

BALLOT ITEMS:

- ▶ The 2004-05 Proposed Budget
- ▶ Bus Purchase Referendum
- ▶ Board of Education Candidates

VOTING:

- ▶ **Tuesday, May 18**
7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
High School Gym



Keeping Our Commitment to **Quality Schools**

On May 18, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake school district voters will go to the polls to decide on a \$41.1 million budget for the 2004-05 school year. Spending in the proposed budget is up 4.87% from the current year, and is expected to result in an average tax increase of 4.76%.

Most of the increase in this year's budget comes from higher costs for salaries, health insurance, pensions and utilities. Debt service costs, on the other hand, are decreasing. More information on all of these is inside.

In addition to the budget, voters will consider a proposition to replace eight school buses and will elect three members to the Board of Education.

Accountability & balance

Like businesses, schools have a responsibility to demonstrate the quality of their services to their customers. The *BH-BL Bulletin* that was mailed to all district homes two weeks ago contains evidence of the reasons residents have to be proud of the five BH-BL Schools and the children they serve.

This is a community that cares about education and demands excellent programs and a safe learning environment for its children. This is also a community that cares about taxes and wants school costs held to a reasonable level.

The annual challenge for the Board of Education is to balance these competing desires. A summary of this year's proposed answer to that challenge is inside.

Dear Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake resident,

Getting invitations to many school activities and special events is one of the pleasures of being a Board of Education member. But this year in particular, spending time in any of our five schools has involved the additional pleasure of knowing that we came close to losing some of this district's strength and special qualities last year due to the state budget crisis, but in the end we did not.

You may recall that last spring we faced the possibility of having to cut almost 25 staff and many other expenses if the community did not support our budget, which would have meant higher class sizes, a lack of equipment, and fewer opportunities for children in every school. What happened instead is that BH-BL voters approved a budget that resulted in a substantial tax increase. Even though the Board did use all the aid that the state Legislature ultimately restored to us last summer to reduce taxes as promised, BH-BL taxpayers were still hit with a tax increase last September that was much higher than the typical 4-6% increase of recent years.

The way that the community and staff came together and supported the school budget in the midst of last year's financial crisis was very gratifying and demonstrated the commitment this community has to education. Thank you.

In developing the 2004-05 school budget this spring, the Board of Education made a commitment not to repeat last year's unusually high tax increase. Although any tax increase presents an additional burden, BH-BL residents will face a significantly lower tax increase this coming fall.

And how have these financial challenges impacted our instructional program? Consistent with what we believe is a fundamental Board of Education responsibility, last year we committed ourselves to navigating the financial storm that confronted the district without damaging the quality of our instructional program. We met that commitment last year, and this spring the commitment to quality instruction continued to be the central focus of our efforts to develop a budget that would result in a much smaller tax increase.

Not everyone will agree with the approach we have taken, as is to be expected in a democracy. Finding the best balance among the often conflicting demands of students, parents and taxpayers is never easy. This is why we urge you to read this newsletter fully and to give the proposed 2004-05 school budget your careful consideration at the polls on Tuesday, May 18.

Sincerely,

The BH-BL Board of Education

Brian Bielecki, *President*

John Conine

Kathleen Frederick

Elizabeth Herkenham

Timothy Kelliher

Robert Speck

Michael Wolf



Q How is this budget different from last year ?

A The proposed 2004-05 school budget totals \$41,107,956. This represents a 4.87% increase over the current year's budget of \$39,200,631.

Developing a school budget was considerably easier this winter and spring than it was one year ago when the State of New York was facing an \$11 billion shortfall and Governor Pataki wanted to cut more than \$1 million in state aid to BH-BL. At the same time, our district was facing over \$1 million in increased costs for two state-imposed changes: higher pension payments to the state retirement systems and a one-time increase in debt service stemming from the state's forcing us to refinance old building debt.

To address this one-two punch of higher costs plus the threat of

lower revenue, Board of Education members made more than \$1 million in budgetary changes by increasing user fees and cutting programs, equipment and maintenance projects. When the state budget was finally settled last summer, our state aid was not cut by nearly as much as the Governor had proposed, but the average school tax increase was still 9.9%.

