



Mt. Marion Grade 6 students Sadie Reed, Carly Bailey, Jenna McDonald, and Rabecca Denise are all smiles displaying their engineering project.

Saugerties

Central School District

BUDGET 2013

Residents to Vote on May 21

Board of Education Adopts Budget Below Allowable Tax Cap Threshold

Saugerties Students Have a Blast During Engineering Event

In the ever-evolving world of education, school districts are now placing a strong emphasis on initiatives in the areas of STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Developing skill sets in these areas of study will prepare students for the global economy of the future as employers look for workers with advanced critical thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning skills. In fact, 10-year employment projections by the U.S. Department of Labor show that of the 20 fastest growing occupations anticipated for 2014, 15 of them require significant preparation in mathematics or science.

At the Grant D. Morse, Charles M. Riccardi, and Mt. Marion Elementary Schools, Grades 4-6 students were recently introduced to the engineering component of STEM by participating in Engineers Week, a nationally promoted science program. As part of the activities, IBM professionals came to the Saugerties classrooms with innovative and fun hands-on projects for students. Plans are in the works for Linda Case-Hook, an engineer, to visit Lawrence M. Cahill Elementary School in the next several weeks.

Aspiring scientists at Grant D. Morse Elementary School had a blast sharpening their scientific skills over a two-day period during Engineers Week, under the guidance of IBM Software Engineer Michael MacIsaac and IBM System Service Representative Michael DeAngelis.

After constructing capsules out of materials such as styrofoam cups, marshmallows, rubber bands, and paper clips, the student engineers attempted to drop their raw egg “astronauts” from higher and higher distances. Winners were those whose eggs arrived safely back to Earth intact.

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The Saugerties Central School District Board of Education has adopted a Proposed Budget of \$55,882,331, which represents an estimated tax levy increase of 1.98 percent. This is the second year in a row that Saugerties has developed a budget less than the allowable calculated increase under New York State’s tax levy limit law, therefore requiring only a simple majority approval. The actual permitted 2013-2014 tax levy increase under the new legislation is 3.51 percent, however the Board of Education wanted to maintain the educational programs for children by seeking efficiencies and reallocation of resources.

Strengthening the Foundation

Long-term planning and fiscal stability were two key elements in the budget development process. Budget development began with a strategic look at the Board’s six core values: addressing student needs, security enhancements, local economic climate, facilities maintenance, technology upgrades, and planning for long-term fiscal health.

Long-term fiscal health was one of the most important factors in the planning process. Several years ago, the District had an unexpected financial crisis and was unable to cover its monthly bills. Revenue Anticipation Notes (RAN) were needed to cover expenses (RANs are municipal bonds that are later repaid. Since they accrue interest, they are not considered a financial best practice). To avoid a repeat of this situation, the District began

Proposed Tax Levy Increase Under Allowable Limit

Allowable Levy
3.51%

Proposed Levy
1.98%

Through increased efficiencies in operations, an increase in state aid, and application of some fund balance, the proposed tax levy increase is 1.98%. This is less than the allowable levy limit increase criteria of the new Tax Cap legislation, and therefore will require a simple majority voter approval.

to rebuild its fund balance. Just as it is preferable for a family to rely upon savings to cover unexpected costs rather than use a high-interest credit card, covering unanticipated expenses through the District’s fund balance helps avoid the same pitfall.

The District strives to be a good financial steward of the community’s investment in education. While maintaining a fund balance is important, considering community need for tax relief and avoiding any year-to-year spikes in the tax levy are also essential parts of budgeting. This year, the District is returning \$450,000 of fund balance to help offset the tax levy.

Looking Ahead

Refining and enhancing student programming with an eye toward 21st century skills played strongly into the budget development. New student initiatives require faculty support and the settlement of the teachers’ collective bargaining agreement stabilized increasing contractual obligations. However, increasing mandated costs and other obligations—including growing State-determined contribution levels to the two New York State retirement systems and the costs of implementing the new Common Core Learning Standards, Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process, and new State Assessments—remained driving forces in budget development.

Facing these challenges while creating a student-centered budget was a prime focus of the Board. The District is now able to more accurately estimate the costs of enhancing student programs to meet the changing needs in education. The Proposed Budget maintains all current student programs. In addition, the Budget includes funding for two additional math classes that will help Saugerties students adapt to recent revisions in New York State educational requirements. The

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VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Tuesday May 21

6 AM–9 PM

Saugerties Students Have a Blast During Engineering Event

“Engineers Week is one of the students’ favorite times of year in fourth grade,” said Morse teacher Rebecca Mulford. “Their energy and enthusiasm was fantastic,” she commented.

The program correlated to present-day Grade 4 coursework in the Simple Machines Science Unit, Mrs. Mulford added.

Thinking ahead? The program also gave the students an overview of the wide range of career options available in engineering, from computer and medical, to electrical and aerospace.

“We want the students to see that engineering is fun and can lead to a good career in a field where there are jobs,” said Mr. MacIsaac. He said that IBM supplied the materials and was fully supportive of the event.

“It’s in IBM’s best interest to reach as many local students in Grades 4-8 as possible, to expose them to engineering and encourage them to enter the field,” Mr. MacIsaac said.

The students worked in teams and started by dropping their finished products from a height of three feet. Those who were successful advanced to a six-foot drop, and then to a ten-foot drop. All Grade 6 students and the three winning teams from Grades 4 and 5 met up with Principal Donald Dieckmann, Jr., who climbed on the roof for the final egg drop.

“The students loved it,” Mr. MacIsaac said. “Everyone hoped their teams and classmates’ teams would survive. It was great fun.”

