

FOCUS

EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
NEWSLETTER
MAY 2016

**BUDGET
VOTE**
TUESDAY

MAY 17

7 a.m. – 9 p.m.

WHAT WILL I BE VOTING ON?

1. A \$90,133,002 budget for the 2016-17 school year
2. Two school bus propositions (see page 4)
3. Three vacant Board of Education seats (see page 7)

**Tax levy
increase of
1.92% is
within the
limits set
by the NYS
Property
Tax Cap**

2016-17 School Budget Maintains All Programs and Stays Under Tax Cap

On May 17, District residents will vote on the \$90.1 million proposed school budget. The proposed budget would maintain all current programs and services with a **tax levy increase of 1.92%**, which is below the state tax cap of 3.35%.

Two other propositions on the ballot include the purchase of new school buses.

BUDGET AT A GLANCE:

- Total 2016-17 proposed budget is \$90,133,002
- Property tax levy increase of 1.92%
- Replacement of 10 school buses

Spring Festival!

You are invited to the 4th annual Spring Festival on Tuesday, May 17, 3-7 p.m at Howard L. Goff Middle School. The event will feature:

- Student Artwork
- Student Music
- Crafts
- Activities
- Food/Drinks

For a complete list of activities and locations visit the District website at
www.egcsd.org



Budget Q & A

For more information about the budget, visit www.egcsd.org/budget

Who creates the school budget?

School administrators develop a budget in coordination with the Budget Review and Advisory Committee, the Board of Education and members of the community. The Board adopts the proposed budget and submits it for voter approval.

What ongoing strategies does the district use to contain costs?

East Greenbush has instituted a number of changes to reduce costs district-wide. Some examples include:

- Contract settlements with major unions including CSEA, EGTA and EGAA increased co-pays on prescriptions and employee contributions toward health insurance, helping the district to realize nearly \$1.5 million in savings in healthcare costs.
- Participation in an energy conservation program for the last nine years saved an estimated \$3.1 million.
- Self-insurance for workers compensation and dental insurance.
- Reduced printed newsletters and correspondence.
- Use of Bus Purchase Reserve Fund approved by voters in 2010 to acquire new buses totaling \$2.6 million and avoiding interest payments.
- Early repayment of retirement incentives to state retirement systems saved an estimated \$210,000 in interest costs.
- Modification of transportation for day care, changing bell times and consolidation of bus routes saved an estimated \$115,000.

If the tax levy increases by 1.92%, does that mean my tax bill will increase by 1.92%?

Not necessarily. Your tax bill is based on a number of factors outside the control of the school district – such as your home’s assessment, equalization rates, the total assessment base, property exemptions and STAR savings.

What happens if the budget is defeated?

If voters do not approve the budget on May 17, the Board of Education has 3 options:

1. Present the same budget to voters on the statewide Budget Re-Vote Day, June 21
2. Present a modified budget to voters on Budget Re-Vote Day
3. Adopt a contingency budget

If the budget is again defeated on June 21, the Board is required to adopt a contingency budget.

What are the requirements of a contingency budget?

Under contingency budget rules, the district will need to remove all non-contingent items from the proposed budget, such as certain equipment, school food service financial support and unreimbursed community use of facilities. Certain contingent, but non-mandated expenses may also be affected, for example, interscholastic athletics; co-curricular activities; art, music and physical education for grades K-6; and library services.

A contingency budget would require the budget be reduced by an additional \$967,677. All state-mandated programs, whether funded by state aid or not, would need to be retained.



DISTRICT-WIDE

ARTS FESTIVAL

Thursday, May 12 • 6 – 8 p.m.

COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL

BUDGET REVENUES

Category	Current Budget 2015-2016	Proposed Budget 2016-2017
Local Property Tax Levy	\$ 50,327,256	\$ 51,294,933
State and Federal Aid	27,735,929	28,189,093
Other Receipts	5,917,656	5,518,354
Fund Balance	4,200,488	5,130,622
Totals:	\$ 88,181,329	\$ 90,133,002

BUDGET EXPENDITURES

Category	Current Budget 2015-2016	Proposed Budget 2016-2017
Board of Education, Central Administration Operations, Legal Services, Personnel & Public Information	\$ 1,773,308	\$ 1,796,736
Central Services	5,876,642	5,970,536
Insurance & Contractual Items	1,023,013	1,086,033
Instructional Programs	41,692,064	43,383,423
Pupil Transportation	5,005,865	4,948,905
Payroll Taxes & Benefits	25,846,880	25,903,106
Voter Approved Referenda	6,963,557	7,044,263
Totals:	\$ 88,181,329	\$ 90,133,002

East Greenbush CSD Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2015-16 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2016-17 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2016-17 School Year *								
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 88,181,329	\$ 90,133,002	\$ 89,165,325								
Increase/Decrease for the 2016-17 School Year		\$ 1,951,673	\$ 983,996								
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.21 %	1.12 %								
Change in the Consumer Price Index		0.12 %									
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount, Net of Reserve	\$ 50,327,256	\$ 51,294,933									
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)	\$ 50,327,256	\$ 51,294,933	\$ 50,327,256								
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 0	\$ 800,563									
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 50,865,415	\$ 51,214,506									
H. Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$ 50,327,256	\$ 50,494,370									
I. Difference: (G – H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$ 538,159	\$ 720,136									
Administrative Component	\$ 10,475,347	\$ 10,600,160	\$ 10,494,217								
Program Component	\$ 63,905,126	\$ 65,592,661	\$ 64,970,045								
Capital Component	\$ 13,800,856	\$ 13,940,181	\$ 13,701,063								
<p>* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2016-17 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law. A school district is limited to two votes annually; the second vote is optional and scheduled at the Board of Education's discretion. If a school budget is defeated twice, the Board must adopt a contingency budget, may not increase the tax levy from the prior year and must eliminate non-contingent expenses such as non-reimbursed community use of buildings and grounds, certain equipment, and financial support for school food service. Certain contingent, but non-mandated expenses may also be affected, including interscholastic athletics, co-curricular activities, certain art/music/physical education at grades K-6 and school library.</p> <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> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 80%;">Description</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>				Description	Amount						
Description	Amount										

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2016-17 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$ 525

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2016-2017 by the qualified voters of the East Greenbush Central School District, Rensselaer & Columbia Counties, New York, will be held at D.P. Sutherland, Green Meadow, Bell Top and Howard L. Goff Schools in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the above mentioned schools, 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.

Voter Propositions on the May 17 Ballot

Proposition No. 1 (Budget)

RESOLVED; That the operating budget, in the amount of \$90,133,002, as proposed by the Board of Education, be adopted for the school fiscal year 2016 – 2017 and the levy of taxes be assessed therefore in accordance with law.

Proposition No. 2 (School Buses)

RESOLVED; (a) That the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District, in the Counties of Rensselaer and Columbia, New York (the “District”), is hereby authorized to purchase various school buses and to expend therefore, including preliminary costs and costs incidental thereto and the financing thereof, an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$602,834; (b) that the Board of Education is hereby authorized to expend \$602,834 for the vehicles referred to herein from the District’s “Capital Reserve Fund – Bus Purchase” which was established pursuant to voter approval on May 18, 2010; and (c) that the Board of Education is hereby further authorized to deposit in such fund an amount up to 100% of any State aid received in any year with respect to purchase of vehicles.

Proposition No. 3 (School Buses Bond)

RESOLVED; (a) That the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District, in the Counties of Rensselaer and Columbia, New York (the “District”), is hereby authorized to purchase various school buses and to expend therefor, including preliminary costs and costs incidental thereto and the financing thereof, an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$339,848; (b) that a tax is hereby voted therefor in the aggregate amount of not to exceed \$339,848 to pay such cost, said tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by said Board of Education; (c) that in anticipation of said tax, bonds of the District are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of not to exceed \$339,848 and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said bonds as the same shall become due and payable; and (d) that an amount equal to 100% of any State aid received in any year with respect to the purchase of the vehicles referred to herein shall be deposited into the District’s “Capital Reserve Fund – Bus Purchase” which was established pursuant to voter approval on May 18, 2010.

With voter approval, New York State will reimburse the District for 59.6% of the total bus purchase.

Q & A: PROPOSITION 2 and 3

Why are we purchasing new buses?

