

SOUNDINGS

Hendrick Hudson School District

2012-2013 BUDGET EDITION

Proposed Budget Meets NYS Tax Cap

School budget reflects difficult decisions but preserves core academic programs.

On Tuesday May 15, 2012, district residents will go to the polls to vote on the Hendrick Hudson School District's \$70,603,251 spending plan for the 2012-13 school year. This will be the first time voters will see a budget under the New York State Tax Cap guidelines.

Under the new law, school districts will need to limit their tax levy increase to about 2%, through a complicated formula taking into account exemptions, debt service, PILOT agreements, and several other factors. The NYS formula applied to Hen Hud resulted in a 1.06% growth in the tax levy.

"The tax cap has presented our school with a number of challenges," remarked Superintendent of Schools Dr. Daniel McCann. "The increases in health insurance and Teacher Retirement System payments, both of which are mandated expenses, constituted a 1.5% increase in the budget alone."

To meet the cap, district officials needed to identify over \$3 million in savings. After six consecutive years of reductions, district officials knew this would be the most difficult year yet to find savings. This is the single greatest year-to-year reduction the district had in this same time period. After going through the line by line budget, the administration identified just over \$390,000 in "non-staff" related reductions. These savings involve decreased overtime allowances, reduced funding for professional development, and a reduction in substitute teacher pay. Additional savings were also identified through the elimination of select co-curricular activities. These cost savings were helpful, but fell far short of the \$3 million target needed to meet the tax cap.

With salaries and benefits comprising over 70% of the budget, it is difficult to achieve the savings necessary to meet the tax cap without effecting staffing. As a result, administrators reviewed staffing needs and identified ways to reduce staff that would have a minimal impact on classroom instruction. The proposed reductions were presented in two levels.

Continued on page 2

Budget Summary

2012-2013 Proposed Budget

\$70,603,251

2011-12 Approved Budget

\$69,880,000

% Change in Budget

1.03%

Tax Levy
\$40,634,694

Tax Levy Increase
1.06%

Estimated Tax Rate Increase/(Decrease)

Cortlandt
1.45%

Peekskill
(1.93%)

**School Budget
Roof Bond
& Bus Proposition
VOTE TUESDAY,
MAY 15th**

**Frank G. Lindsey School
Montrose, NY 7 a.m.-9 p.m.**



Bus Proposition also on Ballot

Each year as part of the annual budget vote, the Hendrick Hudson School District has asked voters to approve modest propositions to fund the replacement of aging school busses as part of our district-wide fleet management plan.

This year voters are being asked to authorize a \$217,000 proposition to support the purchase of a wheelchair van, two passenger vans and a Suburban. District officials have opted to forgo the replacement of any full size busses this year.

According to Assistant Superintendent of Business, Enrique Catalan, "We are cognizant

of the financial impact our budgets have on families throughout the community. While we could have asked to purchase replacement busses, we opted for a smaller proposition to fund only the most necessary equipment."

The wheelchair van was a necessary expense this year as transportation for special needs children often requires the use of a wheelchair lift and special vehicle accommodations to secure the wheelchair during the trip to and from the school and home. Currently all four of our wheelchair vehicles are being used and we have no spare. This purchase will ensure our ability to provide our special needs students with appropriate transportation.

The district will also be purchasing two regular 30-passenger vans. Most vans are used to transport special needs students.

Because special needs schools tend to be a much further distance, it is more economical to use a small vehicle vs a 70-passenger bus. Typically, there are fewer students attending special needs schools, therefore, a smaller vehicle is necessary.

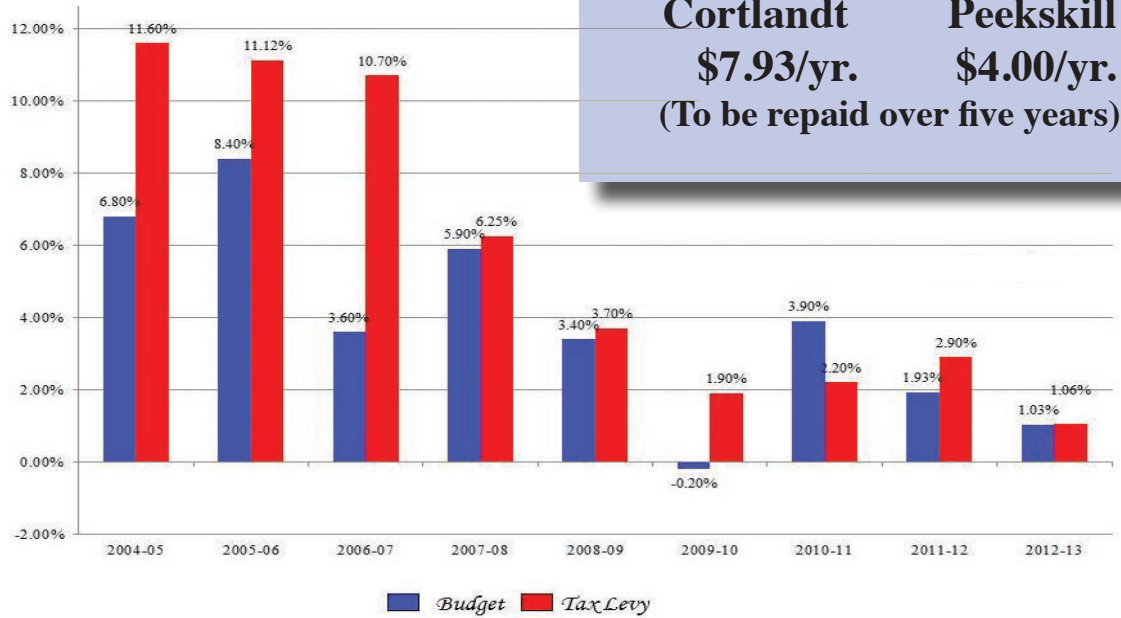
The new Suburban will replace one of our three higher mileage vehicles which will then be given to the buildings and grounds department for snow plowing and transporting maintenance equipment and supplies.