Mr. MacIsaac said he’s been bringing the program to Morse – where his son Daniel is



From left, Mt. Marion Grade 6 students Jared Rompella, Adam Williams, Emily Ingrassia, Jenna McDonald, Rabeca Denise (back to camera), Lexis McCabe (on the floor), Jaea Kleinberg, Elizabeth Feller, and Savannah Dickerson concentrate on their project during Engineers Week.

a Grade 4 student and his two older children attended elementary school – for seven years in a row. “When I see the students so revved up, it makes it very rewarding for me,” he commented.

In the planning stages of their challenge, the Saugerties students were seen strategizing over the \$250 “virtual budget” the teams were given to work with. Morse Grade 6 teacher Janet Sullivan reported that the virtual money taught the students budgeting skills, as they allocated their materials to make sure they had enough supplies to make their capsules.

“It was an excellent problem-solving activity,” Mrs. Sullivan remarked.

The IBM professionals took their show on the road to Charles M. Riccardi Elementary School in early April. There, nine of the students’ group projects survived the in-house rounds of “egg drops” and made it to the Riccardi roof for the final test, which was conducted by Principal Susan Osterhoudt. Three groups succeeded in the roof drop – two Grade 6 groups and one group from Grade 5. The ultimate winning team, a Grade 6 group, was chosen for spending the least virtual money on materials.

At Riccardi, teams of Grade 4 students from Jill Brandt’s and Nancy Gunn’s classes were observed working together in the multi-purpose project.

“The students are able to use their imaginations, cooperative learning skills, and mathematics to accomplish a mutual goal,” said Mrs. Brandt, who is the Riccardi Science teacher for the two Grade 4 classes.



From left, Riccardi Grade 4 students Tryphena Griffin and Cierra Kuriplach test their team’s egg drop project, while fellow engineers-in-training Michael Salmi and Nailen Crespo observe.



The student “engineers” whose projects survived the Riccardi roof drop are, left to right: Alfredo Martinez, Liam White, Braiden Degrou, Dominic Sasso, Nevada Dysard, Victoria Cogswell, Kaylyn Smith, Anthony Owen, Sasha-Kay Bernard, Hannah Pagerey, Emily Christeanson, and Emerson Jones. The three adults seen with the students are, left to right, IBM Engineer Michael DeAngelis, Principal Susan Osterhoudt, and IBM Engineer Michael MacIsaac.



Morse students from Grades 4-6 gather to watch Principal Donald Dieckmann, Jr. drop one of their egg “astronauts” from the school roof.

All the students had fun learning in a different way. “Our students do a lot of intense thinking throughout the school day, and with a project like this, they get to think creatively with others, without pressure,” Ms. Osterhoudt said. “Students get to be imaginative, and they have such a great time coming up with a product that isn’t just paper and pencil.”

Steven Wehr, another IBM Engineer, has been sharing his “love of engineering” with students at Mt. Marion Elementary School for more than a decade, he said. Under his tutelage, Grade 5 students this year were charged with the creative task of designing a structure entirely out of paper, which would hold as many textbooks as possible. No scissors, no tape, no glue.

Morse teacher Mrs. Sullivan also observed that the students who “really benefitted” from the engineering project were those for whom pencil and paper is not their strength. “But being asked to plan, and sketch, and build their ideas? That allowed them to shine – that’s their moment,” she said.

When I see the students so revved up, it makes it very rewarding for me.
— IBM Software Engineer and Morse Parent Michael MacIsaac



Grade 5 winners of the Morse egg drop are all smiles about their accomplishments. They are, from left: Nissa Wood, Skyler Sprague, Carter Vail, and Sophia Davalos-Pacheco.

Saugerties 2013-2014 PROPOSED BUDGET

Central School District

Three Part Budget

The legislation that requires New York State school districts to have a public budget vote includes the requirement that the budget be divided up into three sections: Administration, Program, and Capital.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	INCREASE / (DECREASE)
	7.09%	7.05%	1.67%
Administration	\$ 3,874,945	\$ 3,939,391	\$ 64,446
	80.52%	81.80%	3.83%
Program	\$ 44,023,887	\$ 45,709,125	\$ 1,685,238
	12.40%	11.16%	(8.03%)
Capital	\$6,778,148	\$6,233,815	(\$544,333)
TOTAL	\$54,676,980	\$55,882,331	2.20% or \$1,205,351
2013-2014 Proposed Budget: \$55,882,331			

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Tuesday May 21

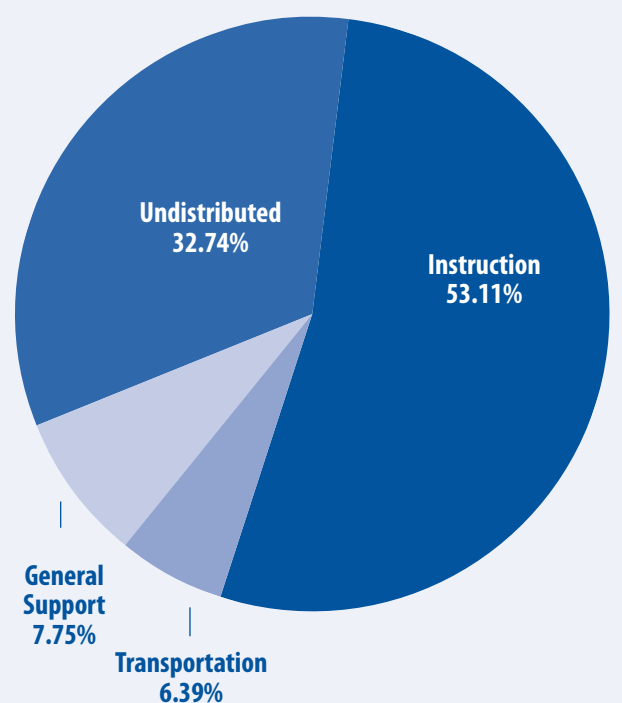
6 AM–9 PM

Cahill Elementary School
Morse Elementary School
Mt. Marion Elementary School
Riccardi Elementary School

