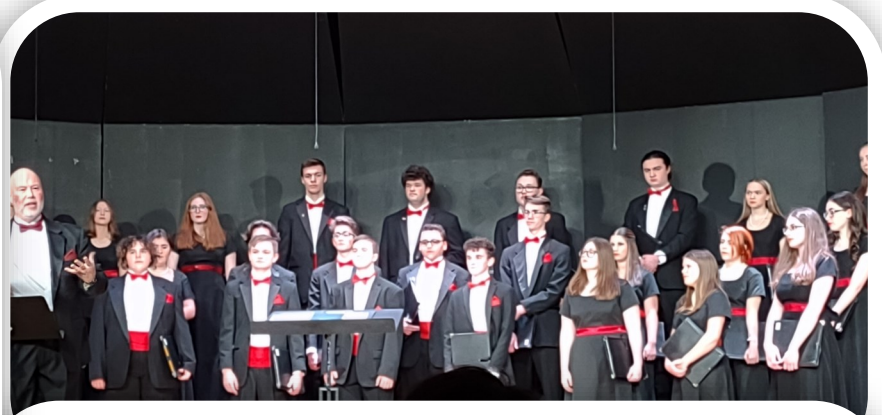


Iroquois Central Schools

IROQUOIS
NEWSLETTER
BOX 32
Elma, New York
14059

Volume 56 Issue 2

May 2023



Budget Vote
May 16, 2023
Intermediate School Gymnasium
7:30 AM - 9:00 PM

Voter Qualifications for May 16 Budget Vote

- * Citizen of the United States;
- * At least 18 years old;
- * District resident for at least 30 days just prior to the vote;
- * Must be eligible under Section 5-106 of the Election Law;
- * No pre-registration required.

Note: Individuals who are first-time voters should be prepared to provide identification to the poll inspector at the time of voting.

*Instructions for obtaining
an Absentee Ballot*

Absentee Ballot applications for the May 16, 2023 Budget Vote/Board of Education Election are currently available in the District Clerk's office.

To request an **application**:

- * Stop in the District Clerk's office (Room 33) of the Intermediate School Building or;
- * Email nspecht@iroquoiscsd.org and request an application or;
- * Mail your request to Nora Specht, District Clerk, PO Box 32, Elma, NY 14059.

Applications must be received by the District Clerk no later than **May 9, 2023** if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter.

SPECIAL BUDGET ISSUE
ANNUAL VOTE MAY 16, 2023
INTERMEDIATE GYMNASIUM 7:30 AM — 9:00 PM

VOTE

**Iroquois Central School District
2023-2024
Budget Vote/Board of Education Election
May 16, 2023
7:30 AM - 9:00 PM**

VOTE

**PROPOSITION NO. 1
ENTIRE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BUDGET 2023-2024**

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:

RESOLVED, that the budget for the Iroquois Central School District, Erie County (the "District") for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023, as presented by the Board of Education, is hereby approved and adopted, in an amount not to exceed \$56,898,897 and the required funds therefore are hereby appropriated and the necessary real property taxes required shall be raised by a tax on the taxable property in said District to be levied and collected as required by law.



**PROPOSITION NO. 2
PURCHASE OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES**

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Iroquois Central School District (the "District") is hereby authorized to undertake the acquisition of four diesel fuel 63-passenger buses (at a maximum average cost of \$160,788 each), and one gasoline fuel 30-passenger, wheelchair equipped bus (at a maximum estimated cost of \$90,224 each) for use in the transportation program of the District, and having an estimated maximum aggregate cost of \$733,378, less trade-in value, if any; and that such aggregate sum (or so much thereof as may be necessary) shall be raised by the levy of a tax to be collected in annual installments, with such tax to be partially offset by state transportation aid available and received therefore; and, in anticipation of such tax, debt obligations of the District shall be issued in an amount not to exceed \$733,378, or the District may enter into a lease/purchase or installment purchase contract up to such stated amount (and having a term of not more than five years), if the Board of Education determines that it is in the best interest of the District to finance the purchases using that method.



