



Harborfields CSD 2015-16 Proposed BUDGET

VOTING
Tuesday, May 19
2-9 p.m.
at OMS Auditorium



Letter from the **BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENT**

Dear Harborfields Residents:

On Tuesday, May 19, voters will head to the polls to vote on the district's proposed budget for the 2015-16 school year. For the fourth year in a row, the Board is presenting a budget that falls within the district's tax levy cap. The proposed spending plan calls for a budget increase of 1.0 percent, which equates to a tax levy increase of 1.74 percent.

As a Board of Education, our goal, as always, is to provide programs and services that support our students and help them succeed while at the same time remaining fiscally responsible to the taxpayers in the community. The proposed budget meets this goal.

The spending plan not only falls

within the tax levy cap, but also maintains and enhances the core of the district's programs. Class size guidelines are being maintained as are AP and elective courses at the high school, music performance groups in grades 4-12 and athletic teams for grades 7-12. Several programs that were cut over the past several years are being restored, as well. The proposed spending plan represents a slight reduction in staffing due to enrollment decline (the projected enrollment for 2015-16 will decline by approximately 114 students). For complete details on what is being proposed through this budget, please see page 3 of this newsletter.

We thank the community for its continued involvement in and support of the district and invite all residents to learn more about the proposed spending plan by attending the formal budget hearing on Tuesday, May 12 at 7:45 p.m. at Oldfield Middle School. Additional budget material can be found on the district's website, www.harborfieldscsd.net. Please make every effort to vote on Tuesday, May 19. Polls will be open from 2-9 p.m. at Oldfield Middle School. Your vote is your voice!

Sincerely,
The Harborfields Board of Education
and Superintendent of Schools
Diana Todaro

New York State law provides that all district budgets be identified in three categories:

Administrative Expenses

- Curriculum Development
- Staff Development
- In-Service Development
- Personnel
- District Audit
- Tax Collection
- Central Printing/Mailing
- District Votes

Program Expenses

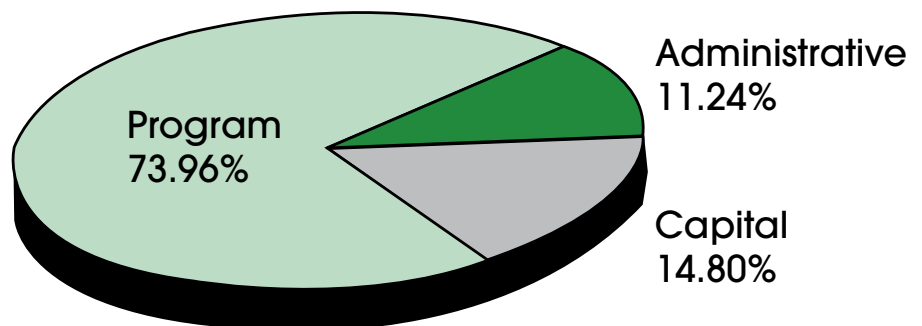
- All Student Services
- Instructional Support
- Transportation Operation
- Instructional Salaries and Benefits

Capital Expenses

- All Facilities Costs
- Debt Services
- Operations/Maintenance
- Supplies
- Utilities
- Personnel

Expenditures by Component

	Budget 2014-15	Proposed Budget 2015-16	Difference
<i>Administrative Component</i>			
Board of Education	\$89,368	\$90,072	\$704
Central Administration	707,131	640,768	-66,363
Finance	846,879	865,119	18,240
Legal Services	81,000	81,000	0
BOCES, Personnel Services	61,725	75,886	14,161
Public Information	104,425	105,691	1,266
Maintenance of Plant	121,037	129,543	8,506
Other Central Services	222,850	222,850	0
Insurance, BOCES & Other Items	634,934	646,064	11,130
Curriculum Development & Supv.	361,559	449,787	88,228
Supervision Regular School	2,497,236	2,466,365	-30,871
Res. Evaluation & Planning	7,300	7,300	0
Instruction (Net of Supervision)	721,872	581,830	-140,042
Employee Benefits	2,664,948	2,678,626	13,678
Total Administrative Component	\$9,122,264	\$9,040,901	-\$81,363
<i>Program Component</i>			
Legal Services	\$135,000	\$135,000	\$0
Instruction (Net of Supervision)	38,463,438	39,853,514	1,390,076
Contract Transportation	4,744,735	4,937,839	193,104
Employee Benefits	15,144,083	14,374,887	-769,196
Transfer to Special Aid Fund	220,000	220,000	0
Total Program Component	\$58,707,256	\$59,521,240	\$813,984
<i>Capital Component</i>			
Operation of Plant	\$4,452,927	\$4,509,465	\$56,538
Maintenance of Plant	823,581	830,699	7,118
Employee Benefits	1,953,836	1,942,100	-11,736
Debt Service	4,619,300	4,629,550	10,250
Total Capital Component	\$11,849,644	\$11,911,814	\$62,170
TOTAL BUDGET	\$79,679,165	\$80,473,955	\$794,791



