

SAVE THE DATE!

Budget Vote

Tuesday May 20th

Seniors & Disabled Get Additional Break on Their School Taxes

In the past year, the Board of Education has unanimously approved two important motions to assist senior citizens and legally disabled citizens with paying their school taxes. Current Real Property Tax law provides local public school districts the option of granting a reduction in the amount of school taxes paid by these individuals, providing they meet certain income and eligibility requirements. This is accomplished by exempting a portion of the assessed value of residential property owned by qualifying individuals. The level of assessment exemption is determined by income level and is based upon a sliding scale, providing up to a 50 percent reduction in assessed value. To participate in the exemption program, qualifying individuals must submit their application with the local assessor's office by March 1 of each year. For complete details, please see the District's website or call the local assessor's office.

Annual Income of Owner or Combined Income of Owners	Percentage of Assessed Value Exempt from Taxation
---	---

\$21,500 or less	50%
More than \$21,500 but less than \$22,500	45%
More than \$22,500 but less than \$23,500	40%
More than \$23,500 but less than \$24,500	35%
More than \$24,500 but less than \$25,400	30%
More than \$25,400 but less than \$26,300	25%
More than \$26,300 but less than \$27,200	20%
More than \$27,200 but less than \$28,100	15%
More than \$28,100 but less than \$29,000	10%
More than \$29,000 but less than \$29,900	5%



Full-Day Kindergarten a Success

read about it on page 3

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Cheryl Nuciforo

Saugerties

Central School District

BUDGET 2008



Program

What Does My Dollar Support?

For every dollar spent on education, 81¢ goes directly to the students.

12¢ is used to operate and maintain our building and grounds, and

7¢ supports the school offices, administration, clerical support, and the Board of Education.

12¢



Capital

7¢



Administration

Program

Supports classroom supplies and equipment, teacher salaries and benefits, all related education costs, and costs for student transportation services.

Capital

Covers facilities costs such as custodial salaries and benefits, maintenance salaries and benefits, service contracts, custodial and maintenance supplies, utility costs for heating, electricity, communication, water, and annual capital project debt service.

Administration

Covers school building offices and central administration, along with clerical support, salaries and benefits of all school administrators, Board of Education expenses for planning, and other administrative activities.

Information about the 2008–2009 School Budget

To Saugerties District Resident:

Last year in this publication, we were able to announce that the Proposed School Budget tax levy increase was the lowest in a decade. This year, the enclosed Proposed 2008–2009 Budget contains a 4.9% tax levy increase, which with the actual 2007–2008 tax levy increase of 1.9% produces a two-year average of 3.4%. This figure compares favorably with the two-year average cost of living adjustment of 3% for the Saugerties area, as computed by the Federal government. Increased salary, energy, and insurance costs, as well as inflationary pressures on the rest of the District's operations are responsible for the majority of the Proposed Budget increase.

That being said, the Board of Education and administration have worked diligently to reduce the initial budget proposal presented to the Board of Education that would have required a larger tax levy increase than indicated in this budget. To make this possible, we have reduced several recommended staff positions, including a new math teacher and special education teacher. We have benefited from senior staff retiring and new, less expensive individuals being hired in their place. We have eliminated the summer school program for the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students. And, we have reduced the equipment budget by 50%.

The Saugerties Central School District operates with the lowest budget support per pupil in Ulster County and is in the lowest support tier of 64 school districts in the Mid-Hudson Valley area. These statistics prove that the District's operations are extremely conservative and economical. That being said, when salary and inflationary pressures impact the budget, there are few options left for the District to absorb the increases other than raising the tax levy or cutting services and programs from an already lean operation.

In all, we feel that the Proposed 2008–2009 Budget presented to the community enables the District to continue its mission of providing a sound education to its 3,000-plus students, but in a reduced form. The proposed 2008–2009 tax levy will translate to \$8,510 per pupil for 2008–2009, which is significantly lower than the 2008–2009 Ulster County average of \$11,986 per pupil.

Please be sure to read through the information presented in this newsletter carefully and contact either your Board representative, Superintendent Richard R. Rhau (247-6551), or School Business Administrator Joseph Dziadik (247-6520) if you have any questions. Be sure to mark your calendars to participate in the Budget Vote and Board of Education Elections on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, from 12 Noon to 9 PM.

See Page 4 for Complete Budget Details

Saugerties Central School District
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VOTE! VOTE! VOTE! VOTE! VOTE! VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Tuesday May 20 • 12–9 PM

Capital Project Construction Update

The work on the Capital Building Project continues to go well and on schedule, reports the District's construction manager, Craig Zandonella of U.W. Marx Construction.

"A lot of good work is getting done," he says. At the High School, the Music Department successfully moved into its expanded space in January. The temporary music classrooms in the auditorium and lobby were vacated, returned to their intended use, and students are enjoying the modern acoustics of their new music rooms. Students have also made themselves at home in the renovated and expanded science classrooms and state-of-the-art biology, chemistry, and physics labs.

Other progress includes interior work in the Media Center, which is nearing 90 percent completion. Old lock-

ers are being removed daily and rows and rows of bright shiny new ones in red, blue, and yellow (a different color for each wing) wait to be installed. A row of nearly 100 lockers in the hallway leading to the 400 wing are now in place and being put to good use by students.

Over the spring break, several classrooms in the 100 and 200 wings were closed for renovation and temporarily relocated. The spring's warmer weather also brought the reconfiguration of the bus loop and its adjacent curbs and sidewalks. The relocation of plumbing for the public restrooms in the High School has also been completed and advance scheduling for the kitchen renovations is currently underway.

A lot of progress has been made in the Elementary Schools as well, with overhead mechanical and plumbing systems now in place. "The bulk of that work is done," Mr. Zandonella adds. "But we're planning for another busy summer as we complete boiler room renovations and upgrades." By September and the beginning of the new school year, Mr. Zandonella and his crew "will be making sure everything is working correctly, all warranties are in place, and generally going well."

