



BUDGET

An investment in quality programming

Proposal balances costs with expanded opportunities, results in estimated 1.95% tax rate increase

On May 21, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake School District residents will go to the polls to vote on a proposed \$69.55 million budget for the 2019-20 school year. The proposal carries a 2.90 percent tax levy increase and results in an estimated 1.95 percent tax rate increase.

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21, at BH-BL High School.

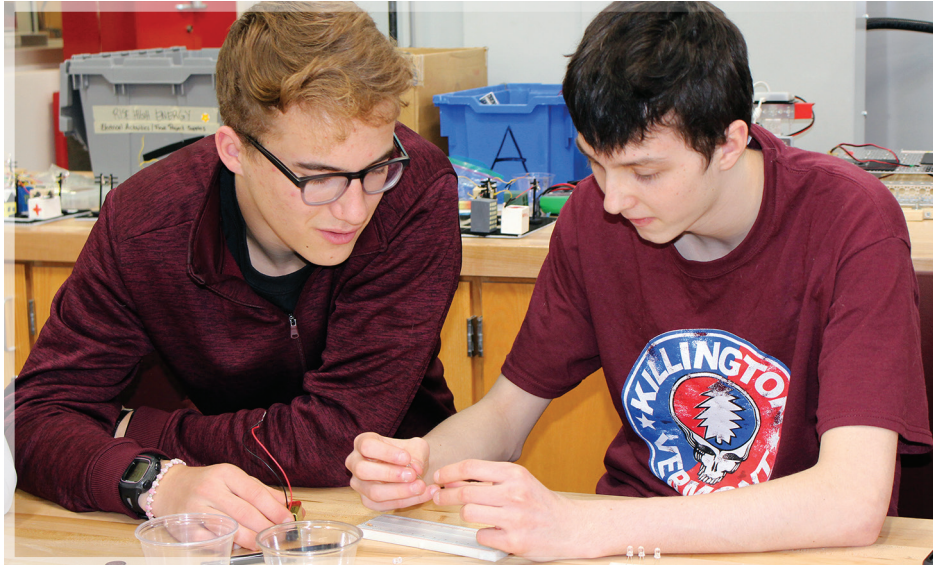
Voters will also be asked to elect two candidates to the Board of Education (see pages 8-9) and consider a proposition to continue the district's practice to include an *ex officio* student member on the board.

The proposed budget preserves all current academic programs, includes expanded opportunities for students, and realizes cost savings through retirements and reallocation of staff responsibilities. The spending plan, which remains below the district's tax levy cap of 3.76 percent for the seventh year in a row, also supports the district's commitment to improve instructional technology districtwide and create 21st-century learning spaces.

"As outlined in the district's 21st-century Frameworks for Learning guiding principles, we remain committed to offering engaging and personal educational experiences while providing our students and staff with the tools they need to learn and teach in today's technology-driven world," explains Superintendent Patrick McGrath.

State aid forecast

BH-BL is slated to receive an overall state foundation aid increase of \$101,045 or 0.75



RPI students in the college's Engineering Ambassadors Program work with BH-BL High School students to solve real-world engineering problems. Students Willard Gideon and Jesse Taylor applied what they learned about electric circuitry and series and parallel circuit design to create a miniature model of a power grid that would be used in a real-world community. They also had in-depth discussions of how the grid should be altered in the future to accommodate renewable energy.

percent, which is the lowest increase the state provided to any school district for 2019-20. In fact, for the past few years the district's foundation aid increase has steadily declined and has not kept pace with the rate of inflation.

"A delicate balance of budget-neutral additions and planned use of fund balance over the past several years has allowed the board to adhere to its promise to deliver high-quality programming and services while remaining below the tax cap," says Superintendent McGrath. "However, when developing our long-range financial plan it's imperative we take into consideration the trends in our state aid because it is unlikely we will be able to continue to balance budgets this way."

The 2019-20 budget proposal, therefore, includes efforts aimed at generating additional revenue. One way is to continue expanding Distance Learning (DL) courses offered through the high school. The state reimburses the district for the costs associated with teaching DL courses. Another initiative is to broaden

the district's food service department through Spartan Catering and opening a Spartan Cafe. (See page 2 for details.)

