

2017-2018
Proposed

BUDGET

Proposed budget balances quality and cost

2017-18 budget carries a 1.96% levy increase

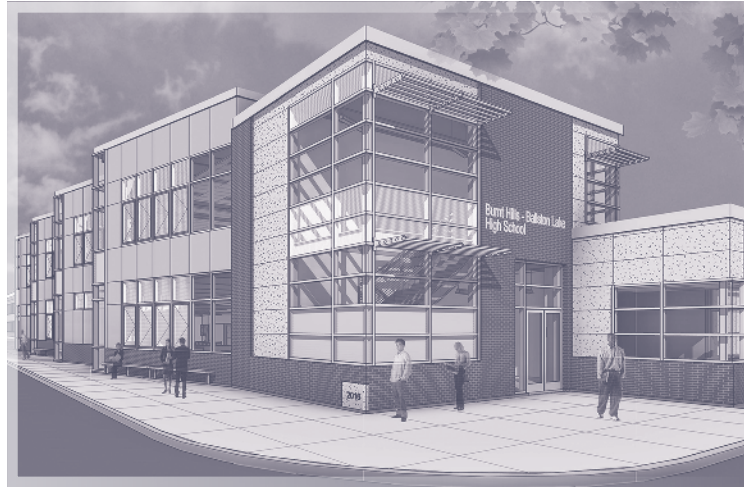
On May 16, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake School District residents will go to the polls to vote on a proposed \$65.4 million budget for the 2017-18 school year. The plan would result in a 1.96 percent tax levy increase, which is below the maximum allowable levy limit and carries an estimated 1.58 percent tax rate increase.

The Board of Education unanimously approved the proposal that preserves programs and staff, and improves academic opportunities such as distance learning and additional computer science classes at the high school. The plan also supports team teaching and a flexible schedule with expanded instructional time at the middle school (see page 3).

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16 in the gym at BH-BL High School, 88 Lakehill Road.

In addition to voting on the budget, residents will be asked to elect three board members and consider a proposition to continue the district's practice to include an *ex officio* student member

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An architectural rendering of the high school's state-of-the-art facility that will house modern-day Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) classrooms as well as a Career & Technical Education Learning Center, a Materials Processing room, and a Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) shop that includes technology used to operate industrial machinery.

High school STEAM addition to open in 2017-18 school year

Voter-approved renovations project nears completion

It was nearly a year ago when school leaders, the board of education, and renovations committee members came together to break ground on the high school's new Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) addition. And today, we are nearing the completion of the 2013 voter-approved referendum and planning to open the new wing for the start of the 2017-18 school year.

The STEAM addition will bring the school facilities to a whole new level by adding modern classrooms and laboratories for hands-on work in such areas as advanced manufacturing, industrial engineering, robotics, electronics, computer science, graphic design, applied math, 2-D and 3-D art, computer-aided design, and digital music. The state-of-the-art STEAM addition elevates BH-BL to an even playing field by introducing students to the technology and work environments they will see in college labs and modern workplaces.

Other high school projects

Other projects in the high school that will be renovated this summer and ready in the 2017-18 school year include renovating the

existing Blue and Red Rooms into a black box theatre and a modern-day presentation center, respectively. The new presentation center will include Smart technology, projectors, and wireless technology that allows for live streaming of presentations such as board meetings and forums as well as classroom presentations.

The library will also be restructured and modernized to include a Learning Commons, which is a full-service learning, research, and project space. The modern space will accommodate students when they need a meeting place to work on collaborative projects with their peers. The new media center will also have study areas where students can easily rearrange furniture to accommodate impromptu planning sessions or secure a quiet place to work.

The current English wing (one of the original sections of the school when it was built in 1955) will be renovated and become the district office. The superintendent, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and assistant superintendent for

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BUDGET *at-a-glance*

- ✓ Proposed budget: \$65,492,019
- ✓ Spending increase: 2.48%
- ✓ Tax levy increase: 1.96%
- ✓ Estimated tax rate increase: 1.58%

Completed Phases

2014

Restructured the middle school traffic area and repaved and reoriented the parking lot to allow for more spaces.

Replaced classroom asbestos floor tiles.

2015

Constructed a new multi-purpose turf field (Centennial Field) and 8-lane track at the high school.

Reconstructed the Stevens main office and added a secure visitor entrance vestibule.

2016

Constructed new workrooms and learning spaces at PES & CHES.

Renovated the gymnasium at CHES.

Renovated PE classrooms/Fitness Center at the HS.

A detailed list of projects, a complete time line, photos, and more information can be found at bhbl.org/referendum.

Renovations project nears completion *continued from page 1*

support services will be located in the district office. The special services, business, and human resources departments will also move to the district office. These departments are currently located at various locations throughout the district. The English classes currently housed in that wing will move to where the existing math classrooms are housed, and the math classes will be relocated to the STEAM addition. The district office is expected to be ready for occupancy in the fall of 2017.



