

SOUNDINGS

Hendrick Hudson School District

2011-2012 BUDGET EDITION

Proposed Budget Maintains Programs & Limits Costs

Academic Programs, Class sizes and Extracurriculars maintained

On Tuesday May 17, 2011, district residents will be asked to vote on a \$69,880,000 spending plan. While school officials were faced with many tough choices during the budget development process, the proposed spending plan continues to preserve class size, maintain academic programs, and most importantly, preserve our core mission to “maximize student potential.”

The \$69.88 million proposed budget is a 1.93% increase over the 2010-2011 adopted budget.

As has been the case for the last several years, the budget development process presented a number of unique challenges for district officials. From decreases in state aid to soaring retirement and health care costs, district officials were once again challenged to do more with less.

Hendrick Hudson School officials have been proactive in their budget preparations. In 2006-07 school officials began to formulate a long-term financial strategy that would position the school district on a solid economic path. The Administration began to review expenditures and staffing needs to improve efficiencies and reduce costs. Since their review began in 2006, the Hendrick Hudson School District has reduced over \$6.5 million in staff and expenses from the budget—resulting in the reduction of the equivalent of 68 full-time (FTE) staff members.

“Reducing staff is always difficult. Fortunately, over half of the positions were eliminated through attrition,” remarked Dr. McCann. “In these times of fiscal austerity it has become increasingly necessary to review and revise staffing plans for our buildings and programs,” he concluded. The proposed budget calls for the reduction of 8.6 teaching positions and 10 teacher aides. It also proposes to re-categorize 5 teacher aides as teaching assistants, and provides for the funding of 3 part-time monitors to ensure adequate supervision and student safety during lunch hours. Additionally, district officials will not replace a secretary at the district office and have reduced a full time Transportation Director position to a .3 FTE. Together, these staffing modifications will save our taxpayers just over \$1 million.

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Budget Summary

2011-2012 Proposed Budget
\$69,880,000

2009-10 Approved Budget
\$68,560,000

% Change in Budget
1.93%

Tax Levy	Tax Levy Increase
\$40,207,581	2.90%

Tax Rate Increase (Est.)	
Cortlandt	Peekskill
3.12 to 3.23%	-0.70 to -0.59%

School Budget & Bus Proposition VOTE TUESDAY, MAY 17

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



Bus Proposition also on Ballot

The Hendrick Hudson School District is also seeking voter authorization on May 17, 2011 to replace six school buses that are nearing the end of their useful life. The District is recommending the purchase in accordance with their fleet management plan which recommends replacing approximately 10% of the fleet each year.

Under the district's Fleet Management Plan, busses are routinely replaced before the absolute end of their useful life. On average, the busses being replaced this year are 13.5 years old, which is well above the recommended industry average of 10 years.

The District's makes every effort to be proactive when it comes to the maintenance, up keep and replacement of district vehicles. The buses in question all have an average of over 165,500 miles. By following the recommended fleet management plan, the district avoids costly spikes in maintenance