To maintain the highest degree of safety for our students and drivers, better fuel efficiency, lower emissions and low repair costs.

If Propositions 2 and 3 are approved, how many buses will we purchase?

If Propositions 2 and 3 are approved, the District plans to trade-in 10 old buses and replace them with 10 new buses (six 66-passenger buses, two 28-passenger buses and two 28-passenger buses with four wheel drive).

How do you decide which buses to replace?

Several factors are taken into consideration, including: industry standards, total mileage, body condition and repair expenses over time. Normally, small buses have an expected life of 8 to 10 years while larger buses may last 12 to 15 years.

What is the cost to taxpayers for Propositions 2 and 3?

There is no impact to taxpayers for Proposition 2 because the purchases will be made out of the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund. There will be no impact to taxpayers in 2016-17 for Proposition 3 because the first debt payment would be made in 2017-18.

Why don't we buy all the buses from the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund?

The Bus Purchase Reserve Fund has a balance of approximately \$634,975. The cost to purchase 10 buses would overdraw that account, which is not allowed by law. So the District must borrow to pay for the remainder of the buses.

Are there any rebates or refunds for these bus purchases?

Yes. New York State will reimburse the District for 59.6% of the total bus purchase. These funds will be deposited in the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund, which was approved by voters in 2010.

Columbia Wins Back-to-Back Science Olympiad State Championships

Columbia's Science Olympiad Team defended its state championship in March, placing first among 54 schools from throughout New York in a series of STEM events. Columbia advances to the national championship which will be held on May 20 and 21 at the University of Wisconsin at Stout.

All 15 team members earned at least one individual medal, and as a team, they earned 19 total medals. The event tests high school students in STEM topics such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, engineering and mathematics.

"After difficulties with an event early in the day, the team pulled together to overcome the adversity they were facing," said Columbia's head coach Diana Prout. "They never gave up and supported each other to reach their goal of defending their title as New York State champions."

Columbia won the 2015 Science Olympiad state championship and then placed 14th at the national championships last May.



Learning Beyond Classroom Walls

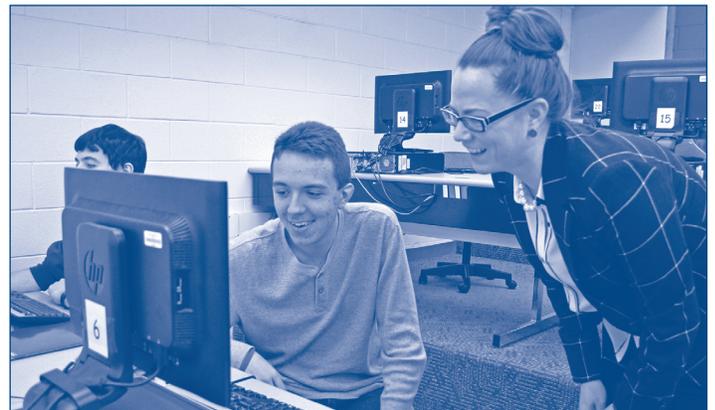
Columbia High School is fostering collaboration and convenience with the free service Google Apps for Education. Beginning on February 1, all high school students were given Google accounts, providing access to email and its applications for documents, presentations and other features.

English teacher Kate Hastings is one of many teachers to implement this in class. Students in Hastings' "Literature, Culture and Society" class watched TV commercials and then wrote a media literacy analysis. Students submitted their essays through Google Classroom, one of the Google Apps features, where Hastings can read them, grade them and make comments, before she returns them digitally to students.

"It's so intuitive that they're having an easy time figuring it out," Hastings said.

Students were given Digital Citizenship training and signed a Digital Social Contract to encourage proper use of the new technology.

"I like using Google because it's convenient," said Erik Ferrari, a senior in Hastings' class. He said it made working on a group project easier because students could share a document online and make real-time changes from different locations.



"This is about collaborative learning and extending the reach of the classroom," said Dr. Lynne Pampel, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

The partnership with Google Apps is just one component in a long-term instructional technology plan. The District will be using \$2.3 million in state funding to add wireless Internet at all seven schools, enhance security features and upgrade classroom technology with new interactive whiteboards and tablets over the next few years.

"Enhancing our instructional technology will improve innovation and student engagement," Pampel said. "It opens up so many more opportunities for our students to learn."