Q A. Is the proposed budget within the tax levy cap?

Yes. The proposed budget results in a tax levy increase of 1.74 percent, within the district's allowable tax levy limit for 2015-16. As the increase falls within the cap, the approval of the proposed budget will require a simple majority vote of 50 percent plus 1 on May 19.

This is the fourth year that New Yorkers are adapting to the new tax laws mandated in June 2011 by state legislators. The levy increase is often referred to by politicians and

reporters as the "2 percent tax cap." This shorthand reference is rather misleading, as the



"2 percent cap" is actually a 2 percent growth factor that is included in a formula used to determine the maximum allowable tax levy increase on a district-by-district basis. Every school district throughout the state has its own tax levy cap. The formula the cap takes many factors into consideration; for example, certain capital projects are excluded from the cap. For Harborfields, the tax levy cap for 2015-16 is set at 1.74 percent, per New York State law. The proposed budget falls within this guideline.

Points of Pride:

- Harborfields High School placed 190th in the nation and 34th in New York State in the U.S. News and World Report's Best High Schools rankings. Additionally, the school ranked 96th in the nation for its STEM program.
- Harborfields High School ranked No. 282 in Newsweek's Top 500 public high schools.
- Harborfields Central School District ranked No. 18 in New York State and No. 1 in Suffolk County in the 2015 New York State Niche Ranking.
- Five Harborfields High School seniors were named 2015 National Merit finalists.
- Nine Harborfields High School students were recognized as Commended Students in the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- 78 Harborfields High School students were recognized as 2014 AP Scholars.
- 40 Harborfields High School students were recognized as 2014 AP Scholars with Honor, 72 were recognized as AP Scholars with Distinction and five were recognized as 2014 National AP Scholars.
- Harborfield High School offered 20 Advanced Placement course options, 13 honors-level courses, and eight courses in which college credit may be awarded during 2014-15.
- Present statistics indicate that approximately 92 percent of district graduates continue their formal education.
- Harborfields High School students consistently score higher than the national average on all areas of the SAT, including SAT subject tests.

Q A. How will the proposed budget impact taxes?

A complete copy of the proposed budget and a tax calculator are provided on the district's website, www.harborfieldscsd.net, and at each school building office. Residents can log onto the website and use the tax calculator to determine the impact of the proposed budget. For those who don't have access to the web, listed below is the formula for calculating your estimated tax increase for the proposed 2015-16 budget.

When using the formula listed below, please be sure to include the assessed value, after all exemptions, including STAR. If you are unsure of your assessed valuation, please contact the Town of Huntington or log onto Harborfields' website which provides access to the Town of Huntington's tax receiver's website.

**Estimated Tax Increase:
Assessed Valuation x .0419**

**Example: For a property assessed at \$4,000:
Estimated Tax Increase: \$4,000 x .0419
= \$167.60**

Q.A. So what program and staffing changes are included in the budget, and how will they impact students?

The proposed 2015-16 spending plan was established with the goal of maintaining, restoring and enhancing the core of the district's programs. While the proposed 1.74 percent levy falls within the district's tax levy cap, all current programs and services are maintained through the proposed spending plan. There will be a slight decrease in staffing due to projected student enrollment decline (there is a projected decline of approximately 114 students for 2015-16) and a restructuring of the high school guidance department.

The following **reductions** are proposed through the spending plan:

- Reduction of 3.5 K-6 teachers due to enrollment decline.
- Elimination of the director of guidance.
- Restructuring of the guidance program at HHS.
- Reduction of reserve allocation.

