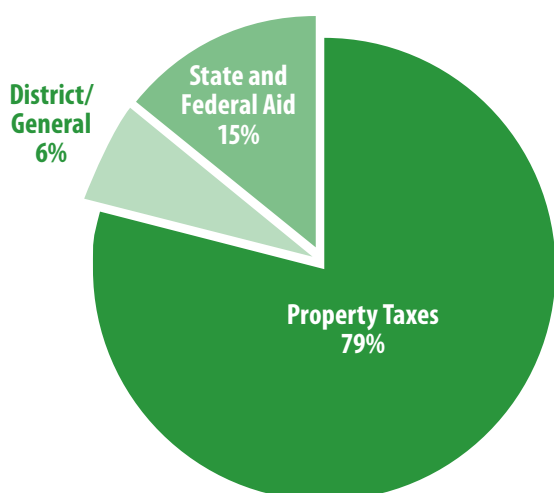
2015-2016 Budget Summary

	Administrative	Program	Capital
Instruction	\$1,593,566	\$25,141,008	-
General Support	\$1,779,366	-	-
Employee Benefits	\$1,140,738	\$12,774,278	\$1,263,997
Operations & Maintenance	-	-	\$3,061,109
Transportation	-	\$3,982,512	-
Debt Service & Interfund Transfers	-	\$350,000	\$570,400
TOTAL	\$4,513,670	\$42,247,798	\$4,895,506
Percentage of Budget	8.7%	81.8%	9.5%

Proposed Budget by Area of Expense



2015-2016 Budgeted Revenues



TAX INFORMATION

Onteora continues to have the lowest tax rate in Ulster County, with a full-value tax rate of \$11.70 per \$1,000 for 2014-2015. After providing the taxpayers with a zero percent tax levy increase since 2012-2013, the District is proposing a budget for 2015-2016 that is less than the current budget and carries a levy increase of less than one percent. The 0.87 percent tax levy increase is below the maximum allowable New York State Tax Levy Limit calculation of 3.34 percent and therefore only requires a simple majority voter approval.

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 0.87 percent increase to the tax levy.

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

Even though the District's proposal actually represents a reduction from the current year's budget and already meets 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 \$348,483 to be removed. In addition to making reductions to reach the zero percent levy increase, the District is also 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.

Save
the
Date

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Tuesday, May 19
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PROPOSED ★ BUDGET

2015-2016

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 12 between 2-8 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 12 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 18, 2015 (the day before the Election and Vote).

Applications for absentee ballots are available on the District website (www.onteora.k12.ny.us/page/63) or at the Central Administration office 8 AM-4 PM Monday through Friday. Applications are to be mailed to: District Clerk, Onteora Central School District, PO 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 19.

WHERE ARE COPIES OF THE 2015-2016 PROPOSED BUDGET AVAILABLE?

Copies of the 2015-2016 Proposed Budget are available for review at the following locations:

- ★ The High School/Middle School Offices
- ★ Bennett Intermediate
- ★ Woodstock Primary
- ★ Phoenicia Primary
- ★ 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 2014-2015 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2015-2016 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2015-2016 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$51,876,125	\$51,656,975	\$51,308,492
Increase/Decrease for the 2015-2016 School Year		(\$219,150)	(\$348,483)
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		-0.42%	-0.67%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.62%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$40,258,961	\$40,607,444	
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)	\$40,258,961	\$40,607,444	\$40,258,961
F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$183,999	\$141,214	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$41,605,853	\$41,461,506	
H. Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, <u>Excluding</u> Permissible Exclusions and Levy for Library Debt, Plus Prior Year Tax Cap Reserve (E - B - F + D)	\$40,074,962	\$40,466,230	
I. Difference: (G – H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$1,530,891	\$995,276	
Administrative Component	\$4,420,751	\$4,513,670	\$4,508,670
Program Component	\$41,552,908	\$42,247,798	\$42,013,316
Capital Component	\$5,902,466	\$4,895,506	\$4,786,506

*If a contingency budget is adopted, the school district is 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.

** 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
No Separate Propositions	

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2015-2016 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹

\$394.00

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 2015-2016 by the qualified voters of the Onteora Central School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at Bennett Intermediate, Phoenicia Primary, West Hurley Elementary and Woodstock Primary School(s) in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

SAMPLE BALLOT: ELECTION

Board of Education Candidates (Vote for Three)

Three (3) Vacancies

TWO are three-year terms – Effective July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018

ONE is a one-year and six-week term, from May 19, 2015 through June 30, 2016, to fill the unexpired seat of Tom Hickey

The candidates as they will appear on the ballot are:

(VOTE FOR THREE)

- ★ Bobbi (Barbara) Schnell
- ★ Laurie Osmond
- ★ Valerie Storey

Messages from the Board of Education Candidates

Bobbi (Barbara) Schnell

Born and reared in Brooklyn, Barbara “Bobbi” Schnell began teaching in 1980. Bobbi taught in private and Montessori schools before becoming a teacher in the New York City public school system. She received her graduate degree and post-grad certification in administration in the city.