This winter and spring, the news out of Albany has been considerably more optimistic than last year. As this newsletter goes to press, we still have no state budget. However, based on conversations with our legislators and an analysis of state trends, we project that our 2004-05 state aid will increase enough to make up for last year's aid reduction. Our estimate of state aid indicates that an average tax increase of 4.76%

in the district's four towns will be necessary to balance the proposed 2004-05 budget.

School taxes will increase by a lesser amount this fall partly due to the district's efforts last year to plan ahead and make the 2003 state fiscal crisis a one-year problem for our district.



Q What parts of the budget are changing the most & why?

A Every year, Board of Education and administration discussions around the budget are wide ranging. From December to April, a myriad of questions come up on how our schools can serve children's needs more effectively, what new models we can adopt to operate our programs more economically, and how we can judge the level of service that this community is willing to support. Typically after several months, a few themes rise to the top and help guide the Board's budget decision-making.

This year a consensus developed that 2004-05 is not a time for new programs and initiatives in our district. High academic achievement is always a BH-BL budget priority, but instead of new

programs to increase achievement, Board members agreed that 2004-05 is a time to start rebuilding some of the areas that were significantly cut in the current year's budget. Few staffing changes were proposed this year, and fewer still survived the budget development process.

Areas of increase

The 2004-05 proposed budget is \$1,907,325 higher than the current year's budget. The following five factors account for most of this increase.

1. Salaries for existing staff would increase by 3.2% or \$750,567. Education is a people business, and over 75% of the budget goes for staffing costs (salaries and benefits). Thus it is natural that

the largest single increase would be in this area.

2. Staff benefits would grow overall by \$449,501 or 6.5%. Like all New York public employers, schools are facing another large increase in required pension payments. We also project that health insurance costs will grow by \$230,000.
3. New staff positions would add \$127,500. A total of 2.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching positions are needed to address enrollment in middle school math, middle school social studies, and elementary class size hot spots. A part-time guidance counselor and a main entrance monitor at the Middle School will

(Continued over)

4

Areas of greatest change (Continued)

improve pupil coordination and safety. Because it will also be possible to cut one teaching assistant and one bus mechanic position, the proposed budget

includes a net increase of 2.0 positions.

- Utilities are increasing significantly after several years of little or no increase. Heat and electricity costs are projected to grow by \$224,000 because we are completing a five-year contract that had allowed us to purchase electricity and natural gas directly from the producer at below current market rates. We have also budgeted an additional \$10,000 for higher gasoline and diesel fuel prices.
- The proposed budget includes \$163,752 for partial restoration of items cut last spring from the 2003-04 budget. The Board's strategy a year ago was to respond to the state budget crisis by reducing the school budget in ways that would have the least short-term impact on instruction. Cutting items like furniture, equipment, staff development, the computer replacement plan

and maintenance projects can be managed temporarily, but not indefinitely — particularly when some of these items had been cut in 2002-03 as well. The chart on the left shows how the proposed 2004-05 budget would start to restore these areas.

Areas of little change or decrease

- After years of significant increases, special education will see little change in 2004-05. Costs for children in BOCES special education classes are expected to rise by \$120,000, but costs for children placed in private special education classes will fall by \$125,555. Special education is particularly difficult to predict, however. These estimates could change if more high-needs pupils move into the district.
- Debt service costs will decline by \$68,143.

Proposed 2004-05 Staffing Changes**TRANSFER:**

Duties of retiring maintenance staff to lower cost positions

ADD:

2.4 FTE	Teaching positions
0.6 FTE	Middle School guidance counselor
1.0 FTE	Middle School monitor

REDUCE:

1.0 FTE	Bus mechanic
1.0 FTE	Teaching assistant

Restorations in the Proposed Budget

ITEM	AMOUNT CUT IN '03-04	RESTORED IN '04-05
Maintenance projects	\$129,500	\$39,000
Computer replacement plan	76,500	46,500
Furniture & equipment	60,912	59,102
Curriculum development	17,000	17,000
Board of Ed. training	7,000	3,150
	<u>\$290,912</u>	<u>\$163,752</u>

Q. How will the proposed budget improve education?

A. As described above, in developing the proposed budget, Board of Education members focused their efforts not on creating new programs and initiatives but on maintaining and restoring the strengths of our school district. But improvements in school programs don't always carry a big price tag. Here are some of the things staff are working on for 2004-05.