"As the percentage of the district's budget supported by foundation aid decreases, we must be open to other revenue sources," says McGrath. "Ideas we've discussed are sharing our courses with other schools, developing a potential alumni funding partnership, and encouraging strategic, targeted economic growth of our tax base."

BUDGET at-a-glance

- ✓ Proposed Budget: \$69,548,408
- ✓ Estimated Tax Rate Increase: 1.95%
- ✓ Tax Levy Increase: 2.90%
- ✓ Budget-to-Budget Increase: 2.15%

Results by the Numbers**522,556**

The number of minutes read by BH-BL students in grades 1-8 during the 2018 Summer Reading Challenge. At the beginning of the school year, readers from each school who have read for the highest number of minutes are recognized with "Summer Reading Champion" signs posted at their homes. The students are also recognized on the district's website and social media channels. Please encourage your children or grandchildren to participate in the Summer Reading Challenge. Your child's school library media specialist will have details. Happy summer reading!

83

The number of clubs & athletic teams supported in the school budget.

BH-BL

What's included in the 2019-20 proposed budget?

In addition to preserving low class sizes and current academic programming, the proposed budget also includes several opportunities to expand upon existing offerings and budget-neutral initiatives.

EXPANDED MATH ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES TO K-2

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in math is currently offered to students in grades 3-5, but will be increased next school year to include grades K-2. The small group setting and instructional support will focus on helping students develop better math competency and improve their foundation skills, both of which are essential to learn higher level math concepts and become strong problem solvers and critical thinkers. As an example, students learn about money in the early elementary grades and then add to that math knowledge when they learn about percentages and fractions in later grades. "Students need to have a solid understanding of basic mathematical concepts before they can build upon these skills in later grades," explains K-12 Math Supervisor Bill McQuay.

EXPANDED DISTANCE LEARNING

Next year's budget further broadens the district's distance learning opportunities by continuing to participate in the BOCES Distance Learning Network. "Distance Learning allows us to leverage technology to bring students from other districts across our region into our classrooms," says McGrath. "When we do this, we receive additional aid to support the cost of the course. This is a win-win for us. It allows our students to take classes with students from other places, increases opportunities for students, and provides a revenue source for our district."

ADDITION OF GRADE 2 KEYBOARDING INSTRUCTION

The new state standards in English language arts include keyboarding instruction at the elementary level. During the second half of the school year a high school business teacher will go to the elementary schools to

provide formal keyboarding instruction to second-grade students. This includes lessons and practice of fundamental keyboarding skills that are necessary to operate a keyboard smoothly while typing. "Typing is a muscle-memory activity and when learned properly it becomes secondary to the task students are trying to accomplish," explains K-12 Business Supervisor Stephanie Andrejczak. Keyboarding is also an essential lifelong skill. As part of the district's 1:1 Technology Initiative, students in grades 3-12 are assigned a Chromebook laptop they are expected to use during school for class work and projects. "We provide our students with technology tools so it's important that we also teach them how to properly use them," adds Andrejczak.

NEW MANDARIN CHINESE IN GRADE 7

Mandarin Chinese, which is currently offered as an enrichment course in grade 6, will be added as a world language course option in seventh grade. And because Mandarin is already taught at the high school, middle school students will now be able to bridge their language studies to earn course credits to fulfill their world language graduation requirement. "Mandarin has become the second most popular dual-language education program in the United States," explains Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction Maryellen Symer. "Adding Mandarin Chinese to our world language program supports our goal to prepare students for college and careers in a globalized world."

BROADENED FOOD SERVICE DEPT.

This proposal includes extending Spartan Catering to include service for in-house athletic banquets, club/organization gatherings, take-out dinners, district meetings, workshops,

etc. Also in the works is opening a Spartan Cafe at the high school. On select days the cafeteria would be open after school and early evening to sell snack bar food.

UPGRADED SAFETY & SECURITY

Within the past several years, there have been many changes to the schools' physical safety and security measures. Next year's budget proposal includes upgrades to these measures, including additional digital surveillance cameras throughout the district and the continuation of a single-point of entry at the elementary schools during after-school and early evening hours.

UPGRADES TO 21ST-CENTURY CLASSROOMS

The proposal supports the board's goal to continue modernizing classrooms to create 21st-century workspaces. Next school year, 45 classrooms will receive improvements to the infrastructure in order to support today's instructional technology, such as high-definition projectors, cameras, and touch screen monitors and tablets that students can use to interact with the screen from their desk.