VOTE

**Iroquois Central School District
2023-2024
Budget Vote/Board of Education Election
May 16, 2023
7:30 AM - 9:00 PM**

VOTE

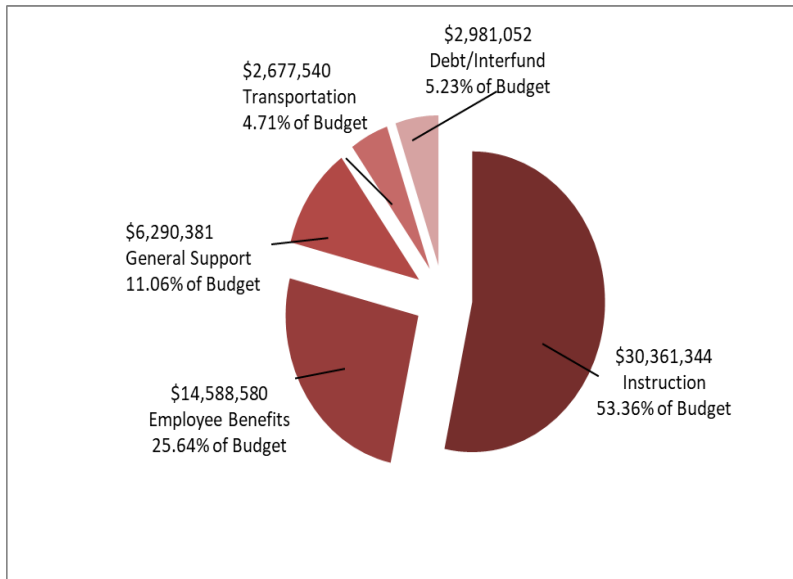
**PROPOSITION NO. 3
FUNDING THE REPAIR RESERVE**

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Iroquois Central School District, Erie County, is hereby authorized, to transfer an amount not to exceed \$450,000 from future unappropriated fund balance of the District to the Repair Reserve Fund (created by Board Resolution on July 6, 2022). The Reserve is to be used for repairs to capital improvements and/or equipment as authorized by General Municipal Law Section 6-d.



Where the Money Goes



EXPENDITURES	2022-23	2023-24	% Change	% of Budget
Instruction Includes: K-12 instructional programs, supervision, BOCES, special education, occupational education, community education, interscholastic athletics, co-curricular programs, library programs and computer instruction.	\$29,237,024	\$30,361,344	3.85%	53.36%
Employee Benefits Includes: Teacher & Employee Retirement Systems, health insurance, unemployment insurance, Social Security and Workers' Compensation.	\$14,498,332	\$14,588,580	0.62%	25.64%
General Support Includes: Insurance, school board, refunds on property tax, utilities, BOCES administrative fees, central offices, buildings and grounds.	\$6,054,680	\$6,290,381	3.89%	11.06%
Transportation Includes: Transportation to public and non-public schools, vocational schools, educational field trips and children with handicapping conditions.	\$2,677,540	\$2,677,540	0.00%	4.71%
Debt/Interfund Transfer Includes: Principal and interest payments for renovation projects/additions approved by voters. (off-set by Revenue Building Aid) Includes \$100,000 Capital Outlay Project for building repairs. *	\$2,516,976	\$2,981,052	18.44%	5.23%
TOTAL	\$54,984,552	\$56,898,897	3.48%	100.00%

*The 2023-2024 budget includes a capital outlay project for \$100,000. This project will address upgrades and improvement's to the Elma Primary electrical system. The work is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2024.

Iroquois Central School District Projected Revenues

	2022-23	2023-24	\$ Change	% Change
State Aid	\$16,895,602	\$17,440,074	\$ 544,472	3.22%
Erie County Sales Tax	\$2,782,882	\$2,932,882	\$150,000	5.39%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,773,612	\$1,773,612	-	0.00%
Use of Reserves	\$428,691	\$428,691	-	0.00%
Other Sources	\$620,395	\$916,255	\$295,860	47.69%
Tax Levy	\$32,483,370	\$33,407,383	\$924,013	2.84%
Totals	\$54,984,552	\$ 56,898,897	\$ 1,914,345	3.48%

Tax Levy



Understanding Your School Taxes

Three Factors That Affect Your Tax Rate

1. The **Tax Levy** from the school district.
 - ◆ From the budget approved by district voters;
 - ◆ Set by district voters at the May budget vote.
2. The **Equalization Rate** set by New York State.
 - ◆ New York State balancing property values in the different townships;
 - ◆ The lower the equalization rate, the higher the full value and the higher your tax rate;
 - ◆ Fixed in August by New York State Property Tax Division.
3. The **Total Assessed Value of the District** set by the Tax Assessors of the towns.
 - ◆ Home values and new construction;
 - ◆ The more improvements to the entire community, the higher the assessed value and the lower the tax rate;
 - ◆ Set by Town Assessors in June;
 - ◆ Individual households value changes from improvements and similar house sales.