The brick facade is being added to the exterior of the addition while the interior is being constructed. The grand opening and public tour of the STEAM addition is slated for early September 2017. More information will be available at www.bhbl.org.

Final phase

While the high school is being renovated, construction crews will simultaneously begin the final phase of the renovations project, which includes work at the middle school and Stevens Elementary School.

At both schools, classrooms will receive 21st-century upgrades and infrastructure improvements,

which include the addition of Smart technology (i.e., flat panel monitors, projectors, cameras, speakers), improved lighting and ventilation systems, and new furniture that's more suitable for a modern learning environment and can easily be adjusted to accommodate class assignments. For example, teachers, who shift between collaborative and individual work, might

need to create a lab-style space where desktops are raised so students can stand behind them to work.

At O'Rourke Middle School, science laboratories will be renovated and modernized. The new labs will better reflect work space that is conducive to lab assignments and projects that students are required to complete as part of today's science curricula.

Proposed 2017-18 budget *continued from page 1*

on the board. (See page 11.)

Overall spending in the proposed budget would increase by 2.48 percent, or \$1.58 million.

"With this budget, the board continues its commitment to provide quality programs and opportunities. This is in keeping with BH-BL's tradition of academic excellence," says Superintendent Patrick McGrath. "And, in this tax cap era, the board has consistently presented budgets that are below the tax cap. This, coupled with increased growth in our district, has allowed the board to keep the average tax rate increase low."

What's in the budget?

In addition to maintaining academic programs, the proposed budget also preserves low class sizes in grades K-6 by adding two kindergarten sections to address the increase in next year's kindergarten enrollment.

"This is a budget-neutral addition,"

explains Assistant Superintendent Maryellen Symer. "By taking this school year's retirements into consideration, we were able to reallocate staff assignments to address the shift in students' needs for next school year."

Also realized in this spending plan is the district's continued commitment to educational technology through the expansion of the Chromebook laptop initiative to include the high school. All students in grades 3 through 12 will have a Chromebook assigned to them to use throughout the coming school year. Students use the Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education in their classes, for homework and research, to collaborate on projects, and to share work with teachers.

At the high school, computer science offerings have been added and plans are underway to participate in a Capital Region BOCES

distance learning network. Through this network, and with the use of streaming technology, several existing BH-BL high school courses could be made available to students in other schools throughout the state. Distance learning courses also will bring new opportunities to BH-BL students. For instance, there are plans to add a Mandarin Chinese elective to the course offerings, which would be taught at BH-BL but offered through the network. And, because the network is supported through BOCES, 65 percent of the cost associated with distance learning courses is reimbursed through state aid.

Cost saving

Several of these budget additions were also possible because of a reduction in employer contribution rates (teacher and support staff state retirement systems), which resulted in a savings of nearly \$500,000.

Grades 7 & 8 to benefit from teaming, flexible schedules

Creating small school communities within O'Rourke Middle School

Team teaching, or teaming as it's commonly known in education circles, is not a new concept at O'Rourke Middle School. It's a model that has been practiced in sixth grade for several years, and one that staff and administrators have been working to implement schoolwide.

"It's been a long-term goal of ours to fully align our school with this best practices model," says Middle School Principal Colleen Wolff. "Teaming opens the door for improved school-to-home communication, allows for longer blocks of instructional time with flexible schedules, and enriches interdisciplinary teaching."

Under the schoolwide teaming model, students in grades 7 and 8 will now be assigned to a group of core teachers (math, science, social studies, English, technology, and art) who, together, will form a small school community.

Benefits of teaming

The general goal of teaming is to provide a more personalized learning experience for students. The small school communities created through teaming can help make the transition

smoother for students as they move from their small, neighborhood elementary schools to the middle school.

With the teaming model, the student-teacher relationship also becomes more individualized through frequent communication. Students' challenges and strengths are better understood and addressed so the students can receive the support they need to succeed.

At O'Rourke, teaming will also support a flexible schedule that allows for more instructional time by extending blocks of time in core subjects, as needed. Team teachers will be able to arrange their classes into varying amounts of time. For instance, they can teach 60- or 80-minute blocks rather than the traditional 40-minute blocks. Flexible scheduling also reduces the time needed to switch between classes and can provide for a less rushed school day.

Also with teaming, teachers will plan

lessons and projects collaboratively to foster interdisciplinary teaching. Doing this ensures that core subject curriculum is supported throughout other subject areas and that students can experience STEAM-based classroom activities.

"We are excited to implement a schoolwide model that fosters greater collaboration among teachers, creates a stronger sense of community and belonging among students, and supports an environment that encourages academic achievement," adds Wolff.



RESULTS by the Numbers

95%

BH-BL's graduation rate, which is ranked #2 in the region.

92%

of BH-BL graduates each year attend either a four- or two-year college.

26

The number of high school students who have received National Merit Letters of Commendation in the past seven years.

42

The number of college credit courses offered at BH-BL HS, which includes Advanced Placement and University in High School courses.