The following have been **preserved** in the current spending plan through effective planning and efficient spending:

- Class size guidelines.
- Grades 9-12 Advanced Placement and elective courses.
- Grades 7-12 athletic teams.
- Co-curricular activities at OMS and HHS.
- L.E.A.P. Enrichment Program at TJL.
- Summer Academy at WDPS and TJL.
- Technology and curriculum initiatives.

The proposed budget includes funding for the **restoration or addition** of certain programs. They include:

- Reinstatement of 0.5 librarian at Washington Drive.
- Reinstatement of 1.0 ESL teacher, resulting from a new state mandate.
- Reinstatement of 1.0 psychologist districtwide.
- Reinstatement of 1.0 grades K-6 PALS class.
- Reinstatement of 1.0 grades 6-12 guidance counselor and an addition of another 1.0 grades 6-12 counselor.
- Purchase of new textbook series for Common Core Algebra, ELA and math instructional resources.
- Purchase of school furniture and equipment.
- Continued support of data management.
- Continued enhancement of districtwide technology initiative, including instructional software.
- Continued support of staff professional development and consultant services.

Points of Pride:

- Oldfield Middle School offers five accelerated sections to students in the eighth grade.
- Harborfields students in grades 3-8 consistently score above average levels of proficiency on New York State ELA and math assessments.
- Harborfields teaching staff have been the recipients of honors including New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance's Elementary Health Educator of the Year, New York State United Teachers School Related Professional of the Year and New York State English Council's Educator of Excellence for 2014.
- One teacher was selected to participate in the New York State Education Department Business and Marketing Test Framework Review Conference.
- One principal received the 2014-15 Western Suffolk BOCES Model Schools Program Administrator of the Year award.
- Two Harborfields students were selected for the NafME 2015 All-Eastern Honors Ensembles.
- 54 Harborfields students were selected to the 2015 SCMEA All-County Music Festival.
- Harborfields High School's Global Justice Club won Stop & Shop's Fight Hunger Challenge when they collected more than 800 pounds of food to benefit the Harborfields Association Community Outreach.
- Three students were selected to perform in the 2015 SCMEA All-County Jazz Ensemble.
- Twenty-one students were inducted into the National Art Honor Society.



Q A. What happens if the budget is defeated?

Since the Board is proposing a budget that falls within the tax levy limit, the budget needs to be approved by a simple majority of voters (50 percent plus one). If voters defeat the proposed budget, the district has the option of putting forth the same budget for a second vote on the third Tuesday in June, presenting an amended budget or adopting a contingency budget. If the proposed budget fails for a second time, the district must adopt the contingency budget, in which the allowable tax levy increase is zero percent. For Harborfields, a contingency budget with a tax levy increase of zero percent would call for a cut of over \$1 million.

Q A. What is Proposition #2 and will it increase my taxes if approved?

In addition to voting on the proposed budget for 2015-16, residents will also have an opportunity to vote on a second proposition that seeks to establish a new capital reserve fund. This new reserve would be funded by the district's current capital reserve fund which is set to expire in 2016. This current fund, established in 2006, was established to replace

or repair school roofs and windows plus associated masonry. Since 2006 these needs have been addressed. The funds in the proposed new reserve would be used to address capital needs that the board identifies, and the community approves through a ballot referendum. The money that exists in the current reserve (approximately \$1.04 million) would be transferred to the new reserve fund if Proposition #2 is approved by the voters. Rather than paying principal and interest on borrowed funds, a capital reserve fund is essentially a savings account established to finance future building renovations and potential infrastructure needs. In addition, the district can earn interest on funds in a capital reserve fund until fully expended, and use that income to pay for capital projects. The establishment of a capital reserve fund enables the district to set aside potential future savings to fund certain capital projects. Most important, the proposed capital reserve fund requires voter approval, both to establish the reserve fund and to expend its funds at a later time. **If Proposition #2 is approved, it is important to note that there will be no increase in taxes.** Approval of the proposition merely allows the district to create the new reserve fund.