TECHNOLOGY & LIGHTING UPGRADES & SAVINGS

Included in the budget is a commitment to use Category Two E-rate Funding along with BOCES aid to purchase local area network equipment (\$227,690) needed to upgrade the technology infrastructure at all three elementary schools. And because e-rate funding and BOCES aid will be used for this improvement project there will be little to no net impact on local funds. The project also includes \$25,000 per elementary school for cabling associated with the infrastructure upgrades. Also included is funding (\$100,000) for a capital outlay project for renovations that include upgrading to more energy efficient (LED) lighting in the Stevens gymnasium.

Q What happens if voters do not approve the proposed budget?

If the proposed budget is 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 \$1,160,278. 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. These requirements existed prior to the tax levy cap and remain in effect.

Q Is there another proposition on the ballot?

In addition to the first proposition, the 2019-20 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. By law, residents must approve this proposition every two years.

This proposition was first proposed and approved in May 2015. For the past four years, a different high school student each school year has been appointed as an *ex officio* member.

The student member attends board meetings, sits at the board table, and contributes to public discussions. An *ex officio* student member does not vote and does not attend executive sessions.

"We are a better board because we have a student voice at the table," says Board President John Blowers. "For the past four years we've been able to more regularly integrate the student board member into our meetings allowing us to strengthen student-centricity in our decision making."

Results by the Numbers

95%

BH-BL's graduation rate is among the highest in the region.

90%

of the class of 2018 attended either a two- or four-year college.

96%

of the class of 2018 earned a Regents diploma or better.

40

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

448

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.

BH-BL



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
2015-2016	2.68%	1.95%
2016-2017	1.32%	0.15%
2017-2018	1.96%	1.46%
2018-2019	2.90%	1.80%
2019-2020	2.90%	*1.95%

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

**RESULTS
by the Numbers****87**

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

649

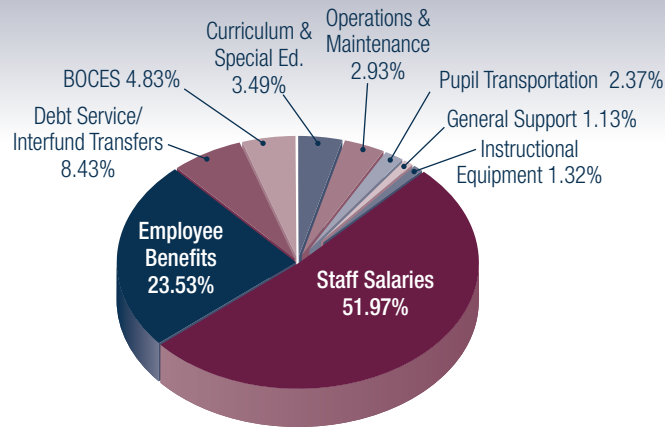
The number of students in grades 4-12 who played a musical instrument and participated in the district's music program this year.

41

The number of high school students whose work appeared in competitive art shows around the region in 2018.

7

The number of consecutive years 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.

BH-BL

Expenditures Summary

CATEGORY	2018-19	PROPOSED 2019-20	% CHANGE '18-19 to '19-20
General Support <i>(Includes district supplies & materials, legal services, general insurance)</i>	\$772,738	\$784,472	1.52%
Curriculum/Spec. Ed. Private Placements	2,608,523	2,429,027*	-6.88%
BOCES	2,990,540	3,357,548**	12.27%
Instructional Equipment, Furniture & Materials	871,638	921,362	5.70%
Operations & Maintenance	1,986,625	2,036,000	2.49%
Pupil Transportation	1,598,630	1,647,340	3.05%
Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes	16,020,141	16,365,839	2.16%
Debt Service & Interfund Transfers	6,212,101	5,862,157***	-5.63%
Staff Salaries	35,021,582	36,144,663	3.21%
Total Expenditure	\$68,082,518	\$69,548,408	2.15%

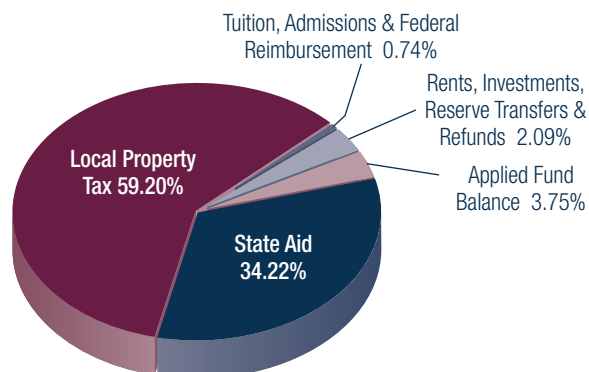
* This decrease reflects anticipated reductions in private out-of-district placements.

