



SACHEM



2008-2009 Proposed Budget

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SACHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MAY 2008

Proposed Budget... Zero % Tax Rate Increase Again

Dear Residents,

For the past three years, we have been able to accomplish our priority objective to develop a school budget that is both cost effective and taxpayer sensitive by changing the educational program to match the state's expectations, tailoring staffing around the smaller 6-8 and 9-12 settings, and examining budget lines and their impact on our district. Three years ago, our district's tax rate increase was only 1.6 percent. Now, remarkably, for the second year in a row we have been able to develop a budget with a zero percent tax rate increase. Not only are we exceeding with our goal of fiscal responsibility, but doing it in a way that addresses the increasing demands of an educationally sound program.



Photo credit: Mike Fuss

No Tax Rate Increase for the Second Consecutive Year

Similar to last year, our proposed budget is aligned with our mission of excellence. Equally important, the budget balances the needs of our students with minimal impact on our local taxpayers. At present, we have responsibly added back to the budget, and the weighted average tax rate change is zero percent. In addition, the budget-to-budget increase is now at 1.71 percent. In the event the proposed budget is defeated, we would have to eliminate \$1 million in much-needed equipment and school buses. This budget is more than \$721,365 under the New York State contingency cap. Remarkable indeed!

The 2008-09 proposed budget includes many enhancements for our school district programs and the students they serve. Included in this budget is additional funding for a Universal Prekindergarten program. Implementation of this program is based on New York State funding. Our goal has been, and continues to be, to provide an excellent program for our community, and do so in a fiscally responsible manner. Please read through these pages to understand what this budget vote represents, and don't hesitate to contact Superintendent Dr. Charles J. Murphy (471-1336 / cmurphy@sachem.edu) or Assistant Superintendent for Business Bruce Singer (471-1321 / bsinger@sachem.edu) with questions about the 2008-09 budget.

Sincerely,

Michael Pomara, Board of Education President

Sachem Central School District

WALTER C. DUNHAM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
245 Union Avenue, Holbrook, NY 11741-1890

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Areas of Budgetary Enhancements

Athletics: Increased funding to support more athletic opportunities for middle school students.

At-Risk Students: Revised criteria for Academic Intervention Support at the high school to meet higher expectations sought by New York State. Three additional teachers at the elementary level to address the reading and Response to Intervention (RTI) needs in the district as part of the special aid budget.

Curriculum Mapping Software: Software to enable teachers to align curriculum collaboratively and share best practices school-to-school.

Drug/Alcohol Counselor: Additional drug/alcohol counselor for the district. Each high school will now have its own counselor, and another counselor will be shared by our middle schools (on the recommendation of our Drug/Alcohol Advisory Committee).

Equipment: More than \$1 million has been allotted for the replacement of old and obsolete equipment to address the needs of our transportation, facilities and security departments.

Facilities: Additional maintenance mechanic position (with a specialty in painting) to help improve the upkeep of our 23 buildings and the fencing for 600 acres of property.

Guidance/Clerical: Additional clerk-typist to aid in scanning and organizing of school records and fulfill requests for transcripts, diploma confirmations and other information.

Instructional Supplies: Continued allocation of resources to our instructional supply lines to keep up with increased supply costs. (Paper is one of the primary reasons supplies have increased, as prices have risen by 10 percent.) This is an \$80,200 increase from last year.

Library Books: Increased funding to our middle and high schools to support literacy goals.

Security Staff: Funding for increased security presence at school events, as well as weekends and late night shifts.

Special Education: Funding for five additional teacher assistants, four additional special education teachers, a behavioral specialist to help identify, evaluate and address behaviorally challenged students in our schools, and an additional administrator for the department.

Student Management System: Additional \$110,000 for the new PowerSchool Student Management System. We hope to begin to implement this new tool next year, and have close to full staff implementation for the opening of the 2009-10 school year.

Technology: Approximately \$700,000 for technology purchases, such as computers, printers, SMART Boards and infrastructure upgrades.

Transportation: The purchase of three replacement buses (included in the equipment mentioned above) for our fleet, as well as two new routes that will be driven by Sachem drivers, rather than drivers contracted by Towne Bus.

Universal Prekindergarten: Additional program to be funded by New York State.



Photo credit: Mike Fuss



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Frequently Asked Questions

What exactly am I voting on?

