

TROY



**TODAY'S
STUDENTS.**

**TOMORROW'S
LEADERS.**

A PUBLICATION OF THE TROY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BUDGET NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2015

SAVE THE DATE

MEET THE BOE CANDIDATES

Wednesday, May 13

6:30 p.m. — Troy Middle School
1976 Burdett Avenue

Followed by BUDGET PRESENTATION

SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE and BOE Election

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2015

NEW POLL HOURS:

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

POLLING SITES:

SCHOOL 2 –

470 Tenth Street

SCHOOL 12 –

475 First Street

SCHOOL 14 –

1700 Tibbits Avenue

SCHOOL 16 –

40 Collins Avenue

SCHOOL 18 –

417 Hoosick Street

CARROLL HILL –

112 Delaware Avenue

*If you are not sure where to vote
on May 19, please go to the
District's website:*

www.troycsd.org

or contact the

BOE Office at 328-5070



Message from the Superintendent

The Troy School District Board of Education has adopted the 2015-2016 budget. The proposed budget of \$108,163,850, which represents a 1.29% increase over the current year's budget, carries a tax levy increase of 2.49%. For the first time in many years, our budget will allow us to add some very crucial and necessary supports for our students and will enable the District to continue our efforts to increase student achievement and to focus on our Mission - to provide a strong educational and social foundation to graduate all students college and career ready.

We would like to recognize and thank the members of the Citizens Advisory Committee, who attended our many workshops over the last five months. Their input and insights were much appreciated. From the onset, the Board of Education and I had a goal to develop a budget that was educationally sound and fiscally responsible. As we are still trying to recover from the more than 140 positions that were cut district-wide over the last five years, this goal was more difficult than in any previous year. This year, an *educationally sound* budget meant not only trying to maintain current programs, but adding the crucial and necessary supports that many of our students need to reach the new level of rigor and to graduate college and career ready. To be *fiscally responsible* required us to do this while keeping in mind our already over-burdened taxpayers. We conducted a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the budget and all of our programs to ensure the most effective and efficient use of district resources. Significant savings opportunities were found, enabling us to offset much of the cost of the added supports, and resulted in the modest 1.29% increase over the current budget. At \$90,000 below the allowable tax cap, we are proud to have accomplished the goal of developing a financially responsible budget, while establishing an educational program that will effectively meet the needs of all of our students.

The uncertainty at the State level added to the already challenging task that we faced in developing this budget. State Aid runs were not released until the final budget was approved on April 1. The message from the Governor throughout the process was that any increase in aid for schools was dependent on the Legislative approval of a progressive reform agenda. We once again conducted an active lobbying campaign and focused those efforts on explaining the precarious financial position of our district to our State Legislators. District representatives met with our Legislators face-to-face in early March. We presented an advocacy sheet that delivered the message that, for districts like ours, "it is about the money." It is evident that with adequate funding from the State, the Troy School District can thrive and our students can, and do, succeed. The advocacy efforts paid off. In the final NYS budget, we received a \$500,000 increase to our Foundation Aid and a \$1.1 million

restoration of our GEA. This additional money from the State helped make it possible to add the supports and programs our students need, and to do it while maintaining a reasonable tax levy increase.

We have great things happening in the Troy School District! We are in full swing with the implementation of the Technology and Security Capital Project and are on schedule to have state-of-the-art, 21st century technology in every classroom, in every building, throughout the district, starting next school year. These upgrades - including interactive, instructional classroom technologies and wireless connectivity inside and outside all district buildings - will transform our educational program. It will result in a stimulating learning environment that motivates students and leads to greater levels of engagement. We continue to offer rigorous, challenging curricula aligned to the Common Core. Our teachers and students are up to the challenge of these higher expectations. We are proud of the teaching and learning that occurs in our classrooms every day and our many achievements from the elementary level up through high school. Once again, our district accomplishments culminated in last year's graduating class collectively earning more than 1,500 college credits through the comprehensive College in the High School program at Troy High School. We were also recognized for improving our high school graduation rate to 83% last year. This is truly an accomplishment for the entire school community and is a testament to the great work that is going on throughout the district.

We are very excited about the future of the Troy School District and we are proud of all the great things going on in our schools. We are confident that we have developed a budget that will allow us to build on our successes and to continue to move the district forward. Thank you for your support and we look forward to working with all stakeholders to achieve success for all of our students.

Respectfully,

Mr. John Carmello, *Superintendent of Schools*



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much is the proposed budget? The proposed budget is \$108,163,850.

