



Outreach

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CONTINUED TREND OF EFFICIENCY & ENHANCEMENTS

Proposed Budget Marks Sixth Year at or Below 2.5%

Thanks to supportive taxpayers, a prudent Board of Education and an administrative team with a foresight on the future, Mineola School District has become a symbol of how a district can simultaneously be both fiscally responsible and a pioneer in creating 21st-century classrooms. The 2013-14 budget is no exception, as it will present the sixth consecutive year with a tax levy increase at or below 2.5% percent while preserving all current program. The 2.18% percent projected tax levy increase falls within Mineola's tax cap and carries a 2.56% percent budget-to-budget increase from last year.

Key Components of the 2013-14 Budget:

- Maintains ALL current program.
- Upgrades to security districtwide.
- Continuation of our iPad initiative, grades 5-7.
- New bus plan – will have entire fleet replaced over the next five years.
- Addition of a diesel fuel station at bus garage.
- Addition of a 5-day Pre-K class to meet growing demand.

Mineola is able to present a budget with these additions – at a time when others are looking to make subtractions – due to its fiscal prudence and consistent five-year outlook in planning. This year included some exceptional circumstances as well:

- Due to diligent contract negotiations, a deferment in step salary for all teachers has saved the district approximately \$250,000 this year. These funds are being given back to taxpayers and being applied directly to offset the tax levy for the 2013-14 school budget. This \$250,000 savings will be applicable next year, as well.
- A \$213,000 Management Efficiency Grant has been applied for the 2013-14 school budget. Mineola has been selected to receive this grant every year for the next three years as a result of its exemplary fiscal responsibility.
- \$500,000 in revenue from Solomon Schechter Day School and Harbor Child Care.

If you take a moment to glance at page 2, you will see a chart that illustrates how Mineola has led the way with one of the lowest average tax levy increases in Nassau County over the last five years. And the district has done this while actually increasing programs and services for its students and community. These programs and services have garnered much success for our district, for which we have been rewarded with many accolades and monetary gains. In the past year alone, Mineola School District has been awarded:

- Apple's Distinguished Program of the Year Award for its exemplary learning environment (only district in Nassau County).
- Management Efficiency Grant (only district in Nassau County) for efficient management and actualized savings from reorganization. This comes with an annual grant of \$213,000 for the next three years.
- Designation as one of the Best Communities for Music Education for the fifth consecutive year.
- Bronze Medal Winner in the Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge for our lunch services and physical education program.
- Second place in the Seventh Annual People's Choice Installation Contest for the alphabet structure at Hampton Street School.

This list is just the beginning. It does not include the innumerable accolades our students receive on a regular basis. Visit the district website and view any of our past editions of the Outreach to see just what our students are accomplishing every day within our budget.

The Mineola Board of Education and administration urge everyone to vote on Tuesday, May 21. Please note that in an effort to remain operating efficiently, there are new polling locations this year. They are clearly outlined on page 4 of this newsletter. Budget information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the district website at www.mineola.k12.ny.us.