Points of Pride:

- One student won an Award of Excellence at the Huntington Art Council's High Arts Showcase.
- Two students were selected to participate in Long Island's Best Competition, an arts-in-education program that integrates experiences in the Heckscher Museum into the high school art classroom.
- Four Harborfields High School students competed in the Long Island Science and Engineering Fair.
- Athletic teams continue to earn Suffolk County Scholar Athlete and Most Outstanding Sportsmanship team honors.
- One teacher was named New York State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Elementary Health Educator of the Year.
- The athletic program and its student-athletes boast numerous recognitions, including New York State Champions, League Champions, Most Outstanding Sportsmanship Teams, and All-County, All-League, All-Conference and All-Academic teams.





What exemptions are available to help taxpayers?

Homeowners in the Town of Huntington will still receive property tax exemptions under the School Tax Relief program. New York State reimburses the school district for homeowners' STAR savings. Under state law, STAR exemptions can now grow by only 2 percent per year. There are two STAR exemptions, Basic STAR and Enhanced STAR.

Anyone who owns his or her home and lives in it while earning less than \$500,000 is eligible for the Basic STAR exemption. The Enhanced STAR exemption is available on the primary residence of Town of Huntington residents age 65 and up with yearly incomes below \$79,050. To receive this exemption, age and income documentation must be provided by applicants by the following Dec. 31 and must be renewed annually.

Town of Huntington residents may also be eligible for the Home Improvement Exemption. This exemption does not apply to new home assessments, additions to homes where the original home is less than 5 years old, or additions that expand the living area of the home by double (or more).

Additional exemptions are available to volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers as well as senior citizens, persons with disabilities with limited incomes and veterans. For more specific information, as well as applications and instructions, please contact the town assessor's office.

Board of Education Candidates



**CHRISTOPHER
KELLY**

Christopher Kelly, a resident of the district for seven and a half years, has one child who attends Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School and two who are non-school age. Mr. Kelly is a market data business advisor and has coached local soccer for the past five years. He feels that the most important issue facing the district right now is ensuring that the district is doing all it can to support students, parents and teachers to meet the Common Core Standards while at the same time providing a well-rounded and engaging educational experience. Mr. Kelly believes that full-day kindergarten is a must in helping the district achieve this goal. He also says that ELA and math are crucial; however, areas like technology, science, the arts and athletics are just as important. "We need to be more creative to avoid budget cuts in these areas," he said. "We need to restore lost funds to our library/media programs to support our educational curriculum. My goal is to do all this while operating under the budget constraints the taxpayers expect." Mr. Kelly believes he can bring his analytical, organizational and communication skills to his position on the Board to support all students, teachers and taxpayers.



**SUZIE
LUSTIG**

Suzie Lustig, a resident of the district for 22 years, has three children, two of whom currently attend schools within the district and another who graduated in 2013. A stay-at-home mom, community volunteer and former public relations and corporate communications specialist, Ms. Lustig has served as the Council of PTAs "Get Out the Vote" chair since 2013. She has also served on the district's Advisory Committee since 2013 and has held multiple PTA positions since 2007, including HHS corresponding secretary, TJJ president, OMS corresponding secretary and Washington Drive vice president. She is involved in multiple community organizations, including Temple Beth El, Toastmasters International, Girl Scouts, Chutzpah Repertory Theater and Community Theater. Ms. Lustig notes that the greatest challenge facing the district is found in continually striving to provide students with a well-rounded and enriching educational experience within the constraints of a budget that does not overburden the taxpaying community. "Meeting this challenge involves a multi-step process, but the number one priority in achieving this would be the creation of a three- to five-year development strategy, which would enable our district to enact proactive budget plans rather than make reactionary annual decisions," she said.

Voters will have the opportunity to elect three members to the Board of Education, each for a three-year term. Candidates run at-large, meaning that the three candidates who receive the largest number of votes will be elected. On Monday, May 11, the Council of PTAs will sponsor a Meet the Candidates Forum at Oldfield Middle School at 7 p.m. Additional information regarding the Board of Education candidates can be found on the district website at www.harborfieldscsd.net.