The community votes – yes or no – on the bottom line total budget amount. This is the financial authority for all programs and services.

What will happen if the budget doesn't pass?

When the community does not approve a proposed budget, the state requires that the district adopt a “contingency” budget. The state forbids certain expenditures under a contingency budget – including the purchase of buses, capital improvements and equipment. Under contingency, school boards must still honor employee contracts and follow state mandates. All cuts must come from non-mandated items.

What measures did the district take to be able to present a budget with no tax rate increase?

Cost-saving measures include consultation with state aid specialists to maximize our state aid; this, in part, resulted in a \$3.84 million increase in state aid for the district. The district maintained an “AA” credit rating, which lowered the cost of borrowing. Staff retirements this year will result in lowering personnel costs. Components of the district’s debt have been paid off, and all capital improvement projects have been eliminated from the general fund budget.

PROPOSITION NO. 1: SACHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPOSED BUDGET GENERAL FUND FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET

	Modified Budget 2007-2008	Proposed Budget 2008-2009	Percent Change
ADMINISTRATION			
Board of Education	113,701	99,163	-12.79%
Central Administration	392,497	415,612	5.89%
Business Administration/Finance	1,665,198	1,820,372	9.32%
Personnel/Communications	1,635,040	1,632,252	-0.17%
Other Central Services	2,390,574	3,160,941	32.23%
Unallocated Insurance/BOCES	2,636,867	2,804,437	6.35%
Curriculum and Instruction	8,491,061	8,987,893	5.85%
Special Education	366,924	367,324	0.11%
Pupil Services	120,512	120,512	0.00%
Benefits	3,631,779	3,651,402	0.54%
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	21,444,153	23,059,908	7.53%
PROGRAM			
Personnel/Communications	84,000	84,000	0.00%
Unallocated Insurance/BOCES	112,000	146,000	30.36%
Curriculum and Instruction	83,876,214	83,836,220	-0.05%
Special Education	32,247,066	32,640,437	1.22%
Ser/Pup-Spec Needs/PSEN	3,835,793	5,592,337	45.79%
Occupational Education	2,079,988	1,927,000	-7.36%
Special Programs	461,431	490,987	6.41%
Instructional Media	7,711,301	8,756,225	13.55%
Pupil Services	12,776,429	14,630,378	14.51%
District Transportation	17,239,986	18,676,618	8.33%
Benefits	46,641,019	46,123,069	-1.11%
Interfund Transfers	550,000	550,000	0.00%
Planned Balance	850,000	850,000	0.00%
TOTAL PROGRAM	208,465,227	214,303,271	2.80%
CAPITAL			
Building and Grounds	17,533,901	18,021,407	2.78%
Equipment (3 Transportation Buses)	270,000	285,700	5.81%
Unallocated Insurance/BOCES	10,000	10,000	0.00%
Benefits	2,997,607	3,071,243	2.46%
Bonded Indebtedness	21,660,218	20,649,478	-4.67%
Capital Projects	2,326,815	-	-100.00%
TOTAL CAPITAL	44,798,541	42,037,828	-6.16%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	274,707,921	279,401,007	1.71%
REVENUES			
State Aid	113,496,153	116,836,047	2.94%
Charges for Services	637,000	925,000	45.21%
Use of Money & Property	2,137,000	2,339,000	9.45%
Debt Service Interest	550,000	150,000	-72.73%
Compensation for Losses	125,000	300,000	140.00%
Medicare Part D Reimbursement	360,000	360,000	0.00%
Refund of Prior Year's Expenditures	200,000	300,000	50.00%
Gifts, Donations, Unclassified (PILOT, E-Rate)	1,400,000	1,475,000	5.36%
Library Debt Service Reimbursement	559,331	543,581	-2.82%
Medicaid Reimbursement	175,000	-	-100.00%
Appropriated Fund Balance	6,876,815	8,000,000	16.33%
Tax Levy	148,191,622	148,172,379	-0.01%
TOTAL REVENUE	274,707,921	279,401,007	1.71%

MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS

In order to increase savings, Sachem plans to enter into a multi-year agreement for pupil transportation van service. This would represent a one-, three- or five-year transportation contract, depending on the bid results. In the event the district chooses to award a three- or five-year contract, the budget would include the first year of a three- or five-year agreement.