More information and construction updates can be found on the District's website at www.saugerties.k12.ny.us.



New lockers line the hallways.



Students working in the High School's new biology lab.



Chorus students warm up in the new Music Department addition.

Keeping the School System Running Smoothly

Our schools have come a long way from the days of the little red schoolhouse with a solitary teacher leading students of all ages in a recital of the day's lessons. In comparison, today's schools have become educational meccas where our children are not only prepared academically for a world of 21st century challenges; but are provided with a variety of healthcare and social services assistance as well.

"It makes a lot of sense," says Cheryl Nuciforo, assistant superintendent of the District. "The students are here, so we bring the services to them. But, it does require that we maintain an extensive amount of recordkeeping, and it takes a lot of personnel to juggle the endless number of State and Federal mandates that all districts must operate under."

Traditionally, District Office personnel are responsible for a wide variety of duties, including instructional leadership and supervision; curriculum and staff development; student testing and assessment; functions related to the school board (such as elections, the district census, property tax assessment, and tax collection); staff personnel services; employee relations and negotiations; fiscal services including budgeting, accounting, and payroll; purchasing; facilities acquisition and construction services; and supervision of operations and maintenance, transportation, and food service.

In recent years, a multitude of new educational mandates from both State and Federal levels have also been added to the mix. These mandates are intended to help raise standards and expectations, but much too often are created with little or no thought to how the programs will be implemented and what their impact will have on staffing levels at the local level.

"The laws are well-intended," Ms. Nuciforo says. "But many are either unfunded or inadequately funded and create additional responsibility and cost in their implementation, as well as voluminous reporting requirements."

For example, numerous excellent programs have been established under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and New York State Learning Standards, but when it comes to the development, implementation, monitoring, and reporting required

for the success of those programs, little or no funding has been provided. Local school taxpayers have had to pick up the difference. Non-compliance is not an option or the District risks losing Federal or State funding.

"The staff takes their responsibilities in meeting these requirements very seriously," says Richard Rhau, superintendent.

Increased standardized testing requirements, attendance tracking, and maintaining extensive student performance data is just one example of new requirements. Under this one mandate, student data must be updated each month into a centralized warehouse at the Mid-Hudson Regional Information Center in New Paltz. The process is complex and labor-intensive, and to complicate things more, the State Education Department continually modifies reporting methods and adds to the number of reports required each year.

Schools today are measured by how they meet the needs of a wide variety of students. Student performance is tracked by specific groups of students, such as those with disabilities, students for whom English is a second language; disadvantaged students; pre-kindergarten children, and more. Schools are measured in how students perform in each of these subgroups, not only how the student body performs as a whole.

"There is also a long list of services related to

Examples of the Comprehensive Plans and Reports districts must develop and file:

- Basic Educational Data System Report
- Academic Intervention Services Plan
- Professional Development Plan
- Biennial Review of Shared Decision Making
- Local Assistance Plans
- Technology Plan
- District and Building Safety Plans
- Count of Immigrant Children and Youth
- Program Information Report
- Violent and Disruptive Incident Report
- Annual Professional Performance Review Plan
- Civil Rights Report

students' health and welfare that we are required to provide and monitor," Mr. Rhau adds. The school provides a variety of nursing services, including physicals, administration of medications, and immunization monitoring – all of which demand extensive and detailed recordkeeping on the part of staff. Another mandate requires the presence of automated external defibrillators (AED) in school buildings and that staff that are trained in their use be present whenever the building is in use.

A range of social services for students and their families has become another element in the function of the modern school. For example, there is a growing population of homeless students that are protected by the McKinney-Vento Act, a relatively new Federal law that requires compliance in order to maintain eligibility for Federal funding. This law mandates that school districts establish and implement procedures for identifying and serving homeless students, which ultimately impacts registration, transportation, school lunch, student activities, as well as academics. The number of students identified and served in the District so far this year is 37, triple what it was two years ago.

New York State also requires regular filing of more than a dozen comprehensive plans and reports, most of which must be developed by a committee with defined representation according to specific guidelines. "Each plan is a time and labor intensive process requiring extensive coordination. The resulting plans are each comprehensive documents with multiple required components," describes Mr. Rhau.

Statewide, many organizations are lobbying for financial relief from the multitude of mandates that grows each year. Until that day comes, however, the staff at Saugerties will continue to do what it takes to meet the demands called for in today's educational environment. "Our staff performs these services on a daily basis under the leadership of the District's administrative team; it's what they do and they do it extremely well," Mr. Rhau says. "These services are vital and without them, the system could not function effectively. Bills couldn't get paid, plans couldn't be implemented, and our students couldn't be served. It's as simple as that."

"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest." – Benjamin Franklin

NEW PROGRAMS YIELDING RESULTS!

Full-Day Kindergarten Sets Foundation for Success

The first year of full-day kindergarten in Saugerties Central Schools is nearly at an end, and by all accounts the program, which was implemented at minimal cost to the local school taxpayers, has been a smashing success. "It's really benefited the students a lot," says Cahill Elementary Principal Susan Gies. "We're feeling really good about it."

When full-day kindergarten was approved last year, Saugerties was one of just 30 of New York's 680 school districts still using a half-day model. "We were definitely in the minority," says Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo.

The additional time that teachers had with students was predicted to be a tremendous academic benefit. Full-day kindergarten gives greater opportunity for screening and assessment to detect and deal with potential learning problems, and more occasions for good, quality interaction between adults and students. Studies show that students from a full-day program demonstrate strong academic advantages after the kindergarten experience. Teaching students was often difficult when they were in class for only three hours each day. Today, Ms. Gies says the proof is evident.

