



# Hastings Happenings

SPRING 2022 SPECIAL BUDGET EDITION

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Dear Hastings Residents,*

Our 2021-22 school year was cheerfully marked by a successful return to healthy, in-person learning. We also welcomed our new superintendent, Dr. William McKersie, as a positive step towards district stability. Just as important, this year marked a return to the characteristic productivity of Hastings students. Though there are too many examples to list here, our students enjoyed noteworthy individual and collaborative honors and success across all areas and in each of our three schools. These moments remind us that Hastings schools are successful because of the energy and focus of all who work on behalf of our students and all who live here.

In this spirit, the proposal for the 2022-23 budget is presented for your consideration within this newsletter. This budget reflects the collaborative work of our superintendent, building principals, administrators, our business official, our board trustees, and, in a very real sense, the collaboration of our residents as well. Residents should take care to note that our budget responds to the complex challenge of inflation and the start of our bond repayment by adding no new programs, reducing several positions and restructuring Special Education in a way that lowers our costs of administration. This budget also supports an important Special Education program review, to be conducted efficiently in-house, without added outside expense.

Our board hopes this year-over-year stability will help make 2022-2023 a next step in our return from the pandemic. Our current school year featured an understandable surge of interest across academics, arts and athletics. Next year we will welcome vibrant and long-awaited new student spaces at both Hillside and the Farragut Complex. Together with these facilities, our budget will continue to support programming as a renewal of our community's values and, after two years of interruption, as

## BUDGET SUMMARY

<b>2022-23 Proposed .....</b>	<b>\$55,821,718</b>
<b>2021-22 Adopted .....</b>	<b>\$52,823,911</b>
<b>Budget-to-Budget Increase.....</b>	<b>5.68%</b>
<b>Proposed Tax Levy Change.....</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

a critical return to the energy, interactions and opportunities our students depend on and merit so highly.

Residents may note the increase in budget, particularly following pandemic years where our district was able to delay or offset a variety of obligations. These increases are largely statutory and contractual. Their significance certainly informs our long-term planning. Likewise, our educational goal and charge remain steadfast and equally long-term: to ensure a high-value education and aid our youth in becoming an asset to their families, peers, community and to themselves. We endorse this budget as an opportunity for all residents to share in the support of these goals.

Please spend time reviewing the information enclosed in this newsletter. The full budget is available on our website: [www.hohschools.org](http://www.hohschools.org). Please be in touch if you have questions - board trustees and the superintendent are always available and our contact information can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Voting for the budget will take place at the Cochran Gym at Hastings High School on May 17, 7 a.m.–9 p.m. If you would prefer to vote by absentee ballot, please contact our District Clerk at 914.478.6402 or at [delabarreram@hohschools.org](mailto:delabarreram@hohschools.org).

Sincerely,  
*Board of Education Trustees*

**VOTE — TUESDAY, MAY 17, 7 A.M. - 9 P.M. — COCHRAN GYMNASIUM, HASTINGS HIGH SCHOOL**

# BUDGET FAQ

## 1) Are there any cuts to programs or personnel?

No, there are no reductions to any programs in the proposed budget. It is the goal of the administration and the Board of Education to present a budget that advances the academic and social-emotional growth of our students.

Positions being vacated due to retirements will not be filled. With reallocation of staffing through modifications in our ICT (Integrated Co-Teaching) classrooms, (as detailed in the story on page 5) we have a reduction of 3 FTE staff. With the change, Hastings will still have a better student:teacher ratio in specialized classrooms than our neighboring districts. The change provides for necessary financial efficiency, providing a total savings of \$375,000.

## 2) What are the main drivers of this year's proposed budget?

The total budget increase for 2022-23 is \$2.99 million, which is a 5.68% increase over the current year.

Three areas account for 75% of the growth:

- Bond Payment – Approximately 30% of the increase in the proposed budget is attributed to the first payment of the \$18.3 million bond, which was passed by voters in 2018 to fund capital improvements at all three schools. This accounts for \$870,000 of the total budget-to-budget increase.
- Mandatory contractual and benefit increases account for approximately \$860,000 dollars, or 30% of the budget-to-budget increase.
- Special Education is rising by \$504,000, accounting for 17% of the overall budget increase. The year-to-year increase for special education is

5.96%, and is driven by \$125,000 for Hudson Lab, out-of-district tuition of \$50,000 and \$200,000 for behavioral and other specialist consultants.

