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MIDLAKES JOURNAL

PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOLUME XXVI, ISSUE III
MAY, 2021

BUDGET EDITION

BUDGET HEARING:

6 p.m., Monday, May 10
High School Auditorium

(In-person attendance following health and safety protocols welcomed. Meetings and hearings are streamed live to the Midlakes Schools YouTube channel and the District's website.)

ANNUAL VOTE:

Noon to 9 p.m., Tuesday, May 18
Middle School Gymnasium

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VIDEO: Second-graders work on a community jobs project and learn about several popular careers.



HOLDING THE LINE ON TAXES

The District presents a budget with no tax levy increase.

During its April 21 meeting, the Board of Education adopted an approximately \$38.3 million budget for the 2021-2022 school year that will be presented to voters on Tuesday, May 18. The proposal calls for no increase to the tax levy while overall spending would increase by 2.27%.

Voters will be asked to select three of four announced candidates to serve on the Board of Education. Current Board member Todd Freelove has declined to run for

another term.

Also, a proposition to purchase three new buses and funding measures for the Clifton Springs Library and Phelps Community Memorial Library will be on the ballot. The District hosts the vote for the libraries but the actual funding does not impact school taxes.

Additional details on the budget and election can be found inside on the District's website at **Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.**

HIGHLIGHTS



CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

The District anticipates construction work on a voter-approved \$15.6 million renovation project to begin in the spring of 2022.

Work was expected to start this spring after the District worked to move up needed approvals from the state. But a delay from the New York State Education Department, which is reviewing a large number of school projects, convinced the District to push back its timelines.

Also, any construction work this spring/summer would have impacted summer programs critical for closing learning gaps created by the pandemic and the opening of school in the fall.

As a result, the District has decided to return to its original timeline for the capital improvement project. Work is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2022, which will allow all programs for the summer of 2021 to be held in their regular locations. More information on the capital project will be shared when it becomes available. ■

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

View a complete list of community resources, including food cupboards, housing, medical and mental services, daycare and much more on the District's website at Midlakes.org/Page/4463. ■

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

STATE. FEDERAL AID SET THE STAGE

The District proposes a zero percent tax increase while working to address gaps created by the pandemic.

The District is grateful to all members of the Midlakes community for their patience, collaboration, sacrifices, and flexibility in navigating a school year unlike any other. It is amazing how much has changed as we adapted to extraordinary circumstances and found ways to prioritize student learning while attending to serious health and safety concerns.

Every aspect of our daily operations — teaching, transportation, sports, events, virtual learning, health and safety protocols, communications, and more — now looks different than it did prior to the pandemic. This has been a monumental task and we credit our students, staff, families, and community for recognizing the challenges and joining us in partnership these past 14 months.

The development of the 2021-2022 school budget is another area that has been greatly influenced by the pandemic. Our budget is comprised of revenues from several different sources, with the most significant portion coming in the form of state aid. When developing a budget, we look to address the most critical needs of students while being responsible to our taxpayers.

After considerable concern about impending budget gaps dating back to the summer and fall of 2020, we are thankful that the state budget includes a substantial increase in Foundation Aid (the most substantial source of state aid) to Midlakes.

This increase has allowed us to build a budget with no increase to the tax levy while addressing both student and operational needs. Our budget proposal also sets the stage to take advantage of two federal stimulus programs to tackle academic and social-emotional learning gaps created by the disruptions related to the pandemic.

The proposed school budget for 2021-2022 calls for \$38,310,998 in spending, an increase of 2.27% from the 2020-2021 budget. New spending is being driven largely by contractual salary and benefit increases in addition to a 10% increase in health care premiums paid by the District.

The budget proposal also calls for some spending reductions. We have reduced spending by accessing increased support from Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES

to create operational efficiencies. We are also able to limit expenditures in the budget by maximizing the use of federal funds to maintain, restore, and increase operational supports and student opportunities.

Additional state aid will also allow us to expand our Universal Pre-Kindergarten program, replace an aging bus lift for our transportation department, and address a malfunctioning electronic sign at the corner of routes 96 and 488.

Overall, we are receiving nearly \$918,000 in additional state aid that will help the District hold the line on taxes while reducing our reliance on reserve fund spending by about \$94,500. The last time Midlakes put forth a budget that called for a zero percent increase in the tax levy was for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Meanwhile, we are working on detailed plans to allocate significant resources from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act and the American Rescue Plan. Those two federal programs account for approximately \$5.6 million in funds available to the District over the next three years to help address learning gaps created by the pandemic as well as other needs. Each program has different requirements, and we will share more ideas for each as we refine our plans in the coming weeks.

We anticipate using these federal funds for staffing and programmatic needs to support in-person instruction and address student learning and social-emotional needs. A detailed plan for the use of federal grant funds, outside the general budget, will be posted to the school website by July 1. Presentations will also be made to the Board of Education at scheduled Board meetings before the plan is finalized.

We know the pandemic has placed many hardships on Midlakes families. We hope by presenting a budget with a zero percent tax levy increase we can provide some relief while still advancing the learning, social-emotional growth, and health and safety of our students. We will use the federal funds allocated to Midlakes to continue our financial responsibility to the community while keeping the needs of our students a top priority.

Thank you for your continued support of all Midlakes students. ■

— Matt Sickles, superintendent



Q & A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Included are responses to some commonly asked questions regarding the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District budget and ballot propositions.

How will the proposed budget affect property owners?

The \$38,310,998 budget proposal calls for a 0% increase in the real property tax levy.