444

The number of high school students who took University in High School college-credit courses last year. Most students can potentially earn a semester's worth of college credits prior to high school graduation.

Impact of new real estate development in BH-BL

When new construction occurs within district boundaries in the form of residential and commercial development, BH-BL's tax base increases. Continued growth in the tax base allows a district's tax rate increase to be lower than the overall tax levy increase—as has been the case in BH-BL for the past several years.

The tax levy is the total amount that a school district collects each year in taxes from all property owners.

The tax rate is the amount of tax paid for each \$1,000 of assessed value of property.

The chart on the right shows the impact of a growing tax base over the past four school years and next year's projected tax levy increase and estimated average tax rate increase.

TAX IMPACT HISTORY

Year	Tax Levy Increase	Average Tax Rate Increase
2013-2014	2.47%	2.01%
2014-2015	1.94%	1.16%
2015-2016	2.68%	1.95%
2016-2017	1.87%	0.15%
2017-2018	1.96%	*1.58%

*Tax base growth factors (if any) comes from the Office of Real Property Services (ORPS). * Estimated.*

RESULTS by the Numbers

100

The number of high school music students who were selected to perform in prestigious county and state music festivals this year.

660

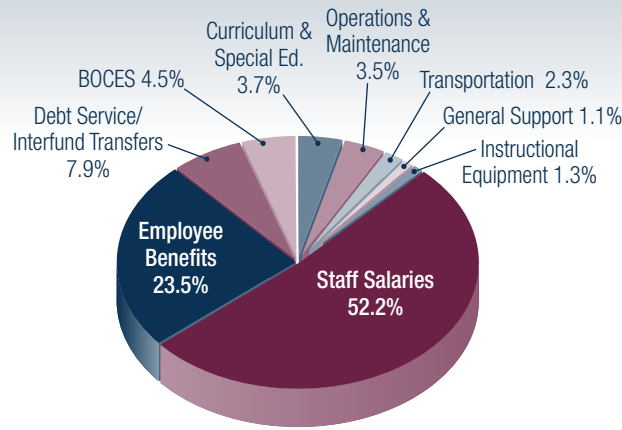
The number of students in grades 4-12 who played a musical instrument and participated in the district's music program this year.

64

The number of high school students whose work was selected to appear in competitive art shows around the region in 2016.

5

The number of consecutive times BH-BL has been named among "Best Communities for Music Education" by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation for its outstanding efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders to make music education accessible to all students.



Expenditures Summary

CATEGORY	2016-17	PROPOSED 2017-18	% CHANGE '16-17 to '17-18
General Support (Includes district supplies & materials, legal services, general insurance)	\$766,504	\$774,541	1.05%
Curriculum/Spec. Ed. Private Placements	2,101,662	2,411,622*	14.75%
BOCES	3,015,364	2,912,245	-3.42%
Instructional Equipment, Furniture & Materials	847,127	881,360	4.04%
Operations & Maintenance	2,720,036	2,266,386**	-16.68%
Pupil Transportation	1,528,360	1,484,400	-2.88%
Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes	15,277,971	15,413,665	0.89%
Debt Service & Interfund Transfers	4,270,972	5,177,050***	21.21%
Staff Salaries	33,377,960	34,170,750	2.38%
Total Expenditure	\$63,905,956	\$65,492,019	2.48%

* This increase is associated with special education placements.

** This decrease reflects the completion of the transfer of funds related to the 2013 referendum.

*** This debt service payment increase is related to the 2013 referendum, and will be offset by state building aid.

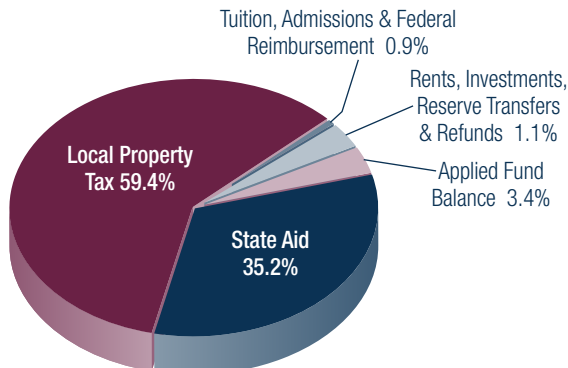
Revenue Summary

	2016-17	PROPOSED 2017-18	% CHANGE '16-17 to '17-18
State Aid	\$21,683,263	\$23,031,566*	6.22%
Local Property Tax	38,132,693	38,882,000	1.96%
Tuition & Admissions	290,000	449,000**	54.83%
Rents, Investments, Refunds, Transfer from Reserves	1,390,000	739,453***	-46.80%
Federal Aid/Medicaid Reimbursement	75,000	100,000	33.33%
Applied Fund Balance	2,335,000	2,290,000	-1.93%
Total Revenue	\$63,905,956	\$65,492,019	2.48%

* This figure includes approximately \$825,000 of increased building aid to meet additional debt service obligations described above.