Other areas of increase include mandated contribution to the Teacher Retirement System of \$200,000 a 6% increase; utility costs, which are projected to rise by 25%, an increase of approximately \$90,000; and overall inflation, running at about 5%, for contractual services.

## 3) What is the proposed budget tax levy increase?

The tax levy will increase by approximately 3.1% over last year's levy. However, many homeowners will not see an increase as the assessed valuation of the village is increasing. The 3.1% tax levy increase represents the direct impact on the Hastings taxpayer, and is lower than the 5.68% budget-to-budget increase due to the effective use of multiple revenue streams.

## 4) Is the District using reserves to lessen the overall tax levy impact?

The District has reserves that are created and funded for specific liability purposes. Over the years, the District has been able to reserve monies to help offset rises in items, such as retirement expenses, to help mitigate the tax impact on residents. The District recognizes the current financial pressures of our taxpayers and this year is proposing drawing on reserves to help offset some of the increases in costs.

## 5) Is the Proposed Budget within the NY State Tax Levy Cap?

Yes, the District has an allowable increase to the tax levy under New York State law of close to \$2 million

dollars; the proposed budget levy is almost \$530,000 under the allowable limit.

## 6) Is the proposed Assistant Director for SPED adding additional cost to the budget?

No. In fact reallocation of special education resources is saving approximately \$30,000. Please see the Special Education story on page 5.

## 7) Are budget increases a regional trend?

Yes, significant budget increases are a regional trend. Increased costs affect all districts and largely reflect rising costs driven by inflation, New York State policy mandates, shifting state pension obligations and other non-local and non-discretionary drivers.

Hastings also has a unique local driver this year - the start of our bond repayment. This required payment is 1.66 percentage points of the 5.68% budget-to-budget increase. Without the bond repayment, the budget increase would be 4.02%.

## 8) What happens if the budget fails to pass?

If the budget does not pass, the board may present the budget again for a re-vote, either as is, or with reductions to programs, personnel, and/or services. Should the budget fail again in a second vote, the district automatically adopts a contingency budget, which would mandate reductions of approximately \$1.3 million.

Budgets that are defeated on a re-vote do not allow any increase to the tax levy from the previous year.

For more detailed FAQs  
visit our website  
or [bit.ly/HOH-22-23](http://bit.ly/HOH-22-23)

# WHAT YOU WILL SEE ON THE BALLOT

## PROPOSITION I

YES | NO

Shall the Board of Education of the Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District, Town of Greenburgh, NY, be authorized to expend the sums set forth in the 2022-2023 Annual Budget in the total amount of \$55,821,718 and to levy the necessary tax therefore?

## ELECTION

### OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The election of two Board of Education Trustees will take place at the same time as the budget vote. Please visit our website at [hohschools.org](http://hohschools.org) for the candidates' names, which will be in the announcements section as soon as they are available.

## BUDGET OVERVIEW

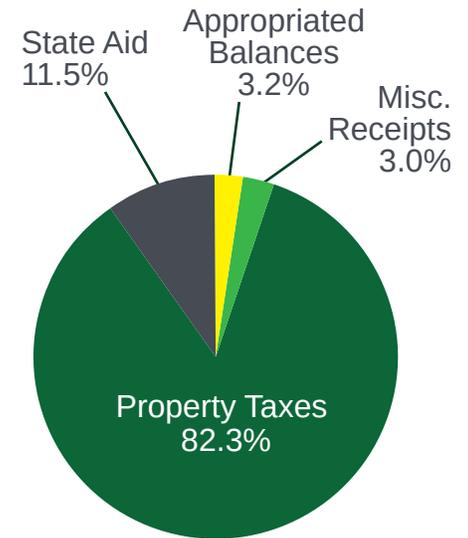
### HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPOSED 2022/23 BUDGET

APPROPRIATIONS	ADOPTED BUDGET 2021/22	PROPOSED BUDGET 2022/23	BUDGET CHANGE
General Support	\$4,820,931	\$5,106,256	\$285,325
Instruction	\$32,853,290	\$34,291,674	\$1,438,384
Pupil Transportation	\$1,372,700	\$1,499,505	\$126,805
Undistributed	\$13,776,990	\$14,924,283	\$1,147,293
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$52,823,911</b>	<b>\$55,821,718</b>	<b>\$2,997,807</b>
% BUDGET CHANGE			5.68%