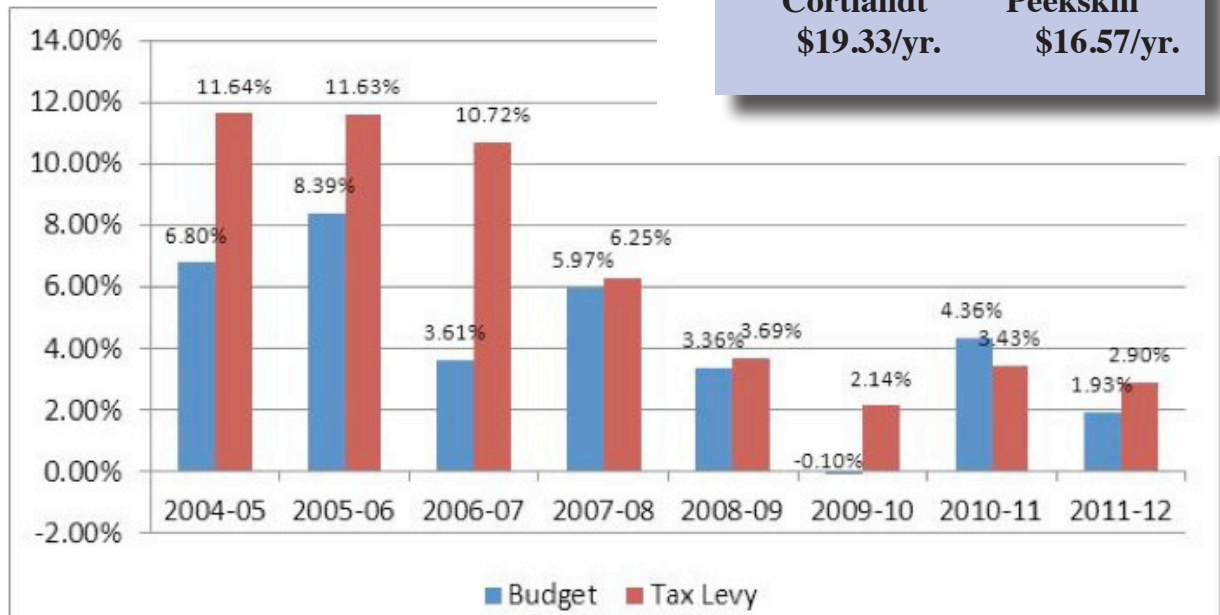
and replacement costs by planning ahead and replacing vehicles before they become too costly to maintain and become less reliable or are no longer safe.

The total cost of this year's planned replacements is \$561,000.

Cost of Bus Proposition to Tax Payer Per Year
(Five Year Bond Anticipation Note)

Cortlandt	Peekskill
\$19.33/yr.	\$16.57/yr.

Budget and Tax Levy Increase



Continued from page 1

Despite these difficult decisions, the district has been able to maintain class sizes in ALL academic areas and continues to fund all of our athletic teams and student activities. Additionally, this budget reflect ours desire to return more special education students to their home schools. As a result, this budget also provides for an additional two special education teachers and an additional speech & language therapist.

Recognizing the financial reality the district faced during this budget process, Dr. McCann along with Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Personnel, Dr. Alice Gottlieb, Assistant Superintendent for Business Enrique Catalan, Director of Facilities, Operations and Maintenance Anthony Merlini and Food Service Director Clare Carey took a pay freeze for the 2011-12 school year. "As we face these tough budget and economic times,

it is the right thing to do. If we ask our staff to do more with less we should follow suit," added McCann.

Following the lead of District Administrators, the Hendrick Hudson School District Administrators Association voted to forgo their contractual raises for the 2011-12 school year as well. This action coupled with the reduction of our transportation director will save over \$200,000 in this year's budget.

Together, these steps have helped to preserve jobs, maintain programs and continue to ensure that the district is able to provide the high quality education program that our community and students deserve.

Despite significant reductions in staff and operation costs, the district has continued to move forward. This was accomplished through creating efficiencies and reallocating funds to programs with the greatest impact on student achievement. Overall academic performance has improved significantly.

Based on current information, district officials project the budget will result in a 2.90% increase in the tax levy which translates to a tax rate increase of between 3.12% to 3.23% for the Town of Cortlandt and -0.7% to -0.59% for Peekskill. For an average house with an assessed value in Cortlandt of \$7,700 the increase would be \$220 in 2011 -2012 school year; in Peekskill a house with an average assessed value of \$7,700, the homeowner will see a \$16 reduction in 2011 - 2012.



New College Level Courses in Engineering and Biomedical Science at HHHS

Walk into Everton Henriques' 2nd period class and instead of finding a whiteboard filled with formulas and equations you find a class full of eager students engrossed on their computer screens. Upon a closer look, you see that each student is designing, piece by piece, a common household gadget. Maybe it was that old remote control to the TV you had way back when. Or perhaps it was that old stapler that's been on top of the desk forever. Either way, students are learning first hand the complexities of building something by first taking it apart. That's what *Project Lead the Way (PLTW)* is all about.



Project Lead the Way is a program of study affiliated with the Rochester Institute of Technology. The program originated in Hen Hud as a result of our Strategic Plan 2010-2016 strategy *identify exemplary and innovative programs and facilities in Science for the HHS*. "We visited the best schools in the region and are working to model our programs to the standards established by schools of the caliber of the Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant High School and the Bergen Academy," remarked Dr. Mcann.