How is the tax levy limit for the District calculated?

State law mandates that an eight-step formula must be used to calculate the District's tax levy limit. This calculation accounts for growth in the local tax base, the rate of inflation, and provides the District with certain exemptions (capital expenditures, retirement contributions, court orders, and judgments). The District may also carry over the unused portion of the tax levy limit from previous years. However, it can be no greater than 1.5% of the prior year's tax levy limit. The District has \$185,155 in carryover from 2020-2021, resulting in a tax levy limit for the upcoming school year of \$15,354,830 for a 3.27% annual increase. For 2021-2022, the District is proposing an increase of 0%.

How are reserve funds being used in the proposed budget?

The District plans to use an additional \$440,495 from its reserves to balance the budget. This amount represents a \$94,504 annual decrease over the 2020-2021 budget. The District will allocate \$415,495 from the Employees Retirement System Reserve and \$15,000 from the Teachers Retirement System, an allowance to offset the district's actual state pension payments for employees belonging to the New York State Retirement System. In addition, the District will use \$10,000 from the Unemployment Reserve to offset actual costs attributed to unemployment claims and will use \$550,000 from its Debt Service Fund to offset the local share of capital debt payments from previous capital projects.

Why is the District paying for more buses?

The District works to ensure the safety of students and staff by using a 10-year rotation to purchase new buses as it phases out aging models. The District will spend up to \$392,951 out of its Bus Purchase Reserve Fund to purchase three buses. The state provides 90% aid reimbursement over five years for the purchase of buses. The net cost to the District after state aid will be \$39,095 out of the reserve fund.

Why is a new bus lift needed?

The District has budgeted \$210,000 for an interfund transfer to the capital fund to purchase a bus lift. Our current bus lift desperately needs to be replaced for safety reasons. The District will utilize these funds to purchase the lift as part of an approved building project. The District will receive state building aid for approximately 87.5% or \$183,750 in reimbursement for a net cost to the District of \$26,250.

Why is funding for the libraries on the ballot?

The District holds the annual appropriations vote for the local libraries in conjunction with the District annual budget vote for efficiency purposes. The library funding has no impact on the school budget or taxes. Taxes related to the library funding are levied separately from District taxes.

What happens if the budget isn't approved?

The District has two options if the budget is defeated. It can propose a new budget or the same budget for a re-vote in June. If that budget proposal is defeated, then the District would be required to adopt a contingency budget. Since the District is proposing a 0% levy increase there would be no change to the tax levy in a contingency budget but there would be restrictions on purchasing non-contingent items and would require the District to charge fees for all facility uses. ■

HIGHLIGHTS

ANNUAL VOTE SUMMARY

BUDGET: \$38,310,998

TAX LEVY INCREASE:

0% over 2020-2021

STATE AID:

+\$917,499 over 2020-2021

RESERVE SPENDING: \$990,496 (\$94,504 less than 2020-2021)

BUDGET HEARING: A budget hearing will be held in the Midlakes High School Auditorium at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 10.

OTHER PROPOSITIONS:

- Spend \$392,951 to purchase three (3) 65-passenger buses.
- Elect three (3) board members
- Funding for public libraries

MAY 18 VOTE

Per NYS, those voting on campus must wear a mask and complete a temperature check as part of a COVID-19 Health Screening. A separate ballot and drop box will be available for those unable to follow health and safety protocols.

• **IN-PERSON VOTING:** Noon to 9 p.m., Tuesday May 18, Middle School Gymnasium.

• **ABSENTEE BALLOTS:** An absentee ballot application (available through 5 p.m. on Monday, May 17 at District Office) must be completed to receive an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots are due to the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18.

ELIGIBILITY: Residents qualify to participate in the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District vote, provided they are:

- A U.S. Citizen
- At least 18 years old
- A resident for at least 30 days

** There is no property requirement to vote. **

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact District Clerk Krystal Plante at (315) 548-6420 or kplante@midlakes.org. More information is available at [Midlakes.org/AnnualVote](https://www.midlakes.org/AnnualVote). ■

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- ▶ Supportive Team

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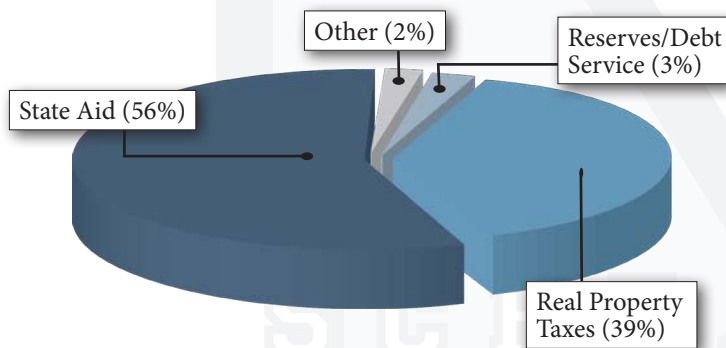
BUDGET PROPOSAL

The following charts and figures detail the sources of revenue along with the expenditures contained within the 2021-2022 school district budget. Further information can be found on the District's website at Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.