"We have kindergarten children writing amazing poetry," Ms. Gies said. "These are things we really couldn't accomplish in a half-day program. And it was frustrating for teachers, because they knew they could be doing more, but they just couldn't get to it."

When the program was proposed, one of the concerns posed was that some children wouldn't be able to make it through a full day of kindergarten. According to Mrs. Nuciforo, today's kindergartner



is more prepared for the challenge than they might have been in the past.

"So many children now have full-day preschool experiences, so when they get to kindergarten, they're really ready for a full day," Mrs. Nuciforo explains. "It's more appropriate in terms of the higher expectations for student achievement that we have now, but it's also appropriate in terms of the background of the students coming in. Our society has changed. Where years ago it might have been too much for kids, now it isn't."

Part of the success of full-day kindergarten has been the District's commitment to providing teachers and support staff with the tools they would need to make the transition a smooth one.

"The District didn't just want to add on hours," Gies says. "Cheryl Nuciforo wanted to make sure

teachers were trained in new ideas." Among those new ideas was an updated approach to early literacy, something Mrs. Nuciforo believes was long overdue in the District. The last comprehensive Districtwide literacy training was done nearly three decades ago, in the late '70s or early '80s.

"Early literacy is one of the indicators for success," Mrs. Nuciforo says. "The teachers went through a lot of professional development in that area last summer."

That extra training was funded through an increase in State Aid provided to the District as a result of adopting the full-day kindergarten program. By carefully developing the plan for the full-day kindergarten program, along with a new Primary Autism Program for special needs students, the District maximized the availability of State Aid and realized other savings. The half-day bus runs, as well as the Pre-1st program, were eliminated, resulting in a significant savings. Pre-1st had been necessary for approximately 20-25 percent of students who weren't ready for first grade after a year in half-day kindergarten.

And while the District itself is happy with full-day kindergarten, so are many of the parents.

"Having full-day kindergarten at Cahill has been great for my daughter," says Kandy Harris, mother of kindergartner, Madeline Kott. "She didn't have any trouble at all adapting to an entire day at school, and half-day kindergarten simply isn't long enough; once kids get in and settled into the mode of learning, the day is over. A full day spent immersed in learning, mixed with opportunities for fun and play, is just exactly what kindergartners need to prepare them for the rest of their academic careers."

Primary Autism Program a Success at Riccardi Elementary School

Parents want their children to have the best opportunities available, especially when it comes to receiving an education. They need to feel a sense of security knowing that their children are being taught in a safe, supportive, and structured learning environment. For parents of students with autism, these normal concerns about their children's well-being and education are compounded.

Autism, a complex developmental disorder of the brain that usually shows its symptoms by the age of three, not only affects a child's ability to communicate, it also impairs social interaction; two key components necessary for success in both school and society. While the disorder presents great challenges, autistic children often have special talents in visual or performing arts, and can contribute greatly to a school's learning community when given the proper structure for their distinctive gifts and needs.

Until September, the District was not able to provide this learning environment to the autistic population, and students instead were bused to special programs outside of the District. However, community support of the 2007-2008 school budget made it possible for the District to offer its own Primary Autism program, specifically designed to address the autistic students' unique needs. The program is based at Riccardi Elementary School.

Now, with almost a full school year behind them, the program is already showing evidence of tremendous success. At the beginning of the school year, one child entered the program with no vocabulary—only screams to express different emotions. That student is now verbalizing sentences and greeting teachers by name. This kind of breakthrough is a huge triumph for the student, the school, and the student's family. A voice expressing all the typical emotions of childhood—hope, fear, excitement—where once there was silence or screams is reason to celebrate.

For this student, as well as a rising number of other District children with autistic behaviors, the launch of the Primary Autism program has given

them the opportunity to not only receive their education close to home, but to also form bonds with fellow students of similar backgrounds in their own community. Parents can also feel assured that their children's needs are being addressed—right in their very own hometown.

"There's so much that's a challenge for these children. To be able to have them here in the District, in their own schools with other children from the community, and meet their needs is really special."

—Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo

Other benefits of the Primary Autism program include a shorter bus ride for students, the availability of top-notch treatment and support locally from qualified professionals, and the camaraderie and support of other parents and students coping with the challenges of autism. The District is able to serve as a liaison between parents and students within the Saugerties community, affording them the opportunity to learn from each other and participate in broader discussions on how to best meet the needs of the District's autistic children.

"These children are a very integral part of our school," Principal Michael Miller says. "They bring a lot to it, and I think they get a lot from it. I have seen a tremendous success from this program, and I attribute it to the dedicated and talented staff and their consistent and nurturing approach."

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo agrees. "There's so much that's a challenge for these children. To be able to have them here in the District, in their own schools with other children from the community, and meet their needs is really special."

A recent report by the U.S. Health Department states that one out of every 150 children is affected

by autism. That rising number is evident locally, too, according to Susan Gage, the District's Director of Special Education. A decade ago in Saugerties schools, there were just five students diagnosed with autism. Five years later, that number was already up to 12. When the Primary Autism program was being planned in the 2006-2007 school year, that number had climbed to 23, and an additional eight students were pre-registered in kindergarten at the beginning of this academic year. Ms. Gage expects to see an influx of even more students when the new school year begins, and believes the program will likely need to grow with the student population in coming years. "We already have three students who could potentially come into the program next year," she reports.

With the increase in the number of Saugerties students with autism, the District finally reached the point where the desirability of running an in-house program was matched by the ability to afford to make it happen, says Ms. Gage. "We really wanted to give the autistic students the best learning environment, and that's having them here, in their home school district."

Taking the step to bring the program in-house also provided valuable benefits to local taxpayers. As part of an integrated plan to implement a full-day kindergarten program and by bringing the autistic students home, the District received increased amounts of State Aid, as well as saved money on transportation and tuition. These savings and the revenues generated by the new initiatives were more than the actual cost to implement the programs.