Mr. Henriques, a former engineer, came to Hen Hud just last year to teach chemistry and *PLTW*. Today along with Chemistry he teaches engineering classes through *Project Lead the Way*. "It's been an amazing experience. To be able to take my engineering background and share it with these kids is incredible," remarked Henriques.

In the first year, *PLTW* offers a course in *Introduction to Engineering & Design*. Over the next 4 years, additional classes will be phased in so that this year's freshman could have taken four or more "rigorous, relevant, reality based courses" in engineering.

As more students learn about the program, the more popular it seems to get. Next year's schedule includes additional sections of this popular class.



According to Connor Briggi. "Ever since I was small I wanted to build things. This program is going to give me a leg up when I apply to Annapolis next year," he said.

From experimenting with old radios to building with legos, these students each

possess a desire to explore and understand the inner workings of the world around them. "I always tinkered with things and tried to figure out how to make them work better. I've had a natural curiosity to see how things work," said 10th grader Joe Caputo.

And the engineering classes are just the beginning. This fall, Hen Hud will be the first high school in Westchester County to offer the Biomedical sequence through *Project Lead the Way*.

Under the direction of Jeanine Hall, the Biomedical sequence will expose students to concepts of human medicine and be introduced to bioinformatics, including mapping and analyzing DNA.

Like the engineering program, the Biomedical program is going to be very hands-on. "I probably lecture four or five times a year. Most of the class is hands-on and exciting." From dissecting a human heart to understanding what it takes to create life-saving artificial insulin the students will be exposed to college level concepts and lab exercises.

Together, the Engineering and Biomedical Medical sequences from *Project Lead the Way* represent two innovative programs that inspire and challenge our students. Through its focus on *STEM* (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) *PLTW* is preparing our students for the challenges of the 21st century. Students will enter college with knowledge of concepts and ideas that will enable them to be leaders amongst their peers on the latest trends in both Biomedical science and Engineering.

"The opportunities presented by this program are endless. From college admissions to career choice, *PLTW* will help our students stand out amongst their peers from not only across Westchester but the Hudson Valley and through out New York," said Principal James Mackin.



Registration Voter Information

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 12, 2011 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 in able to vote in person on May 17, 2011. You may apply in person at the School District Administration Building for an application. May 10th is the deadline for absentee ballot applications if it is to be mailed to the voter. May 16, 2011 is 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 17th. For further information, contact Rosanne Squillante, District Clerk at the District Office, 61 Trolley Road, Montrose, NY 10548 or call (914) 257-5112.



Building for the Future

A message from Dr. McCann, Superintendent of Schools



The last twelve months have proved to be a remarkable time for the Hendrick Hudson School District. From rigorous course work to programs to support our special needs students at our High School, to our schools exceptional performance on the ERB's, our school district is making the necessary academic progress to be true to our mission of "maximizing student potential."

Since our last budget vote, we have striven to find savings through out our district, while at the same time maintaining our academic programs and class sizes and expanding on successful programs.

Through the hard work of our District leadership and Board of Education, we have developed a budget that promotes academic growth and innovation while maintaining a fiscally conservative bottom line.

I am pleased that we have been able to return some of our special needs students to the district thanks in part to the efforts of the Special Education PTA. Not only is this the best environment for those students, but we were able to realize a significant costs savings by doing so.

Our budget was also helped considerably through our district administrative unit, voting to forgo their contractual raises for the 2011-12 school year.

This type of proactive leadership through out our district has enabled

us to maintain our high standards and rigorous academic program.

This budget also provides for the expansion of *PLTW* in our High School to include a Biomedical program that will expose our students to college level curricula while preparing them for post-secondary opportunities in the biomedical field.

This year over 250 elementary students participated in our elementary level science expo. It is out intention to continue to support the growing interest in this program and science education.

As we move forward, I encourage each of you to carefully review our budget information in this newsletter and on our website at www.henhudschools.org/budget. There you will find in-depth information about the budget and how it will effect your child and your pocket book.

