

Menands School District Budget Vote on May 17

On Tuesday, May 17, residents of the Menands School District will vote on the proposed \$7,552,806 budget for the 2011-2012 school year. **The proposed budget is \$27,162 less than the current year's budget – a decrease in spending of approximately one-third of one percent (-0.36%).** In spite of a decrease in the spending plan from this year to next, the proposed budget calls for increasing the tax levy by \$182,360, or 3.13%. Increasing the tax levy – the amount of money the school district needs to raise from taxes to balance the budget, is necessary due to a reduction in revenue from interest income, State aid, and fund balance. “In developing this budget,” explained Superintendent Kathy Meany, “the Menands Board of Education maintained its commitment to providing a high quality education to the children of the community at a realistic cost to the taxpayers.”

The district will set the actual tax rate in August after the Town of Colonie publishes the final assessments for properties located in the school district. Based on current estimates, the proposed budget will result in an increase in school taxes of about \$73 for the year on a home assessed at \$100,000.

What is included in the proposed school district budget for 2011-2012?

The budget maintains the current educational program for meeting the needs of Menands School students in kindergarten through eighth grade. As we continue to prepare students for an increasingly complex and globalized future, Menands students benefit greatly from the following programs:

- Full day kindergarten and strong academics in the core subjects at every grade
- Professional development for teachers given changes in State standards and assessments
- Active, engaging instruction in the special areas of art, music, band, physical education, health, and library media
- K-8 Spanish and K-8 computer technology
- An in-district enrichment program in fifth through seventh grades and Regents level earth science and algebra in eighth grade
- Academic intervention services and summer school for struggling students
- After-school clubs and sports and a 4:00 bus

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The proposed budget includes tuition payments for Menands students to attend their choice of three high schools: Shaker High School, Watervliet, or Tech Valley High School, which is a public school operated by BOCES. The proposed budget also addresses all employee contractual obligations and largely maintains the current staff with no additions or layoffs.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED EXPENDITURES			
Line Item	2010-2011 Adopted Budget	2011-2012 Proposed Budget	Change
Board of Education	\$ 13,609	\$ 15,517	\$ 1,908
Central Administration	\$ 212,115	\$ 212,350	\$ 235
Business Admin/Staff/Finance	\$ 200,193	\$ 205,801	\$ 5,608
Central Services	\$ 306,882	\$ 324,020	\$ 17,138
Special Items -Insurance etc.	\$ 69,736	\$ 70,400	\$ 664
Total General Support	\$ 802,535	\$ 828,088	\$ 25,553
Supervision, Curriculum Develop.	\$ 108,267	\$ 111,438	\$ 3,171
Regular Instruction	\$ 3,182,493	\$ 3,158,834	\$ (23,659)
Student with Disabilities	\$ 824,812	\$ 834,536	\$ 10,724
Instructional Media	\$ 174,323	\$ 168,613	\$ (5,710)
Guidance and Health	\$ 107,050	\$ 110,887	\$ 3,837
Extracurricular/Athletics	\$ 33,300	\$ 43,500	\$ 10,200
Total Instruction	\$ 4,429,445	\$ 4,427,808	\$ (1,637)
Transportation	\$ 675,892	\$ 678,600	\$ 2,708
Youth Services	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,800	\$ -
Employees Benefits	\$ 1,108,718	\$ 1,150,257	\$ 41,539
Interfund Transfers	\$ 82,525	\$ 50,000	\$ (32,525)
Debt Service	\$ 477,853	\$ 414,253	\$ (63,600)
Total Trans./Emp. Benefits/Debt	\$ 2,347,988	\$ 2,296,910	\$ (51,078)
Total Expenditures	\$ 7,579,968	\$ 7,552,806	\$ (27,162)

What budget challenges does the school district face and how are these being addressed?

Like almost every school district, Menands will sustain a loss of State aid from this year to next and diminished interest on earnings. Also similar to other school districts, these losses in revenue are occurring at a time of rapidly increasing costs for employee health insurance and district contributions to employee and teacher retirement systems.

As revenues decline and costs increase, Menands School District faces two budget challenges that make us different from other districts. First, our enrollment is increasing, and we are now servicing the highest number of students than in the previous 25 years or more. Second, when the Town of Colonie changed from a two-tiered to a one-tiered system of property assessment, a much larger amount of the responsibility for the tax levy moved from commercial properties to residential property owners in the district. This would have resulted in a major spike in property taxes for homeowners for at least five years. The school district is now in the second year of a five year plan of using fund balance to offset the loss of revenue created by this problem.

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In addition to establishing the aforementioned five year financial plan, the school district has implemented numerous strategies in the past three years for addressing the myriad of current economic challenges. These strategies include the following:

- More efficient use of federal grant money
- More careful filing for state aid on certain groups of students
- Rebidding for service contracts whenever possible (i.e. lawn mowing and snow plowing)
- Negotiating higher employee contributions to health insurance to offset increased costs
- Developing in-district educational programs instead of relying on BOCES (i.e. for high achieving students)
- Scheduling current staff more efficiently
- Reducing personnel costs through attrition whenever possible. Last year, a reading teacher who retired was not replaced, and this year, a teaching assistant who is retiring will not be replaced. Instead, the district has contracted with the University at Albany to provide some of these services.

SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED REVENUES			
Line Item	2010-2011 Adopted Budget	2011-2012 Proposed Budget	Change
Tax Penalties	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,200	\$ -
Interest and Earnings	\$ 16,000	\$ 12,000	\$ (4,000)
Rental of Real Property	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ -
Commissions/Miscellaneous	\$ 1,150	\$ 1,150	\$ -
Refund Prior Year	\$ 48,000	\$ 20,000	\$ (28,000)
Gifts and Donations	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -
Total Local Revenue Sources	\$ 71,150	\$ 39,150	\$ (32,000)
State Aid	\$ 648,148	\$ 586,420	\$ (61,728)
BOCES AID	\$ 39,950	\$ 73,580	\$ 33,630
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 975,000	\$ 825,000	\$ (150,000)
Total Fund Balance and State Aid	\$ 1,663,098	\$ 1,485,000	\$ (178,098)
Tax Levy	\$ 5,845,720	\$ 6,028,656	\$ 182,936
Total Revenues	\$ 7,579,968	\$ 7,552,806	\$ (27,162)

What happens if the 2011-2012 budget is not approved by the voters on May 17?

If the voters defeat the budget, the District will have three options: to present the same budget for a re-vote; to present a new budget for a vote; or to go straight to a contingency budget. Under State law, a school board can submit a budget to voters a maximum of two times. If there is a re-vote on the same budget, or if there is a vote on a new budget and the new budget is defeated, the law requires that the District adopt a contingency budget.

The proposed budget for 2011-2012 is already below the allowable spending cap were the school district to go to a contingency budget. Under a contingency budget, however, State law would also require that we eliminate equipment from the budget (\$51,799) and eliminate the cost to the district for community use of the school building and grounds.

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**Menands School District Budget Notice
Overall Budget Proposal**

	Budget Adopted for the 2010-2011 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2011-2012 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2011-2012 School Year*
Total budgeted amount	\$7,579,968	\$7,552,806	\$7,581,007
Increase/decrease for the 2011-2012 school year		\$-27,162	\$-78,961
Percentage increase (decrease) in proposed budget		-0.36%	-1.04%
Change in the consumer price index		1.02%	
Resulting estimated property tax levy for 2011-12		\$8,028,858	\$8,076,857
1. Administrative component	\$790,877	\$799,553	\$793,824
2. Program component	\$5,954,907	\$5,968,213	\$5,918,915
3. Capital component	\$834,184	\$793,040	\$789,668
If the 2011-2012 budget is not adopted on May 17th, the Board of Education can submit the budget for a re-vote, submit a new budget for a vote, or go directly to a contingency budget.			

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

	Budget Proposed for the 2011-2012 School Year
Maximum Basic STAR Tax Savings – Cannot exceed more than 2% of the prior year maximum savings	\$487

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2011-2012 by the qualified voters of the Menands Union Free School District, Albany County, New York, will be held in the lobby of Menands School in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, between the hours of 12:00pm and 8:00pm, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.

Definitions

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| 1. Administrative component includes: salaries and benefits of superintendent, principal, treasurer, and clerical staff, school board, legal, and auditing costs; curriculum development; general insurance; BOCES administrative costs |
| 2. Program component includes: salaries and benefits of all instructional staff; instructional materials and textbooks; equipment; extracurricular activities; transportation; BOCES program costs |
| 3. Capital component includes: salaries and benefits of maintenance and custodial staff; debt service on building projects; utilities; tax certiorari |



(children perform in The Wizard of Oz)

What tax exemptions can residents receive?

The New York State School Tax Relief (STAR) program allows homeowners to exempt from taxes a certain amount of the assessed value of their property. All residents are eligible to receive Basic STAR on their primary residence; senior citizens whose income does not exceed a given limit are also eligible to receive Enhanced STAR. Starting with the 2011-2012 school budget, the State has imposed a cap on increases in STAR savings. Residents of the Menands School District should contact the Town of Colonie at 783-2700 for information about their STAR eligibility.

What else will voters be deciding on May 17?

School District – Residents will elect one candidate to the Board of Education. Mr. Michael Testo, current president of the Board, is running in an uncontested election for his second, five year term. Residents will also vote on a proposal to expend money from capital reserves on needed improvements to the school grounds. Specifically, the proposal requests voter authorization to use money from the district capital reserve fund for the purchase of equipment to replace the playground due to health hazards of the current structure. The proposal also requests voter authorization to expend capital reserves for the repair and replacement of damaged sidewalks on school property.

Library- Mrs. Kerry Wroblewski is running in an uncontested election to fill a vacancy on the Menands Library Board. Residents will also vote on the library budget for 2011-2012. The proposed library budget of \$134,633 represents a 2.03% increase in operating expenses for next year. This will result in a tax levy of \$126,483, or an increase of 2.9%.

Who can vote on May 17?

Residents of the Menands School District can vote on May 17 if they are a citizen of the United States and at least 18 years of age. A voter must have resided in the district for at least 30 days prior to the election and must be registered with the Albany County Board of Elections. Residents may also register to vote in person with the school district in the school lobby on Wednesday, May 11, from 3:00-7:00 pm.

When and where will the May 17 vote take place?

The vote will take place in the Menands School District lobby on Tuesday, May 17, from 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm.



MAY 2011

**MENANDS SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE AND BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION
MENANDS PUBLIC LIBRARY BUDGET VOTE AND LIBRARY TRUSTEE ELECTION**

**Voting Registration May 11, 2011 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Menands School Foyer

Vote May 17, 2011
***Noon to 8:00 p.m. Menands School Foyer**

** New Voting Hours*

***To vote, you must be a U.S. citizen who is at least 18 years of age, and have resided in the district for at least 30 days.*

** If you voted in prior elections, you do not need to register again.*

May 2011

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