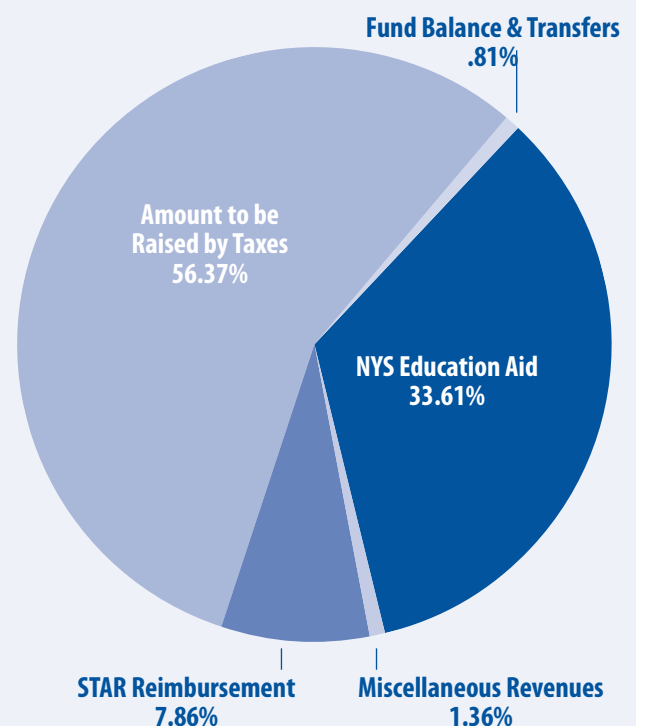
Expenditure Summary

	ADOPTED BUDGET 2012-2013	PROPOSED BUDGET 2013-2014	\$ INCREASE (\$ DECREASE)
GENERAL SUPPORT			
Board of Education	\$33,874	\$34,014	\$140
Central Administration	\$228,800	\$234,572	\$5,772
Finance	\$421,679	\$413,521	(\$8,158)
Staff	\$203,796	\$243,966	\$40,170
Central Services	\$2,880,347	\$2,724,792	(\$155,555)
Special Items	\$686,665	\$682,507	(\$4,158)
Total	\$4,455,161	\$4,333,372	(\$121,789)
INSTRUCTION			
Administration & Improvement	\$1,268,615	\$1,262,288	(\$6,327)
Instruction - Teaching	\$24,435,435	\$25,046,929	\$611,494
Instructional Media	\$1,207,872	\$1,196,474	(\$11,398)
Pupil Services	\$2,097,867	\$2,172,831	\$74,964
Total	\$29,009,789	\$29,678,522	\$668,733
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION			
District-Owned Transportation	\$197,866	\$197,631	(\$235)
Contract Transportation	\$3,193,467	\$3,374,987	\$181,520
Total	\$3,391,333	\$3,572,618	181,285
UNDISTRIBUTED			
Employee Benefits	\$14,729,192	\$15,638,675	\$909,483
Debt Service	\$2,989,505	\$2,509,144	(\$480,361)
Interfund Transfers	\$102,000	\$150,000	\$48,000
Total	\$17,820,697	\$18,297,819	\$477,122
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$54,676,980	\$55,882,331	\$1,205,351

How the Money Will Be Spent



Where the Money Comes From



Revenue Summary

	ADOPTED BUDGET 2012-2013	PROPOSED BUDGET 2013-2014	\$ INCREASE (\$ DECREASE)
Total Miscellaneous Revenues/Federal Aid	\$885,000	\$759,319	(\$125,681)
Total State Aid Revenues without STAR	\$18,297,227	\$18,780,033	\$482,806
Total Revenue Other Than Property Tax/STAR	\$19,182,227	\$19,539,352	\$357,125
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$300,000	\$450,000	\$150,000
Amount to Be Raised by Property Tax (estimated)	\$30,888,573	\$31,500,675	\$612,102
STAR Reimbursement (estimated)	\$4,306,180	\$4,392,304	\$86,124
TOTAL REVENUES	\$54,676,980	\$55,882,331	\$1,205,351

Saugerties 2013-2014 PROPOSED BUDGET

Central School District

Facts & Figures About the Proposed Budget

What is Saugerties' budget per pupil?

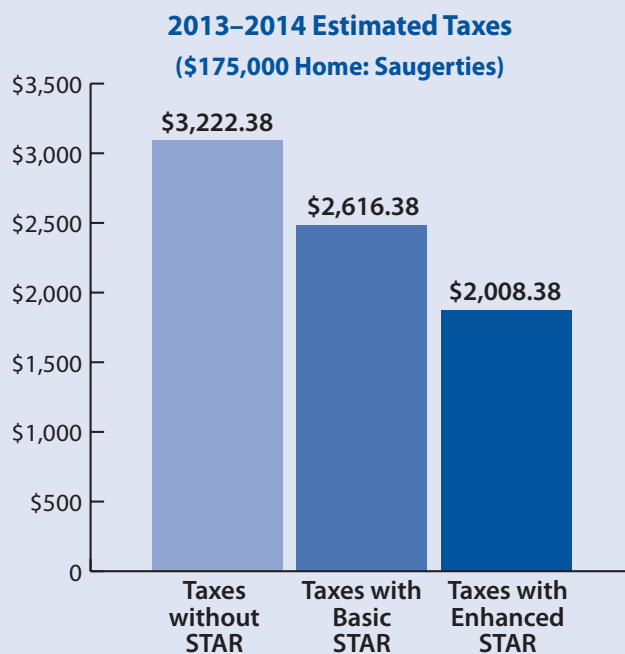
Historically, Saugerties has had the lowest per pupil costs of any Ulster County School District. According to the 2011-2012 Mid-Hudson School Study Council report, the District's cost per pupil is \$18,113.99. The Ulster County average is \$22,755.40.