**DONALD
MASTROIANNI**

Donald Mastroianni, a resident of the district for the past 49 years, is the current vice president of the Board of Education. He has served on the Board since 2006 and has held the position as president. He also served 10 years as president of a neighborhood association in Centerport and is employed as a chief financial officer and chief operating officer. Mr. Mastroianni has three children, all of whom attend Harborfields High School. He believes that state impositions such as the Gap Elimination Adjustment on school district aid, along with other high-cost mandates, unrealistic deadlines, etc., represent the most significant challenges to the district. He also believes that the Harborfields tradition of providing an excellent and highly ranked education, combined with offering enrichment opportunities for all students, continues to be overwhelmingly impacted by state impositions that are out of the district's control. "My professional background in finance, experience from serving diligently on the Board for the past nine years and leadership positions I've held on the Board, along with working cohesively with my Board colleagues, district leadership and local legislators, enables me to effectively continue working on behalf of our students and the taxpaying community in Harborfields," he said. Mr. Mastroianni holds a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from New York University.



**DR. THOMAS
MCDONAGH**

Thomas McDonagh, a resident of the district for 23 years, has four children, three of whom have graduated and one who currently attends Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School. Dr. McDonagh is a pediatrician and serves as the current president of the Board of Education, a position he has held since 2012. He has served on the Board since 2008 and is also the past president of the Huntington Medical Group and the past chief of pediatrics at Huntington Hospital. "I have the leadership skills to coalesce divergent constituencies in the district, which will continue to move Harborfields toward the goal of enhancing the educational experiences of our students," he said. Dr. McDonagh holds a Bachelor of Arts from Haverford College and a Doctor of Medicine from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.



**COLLEEN
RAPPA**

Colleen Rappa, a resident of the district for 17 years, is a stay-at-home mom and former attorney. She has five sons, three of whom graduated in 2014, one who is a student at Oldfield Middle School and one who attends Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School. According to Ms. Rappa, one challenge the district faces is how it can create programs and pathways that prepare students for postsecondary education and meaningful employment in the era of the property tax cap laws and the New York State Regents Reform Act. She recommends that the district create a state-of-the-art communications art program that encompasses various communication modes (film, TV, radio, social media), integrates the current arts programs in the district, and incorporates a film production studio with the latest technology to help establish an alternate pathway for diplomas and certificates for students of all abilities. She believes this can be done by establishing stakeholder support and providing a benefit for each stakeholder. "Everything we do is wrapped around the communication and technology fields," Ms. Rappa said. "Every student, whether academically gifted or delayed, can learn and be inspired by the communication [and film production] classes."

**Q
A.**

Will residents be eligible for the property tax rebate as included in the state's budget?

According to the law this year, a homeowner will receive a property tax rebate check from New York State sometime this fall if the following criteria are met: 1) The school district's budget must stay at or below the tax levy cap for 2015-16; 2) the district must demonstrate a savings of 1 percent in the tax levy over the next few years to the state; and 3) the homeowner is eligible for the STAR exemption. Effectively, this equates to a freeze on a resident's school property taxes.

RETURN ADDRESS:

Harborfields Central School District
2 Oldfield Road
Greenlawn, NY 11740-1200

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VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

A person shall be entitled to vote if he or she is 18 years of age or older, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of the school district for 30 days preceding the meeting at which the person offers to vote.

REGISTERING TO VOTE

Community members who wish to vote at the annual budget vote and election for Harborfields should register in advance through the Suffolk County Board of Elections, the same as if they were voting in any other election (town, county, state, etc.). Any community member not already registered with the Suffolk County Board of Elections may appear on the day of the budget vote and, once it is determined that he or she meet the criteria discussed above, his or her name will be added to the poll list and he or she may cast a ballot.



ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Absentee ballots are provided upon proper application to any qualified voter who will be unable to vote in person due to illness or physical disability, hospitalization, incarceration (unless incarcerated for conviction of a felony), or travel outside the voter’s county of residence for employment or business reasons, studies or vacation on the day of the election.

Absentee ballot applications must be received by the district clerk or designee at least seven days before the election, if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the election, if the ballot is to be issued to the voter in person.

In order to obtain an absentee ballot, residents must first complete an application for an absentee ballot. The application is available on the district’s website under the “District News – Budget Information” section or may be obtained by stopping by the office of the district clerk, located at 2 Oldfield Road. Absentee ballots applications can also be requested by phone by calling the district clerk’s office at 631-754-5320, ext. 300.

**PLEASE REMEMBER
TO VOTE**

Tuesday, May 19

Polls will be open from 2-9 p.m.
in the Oldfield Middle School auditorium.



Scan this code to go
directly to the budget
page of our website.



Harborfields CSD
2015-16 Proposed
BUDGET

Publications
Coordinator:
Beth Izzo

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