Cost of Bus Proposition to Average Household in Cortlandt Peekskill

\$7.93/yr. \$4.00/yr.

(To be repaid over five years)

Budget and Tax Levy Increase



Continued from page 1

Level 1 reductions consist of 11 teachers. Of the 11 Level 1 reductions, 5.6 full time equivalent (FTE) positions were identified as efficiencies or due to changes in enrollment, while 5.4 FTE would have a programmatic impact. Level 1 also includes 12 teacher aides, and 3 custodians (all of whom are retiring). These reductions will result in a savings of \$2.2 million. Our proposed Level 2 reductions would result in the elimination of another six teaching positions and 1 administrative position. The Level 2 reductions would result in a savings of almost \$768,000.

These reductions are in addition to the over 69 positions reduced since 2006 at a savings of over \$6.5 million. "Each year it has become more and more difficult to identify savings and still preserve our core programs," said McCann. "The reductions in this year's budget are the most significant reductions our program budget has seen yet."

"Over the last 5½ years every effort has been made to keep budget increases at a sustainable level," said McCann. "We have consistently presented budgets with reasonable increases that balanced our student's needs with our community's ability to support our budgets. We intend to come in at the tax cap, while still

maintaining as many of those opportunities and programs that set us apart from other districts in the county and region," concluded McCann.

The positions identified in Level 2 will be saved should the district's teachers, represented by the HHEA, take a 0% increase for the 2012-13 school year. This concession would allow the district to save approximately \$885,000 and would result in the full restoration of all Level 2 positions. Superintendent of Schools Dr. McCann has also indicated that he would recommend the restoration of some additional positions contained in the Level 1 reductions should a settlement be reached.



New Roofs For B-V and High School on Ballot

In December 2011, our community voted on a proposed bond referendum that would have enhanced our science and performing arts facilities, upgraded our athletic fields, and replaced aging roofs at both Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School and the High School. Although the bond was defeated, there are a number of critical infrastructure issues that still require attention.

Efforts to repair leaks in sections of the roof at B-V and the High School gymnasium have been unsuccessful. Water continues to enter sections of the buildings.

To address this issue, we are asking the community to authorize \$500,000 to be used for the immediate replacement of sections of roof at

both B-V and the High School gymnasium. This is a critical project that requires our immediate attention. By authorizing this bond in May, the work will be completed during the summer and will have a minimal, if any, impact on our students. 10% of this project is eligible for NYS aid.

District officials are also returning to the taxpayers approximately \$666,000 of left over funds from the 2008 \$4.6 million bond (doors, playgrounds, and bathrooms). The district will use these funds to repay the original debt.

Cost of Bond Proposition to Average Household in Cortlandt Peekskill

\$1.23/yr.	\$.62/yr.
(To be repaid over 10 years)	

Hen Hud: A Place of Learning and Excellence A message from Dr. McCann, Superintendent of Schools



Next month will mark my sixth year here at Hen Hud and my final month as Superintendent of Schools. As I reflect back on the many successes we have shared over the last six years, I am hopeful for the future and gratified with the progress we have made and the school system we have created that places a premium on student achievement.

We have done much together since 2006. We have overcome challenges, shared success and unfortunately some sorrow as well. Never once though did we retreat

from our shared mission of maximizing student potential.

The success we realized would not have been possible without the dedication of the Board of Education, administration, faculty, staff, students and their families. In a time of significant fiscal challenges, we made great strides in academic programs and performance. The addition of Advanced Placement and college level courses at the high school, as well as a variety of innovative and engaging courses in the arts, provide our students with the opportunity to pursue their unique interests in a challenging and engaging environment.