Mineola Union Free School District

121 Jackson Avenue,
Mineola, New York 11501

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VOTE TUESDAY, MAY 21

@ Jackson Avenue and Meadow Drive Schools

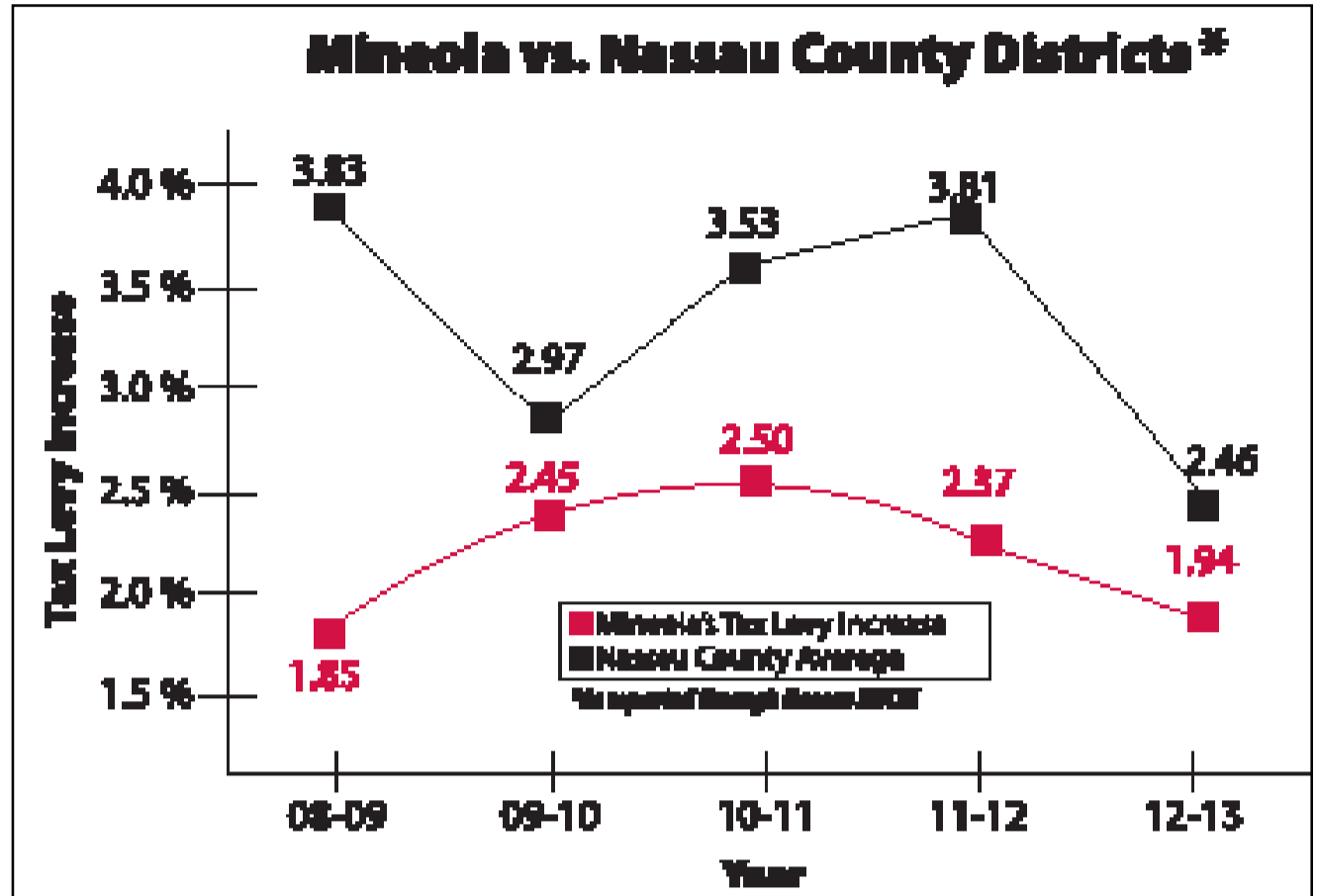
*See page 4 for new polling
location information

6:00 AM to 9:00 PM

A complete copy of the proposed budget
is available on the district's website at
www.mineola.k12.ny.us

Maintaining a Lower & More Stable Tax Levy

While the trend throughout Nassau County has been to put forth tax levy increases that vary greatly from year to year – sometimes low, sometimes high – Mineola has maintained a steady tax levy increase at or below 2.5% for six consecutive years. This is due to our consistent long-term planning and reorganization that allow us to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. In fact, Mineola had the 7th lowest average tax levy increase for the last five years among K-12 school districts in Nassau County. See the graph at right where the numbers speak for themselves.



THE 2013-14 SCHOOL BUDGET

Proposed Expenditures: Quick Look

	Approved Budget 2012-13	Proposed Budget 2013-14	Dollar Change from 2012-13
Total Instructional Program	\$63,975,695	\$66,696,849	\$2,721,154
Total Capital	\$11,650,108	\$10,752,066	(\$898,042)
Total Administration	\$8,366,377	\$8,694,741	\$328,364
TOTAL BUDGET	\$83,992,180	\$86,143,656	\$2,151,476
PROJECTED TAX LEVY INCREASE:	2.18%	BUDGET-TO-BUDGET INCREASE:	2.56%