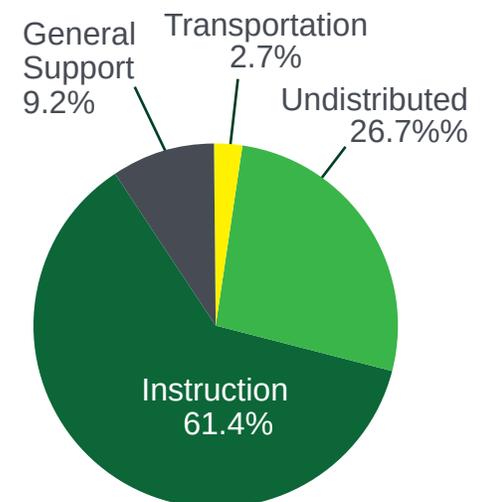
REVENUES	ADOPTED BUDGET 2021/22	PROPOSED BUDGET 2022/23	BUDGET CHANGE
State Aid	\$5,708,311	\$6,403,146	\$694,835
Miscellaneous Receipts	\$1,275,000	\$1,675,000	\$400,000
Appropriated Balance	\$534,843	\$854,843	\$320,000
Retirement Reserve	\$650,000	\$850,000	\$200,000
Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Property Taxes	\$44,555,757	\$45,938,729	\$1,382,972
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$52,823,911</b>	<b>\$55,821,718</b>	<b>\$2,997,807</b>
% TAX LEVY CHANGE			3.10%
Assessed Valuation	\$2,051,718,310	\$2,154,060,446*	\$102,342,136
Tax Rate	\$21.71	\$21.33	-\$0.38
Tax Rate Change			-1.75%

\*Assessed valuation is subject to change.

## REVENUES



## EXPENDITURES



# CAPITAL PROJECTS

## NEAR COMPLETION

The capital improvements that were funded by the bond referendum approved by voters in 2018 are almost complete. Three major projects will bolster Hastings educational programs, and the quality of its facilities, for decades: The Farragut Complex music suite has been renovated; the Farragut Middle School auditorium, which has not been used for years, has been restored to a beautiful instructional and performance space, and at Hillside, students will soon be moving into the new addition of classrooms and a state-of-the-art cafetorium.

Middle and high school students were able to move into the new music suite beginning in January. While finishing touches still need to be made, the students are already enjoying the new space. Two large practice rooms for band and orchestra have been completely renovated, allowing for more flexible use of the space. New storage lockers keep instruments safe and orderly, and a former office has been converted into a small

practice room

“We are delighted with the music room renovations,” said music chairperson, Michael Rubino. “We now have an inviting space with ample storage, lighting and seating.”

At Hillside Elementary School students will soon be moving into an addition that includes four new classrooms, an elevator and a cafetorium, equipped with a kitchen so that, for the first time, Hillside students will be able to buy lunch at school. This space will also be available for community use outside of school hours.

“The new cafetorium will be a gamechanger and its space will allow for more flexibility in scheduling,” said Principal Amy Cazes. “The cafetorium will give us a state-of-the-art performance space that can be used without affecting physical education class schedules. The new addition will allow Hillside to better serve our students and community for years to come.”

And at the middle school, an old unused

auditorium on the third floor has been restored and will afford space for large assemblies, something the middle school has been lacking until now. This 260-seat facility has been designed to add flexible capacity for up to 320 people and will be used by both the middle and high school for grade level assemblies, performances and other occasions when large numbers of students gather.

“I am thrilled about all the possibilities and opportunities the new auditorium will provide our students and staff,” said Jennifer Spirelli, FMS principal. “It adds an informal as well as formal gathering learning space. We already have events planned for this year and staff are eager to utilize the space, not only for assemblies and guest speakers, but for student presentations.”

The capital improvements included a number of less exciting, but nonetheless important upgrades to district facilities, including: At Hillside, a new roof, some new energy efficient windows, first floor



The Hillside Elementary School addition.



The renovated middle school auditorium.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION PROPOSALS TO OPTIMIZE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

flooring and brick repointing. In the Farragut Complex, half of the middle school roof, a new boiler (replacing one dating to the 1980s), repointing of brickwork and restoring the cornice on the exterior of the historic building.

Starting this fall, Hastings residents will see an increase in expenditures related to new debt service associated with this capital improvement project. The first debt payment on this bond is due in the 2022-23 school year and is reflected in this proposed budget.