What are the estimated 2013-2014 equalization rates?

The rates are based on the preliminary assessment rolls for the three towns comprising the Saugerties Central School District.

Town	Equalization Rate
Saugerties	1.00
Ulster	0.7814
Woodstock	1.00

The estimated tax bills are for a property in Saugerties with an assessed value of \$175,000. (Since the tentative equalization rate for Saugerties is 1.00, the assessed value will equal the true value.)



How does the STAR program work?

The School Tax Relief (STAR) Program that was passed by the Legislature in 1997 to provide Basic and Enhanced school tax relief for owner-occupied, primary residences is continued under the New York State budget but has been revised to also reflect income levels of owners. Owner-occupied, primary residences where the owners' total income is less than \$500,000 are now eligible for STAR.

The Basic STAR exemption is offered to property owners on their owner-occupied primary residences, and is provided in the form of an actual reduction in homeowners' property tax bills. Owners who are aged 65 or older who meet income criteria are eligible for even greater tax savings through the Enhanced STAR exemption.

Seniors must apply for Enhanced STAR each year. **Beginning in 2014, homeowners with the Basic STAR exemption will also have to apply annually.** New York State has advised that homeowners will be contacted with specific instructions in the future. For more information, contact your local assessor.

How do I get more detailed information about the budget?

You can stop by the District Offices in the Hildebrandt Building or any of the six schools for a copy of the complete Budget document, or visit www.saugerties.k12.ny.us. Please contact Superintendent Seth Turner at (845) 247-6551, or School Business Official Don Gottlieb at (845) 247-6520, if you have specific questions.

were also a part of the budgeting process. New York State mandates that public school districts must provide certain services, such as bussing and nursing services, to students whose parents choose for them to attend a private school. With the closure of St. Mary's of the Snow, the District was able to eliminate certain associated costs, such as funding the position of a part-time nurse.

A change in student needs resulted in the elimination of 4.0 teaching positions. Declining enrollment at the elementary level led to the elimination of two elementary school teaching positions. Additionally, changing student needs and the realignment of responsibilities resulted in the elimination of 2.0 special education positions.

The Result

Overall, the budget increased by 2.2 percent. A 2.64 percent increase in State Aid helped to offset these costs. Combined with the application of \$450,000 from fund balance, the Board of Education was able to contain the levy impact to be less than two percent, and below the threshold

Questions and Answers About the Tax Levy

New York's fiscal crisis has major implications for the State's public school system, and for the way the Saugerties Central School District develops its budgets. Below are answers to some common questions people ask. Additional information about the Proposed Budget can be found at www.saugerties.k12.ny.us. The community is encouraged to vote on the budget on May 21, 2013. Board of Education members will also be elected.

What is the "tax cap"?

New York State has implemented a new law that changes the way budgets are approved. The changes went into effect beginning with the 2012 vote. Under the law, a school district must now plan its budget around a complex State formula that calculates a baseline tax levy increase. Budgets that carry a tax levy increase at or below this calculation will need the approval of a simple majority (50 percent plus one) of voters. Any proposal higher than this calculation will require a supermajority approval (60 percent). **The Board of Education has adopted a budget that is BELOW the allowable levy level under the State's formula and therefore will need a simple majority voter approval of 50 percent plus one.**

How is the tax levy increase calculated?

Although this law has been commonly referred to as the 2 percent tax cap, it is important to understand that it is not a cap, nor does it limit the levy increase to just two percent. That number may be above or below two percent, and it will vary each year. While the formula is influenced by the lesser of CPI (consumer price index) or 2 percent, it then allows for specific exemptions and the application of other factors in the formula. In Saugerties, this year's exemptions include increases to State-mandated pension contributions, as well as the principal and interest on past debt for capital projects. After applying the allowable exemptions, the Saugerties Central School District is permitted a maximum 3.51 percent levy. **The Board of Education has adopted a budget less than this, with a 1.98 percent levy increase.**

What can I do?

The most important things community members can do is to become informed about the budget being presented and to vote on May 21. We understand that the school budget process is complicated, and that the addition of the levy limit legislation may make it more confusing. However, it is important for the community to understand the budget proposal. Please visit our website and attend Board meetings to stay informed. Helping everyone understand the budget and what it means to the future of the programs offered to students is very important. We want to assist in any way we can.

set by the new levy limit legislation for a simple majority approval.

"The Board has directed me to prioritize District resources to ensure all students are able to demonstrate academic progress," says Superintendent Seth Turner. "We have responded to the challenging educational landscape by becoming as lean and efficient as possible. This budget supports our students by increasing our academic offerings and access to technology so they will be able to develop the skills they need to be successful."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Board of Education Adopts Budget Below Allowable Tax Cap Threshold

proposed courses will help make Saugerties High School graduates better prepared for both college and careers, important components of New York State's Common Core Learning Standards.