For a detailed look at the district's proposed budget, including the entire three-part budget, please visit the district's website at www.mineola.k12.ny.us

PROPOSED BUDGET VS. CONTINGENCY BUDGET

Proposed Budget
\$86,143,656

Contingency Budget
\$84,728,180

If voters defeat the proposed budget twice, the district must operate at the same budget as last year. This would force the district to cut approximately \$1.4 million from the proposed budget. This would result in the elimination of all proposed enhancements to program and equipment, as well as the need to further maximize staff. In turn, this would possibly lead to increased class size and/or reduced program offerings. Since our district has consistently approached each budget with a five-year outlook, Mineola is in a much better position than most others; however, a reduction of this magnitude could also affect our athletic program and result in a void that will only get harder to fill and restore, especially as we face more and more restrictions under the cap.



The Tax Cap:

An Explanation for Mineola

First and foremost, it is important to note that the tax cap has been wrongfully referred to as the "2% tax cap." Districts are not restricted to 2%, but rather a calculated percentage that may fall below or above 2% and still be within the "cap" guidelines. These calculations are determined by the state, and the formula is available to view in a presentation available on the district's website.

Based upon the state's calculations, Mineola's cap for the 2013-14 school budget is a 2.51% tax levy limit. This tax levy limit applies only to the school district's tax levy, NOT to tax rates or individual tax bills.

Since we are not exceeding the cap, our proposed budget will require the simple majority vote (not a 60% supermajority) in order to pass. Just because we meet cap requirements does not mean we automatically pass a budget! Voter approval is still required.

If the proposed budget is defeated in May, the district has the option of putting up the same or a revised budget for a revote, or adopting a contingency budget. If a proposed budget is defeated twice by voters, a district must adopt a contingent budget. A contingency budget will prohibit spending in specific areas, including community use of buildings, certain salary increases and new equipment purchases. More significantly, under the new law, a district that adopts a contingency budget may not increase its current tax levy by any amount, resulting in a 0% tax levy increase.

You can see the effect a contingency budget will have on Mineola in the article above.

Key Terms for the 2013-14 Budget

With the tax levy limit only in its second year, the 2013-14 budget lends itself to some terminology our taxpayers should be familiar with. Here, we will explain some of the most common terms you will hear during the budget process this year.

REVENUE: Funding to support the proposed budget can come from several sources including federal and state aid, grants, rental fees, interest earnings and carry-over funds from the previous year.

TAX LEVY: The total amount of property taxes a school district must collect in order to balance its budget, after accounting for all other revenue sources, including state aid.

TAX RATE: In Nassau County, how a particular piece of property is taxed is based on three factors: the tax levy, the adjusted base proportion for that class or type of property, and the assessment for the property. The final tax rate is set by Nassau County, not the school districts.

TAX LEVY LIMIT: A calculated tax levy amount (based on a state formula) that sets the threshold by which a district is able to raise taxes for the upcoming school year. Despite its name, there is NO fixed number that is the limit, but

rather it will vary from district to district based upon the state formula.

MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE TAX LEVY: The tax levy limit PLUS certain exclusions. Exclusions to the tax levy limit include voter-approved capital expenditures, increases in the state-mandated employer contribution rates for teacher and employee pension systems that exceed two percentage points, and judgments resulting from tort actions of any amount that exceeds 5% of a district's current levy.

CONTINGENCY BUDGET: According to state law, school boards may submit a proposed budget for voter approval a maximum of two times. If the proposed budget is defeated both times, the Board, by law, must adopt a contingency budget that carries a zero percent tax levy increase and is subject to additional spending controls by the state.

BOARD CANDIDATES

In addition to voting on the budget, this year residents will be electing one candidate to the Board of Education. The seat that will be voted on is the one currently occupied by Irene Parrino. Residents will receive a separate mailing at the beginning of May with more information on the candidates running for the Board.

POLLING LOCATION CHANGE

On Jan. 31, 2013, the Board of Education of the Mineola UFSD adopted a resolution to decrease the number of polling places from four to two. Therefore, voting for the Mineola UFSD Annual Election and Budget on May 21, 2013 will take place at the following two locations: the Jackson Avenue School and the Meadow Drive School.