** This increase is associated with special education placements.

*** This decrease reflects the completion of the transfer of funds related to the 2013 referendum.



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2016-17 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year	Contingency Budget for 2016-17 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$63,905,956	\$65,492,019	64,742,712
Increase/Decrease for the 2017-2018 School Year		\$1,586,063	\$836,756
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.48%	1.31%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.26%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$38,132,693	\$38,882,000	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	0	0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable**	0	0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	0	0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$38,132,693	\$38,882,000	\$38,132,693
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$994,560	\$1,078,473	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$37,184,171	\$37,899,645	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$37,138,133	\$37,803,527	
I. Difference: (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval)	\$46,038	\$96,118	
Administrative Component**	\$6,347,939	\$6,454,235	\$6,431,056
Program Component**	\$47,450,185	\$47,997,328	\$48,071,476
Capital Component**	\$10,107,832	\$11,040,456	\$10,240,180

The box on the left is the "School District Budget Notice" as required by state law. School districts must present their costs in three prescribed components, as defined below. A more detailed breakdown of expenses and revenues is given on page 4.

* Assumptions made in projecting a contingent budget for 2017-18, should the proposed budget be defeated: While this may be adjusted, the district assumes the proposed budget would be reduced by removing non-contingent expenses for equipment and new capital project costs. To result in no tax levy increase as the law requires, we would also need to cut a number of staff positions and increase class sizes. (See page 6.)

¹ The estimated basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law. The numbers listed here come from the NYS Office of Real Property Services website: <http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/sd41.htm>

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

Ballston	Charlton	Clifton Park	Glenville
\$778	\$779	\$814	\$618

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2017-2018 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 High School in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2017, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., prevailing time in the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake High School gymnasium, 88 Lakehill Rd., Burnt Hills at which time the polls will be open to vote by voting machine.

**BUDGET COMPONENTS DEFINITIONS

1. Administrative costs include the salaries and benefits of administrators and supervisors, the salaries and benefits of clerical staff, school board costs, curriculum development, staff development, tax collection, legal and auditing costs, central printing, central data processing, general insurance, 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), textbooks, instructional materials, equipment, extracurricular activities, BOCES program costs, and all costs of the transportation program except bus purchases.
3. Capital costs include the salaries and benefits of custodial staff, debt service, bus purchases, utilities, fire insurance, tax certiorari, and other court-ordered expenses.



In March, Pashley PTA kicked off a Parents As Reading Partners (PARP) program with a night of reading-related activities. The students above created PARP Passports and received a "stamp" for every reading station they visited. High school students even joined the fun by reading picture books to students in Spanish. PARP is a nationwide program that encourages parents to read with their children for at least 15 minutes a day. The goal is to show children that reading can be fun AND informative.

Did you know?

BH-BL

has more than 125 K-12 students participating in one of the district's 18 FIRST Robotics teams this year.

BH-BL

strongly supports integrating technology instruction in the classroom, which is why students in grades 3 through 8 receive Chromebook laptop computers to use in their classes throughout the school day. The proposed budget also supports expanding the Chromebook initiative into grades 9-12 next year.

BH-BL

Board of Education has proposed school budgets that have been below the district's maximum allowable tax levy limit since the inception of the state-imposed tax cap law in the 2012-13 school year.



What happens if the budget is defeated? Does the tax “cap” law impact a contingent budget?

If the proposed budget were defeated, state law gives the Board of Education two options:

- * Resubmit the same or revised proposal for a revote or
- * Move directly to a contingent budget.

If voters defeat the proposal a second time, however, the board must adopt a contingent budget.

Rules more severe now

Under New York's tax “cap” law, districts that adopt a contingent budget cannot increase the current tax levy by any amount—resulting in a zero percent tax levy increase.

Bringing the BH-BL tax levy increase down to zero would force the board to reduce the proposed budget by \$749,307. In doing this, the board may not be able to adhere to its goal of preserving student programs and services or staff. It would likely have to make a number of staff reductions

across all schools, which would increase class sizes.

Adopting a contingent budget prohibits a district from spending any money in certain areas, including community use of school facilities (unless all costs are reimbursed to the district); new equipment purchases; nonessential maintenance; capital expenditures (except in emergencies); salary increases for non-instructional and non-unionized employees; and certain field trips and student supplies.

Also under contingency rules, the administrative component of the budget would be subject to certain restrictions.



As part of a 10-week enrichment lesson about hurricanes and weather, first- and second-grade students at Charlton Heights Elementary School constructed models of hurricane-resistant homes. The students, like Lucy Capo and Gabriella Tatro pictured above, had to build their models using only construction paper, tape, straws, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and a paper plate. The model homes were put to the test when a leaf blower, simulating a hurricane, was turned on them. You can watch the video at www.bhbl.org/news to find out which models withstood the hurricane.

These requirements existed prior to the tax levy cap and remain in effect.



Are there any exemptions available to help taxpayers?

Yes. Homeowners can receive property tax exemptions under the School Tax Relief (STAR) program. Under state law, STAR exemptions can now grow by only 2 percent per year.