Secondary school staff are using many strategies to help more pupils meet higher state standards and earn a Regents diploma.

Sometimes a small expenditure of funds can reap significant rewards. Middle School staff believe that will be the case in their current effort to enforce higher expectations for pupils. Starting this year, pupils who fail two or more classes will not be allowed to advance to the next grade. This change will result in more pupils taking summer school (hence the need for a small increase in summer staffing), but also hopefully more pupils passing state exams and eventually earning Regents diplomas.

In the current year, a \$1,000 seed money award from the BH-BL Education Foundation was

very successful. It enabled district administrators to work with a local grant writer to develop a list of grants our schools might be eligible for. (We are currently waiting for a decision from the federal government regarding a \$330,000 proposal prepared by the physical education department, for instance.) The proposed budget includes \$8,000 to expand our grant-seeking efforts.

The proposed budget also includes a small increase for video-conference field trips. Teachers have been trained to use technology that enables children to take live visits to places as varied as the Globe Theater in London and

the Cincinnati Art Museum — without leaving their school. Using PTA-donated funds and \$4,000 in the 2004-05 budget more students will benefit from

these trips next year.

Another new initiative will be creation of a study committee to examine how the school district

can do more to reduce student obesity and improve children's nutrition and fitness through our instructional, lunch, and other programs.

Q How will the proposed budget impact taxes?

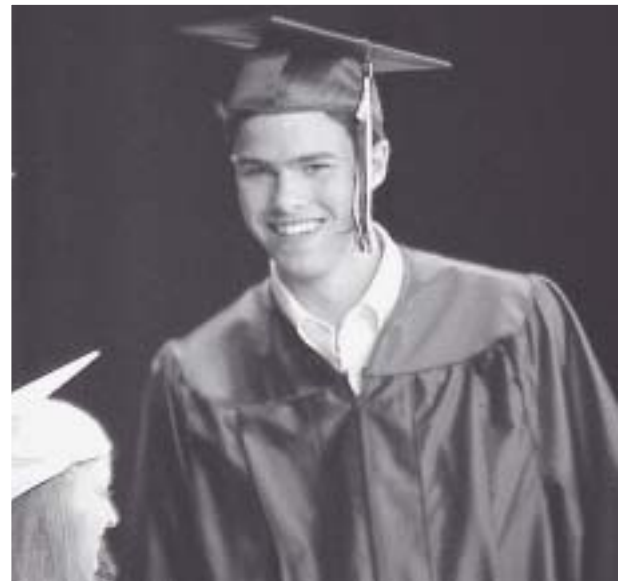
A The proposed budget for 2004-05 is 4.87% higher than the current year's budget. Based on our estimate of the amount of state aid BH-BL is likely to receive, a 4.76% average tax increase would be needed in the district's four towns to balance this budget.

For the homeowner with a median value home assessed at \$113,000, this would mean a tax bill increase of \$130 over this year, which will be a net increase of \$96 after the STAR exemption.

The actual tax increase will vary somewhat from town to town due to equalization rates that the

state Office of Real Property Services (ORPS) will announce in July. These rates are intended to spread the tax burden across the district as fairly as possible. They attempt to "equalize" or compensate for differing assessment practices and for towns where property values may be rising or falling within a school district. For instance, if ORPS determines that property values have risen more in one town than another, the tax increase in that town may be somewhat higher than the 4.76% average while the rate in another town is lower than the average. These differences tend to even out over several years.

The school district has no role in determining how much of the tax burden is placed on any one town or property owner.



Q There seems to be a lot of construction in the district. What happens if we get more revenue than projected, either from the state or from new construction?

A As the revenue pie chart on page 7 shows, NY school districts have basically two sources of income: local property taxes and state aid. So the amounts of money that our district will receive in state aid and in taxes generated from new construction have a direct effect on the tax increase.