How does this financially impact the tax payer? The proposed budget will require an increase of 2.49% in the tax levy. The tax levy represents the total amount of property taxes the District needs to raise. As the City of Troy and the Town of Brunswick have different assessment practices and different equalization rates, the impact of the increase in the tax levy may vary. The average homeowner in Troy will see a \$69 increase in their tax bill, while the average homeowner in Brunswick would see an increase of \$87.

How will the State's Property Tax Freeze affect the taxpayers?

Troy City School District complied with the program last year by staying within the property tax cap. This resulted in the State sending rebate checks to qualified homeowners that matched the increase in school taxes from 2013-14 to 2014-15. The second year requires school districts to stay within the property tax cap and file an efficiency plan to qualify homeowners for this year's tax freeze program. We stayed within the tax cap and we anticipate that our plan will be approved by the state. Once approved, homeowners should expect to see another rebate check this fall.

How has State Aid affected Troy's budget? The 2015-2016 State Aid projections estimate that the District will receive \$57.6 million in State Aid. This represents 53% of all revenues, indicating Troy City School District is heavily reliant on State Aid.

What are the major items that increased from the current year to the 2015-2016 year?

The major items that have increased are retirement costs, health benefits, and salary increases.

Are there any proposed cuts in the budget? The budget was developed through a series of workshop meetings to determine where cuts could be made while preserving programs for Troy's students. For the second consecutive year, we were able to close the budget gap without any reductions in staff or programs.

How did the District achieve savings in the budget? The District achieved savings in several areas. These include offering a retirement incentive and finding efficiencies throughout the budget.

What were the savings from the retirement incentive? The District offered a retirement incentive to all bargaining groups which resulted in a savings of approximately \$678,000.

How do charter schools impact our school taxes? Troy City School District is required by law to pay tuition for our residents who attend a charter school. Currently there are 705 students attending charter schools at a tuition rate of \$15,986 per student. In addition to the tuition, the District spends an estimated \$625,000 in transportation costs for these students. Charter school expenses represent 10.8% of the District budget.

What happens if the budget is defeated? If the proposed budget is defeated by the voters, the school district – as in the past – has the option of putting the same or a revised budget up for a re-vote, or adopting a contingency budget. If a proposed budget is defeated twice by the voters, the district must adopt a contingency budget.

What does a contingency budget mean to the District and students?

A contingency budget means that the District cannot raise the overall tax levy. If the District goes to a contingency budget, the District will be required to cut an additional \$877,275 from the budget. This would result in personnel cuts and would be devastating to student programs. It would also prohibit the purchase of student supplies and equipment, including computers and technology equipment.



The Cisco MX800 is a state-of-the-art videoconferencing unit that will be installed in more than 200 classrooms as part of the \$8.4 million Capital Project approved by voters in 2013.

Capital Project in action

On March 20, 2015, Troy CSD faculty kicked off the beginning of a new age for the district; one that will bring it to the forefront of instructional technology while improving safety for students and staff.

Teachers from each school gathered at Troy Middle School for an unveiling of the videoconferencing equipment, currently being installed in more than 200 classrooms. This state-of-the-art, university-caliber technology is part of the \$8.4 million bond referendum approved by voters in 2013. It includes interactive instructional technology for classrooms, wireless connectivity inside and outside all buildings, as well as network upgrades and security enhancements – all of which will be installed by the start of the next school year.

Teachers had an opportunity to use the technology to teleconference with organizations from all over the country to learn how they can help provide real-world instructional content for our students. Students might learn about the business and marketing involved at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tennessee, or they can investigate historical artifacts from the Institute of Holocaust Education, in Omaha, Nebraska, without ever leaving their classrooms. Even Pre-K students can use the technology to learn about basic math, as it relates to the world we live in.

"We're moving our lesson plans into the 21st Century with real-world collaboration that is far more engaging for our students," said Troy CSD Director of Technology Jared Heiner. "These improvements put us at the head of the game; no one else has anything like this."

Troy High School graduation rates on the rise

Troy High School improved its graduation rate to 83% last year. The statewide average was 76.4%, according to the New York State Education Department.

"Our mission is to graduate all students college and career ready and we strive every day to make that mission a reality," said Troy CSD Superintendent John Carmello. "We are very proud of the increase in our high school graduation rate. It is proof that by developing positive relationships with students, having high expectations, delivering high quality instruction, and offering targeted support for those who need it, all students can be successful. This is an accomplishment for the entire district and everyone in the district should feel ownership and pride in these results."