Bobbi moved to Olive 25 years ago. Her son graduated from Onteora High School, and he now lives and works in San Francisco.

Bobbi became Principal at West Hurley Elementary School in 2001. When West Hurley closed, she became Principal of Woodstock Elementary School, where she worked until her retirement in 2013.

In December 2014, Bobbi interviewed for an open Board of Education seat, and she was offered the position. “I got so much joy from working with the staff, families, and community as a principal, it’s an honor to be able to give back to them by serving as their representative on the school board,” she said.

Bobbi, who formerly served as a hospice volunteer, currently delivers Meals on Wheels with her husband. She sells antiques and vintage items at the Blue Barn Marketplace in Shandaken, and lives with her husband and cat in Olivebridge.

Laurie Osmond

Laurie Osmond has been on the Onteora Board of Education since 2008. During that time, she served as President for two years and Vice-President for one year, and has been an active member of various Board committees.

Ms. Osmond was raised on eastern Long Island and lived in California before settling in Woodstock in 2004. She attended Brown University and San Francisco State University and holds a B.A. in Broadcast Communications Arts. She is a self-employed media producer, editor, writer, and videographer and is the mother of a daughter attending Onteora schools.

Ms. Osmond hopes that her service contributes to the growth of the District as a place of educational excellence, with wide-ranging opportunities for students and a curriculum that embraces the unique character of our region while empowering students to succeed on a global level.

Valerie Storey

My name is Valerie Storey. Both my husband Marshall and myself are graduates of Onteora. We have two children that are currently enrolled at Woodstock Primary School and the Middle/High School. I have lived in the area all of my life. I have been on numerous committees concerning the future of our children. I’m currently active on the District Comprehensive Planning Team on Later Middle School/High School Start Times. I enjoy reading, camping, and spending as much time as possible with my family.

Test-Prep Class Boosts Readiness for SAT Exam



Onteora English teacher Elaine Conroy teaches Onteora students about dangling modifiers during an SAT prep class offered through Ulster BOCES.

This year, 40 Onteora juniors took advantage of an opportunity to enhance their chances of success on the SAT—an exam used by many colleges to assess the academic skills of applicants.

The students enrolled in a free SAT prep class, taught by Onteora teachers who received special training through Ulster BOCES. State funding for the training was provided through the Virtual Advanced Placement (VAP) Program. A VAP grant also paid for course materials and an online portal.

The weekly classes, which run through mid-May, are being taught by Onteora Math teacher Wendy Cohen and English teacher Elaine Conroy.

“The kids love the class,” commented Ms. Conroy, who has been helping to prepare the students for the Critical Reading and Writing portions of the exam. “There’s a digital component, a textbook that is theirs to keep, and lots of skill and drill.” Referring to A-List, the national educational services provider that designed the prep course, she declared, “A-List has made a science of the SAT.”

Ms. Cohen, who has been focusing on the Math section of the SAT, believes that the test-prep program has been highly worthwhile for Onteora students. “Each week I can see the students’ problem-solving abilities improve,” she observed. “The strategies taught in the course enable them to simplify complex problems and come up with the correct answer more quickly. The SAT is unique, and it benefits the students tremendously to prepare specifically for this exam.”

Onteora Celebrates Foreign Language Week

Onteora High School/Middle School celebrated foreign languages from March 9-13. The hallways were adorned with colorful posters made by students to illustrate French and Spanish proverbs like “Feliz Como un Pez en el Agua” (Happy Like a Fish in Water), “Les Chiens ne font pas des Chats” (Dogs are not Cats), and “Le Chat Parti, les Souris Dansent” (When the Cat’s Away, the Mice will Dance). During the morning announcements, students recited foreign language trivia and sang songs in Spanish or French. At lunchtime, they were greeted by posters displaying facts about other countries around the world. As a special treat, students in Valerie Stewart’s and Christi Nelsen-Epstein’s 9th period Spanish classes learned to make empanadas, a dish popular in Spain.

“At Onteora, we believe the learning of a foreign language will make our students more competitive in the global market post-graduation,” explained Mrs. Stewart, who serves as the District’s Foreign Language Liaison. “Whatever our students plan on pursuing in the future, the knowledge of a foreign language can open up doors of exciting opportunity.”