The Basic STAR exemption is available on a homeowner's primary residence for anyone who owns and lives in his/her own home and earns less than \$500,000 a year.

The Enhanced STAR exemption is available on the primary residence of taxpayers age 65 and older with yearly incomes below \$86,000.

Three other tax relief options

BH-BL residents over the age of 65 with incomes of \$37,400 or less also can be exempted from paying

school taxes on 5 to 50 percent of their home's assessed value depending on their exact income. The district also grants a disability exemption, ranging from 5 to 50 percent, for qualifying residents of any age with disabilities and incomes of less than \$37,400.

In February 2017, the board adopted the Alternative Veterans' Tax Exemption at level 1, which allows qualifying veterans to be exempted from paying school taxes on a portion of their home's assessed value depending on their military service.

Applications for these district exemptions and for state STAR exemptions must have been filed with your town assessor's office by March 1, 2017. Call your town assessor or visit your town's website

2017 Estimated STAR Values

Basic STAR	MAXIMUM TAX SAVINGS
Ballston	\$778
Charlton	\$779
Clifton Park	\$814
Glenville	\$618
Enhanced STAR	MAXIMUM TAX SAVINGS
Ballston	\$1,560
Charlton	\$1,561
Clifton Park	\$1,631
Glenville	\$1,192

if you have questions about STAR or other exemptions.



How will the proposed budget impact taxes?

The 2017-18 proposed budget of \$65,492,019 is 2.48 percent higher than the current year's budget. Given the state aid BH-BL will receive and other revenue sources, the overall property tax levy will increase 1.96 percent in order to balance the proposed budget.

Equalization rates

Calculating tax rate increases is complicated by the fact that the BH-BL district is made up of parts of four towns—Glenville, Charlton, Ballston Lake, and Clifton Park.

Each year, tax rate increases vary from town to town due to equalization rates that the New York State Office of Real Property Services (ORPS) announces in August.

As the name implies, equalization rates are intended to spread the tax burden across the four towns as fairly as possible. The rates attempt to "equalize" or compensate for differing assessment practices, for the fact that one town's assessments may be more recent than the other towns', and for the fact that property values don't

change equally in all towns within the school district.

For instance, if ORPS determines that property values have risen more in one town than another in the past year, the tax increase in that town may be somewhat higher than the estimated 1.58 percent average for 2017-18, while the rate in another town may be lower than the average.

Equalization rates are typically not shared with school districts until August. Equalization rate differences tend to even out over several years, but they make it impossible to predict actual tax rate increases in each town.

The school district plays no role in determining what portion of the tax burden is placed on any one town or any one property owner.

The state ORPS office sets equalization rates that determine the portion of the total tax levy paid by each town, and the assessor in each town calculates individual assessments that determine how much is paid by each property owner.



Thanks to the Arts & Enrichment program sponsored by the PTA, students at Stevens Elementary School, like Ayanna Ramsaran and Sam LaVake above, were able to spend a day with members of the Saakumu Dance Troupe who were visiting from Ghana, West Africa. Members of the troupe educated students about traditional and contemporary African music and dance. The students even learned how to play the gyil (an African xylophone), African drums, and calabash water drums. They also worked with dancers to master steps to a traditional African dance. At the end of the day, the students used their new skills to participate in a performance with the troupe.

Understanding Tax Levy and Tax Rate

How is the tax levy different from the tax rate?

The **tax levy** is the total amount that a school district raises each year in taxes from all property owners.

The **tax rate** is the amount of tax paid for each \$1,000 of assessed value of property.

Is the tax levy increase within the tax cap?

Yes. In fact, the proposed tax levy increase of 1.96 percent is below the district's 2017-18 maximum allowable tax levy limit of 2.22 percent. Staying below the tax levy limit allows residents to qualify for the state's property tax rebate.

How does the tax levy cap work?

Under New York state tax cap rules, school districts must use a complex formula to calculate their own unique "tax levy limit." Districts then add exclusions set forth in the law to this limit to determine their maximum allowable tax levy for a simple majority vote.

2017 MEDIAN FULL-MARKET VALUE PER TOWN & ESTIMATED 2017 TAX INCREASES

Ballston	\$213,929	\$71
Charlton	\$215,694	\$71
Clifton Park	\$177,759	\$59
Glenville	\$182,553	\$60

Understanding this chart: If your home is in Glenville and last September's tax bill shows its total full-market value was \$182,553, your school tax bill could increase by \$60 in September. This is the best estimate the school district can make given existing data. Calculations will change when ORPS announces new equalization rates in August. Additionally, the estimated figures are *before* factoring in any exemptions. **Reminder:** Some town assessments are more up to date than others. Median full-market value figures are calculated directly from the tax rolls and are based not on the entire town, but only on the portion of each town within the BH-BL district.

Board of Education CANDIDATES

At the polls on May 16, residents may also elect **three** members to the Board of Education.