BALLOT FOR THE MAY 19 VOTE:

Budget :

RESOLVED, that the proposed budget of expenditures of the Enlarged City School District of Troy, New York for the 2015-16 school year in the amount of \$108,163,850, and for the purposes shown in the statement of estimated expenditures adopted by the Board of Education be and the same hereby is approved and the amount thereof shall be raised by a levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the school district, after first deducting the monies available from state aid and other sources as provided by the law.

YES ☐

NO ☐

Board of Education Election:

The School Board election will be held on May 19 to elect three members of the Board of Education as follows: three members to 3-year terms commencing on July 1, 2015 and expiring on June 30, 2018. Three candidates receiving the largest number of votes cast will be elected to the 3-year terms. Deadline for nominating petitions was April 29. Candidate information is available at: www.troycsd.org/boe/candidates.asp.



Students learn about the importance of community service

The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program is an after-school program that provides high-quality enrichment, health and wellness, and community service experiences for more than 450 Troy students in Grades 5-8 through a school, community and parent partnership.

The HOPE Group (Helping Other People Everywhere) is part of the 21st Century program and works on community service projects throughout the school year. The HOPE Group recently served dinner to more than 100 people at The Salvation Army in Troy. As students learn good citizenship and compassion, the entire community benefits.



Veronica Bystroff's acrylic painting titled, "Cat," received Honorable Mention at this year's Questar III High School Art Invitational.

Student art featured in regional exhibit

The artwork of Troy High School students Veronica Bystroff, Lauren Elder and Ashley Hale was selected to be a part of the 26th Annual Questar III High School Art Invitational. Hosted by the Arts Center of the Capital Region, the exhibit featured artwork from 13 school districts and ran from March 27 – April 18, 2015. Bystroff and Hale received Honorable Mentions for their work.

Property Tax Information:

- The District's Tax Levy will increase 2.49% for the 2015-16 school year.
- The estimated basic STAR tax savings for homeowners is \$587.
- The tax rates will be established upon receiving the equalization rates from the New York State Office of Real Property Services and the final assessments from the City of Troy and Town of Brunswick.

Voter Eligibility:

To vote, you must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen and a resident of the Troy City School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote date.

Absentee Ballot Information:

To vote by absentee ballot, you must fill out an application. Please contact the Board of Education Office at 328-5070. If you want a ballot mailed to you, your application must be received 7 days before the vote. If you plan to pick up your ballot, your application must be received 1 day prior to vote. Completed absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on May 19, the day of the vote.

School Tax Relief Program:

STAR is New York State's School Tax Relief Program that includes a school property tax rebate program and a partial property tax exemption from school taxes. All New Yorkers who own and live in their one-, two-, or three-family home, condominium, cooperative apartment, manufactured home, or farm dwelling are eligible for STAR on their primary residence. For information about the STAR rebate program, please visit the website of the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance or call 518-457-2036.

Understanding the New Tax Cap Laws:

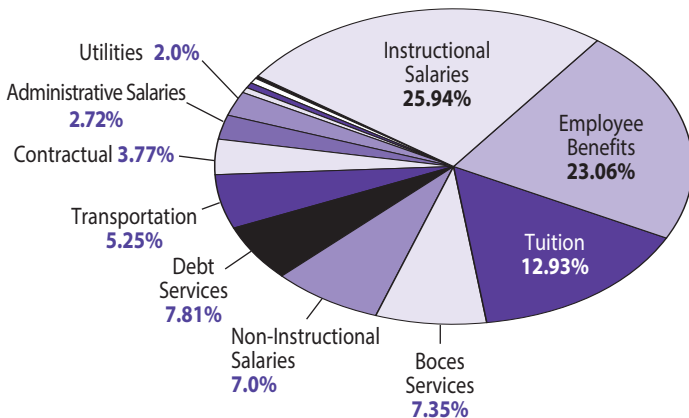
The law does not prohibit tax levy increases greater than 2% despite how it has been described. The law requires districts to calculate their own tax levy limit based on the law which includes exemptions for voter-approved local capital expenditures, increases in pension rates that exceed 2 points; and court order judgments. The Troy City School District's maximum allowable tax levy increase is 2.75%. The District is proposing a 2.49% levy increase which is below the maximum allowable by law.