Board of Education President Doug Sundheim noted that, "The Board of Education, district staff and students deeply appreciate the wisdom and foresight of Hastings leaders and residents in supporting the bond and the resulting capital improvements. The investment will bolster high quality education, a signature for Hastings, and position the district to be able to continue to deliver that quality well into the future."



The retractable seating in the Hillside cafetorium.

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the district will review operations in the Special Education Department to better meet the needs of students and families.

With a strong belief in systematic, responsive and inclusive learning, the district will deliver an action plan to advance the program by January 2023. The district will establish a planning committee, including parents, to finalize a program review process, analyze data and design individual best practices in a multi-year strategic plan to take the district forward.

"We look forward to seeing the results of the program review. In the meantime, we are proposing several immediate changes that will set the Special Education Department up for a successful start to a new phase," says District Superintendent Dr. William McKersie.

The district is proposing to add a second Assistant Director for Special Education as part of the 2022-23 budget, a measure that will result in cost savings.

By utilizing Federal grant funds and reassigning existing staff to support students more efficiently the new appointment will actually save the district approximately \$30,000.

"It is counterintuitive to suggest that adding an administrator will save funds, but that is exactly what will occur with our proposal," says McKersie.

The proposed appointment comes in response to a recommendation from a consultant study of the Hastings UFSD's Special Education Department. The second Assistant Director would increase capacity for strategic planning and management, staff supervision and coaching, communications and working with professionals and families to refine special education best practices across the district and for individual students.

"We embrace special education as a centerpiece of Hastings. The growing and varied needs of special education students requires us to expand our district wide capacity for forward-looking, responsive planning and implementation. Ultimately, we want to be known as an inclusive school system, which serves a wide range of student needs within the district while fostering more independence as students move through our schools," McKersie says.

The philosophy of fostering independence allows the district to reduce the extent of teaching assistants in the ICT classrooms in grades 2-5. Each ICT classroom will still have a 1.0 general education and 1.0 special education teacher. In grades 2-5, we will reduce teaching assistants per grade from 1.0 to 0.5, and have each grade collaborate on the sharing of the teaching assistant. Currently, our teaching assistants in grades 2-4 are being used for other staffing purposes, such as general supervision, which is a common practice regionally when there are challenges with staffing. Focusing on teaching assistants as instructional resources is essential. Consistency will be maximized, since the teaching assistants rarely will be pulled from classroom duties, allowing more predictable instructional support for students.

Combined with plans to deploy staff to support students more efficiently, the modification of teaching assistant assignments will afford the district some \$375,000 in savings.

# PROPERTY TAX REPORT CARD

	Budgeted 2021/22 (A)	Proposed Budget 2022/23 (B)	Percent Change (C)
Total Budgeted Amount, not Including Separate Propositions	\$52,823,911	\$55,821,718	5.68%
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount <sup>1</sup>	\$44,555,757	\$45,938,729	
B. Tax Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable			
C. Tax Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable <sup>2</sup>			
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy, if Applicable			
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$44,555,757	\$45,938,729	3.10%
F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$430,865	\$1,252,847	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions <sup>3</sup>	\$44,124,892	\$45,215,645	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$44,124,892	\$44,685,882	
I. Difference: (G - H); (negative value requires 60.0% voter approval) <sup>2</sup>	\$0	\$529,763	
Public School Enrollment	1,619	1,650	1.91%
Consumer Price Index		4.70%	

<sup>1</sup> Include any prior year reserve for excess tax levy, including interest.

<sup>2</sup> Tax levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion under the School Tax Levy Limit and may affect voter approval requirements.

<sup>3</sup> For 2022-23, includes any carryover from 2021-22 and excludes any tax levy for library debt or prior year reserve for excess tax levy, including interest.

	Actual 2021/22 (D)	Estimated 2022/23 (E)
Adjusted Restricted Fund Balance	\$6,282,719	\$6,075,523
Assigned Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,284,843	\$1,804,843
Adjusted Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$2,110,319	\$2,232,868
Adjusted Unrestricted Fund Balance as a Percent of the Total Budget	4.00%	4.00%

## BUDGET HISTORY

School Year	Budget	Budget-to-Budget	Tax Rate Change	Tax Rate per \$1,000
2018-19	\$50,518,586	4.26%	0.86%	\$21.04
2019-20	\$51,283,825	1.51%	0.43%	\$21.12
2020-21	\$51,660,159	0.73%	1.23%	\$21.38
2021-22	\$52,823,911	2.25%	1.45%	\$21.71
2022-23	\$55,821,718	5.68%	-1.75%*	\$21.33*

\*Estimate

## INTERFUND TRANSFERS

### Capital Fund

Funds have been appropriated for capital improvement projects and upgrading facilities. The following is a breakdown of projects funded:

► **District Wide:** Funds have been appropriated for capital improvement projects and upgrading facilities.