To learn more about the candidates, the district will conduct a **Meet-the-Candidates Night on Wednesday, May 10 at 7 p.m. in the BH-BL High School Library.**

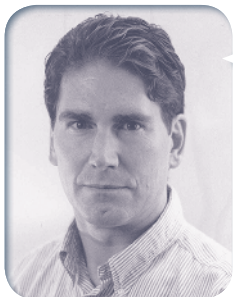
All residents

are invited to pose questions and listen to the candidates discuss their views. If you can't attend, the event will be streamed online.

*** The statements to the right of each candidates' bio were written by the candidates. The opinions contained within are theirs and may not reflect the opinions or views of BH-BL School District leaders or the Board of Education.**

Peter Sawyer

is seeking his second term on the board, where he is currently serving as president and a member of the board's Strategic Partnerships Committee. He has been an on-and-off BH-BL resident for more than 30 years, and is a 1977 BH-BL graduate. Peter holds a Ph.D. in social sciences from Syracuse University and is a Department Chair and Director of the Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement at Hudson Valley Community College. He also is a member of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Rotary Club and the American Sociologist Association. In the past, he has served on several BH-BL committees. Peter lives in Burnt Hills and has two sons who graduated from BH-BL High School. See Peter's position statement* at right.



"As a graduate of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools and as someone with two children who have gone through our schools, I feel a deep commitment to the community and to the district. I believe we have outstanding schools with tremendous teachers, dedicated staff, excellent administrators, and a community that knows that character, integrity, hard work and education hold the keys to the future.

My ability to contribute to our schools is based on 30 years of working in higher education, in both administration and in teaching. Currently, I work as a Department Chair and Director of the Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement at Hudson Valley Community College, where I have been since 2001. I supervise faculty and lead a large department that teaches through interactive video, online, traditional and blended formats.

Since I have been on the board, I have been able to support initiatives to create better linkages to college courses and programs at local community colleges. I have initiated the development of significant metrics, beyond state testing, which can be used to gauge the success of our schools and inform our decision making.

I have pushed for the use of surveys to evaluate our practices and I have pushed for the strengthening of our partnerships in the community to give our students opportunities for growth and development in a variety of career fields.

I believe my experience over these past three years combined with my background in education put me in a unique position to support the leadership of our schools and to move the district forward. My commitment to our schools and to our community reflects my strong belief in civic engagement and in the Rotary motto 'service above self.'"

John Blowers

joined the board in 2006 and has twice served as both board president and vice president. He is a member of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake class of 1983 and holds an MBA from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. John is the Senior Operations Director for the Boston-based management consulting firm Public Consulting Group, and is also the author of the novel *Life on Tilt*. He coaches CYO basketball and is a board member for Junior Achievement. John resides in Ballston Lake and has two children attending BH-BL High School and one child attending O'Rourke Middle School. See John's position statement* at right.



"During good times you find out how good a district is. During bad times you find out how great a district is.

The past several years have been challenging for public education. The Great Recession caused many districts to dramatically reduce staff and program. The ensuing recovery had barely started when NYS Education Department introduced the Regents Reform Agenda. While opinions vary about the appropriateness of these changes, the pace and inclusiveness of how these reforms were introduced are nearly universally criticized. This sequence of events has crippled many districts by depleting resources then introducing initiatives without the proper communication and support structures. BH-BL has been able to navigate these events more successfully than many districts by relentlessly asking ourselves the same question: "What is best for this district?" During the economic downturn, this took on the form of developing a long-range strategic financial plan to help us develop models to navigate the fiscal uncertainty. During the poorly executed reform roll out, this has taken on the form of partnering with educational influencers to correct course while reassuring the community during a period of uncertainty.

During my time on the board, I have endeavored to increase community involvement with understanding the challenges facing our district and developing solutions. I introduced online budget forums and simulcasting/archiving board meetings to increase transparency. I pushed for the creation of a board email account and advocated for the district's Facebook presence. I led the board's search efforts to identify our current superintendent and I have been part of a small team developing a long-term strategic plan focused on key district drivers to make our success more predictable and transparent. More recently, I co-chaired a committee to develop solutions to erase growing food service deficits, provided pro bono advisory services to the district's HR & business office and led the efforts to appoint a student representative to the board.

I welcome the opportunity to continue to serve this community by exploring ways we can deliver quality education in the most responsible manner."

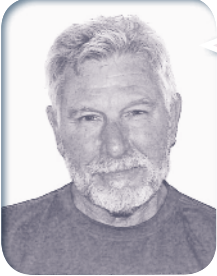


Board of Education CANDIDATES

Don Marshall

is seeking his first term on the board. Don served as a teacher in the Peace Corps in Africa after graduating from Butler University.

He also has a master's in social work from Syracuse University and worked as an educator and therapist with at-risk adolescents and their families his entire professional career. He recently retired after 29 years as Executive Director of The Charlton School. He and his late wife, Karen, have lived in the Burnt Hills for 30 years. Their three children are BH-BL graduates. In the past, Don was involved in leadership roles within community youth sports programs and served on several school committees. He has also served on a statewide NFP Board of Trustees. See Don's position statement* at right.