Principal Miller reflects on that momentous day at Riccardi when the autistic child first spoke. "There's probably no better feeling in the world than having a child who entered in September and was nonverbal, now be able to communicate in sentences and actually be able to tell you what he or she wants," he says. "It's really rewarding to hear that child discuss something during an activity, or simply be able to say, 'Good morning Mr. Miller.' It's such a great feeling."

Proposed Budget

Saugerties Central

Three Part Budget

The legislation which 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.

	2007-2008	2008-2009	Difference
	7.40%	7.26%	(-0.14%)
Administration	\$3,683,933	\$3,786,681	\$102,748
	80.51%	80.41%	(-0.10%)
Program	\$40,078,528	\$41,922,296	\$1,843,768
	12.09%	12.33%	.24%
Capital	\$6,019,969	\$6,426,763	\$406,794
Total	\$49,782,430	\$52,135,740	\$2,353,310

Total 2008-2009 Proposed Budget: \$52,135,740

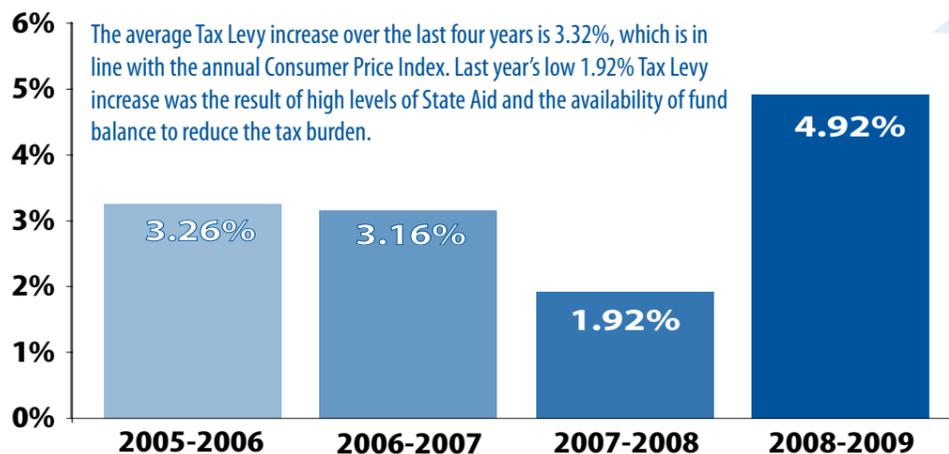
Sample Ballot

The wording on the propositions will appear as shown in these examples and you will have a choice for either YES or NO:

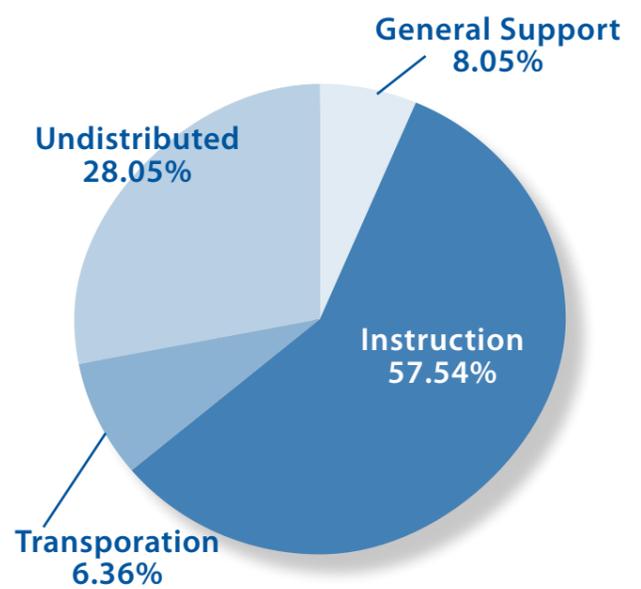
Proposition Wording:

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 2008-2009 school year in the total amount of \$52,135,740 (the budget), and levy the necessary sum against the taxable real property in the district?

Tax Levy Comparison



How the Money Will Be Spent



Facts & Figures: Information About the Proposed Budget

What is Saugerties budget per pupil?

Historically, Saugerties has had the lowest per pupil cost of any Ulster County School District. Total enrollment for 2008-2009 is projected to be 3,188 students, and the per pupil cost will be \$16,354. According to the 2008-2009 Property Tax Report Cards listed on the School Operations and Management Services page of the New York State Department of Education's website, the average per pupil cost of the other eight Ulster County school districts for last year was \$20,064. This means that Saugerties' per pupil expense NEXT year will be less than the average of the other Ulster County school districts.

What are the estimated 2008-2009 tax rates?

The tax rates for each township are estimated to increase by 4.35%.

Town	Tax Rate	Difference
Saugerties	\$15.58493	+ \$0.64957
Ulster	\$18.05399	+ \$0.75248
Woodstock	\$15.76829	+ \$0.65722

How does passing the School Budget affect homeowners?

Estimated School Tax Bill For 2008-2009*

True Value	Regular Taxpayer	Basic w/STAR	Enhanced w/STAR
\$70,000	\$871.99	\$498.28	\$0.00
\$100,000	\$1,245.70	\$871.99	\$538.15
\$175,000*	\$2,179.97	\$1,806.26	\$1,472.42
\$250,000	\$3,114.24	\$2,740.53	\$2,406.69
\$300,000	\$3,737.09	\$3,363.38	\$3,029.54

*average school district assessment/Township of Saugerties

Other than property taxes, what else pays for education programs?

Approximately 47.96% of the revenue needed to fund the budget is raised through sources other than the local tax levy and STAR payments. These sources include State Aid, appropriated fund balance, inter-fund transfers, tuition, Federal Medicaid Aid, and revenue from investments. The balance is raised through school taxes paid on local properties.