Unlike last year, this spring it does **not** appear likely that BH-BL will receive more aid once the state budget is finally approved. Our analysis of the current state situation and conversations with our legislators indicate that any additional aid will likely be given

to high needs school districts like New York City.

Construction within the school district generates some new revenue each year. This is what is called tax base growth. In communities where there is a lot of new construction like Clifton Park, the tax base can grow by as much as 3-4% per year. In our school district, the tax base typically grows by about 1/2% per year, which generates roughly \$200,000 in new tax dollars annually.

Because there has been somewhat more new construction than usual taking place here in the past year, we estimate that \$275,000 in

new tax dollars will be generated from tax base growth in 2004-05. (See the Revenue Summary footnote on page 7.)

It is important to note that the public vote on May 18 determines only the amount that can be spent in 2004-005, not how to provide it. The Board of Education has until mid-August to vote on the tax levy that will be used to balance the school budget. Any additional income or state aid that we learn about before mid-August could potentially be used to reduce the tax levy.

Q. How will the STAR exemption affect school taxes?

A. Homeowners can receive tax exemptions under the School TAx Relief (STAR) program. The state reimburses schools for taxes that residents are exempted from paying.

Senior citizens age 65 and older with an annual household income of less than \$60,000 per year qualify for an **Enhanced STAR** exemption, where the state pays the school taxes on \$50,000 of the assessed value of their home. For BH-BL residents, this means the state will pay about \$1,230 of your tax bill.

For other homeowners, \$30,000 of your home's value is exempted from school property taxes under the **Basic STAR** program. This exemption means that the state will pay about \$700 of your school property tax bill.

Homeowners receiving the regular STAR exemption need not reapply each year. Only senior citizens receiving the enhanced exemptions must reapply each year to prove that their income is still within the \$60,000 limit.

Call your town assessor if you have questions about this program:

- Ballston: June Maniacek, 885-8502
- Charlton: Marge Dennis, 384-0152
- Clifton Park: Walter Smead, 371-6461
- Glenville: Rosalie Fahey, 384-0093.

Q. What happens if the budget is defeated?

A. If the proposed budget is defeated at the polls on May 18, state law gives the school board three options. Board members may decide to put the same budget before the voters a second time, put a revised budget before the voters, or go directly to a contingent budget. If the voters defeat the budget a second time, the Board must go to a contingent budget.

The rules for a contingent budget changed a few years ago. Here are the new limits:

- A contingent budget cannot contain any money for furniture, equipment, or new capital projects. Unlike some years ago, contingent budgets can now fund interscholastic sports and the same level of bussing previously provided in a school district.

- The administrative proportion of the budget cannot be larger than in the previous year.
- Most importantly, the amount that a contingent budget may increase is tied to the cost of living increase as defined by the Consumer Price Index. This means that, except for debt service and court-ordered expenses, no New York school district's 2004-05 contingent budget can be more than 2.76% higher than their current year's budget.

For BH-BL, these rules mean that the Board of Education would have to cut \$978,698 from the proposed budget.



Expenditures by Category

CATEGORY	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	PROPOSED 2004-05	% INCREASE '03-04 to '04-05
Staff Salaries	\$21,096,636	\$22,273,059	\$23,174,607	\$24,025,524	3.67%
Staff Benefits	5,219,272	5,664,510	6,886,562	7,336,063	6.5%
BOCES/Special Ed. Contracts	2,903,555	3,037,299	2,850,355	3,010,591	5.62%
Equipment & Furniture	284,262	313,019	118,015	199,044	68.66%
Textbooks, Software & Supplies	1,157,377	1,081,264	1,132,711	1,224,959	8.14%
Utilities & General Insurance	1,071,720	1,131,720	1,149,600	1,399,600	21.75%
Debt Service	2,935,536	2,652,215	2,950,096	2,889,078	-2.07%
Renovation, Maintenance & Other Services	850,657	984,072	938,685	1,023,097	9.0%
Total Budget	\$35,519,015	\$37,137,158	\$39,200,631	\$41,107,956	4.87%