Technology Upgrades to Meet NY Mandates

Student access to technology was also a key focus of budget planning. In January 2013, the New York State Education Department announced that schools should be prepared to accommodate "computer-based administration" on end-of-year exams by the 2014-2015 school year. This impacts Grades 3-12. Students will no longer take exams with pencil and paper – they will have to use computers to complete certain assessments. Existing technology does not wholly support this new testing requirement. The District's technology program has been working with limited resources in recent years, so "getting up to speed" will be a multi-step process.

Currently, the District only has wireless "hotspots" available to activate three mobile laptop computer labs at the Junior/Senior High School. Up to 75 students can access wireless Internet simultaneously in these labs. Under the new State mandate, an entire grade level of students must be able to access a test simultaneously. A major step toward accommodating this new mandate will be upgrading infrastructure so that wireless Internet can be made available in each building. If the Proposed Budget is approved, upgrades for the Junior/Senior High School will begin in the summer of 2013; upgrades to the elementary schools are planned for the summer of 2014.

The new exams will also require machines to run Windows 7. Of the approximately 900 computers districtwide, a number of machines need manual hardware upgrades in order to run this software.

The technology upgrades will also be used to enhance safety and security throughout each of the buildings. An IP-based camera security system that will allow real-time access to security videos is planned, but requires wireless access to function optimally.

Re-aligning Resources

BOCES costs, the closing of a local private school, and federal, state, and local actions

Saugerties

Central School District

2013-2014 PROPOSED BUDGET

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2012-2013 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2013-2014 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2013-2014 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$54,676,980	\$55,882,331	\$55,184,105
Increase/Decrease for the 2013-2014 School Year		\$1,205,351	\$507,125
Percentage Increase / (Decrease) in Proposed Budget		2.2%	0.9%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.1%	
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Including Levy to Support Library Debt, if applicable	\$35,194,753	\$35,892,979	\$35,194,753
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$817,107	\$1,199,264	
A. Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Not</u> Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt	\$34,377,646	\$34,693,715	
B. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Not</u> Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$35,212,444	\$36,428,458	
Difference: A - B (Positive Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)	(\$834,798)	(\$1,734,743)	
Administrative Component	\$3,874,945	\$3,939,391	\$3,888,913
Program Component	\$44,023,886	\$45,709,125	\$45,141,760
Capital Component	\$6,778,148	\$6,233,815	\$6,153,432

* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2013-2014 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law: A contingency budget for 2013-2014 requires that the tax levy increase by 0.0%. Therefore, a budget gap of \$698,226 would need to be addressed to reach the contingency level. The anticipated changes in order to meet the contingency level include the following:

- five teaching positions
- a number of teaching assistants
- custodial staffing
- potential cuts to interscholastic sports programs
- eliminating equipment spending unrelated to safety and security, and
- reducing BOCES services.

There are no separate propositions for 2013-2014.



Under the Budget Proposed for the
2013-2014 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption savings ¹ → \$606

¹The 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 2013-2014 by the qualified voters of the Saugerties Central School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at the Cahill, Morse, Mt. Marion, and Riccardi Elementary Schools in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2013, between the hours of 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

Sample Ballot

The wording on the proposition will appear as shown in this example and you will have a choice of either YES or NO:

Proposition 12013-2014 Budget

Shall the Board of Education of the Saugerties Central School District be authorized to expend the sums of money which will be required for School District purposes for the 2013-2014 school year in the total amount of \$55,882,331 (the budget), and to levy the necessary sum against the taxable real property in the District?

There are three (3) three-year seats available on the Board of Education. The terms will run from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016. Only two candidates submitted petitions to run for the Board of Education. Therefore, there are only two names listed on the ballot: George Heidcamp and Angie Minew. The third seat will likely be filled by a “write-in” candidate. You can vote for a “write-in” candidate by adding his/her name to the ballot. As of the date of this printing, the following individual(s) has/have publicly expressed their interest in being considered a “write-in” candidate: Robert Davies.

★ George Heidcamp

★ Angie Minew

★ _____

VOTE!

VOTE!

VOTE!

Tuesday May 21

Cahill Elementary School

Morse Elementary School

Mt. Marion Elementary School

Riccardi Elementary School

6 AM–9 PM

Voting Information

Who May Vote?

In order to vote you must be:

- ★ Registered to vote
- ★ A citizen of the United States
- ★ 18 years of age or older
- ★ A resident of Saugerties Central School District for at least 30 days, immediately before the election

When and Where is the Vote?

Voting will take place on Tuesday, May 21, 2013, from 6 AM to 9 PM. Polls are open in each of the Saugerties Central School District’s Elementary Schools (Grant D. Morse, Mt. Marion, Cahill, and Riccardi) by School District voting areas.

Where Can I Get An Absentee Ballot?

Absentee ballot applications are available for pick-up at the Hildebrandt Building on weekdays from 8 AM to 4:30 PM. A voter can request an absentee ballot be mailed to them; however, the request for mailing must be made before May 13. The completed absentee ballots must be returned to the Hildebrandt Building in a sealed envelope no later than 4 PM on May 20.

How Do I Register?

If you are already registered to vote in the general governmental elections in November, then you are registered to vote in the School District vote. If you are not registered, you may do so by obtaining a registration form available at the following locations:

- ★ Ulster County Board of Elections, 284 Wall Street, Kingston (phone: 334-5470)
- ★ Ulster County Department of Motor Vehicles, 244 Fair Street, Kingston (phone: 340-3700)
- ★ any United States Post Office

Where Do I Vote?