Iroquois Tax Levy History

Year	Levy %
2003-04	7.95
2004-05	8.80
2005-06	8.78
2006-07	5.99
2007-08	8.03
2008-09	5.93
2009-10	4.97
2010-11	3.98
2011-12	4.98
2012-13	3.42
2013-14	2.24
2014-15	3.14
2015-16	3.41
2016-17	0.81
2017-18	2.58
2018-19	2.89
2019-20	2.77
2020-21	2.08
2021-22	1.96
2022-23	2.51
2023-24	2.84

Being a good role model requires lifelong learning.



One of the best ways for children to learn is from the caring adults who are positive role models. Our students are very fortunate to have some of the best among them because our faculty continues to show they are never done learning themselves!

Approximately three years ago, teachers and administrators began studying the Science of Reading. The research has been available for several years and continues to be transformed into practice. It centers on the key aspects of how students learn to read and comprehend. This is no small feat.

This year, our focus is to strengthen our phonemic and phonics curriculum and instruction. To accomplish this, we partnered with the REED Charitable Foundation for training. All K-2

classroom teachers, and K-4 Special Education and RtI teachers received 30 hours of training in Orton-Gillingham, phonics, and phonemic awareness. This highly researched methodology provides the foundation for our early readers.

Additionally, and with the help of our 2 Literacy TOSAs [teachers on special assignment], professional development in reading is extending through our entire K-12 grade levels. Faculty are expanding their instructional understanding to best strengthen our students' background knowledge and vocabulary, key elements in language comprehension.

Our goal is to continue our study in the elements of the Science of Reading and make modifications to curriculum and instruction that will strengthen our students' ability to read and comprehend earlier and with various modes of medium. To do this, all involved continue to model the commitment to be life-long learners and good role models for our students.



MaryJo Dudek, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent

Considerations for Budget Preparation

Completely and unwaveringly committed to serving the interests of our students.
 Committed to exercising care and good judgment in managing the resources with which we are entrusted.
 Committed to conducting business in an open, objective, and professional manner.
 Future-focused planning and committed to constant improvement.

2023-2024 Proposed Budget

\$56,898,897

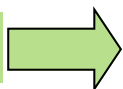
Budget-to-Budget Increase: 3.48%

Projected Tax Levy Increase

2.84% Increase Over Current Levy

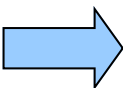
Total Levy of \$33,407,383

2.84% Tax Levy



All current academic, athletic and extracurricular programs remain intact.

If Budget is Defeated
Determine:

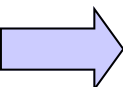


A) Reduce athletic expenditures by eliminating modified and low participating junior varsity and varsity sports along with reduction of extra-curricular clubs and increase in class sizes

OR

B) Return to voters with the same proposed budget.

0.00% Tax Levy
(adopted with two (2)
failed budgets)



100% of Athletic and Extracurricular Clubs Eliminated

High School Reductions: AP Offerings, Electives, Increased Class Size, Computer Labs, Art Classes, Business/Tech Classes & Dept. Chairs.

Middle School Impact: Class Sizes Increase to Maximum of 27, Reduction of Computer Lab & Technology Classes.

Primary Levels: Increased Class Size to maximum of 27, Elimination of Instrumental Band and Chorus.

Community: All non-school organizations would be required, by law, to pay for the use of school building facilities.

PLEASE NOTE

Estimated School Tax Bill* Based on \$250,000 Property

PLEASE NOTE

County	Town	Property Market Value	Equalized Assessed Property Value	Actual 2022-23 Tax Rate (Per \$1,000)	Estimated 2023-24 Tax Rate (Per \$1,000)	Dollar Tax Increase	Estimated % Increase
Erie	Aurora	\$250,000	\$66,250	\$ 47.63	\$ 48.99	\$89.76	2.84%
Erie	Elma	\$250,000	\$8,050	\$393.15	\$404.33	\$90.02	2.84%
Erie	Lancaster	\$250,000	\$217,500	\$ 14.77	\$ 15.19	\$91.39	2.84%
Erie	Marilla	\$250,000	\$75,000	\$ 42.26	\$ 43.46	\$90.14	2.84%
Erie	Wales	\$250,000	\$80,000	\$ 39.51	\$ 40.63	\$89.91	2.84%
Wyoming	Bennington	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$ 13.68	\$ 14.10	\$104.18	3.05%

*Estimates do not include STAR subsidies.