Expenditures by Service

SERVICE	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	PROPOSED 2004-05	% INCREASE '03-04 to '04-05
Instruction	\$24,020,571	\$25,385,733	\$26,743,235	\$28,019,069	4.77%
Pupil Services (Library, Athletics, Guidance & Health)	2,360,877	2,389,054	2,671,292	2,717,640	1.74%
Operation & Maintenance	2,193,581	2,506,023	2,456,264	2,618,957	6.62%
Utilities & General Insurance	1,071,720	1,131,720	1,149,600	1,399,600	21.75%
Transportation	1,837,839	1,904,812	1,951,632	2,085,637	6.87%
Debt Service	2,935,536	2,652,215	2,950,096	2,889,078	-2.07%
Central Support	1,098,891	1,167,601	1,278,513	1,377,975	7.78%
Total Budget	\$35,519,015	\$37,137,158	\$39,200,631	\$41,107,956	4.87%

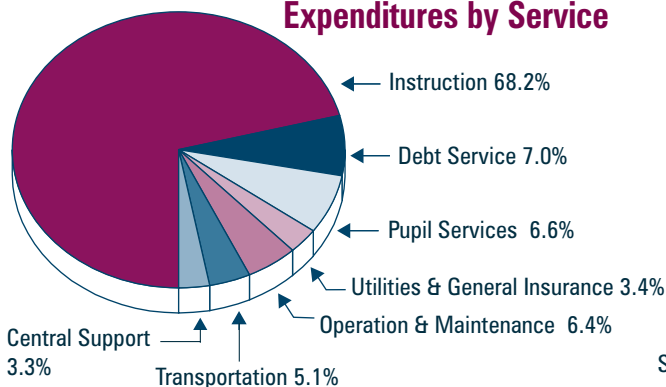
Each item in this chart includes amounts budgeted for staffing, supplies, equipment & all costs directly related to that service. No funds are budgeted for the school lunch program, whose entire cost (including staff salaries) is paid for by meal purchases and state and federal aid.

Revenue Summary

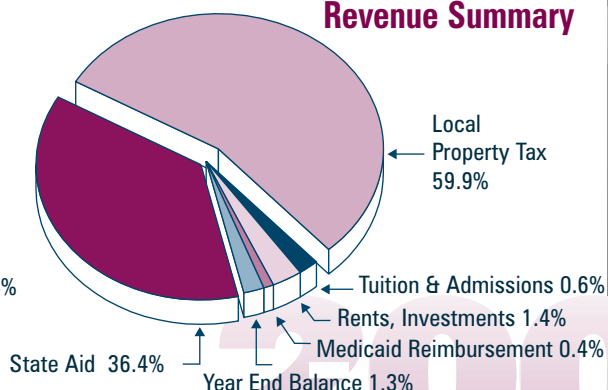
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	PROPOSED 2004-05	CHANGE '03-04 to '04-05
State Aid	\$14,370,887	\$14,747,592	\$14,488,709	\$14,978,896	\$490,187
Local Property Tax	19,654,128	20,891,566	23,243,922	24,624,860	1,380,938 *
Tuition & Admissions	188,000	177,000	223,000	228,200	5,200
Rents, Investments, Refunds	696,000	611,000	535,000	576,000	41,000
Federal Medicaid Reimbursement	60,000	160,000	160,000	150,000	-10,000
Year End Balance	550,000	550,000	550,000	550,000	0
Total Revenue	\$35,519,015	\$37,137,158	\$39,200,631	\$41,107,956	\$1,907,325

* \$1,105,938 of this change is from the tax rate increase. The remainder is tax revenue on new construction added to the tax rolls since last year. An estimated \$4.5 million of the property tax levy will be paid by the state under the STAR program. See page 6.

Expenditures by Service



Revenue Summary



8

The box on the right is the "School District Budget Notice," as required by state law. School districts must present their costs in three prescribed components, which are defined at the bottom of this page.

The traditional, more detailed breakdown of our expenses and income is given on the previous page.