The following is a list of the boundaries for each of the election districts:

Election District #1 Polling Place:

Jackson Avenue Elementary School

All those portions of the school district which are located within the US Postal Service Zip Codes 11501 and 11040.

Election District #2 Polling Place:

Meadow Drive Elementary School

All those portions of the school district which are located within the US Postal Service Zip Codes 11507, 11577 and 11596.



Questions & Answers

Regarding the 2013-14 Proposed Budget

Q. How are we able to add programs, while other districts are cutting programs?

A. As a result of the reorganization and closing of Cross Street and Willis Avenue schools, the district has been able to increase program opportunity for students. The savings have allowed us to not only keep the proposed tax levy increase at our "cap," but add programs to benefit our students, as well. This year, we have also received a number of grants, such as the Management Efficiency Grant which accounts for more than \$213,000 to go toward educational program this year.

groups. The budget also provides more than 600 private and parochial school students with textbooks, computer software, health services, special education services, library materials and transportation to their respective schools.

Q. Are there tax exemptions for senior citizens?

A. The Mineola Board of Education is aware of the strain that the tax levy increases can place on our senior citizens. In order to help ease this burden, the Board has approved senior citizen tax exemptions that may reduce property taxes for seniors by as much as 50%, based on the individual's annual income. This means that a senior citizen with low income may be eligible to pay only half the amount of the school tax that he or she would otherwise be required to pay. Seniors can apply for this exemption by contacting the Nassau County Department of Assessment at 516.571.1500.

Q. What programs are included in the budget?

A. This budget includes funds for all current academic, co-curricular and extracurricular programs, as well as the continuation of our iPad program.

Q. What happens if this budget fails?

A. If the budget fails, the Board of Education has the opportunity to make any changes to the proposed budget and put it up for another public vote in June. However, the Board of Education also reserves the right to not conduct a revote and go straight to a contingency budget. To see what a contingency budget would mean for Mineola, please see page 3.

Q. Are there any other exemptions that homeowners may qualify for to reduce school taxes?

A. All New York State residents who live in their own homes have the opportunity to see a reduction in their school property taxes, regardless of age or income, through the New York State School Tax Relief (STAR) Program. Senior citizens are eligible for an enhanced STAR credit. In order to receive this exemption, residents must apply to the Nassau County Department of Assessment at 516.571.1500. Seniors must reapply for the enhanced exemption each year.

Q. What is included in the budget for residents who do not have children in the public schools?

A. The Mineola Union Free School District serves all residents. All district buildings and athletic fields are available for use by community

IMPORTANT Budget Dates

Thursday, May 9

Board of Education Workshop Meeting & Budget Hearing @ WI 7:00 PM

Thursday, May 16

Board of Education Business Meeting @ WI 7:00 PM

Tuesday, May 21

Board Election and Budget Vote @ Jackson or Meadow Drive Schools (See new Polling Chart at left) 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM

VOTER INFORMATION

Voting Requirements

To participate in the May 21, 2013 budget vote and Board election:

- You must be a registered voter who is a United States citizen 18 years of age or older, and a district resident for at least 30 days prior to the vote.
- You need not register if, during the last four years, you voted in a general election in Nassau County, voted in a Mineola Union Free School District election, registered with the Nassau County Board of Elections, or registered with the Mineola Union Free School District.

When and Where to Register

From now through May 16, 2013, registration is continuous, Monday through Friday from 11 AM to 3 PM in the Superintendent's Office, located at 121 Jackson Avenue, second floor. There will be a special registration opportunity on the evening of Tuesday, May 7, 2013 from 4 PM to 8 PM at Willis.

Who Needs to Register?

New Mineola residents and residents who have had a change in address must re-register by May 16, 2013.

When and Where to Vote

Voting will take place on Tuesday, May 21 between the hours of 6 AM and 9 PM at either Jackson Avenue or Meadow Drive (see at left).

Absentee Ballots

If you will be out of the country or unable to vote in person on May 21, you can apply for an absentee ballot. Applications for absentee ballots are available in the Superintendent's Office, located at 121 Jackson Avenue, second floor. You may either call 516.237.2002 to have an application mailed to you, come into the office to pick one up in person, or download a copy from the district website at www.mineola.k12.ny.us.



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