*The estimates are based on 2022-23 equalization rates and property values. They will change for 2023-24.

*Individual assessments may vary.

School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2022-23 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2023-24 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 54,984,552	\$ 56,898,897	\$ 55,974,884
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$ 1,914,345	\$ 990,332
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.48%	1.80%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8.0%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$ 32,483,370	\$ 33,407,383	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$ 0	\$ 0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$ 0	\$ 0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$ 0	\$ 0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$ 32,483,370	\$ 33,407,383	\$ 32,483,370
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 0	\$ 0	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 32,483,370	\$ 33,407,383	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$ 32,483,370	\$ 33,407,383	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$ 0	\$ 0	
Administrative Component	\$ 5,711,451	\$ 5,993,514	\$ 5,919,972
Program Component	\$ 42,164,111	\$ 43,189,317	\$ 42,657,435
Capital Component	\$ 7,108,990	\$ 7,716,066	\$ 7,397,477

*The contingent budget represents expenses that are related directly to student instruction and required support activities. The contingent budget excludes non-contingent equipment and program expansion. It would also include cutbacks as follows: a percentage of extracurricular clubs, a percentage of athletics, some supplies, and the Capital Outlay Project.

Description	Amount
Proposition #2: Purchase of transportation vehicles	\$ 733,378
	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$ 388.86

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

** 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)

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-2024 by the qualified voters of the Iroquois Central School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at the Iroquois Intermediate School Building in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 between the hours of 7:30 AM and 9:00 PM prevailing time in the Iroquois Intermediate School Building Gymnasium, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

**Douglas R. Scofield**

Message from the Superintendent

I would like to thank everyone, including students, parents, faculty, staff, administration, and the community for their continued support for student instruction. The world today presents unique challenges, and the Iroquois community continually responds in a united fashion through collaboration, which is what makes Iroquois so great. Student instruction and safety continues to be at one of the highest levels in Western New York and New York State.

This accomplishment exemplifies the statement “Iroquois is a family” which puts students first to overcome any obstacle. It also highlights our continuing focus on the future, balancing instruction for students while mindful of the fiscal impact on the community. Iroquois will continue this balance with the 2023-24 school budget enabling us to maintain the current programs and services for students.

This year was the first year with School Resource Officers in all buildings. This additional safety measure was a great success. The officers are continually present in the buildings and implemented numerous changes to practice which provide greater safety. One example is that meetings were held in all buildings to gather teacher and staff feedback to determine what procedures required modification.

The Strategic Plan moves forward in its first year with three main areas of focus: Communication, Student Experience, and Facilities. A new communication system was implemented that provides accurate, timely and meaningful information at all levels to all stakeholder groups. Additionally, Iroquois will again survey those at every level of the District to provide feedback on areas of success and areas in need of improvement. Student Experience focuses on a goal of achieving 100% of our K-12 students having access to a high quality Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for both academic and social emotional learning. Additionally, we will focus on students developing leadership aptitudes, advocacy skills, and community involvement expertise to meet the needs of their future professions. A Facilities committee is focusing on the development and implementation of an action plan. This will be based on a critical analysis of all structures and spaces District-wide to determine what is in the best interest of teaching and learning, while protecting the investments of the community.

The annual school budget vote and Board of Education election will take place on May 16th from 7:30 am through 9:00 pm in the Intermediate Gymnasium. If you have concerns with voting in person, please contact the District Clerk to obtain an absentee ballot. Please contact me at 652-3000 ext. 1001 or dscofield@iroquoiscsd.org if you have questions about the 2023-2024 proposed budget. I look forward to seeing everyone on May 16th.

Questions & Answers

Q: Has the Board of Education initiated any new future focused planning?

A: Yes. The Iroquois Board of Education is in its first year of a five-year Strategic Plan developed by members of the community, students, staff, teachers, and administration. This process reflects current practices and goals for creating a comprehensive plan for the future.

Q: Did the Iroquois School District remain within the tax cap limit?

A: Yes. Iroquois has remained within the tax cap every year since its inception and is doing so again for the 2023-2024 school budget.

Q: Does the increase in the tax levy actually equal the increase on my school tax bill?

A: No. There are additional factors, such as equalization rate and assessment, that cause the individualization of each resident's tax bill.

Q: How are the reserves funded?

A: After all expenditures are complete, the remaining balance is used to fund reserves.

Q: What is a repair reserve?

A: The funds in a repair reserve are only allowed to be used to fix an unanticipated equipment or infrastructure failure. The fund will be funded by unrealized expenditures during a school year.