2015-16 Highlights

- 91% of the Class of 2015 went on to a college or vocational school
 - Boston College, California Berkeley, Georgetown, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Syracuse University, Yale
- Columbia High School's graduation rate for 2015 was 93%, up from 92%
 - State average is 78%
- Ranked 4th best high school and 5th best school district among 84 Capital Region school districts (*Albany Business Review*)
- Columbia High School ranked in top 10% of high schools in the United States in 2015 and 2016 (*U.S. News & World Report*)
- Bell Top Elementary School was named a Reward School by the NYS Education Department based on its high academic achievement
- Columbia's Science Olympiad Team won its second consecutive state championship in March and advanced to nationals
- Goff's Science Olympiad Team won the regional championship and placed third at states
- Columbia Girls Bowling won the NYS Championship in February
- Goff PE Teacher Curtis Sankey was named EGTA Teacher of the Year
- DPS and Green Meadow Social Worker Bennett Kelvin was nominated for the New York Association of School Psychologists School Practitioner of the Year Award
- Janet Kaiser received the School Social Worker Award in Character Education from the Academy for Character Education at The Sage Colleges
- Dr. James Baldwin '72, Andria (Obermayer) Hanley '84 and Andrea Neiman '01 were inducted into the Columbia High School Hall of Fame and Burke Adams received the Community Service award at the East Greenbush Education Foundation Gala
- Red Mill Special Education Teacher Paula Sobol was named Special Educator of the Year by the East Greenbush Special Needs Parent Support Group



- Bell Top's Melissa Gilligan and Columbia's Andrea Neiman were named Channel 13 Teachers of the Week
- Columbia won the State Sportsmanship Award for the third straight year from the New York State Public High School Athletic Association
- John Devine was named *Troy Record* Wrestler of the Year
- Bus Driver Jill Bonesteel won the 2016 Excelsior Award from the New York State Public High School Athletic Association
- Eighth grader Jake Goodman played Ralphie in the production "A Christmas Story" at Capital Rep in December
- Columbia junior Ronnie Shuhart won a statewide poster contest advocating for an end to cyberbullying
- 30 students presented their artwork at Siena College's 29th annual Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King Lecture Series on Race and Nonviolent Social Change
- Alisha DeCelle's class at Genet Elementary School won a local math competition for schools from Columbia, Rensselaer and Greene counties
- Bell Top's Butterfly Garden was named a Monarch Waystation by the nonprofit group Monarch Watch, an affiliate program of the Kansas Biological Survey
- Genet Elementary School is celebrating its 75th anniversary all school year by incorporating its history into classwork and special events
- Columbia High School launched a new STEM Academy this past fall
- The East Greenbush Education Foundation raised \$10,000 for student enrichment grants at its annual gala in April
- The District retained its "high grade" Aa3 credit rating from Moody's Investors Service in January
- For the third straight year, East Greenbush Central School District received a "no designation" fiscal stress score from the New York State Comptroller's Office, indicating a low level of fiscal stress
- The District saved more than \$350,000 last year as part of its energy savings program



Board of Education Candidates

There are three open seats for the Board of Education. Qualified district residents may vote for up to three persons to fill these positions. The statements below were submitted by the candidates who filed nominating petitions.



KAREN CURRAN

My husband Paul and I have been residents of East Greenbush for over 17 years. We have two boys: Dylan, who is a graduate of Columbia High School, and Corey, who currently attends Columbia High School. I have a master's degree in physical therapy and a minor in psychology. I'm currently employed by PRN Physical & Occupational Therapy as a physical therapist.

My family has been positively affected by the many terrific teachers and staff within our district. I've had the privilege of being able to volunteer in elementary school classrooms, assist with the Junior Achievement Program and coach many Odyssey of the Mind teams. I have found volunteering in our district for many years to be a rewarding and positive experience.

I have also served on the Board of Education for the past nine years. In that capacity, I am a member of many school committees. I know the dedication, hard work, challenges and time commitment this position requires. I believe we should provide opportunity for all children to achieve their highest potential in a fiscally responsible manner for our community. If re-elected, I will continue to strive to provide quality education for every child in our great district.