The district will be renewing the third year of a three-year contract for the following contractual services: internal claims auditing, internal auditing services, legal/general counsel, bond counsel, financial advisory services, independent/external auditing, insurance services, public relations services, third-party administration for long term disability and Project Adventure – inspection and repair.

The district will be renewing the fourth year of a five-year contract for banking services with the option to renew for one more year and renewing the third year of a five-year contract for pupil transportation “large buses,” with the option to renew for two more years.

The district is entering a one-year contract with the option to renew for four additional years for third-party administration for tax sheltered annuities.

The district is entering into a one-year contract with the option to renew for two additional years for the following services: occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy and home teaching.

Please go to our website – www.sachem.edu, where you will find a tax calculator to estimate your taxes for 2008-09. You may also view the full line-by-line budget on the district website.



Photo credit: Mike Fuss

Comparison of Taxes

Taxes for average home:	2007-08 Modified Budget	2008-09 Passed Budget	2008-09 Defeated Budget*
Brookhaven (AV=\$3,500)	\$5,890.50	\$5,889.90	\$5,889.90
Islip (AV=\$40,000)	\$4,868.00	\$4,868.72	\$4,868.72
Smithtown (AV=\$6,000)	\$6,330.00	\$6,325.07	\$6,325.07

* When the Community does not approve a proposed budget, the state requires that the district adopt a "contingency budget." The state forbids certain expenditures under a contingency budget (see page 2, "frequently asked questions").

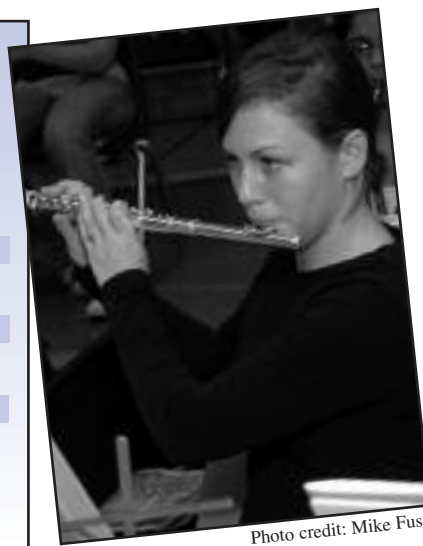


Photo credit: Mike Fuss

The weighted tax rate change for the three townships is zero percent; however, the actual school tax rate may vary in each town. School property taxes will continue to be reduced by the STAR assessment reduction as shown on the homeowners' property tax bill. For further information please refer to www.orps.state.ny.us.

BUDGET VOTE: TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008 • 6:00AM-9:00PM AT ALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Voter Eligibility

In order to vote, you must be a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, and must have been a district resident for at least 30 days prior to the vote. Eligible voters include those who have voted in federal, state, county or school district elections within the past four years, those who are registered with the Suffolk County Board of Elections and residents who registered during the school district's registration period. Residents should direct any questions regarding voting eligibility to Ms. Carol Adelberg, District Clerk, at (631) 471-1331.

Voter Registration

District residents may register to vote on any school day during school hours at any one of the district's schools or at the District Office. The last day of voter registration at the district office is May 15, 2008, until 3:00 p.m. There will be extended hours for registration on Tuesday, May 6, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at District Office and Saturday, May 10, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at District Office. Residents should direct any questions regarding voter registration to Ms. Carol Adelberg, District Clerk, at (631) 471-1331.

Absentee Ballot

Absentee ballots may be used by eligible voters for voting on the budget and Board candidates. Applications for absentee ballots are available in the office of the District Clerk and on our website (www.sachem.edu). To obtain an absentee ballot, an individual should complete the written application form and submit it to the District Clerk at least one day before the vote if the ballot is personally delivered by the voter. This application must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Persons designated by the Suffolk County Board of Elections as "permanently disabled" need not make an application, since they will automatically receive an absentee ballot by mail. For further information, contact the District Clerk's office at (631) 471-1331.

Where to Vote

Voter lines mirror the established elementary school boundaries. If you need to verify the building in which you are designated to vote, please contact the District Clerk at (631) 471-1331.

Public Hearing

Thursday, May 8, 2008 • Samoset Middle School • 8:00 p.m.

Last Day to Register

Thursday, May 15, 2008 • 3:00 p.m.