** This reflects anticipated increases in BOCES technology purchases & Special Education placements at BOCES.

*** This decrease reflects the expiration of a 15-year-old bond.

Revenue Summary

	2018-19	PROPOSED 2019-20	% CHANGE '18-19 to '19-20
State Aid	\$24,065,085	\$23,797,454	-1.11%
Local Property Tax	40,009,573	41,169,851	2.90%
Tuition & Admissions	395,000	415,000	4.45%
Rents, Investments, Refunds, Transfer from Reserves	1,502,000	1,454,999	-6.36%
Federal Aid/Medicaid Reimbursement	100,000	100,000	0%
Applied Fund Balance	2,010,860	2,611,104	29.21%
Total Revenue	\$68,082,518	69,548,408	2.15%



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2018-19 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2019-20 School Year	Contingent Budget for 2019-20 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$68,082,518	\$69,548,408	\$68,388,130
Increase/Decrease for the 2019-2020 School Year		\$1,465,890	\$305,612
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.15%	0.45%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.44%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$40,009,573	\$41,169,851	
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)	\$40,009,573	\$41,169,851	\$40,009,573
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$1,116,972	\$1,490,513	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$38,924,476	\$40,021,663	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$38,892,601	\$39,679,338	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$31,875	\$342,325	
Administrative Component**	\$6,345,650	\$6,851,045	\$6,374,125
Program Component**	\$49,812,713	\$51,017,068	\$50,036,322
Capital Component**	\$11,924,155	\$11,680,295	\$11,977,683

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 2019-20, 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 3.)

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
\$794	\$795	\$819	\$630

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2019-2020 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 21, 2019 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.



Charlton Heights first graders **Leah Pott** and **Evan Caisse** are discovering the wonders of science during a candy solubility experiment, which was a culminating project in an enrichment unit with PACE teacher Carrie Sunkes. "It's so rewarding to hear first graders use words such as dissolve, texture, and soluble when they are doing the experiment," says Sunkes. "I believe exposing kids to hands-on science at an early age helps them make connections from the classroom to the real world—and that's something that will stay with them forever." Visit www.bhbl.org to watch a brief video of the students' experiment.

BH-BL



Did you know?**BH-BL**

has more than 130 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 3-12 receive Chromebook laptop computers to use in their classes throughout the school day. Coupled with other teaching technology equipment, students and teachers are able to connect on a whole new level in the classroom.

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.

BH-BL

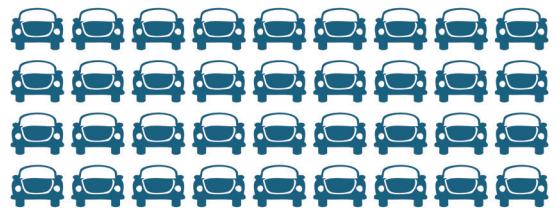
Are new buses being purchased for next year?

Yes, but like the past few years the cost of the new buses is included in the budget proposal. Bus purchases are done this way so the district doesn't have to borrow funds and incur debt. The proposed budget includes \$830,000 for the purchase of five 66-passenger buses and three 29-passenger buses (one with a wheelchair lift) to replace some of the district's oldest buses.

The district anticipates being 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 \$282,200.

Additionally, by purchasing buses outright, the district saves an estimated \$15,000 in interest and legal fees associated with borrowing funds.

ONE SCHOOL BUS CARRIES THE EQUIVALENT OF 36 CARS

AMERICAN SCHOOL BUS COUNCIL


Bus replacement plan

The buses scheduled to be replaced in the 2019-20 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.

BH-BL's 69-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 several of the oldest buses each year.



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 of \$86,300 or less.

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.

Last year, 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 be filed with your town assessor's office. Visit your town's website or call your town assessor if you have questions about these exemptions.