Our choral and theatre programs are outstanding and coursework in science research, engineering and biomedical studies has given our High School and students the recognition they so strongly deserve.

In addition, our middle school and three elementary schools have performed admirably. BMMS has engaged the tenets of middle level education, raised academic standards, and provided children with a warm and supportive environment. For the first time in over twenty years, we have an articulated curriculum in Language Arts and Mathematics in our elementary schools. There have been many peaks and a few valleys in performance, but we have shown steady growth

in our academic programs and their impact on student learning. We have worked hard this past year to ensure stronger, more consistent instruction in every classroom.

As I prepare to start a new phase of my life, I am hopeful for Hen Hud and the state of public education. There are many difficult decisions that will need to be made that will be tempered by the success of our students and a consistent desire to raise expectations and maximize student potential.

This budget reflects some of the challenges we have faced between providing opportunity for our students and containing costs. While no one is happy to place a price tag on education, it has become an inevitable reality as we all learn to do more with less. For a long time we have talked about maximizing potential and now we must learn to better maximize our dollars to provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number.

This task is not always easy. But it is nonetheless our mission moving forward. The 2012-2013 budget is the leanest budget presented since I have been here. It reflects the desires of our community while protecting those programs and advancements we have created that make our district unique.

In closing, I would like to thank the community for your support through my tenure here in Hen Hud. It has not always been an easy road but it has always been interesting. The challenges we have faced, the successes we have shared, have together made us a stronger, more effective school system. I would like to thank each of you for making my time here in Hen Hud both professionally and personally fulfilling and successful. I am grateful for your support and resolve as we tackled the many varied issues facing our schools and students.

With best wishes,

Dr. Daniel McCann,
Superintendent of Schools

B-V Elementary School

SOARing to New Heights

As the new principal of Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School, Joshua Cohen was presented with many opportunities and challenges. His task was clear; increase rigor in math and language arts instruction, work with faculty to enhance B-V's character education program, increase community involvement and, in concert with a goal shared by all the schools, improve the perception of the B-V school.

Ten months later, the B-V community is celebrating wonderful progress; student achievement is on the rise, family involvement is high, and teachers are working collaboratively with students, families and administration to provide the highest quality education to all students.

Instructional Initiatives

Mr. Cohen and the teachers dove into the data this year. In an effort to analyze strengths and weaknesses, they have worked together to review classwork and homework, conduct item-analyses of district assessments, and plan strategies to differentiate instruction.

Research tells us that schools with common expectations are better for kids. When students are taught consistent strategies for math and reading, they are more successful as they progress through the grades. The school community has worked hard to bring this consistency to B-V in many ways: in addition to high expectations for every classroom, the School Wide Math Problem of the Month, and the Reading Buddies programs are examples. Children and families are working together on the same projects, using the same strategies and vocabulary.

B-V staff members stress the importance of building conceptual knowledge. "It is so important for children to not only hear it, but see the concept and touch it to understand it," said Cohen. National Coconut Day, as an example, challenged students and families to enjoy math, make real world connections, and use hands-on tools such as rulers, string and protractors.

To promote a love of literature, B-V initiated a monthly reading buddies program. Children build their reading stamina as they help their buddies understand new vocabulary words, read more complex sentences, and analyze with themes throughout the book. This year, the students have taught one another about African American and women's history, nonfiction, fiction, poetry, mystery and music.

Meeting the Needs of All Children

One of the greatest challenges facing Mr. Cohen, the staff and the families at B-V was the school status as a "School In Need of Improvement (SINI)." To overcome this, Mr. Cohen, along with the staff and parents, developed a number of innovative programs that focus on raising student achievement in all content areas.

When B-V was identified as a "SINI" school, it was in part due to the district's special education population, housed at B-V, not making adequate yearly progress. However, Mr. Cohen understands that, "all students have special needs." With that in mind, he and his staff lengthened the school day for every student, through programs like the After School Academy and Homework Help. Instruction is tailored in these programs to meet the needs of individual children.

In addition, B-V staff members work hard to offer enrichment opportunities to all students. Teachers incorporate enrichment activities into their classroom routine, and a committed group of parents offer lunchtime and afterschool enrichment as well.

Character Education

Enhancing the quality of student life at B-V has taken many forms. Through the Caught SOARing program, students are recognized daily for doing the right thing. A revamped Citizen of the Month program focuses on 8 traits throughout the year. B-V has also adopted bully prevention strategies to help children stand up for themselves and their peers and to solve difficult problems.

Family Involvement

Another key component to student success is family involvement. "We need our families to continue the work we do in the classroom at home so the students have continuous reinforcement of ideas, strategies and concepts," said Mr. Cohen. Between Mr. Cohen's school wide math and reading challenges and support for all families at PTA meetings, parent involvement has increased. B-V is hopping on PTA nights, for both children and parents.