District A: Grant D. Morse Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 6, 9, 15, and 16, and contains that geographical area south of the Greene County line, west of the New York State Thruway, north of Route 212 and east of the west boundary of the town of Saugerties located between Palenville and Zena.

District B: Mt. Marion Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 5 and 10 of the town of Saugerties and those parts of 3, 6, and 7 of the town of Woodstock. It is within that geographical area south of Route 212, west of the NYS Thruway (north of Glasco Turnpike), west of Snyder Road and Schoolhouse Road, north of the southern boundary of the town of Saugerties, with the exception of that area of the town of Saugerties located in the Kingston Consolidated School District and east of the School District boundary near the area of Plochmann Lane in the town of Woodstock.

District C: Cahill Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 14 of the town of Saugerties and is within that geographical area south of the Greene County line, west of the Hudson River, east of the New York State Thruway and north of the area commonly referred to as Barclay Heights.

District D: Riccardi Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 8, 11, 12 (including Mt. Marion Park), and 13 located in the Town of Saugerties and parts of 7, 9, and 12 located in the town of Ulster. Geographically, it is bounded north by the south boundary of Election District 3, on the east by the Hudson River, on the west by the New York State Thruway (north of Glasco Turnpike), then south of Glasco Turnpike to the east of Snyder Road and School House Road and on the south by the town of Ulster.



Stepping into action in the Zumba class are, from left: Hailie Terbush, Grade 4; Paige Brady, Grade 4; Zoe Lee Hartrum, Grade 2; Benjamin Reynolds, Kindergarten; Meagan Chase, Kindergarten; and Jade Meneses, Grade 2. Sitting it out are Colby Amell, Grade 6, and Mt. Marion teacher assistant Robin McDonald.

Students Get Into the Groove at Mt. Marion Creative Fundraiser

Mt. Marion Elementary School held a Mini Marathon Dance on March 9 at Saugerties High School and raised more than \$2,000 to support school programs, field trips, and events at Mt. Marion, while promoting health and fitness for the school's students and the community. Participants laced up their sneakers and got into the groove in four dance classes at the event, which was sponsored by the Mt. Marion PTA.

Cahill and Mt. Marion Students Abuzz as they Participate in Agricultural Literacy Event



Cahill and Mt. Marion Elementary School students were all abuzz when community volunteers came and read to them in an exciting agricultural awareness literacy program during the week of March 18.

One of the highlights was when students in Grades 1-4 got to cozy up and learn all about beekeeping in a story-time rendition of *The Beeman*, during the special 2013 Agricultural Literacy Week program. The book was shared with children in both schools.

The Mt. Marion students in Jen Arcadipane's K-2 Life Skills Program class had a unique, hands-on experience when their reader, local beekeeper Richard Hines, also brought his bee gear for them to see and touch.

"I love working with kids," said Mr. Hines, a resident of nearby Cottekill. "They teach me joy, and I try to teach them respect for nature and for each other."

In an engaging exchange with Mr. Hines, the students gleefully reported that bees give us honey, and then they learned about the pollination process. The young learners' enthusiasm heightened when they got to see the honey's "home" inside an actual beehive.

The program was sponsored by New York Agriculture in the Classroom, which is housed at Cornell University in Ithaca and is funded by the State's Department of Agriculture & Markets. It held Agricultural Literacy Week in support of its mission of fostering awareness, understanding, and appreciation of agriculture and the food and fiber system, said Katie Bigness, Program Coordinator for New York Agriculture in the Classroom.

"New York has such a beautiful bounty of agricultural products and great natural resources to promote, from dairy and corn, grapes and apples to wool from sheep, to timber and water," Ms. Bigness said.

Patricia Manfrates, Librarian at the Cahill and Mt. Marion schools, said she brought the program to her little bookworms because she feels it's important for younger students to learn through stories where their food comes from and how it gets from farm to table.

According to Ms. Manfrates, the project also follows the Common Core Learning Standards in English Language Arts, and focuses on content in Science and Social Studies as well.

"Through literature programs like this, students are learning geography – what happens right here in their neighborhoods, right here in the Hudson Valley," Ms. Manfrates said.



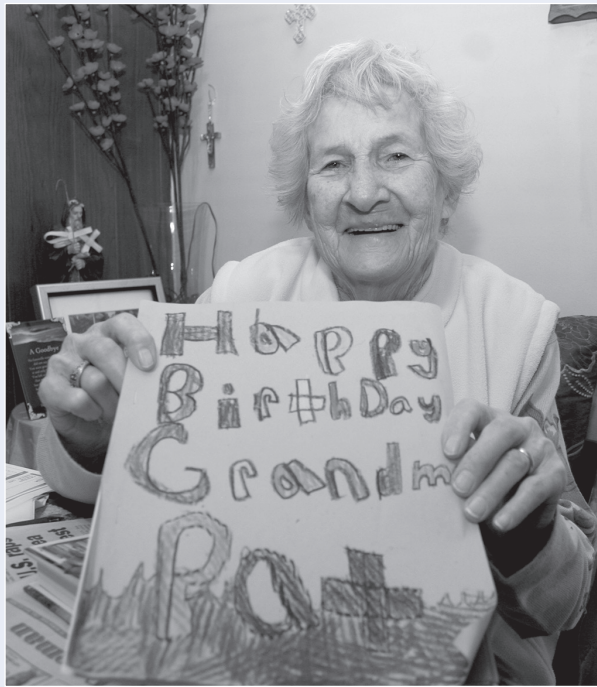
Students in Jen Arcadipane's K-2 class at Mt. Marion Elementary School gather around to see Cottekill beekeeper Richard Hines' bee frame during Agriculture Literacy Week. The engrossed students are, from left, Dominick Decker, Michael Jordal, Breena Cuchelo (back), Jadyner Denton, Tyara Schiskey (back), Dakota DeGroat, and Bradley Williams.