2019 Estimated STAR Values

Basic STAR	MAXIMUM TAX SAVINGS
Ballston	\$794
Charlton	\$795
Clifton Park	\$819
Glenville	\$630

Enhanced STAR	MAXIMUM TAX SAVINGS
Ballston	\$1,591
Charlton	\$1,592
Clifton Park	\$1,664
Glenville	\$1,216

STAR Exemption Changes:

Please contact your town assessor's office to learn more about the new requirements for residents receiving STAR exemptions.



How will the proposed budget impact taxes?

The 2019-20 proposed budget of \$69,548,408 is 2.15 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 2.90 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 1.95 percent average for 2019-20, 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.

2019 MEDIAN FULL-MARKET VALUE PER TOWN & ESTIMATED 2018 TAX INCREASES

Ballston	\$223,989	\$90
Charlton	\$234,478	\$94
Clifton Park	\$186,429	\$75
Glenville	\$193,258	\$78

Understanding this infographic: If your home is in Glenville and last September's tax bill shows its total full-market value was \$193,258, your school tax bill could increase by \$78 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.



Eighth grader **Josh Warland** makes sure the rocket box-style bat house he built in Nick Morocco's Technical Systems class properly fits on its anchor post. The class requested this project after learning that a large colony of endangered northern long-eared bats were discovered on teaching assistant Kelly Chila's Saratoga County property. In 2015 this species of bat was placed on the endangered list after discovering white-nosed syndrome is contributing to their extinction. According to the NYS Department of Environmental website, the disease is easily spread because bats hibernate together in massive colonies in caves and mines. The students' bat houses will help separate the bats when they aren't hibernating and possibly slow the spread of the disease.

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 2.90 percent is below the district's 2019-20 maximum allowable tax levy limit of 3.76 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.

BH-BL



Board of Education CANDIDATES

At the polls on May 21, residents may also elect **two** members to the Board of Education.

To learn more about the candidates, the district will conduct a

Meet-the-Candidates Night on Wednesday, May 15 at 7 p.m. in the HS Board Room.

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.**

BH-BL



Jennifer Longtin

is seeking her third term on the board where she has served as president, vice president, and finance committee chairperson.

During her terms, she has been instrumental in reviewing and revising board policies to better align them with the recommendations from the NYS School Boards Association. Jen also owns Lighthouse Insurance Agency, an independent agency, and Longtin Properties LLC, both of which have operated in Burnt Hills for more than 10 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and business management. She and her husband have lived in Ballston Lake for 19 years. They have twins, a son and daughter, in ninth grade at BH-BL High School and a daughter in seventh grade at O'Rourke Middle School. See Jen's position statement* at right.



Lee-Ann T. Mertzlufft

is a 14-year resident who is seeking a new term on the board. She previously served on the board from 2010 to 2016. Lee-

Ann works for the Albany City Schools as a districtwide Assistive Technology Specialist for Individuals with Disabilities. She holds a BS from SUNY Oswego and a master's degree from St. Rose. Lee-Ann has experience as a member of the Town of Ballston Ethics Committee and the International Dyslexia Association. She is also a lifetime member of Wilson Reading Academy. In the past, she has served as a Girl Scout leader and earned a Board Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016 from the NYS School Boards Association. She has three children—two who graduated from BH-BL and one in seventh grade. See her position statement* at right.



"One goal one passion—I am running for re-election for my family and yours because we are in this TOGETHER!"

As I finish up my second term on the Board of Education and reflect back over the last six years...my thoughts go to 'wow' we sure do have something really special here at BH-BL. We have exceptional teachers and staff who are truly vested in helping all of our students succeed. We have a community that supports our district's efforts to improve and flourish. And we have visionary leadership that has put us on a pathway toward continued success.

Having three children in the BH-BL school district I have the opportunity to meet many of our amazing students and their wonderful parents. I also have the experience of seeing my children and other students flourish as well as hit a few bumps.

While on the board, I have been instrumental in strongly encouraging communication along with ensuring we provide a safe and nurturing environment that will give our students the foundation they need to thrive and succeed. I've also been heavily involved with the Policy Review Committee where I play an integral role in revisiting and revising our current policies.

Our world is changing and we are faced with more challenges every day, I will continue to be an advocate for our students, teachers and community. I still have the same passion I did six years ago and am excited to do my part in continuing to help guide our district into the future. I pledge to do my best to continue to be an active, engaged school board member working in the best interests of our students, our district and our community.