How does the school tax reduction for STAR participants impact other school taxpayers?

Local property owners who do not receive a STAR exemption are not negatively impacted by the STAR program. New York State reimburses the District for the reductions STAR provides to residents who qualify for exemption. Basic and enhanced STAR applications are available from the local assessor's office. Enhanced STAR applications need to be filed annually.

How has the voter-approved Capital Project impacted the school budget?

The final portion of the annual debt service, in the amount of \$335,395, has been added to the 2008-2009 budget.

How is the District's State Aid anticipated to change?

Under the finalized State Budget, the State's support of the school budget will increase by \$316,720 to a total of \$22,818,715. This comprises 43.77% of all budgeted revenues.

What program changes are included in the Proposed Budget?

- One existing elementary teaching position was removed from the 2008-2009 Proposed Budget. This position was held by a teacher who is retiring as of June 30, 2008, thus the reduction will be made by attrition.
- One existing custodial worker position was removed from the 2008-2009 Budget. This position will be reduced by a retirement in the Buildings and Grounds Department, thus the reduction will be made through attrition.
- The local Summer School program for 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students has been removed from the 2008-2009 Proposed Budget and will no longer be offered locally.
- The Instructional Budget was reduced by \$224,000 reflecting the elimination of the one-time "start-up" costs of the Full-Day Kindergarten that were included in the current year's budget as follows:

Equipment:	\$60,000
Contractual Expense:	\$55,000
Supplies/Materials:	\$19,000
Textbooks:	\$90,000
- The Budget for the Program for Children with Disabilities was reduced by \$69,000 to reflect the elimination of the one-time "start-up" costs of the local autism program that was included in the current year's budget as follows:

Equipment:	\$5,000
Contractual Expense:	\$45,000
Supplies/Materials:	\$14,000
Textbooks:	\$5,000

Saugerties

School District

2008-2009

Overall Budget Proposal

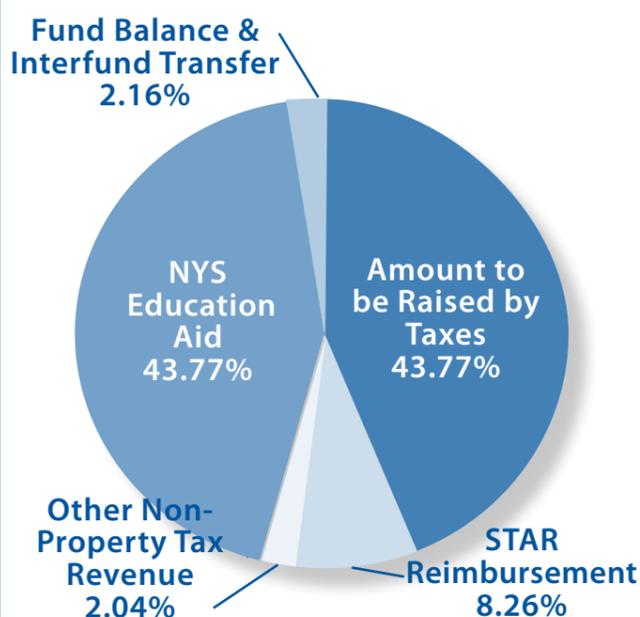
	Budget Adopted for 2007-2008 School Year	Budget Proposed for 2008-2009 School Year	Contingency Budget for 2008-2009
Total Budgeted Amount	\$49,782,430	\$52,135,740	\$51,699,279
Increase for 2008-2009 school year		\$2,353,310	\$1,916,849
% Increase in Each Proposed Budget		4.73%	3.85%
Resulting Estimated Property Tax Levy for 2008		\$27,129,415	\$26,692,954
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.60%	
Administrative Component	\$3,683,933	\$3,786,681	\$3,764,765
Program Component	\$40,078,528	\$41,922,296	\$41,589,606
Capital Component	\$6,019,969	\$6,426,763	\$6,344,908

Election of Board of Education Members

There are three (3) three-year seats available on the Board of Education. The three candidates with the most votes will fill the vacancies and their terms shall be effective July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2011. The following six candidates are running for election to the Board of Education:

- Walter Frey, Jr.
- Thomas Ham
- Lanny Walter
- William Creen, II
- Charles Schirmer
- Steven Haun

Where the Money Comes From



Contingency Budget

If the voters do not approve the Proposed Budget on May 20, the District can put it (the Proposed Budget) or a revised version of the Budget before the voters for a revote only one more time, or the Board of Education can adopt a Contingency Budget, in which the amount of the Budget is then determined by law. If the Proposed Budget or a revised Budget does not pass on the second vote, the District MUST adopt a Contingency Budget. According to current law, the Contingency Budget can increase no more than 3.36% over the 2007-2008 Budget, after adjustments for debt and non-recurring items are made. The current Proposed Budget is a 4.73% increase over the 2007-2008 Budget, which means that a 0.8% or \$436,461 reduction would be needed to reach the mandated Contingency Budget level. This would be accomplished by making the following reductions:

- When a district has adopted a Contingency Budget, all equipment MUST be removed from the Budget. This elimination would reduce the Budget by \$85,785.
- The District would then need to remove an additional \$350,676 from the Proposed Budget in order to accommodate the Contingency Budget cap. This decrease could have a significant impact on staffing, transportation, non-mandated programs, sports, extra-curricular activities and elementary class sizes.

The Budget vote for the fiscal year 2008-09 by the qualified voters of the Saugerties Central School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at the four elementary schools (Grant D. Morse, Mount Marion, Cahill, and Riccardi) on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 between the hours of 12 PM and 9 PM, prevailing time in Saugerties Central Schools, at which time the polls will be opened for voting.