All schools strive to continuously improve. At B-V hard work and teamwork are making a difference. "We have every confidence that we are on the right track to help our students reach their maximum potential," said Cohen. "We have an amazing group of accomplished educators who are devoting themselves to our students and it shows, not only through test scores, but through the enthusiasm and excitement our students demonstrate each day. We promise to continue to find ways to involve parents, motivate students and support teachers," concluded Cohen.



From left to right B-V Principal Josh Cohen, PTA President Lauren Attinelly, 5th grade ICT teacher, Sarakay Eyring, 1st Grade teacher Nupur Pal-Kolisz, 4th grader, Leahonni Culberson, 2nd grader, Rachel Ostrowski, 3rd grader Brian Sanmartin and 4th grader Juan Flores.



What Is the Common Core?

By Dr. Alice Gottlieb



Variations on a new phrase keep appearing in current literature about learning in our schools: the Common Core, or Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Parents may wonder about these new standards and how they will affect their children's lives in our schools.

In the mid 1990s, with talk of greater accountability for both teachers and students, each state wrote its own Learning Standards for each instructional

area. In 2005, New York State adopted "new" Learning Standards, and revised its testing structure to evaluate teaching and learning.

By 2010, educators across the country began to realize that 50 different states with different learning standards was an ineffective way to increase expectations for all learners, and a group of educational leaders came together to write common learning standards for all the states. When New York State adopted the CCLS in 2011, they joined 46 other states in doing so.

So how are the new standards different from the 2005 NYS Learning Standards?

- Rather than focusing on narrow subject areas, the Common Core Learning Standards integrate literacy and math instruction into every content area.
- There are fewer standards, but each one is deeper and richer, and the standards are consistent across the grades. Forming a "staircase of complexity," students are required to apply common concepts with increasing rigor as they move through the grades.
- Literacy means all genres, and there is an increasing emphasis on non-fiction reading and writing as children get older. By high school, at least 60% of the curriculum must be informational text.
- The "dual intensity" of skill acquisition and conceptual understanding underlies the math standards. Teachers must create opportunities for students to participate in "drills" and make use of those skills through extended application of math concepts.

The goal of any educational initiative must be increased student achievement. The Common Core is no exception – as children are exposed to increasingly rigorous material and ideas, their learning will soar.



Schools Make the Grade

A Message from Marion Walsh,

President, Board of Education



On behalf of the Board of Education, I thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of the 2012-2013 school budget proposal. We urge you to exercise your right to vote on Tuesday, May 15th.

Governor Cuomo's tax cap has set unprecedented challenges for our school district. Developing a responsible budget to meet the educational expectations of the District has been unusually difficult. The Board of Education, along with district administrators, worked diligently to meet the challenge. While it is never easy to reduce positions, it was nonetheless necessary again this year, in order to present a budget within the range of the tax cap.

As we confront continuing economic challenges, we must remain optimistic. Our first priority has been to create an improved and supportive school district for our students so that they may excel in our increasingly competitive world.

We seek the support of our community for this budget, which provides world-class opportunities for our students. To begin with, our high school offers 28 college level courses, all of which are available to any student wishing to work hard. Our middle school offers accelerated high school courses, including tenth grade biology, an improved Math curriculum, and an English curriculum that meets students' diverse learning needs and interests. Our elementary schools have raised standards in English and Mathematics. Students are learning to read earlier, are increasing their problem solving and comprehension skills, and are developing 21st Century Learning Skills such as working creatively and collaboratively, and using available technology for a multitude of reasons. Of course, we also offer a full array of special education programs and courses and are endeavoring to provide even more support for our students. Our Board is very proud that in September 2011 a number of students returned to Hendrick Hudson from out-of-district placements to be part of new special education programs which have been very successful.

Finally, we are proud that our budget preserves our rich music and arts programs as well as our strong extracurricular and sports programs. These programs are vital for the full development of our students.

The proposed budget reflects hours of careful review and thoughtful deliberations. The Board of Education has set high goals for our administration to improve our District's academic performance and rigor, with a transparent and responsible budget. Support of our budget equates to optimism for the future and support for our students.

Sincerely,

Marion Walsh

Student Spotlight

The educational plan for the Hendrick Hudson School District is designed to maximize the potential of each of our students. Here is just a small example of what Hen Hud students do to make our community proud, and our school a bold and innovative place of learning.



Sara Tabio, Freshman



This is Sara's first time attending public school. She transferred to Hen Hud after eight years of private school in Manhattan.

Since coming to Hen Hud, Sara has taken full advantage of the myriad of opportunities available to her. From taking advanced placement and honors classes to becoming involved with SEED, STAR and the school literacy magazine, Sara is not only adjusting to her new school but embracing all it has to offer.

Having been a bullied student in her previous school, Sara has been recruited by her guidance counselor, Ms. Cardenas, to speak to other students about the perils of bullying and the effects it has on people.