I am proud to serve our community as a BH-BL Board of Education member and thank you for your support with my re-election."

"Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake is, and has been for the last 104 years, a great district with an abundance of pride and passion for its children and community. It is a place where people choose to live. The dedication of the parents, faculty, support staff, and administrators is the backbone of our community. Yet, life is not simple, nor are the decisions placed before each and every board member. They require care, compassion, and thoughtfulness. Being a Board of Education member is truly not an easy role to fill, but it will be filled, and who you vote for on May 21 will determine the quality of the job that gets done.

Today's children are our future. Technology is redesigning the human brain starting in infancy, or, I dare say, starting in utero. Thus, how our community chooses to proceed in educating our children is crucial. As a former BOE member, I made every effort to collaborate with all stakeholders, including community members, parents, children, and school personnel. In addition, I tried to balance our community's educational and social needs with our fiscal realities. BH-BL is currently a top area district, and that is not by accident. Maintaining our status will take cooperation and engagement from staff and community members. It will require foresight and the ability to look at the entire system while being mindful of the creative, new approaches that are now part of our society whether we like them or not. The composition of the BOE will play a significant role in determining our children's and community's future.

As a parent of three daughters, two of whom graduated from BH-BL, and as someone who has served as past BOE president, vice president, and finance chair, I understand from experience how difficult it is to run a top-notch school district. Yet, I believe that my nearly 29 years of experience as a parent, community member, public school teacher, special educator, and business owner has made me aware of the diversity of perspectives in our community, all of which will inform my decisions if the voters grant me the privilege to serve."

Patrick Ziegler

is a 16-year resident who is seeking his second term on the board. He is a volunteer for Junior Achievement and Cents Ability and is a Faith Formation teacher. He is also a member of the Knights of Columbus and the University of Albany Alumni Association. Patrick has spent more than 20 years in higher education finance and currently serves as a Market Relationship Manager for Wells Fargo. He holds a BA from Molloy College and a master's degree from the University of Albany where he is also completing his doctorate work in Educational Leadership & Policy. He and his wife Mary have three children in the district—a junior, an eighth grader, and a third grader at Charlton Heights. See Patrick's position statement* at right.



"John Quincy Adams once said that 'If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.' This brief yet powerful definition of leadership certainly speaks to the importance of the work performed by local Boards of Education as our decisions must always be made with that one goal in mind—to help our students dream more, learn more, do more and become more. As I complete my first three-year term as a Board member, I am proud of what we have accomplished but even more pleased with our commitment to servant leadership and open dialogue with all of the stakeholders who care about our community, our schools and our students. In my brief tenure, I have participated in leadership training, served as vice president and finance chair, supported the scheduling of Policy Forums that are open to the public, presided over Board and Committee meetings and helped address parent concerns with district leadership. We successfully concluded a bond referendum last fall that will address a number of critical infrastructure issues including our Transportation Building and our High School auditorium. We have approved fiscally responsible budgets that have kept tax increases below the rate of inflation while not only maintaining but actually expanding educational opportunities for our students and improving school safety and security. And finally, I have recommended that we create a sub-committee to identify opportunities for saving money and increasing revenue as we struggle to replace cuts to our education aid.

To be sure, I remain steadfastly opposed to federal 'mission creep' and unfunded state mandates imposed without local input and consultation. The education of our children is and should remain a local responsibility. We can, and will, continue to provide our students with a high-quality education with an extensive array of both academic and extra-curricular opportunities so long as we keep the advice of John Quincy Adams at the forefront of all we do.

We serve and we lead so that others may be more. That sentiment will continue to be at the core of my efforts if elected to a second term."



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 518-399-9141, ext. 85002. There is also budget information at www.bhbl.org.



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.

BH-BL



Among the many volunteers at the district's second annual BH-BL Community Dinner were Spartan Catering and food service employees **Maria Huggins, Kathy Wancewicz, Helen Roos, Sue Brown, and Food Service Director Nicola Boehm.** For the past two years the dinner has raised nearly \$2,500 for the Backpack Program that provides local families in need with food and supplies. "This fundraiser has many great benefits because it brings the community together for a worthy cause," says Boehm. "I'm proud to be a part of it and proud that Spartan Catering is involved." The third annual Community Dinner is already being planned for March 2020 and will continue to feature performances by student musicians. Visit the district website in February for details about the dinner and to buy tickets!