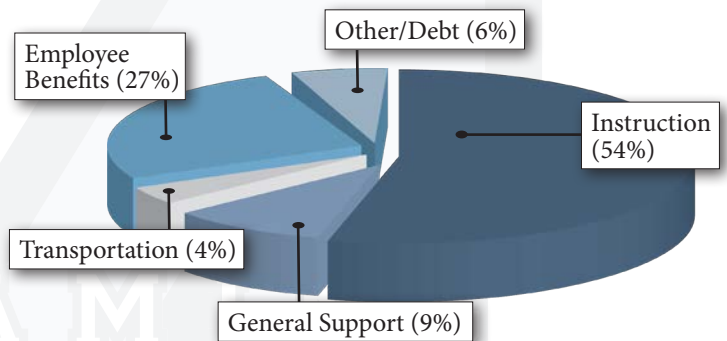
PROJECTED REVENUES

| SOURCE | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | INCREASE (DECREASE) |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| State Aid | \$20,621,842 | \$21,539,341 | \$917,499 |
| Real Property Taxes | \$14,867,586 | \$14,867,586 | --- |
| Reserves/Debt Service | \$1,085,000 | \$990,496 | (\$94,504) |
| Other | \$913,575 | \$913,575 | --- |
| TOTALS | \$37,488,003 | \$38,310,998 | \$822,995 |

BUDGET REVENUES



BUDGET EXPENDITURES



** Figures are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point.

BUDGET/AID ALLOCATIONS

The following list includes items addressed in the 2021-2022 budget proposal and planned through the use of federal stimulus funding allocated to the District.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

- **Equipment:** The District plans to replace an aging bus lift, a broken marquee at the corner of routes 96 and 488, and other equipment.
- **Other:** The District will absorb a HR position contracted through W-FL BOCES.

UPK FUNDING

New York State approved increased funding to the District to expand and include more children

in Universal Pre-Kindergarten. The additional \$400,000 allotted is approximately double the current aid provided to the District for UPK.

FEDERAL STIMULUS

The District is being allotted nearly \$5.6 million from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act 2021 (CRRSA) and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) to address learning gaps created by the pandemic. A formal proposal will be presented in May/June. Initial plans include the following:

- Materials/supplies to support in-person instruction
- ARPA summer programming
- ARPA after-school programming
- Grade 3 teacher – Reduced class size/Tier 1

instruction

- Reading teacher K-6 – Tier 2 & 3 instruction
- Math AIS teacher K-6 – Tier 2 & 3 instruction
- School psychologist (moved from budget to Federal Funds) – IEP support and Tier 2 & 3 social-emotional support
- School counselor/Social worker – Tier 1 social-emotional support and/or Tier 2 & 3 social-emotional support, attendance, intervention and community engagement
- Professional development for reading and math – Tier 1 instruction
- Clerical position (moved from the budget to federal funds for an anticipated retirement)
- Cleaner/laborer to support COVID-19 health and safety protocols ■

ITEMS ON THE BALLOT

2021-2022 SCHOOL BUDGET

To adopt the annual budget for the fiscal year 2021-2022 and to authorize the requisite portion thereof to be raised by taxation on the taxable real property of the District.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

To elect three members of the Board of Educa-

tion to three-year terms, commencing on July 1, 2021 and expiring June 30, 2024.

SCHOOL BUS PURCHASES

Shall the Board of Education be authorized to expend up to \$392,951 for the purchase of school buses, to be paid from the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund.

COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

A separate proposition shall be on the ballot for approval of an increase in the annual appropriation for the Clifton Springs Library in the amount of \$84,000, and an increase in the annual appropriation for the Phelps Community Memorial Library in the amount of \$84,000. ■

2021-2022 EXPENDITURES

INSTRUCTION: 54% OF BUDGET

All services that provide or directly affect instruction to students are included in this section. Items in this section include the school program, special education, summer school, support services (school libraries, health, psychological and social work services, curriculum coordination, supervision, and development, Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES instructional programs, and student activities (sports, intramurals, and co-curricular activities).

| CATEGORY | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | INCREASE (DECREASE) |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Salaries | \$12,914,495 | \$13,198,755 | \$284,260 |
| Equipment | \$106,400 | \$106,400 | --- |
| Supplies & Materials | \$457,785 | \$457,785 | --- |
| Contractual Expenses | \$1,176,390 | \$1,167,275 | (\$9,115) |
| BOCES | \$5,019,351 | \$4,818,001 | (\$201,350) |
| TOTALS | \$19,674,421 | \$19,748,216 | \$73,795 |

GENERAL SUPPORT: 9% OF BUDGET

The portion of the budget covering areas that support the educational program through central administration, business operations, human resources, community relations, maintenance and repair of district groups and facilities, printing, mailing, meetings, Board of Education and legal services.

| CATEGORY | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | INCREASE (DECREASE) |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Salaries | \$1,155,682 | \$1,180,313 | \$24,631 |
| Equipment | \$133,500 | \$198,500 | \$65,000 |
| Supplies & Materials | \$163,900 | \$163,900 | --- |
| Contractual Expenses | \$1,090,771 | \$1,090,771 | --- |
| BOCES | \$1,152,738 | \$1,070,917 | (\$81,821) |
| TOTALS | \$3,696,591 | \$3,704,401 | \$7,810 |

TRANSPORTATION: 4% OF BUDGET

A section of the budget covering bus transportation to district, parochial/private schools, BOCES programs, field trips and trips to athletic contests.

| CATEGORY | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | INCREASE (DECREASE) |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Salaries | \$1,207,927 | \$1,269,663 | \$61,736 |
| Equipment | \$7,000 | \$7,000 | --- |
| Supplies & Materials | \$323,100 | \$323,100 | --- |
| Contractual Expenses | \$91,510 | \$91,510 | --- |
| BOCES | \$29,137 | \$29,137 | --- |
| TOTALS | \$1,658,674 | \$1,720,410 | \$61,736 |