School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2003-04 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2004-05 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2004-05 School Year*
Total budgeted amount	\$39,200,631	\$41,107,956	\$40,129,258
Increase (decrease) for the 2004-05 school year		\$1,907,325	\$978,698
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		4.87%	2.37%
Change in the consumer price index		2.3%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2004-05 school year		\$24,624,860	\$23,646,162
Administrative Component	\$4,385,466	\$4,566,799	\$4,458,073
Program Component	\$28,310,547	\$29,700,400	\$28,993,293
Capital Component	\$6,504,618	\$6,840,757	\$6,677,892

* Assumptions made in projecting a Contingency Budget for 2004-05, should the proposed budget be defeated: We assume that the budget would be reduced by removing non-contingent expenses for furniture, equipment and new capital project costs.

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR** Exemption Savings Based on a Hypothetical Home Within the School District with a Full Value of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000)

	Budget Adopted for the 2003-04 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2004-05 School Year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$672	\$704 (estimated)
School tax increase (decrease)	\$154	\$106 ***
Net Basic STAR tax savings	\$518	\$598

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2004-2005 by the qualified voters of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District, Saratoga & Schenectady Counties, New York, will be held at the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Senior High School in said district on Tuesday, May 18, 2004, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Senior High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.

** The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

*** This number differs from the \$130 average household estimated tax increase shown on page 4 because the state calculation of \$106 uses a state determination of "full value" while the district's calculation of \$130 uses locally determined assessed values.

Definitions

1 Administrative costs include the salaries and benefits of all certified staff who spend 50% or more of their time in administration, plus the salaries and benefits of clerical staff. Also, school board costs, curriculum development, staff development, tax collection, legal and auditing costs, central printing, central data processing, BOCES administrative costs, research, planning, and evaluation.

2 Program costs include the salaries and benefits of all teachers and

staff delivering pupil services (health, guidance, library and athletics). Also, textbooks, instructional materials, equipment, extracurricular student activities, BOCES program costs, and all costs of the transportation program except bus purchases.

3 Capital costs include the salaries and benefits of maintenance and custodial staff, plus debt service, bus purchases, utilities, general insurance, tax certiorari, and other court-ordered expenses.



Q What has the district done to cut costs & increase efficiency?

A Each year BH-BL board members and administrators search for ways to increase non-tax revenues and operate school programs more efficiently. Efforts over the past several years to deliver programs at the lowest cost include:

- Offering retirement incentives to teachers in 2000 and 2001 means that we have paid approximately \$1 million less on teacher salaries each year since then compared to what we would have paid without these retirements. The 2003-04 median teacher salary is now lower than it was 10 years ago.
- All district employees and retirees pay a portion of their health insurance costs.
- A five-year contract to purchase electricity and natural gas directly from the producer has saved more than \$30,000 a year and allowed us to avoid sharp market increases other districts have experienced. This contract is expiring, so prices will rise, but we believe this method of purchasing utilities will continue to save money in the long run.
- Several of the largest projects in last October's \$16 million renovations referendum were designed with energy savings in mind. Replacing the old steam heating system and 48-year-old boilers at the High School, the 42-year-old boilers at the Middle School, and the single-pane windows across the front of the High School will result in considerable energy savings once these projects are completed.
- Conversion to a new telephone system let us eliminate five high-speed data communication phone lines, saving about \$25,000 per year.
- By sharing risk management ideas with five other local school districts and bidding general liability insurance as a group, we have kept premiums for this insurance among the lowest for districts in the area.
- The district uses cooperative purchasing of materials and services whenever it is advantageous to do so. For example, BH-BL organizes a seven-district joint purchase of a year's supply of copier paper, resulting in prices even lower than the state contract price.
- Installation of energy-efficient, auto-on, auto-off lighting fixtures in all schools has resulted in substantially lower costs for lighting.
- Current fuel costs would have been twice as high had we not converted to more fuel efficient diesel buses several years ago.
- Self-funding of Worker Compensation and unemployment benefits saves the district more than \$400,000 a year.
- Public information, staff Haz-Com trainings, tax billing, some data processing, and instruction for certain disabled pupils are services that have proved to be both more effective and less expensive when purchased cooperatively through the BOCES.