Expenditures — How is the money spent?

| BUDGET CATEGORY | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | DIFFERENCE | % CHANGE |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Administrative Salaries | 2,759,988 | 2,942,969 | 182,981 | 6.63% |
| Non-Instructional Salaries | 7,550,341 | 7,575,690 | 25,349 | 0.34% |
| Instructional Salaries | 26,962,203 | 28,056,770 | 1,094,567 | 4.06% |
| BOCES Services | 8,911,671 | 7,954,373 | (957,298) | -10.74% |
| Tuition | 14,284,878 | 13,985,808 | (299,070) | -2.09% |
| Aided Materials | 654,739 | 685,739 | 31,000 | 4.73% |
| Transportation | 5,581,863 | 5,678,846 | 96,983 | 1.74% |
| Debt Service | 8,603,873 | 8,442,997 | (160,876) | -1.87% |
| Employee Benefits | 23,943,510 | 24,945,506 | 1,001,996 | 4.18% |
| Equipment | 561,194 | 625,290 | 64,096 | 11.42% |
| Interfund Transfers | 218,000 | 218,000 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Supplies | 705,016 | 810,995 | 105,979 | 15.03% |
| Utilities | 2,224,000 | 2,159,500 | (64,500) | -2.90% |
| Contractual | 3,827,588 | 4,081,367 | 253,778 | 6.63% |
| TOTAL GEN. FUND BUDGET | 106,788,864 | 108,163,850 | 1,374,986 | 1.29% |

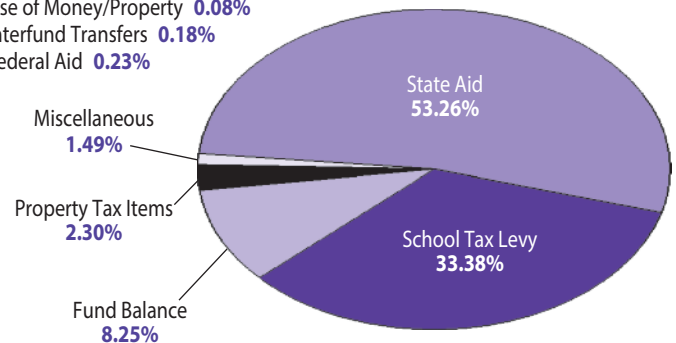
Expenditures

Supplies **0.75%** Aided Materials **0.63%**
 Equipment **0.58%** Interfund Transfers **0.2%**



Revenues

Charges for Services **0.76%**
 Property Sale & Comp for Loss **0.05%**
 Use of Money/Property **0.08%**
 Interfund Transfers **0.18%**
 Federal Aid **0.23%**



Revenues — Where does the money come from?

| REVENUE CATEGORY | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | DIFFERENCE | % CHANGE |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Real Property Tax Items | 2,380,000 | 2,490,000 | 110,000 | 4.62% |
| Charges for Services | 823,850 | 826,875 | 3,025 | 0.37% |
| Use of Money & Property | 104,500 | 89,500 | (15,000) | -14.35% |
| Sale of Property & Comp for Loss | 51,600 | 54,600 | 3,000 | 5.81% |
| Miscellaneous | 1,607,666 | 1,607,666 | 0 | 0.00% |
| State Aid | 57,364,306 | 57,610,992 | 246,686 | 0.43% |
| Federal Aid | 300,000 | 250,000 | (50,000) | -16.67% |
| Interfund Transfers | 0 | 200,000 | 200,000 | 0.00% |
| Fund Balance | 8,925,000 | 8,925,000 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Total other than Tax Levy | 71,556,922 | 72,054,633 | 497,711 | 0.07% |
| School Tax Levy | 35,231,942 | 36,109,217 | 877,275 | 2.49% |
| TOTAL GEN. FUND REVENUE | 106,788,864 | 108,163,850 | 1,374,986 | 1.29% |