Ian Skalky, Senior



Ian is a bright and creative senior who will be attending Emerson College in Massachusetts this fall.

Ian has been an enthusiastic member of several co-curricular activities, however, his passion is film and all aspects of film making. This past summer he participated in a film experience at Emerson College where he could hone his skills.

This year Ian is President of the high school's Film Club. He has tirelessly worked these past years on the Hendrick Hudson Film Festival and has contributed greatly to its success. No job is too big or too small for Ian to do to ensure the festival's success.

Jacob Buckner, Sophomore



Jacob has long demonstrated an interest in the arts. As a sophomore at Hen Hud, he is taking full advantage of the many art classes available at the High School. He plans to pursue his passion at the Tech Center in the fall as

part of the Advertising Art and Digital Design Program.

Jacob hopes to use the skills he learned through the art programs and his natural talent to pursue a career as an art historian or an art teacher.

Outside the classroom, Jacob is active in the Hen Hud School community. From participating in the Film Club, Art Honor Society, Speech and Debate and the Gay, Straight Alliance, Jacob is a friendly and familiar face throughout the High School.

Jacob also has played on the Hen Hud tennis team since 7th grade.

2012-2013 Budget Supports

**Exemplary Programs in
Academics, Arts & Athletics**

**Preserves
Programs & Activities**

Supports Innovation

NYS Tax Cap Forces Difficult Choices in 2012-13 Budget

Last June, Governor Cuomo signed into law the most comprehensive and substantial property tax reform law in New York State history and arguably one of the toughest in the nation. The law, aimed at keeping property taxes low, caps municipal spending to 2% over the prior year. Any effort to exceed the state mandated cap needs to pass by a supermajority of voters.

While the law is structured to provide a 2% cap, the actual cap is based on a complex formula taking into account factors such as PILOT agreements and debt service. This formula capped the district tax levy at \$40,634,694, which represents just a 1.03% increase, or \$427,112, over the 2011-12 tax levy.

The tax cap presented the district with the difficult choice between exceeding the tax cap to maintain programs and positions or meeting the cap and as a result identifying \$3,001,000 in cuts from the 2011-12 rollover budget.

After much deliberation, the Board of Education together with district administrators elected to meet the tax cap, citing concerns over our ability to pass a budget with a supermajority.

Over the last six years, officials have reduced expenses through identifying efficiencies, conserving resources and as a last resort reducing staff. Since 2006, district officials have reduced almost 70 positions resulting in over \$6 million in savings. Today, our administrative budget as a percent of the full budget is the smallest it has been in recent memory, accounting for 6% of our spending.

Many of the reductions in previous years were kept away from core programs and classrooms. This was not possible this year. The reductions recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and adopted by the Board of Education were difficult and will have an impact on our classrooms and our students.

While these choices were difficult, the positions were identified because they will have the least impact on classrooms and student achievement. The individuals who hold these positions are dedicated, consummate professionals who have inspired our students and made student achievement the central focus of their work here in Hen Hud.

To meet the tax cap district officials have recommended the following staffing reductions for the 2012-13 school year at two levels. Level 1 reduces 26 positions from the budget, saving about \$2.2 million dollars. Despite the size of the Level 1 reductions, another \$768,000 in savings was needed to meet the tax cap. These savings are reflected in our Level 2 reductions which include an additional seven positions.

The district is currently in negotiations with the HHEA (teachers' union) and officials are hopeful that a resolution can and will be reached prior to the new fiscal year starting on July 1st.



Furnace Woods 4th Grade Teacher Heather Angelo received the Extra-Mile Award at the April 24, Board of Education meeting. Pictured from left to right are Trustee Charles Thompson, Nick Angelo, Guiliana Angelo and Heather Angelo. Congratulations!

Registration

To vote in the Hendrick Hudson School election, you must be registered. If you are registered to vote in the general election and have voted within the last four years, you are also registered to vote in the school election. If you wish to register for only the school election, you may register on Thursday, May 10, 2012 with the District Clerk at 61 Trolley Road, Montrose, between 8:30 and 4:30. If you are not sure if you are registered, please call Rosanne Squillante at (914) 257-5112.

Qualifications to Vote

- A person must be a citizen of the United States
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Be registered to vote in the school district elections and
- Be a resident of the district for at least 30 days preceding the vote.

Absentee Ballots

Applications for absentee ballots are available now for registered voters who will not be able to vote in person on May 15, 2012. You may apply in person at the School District Administration Building for an application. May 8th is the deadline for absentee ballot applications if it is to be mailed to the voter. May 14th is the deadline for absentee ballot applications if the ballot is to be picked up by the voter. All absentee ballots must be returned to the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 15th. For further information, contact Rosanne Squillante, District Clerk at the District Office, 61 Trolley Road, Montrose, NY 10548 or call (914) 257-5112.