Q What else will be on the May 18 ballot?

A The Board of Education is seeking the voters' approval to borrow \$511,000 to replace eight of the oldest buses in our 65-bus fleet during 2005-06. These would be:

- Four 66-passenger buses,
- Two 30-passenger bus, and
- Two 5-passenger sedans.

All vehicles being replaced will either be 10 or more years old or have accumulated more than 130,000 miles. Beyond these lim-

its, vehicles become prohibitively expensive to repair given the strict state safety codes for school buses. The sedans are used to transport special education children to schools outside the district.

This referendum would allow us to borrow funds to replace the buses before the opening of school in September 2005.

Approximately 65% of the cost of buses is reimbursed by state aid.



Payment for these buses would be spread over five years beginning in 2006-07 and would be phased in as payments on other buses are complete. Annually funding buses in this manner costs the average homeowner \$18 to \$21 per year.

Board of Education Candidates

BH-BL residents will elect three members of the Board of Education on May 18. The two candidates receiving the most votes will be elected to three-year terms of office. The

candidate receiving the third highest number of votes will be elected to the remaining two years of the position held by a member who resigned earlier this year.

Residents will have an opportunity to hear the candidates discuss their views at **Meet the Candidates Night** at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, **May 12**, in the High School Library.

TIMOTHY KELLIHER has served on the school board for six years including one year as its president. He has been a computer scientist with General Electric Global Research for 20 years. Before joining the school board he was a member of the Charlton Heights Building Council. Tim and his wife Margaret live on Charlton Road. They have three daughters, one attending Charlton Heights, one at the

O'Rourke Middle School, and one at the BH-BL High School.

"It is always a time of change for BH-BL. The retirement of Dr. Hostetter brings with it a time to evaluate the things we do well, the things we can improve, and the opportunities a new leader can bring. This year the board has devoted a significant amount of time to selecting our new superintendent and to gathering input from all constituencies on what qualities we desire for our district and its leadership.

This process, as I have come to learn during my time on the board, is rooted in the Burnt Hills way. We listen, we talk, we include, we reflect,

we chart a course and we follow the course. Is this the only way, or the best way, to run a school district? Of course not, but it is currently working to make BH-BL a district of which the community can be rightfully proud.

Every year it is a struggle to balance new with old, cost with tax, things with people. I welcome the opportunity to continue my role in this balancing act, representing all residents and all students, so that together we achieve as much as we can at a price we can afford."



MICHAEL RESUE is a licensed security guard at St. Clare's Hospital. A lifelong district resident, Michael previously ran for a seat on the Board of Education in 1996 and earlier this winter. His volunteer service in the community includes being a member of the School-Community teams who interviewed candidates for the new BH-BL superintendent this spring, and more than five years with the Ballston Lake Emergency Squad. He was also active with the Ballston Lake Fire

Department for over 13 years, including two years as its president. He lives on Main Street in Ballston Lake and is proud to be a member of the BH-BL Class of '84.

"I would be very proud and honored to be a member of the school board. It is one to be very proud of. As years go by, things are certainly changing with the new technology and the tougher state requirements for the graduating class, which means we need a tougher school board. With the state budget not being on time for over 19 years, that means our job to control our district budget and to keep taxes low and not to increase over 5% will be tough, but I feel it's a job I could do.

We all need to look at the future of BH-BL and where we are going and

be pleased with what was done in the past. I would like to post the board meeting on the Stevens and O'Rourke Middle School signs along with the local paper, to have a better turnout at the meeting to hear from the district residents about concerns.

I am also seeing the district enlarge with all of the new construction of homes, and that is what we need to work on as a board especially if the 800 homes come in at the Cappiello Farms on Rte. 50 in Burnt Hills, which will cause us to increase the staffing of teachers, bus drivers, custodial staff, etc., which will cause our tax base to go up and our enrollment.

If elected as a board member, I will work very hard as I can to help each and every one of the district to answer questions to the best that I can or meet with anyone when needed."