#### ► Projects Funded:

- Classroom doors \$10,000
- Classroom floors \$20,000
- Sidewalk replacement \$70,000

**Total \$100,000**

## SPECIAL AID FUND

► Funds for the summer school program for students identified by the Committee on Special Education are allocated in this fund.

► The District is responsible for 20% of summer school tuition and busing.

## DEBT SERVICE

► This category represents the District's long-term financing of capital improvement projects and alterations.

► Funds are included for the payment of principal and interest of the capital improvement bond authorized by the community in 2014 and 2018.

► Also included is the District's lease payment on the Energy Performance Contract.

► The lease payment is financed by the savings the District received in energy costs.

► Next year, the first payments are due on the capital project approved by voters in 2018. These are reflected in the proposed budget.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2021-22 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2022-23 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 52,823,911	\$55,821,718	\$54,438,746
Increase/Decrease for the 2022-23 School Year		\$2,997,807	\$1,614,835
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.68 %	3.06%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.7%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$44,555,757	\$45,938,729	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$	\$	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$	\$	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$	\$	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$44,555,757	\$45,938,729	\$44,555,757
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$430,865	\$1,252,847	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$44,124,892	\$45,215,645	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$44,124,892	\$44,685,882	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$529,763	
Administrative Component	\$4,595,703	\$5,051,086	\$4,851,086
Program Component	\$42,650,128	\$45,193,135	\$44,010,163
Capital Component	\$4,414,328	\$5,577,497	\$5,577,497

\* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2022-23 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

Reductions in administrative expenditures, public relations, teaching positions and staff, professional development, equipment, and overtime.

\*\* List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)

Description	Amount
	\$
	\$
	\$

\*NOTE TO SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS OFFICIALS: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to: [emscmgts@nysed.gov](mailto:emscmgts@nysed.gov)

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings<sup>1</sup>

\$1,708

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2022-23 by the qualified voters of the Hastings on Hudson school district, Westchester County, New York, will be held at Hastings High School in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Hastings High School Cochran Gym, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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



Hastings-on-Hudson  
Union Free School District  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
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## VOTER INFORMATION

Tuesday , May 17  
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Cochran Gymnasium, HHS

### Absentee Ballots

In order to vote, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States.
- 18 years old as of May 17, 2022.
- A resident of the District for 30 days prior to May 17, 2022.
- Previously registered or have voted in either a School or General Election in the last four (4) calendar years, or on April 20 or May 11, 2022, in the high school lobby.

To request an absentee ballot please contact the District Clerk, Melissa DeLaBarrera at 914-478-6402 or email [delabarreram@hohschools.org](mailto:delabarreram@hohschools.org).

Absentee ballots must be returned to the District Clerk no later than 5:00 PM on May 17, 2022.

**Si quiere una traducción  
en español de este boletín,  
por favor llame al  
914-478-6402**

## NYS STAR PROGRAM

The New York State School Tax Relief Program (STAR) provides homeowners with two types of exemptions that reduce their school tax bills. The Basic STAR exemption is available for owner-occupied primary residences for those with incomes below \$500,000 for STAR credit (\$250,000 or less for the STAR exemption). An Enhanced STAR exemption is available for those 65 or older, with incomes of \$90,550 for 2021 benefits, or \$88,050 or less for 2020. Annual applications are required for the Enhanced STAR. A taxpayer who is eligible for the Enhanced STAR program may designate an adult third-party to receive an annual notice from the Town of Greenburgh regarding the filing deadline. For some taxpayers this credit will be received as part of the state tax return.

Forms can be found online at [www.tax.ny.gov/forms/orpts/star.htm](http://www.tax.ny.gov/forms/orpts/star.htm) or by calling the Assessor's Office at (914) 993-1520.

For Village homeowners, the 2021-2022 Basic and Enhanced STAR exemptions should be about \$1,708 and \$3,973 respectively.