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: 27% OF BUDGET

Social security, retirement, health insurance, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation insurance, disability and life insurance are in this category.

| CATEGORY | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | INCREASE (DECREASE) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Social Security | \$1,174,846 | \$1,206,409 | \$31,563 |
| Health Insurance | \$6,964,186 | \$7,342,603 | \$378,417 |
| Employee Retirement System | \$531,427 | \$581,363 | \$49,936 |
| Teachers' Retirement System | \$1,195,088 | \$1,235,752 | \$40,664 |
| Workers' Compensation/Unemployment | \$145,000 | \$117,202 | (\$27,798) |
| TOTALS | \$10,010,547 | \$10,483,329 | \$472,782 |

OTHER/DEBT: 6% OF BUDGET

A portion of the budget for expenditures that include community programs, food service and debt service.

| CATEGORY | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | INCREASE (DECREASE) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Community Programs | \$101,357 | \$111,579 | \$10,222 |
| Transfer to Other Funds | \$195,000 | \$195,000 | --- |
| Transfer to the Capital Fund | --- | \$210,000 | \$210,000 |
| Debt Service | \$2,151,413 | \$2,138,063 | (\$13,350) |
| TOTALS | \$2,447,770 | \$2,654,642 | \$206,872 |

*Note all figures are rounded to the nearest whole dollar value.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| GENERAL FUND TOTALS | \$37,488,003 | \$38,310,998 | \$822,995 |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|

HIGHLIGHTS



THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District is governed by a seven-member Board of Education elected by eligible voters. Members are volunteer public officials who serve, without pay, for three-year terms.

For more information on the Board of Education, contact District Clerk Krystal Plante at (315) 548-6420, or visit the Board of Education online at Midlakes.org.

AMBER WILKES
PRESIDENT

TRACY ALTMAN
VICE PRESIDENT

JACOB AMIDON
BOARD MEMBER

RYAN DAVIS
BOARD MEMBER

TODD FREELOVE
BOARD MEMBER

MATT MURPHY
BOARD MEMBER

SHERI SCHERBYN
BOARD MEMBER

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

BUDGET PROPOSAL INVESTS IN OUR FUTURE

Midlakes has proved to be one of the most resilient school communities since the start of the pandemic. We have been forced to adjust every aspect of school through a different lens: academics, transportation, athletics, and social activities.

Rewinding our thoughts to last fall, I am proud to say the Midlakes team worked tirelessly to put together a reopening plan in August 2020, following state and federal guidelines while simultaneously working to support our students, staff, and families. Along with a reopening plan, the school was also mandated to purchase personal protective equipment, and other safety items to bring students and staff into the school buildings at any capacity.

Meanwhile, there were discussions that funding for schools might be cut. Fearing the worst, we encouraged our school community to write state and federal leaders to support the full funding of schools.

The Board of Education engaged the administrative team as far back as last summer to begin reviewing this year's budget proposal. The Board continues to receive regular updates from the

administrative team to ensure all team members engage in the budget process. Our entire team has worked endlessly, not only on the budget but to ensure that Midlakes is a safe and healthy place for our children.

We are thrilled that the state passed a budget that increased funding to our District. The District is also developing plans to use available federal funds under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan to help address learning gaps created by the pandemic.

The increase in funds will also ensure the health and well-being of everyone on the Midlakes' campus.

With the increased funding that became available, we are excited to present a budget to the community

"Our entire team has worked endlessly, not only on the budget but to ensure that Midlakes is a safe and healthy place for our children."

— Amber Wilkes, Board president

with a zero percent tax increase. This allows us to be fiscally responsible to our taxpayers while addressing the needs of our students.

Although we are still navigating the pandemic, the proposed 2021-2022 budget and increased federal funds will allow us to move forward to best serve the students, staff, and community at Midlakes. See you at the polls on May 18. ■

— Amber Wilkes, president of the Phelps-Clifton Springs Board of Education

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

The Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District Board of Education values the input of the Midlakes community and welcomes public comment on any topic related to its work, with the exception of individual student and/or personnel matters.

Community members may submit a public comment in-person during Board meetings provided they sign in and identify themselves by name

and address.

The public comment period will be limited to a total of thirty (30) minutes and one (1) comment per person. Individual comments will be limited to two (2) minutes.

The Board of Education does not respond to items presented or questions raised through public comment. However, it may discuss topics of public comment at a later time and/or contact the individual

who submitted the comment.

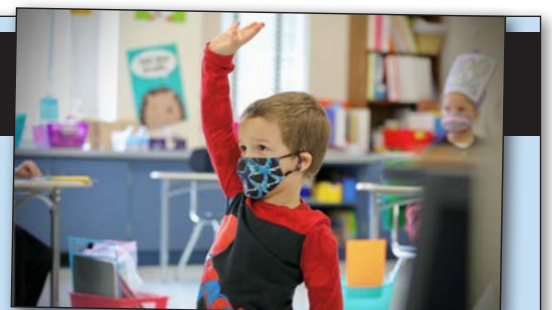
Board meetings are held in the Midlakes High School Auditorium, 1550 Route 488, and typically begin at 6:30 p.m. Meetings will be streamed live to the District website (Midlakes.org) and the Midlakes Schools YouTube channel.