Voter Information



Oz for Puppets

Jan Aiello and her high school Accelerated Art and Ceramics students have prepared a thirty-minute rendition of Frank L. Baum's *Wizard of Oz*—for puppets. The puppets are 3' tall marionettes of all the characters including Toto and a flying monkey. They were created by carving clay heads for different characters of the story. Plaster gauze covered the clay and was painted, decorated, and wired onto a fabric and wood body.



How did it all start? Last summer, Jill Davis, the Hen Hud Free Library Director, and Jan Aiello, were imagining a project that would involve students, the community and the visual arts curriculum at the high school. The focus was an event capping the "Community Read" literacy initiative in the spring of 2012. The chosen book was *The Wizard of Oz*.

For this production, Jan Aiello wrote a script and created two scenes in stop motion animation that resemble classic Indonesian black shadow puppet stories. Her husband, Mike Aiello, devoted himself to the sound engineering of the thirty-minute long radio play. Six students read vocal parts into a digital recorder with the artistry of trained voice actors. Once the sound effects were added—roaring lions, flying monkey screams, and the terrifying sound of a tornado siren and winds—the audio version was complete. Meanwhile, students dressed the puppets and painted scenery and props.

Everyone played a part in bringing about the many performances in different buildings, and thanks must go to the administrators, custodians and technical support Tim McKeon. Mr. McKeon trained students to run the projector, lights and sound for the performances, and is creating a DVD of the show.

On stage, there was an energetic team effort, with students relieving each other of puppet duties and stage crewing tasks as arms got weary, or people needed help untangling strings. The laughing and clapping audience of attentive young children was all the reward the performers needed. There were smiles all around.

Most of the Hen Hud students involved in this adventure are also going to see the critically acclaimed Lincoln Center production of *War Horse* in April, a trip sponsored by the Hendrick Hudson Community Education Foundation. The class has been reading the Michael Morpurgo book aloud in preparation for the trip. This not only completes a truly rounded literacy program for these students, but allows them to give back to the community in a meaningful and creative way through performance and the visual arts.

The community is cordially invited to the May 20th performance at the Hendrick Hudson Free Library at 2 p.m.

See You in Oz!

"There's No Place Like Hen Hud..."

Hen Hud Community to Take Part in Community Read

It was last March, when Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Personnel Dr. Alice Gottlieb first mentioned the idea of a community read to Hendrick Hudson Free Library Director Jill Davis. "I thought it would be a great way to get our students and community excited about reading," said Gottlieb of the meeting. Davis jumped at the challenge, and with her staff at the library brainstormed activities and texts appropriate for a community read.

L. Frank Baum's classic novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* quickly emerged as the novel of choice for the Hen Hud community read. According to Davis, "Oz" has all the trappings of a perfect community read novel. "The story is a timeless piece that many of us remember reading or watching as children and then again with our own children." "It also helped that there are so many different versions of the novel, making it accessible to students at all age levels," said Gottlieb.

"Oz" also holds a special place in the hearts and minds of many residents in the area, as Baum spent several years at the Peekskill Military Academy and it is believed that he based portions of the novel on this area.

Most students in the district have received a version of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. (Through grants from Entergy and the HHCEF). The HHFL has acquired copies of the story for residents throughout the community to borrow to take part in the community read, including bilingual versions for the growing ELL population.

"It's exciting to see the enthusiasm that has developed throughout the community, and the variety of ideas and programming it is generating," said Davis. "I can't wait to hear the chatter about it in the halls of our schools," remarked Gottlieb.

Beginning March 14, the Hendrick Hudson Free Library began delivering books to the schools so students could begin reading. By the end of March, students had their own copy of a version of "Oz" and the community read will be underway.

The community read will culminate the week of May 14-21, with a number of events at the Hendrick Hudson Free Library. From book discussions to a themed costume party to a historical talk about the local connection to Oz with historian John Curran, there is a way for everyone to be a part of the community read.





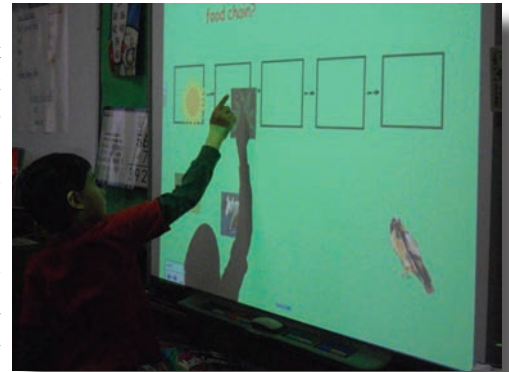
“Hoops for Heart” at Furnace Woods School

In March, Furnace Woods Elementary School students participated in their annual “Hoops for Heart” event organized by their physical education teacher, Chris Wickel. During their physical education classes, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade students highlighted their basketball prowess and earned donations from family and friends for the American Heart Association. This year, the event raised \$2,010 dollars. Students who raised a significant amount of funds earned prizes for their tremendous efforts including “Hoops for Heart” t-shirts and water bottles. Kudos to the students, families, and FWS staff contributing to this annual effort and showing support for the cause. Way to go!