TROY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT: SCHOOL BUDGET NOTICE

| Overall Budget Proposal | Budget Adopted for the 2014-15 School Year | Budget Proposed for the 2015-16 School Year | Contingency Budget for the 2015-16 School Year * | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|-------------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions | \$106,788,864 | \$108,163,850 | \$107,286,575 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Increase/Decrease for the 2015-16 School Year | | \$1,374,986 | \$497,711 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget | | 1.29 % | 0.47% | | | | | | | | | | |
| Change in the Consumer Price Index | | 1.62 % | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | \$35,231,942 | \$36,109,217 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable ** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D) | \$35,231,942 | \$36,109,217 | \$35,231,942 | | | | | | | | | | |
| F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit | \$967,115 | \$1,167,768 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions | \$34,474,359 | \$35,034,561 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H. Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, <u>Excluding</u> Permissible Exclusions and Levy for Library Debt, Plus Prior Year Tax Cap Reserve (E - B - F + D) | \$34,264,827 | \$34,941,449 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I. Difference: (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) ** | \$209,532 | \$93,112 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative Component | \$10,301,142 | \$10,614,067 | \$10,463,920 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Program Component | \$79,362,329 | \$80,463,661 | \$79,961,533 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital Component | \$17,125,393 | \$17,086,122 | \$16,861,122 | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>* A contingency budget means that the District cannot raise the overall tax levy. If the District goes to a contingency budget, the District will be required to cut an additional \$877,275 from the budget. This would result in the loss of teaching and non-instructional positions throughout the District and would be devastating to student programs. It would also prohibit the purchase of student supplies and equipment, including computers and technology equipment.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Description</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>** 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)</p> | | | | Description | Amount | | | | | | | | |
| Description | Amount | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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NOTE: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to:
emscmgts@nysed.gov

Under the Budget
Proposed for the 2015-16
School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$587

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2015-2016 by the qualified voters of the Enlarged City School District of Troy, Rensselaer County, New York, will be held at all elementary schools in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 between the hours of 7:00am and 8:00pm, prevailing time in PS2, PS12, PS14, PS16, PS18 and Carroll Hill, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. ⁽¹⁾ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law).



Troy City School District
475 First Street
Troy, New York 12180

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Donna Watson, *Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction*
Terry Blanchfield, *Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business*
Kristen Miaski, *Director of Human Resources*

District Office: (518) 328-5052

www.troycsd.org

**BUDGET
VOTE**
BOE Election
**TUESDAY
MAY 19**

Produced by Questar III Communications Service

Today's Students. Tomorrow's Leaders.

School 2 promises innovation

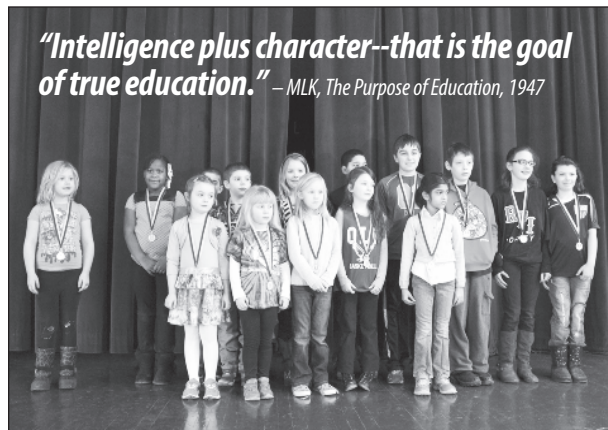


"Project PROMISE" is a unique school-wide program at School 2. The purpose is to motivate students, increase parent participation and build a strong sense of community. PROMISE stands for Promise, Resilience, Opportunity, Motivation, Innovation, Service and Empowerment. Students and families recently participated in one of the many PROMISE Saturday events held this year. Participants joined WMHT Public Television in a "Ready to Learn" workshop to conduct a science experiment. They learned

what happens when you mix oil and water, and they created their own lava lamps from basic kitchen supplies.

As a Priority School, School 2 is committed to turnaround and reform. School 2 offers uniforms; an extended school day; grade level instructional coaches and family supports in an on-site Community School environment.

"Intelligence plus character--that is the goal of true education." — MLK, *The Purpose of Education*, 1947



Students at School 18 smile for the camera after they received the "Principal's Character Award" during a ceremony on February 6, 2015. This medal is the highest award given to the school's elementary students. The award is based on integrity, character, and the willingness to put forth hard work. Parents and guests were invited for a special breakfast for the students.



Commissioner visits P-TECH

Earlier this year, State Education Department Commissioner John King met with the inaugural Troy Riverfront P-TECH class to learn about the program as an education model for the future.

The very first cohort of students will successfully complete their first year of the Troy Riverfront P-TECH program this June. A new cohort of 32 students has been selected and is preparing for their first year in the program. P-TECH puts high school students on a direct career path to the region's most in-demand fields including technology, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing. Students take a combination of high school and college level courses, and receive an Associate's Degree, with no cost to the student or their families. It is one of only 16 programs of its kind in the state.