"The BH-BL School District has a history of excellence in teaching, administration, and development. This excellence is a result of a commitment to quality made by our community going back generations. My commitment as a potential school board member will be to build on this tradition of effort and excellence.

The effectiveness of any organization is first and foremost established on its financial integrity. Our school budgets must be affordable and sustainable. Reasonable cost containment is the hallmark of any successful organization. While at The Charlton School, I developed and worked with 29 annual budgets. Budgets reflect policy and exist for the purpose of programs. It is the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Education to develop a budget that supports our educational programs, our staff and our facilities. It is clear that our district has traditionally done this. We must maintain and build on this tradition.

As an administrator at The Charlton School, I helped our staff to develop effective programs for a wide variety of students. I fully understand that staff, at all levels, are the heart of our schools. I also worked closely with a union. I successfully negotiated nine labor contracts with SEIU. The goal of these negotiations was to get a fair and affordable agreement, while maintaining our positive working relationships.

In today's financial and political environment it is important to advocate for the policies and resources necessary for the development of our public schools. I spent many hours with our elected officials advocating for our schools. As a school board member, I will continue to do this.

Membership on the board carries with it huge responsibilities. If elected, I commit to listening to our stakeholders and to using my mind, my heart and my experience, as a teacher, a school administrator, a board member and a parent, to maintain and to improve our tradition of quality education and fiscal responsibility in our schools."



Do you have other budget questions?

If after reading this newsletter you have other questions about the budget, please contact Superintendent Patrick McGrath by email or phone at pmcgrath@bhbl.org or 399-9141, ext. 85002. There is also budget information at www.bhbl.org/budget.



Dry ice bubbles, make-your-own slime, lava beakers, and glow-in-the-dark bubbles were just a few of the nearly 20 different science experiment stations that all fourth-grade students, like Pashley Elementary School student Alexandra Barber pictured above, were introduced to during the high school's second annual Science Demo Day. "Science Demo Day is about showing young students the wonders and fun of science by giving them a chance to perform interesting and exciting experiments," explained Science & Technology Department Head David Collins. All of the experiments were run by Science Honor Society high school students who worked in peer groups to research and develop an age-appropriate experiment. "It's these types of hands-on lessons and engaging activities that are used to enhance the curriculum that BH-BL supports and strives to bring to its students," added Collins.

SAVE THE DATES

MS & HS Arts Festivals

Join us in celebrating BH-BL student artists at the annual Arts Festivals where a year's worth of their work will be showcased. Much of the artwork on display has been recognized and earned awards at prestigious competitions throughout the region.

- ✓ **Tuesday, May 9:** O'Rourke Middle School Arts Festival, 5 p.m. in the cafetorium
- ✓ **Tuesday, May 16:** BH-BL High School Arts Festival, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the gym



Exit Survey

Following the vote, residents will be asked to complete a voluntary and anonymous exit survey. This will help the board gather community feedback and help guide future budget and program decisions. Both online and paper surveys will be available.

Just can't hide that SPARTAN Pride



Congratulations to the boys varsity cross-country team for being named the New York State Class B Champions and finishing the season with a Suburban Council dual meet record of 13 – 2. Additionally, Tyler Berg, Evan Brennan, Aidan Gillooley, and Nick Hunziker were named Suburban Council Cross Country All-Stars, and the students achieved a scholar-athlete grade point average of 95 percent.



We are proud to announce that for the fifth consecutive year, BH-BL is one of only 527 districts across the nation to be recognized as being among the Best Communities for Music in Education by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation for its outstanding music education program.

This is just a small sample of the many successes BH-BL students accomplish in the classroom and on the athletic fields throughout the year. To learn more about student and staff achievements throughout the school year, please visit our website and social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) where news, announcements, and photos are shared almost daily! Visit us at www.bhbl.org or follow BH-BL on social media at @BHBLschools.



Congratulations to high school Science Research students Jonathan Sinopoli, Mary Hamilla, Evan Karl, Karolyn Bedore, Morgan LaMere, and Eva Scott (missing from photo) for raking in the awards at the prestigious Greater Capital Region Science & Engineering Fair. Good luck to Jonathan who will compete in the State Science Congress event in June.



Congratulations to seniors Matthew Darling and Lauren Dougherty for being named National Merit Scholarship Finalists. They are competing against 15,000 other finalists (narrowed down from 50,000) for academic scholarships based on their PSAT/NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) scores and an accompanying essay.



Congratulations to YMCA Educator of the Year BH-BL High School English teacher Patrice VanHeusen and high school students Hailey Aldrich, Olivia Asuncion, Calabria Brunson, Natalie Burgner, Christian Gramuglia, Jordan Greem, Connor McClernan, Kristina Mills, Natalie Morse, Eric Phelps, Jared Rotunda, Taylor Safford, Sarah Steepe, Hannah Sweeney, Jake Warren, and Daquan Williams for being named YMCA Outstanding Volunteers.