FGL Celebrates Earth Day

Each April we are reminded that the precious planet we live on needs to be taken care of. We take time on April 22 each year to celebrate Earth Day and the importance of taking steps to ensure a cleaner Earth and environment.



Students from Ms. Bitondo’s and Mrs. Ryan’s class at Frank G. Lindsey conducted a cooperative science lesson about the environment and food chains. Mrs. Ryan’s class just finished a science unit studying different types of energy (light, heat, sound, magnets and wind) and Ms. Bitondo’s class is studying food chains/ecosystems in the environment. The objective for this lesson was for the two classes to learn about food chains and how living things all need each other.

First, Ms. Bitondo led a lesson on the smart board using an interactive program called Vizzle. This provided the students with the vocabulary and background knowledge of a food chain. They discussed producers, consumers and decomposers. In small groups, students took turns reading a booklet about food chains prepared by the teachers. A “SMART Exchange” lesson followed and the students made their own food chains on the smart board.

The end of the lesson was an exciting “Food Chain Game” where the students placed pictures in the correct order on the food chain. If the order was correct, the food chain came to life in animation and they watched the action unfold before their eyes!

Students talked about how the animals in the food chain depend on the environment to survive. They also talked about how the weather, fire and cutting down trees can change the food chain. They realized that all living things depend on the same food sources.

Senior Partner Day at Blue Mountain Middle School

Students at Blue Mountain Middle School had a wonderful time with the Seniors from Springvale and other parts of our district community as part of our Partners Club. The seniors came to enjoy a typical day in the life of a middle school student, they attended classes and had lunch with their student partner.

The Partners Club is run by Logan Krause and Donna Miller, who with hard work made the day a success. Mrs. Simon, a retired Hen Hud teacher, said, “We make each other feel good and I have a new appreciation for middle school age students.”





Hen Hud & Senator Ball Honor Local Veterans

On Tuesday, February 28, Senator Greg Ball (R, C – Patterson) presented his traveling Veterans' Wall of Fame at Hendrick Hudson High School with some local veterans whose own faces grace this wall of tribute.

"These 27 Veterans were hand-picked to be on this wall because they chose a path of courage, honor, integrity and bravery," Senator Ball said. "Their path is one that helped shape America as we know it, protecting our way of life and liberty."

Retired Sergeant Squad Leader Frank L. Campanaro from Cortlandt stood alongside Senator Ball to help him cut the yellow ribbon and unveil the wall.

"Senator Ball did a good job in doing this," Campanaro said. "The kids need to know what's going on— we can't let this die out. I'm a WWII Veteran and I'm 88 years old. Everyone is close to 90 that was in the second World War and they're dying, quite a few of them every day, so we have got to get all the information we can now."

Eugene Parrotta from Croton-on-Hudson is another local veteran on the wall, and he is also the chairman of Senator Ball's Veterans Advisory Council. For Parrotta, the meaning behind this wall runs deep.

"Freedom and liberty are the title and deed of the soil we stand on. The price of that freedom and liberty is very expensive. The men on this wall have all paid that price," Parrotta said. "I would like to thank Senator Ball for honoring us all with such great dignity and respect. God Bless Senator Ball, everyone here today, and The United States of America."

Hendrick Hudson High School Principal James Mackin said his students are always captivated when veterans come into the school to speak, so he expects the students will thoroughly enjoy having the wall at the school.

"I think it's a great opportunity for students to understand what veterans have sacrificed," Mackin said. "It's a good way for them to connect with the history in the area."



B-V Students Share Letters with Soldiers in Afghanistan

During the 2010-11 school year, students in Mrs. Eyring and Mrs. Holzman's fourth grade class wrote letters to soldiers in Afghanistan. These letters were sent to Captain Robert Yarrish, a Navy doctor who went to Afghanistan in June and planned to return in December.



The children's letters were sent in June of 2011, at the end of the school year; Captain Yarrish received the letters and shared them with other soldiers (mostly doctors, nurses and medical personnel). Many students got return letters in November and December and were excited to be able to share their new experiences in 5th grade with "their" soldier. The students who received letters wrote back to "their" soldier, and those who did not receive a letter back wrote another letter addressed to any soldier.

This was a great learning experience. The improvement in writing was clear in the second letter; students were writing more complex and interesting sentences and were more organized with their thoughts and paragraphs. They also wrote more the second time around, especially if they were returning a letter. Students learned that you change your writing for different audiences; a general soldier letter is very different than a response to a specific soldier who has written to you. This wasn't just an assignment for school, but a writing response to a real life situation.