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

	Budget Proposed 2008-2009
Estimated Basic STAR tax savings:	\$373.71

¹ Provide a statement of assumptions made in estimating the contingency budget pursuant to section 2023 of the Education Law.

² The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

What happens if the budget is defeated?

According to State Law, if the voters do not approve the Proposed Budget on May 20, the District has two options. It can put it (the Proposed Budget) or a revised version of it before the voters for a revote one more time, or it can adopt a Contingency Budget in an amount that is determined by law. If the Board elects to place another Proposed Budget up for public vote and it fails the second time, the District MUST adopt a Contingency Budget. Current law dictates that the Contingency Budget spending can increase no more than 3.85% or \$1,916,849 over the 2007-2008 approved budget. This would result in a reduction of \$436,461 from the Proposed Budget. A Contingency Budget caps spending and does not consider the availability of revenues intended to offset the expense. Among the items that would be significantly impacted by the decrease are staffing, transportation, Elementary School class sizes, sports, and extra-curricular activities, to name a few.

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. Please contact Superintendent Richard Rhau at 247-6551, or School Business Administrator Joseph Dziadik at 247-6520, if you have specific questions.

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

	ADOPTED BUDGET 2007-2008	PROPOSED BUDGET 2008-2009	\$ Increase (\$ Decrease)
GENERAL SUPPORT			
Board of Education	\$34,930	\$36,025	\$1,095
Central Administration	237,320	248,570	11,250
Finance	368,795	397,535	28,740
Staff	154,105	172,740	18,635
Central Services	2,699,755	2,717,440	17,685
Special Items	613,465	626,775	13,310
Total General Support	\$4,108,370	\$4,199,085	\$90,715
INSTRUCTION			
Administration & Improvement	\$1,410,235	\$1,445,980	\$35,745
Instruction - Teaching	23,632,565	25,030,140	1,397,575
Instructional Media	1,418,465	1,368,505	(49,960)
Pupil Services & Activities	1,974,760	2,154,760	180,000
Total Instruction	\$28,436,025	\$29,999,385	\$1,563,360
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION			
District Transportation	\$155,155	\$160,665	\$5,510
Contract Transportation	3,123,375	3,152,720	29,345
Total Pupil Transportation	\$3,278,530	\$3,313,385	\$34,855
UNDISTRIBUTED			
Employee Benefits	\$11,164,150	\$11,489,135	\$324,985
Debt Service	2,715,355	3,050,750	335,395
Interfund Transfers	80,000	84,000	4,000
Total Undistributed	\$13,959,505	\$14,623,885	\$664,380
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$49,782,430	\$52,135,740	\$2,353,310

REVENUE SUMMARY

	ADOPTED BUDGET 2007-2008	PROPOSED BUDGET 2008-2009	\$ INCREASE (\$ DECREASE)
Total Misc. Revenues/Federal Aid	\$798,700	\$1,063,700	\$265,000
Total State Aid Revenues w/o STAR	22,501,995	22,818,715	316,720
Total Revenue Other Than Property Tax/STAR	\$23,300,695	\$23,882,415	\$581,720
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$498,910	\$498,910	\$0
Interfund Transfer	\$125,000	\$625,000	\$500,000
Amount To Be Raised by Property Tax	21,751,680	23,293,390	\$1,541,710
"STAR" Reimbursement (estimated)	4,106,145	\$3,836,025	(\$270,120)
TOTAL REVENUES	\$49,782,430	\$52,135,740	\$2,353,310

Behind the Wheel: The Important Role of Bus Drivers

School bus drivers play an important, and sometimes under-recognized, role in helping children receive an education. The challenges they face daily are ones that would make most people shudder just to think about. School bus drivers must maintain a precisely timed schedule, maneuver a large commercial vehicle up to 40 feet in length in unpredictable traffic, anticipate adverse road conditions when bad weather hits, and all with 50 to 60 enthusiastic students sitting behind their backs. If that isn't pressure enough, they know they are taking responsibility for the safety and well-being of their friends' and neighbors' most precious treasures...their children.

Fortunately, there are dedicated men and women who take on this important job, despite its many sobering responsibilities. Ask school bus drivers in the Saugerties Central School District how they do it and their quick response is that they love their job and wouldn't think of doing anything else.

"I love the kids," says Gerry Jones, a 39-year driver for Lezette Express Inc., one of the District's bus companies. He admits that the students can be exasperating at times, "but it's also very rewarding," he adds. "These kids become like family, you know who their friends are and what's

going on in their lives. You watch them grow up."

Then there's the mother-daughter team at First Student, Brenda Oster with 20 years of experience under her belt, and her daughter, Pam Every, with six years. They also say it's the students who keep them inspired. "You just have to really like kids," Ms. Oster says.

The majority of the District's students are transported by two companies: Lezette Express Inc. (a local family-owned company), and First Student (the largest school bus operator in the nation). A great many of the drivers are residents of the District and often have decades of experience. "Although the drivers are not directly employed by the school district, they are an integral part of the school community," says Joseph Dziadik, school business administrator for the District. "These folks play a very vital role in the daily operation of the District."

More than half of the District's contract drivers have been with their respective companies for more than 10 years, many have reached the 20-year mark, and several are 30-plus year veterans. The job is definitely not for everyone, though. Some prospective drivers go through the extensive training and testing required and quit after just one day behind the wheel.

In New York State, school bus

drivers are required to take a road test, a written test, and a physical performance test each year. Also mandatory is an annual defensive driving course and biannual refresher safety courses that include everything from bus handling to pre-ride and post-ride safety checks to student management. School bus drivers are also subject to criminal history background checks, as well as random drug and alcohol testing.

Karl W. Lezette, vice president of the company that his great-grandfather started in the 1930s, says he has a team of devoted drivers whose top priority is safety. His drivers conduct extensive pre-trip and post-trip inspections that are vital to safe operation. "We have a lot of good people working for us," he says. "Many are community members with children in the District. They take their jobs very seriously."