For a complete list of meetings, visit the Minutes & Agendas tab under the Board of Education menu at Midlakes.org. ■

UPK, K PRE-REGISTRATION

Families may pre-register their children for Universal Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten for the 2021-2022 academic year at MIDLAKES.ORG.

Find the UPK and Kindergarten forms under the "Schools" drop-down tab.



BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

*District voters will elect three (3) individuals to three-year terms beginning July 1, 2021.
Board members serve without pay and are listed in alphabetical order on the ballot.*



**TRACY
ALTMAN**
1022 Burnett
Road, Phelps

Family:
Husband,
Travis; two
sons

**Occupation/
Career:**
School
Counselor

Qualifications and Activities:

Member of the Phelps-Clifton Springs Board of Education for the past three years, health and life coach, parent volunteer of the Clifton Springs YMCA swim program, and New York State Track and Field official. Lifelong member of the community, alumni of Midlakes and a parent of two current students. Over 15 years of experience working with students in a neighboring school district.

Personal Statement:

I would like to continue to work on strengthening the quality of education that our school district provides, with a focus on achievement for every student. I will continue to advocate both locally and at the state level for adequate mental health and comprehensive school counseling supports to ensure the development of well-adjusted, contributing members of our community and our society. I believe these two priorities have to be our primary focus as we move forward and recover from the effects of the pandemic.



**LINDSAY
MARINO**
36 S. Newark
St Phelps

Family:
Husband, Bill
Hunter; two
sons, and a
daughter

**Occupation/
Career:**
RN, BSN,
Assistant
Nurse

Manager of the Pediatric Emergency Room
(Golisano Children's Hospital)

Qualifications and Activities:

I have been involved in many activities in the

Midlakes community, mostly surrounding the activities of my three children. I have been a volunteer medic for the Midlakes Junior Eagles for six years, attending all football games and many practices. I have coached many sports since my children began participating at the age of four. I have coached YMCA soccer and basketball for many seasons. I have been a classroom volunteer in my children's classroom and on field trips throughout our six years in the elementary school.

Personal Statement:

I graduated from the University of Rochester with my BSN in nursing and have made a lifelong career at Golisano Children's Hospital. I have been a Pediatric RN for 20 years, and for the last nine years, I have been the assistant RN Nurse Manager of the Pediatric Emergency Department. The 2020-2021 year has been a challenging year for all of us, especially for our children. My profession has taught me about adaptation and resiliency. I believe my practical knowledge and common-sense approach can help move us forward academically during this unusual time of a pandemic. I am passionate about making decisions that are medically safe but yet practical for our children. I embrace challenges and I am not afraid of hard work or difficult decisions. I am committed to our children at Midlakes and I would be honored to serve on the Board.



DON MILLER
2461 Waddell
Road, Clifton
Springs

Family: Wife,
JoEllen; a
daughter and
a son

**Occupation/
Career:**
Employee at
the Palmyra-
Macedon
Central School

District, former employee at Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District, HVAC expertise

Qualifications and Activities:

Phelps business owner, previously served as a Board of Education member in the Palmyra-Macedon Central School District, and currently a varsity boys basketball official

Personal Statement:

As a past employee of Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District, current business owner and past Board of Education member, I feel

that I will bring a lot of experience as a Board member. Also, with my construction background, I will be able to add insight to upcoming capital improvement projects slated for Midlakes.



**AMBER
WILKES**
1210 West
Townline
Road, Phelps

Family:
Husband,
William; two
daughters and
a son

**Occupation/
Career:** AIS
teacher math,
Geneva City

School District; reading K-4 at St Francis - St. Stephens School in Geneva.

Qualifications and Activities:

Member of the Board of Education for the past six years; last year as president. A member of several District committees, including capital improvement project, audit, strategic plan member, policy and Graduates of Distinction.

Personal Statement:

The experience I have gained as a Board member over the past six years allows me to better understand the inner workings of the District and the school budget process. It also has taught me to be prepared for the unknown and to focus decision-making around what is best for children. My background not only allows me to view issues as a parent and taxpayer but also as an educator. With extended family that owns several properties in the District, I understand the need to be fiscally responsible. My goal as a Board of Education member is to be part of a team that creates a safe and positive learning culture for both students and staff, where both feel the empowerment to grow as learners. ■

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Five Sports One Year

Student-athletes take advantage of the unique sports calendar.

Cara Walker knows exactly how she would have reacted if somebody had told her in August that she would play five varsity sports during her senior year.

"I definitely would have laughed at them," Walker said. "At the time, especially with COVID, we were still questioning whether we were going to have one season, let alone a chance to play five."

But five is where she landed: soccer, basketball, indoor track and field, volleyball, and lacrosse.

Walker is not alone in participating in more than three sports. Seven student-athletes at Midlakes have registered to play five sports this school year with 13 others signing up to play four.

OPPORTUNITY RISES

While interscholastic sports were threatened over fears of the pandemic, new health and safety protocols and a shuffling of the sports seasons by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association gave way to more compact seasons.

Football, volleyball, and cheerleading were moved to a new "Fall II" season that began in March and concluded in April. In November, indoor track and bowling began before there was ever a guarantee that wrestling and basketball would take place.

Walker, along with Chase Peacock and Bradley Marquart, all decided to go out for indoor track while patiently waiting for the go-head on basketball and wrestling from the state.



When those sports were approved, instead of making student-athletes pick a sport to play, the Wayne-Finger Lakes Athletic Council decided to allow for dual participation.