JAMES GIORDANO

I am currently Vice President and Chief Information Officer of Latham International Pools. I am a seasoned business executive, with roles in Information Technology leadership for more than 27 years. I started my career at IBM working as a programmer in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. After six years at IBM, I spent the next 10 years working in consulting for Symmetry

Consulting. Most recently I worked for General Electric in various executive leadership positions. I have a MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, a bachelor's degree in computer information systems from the SUNY College of Technology, and an associate's degree from Hudson Valley Community College.

I serve on the Board of Directors for Make-A-Wish Northeast NY. I have volunteered with the Boy Scouts throughout my entire life, and am currently the Scoutmaster for Troop 522 in East Schodack. I am also an Executive In Residence for RPI, where I assist students in the Startup community.

I attended the East Greenbush School District, graduating from Columbia in 1985. I live in East Greenbush with my wife Sandy, and our sons Jared and Matt.

East Greenbush CSD Ranks 5th in Capital Region

East Greenbush moved into the Capital Region's top five districts in the *Albany Business Review's* 2015 Schools Report rankings.

The annual report uses data from the NYS Education Department to rank 84 school districts in the 11-county Capital Region. Columbia High School ranked 4th among the area's high schools.



SHAY HARRISON

I am a candidate for a third term on the EGCS D Board of Education. Our school district has undergone a great deal of transition over the last six years that I've been on the Board. The changes to the district's fiscal management, staff monitoring and assessments, and academic program and testing requirements are largely in place and in process

of full implementation across our seven schools and supporting departments. The Board has worked together diligently to meet these requirements and add needed programs and services for the students. The next important step is the installation of our new superintendent, Mr. Simons, and I would like to have the opportunity to work with him in his transition as he takes over leadership of the district. My goal is to assist Mr. Simons in establishing a culture and environment among the staff and students that is open, respectful and trusting.

I graduated from Columbia High School in 1990 and presently work in industrial research and development for a company in Saratoga. I reside in East Schodack.



East Greenbush Central School District
 ADMINISTRATION CENTER
 29 Englewood Avenue
 East Greenbush, NY 12061

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2015-2016 Board of Education

- Dr. Shay Harrison, *President*
- Mark Mann, *Vice-President*
- Michael Buono
- Karen Curran, *Assistant Clerk*
- Kathleen Curtin
- John J. Dunn, Jr.
- Katherine Maciol
- Jennifer Massey
- JoAnn Taylor, *Deputy Treasurer*

DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE MAIL IMMEDIATELY

The East Greenbush Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or marital status, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by State or Federal law in any of its employment decisions; and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, and NYS Human Rights Laws.

Produced by Questar III's Communications Service

Voting Information

VOTER REGISTRATION:

You are already registered to vote if you have voted in a school election within the last 4 years (or are registered with the County Board of Elections). To register:

- Go to the Office of the District Clerk, 29 Englewood Avenue, East Greenbush, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on regular days of business
- Bring photo ID with a current address
- If you have moved, also bring other means of residential identification, such as a utility bill, phone bill or other official document

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS:

- Age 18 or older
- U.S. Citizen
- Resident of the district for at least 30 days prior to the vote
- Registered to vote

VOTING BY ABSENTEE BALLOT:

Qualified district residents who are unable to go to the polls may cast their votes by absentee ballot. An application is required first and may be obtained by calling the District Office at 207-2535. Applications are also available on the District's website at www.egcsd.org. The due date for applications is Tuesday, May 10, 2016 if received by mail or Monday, May 16, 2016 if received in person at the District Office.

Once a completed application is approved, an absentee ballot is issued to the voter; it must be returned to the District Clerk's Office by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17, 2016. Note that individuals designated as permanently disabled by the Rensselaer County Board of Elections will automatically receive an absentee ballot.

BUDGET VOTE

TUESDAY • MAY 17

7 a.m. – 9 p.m.

POLLING SITES:

1. Bell Top Elementary School – Residents of the Town of North Greenbush
2. Howard L. Goff Middle School – Residents of the Town of East Greenbush
3. Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School – Residents of the Towns of Sand Lake or Chatham or residents with a Nassau mailing address
4. Green Meadow Elementary School – Residents of the Town of Schodack who do not have a Nassau mailing address

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