Doreen VanValkenburg, contract manager at First Student, has worked with hundreds of school bus drivers during her 32 years in the business. "People sometimes do not realize what a tremendous responsibility school bus drivers take on every day once they enter that bus. They are truly a great dedicated group of people and I could not be more proud of them," she says.

Unsung Heroes

With more than 3,000 students in the District to transport, a typical day for a school bus driver can include driving anywhere between four to eight different routes over 80 to 120 miles. Drivers pick up their earliest riders – High School and Junior High students – before 7 AM. Once they're dropped off, drivers head back out on the road to pick up the Elementary students. Afternoon dismissals run from 2:15 to 3:30 PM, when the routine begins again, in reverse, as students return home. In between, drivers transport students on field and museum trips, and some also drive late afternoon bus runs for students who are participating in sports and other after-school activities.

Margie Lasher and Stella Wynkoop, bus monitors, are integral players on the Lezette Express team.



When time is of the essence and a student needs a ride home because of medical or other extenuating circumstances, administrators and teachers call on District employees Larry Swart or Gordon Allen. The two men, who work in their regular positions of Warehouse Manager and Courier, are also New York State certified school bus drivers. The fact that Mr. Swart and Mr. Allen are available is valuable when an emergency arises. Having the flexibility to serve students' transportation needs on a moments notice is not always possible when depending upon contractors for all transportation needs. Having qualified bus drivers on site offers a valuable and cost-effective advantage to the District's transportation program in responding to students' immediate needs.

Another Hero in Our Midst

When inclement weather hits, the bus schedules can really jam up with morning delays or early afternoon closings. "There's nothing like a bad weather day – those days are really intense," says Carol Petramale, transportation clerk for the District since 1982. "That's when the bus drivers are truly our unsung heroes. They've got our kids in their hands – it's a huge responsibility."



Although she wouldn't admit it, Ms. Petramale is quite a hero herself. The role she plays as liaison between the District and the bus companies directly reflects on providing a smooth and safe transportation operation. When the buses are on the roads, she is in constant radio contact with drivers and dispatchers. She monitors weather conditions and keeps parents informed of any delays so they don't have to worry. She maps out alternative routes if roads are not passable, such as when a recent bank robbery detoured buses from their normal schedule and required quick action to help drivers find a way to safely deliver students home as quickly as possible.

When she isn't at the helm of her dispatch radio, she's handling mountains of paperwork for student daycare transportation requests and rescheduling transportation for cancelled events. While she uses a computer and specialized transportation software to help her map out bus routes for the drivers, her colleagues say she knows the runs by heart.

"She is like an air traffic controller, directing and redirecting buses, making split second decisions, sometimes under extreme pressure," says Mr. Dziadik. "She does an amazing job for our students."

First Student Heroes

Daniel Allamena
Carol Carr
Diane Cavallaro
Valarie Cisco
Lori DeGasperis
Jean Dussol
Pam Every
Carl Ferrono
Frank Galizia
Dick Gueren

Joe Guerriero
Barbara Hally
Bob Johnson
Dave June,
mechanic
Lauren Legg
Rich Magee
Linda Mencke
Jill Olson
Steve Olson

Brenda Oster
John Poletto
Victor Ramirez
Statia Rell
Harold Reynolds
Pat Richards
Sean Skidmore
Walt Skidmore
Gail Slater

Lezette Express Heroes

Natalie Auchmoedy
Aggie Barber
Jerry Bogardus,
mechanic
Linda Brockway
Molly Brown
Tom Cafaldo
Holly Conlon
Edward Creen
Millie DeLong
Ruth Dhondy
Mike Dittus
Fred Ferrara
John Freligh

Craig Heiss
Maren Isabella
Gerry Jones
Pat Kelley
Tom Krzywonos
Margie Lasher
Dick Miller
Dot Moore
Rae Pavlak
Linda Pedersen
Elaine Quinn
Bob Rhinehart
Joy Richmond
Bob Riley

Alan Schoenfeldt
Georgiana Short
Art Sperl
Nancy Sperl
Peg Sullivan
Mel Tompkins
Tom Tyrol
Kevin Walsh
Louise Weeks
Wendy Whitbeck
Laura Williams
Bert Woodworth
Stella Wynkoop

Lauren Legg has 20 years of service at First Student.



Carl Ferrono is an 18-year veteran at First Student.



Ed Creen has been driving for Lezette Express Inc. for 17 years.



Gerry Jones is a 39-year veteran driver for Lezette Express Inc.



Brenda Oster, a driver at First Student, has been driving a school bus for 20 years, and her daughter, Pam Every, has been a driver for six years. Steve Olson has been driving for First Student for ten years.



Margie Lasher, bus monitor for Lezette Express Inc., demonstrates how the wheel chair lift is used on a school bus.



Saugerties in Good Standing with New York State Education

The latest school report card issued by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has named the Saugerties Central School District as a "school in good standing." The report covers the 2006-2007 school year and measures student performance from a variety of specific subgroups of the student population such as sex, race, economic standing, and classification (Special Education).

As a result of the No Child Left Behind Act, a federal standards-based law that increased requirements and accountability, school districts are now required to administer State Assessments to all students in Grades 3-8 in several subject areas. New York State Regents exams continue to be the mode of assessment at the high school level.

In the District's four elementary schools, as well as in the overall results of Junior High testing, students reached all the targets in English language arts (ELA), math, and science testing.

At the High School, ELA and math testing also hit the mark, with the graduation rate well exceeding the State goal. The District graduates 80% of its students in four years, compared to a target of 55% set by NYSED.