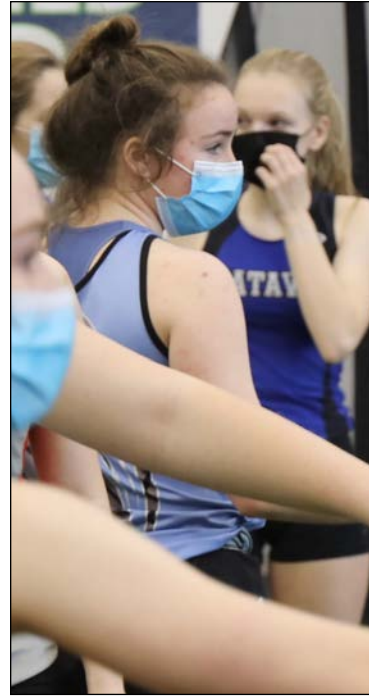
"A lot of the kids are just happy to be playing," said John Lombardi, Midlakes athletic director. "They want to excel and they want to win, but I think that some of them are also just out there for the love of the game."

MEMORIES

For Peacock, it meant a return to wrestling without having to give up indoor track and field.

"I had the opportunity to do it and I thought, 'Why not collect five varsity letters?'" said Peacock, who finished second in the Section V Class B1 Wrestling Tournament at 110 pounds. "Volleyball is a hobby sport outside of school, so why not try it? I am enjoying it, but it is way harder than I thought."

Marquart, who played soccer, basketball,



and lacrosse, added indoor track and field and volleyball.

Boys volleyball head coach Kyle Salisbury said the addition of Peacock and Marquart gave the team a boost.

"They bring good energy and good attitudes," said Salisbury. "They are both real high-energy people."

Junior Maeghan Mahoney's primary sport is swimming and she also plays softball. She added bowling, indoor track, and volleyball this year.

"It's kind of a chance to relax," she said. "There's more fun and you get to hang around with new people. I think that it is fun to use all of the different skills. Swinging (your arm in volleyball) is similar to throwing a softball."

BIRTHDAY GIFTS

A standout basketball player, Walker has won sectionals and played in two state basketball tournaments. She decided to go out for indoor track when the basketball season remained in doubt.

When February arrived, she played both sports — sometimes on the same day.

Take Feb. 27, for example. Walker cleared 5-feet to finish first in the high jump and then finished second in the 55-meter dash at the Wayne-Finger Lakes League Championships. That night, she drilled the game-clinching 3-point basket in overtime against Penn Yan.

All on the day she turned 18.

"It was a fun-filled birthday," Walker said with a laugh.

Her decision to play volleyball gave *The Daily Messenger's* Girl's Basketball Player of the Year additional time with her younger sister, Callie, who is a member of both teams.

"It's a bright spot," Lombardi said. "These kids are having an opportunity to try something new and different, and some of them are having the chance to play an additional sport with a sibling and share those types of memories."

Girls volleyball coach Matt Marchae-si said the additional opportunities for student-athletes have been beneficial for everyone.

"I think it's beneficial that they are getting extended opportunities, especially with all that has gone on in the last year and so many kids missing out on so much," he said. "We are lucky that we have (Walker and Mahoney) here this season to help us out."

Maybe more impressive is how Mahoney, Peacock, and Walker joined about 30 other student-athletes in being named Scholar-Athletes by the state for earning a GPA of at least 90.

"All of the coaches are really impressed that we are able to handle online schooling, block scheduling, and playing

multiple sports," Mahoney said.

All of it has made for an unforgettable sports year.

"Every single day there is a positive, you just have to find that positive," Peacock said. "You have to want to be the best you can be, even when there is a pandemic going on. I definitely think that playing five sports is something you should be able to brag about." ■

"I had the opportunity to do it and I thought, 'Why not collect five varsity letters?'"

— Senior Chase Peacock

FIVE SPORTS

- Chase Peacock
- Cara Walker
- Bradley Marquart
- Maeghan Mahoney
- Tyler Lantrip

- Catherine Peacock
- Noah Frere

FOUR SPORTS

- Adam Wilkes
- Ryan Peck

- Camryn Ford
- Mary Givens
- Hanna Godkin
- Olivia Hannux
- Kate Mahoney
- Garrett Cooper

- Alyssa Crance
- Stella DelPapa
- Ariana Hicks
- Kiana Naval
- Abraham Rodriguez-Diaz ■

HIGHLIGHTS

A+

SCHOLAR-ATHLETES ANNOUNCED

Several sports programs and more than 30 student-athletes were recognized by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association for outstanding achievements in the classroom for the 2020-2021 winter season.

To receive team recognition, the team's average GPA for at least 75 percent of its roster must be greater or equal to 90 percent. Individual student-athletes need to earn at least a 90 GPA.

The girls basketball team with a grade point average of 95.82, girls indoor track and field (95.47), girls bowling (90.77), and the boys swim team (90.24) were named as Scholar-Athlete Teams. A complete list of individuals can be found at Midlakes.org. ■

GIRLS WRESTLERS COMPETE IN MEET

Leah Peck, Olivia Miles and Emma Jacobsen competed in the first dual wrestling match for female wrestlers in Section V's history. They were joined by about 35 girls from approximately 20-area schools during the winter event. ■



MIDLAKES MEMORIES

**Responses edited to fit space.*

1971: I was a proud member of the first freshman class at Midlakes. It was the best year ever and marked the beginning of many new friendships. Also, a very proud parent of two now-adults that graduated from Midlakes.