"Grandma Pat" Brings Her Love of Children and Books to Riccardi School

On any given weekday, Patricia Buono of Glasco can be found in a Charles M. Riccardi Elementary School classroom helping students with their math problems, spelling words, or reading assignments. Or, she's giving the children gentle guidance and nurturance. Mrs. Buono isn't paid for her time and efforts – not in money, anyway.

"Grandma Pat" volunteers at Riccardi almost every day. She can usually be found tutoring either Susan Rinaldi or Frances Murphy's Grade 2 students or helping out in Joanne Arcadipane's Grade 3 class. She's relished this role for more than 25 years.

"I feel like I'm helping," Mrs. Buono said. "I love my time at Riccardi and I love the children and the love they give me back."



"Grandma Pat" Buono proudly displays the birthday book she was given by students in Joanne Arcadipane's Grade 3 class at the Riccardi School.

Mrs. Buono explained that while she always wanted to be a teacher, she married at age 20 and began raising her own children right away. Nearly 30 years ago, the mother of five, grandmother of 16, and great-grandmother to another 16 took her cue to come to Riccardi to read to the children from her daughter, Faith Fury. The Buono children were schooled at Riccardi, and Ms. Fury works in the school. She is retiring from her position as an AIS (Academic Intervention Services) teacher this year.

"I love to read and always have," Mrs. Buono says. So she brought that enthusiasm over to Riccardi and began to share that love, wisdom, and kindness with the students. Several years later, she joined the Foster Grandparent program and became Grandma Pat at Riccardi.

In a tribute to "Grandma Pat" three years ago when she turned 82 years young, Mrs. Murphy wrote, "Day after day, week after week, year after year, Grandma Pat is seen walking our hallways, offering hugs and encouragement, tutoring reading, and giving love to our students."

Mrs. Buono recently celebrated her 85th birthday at a big family party. Her Riccardi children honored her as well, with cards and good cheer. Ms. Arcadipane's students presented her with a hand-made book.

"What is Grandma Pat's gift of time and love worth?" Mrs. Murphy mused in her earlier writing. "Ask yourself this question. At a time when our budget belts are tightened and each penny is counted, what is it worth? Yes, Grandma tutors reading. But she is so much more. Grandma Pat supports our community and builds bridges across generations."

Cahill Students Well Versed in Poetry

April is National Poetry Month, and the students at Cahill Elementary School celebrated the occasion in style. For weeks, the students worked in class with their teachers on poetry units. Verses selected by students were hung on the school's "Poet Tree," an artful visual in the front hall of the school for all to admire. The students and Principal Susan Gies capped the month's celebration off by inviting parents to join them for an elegant Poet's Tea Party, an event complete with clothed tables set with flowers, iced tea, and pastries. Students shared their own works, as well as some of their favorite published poems, at the May 2 event.

"It's really a lovely spring night," Mrs. Gies said about the tea party, the ninth one held at Cahill, noting that a lot of the poems the students write are about spring.

Throughout the month-long celebration, the value of poetry was reinforced by Mrs. Gies, who gave school-wide deliveries over the PA system, and School Librarian Patricia Manfrates, who read verses to the students at the beginning of their library classes.

According to Dana Fulmer, an English Language Arts (ELA) content specialist from Ulster BOCES working with the District on implementing New York State's new Common Core Learning Standards, poetry encapsulates many of the qualities of literature that are highlighted in the new standards for ELA, such as

skillful use of language; precise, nuanced vocabulary; and deeper meaning.

"Poems are an ideal way for teachers to introduce students to 'close reading,' which is the reading and re-reading of short pieces to get all the juicy bits out of it, to notice language, to infer, and to synthesize meaning," said Ms. Fulmer. "Poetry also offers an opportunity to introduce deeper meaning into our classrooms and helps students to construct meaning, which should be our highest goal as educators," Ms. Fulmer continued.



Grade 3 student Emily Gunderud-Cruickshank admires the Cahill Poet Tree, which is adorned with poems picked by her schoolmates in celebration of National Poetry Month.



Cahill students ponder the meaning of a poem as their Grade 2 class listens to School Librarian Patricia Manfrates read verses to them during National Poetry Month.

District Sends Three Champion Spellers to Regional Bee in Schenectady

Congratulations to Michaela Cohen, Kaleb Friedman, and Grace Tytus – three super Saugerties spellers who recently participated in the Regional Spelling Bee at Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady, New York.

The Saugerties students qualified for the regional competition by progressing through three district-level spelling bees. Grace Tytus, a Grade 6 student at Grant D. Morse Elementary School, won at the District level, and Michaela Cohen, a Grade 7 student at Saugerties Junior High School, and her Grade 8 schoolmate Kaleb Friedman were the runners up.

Michaela progressed to the third round of the March 5 Regional Spelling Bee. She finished in the top 45 out of 118 Grade 4 to 8 spellers, who hailed from 62 different school districts and private schools spanning from Ulster to Albany counties. Grace and Kaleb were among the approximately 40 percent who participated through the first round.

Saugerties Junior High School Assistant Principal Lisa Kappler was impressed with the students' composure and the caliber of the words.

"The children didn't seem nervous at all," Ms. Kappler observed. "They were very confident and some of the words were challenging."

She was also taken by their empathy for others and noted, "They had understanding and compassion for others when they spelled a word incorrectly."