Questions & Answers cont.

Q: With the change in enrollment, has the District reduced staff?

A: Yes. Annually the District reviews the staff/enrollment ratio to adjust for changes in enrollment. This year there will be an adjustment of approximately 5%. In the previous ten years, the district has reduced general education staff by 15% and administration by 5%.

Q: Has the District implemented any new practice to make budget information more available to community members?

A: Yes. The District has implemented a new communication service that allows any resident to sign up and receive texts, emails and phone calls directly from the school which may include budget information, newsletters and mailings. The link to sign up is on the website, www.iroquoiscsd.org, under *Announcements*.

Q: What methods does the Iroquois Board of Education use to hear public opinion?

A: The Board of Education uses multiple methods to listen to the public as a whole. There is time devoted at every Board meeting to listen to the public directly. In addition, the email addresses of all board members are posted on the District website and a community roundtable takes place every year.

Q: What happens if the May 16th budget vote is not supported?

A: If the budget is not supported the Board of Education will decide to either:

- Return to voters with reduced athletic and extracurricular club expenditures, decreased course offerings and increase class size; or,
- Return to the voters with the same proposed budget and corresponding tax levy; or,
- Adopt a contingent budget.

Q: What does it mean if the budget is defeated, and we are required to adopt a contingent budget?

A: A contingency budget would cause elementary class sizes, in a majority of the classes, to increase to approximately 27 students per class. There would be a reduction of elective courses, including art and music, as well as advanced placement courses. It would also be necessary to eliminate some modified, junior varsity and varsity sport teams, as well as some extracurricular clubs. Equipment purchases would be eliminated. In addition, all non-school organizations would be required, by law, to pay for the use of school building facilities.



Candidates for the Board of Education
Seeking Election to a Five-Year Term
(vote for 2)



Heather Becker—Heather Becker is a 1992 graduate of Iroquois High School. Heather returned to the Iroquois School District so that her two children could attend this fantastic school. She is currently the Treasurer for the Wales Primary PTO and has served in this capacity for two years.

Heather received a B.A. Degree in Political Science with a second major in Philosophy from Fredonia State College and a M.S. Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Buffalo. Heather is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor as well as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

Heather has worked as a public servant for the past 22 years. She currently works for the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) as the Assistant Veteran Readiness and Employment Officer for the Vocational Readiness and Employment Division. Prior to working at the VA, she was employed as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the State of New York. As a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, she assisted individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. She also provided transition services to students with disabilities in secondary education. She has worked as a Community Mental Health Counselor assisting individuals with traumatic brain injury and chronic mental health conditions.

Iroquois Central School District has a reputation of providing a well-rounded education that prepares students for the future. This reputation has contributed to the many graduates returning to the district so that their children can attend Iroquois. Heather is invested in ensuring that Iroquois continues to provide the best education, supporting the well-being of students while balancing parent needs and responsibility to taxpayers.

~printed as submitted by candidate



Keith Vergien—A local resident of the Iroquois Central School (ICS) district for the past twenty- four years, Keith and his spouse Jacqueline remain actively engaged in the athletics and academics programs at ICS with their children. Keith is the Senior Vice President of Sentient Science, a global software company that builds digital twins for the renewable energy sector and electric vehicle market. He manages a multicultural team in the Americas and in Europe.

Keith has an extensive background in executive business strategy and operational discipline serving various levels of an organization. He has led, coached, and developed multicultural teams to meet and exceed individual, team and corporate goals and requirements. Throughout his tenures at Clipper Windpower, EDF Renewables and Sentient Science, he's worked with diverse team of directors, operations managers, customer success and marketing teams. Keith leverages his technical depth of knowledge in renewables to build credibility and trust within key strategic accounts.

He deeply values customer responsiveness, integrity, and environmental sustainability. Keith holds technical degrees from BMW, Ford Motor Co and PMP certification(s).

“With change...comes opportunity” – Keith Vergien

~printed as submitted by candidate

VOTE - MAY 16, 2023
Intermediate School Building
Gymnasium

IROQUOIS NEWSLETTER
U.S.P.S. 270-040

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Jane Sullivan, President
Robert Barry
Heather Jacobs
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Charles F. Specht
Sharon Szeplowski
Louise Toth

Douglas R. Scofield
Superintendent of Schools

Nora Specht
District Clerk

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This is your official School District Newsletter



VOTE May 16, 2023
INTERMEDIATE BUILDING
7:30AM-9:00PM