— Dawn (VerStraete) Nieskes

1975: I started school in Phelps, then my family moved to Clifton Springs, then back to Phelps five years later. I was one of very few that knew both Phelps and Clifton kids. I thought it was great to bring my old and new friends together. The school was so clean and smelled new.

— Sandy (Naukam) Case

1995: We were the first sixth-grade class to enter the new middle school building and the last fifth grade class to leave Clifton Springs Elementary. I remember meeting many new friends as we came together for the first time. I attended Midlakes my entire academic career and am so thankful I was hired to teach here.

— Karen Busby

1999: One milestone is that my first year at Midlakes, 1999, I taught first grade at the Banta Street School, now the PCC. This year I am teaching the son of one of my first graders in fourth grade! I also remember having "Fun Runs" (2001) with my classes while teaching third grade at the Teft Avenue building and during our Thanksgiving run we actually had a wild turkey join us!

— Julie Backus

2010: Kori Hughes & Cassie Goodman were the first female athletes to be named First Team All State in Midlakes. Kori went on to play soccer at the University at Buffalo, and Cassie ran cross country and track at SUNY Geneseo.

— Kori Hughes & Cassie Goodman

1971: I remember being apprehensive but very excited to get into the "new" school. We would be the first class to graduate as Midlakes. My nephew is also a Midlakes graduate and now his two daughters are students at Midlakes!

— Linda Schutt

2009: Boys Basketball wins the school's first-ever Section V basketball title.

— Erin Kelly

2020: The Midlakes Strong Chicken BBQ highlighted the caring compassionate nature of our community. The strong bond between our District and all of our local organizations was on full display and the food was pretty good, too.

— Ryan Davis

2003: Our programs would not be possible if it wasn't for Rick Bley's hard work and advocating in the late 90's and early 2000's to get the new math, science and technology wing built in '03.

— Dan Wheeler

2012: The Midlakes Indoor Drumline won the New York State Percussion Circuit Championships in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016. In 2012, the drumline finished with a World Ranking of 21st in the Class A Division of WGI Percussion Championships.

— Scott Monagle

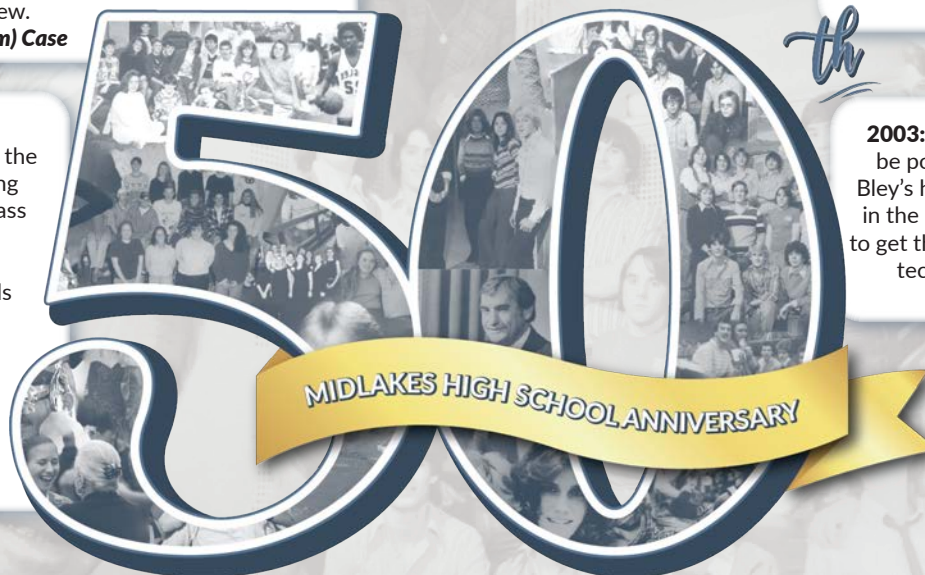
2001: I moved to Clifton Springs in 1997, met Dan McConnon in Ms. Hussey's class (Mrs. Hannux) my freshman year. We graduated in 2001, married in 2004, and I started working at Midlakes Middle School in 2006.

— Jocelyn McConnon

2016: Mrs. Manns and her seventh-grade students start the "Sulphur Springs Frog Jumping Contest" to bring Mark Twain and his famous story to life; "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County". The contest has continued ever since.

— Heather Manns

Note: Students who went on the senior trip to Washington D.C. inspired the look of auditorium renovations in 2006. The students wanted it to look like the Opera House in the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in the nation's capitol and not the Kennedy Space Center in Florida as stated in the January edition of the Journal.



1971 - 2021

Staff and community members share
their memories to celebrate the
50th anniversary of Midlakes High School.

FOOD SERVICE

MIDLAKES PROVIDES FAMILIES 281K MEALS

In an effort that included employees from every department, the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District prepared and delivered approximately 281,000 meals to students learning remotely from the start of the pandemic through February 2021.

Midlakes food services team was joined by maintenance and transportation staff, teachers and teacher aides, drivers, and other school workers who stepped up to ensure that no student went hungry by providing access to free meals funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"No child should go to bed hungry and our staff — not just our food service team but everyone — really came together to get meals to our students despite the challenges of the past year," said Jil Swarthout, food services director. "There is a strong link between learning and nutrition and without the extraordinary work of those in our District, from adjusting operations on the fly, managing supply chain shortages, establishing new delivery routes and improving our processes, we could not have accomplished so much without everyone's dedication and unwavering willingness to put children first."