While the District's graduation rate exceeded standards, changes at the State level may make it difficult to improve on those tallies in the immediate future. Traditionally, Saugerties has given Regents diplomas to students receiving at least a 65% grade on all five tests required by the State. An option for a local diploma was available to students receiving at least a 55% on all of the same tests. However, within the next two years, NYSED will no longer allow districts the option of offering a local diploma.

"Currently, depending on the subject area, we have 15% or 20% of the students who score between 55 and 64 on one or more of the exams," explains assistant superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo. "Previously, they could have earned a local diploma."

Anticipating the challenges the diploma requirements will pose to some students, the District is already working on a solution, including tweaking the academic intervention program (AIS) to help sooner identify students who might need a helping hand.

"We're looking at our AIS program, we're examining our regular classroom program, and we're scrutinizing at our Special Education program so that we can help those students meet the new stan-

dards," says Mrs. Nuciforo.

The District is also focusing on a subgroup of students with disabilities at the Junior High School. For the second year in a row, students in this particular subgroup did not meet the standards of performance on the State Assessments, resulting in the entire school being labeled as a School Requiring Academic Progress, Year Two. According to NYSED guidelines, schools with this distinction must meet certain criteria.

"I do believe that students with disabilities are getting a higher level of instruction and more educational opportunities than they may have gotten in the past."

— Assistant Superintendent
Cheryl Nuciforo

According to Mrs. Nuciforo, ongoing efforts in professional development, curriculum review, and intervention plan revisions are already in motion to address the needs of this group of students.

The District is also focusing on making the transition from the Junior High to High School as smooth as possible. While both schools are on the same campus and are technically part of the same complex of hallways, making the move from 8th to 9th grade

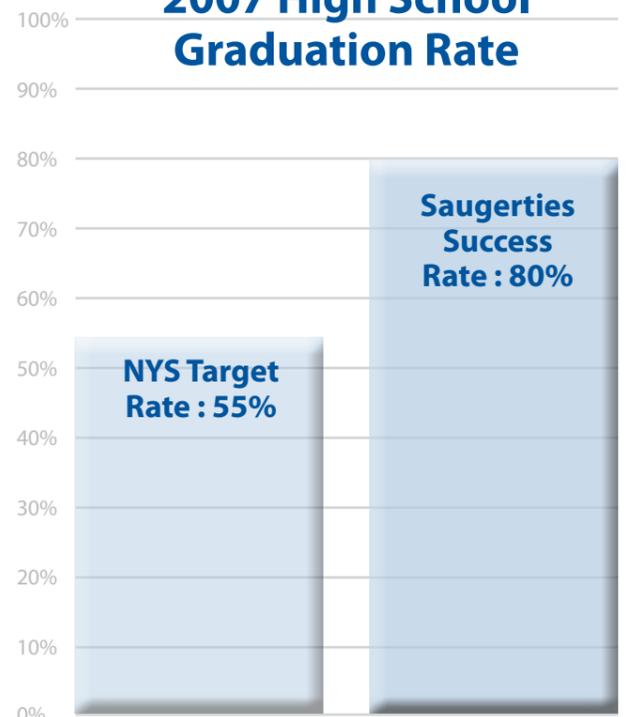
can still be intimidating. Students at this age are already struggling with a tremendous amount of change. Between physical developments of adolescence, intensified romantic and physical feelings, and increased worries about "fitting in," the added stress of moving to a new school environment, with new expectations and new freedoms, can be a momentous challenge.

Saugerties isn't alone in finding difficulty in the junior high disabilities subgroup. "This is not new," Mrs. Nuciforo says. "We've been working on this for a number of years. This is a very common area to be struggling, and we are continuing to put our best effort forward to meet these needs."

Since the results of this subgroup have been a national issue, changes could be made to soften the requirements. "No Child Left Behind is essentially a civil rights legislation," Mrs. Nuciforo says. "I do believe that students with disabilities are getting a higher level of instruction and more educational opportunities than they may have gotten in the past. However, because not just Saugerties or New York State, but the whole country is struggling with the achievement of this particular group, there are hopes that in the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind that there are some adjustments in how we measure their achievements."

Finally, the District was surprised by a rare drop in the success rate among economically disadvantaged students in the District, who as a group failed to meet AYP in ELA, math, and science for the first time in recent years. "These results do not

2007 High School Graduation Rate



fit with how real students behave in the classroom," Mrs. Nuciforo explains. Since the results were such an anomaly, data is being carefully reviewed to ensure its accuracy. The District will not be tagged for the problem unless it happens for a second straight year.

The State's School Report Card generates valuable data that provides educators with an excellent starting point for measuring student achievement and program success. However, the educators in the District see these results as just one component of an overall picture, which also includes school climate, and student contributions to the community at large. Though the District is considered a "School in Good Standing," Saugerties continues to strive for improvement in ALL areas, not just ones cited by the State.

Save the Date!

VOTE

Tuesday, May 20

12-9 PM

Voting Information: Tuesday May 20 • 12-9 PM

Who May Vote?

In order to vote you must be:

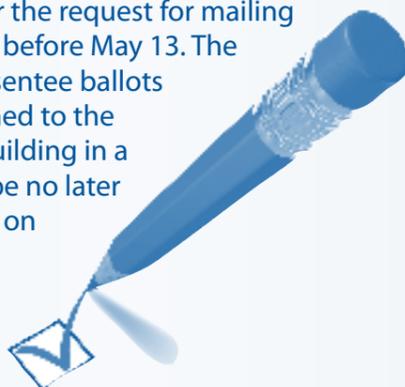
- Registered to vote
- A citizen of the United States
- 18 years of age or older
- A resident of Saugerties Central School District for at least 30 days, immediately before the election

When And Where Is The Vote?

Voting will take place on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, from 12 PM 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 11:30 AM 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 Motor Vehicle Bureau, 240 Fair Street, Kingston phone:340-3700);
- ★ any United States Post Office.