ROBERT SPECK is completing his 30th year on the BH-BL Board and is currently Board vice president and Finance Committee chair. A retired GE engineer and manager, Bob earned a BH-BL PTA Founders Day Award in 1973 and a National PTA award in 1990. He is a former president of the Stevens PTA Board and the Capital Region BOCES Board. Bob and his wife Betty live on Wendy Lane in Burnt Hills. Their four children are all BH-BL graduates.

“In March the state issued School Report Cards on BH-BL and other districts summarizing student performance for the past three years. As shown in the Bulletin newsletter sent

to each district family, this report is a real credit to the school district and community for the accomplishments and progress made in the past few years. Another major annual effort is development of an annual budget that meets the Board of Education’s budget objectives and maintains education and support programs within a cost acceptable to the community.

Also during the past few years our school district has developed a Continuous Improvement Program. Target areas for improvement include student performance and achievement, staffing, services, operations and facilities.

In arriving at my decision to run for another term on the Board, I reviewed the work involved to continue the many important programs and my capacity to contribute. With the sup-

port of my wife and family, I am anxious to continue to contribute this volunteer work for another three years. I strongly feel my experience during the past 30 years can be an asset in continuing to implement the Continuous Improvement Program and developing the district’s long range plan.

With the retirement of Dr. Hostetter and the appointment of a new superintendent this June, we must all work together to continue balanced leadership between the Board of Education and administration.”



MICHAEL WOLF was appointed to the Board of Education this winter when another member resigned. He is an operation manager at State Farm Insurance. Michael served on the 2003 committee that studied major renovations and construction needs in our schools. He is the Spartan Junior Girls Basketball Commissioner and has coached basketball and soccer in the district for several years. Michael and his wife Peg live on Midline Road in Ballston Lake. They have two children at the O’Rourke Middle School and one attending Stevens Elementary.

“School governance is a broad and sometimes difficult task. Our school district has a long history of stability and excellence in education, and of residents and staff working together for better schools. Much of our success can be attributed to the students, staff, parents and community members who believe in our mission statement and emulate our core beliefs for high academic achievement and quality education. This philosophy has been demonstrated by community members associated with volunteer efforts I have been involved with, such as recreational sports activities, the 2003 Renovations Bond Committee and, most recently, the School Board as an interim member.

If I am fortunate enough to be elected to the School Board, my pledge to you would be to foster and reinforce

the culture that has made us successful in the past and incorporate our mission statement and core beliefs in the day-to-day issues that the Board of Education will work through. Guided by these principles, I will strive to move the district forward in areas such as curriculum/program improvement, community understanding and involvement, and fiscal management. As we move forward, I believe that our culture will continue to attract the best people to our district to meet the needs of our students and that our commitment to continuous improvement will guarantee our success.”





Please remember to

Vote!

**Tuesday, May 18
7:00 am - 9:00 pm
High School Gym**

Voter Qualifications

All voters must be United States citizens, age 18 or older on election day, residents of the BH-BL school district for 30 days immediately prior to election day, and registered.

Registering to Vote

You are already registered to vote on May 18, 2004, if you registered for or voted in either a school election or a general election anytime since May 2000. If you are not already registered, you may do so in either of two ways. You may register for the school election by coming to the school district office in the Glenhaven Building, 50 Cypress Drive, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday - Friday, through May 14. Or you may register in person or by mail with your County Board of Elections through May 14.

Absentee Ballots

Registered voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at the polling place on May 18.

To receive an absentee ballot, voters must obtain an application from Richard Longhurst, Clerk of the Board. The application must be returned to him at least seven days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or at least one day before the election if the ballot is to be picked up personally by the voter at the district office from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Absentee ballots will be counted only if they are returned to the Clerk of the Board no later than 5:00 p.m. on election day. For more information, contact Mr. Longhurst at 399-9141, ext. 5025.

Board of Education

*Brian Bielecki, President
John Conine
Kathleen Frederick
Elizabeth Herkenham
Timothy Kelliher
Robert Speck
Michael Wolf*

Superintendent

Dr. William Hostetter

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake

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Permit #15

Produced in
cooperation with the
Capital Region BOCES
Communications Service
Christy Multer,
Editor & Photographer

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Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake