



Rocky Point Schools

Soaring

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY POINT UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOTERS ASKED TO APPROVE SPENDING TO PRESERVE PROGRAMS, STAFF

District Seeks to Continue Efficiencies and Overall Improvement

The Board of Education of the Rocky Point UFSD has adopted a proposed budget for the 2012-13 school year that efficiently uses taxpayer dollars, while continuing our development into a high-quality school system through increased academic rigor and greater emphasis on support, technology, and organizational development, along with a commitment to maintaining important co-curricular opportunities.

Rocky Point's reputation for careful budgeting has resulted in the distinction of having among the lowest per pupil expenditures of all school districts in Suffolk County. That status likely will hold for 2012-13, as budgeted expenditures are expected to grow just 2.97%. This comes after several years of cost cutting in many areas that was necessitated by deep declines in state aid and ongoing economic constraints.

For the past three months, the Board has discussed the likelihood that a proposed budget that preserves existing programs and staff would exceed the tax levy cap for Rocky Point, which is only 1.84%. Therefore, voters will

Potential Outcomes

The proposed budget is approved by 60% of voters:

- Maintains current programs/staff
- Maintains athletics/clubs
- Adds 5 Advanced Placement courses
- Continues Next STEP initiatives

The proposed budget is not approved:

- Reduction of up to \$1.4 million, subject to BOE approval
- Elimination of Kindergarten or reduction to half day.
- Elimination of up to 19 positions
- Elimination of sports (MS, potentially JV)
- Elimination of ES, MS and potentially HS extracurricular activities

cast their ballots on a budget that calls for a tax levy increase of 3.2%, which will require approval of at least 60% of participating voters.

Unfortunately, a budget that only allows for a 1.84% tax levy increase would result in the potential reductions of full-day kindergarten to half-day, elimination of some sports programs, elimination of many extracurricular activities, and elimination of multiple positions throughout the district. That is why your Board of Education supported exceeding the cap in this proposed budget; we believe it preserves the core of what is desired by our community.

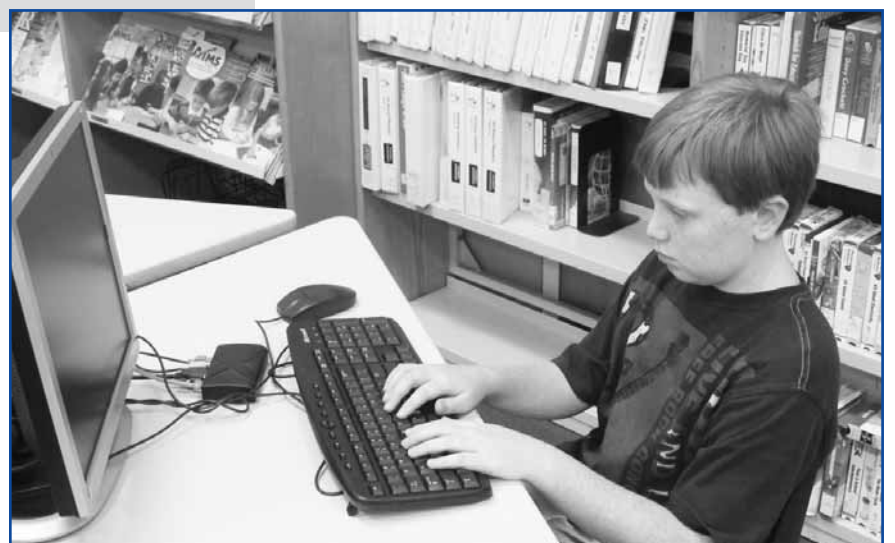
Therefore, our voters are being given the opportunity to preserve existing programs and staff with an affirmative vote to exceed the tax cap. We believe you deserve budgetary control, which is the guiding notion of the tax levy.

Our Board and administrative team stand ready to assist you in understanding what this budget means. Please visit our website for more information, and feel free to contact the Superintendent or School Business Official with any additional questions.

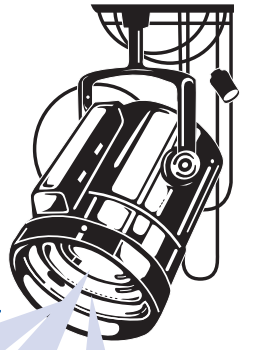
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****ECRWSS****
POSTAL PATRON



A Spotlight on Achievement



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- In June 2011, 88% of the graduating class pursued higher education
- 41% of the Class of 2011 acquired an Advanced Regents Diploma or a Regents diploma with honors; another 50% received a Regents diploma
- The College Board recognized 18 high school students as Advanced Placement Scholars, 6 AP Scholars with Honor, 1 AP Scholar with Distinction, and 2 National Scholars
- Senior named a Commended Student in the 57th annual National Merit Scholarship Program
- Students participated in Brookhaven National Laboratory's annual Science Fair
- Three students earned perfect scores in the national WordMasters Game
- Three students placed first in the regional and sixth in the national Stock Market Game
- Middle school students named second-place winners in the Cablevision Power to Learn Delete Cyberbullying poster contest

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

- An FJC teacher was named a recipient of an Optimum Lightpath Grant
- An FJC teacher aide was named a recipient of a Mentoring Achievement Award by the Long Island Mentoring Partnership of Long Island

- A middle school teacher was named a winner in the Barnes & Noble "My Favorite Teacher" contest
- Students raised thousands of dollars for local and regional charities and organizations
- The high school and middle school have an active National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society
- Hundreds of students participate in annual school musical productions
- Physical education teacher recognized for participation in the annual Relay for Life event and mini-relay

ATHLETICS

- High school cheerleading team won the Regional and National Championships for a second consecutive year
- 16 teams have been designated as Scholar-Athlete Teams during the fall and winter sports seasons
- 15 fall and winter sports teams have received sportsmanship awards
- Seniors named Suffolk Zone Award winners based on academics, leadership, and athletics
- District received 2010-2011 Sportsmanship Promotion Award from the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA)

- Five seniors have signed National Letters of Intent to play sports at the NCAA level
- District offers student-athletes opportunity to participate in the ImPACT Program, a cutting-edge pre-season physical of the brain

MUSIC

- Students selected to perform at the New York State Council of Administrators of Music Education (NYSCAME) All-County Conference
- One student selected as a NYSSMA All-State musician
- Students selected to perform at the All-County festivals
- JAE students selected to perform at the American Choral Directors Association festival
- Secondary Music Chairperson selected as Person of the Year in the Arts by the Village Beacon Record
- High school band participated in Newsday's Regional Marching Band FFJC Teacher Festival at Hofstra University



The proposed budget places a continued emphasis on academic rigor and overall improvement of the system.

Five new AP courses will be added at the high school if the budget is approved.



2012-2013 BUDGET SUMMARY

This summary indicates the total expenditures in each section of the budget and compares the current budget to the 2012-2013 proposed budget.

• BOARD OF EDUCATION

All expenditures for members of the Board of Education, including: contractual costs, the District Clerk's salary, voting expenses such as voting machine rentals, advertising, printing and other election expenses.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$26,000	\$27,760

• CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF

All expenditures for central administration offices, including: accounting, budgeting, payroll, auditing (claims, internal and external), clerical staff, District Treasurer, and school attorney.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$1,589,897	\$1,610,030

• CENTRAL SERVICES

All expenditures for the operation and maintenance of the physical buildings in the District, including: utilities, garbage removal, building repairs, central printing and mailing, and expenses for central data processing.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$4,770,957	\$4,672,982

• SPECIAL ITEMS

Cost of unallocated insurance, and administrative charges for BOCES services, and miscellaneous administrative expenditures.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$966,488	\$861,204

TOTAL GENERAL SUPPORT

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$7,353,342	\$7,171,976

• INSTRUCTIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Districtwide expenses for curriculum development, professional development, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, chairpersons, and directors.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$2,358,943	\$2,447,667

• TEACHING

All expenditures of the instructional program, including: teachers, teacher assistants, monitors, textbooks, supplies, and specific programs such as special education, summer school, and community education.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$33,983,806	\$35,601,650

• INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

All expenditures of the school libraries and audiovisual programs, including: library books, reference materials, and computer-assisted instruction.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$887,864	\$884,288

• PUPIL SERVICES

All expenditures for attendance, certified guidance counselors, health office services, psychological and social work services, co-curricular activities, and interscholastic athletics.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$2,967,893	\$3,064,230

TOTAL INSTRUCTION

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$40,198,506	\$41,997,835

• PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

All expenditures for District-contracted transportation, including: drivers' salaries, buses, gas, parts, and repairs.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>*2012-2013</u>
\$4,778,406	\$4,530,000

TOTAL TRANSPORTATION

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$4,778,406	\$4,530,000

*Included here is the first year of a three-year contract extension, with an option for two additional years, the total estimated cost of which is \$23,667,000.

• EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Insurances (life, dental, health, workers compensation, and unemployment), payroll taxes, and pension contributions.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$13,397,493	\$14,139,057

• DEBT SERVICES

All expenditures for principal and interest on short-term and long-term bonds and notes.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$3,691,831	\$3,645,144

• INTERFUND TRANSFER

Appropriations and transfers of monies to special aid fund.

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$90,000	\$90,000

TOTAL UNDISTRIBUTED

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$17,179,324	\$17,874,201

TOTAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET

INCREASE OF 2.97%

<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>
\$69,509,578	\$71,574,012

Rocky Point *Efficiencies*

In addition to maintaining per pupil expenditures at a rate among the lowest on Long Island, over the past several years, the District's Board of Education and administration have focused intensely on reducing specific expenditures while maintaining student programs. This has been an ongoing process that has enabled the Board to present a budget for 2012-2013 that maintains the District's core academic programs and co-curricular activities. The following is a list of recurring cost-savings and revenue enhancements the District has achieved over the past few years.

- Contracted transportation expenses - \$811,000
- Relocated District Office - \$200,000
- Refunding outstanding bonds and other debt service - \$140,000
- Energy efficiency - \$76,000
- Renegotiated contracts and miscellaneous reductions - \$68,000
- Recovery of lost building aid lost under prior Board and administration - \$2.4 million over 20 years
- Secured \$500,000 Response to Intervention (RTI) grant
- Secured \$5,000 LightPath Grant to advance the teaching and student learning with technology at FJC
- Continuation of Next STEP initiatives to improve outcomes for all students
- In May, 2011, at no new cost to the taxpayer, the District utilized \$2.9 million from the existing capital reserve fund to complete several districtwide projects and will be refunded approximately \$2.1 million from the state over 15 years
- Applied \$3.9 million in fund balance and reserves to reduce the tax levy

Questions *and* ANSWERS

Q: Why does the increase in the tax levy cap vary from district to district? I thought it was supposed to be a 2% cap for all levels of government?

A: No, the 2% you have heard about represents the *growth factor* in the state's formula. Some districts, like ours, will have levy caps below 2%, and some will have caps that are higher. Each district must complete a tax levy cap worksheet to calculate the individual tax levy cap. Factors that impact the cap calculation include the tax base growth factor, received PILOT payments, debt service for capital projects, and other exemptions.

Q: So is that why our cap is lower than others?

A: Yes. Our District doesn't have a lot of 'offsets' that would otherwise increase the cap. For instance, we have reduced our outstanding debt and funded new capital projects from our Capital Reserve Fund at no new cost to the taxpayers. Doing this means we are efficient and not taking on debt, but it limits the increase in the tax levy cap.

Q: Why is this a challenge for the District?

A: Because a 1.84% levy increase does not raise enough revenue to maintain all current services and programs – the things that our community has said it values and wants to preserve.

Q: So is that why the District is asking for approval of a spending plan higher than 1.84%?

A: Yes. The District is presenting a budget that will allow for the continued development of a high-quality school system, increased academic rigor, academic support, instructional technology, co-curricular opportunities, and the continuation of Next STEP initiatives. The District believes that "piercing" the cap will preserve the District's educational core. Without doing so, the District would be in the unfortunate position of having to cut meaningful services.

Q: If the budget were not approved, what would be the impact?

A: If the proposed budget is defeated on May 15, the District would need to cut up to \$1.4 million from the proposed budget. This would result in the potential elimination of up to 19 positions, reduction or elimination of kindergarten, the elimination of multiple sports programs, and the elimination of most extracurricular clubs and organizations, subject to Board approval. In the estimation of the District's leadership, this would have serious long-term negative effects on the District. It might also result in the loss of the community's ability to use District facilities without charge.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: Complete copies of the proposed 2012-2013 budget are available in the District Office, and reference copies are available for inspection at all District schools and the public library. Budget information is also available on the District's website at www.rockypointschools.org.

2012 BOARD ELECTION

District residents will be asked to elect two individuals to the Board of Education, each for a term of three years. There are four candidates seeking election, and the two individuals receiving the highest votes will be elected.



Edward Casswell

Edward Casswell has been a Rocky Point resident for 21 years and is employed in the field of education. Mr. Casswell currently serves as the President of the Suffolk County High School Principals Association and Principal of Center Moriches High School. He is also a North Shore Little League Board member and coach. As a public servant for 25 years, Mr. Casswell believes that he has developed the ability to bring various constituency groups together. If elected to the Board, he will work to enhance the relationships of all constituency groups (students, parents, teachers, administrators, and Board members, etc.), in order to maximize the potential of all of its members for the betterment of the students and community.



Aisha Grundmann

Aisha Grundmann has worked as a pharmaceutical sales representative for a global organization, where she has been responsible for launching new medications into the marketplace. She is running for election to the Board of Education to continue the Board's mission of delivering programs that increase student achievement, while remaining fiscally conservative. Ms. Grundmann noted that she understands what it takes to work as a team and to initiate smart management practices and budgets. Most importantly, she wants residents to know that she is a passionate parent of two children who wants to assist in bringing the District's schools to a higher level of excellence.



John Lessler

John Lessler is a graduate of Rocky Point High School and has lived in the community for 27 years. Mr. Lessler was elected to the Board in 2009 and would like to continue to bring stability to the schools during the current financial climate. As a trustee, Mr. Lessler has assisted in the District's efficient management and maximizing of resources through responsible spending, as well as the institution of a five-year strategic plan for academic excellence and sustainability. If re-elected, Mr. Lessler wants to ensure that the District's students have what they need to be successful, without exhausting the taxpayers. Mr. Lessler is a land management specialist for the Town of Brookhaven, where he preserves properties and manages over \$200 million of town open space and parkland.



Scott Reh

Scott Reh is a graduate of Rocky Point High School and his family has lived in the community for 43 years. He is currently employed as the Director of Athletics, Physical Education, Health, Nursing, and Grounds in the Mount Sinai School District. Mr. Reh was elected to the Board during a special election for the 2010-2011 school year and believes that his 20-year involvement in education provides him with the insights and skills relevant to being a school district trustee. If re-elected to the Board, Mr. Reh will continue to equally represent all factions of the District and tap into resources locally, regionally and nationally to assist the District in attaining its goals and remaining fiscally responsible.

VOTE MAY 15 7 am - 9 pm

• Voting will take place in the HS gym

You must register if:

- You are a new resident of the school district who has lived within its boundaries for at least 30 days prior to May 15, 2012, or
- You have not voted in a regular or special school district election, or in a general election covered by the Suffolk County Board of Elections, within the past 4 years

Qualified voters may register at the Office of the District Clerk in the Rocky Point School District Administrative Office from 9 AM to 3 PM, Monday through Friday.

You are eligible to vote if you are:

- A citizen of the United States
- 18 years or older
- A Rocky Point School District resident for at least 30 days prior to May 15, 2012
- Registered on the voter rolls of the Rocky Point School District or the Suffolk County Board of Elections

Absentee Ballots

Those eligible voters who expect to be out of town or unavailable to vote on May 15, 2012 may vote by absentee ballot. Applications for absentee ballots are available from Patricia Jones, District Clerk, at the Rocky Point School District Administrative Office, 90 Rocky Point-Yaphank Road, Rocky Point.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michael Nofi, President

Diane Burke, Vice President

Kathleen Hegggers, Trustee

John Lessler, Trustee

Scott Reh, Trustee

ADMINISTRATION

**Dr. Michael F. Ring
Superintendent of Schools**

**Dr. Deborah DeLuca
Assistant Superintendent**

**Gregory Hilton
School Business Official**

**Susan Wilson
Executive Director for Educational Services**



District Mission Statement

The mission of the Rocky Point Union Free School District is to develop each child's full potential in a nurturing and supportive student-centered environment that will promote a foundation for lifelong learning.