Each of the four Saugerties elementary schools and the Saugerties Junior High School were represented in the district-wide contests, which were supported by the PTAs at Cahill, Morse, and Mt.

Marion, and by student funds at Riccardi and the Junior High School.

"It's great that students take the time to practice words and their origins," Ms. Kappler said. "They're choosing academics over other activities,

and they seemed to enjoy learning new words."

Theresa Costello, a teacher assistant at Cahill Elementary School and a Riccardi Elementary School parent, organized the District spelling bees and accompanied the three champion Saugerties spellers to the regional event.

She was assisted by Charlene Fraske, a Grade 6 teacher at Mt. Marion Elementary School; Amy Hopf, a Grade 5 teacher at Cahill Elementary School; Nancy Gunn and Jill Brandt, Grade 4 teachers at Riccardi Elementary School; Jessica McCaig, a Reading/ AIS (Academic Intervention Services) teacher at Morse Elementary School; and Colleen Ryan, a Grade 8 English teacher at Saugerties Junior High School.

"Thanks to our schools' support, with the additional help and cooperation of our principals and teacher coordinators, Saugerties students were able to participate in this enriching and educational program," Mrs. Costello said.



Super Saugerties spellers, seen from left, are: Grace Tytus, Grade 6, Morse Elementary School; Kaleb Friedman, Grade 8, and Michaela Cohen, Grade 7, Saugerties Junior High School.

"The children didn't seem nervous at all. They were very confident and some of the words were challenging."

— Lisa Kappler, Saugerties JRHS Assistant Principal

Junior High Art Students Get Creative With Computers

Using technology to support interdisciplinary learning can engage students in their education in creative ways, with powerful outcomes.

This was evident when Grade 7 students in Robert Slate’s art class at Saugerties Junior High School were taught how to create and share movies using the computer program “Movie Maker.” Working in pairs, the students selected an artist, an art style, or a time period, and browsed the Internet for images and information about their topic, Mr. Slate explained.

After putting their pieces into the Movie Maker format, the cinematographers added music and then premiered their one-minute pieces for their classmates in the school Computer “Screening Room.”

“The nice thing about the project is that the students learned about the artist they researched, and then had the opportunity to learn about the other artists chosen through their classmates’ presentations,” Mr. Slate said.

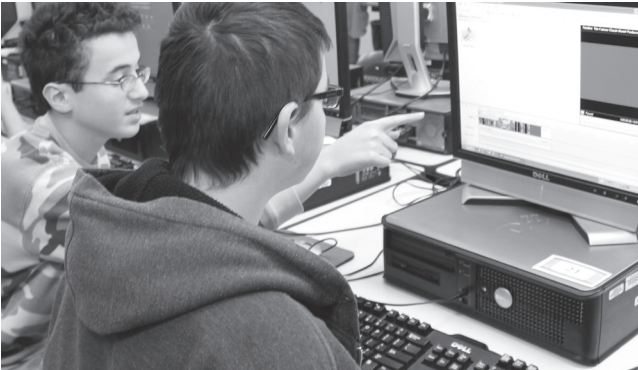
The art teacher said he originally imagined introducing his students to the Movie Maker program several years ago, when he took a course about the computer software at Ulster BOCES in New Paltz.

Saugerties Junior/Senior High School Principal Thomas Averill said that the project’s use of the Movie Maker program to incorporate factual material lines up perfectly with the State’s new Common Core emphasis on non-fiction reading.

Mr. Averill also remarked, “Mr. Slate is ahead of his time. He’s done this type of teaching before, by utilizing a fine mix of modern technology and traditional resources to deliver instruction.”



Dalia Alsbini, left, and her partner Piper Musgrave listen to their presentation while they reflect on a painting by their chosen artist, Vincent Van Gogh.



Jack Levy points out a presentation detail to his project partner, Cody Bivins.



Ethan Nezhich, left, and his project partner Albert Nova, get their presentation ready.

High School Seniors Bring Satire to the Stage

Saugerties High School thespians brought a satirical look at the world of politics to the stage when they presented two performances of the comedy *The Election*, a new play by Don Zolidis.

The curtain rose in mid-April for the Saugerties High School senior play, a topical show that takes aim at Super PACs – political action committees – and the

money in politics, according to *The Election* Director John Wells, an English teacher at the High School. The contemporary comedy juxtaposes a national election with the setting of a high school election, Mr. Wells explains. It features a media-moderated talk show with political panelists, two crazy sisters, and comes complete with a slick Super PAC finance manager.

Grade 12 student Dylan Hill plays the ‘slick’ Karl

Merriweather – a “dorky, spiffy, know-it-all kind of kid,” Dylan muses.

Merriweather is campaign manager and companion to candidate Mark Davenport, played by Dakota Gray. Davenport is running for student body president against Christy Martin, portrayed by Lisa Maher.

At the end of the show, it is ultimately revealed that Super PAC representative Gary McMaster (Christopher Stuppy) has been funding both campaigns to raise the drama in the election, leading to higher ratings for television host Kyli (Emma Gremer).

Mr. Wells said he chose *The Election*, the third senior play he’s directed at the school, to deliver a deeper message than the previous “light and funny” selections.

“This play is also really funny, but there’s something deeper at its heart,” Mr. Wells says. “It’s an

illustration of how money and greed can really warp politics.”



Dakota Gray, left, and Lisa Maher, right, playing candidates Mark Davenport and Christy Martin, get into a heated onstage debate, while Emma Gremer’s character, moderator and local television host Kyli, tries to keep her cool.



A group of cast members gathers during a rehearsal of *The Election*.