Starting May 10, the District will only offer a food pickup option for families from 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 a.m. every Monday in the Middle School bus loop. Families must fill out an online form for service, even if they currently receive meals, at Midlakes.org/Page/4571.



Families with questions regarding meal service may contact Jil Swarthout, at jswarthout@midlakes.org or (315) 548-6415. ■

ELEMENTARY FAMILIES SHARE LEARNING MODEL PREFERENCES

A significant number of families responding to a District questionnaire said they preferred a move from hybrid learning model to a five-day in-person instructional model with an option for five-day remote learning given updated guidelines from the New York State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention allowing for the reduced social distancing of younger children.

A total of 532 responses were collected by the District from April 15 – 20 amounting to responses representing about 63% of all UPK-6 students at Midlakes Elementary School.

About 76% of those responses, or 402 families, noted a preference to move to an instructional model with five-day in-person instruction with a five-day remote learning option.

When asked what they would choose — either a five-day remote or five-day in-person learning — approximately 92% picked five-day in-person instruction for their students. Meanwhile, 42 families selected the remote option.

Nearly 71% of responding families said that they would require transportation from the District for their children.

The District has targeted May 10 for the return of UPK-6 students to full five-day in-person instruction.

More detailed plans will be posted to Midlakes.org and shared with families but general guidelines include the following:

- Students will be masked at all times, except when eating.
- In classrooms, students will be seated three feet apart with masks.
- Adults will be spaced six feet from each other and students.
- In hallways, students will be spaced six feet apart (whenever possible) with masks.
- During meals, students will be grouped by cohort in cafeterias and students will be spaced six feet apart while eating.
- On buses, students will be seated up to two per seat, as needed. Students from the same household or daycare will be seated together first. Additional students will be seated two per seat as needed to meet transportation needs (not to exceed two per seat). Bus ventilation will be increased with open windows and roof hatches.
- Students will be spaced six feet apart when singing, playing an instrument, or aerobic activity.

Also, a questionnaire was sent to families with students in Middle/High School. Results were not available as of publication. ■

HIGHLIGHTS

STUDENTS COLLECT 450 PAIRS OF SHOES

Midlakes Elementary School Student Council and the National Elementary Honor Society collected approximately 450 pairs of shoes as part of a character-building initiative to learn more about empathy in March by putting themselves in someone else's shoes

Shoes, sneakers, sandals, boots and other footwear were donated the week before spring break and will go to benefit local families and community organizations. The project is part of the District's Character Strong social-emotional curriculum. ■

DICTIONARIES FOR THIRD GRADERS

The Clifton Springs Grange donated new dictionaries to third-graders at Midlakes Elementary School through its "Words for Thirds" program to encourage good reading habits and comprehension skills. ■

STUDENTS NAMED 'TOP OF THE TRADE'

The Finger Lakes Technical and Career Center selected several Midlakes students for its Top of the Trade recognitions in December and January.

DECEMBER

- Maci Delforte, Animal science
- Abigail Rouland, Animal science
- Timothy DePriore, Criminal justice
- Liam Schreder, Computer technology

JANUARY

- Craig Adams, Criminal justice
- Robert Burnham, Computer technology
- Briggert Cooley, Animal science
- Matthew White, Diesel technology
- Avery Hackett, New Vision Health Therapy Sciences
- Samantha Naranjo, Farm to Table Sustainable Agriculture. ■

HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNITION

VALEDICTORIAN LYNDSEY WRIGHT

Lyndsey Wright, daughter of Jamie and Lynda Wright, plans to attend Cornell University's College of Engineering to major in bio-medical engineering in the fall.

Activities and achievements include: National Honor Society, Mary Hicks Preston Board, Student Council, Interact Club, Yearbook Club, Masterminds, Class President, Indoor and Outdoor Track, dance with Studio for the Performing Arts, Scholar-Athlete, High-Honor Roll, Mastery in Math and Science, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Conference Ambassador, Attendant with Gary Sinise Foundation's Soaring Valor Trip, University of Rochester's Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass Award, Chemistry Achievement



Award, and the Ontario County Youth Advisory Board Certificate of Recognition. She participated in Girl Scouts earning Bronze and Silver awards and anticipates receiving the Gold Award. ■

SALUTATORIAN RYLEIGH BRADLEY

Ryleigh Bradley, daughter of Tracey and Kevin Bradley, plans to study nursing at St. John Fisher College in the fall.

Activities and achievements include: A member of the high school archery team, Interact Club, and the Midlakes "Reflections" Yearbook Club. She is also a member of the National Honor Society and has spent her time at Midlakes High School focusing on her studies, contributing to the local community, and spending time with friends. Ryleigh was offered a job at the Phelps Hometown Pharmacy at the beginning of her sophomore year and has been a pharmacy technician ever since.



In getting a glimpse of the health care world, Ryleigh realized she wanted to help others for a living. ■



PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Send tips and suggestions to: Newsletter, 1490 State Route 488, Clifton Springs, NY 14432

NYSPRA
New York School Public Relations Association
AWARD WINNER: 2019, 2020



**PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**
1490 STATE ROUTE 488
CLIFTON SPRINGS, NY 14432

DISTRICT VOTE

- The District Vote is Tuesday, May 18 with in-person voting from noon to 9 p.m. at Midlakes Middle School Gymnasium, 1550 Route 488, and by absentee ballot.

ON THE BALLOT

- Proposed budget: \$38,310,998
- \$392,951 to purchase three (3) 65-passenger buses.
- Elect three (3) Board of Education members
- Funding for community libraries

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