Onteora students Juliette Patterson and Adam Feldman make empanadas during Foreign Language Week with their Spanish teacher, Christi Nelsen-Epstein.

Congratulations to the following Middle School students, who were inducted into the National Junior Honor Society in March:

Siena Beck	Spencer Estes	Quinn Savatgy
Yasmin Chefridi	Grace Foster	Jazarah Shim
Madison Breagan	Ellery Loheide	Jason Zheng
Adrien D’Aprile	Loic Roels	
Erin Downs	Emily Salem	

“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 (1965 or earlier) are eligible to walk with this year’s graduating seniors. Graduation will be held on June 26 at 6 PM. For more information or to sign up for the “Golden Walk,” contact Rita Vanacore at imagineonteora@gmail.com.

ONTEORA JUNIOR IS INDONESIA-BOUND

Promoting cross-cultural understanding. Sharpening leadership skills. Pursuing a passion for peace-building and community service. These are just a few of the activities on Onteora junior Raegan Loheide’s summer to-do list. Raegan is one of only eight U.S. students selected to participate in the Indonesia-U.S. Youth Leadership Program (I-US-YLP) from June 26-July 28. The cultural exchange opportunity is sponsored by the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

“Everything about this program sounded like it was coming from my heart,” explained Raegan when asked what inspired her to apply. “I was drawn to the experiences it offers, its goals, and the impact I think it can have on helping young people get ready to make a difference.”

After a pre-trip orientation period at George Mason University in Virginia, Raegan and the other American participants will travel to Indonesia for a three and a half week visit. Highlights of their trip will include “homestays” with Balinese families, an overnight visit to an Islamic boarding school, and tours of ancient Indonesian temples. In addition to sightseeing, the students will participate in classes and interactive activities on topics ranging from “Democracy and Civic Engagement,” to “Culture, Conflict and Cooperation,” to “Media for Social Change.”

Raegan was particularly drawn to the program’s conflict-resolution component. “Even as a teenager, there are so many conflicts you can get into,” she reflects. Speaking about international diplomacy, she says, “You can’t just assume that you understand a different culture’s values—you need to connect with its people and try to immerse yourself in that culture.”

Raegan’s future plans include college, where she hopes to major in international public health.

The exchange also calls for 19 Indonesian students and educators to travel to the United States. For more information on the program, go to <https://indolead.wordpress.com>

ONTEORA

Empower • Contribute • Succeed

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Ulster BOCES Community Relations

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To Postal Customer

Onteora Middle School Celebrates Diversity Day

Expanding horizons. Encouraging students to try something new. Deepening their understanding of other cultures. Learning to respect themselves as well as other people. These were some of the goals of Diversity Day, which took place at Onteora Middle School on March 6.

This annual event, which has been celebrated at the school for the past 17 years, offered students a range of workshops presented by community members, parents, District staff members, and representatives of various service groups. "We are trying to give students experiences they may not get elsewhere and inspire them to reach out into the community to provide service to others," explained Family and Consumer Sciences teacher Marjorie Hodder, who helped coordinate the event.

Among those sharing their talents, knowledge, and expertise were autism advocate Jesse Saperstein, who discussed what it is like to live with Asperger syndrome, and teaching assistant Kim Raszewski, who taught a lesson on Mayan culture before inviting the students to help her assemble school supplies for a school located on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula.



Autism advocate Jesse Saperstein was among the featured Diversity Day speakers.



Local hunger was the focus of a workshop held during the Middle School's recent Diversity Day. Pictured are Leyla Crossan and Naomi Teitler, who are showing off muffins they helped bake for Family of Woodstock.

Students also had the opportunity to bake muffins for Family of Woodstock, learn the techniques of a Japanese martial art, acquire basic first aid and survival skills, and make music on their iPads.

Culminating the day's activities was a character-education assembly entitled "Quest for Respect," presented by Camfel Productions. Combining music, video clips, and compelling personal stories, the presentation reinforced the message that true respect is earned through hard work and determination, and is defined by character. For more information on the assembly, go to the Camfel Productions website: www.camfel.com.

Calling the event "a huge success," Mrs. Hodder was quick to credit the hard work of the volunteer workshop presenters, "who were willing to share their talents and culture and their passion for educating students."

VOTE! Tuesday, May 19

2 PM - 9 PM

Useful District Contact Information

www.onteora.k12.ny.us

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Assistant Principal, Dieter Schimmelpfennig

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Principal, Jennifer O'Connor

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PHOENICIA PRIMARY • 688-5580
Principal, Linda Sella

WOODSTOCK PRIMARY • 679-2316
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