Q Is the district purchasing buses for next school year?

Yes, but there will not be a separate proposition for the purchase of buses since the district will not borrow funds to buy them this year. Instead of incurring debt, the proposed budget includes \$750,000 for the planned purchase of four 66-passenger buses, three 29-passenger buses, and one wheelchair-accessible bus to replace some of the district's oldest buses.

The district is also slated to be reimbursed approximately 66 percent of the cost of the buses through state transportation aid in subsequent years, resulting in a net local cost of approximately \$255,000. Additionally, by purchasing buses outright, the district saves an estimated \$15,000 in interest and legal fees associated with borrowing funds.

The district's retired buses are expected to be traded in to further reduce the purchase price of the new buses.

The buses scheduled to be replaced in the 2017-18 school year are among the oldest in the district's fleet and have already accumulated high mileage, exceeded their warranties,

and undergone many maintenance repairs. Beyond certain limits, buses typically become too costly to maintain given the state's stringent safety codes. Furthermore, new school buses are aligned with the latest safety and emissions standards and have better fuel economy rates.

According to state law, if a bus doesn't pass inspection, it must be taken off the road until repairs are made. When this happens, the district has fewer buses to use for trips outside of the regular daily school runs, such as athletic team transportation, field trips, etc.

Bus replacement plan

BH-BL's 68-bus fleet travels more than 700,000 miles a year, transporting more than 3,100 students to and from its five schools. The buses are also used for sporting events, out-of-district runs, shared transportation runs, field trips, summer school, and other events.

In order to keep buses in safe working order, the district's long-standing policy has been to replace a few of the oldest buses each year.

Q Is there another proposition on the ballot?

In addition to the first proposition (the 2017-18 school budget), residents will also be asked to vote on a second proposition reauthorizing an *ex officio* student member position on the BH-BL Board of Education.

This proposition was first proposed and approved in May of 2015. For the past two years, a different high school student each school year has been appointed as an *ex officio* member. The students attended board meetings, sat at the board table, and contributed to public discussions. An *ex officio* student member does not vote and does not attend executive sessions. By law, residents must approve this proposition every two years.

"We feel it's important to learn from our students and consider their perspective during our decision-making process," says Board President Peter Sawyer. "For the past two years, the students' input has been invaluable."

RESULTS by the Numbers

4

The number of consecutive years BH-BL HS has been named a Reward School by the New York State Education Department. This designation goes to NY schools with the highest achievement in the state or those that are making the most progress in closing student achievement gaps.

15

The number of state championships BH-BL athletes have earned over the past 10 years.

800

The number of students who participated on at least one interscholastic athletic team this school year.

6

The number of consecutive years BH-BL was recognized as a Scholar Athlete School of Distinction as a result of all 27 varsity teams earning a GPA of 90 or greater.

Bus Drivers Wanted

Are you interested in a career that offers a good work-life balance, job security and leadership opportunities? You should consider driving a bus for BH-BL.

Driving a school bus requires a commercial driver's license (we provide training), a clean driving record, a high school diploma and the ability to meet additional standards set by New York state. The district also pays for training to further prepare its drivers to ensure students' safety while on the school bus.

The starting hourly wage for drivers at BH-BL is \$19.46.

For more information, call Director of Transportation Joseph Czub at 399-9141, ext. 83525.



O'Rourke Middle School students (from left) Miriam Rice, Gabriel Goss, Alex Pedone, Faith Rogers McCarthy, and Samantha Chase board their school bus for afternoon dismissal.

**Board of Education**

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Tara Mitchell, Editor*

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake

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PO Box 1389

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(518) 399-9141, ext. 85002

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12 2017-2018 Proposed Budget

Please
remember
to VOTE!

Ballot Items

☒ The 2017-18
Proposed Budget

☒ Board of
Education
Candidates

☒ Student Board
Member

Tuesday, May 16
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
High School Gym
88 Lakehill Road,
Burnt Hills

👍 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 16 if you are registered with your county Board of Elections to vote in a general election.



A "pop"-ular experiment at Charlton Heights Elementary School's recent Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Fair was the "How to Stand on Balloons" demonstration. Students Tyler and Kameron Siis and Principal Tim Sinnenberg tested it out, and, to their surprise they did not pop any balloons! There were more than 30 student experiments and hands-on demonstrations. The full story and photo gallery can be found at www.bhbl.org/CharltonHeights.

**👍 Absentee Ballots**

Registered voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at the polling place on May 16.

To receive an absentee ballot, first fill out an application from Clerk of the Board Christopher Abdo at the district office. The application can also be downloaded from the BH-BL website at www.bhbl.org/budget/voterinformation.cfm

The completed application must be

returned to Christopher Abdo 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 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Absentee ballots will be counted only if they are returned to the clerk of the board no later than 5 p.m. on election day, May 16. For more information, contact Christopher Abdo at 399-9141, ext. 85025.