Most importantly, some people believe that if you do not have children in the school system you have no vested interest in the school budget. I beg to differ. As a community and as citizens of this great nation, we, have a vested interest in making sure our children and our neighbors children have the opportunity to be successful and learn in an academically strong and innovative environment. We have the responsibility to give our students all that is necessary to grow and eventually to carry on that same responsibility for future generations. If we provide a quality education for our children today, we ensure our schools, community and nation will thrive.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel McCann

Sights Around Hen Hud



Seniors Miranda Kephart, Alana Harris, Jonathan Cohen, Anna Walsh, Jeffrey White and Tara Kutzbach were recognized as National Merit Scholarship Finalists.



Students from B-V presented long-time volunteers Madame and Mousier O'Connell with the Extra-Mile Award for their work bringing French Culture and Language to the halls of B-V.

Strategic Planning: Maintaining Innovation in Tough Economic Times

By Dr. Alice Gottlieb



On March 10 and 11, 2011, twenty community members, teachers, and administrators came together to chart the course for the Hendrick Hudson School District for the next five years. At the end of the two day workshop, the Strategic Planning Team approved six new Strategies and 50 Action Plans to send to the Board of Education for adoption.

The strategic planning process begins with basic questions: "What are our strengths as a district, and what challenges are we facing?" Then, the planning team brainstorms solutions and suggestions to meet them, and finally writes strategies to guide the work. This is when the planning begins. Groups of 6 to 10 community and district members joined Strategic Planning Action teams to research and write the plans that will guide our work for the next five years.

Most of the goals of the 2005-2010 Strategic Plan are complete, although we still have plans to meet for Strategies written since 2008. These are on-going in nature, and are based in curriculum writing and in implementing exemplary and innovative programs in the Arts, Science, and Technology.

Our new Strategies will bring our district to a new level of excellence. They have been written with the district Mission and Objectives in mind, challenging each student to set and achieve challenging goals, to surpass previous levels of academic performance, to demonstrate the 21st Century Learning Skills including creativity and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration, and finally, to be respectful, responsible citizens.

Following are our six new Strategies:

- We will identify exemplary and innovative educational programs and facilities in Athletics for the Hendrick Hudson School District.
- We will improve the public perception of the accomplishments of the Hendrick Hudson School District and involve all members of our educational community to achieve our mission.
- We will integrate 21st Century Learning Skills into our articulated curriculum.
- We will effectively use data to inform interventions and improve instruction.
- We will consistently develop strong, on-going relationships and partnerships with individuals and public and private entities to support the District with financial and other resources.
- We will create a climate that models, supports, and reinforces respect, responsibility, and active participation in the community.

Later this spring, district administrators will determine which action plans to begin during the 2011 - 2012 school year. Although some of the plans will require some seed money, most can be done using existing resources. Over time, with help from the grant writing committee, we hope to implement all of the Action Plans recommended by the Strategic Planning Team.

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 2011-2012 school budget proposal. We urge you to exercise your right to vote on Tuesday May 17th.

Once again this year, 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.

As we confront continuing economic challenges, we must remain optimistic. Our first priority has been to create an improved system for our students so that they may excel in our increasingly competitive world. This year in particular, the accomplishments of our graduating seniors—whether scientists, artists, writers or just well-rounded students—represent a testament to our District. Our seniors have had remarkable success in achieving acceptances to some of the best colleges in the country and our District has clearly prepared them for the next challenges of their lives.

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 our committees on special education teams are consistently evaluating how to foster educational success for students with special needs. Our Board is very proud that, in September 2012 a number of students will return to Hendrick Hudson from out of district placements to be part of new special education programs.

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 so vital for the full development of our students.

The proposed budget reflects hours of careful review and thoughtful deliberations. While it is never easy to reduce positions, it was nonetheless necessary again this year, in order to present a budget with a minimal impact on taxes. In our economic climate, everyone must work harder and more efficiently.

The Board is especially thankful to our District and building level administrators, who, recognizing the tight financial circumstances we were facing, agreed to forgo their contractual raises for the upcoming school year. This action set an example for all and allowed us to preserve a number of programs and positions that might otherwise have been reduced.

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.

We appreciate your support.

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.



Cameron Rasmussen, Junior

Member of National Honor Society.

Tremendous Cross Country and Track athlete.

Plays the Clarinet in Concert Band and is a member of NYSSMA.



Passionate about art and is looking forward to taking AP Studio Art and creating a portfolio for college.

Will pursue Art in college.

Rachel Martin, Senior



Accepted to five out of seven colleges she applied to.

Currently attends the BOCES Fashion Design Program.

Member of National Honor Society.

Member of New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Honors Choral Ensemble.

Received ratings of 100 for 2 consecutive years at music festivals.

Varsity Skier & Junior Varsity Soccer.

Luis Siguenza, Senior



Immigrated from Ecuador to United States when he was 12.

After going through the district ESL program he reached proficiency by 10th grade and no longer requires ESL.

Leader amongst his peers in and out of the classroom.

Vice President of the Hispanic Honor Society

Varsity Soccer Player

Member of National Guard Corps of Cadets-Received 1st place in Marching Tournaments.

Received 3rd place for National Spanish Exam.

2011-2012 Budget Supports

Exemplary Programs in
Academics, Arts & Athletics

Preserves ALL Programs &
Activities

Supports Innovation

Reflects 0% Increase in
Administrative Budget



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
- Maintain existing levels of services & extra-curricular activities
- 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 \$4.2 million in state aid, (6.1%) other revenue sources such as interest income, rentals and fees total \$1.5 million (2%). Due to expense control and careful money management the district is expecting to save \$1.35 million this year. 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, which is the smallest part of our budget, covers

(7%) expenses such as district and school administrators and their support staff, legal fees and our public relations program. The Capital portion (14%) contains the funds necessary to run our schools including energy, maintenance, facilities and debt service. The Program portion of our budget is the largest (79%) and contains the costs associated with educating our students including teacher's 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 \$6.5 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 11.93 positions including 8.6 teaching positions and 10 teacher aides. It also proposes to re-categorize 5 teacher aides as teaching assistants, and provides for the funding of 4 part-time monitors to ensure adequate supervision and student safety during lunch hours. It also eliminates .7 administrative positions and one secretary from central office. These staff reductions will save the district approximately \$1.1 million.

Will my child's class size be effected by these changes?

No. School officials have taken great pains to ensure that any cuts are as far from the core educational program as possible. While any cuts are painful, we are confident that these changes will have a minimal impact on most grades, and a few grades are even projected to see a decrease in class size in the fall.

What happens if the budget fails?

In the event that the recommended budget fails to meet voter approval on May 17, the district has three options to choose from. The first option the Board has 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. The third option would be to immediately adopt a contingent budget. If the budget fails to gain enough support the second time, the district will also be forced to adopt a contingent budget.

What does a contingent budget mean?

Although the proposed budget is lower than the contingent budget would be, should the district decide to or be forced to enact a contingent budget there is a good chance that no part of the district would be left unscathed.

With all the cut 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.

PARENT PORTAL IS NOW OPEN
The Parent Portal is now active and for the 2010-2011 school year will be the primary method for parents and guardians to access report cards and progress reports. If you have not done so please request an account.

To do so visit

<http://www.henhudschoools.org/portal> and print the Portal Agreement Form and return it to your child's school. Please have a valid email address on file as you will receive your Activation Key by email.



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

Hendrick Hudson School District Administration

Board of Education

Marion Walsh, President
William Oricchio, Vice President
Mary-Pat Braggi
Ellen Grabowitz
Laurie Ryan
Charles Thompson
Carson Jacobs

District Administrators

Dr. Daniel McCann
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Alice Gottlieb
*Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum,
Instruction, and Professional Personnel*

Enrique Catalan
Assistant Superintendent for Business

Kathleen Coughlin
Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mathew Swerdloff
Director of Technology

Thomas Baker
Director of Athletics

Anthony Merlini
Director of School Facilities, Operations and Maintenance

Edward Kear
Interim Director of Transportation

Clare Carey
Food Service Supervisor

Public Relations Coordinator/Editor
Rick McCormack

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**Frank G. Lindsey
Elementary School**
57 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548
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**Furnace Woods
Elementary School**
239 Watch Hill Road
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
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**Blue Mountain
Middle School**
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