Last week, Captain Yarrish and his wife visited Mrs. Eyring and Mrs. Holzman's fifth grade class – most of whom had looped up with them from fourth grade. He came in his dress uniform, asked the kids questions, answered their questions, and shared his medals, medallions and other special items. He then showed a PowerPoint presentation he had created documenting his preparation in boot camp, his trip over to Afghanistan, some of the vehicles and weapons, the medical compound, the hospital and his trip back home. Throughout his presentation, he made sure that the students made connections to what he was showing them. He also made it clear that the letters were very special and important to the members of the armed forces overseas.

Since his visit, the students have been working on drawing pictures and writing notes to send to their soldiers, sharing their visit with Captain Yarrish. Although only a couple of letters have trickled in replying to the letters sent in December, the students have become excited about sending notes and letters more frequently rather than waiting for an answer before writing again.

Frequently Asked Questions

What went into developing this year's budget?

This year's budget comes after months of work by both our school administration and our central office staff starting back in November. It also reflects the Board of Education's thoughtful deliberations after carefully listening to and considering the public's comments from Board meetings and around town.

In developing this year's budget we focused on several core goals:

- Provide the community with an affordable, sustainable budget
- Keep any reductions as far from core academic program as possible
- Continue cost effective maintenance of facilities
- Continue focus on achieving efficiency
- Work with Board as representatives of the community to establish a target tax rate.

Where does the money come from?

As a public school in New York State, we receive our funding from a variety of sources, some large and some small, but each an important piece of the "funding pie." Due to the relative wealth of our community, a vast majority of the budget comes from the local tax levy. This is about \$40 million (57.6% of total revenue). The next largest source of funding come through PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreements with entities such as Entergy, LaFarge and RESCO. This accounts for over \$21.3 million dollars (30.6%) in revenue. Those two sources account for nearly 88% of our revenues. The other 12% comes from about \$4.7 million in state aid, (6.1%) other revenue sources such as interest income, rentals and fees total \$1.5 million (2%). Due to additional revenue, expense control and careful money management the district is expecting to push forward \$530,000 from this year's budget and use \$600,000 from fund balance to reduce the tax levy. The district will take these savings to reduce the tax levy and keep local taxes at a stable and low rate.

Where does the money go?

The school budget can be broken down into three categories, Administrative, Capital and Program. The Administrative portion (6%), which is the smallest part of our budget, covers expenses such as district and school

administrators and their support staff, legal fees and our public relations program. The Capital portion (13%) contains the funds necessary to run our schools including energy, maintenance, facilities and debt service. The Program portion (81%) of our budget is the largest and contains the costs associated with educating our students including teacher salaries and instructional support services.

What has the district done to curb spending up until now?

District officials have reduced spending in this through finding greater efficiencies, cost-effective maintenance of facilities and finally through staff reductions. Since 2008, the Hendrick Hudson School District has reduced over \$9.5 million in staff and expenses from the budget.



Will there be any reductions in staff this year?

In these times of fiscal austerity, staff reductions have become necessary across all industries, and education is no different. The proposed budget calls for the reduction of 33 positions including 17 teaching positions and 12 teacher aides. It also eliminates 1 administrative position and three custodians.

What happens if the budget fails?

In the event that the recommended budget fails to meet voter approval on May 15, the district has three options to choose from. The first option would be to put the same budget up for a vote a second time and hope for a different outcome. The second option would involve the school board making additional reductions to the budget that could include additional staff and program cuts. If the budget fails to gain enough support the second time, the district will be forced to adopt a contingent budget. The third option would be to immediately adopt a contingent budget.

What does a contingent budget mean?

A contingent budget would require the district to reduce approximately \$400,000 from the proposed budget.

With all the cuts you have mentioned why are taxes still going up?

In developing this year's budget, administrators had to contend with rising teacher retirement costs and health insurance, higher energy prices, contractual obligations and inflation.

Will there be anything else on the ballot?

Yes. When voters enter the voting booth they will see a Proposition to purchase new school buses for the Hendrick Hudson School District. Voters will also be asked to select two people to serve on the Hendrick Hudson School District Board of Education. Each term is a full three year term.

Additionally, voters will see the Hendrick Hudson Free Library budget. We share the ballot with the library to reduce the costs of holding separate budget votes.

Voters will also be asked to authorize \$500,000 to replace roofs at B-V Elementary School and Hendrick Hudson High School.





Hendrick Hudson Mission Statement

The mission of the Hendrick Hudson School District, a dynamic, innovative, and supportive educational community, is to ensure each student is an engaged, passionate learner who achieves his or her maximum potential and contributes to society.

This is accomplished in a system characterized by:

- A culture of the highest expectations for all;
- A rigorous, articulated curriculum;
- Diverse, effective instructional strategies and resources;
- An educational environment that is challenging, creative, exploratory, accessible, and nurturing; and
- A fully engaged, supportive community.

Visit us on the web at
www.henhudschools.org
for the latest news and information

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