SAVE THE DATES

HS Fine Arts Events

- ☒ **Monday, May 20:**
High School Fine Arts Honors Showcase, Senior Exhibition & Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, 7:30 p.m., HS auditorium
- ☒ **Tuesday, May 21:**
BH-BL High School Arts Festival, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., HS auditorium lobby

Just can't hide that Spartans PRIDE



Congratulations to BH-BL High School Science Research students **Isabelle Cataldo**, **Dora Law**, and **Frank Marin** for being honored with awards at the prestigious Greater Capital Region Science and Engineering Fair held at RPI in March. Isabelle won the Linda Austin DNA Science and Technology Award; Dora won the Regeneron Award; and Frank won both the NASA Earth System Science Award and the US Navy & Marine Corps Award.



Congratulations to BH-BL HS students (top left) **Abigail Evans**, **Dora Law**, **Adam Boucher** (bottom left) **Anna LeClair** and **Jacob Shell** for being named National Merit Commended Scholars for earning high scores on the PSAT. Of the 1.5 million high school students who take the exam annually, only three percent receive Letters of Commendation recognizing their academic abilities and potential.



Charlton Heights Elementary School's fourth grade Odyssey of the Mind team won the state championship at the NYS Odyssey of Mind tournament. They will compete at the World Finals at Michigan State University, May 22-25, against teams from across the United States, as well as 25 other countries. Congratulations and good luck to **Lucy Capo**, **Emme Fischer**, **Arden Heiner**, **Stella Kibler**, **Gabi Tatro**, and **Caroline Welsh**. (And their coaches **Kodi Kibler** and **Sara Welsh**.) For the state win, the students competed in Leonardo's Workshop problem that required them to create and present a performance that tells an original story about Leonardo da Vinci. The team's solution included a robotic knight powered by hydraulics and two jaw-dropping replicas of Leonardo's "Mona Lisa" and "Lady with Ermin" paintings.



Congratulations to BH-BL teachers **Regina Reals** (science), **Kathryn Perry** (computer science), and **Sara Verga** (Pashley) for being among only 275 teachers in the state to be selected this year to join the New York State Master Teacher Program. Being selected and named a Master Teacher is among the highest professional honors awarded to the state's science, technology, computer science, engineering, and mathematics educators. Throughout the four-year program, the teachers will engage in peer mentoring and intensive content-oriented professional development; work closely with pre-service and early career teachers to foster a supportive environment for the next generation of STEM teachers; and participate in and lead professional development sessions. Other BH-BL high school teachers who are currently in or graduated from the NYS Master Teacher Program are **Sabine Erickson**, **Margaret Kelliher**, **Carolyn Litynski**, **Daniel Swan** and **Melissa Thomas** (Master Teacher Emeritus).

BH-BL





For the second year in a row, O'Rourke Middle School's Future City team took first place at the regional competition. This year's competition challenged students to plan, design, build, write about, and present a resilient city to judges. O'Rourke's team built EndoSparta, a city with an electrical grid designed to withstand and quickly recover from natural disasters. The students, along with middle school teachers **Katie Duell** and **Nick Morocco** and engineer mentors **Erik LeClair** and **Jennifer Wiederhold**, competed against 23 teams from around the region. Congratulations to this year's team members **Howard Bearce**, **Miles Bechtel**, **Carsyn Bonesteel**, **Nicole Boyea**, **Sawyer Brannigan**, **Emily Burdikoff**, **Duncan Dauphinee**, **Gavin Heritage**, **Anya Kotkoskie**, **Thomas Kotkoskie**, **Owen LeClair**, **Nolan McFarland**, **Maggie Miazga**, **Patrick Robbins**, **Ethan Swift**, **Gregory Tomik**, **Brayden Townsend**, **Ceres Winchester**, and **Ana Zepf**.



Congratulations to the 2018 boys varsity cross country team of **Ryan Allison**, **Tyler Berg**, **Kevin Board**, **Evan Brennan**, **Aidan Gillooley**, **Nick Hunziker**, **David Metacarpa**, **Ryan Sheppard**, **Zackary Scribner**, **Mikhail Troyan**, and **Dante Ubriaco** for winning the New York State Class B Championship. The team also finished with a Suburban Council dual meet record of 15-0. This is the 8th state championship win for BH-BL boys cross country.



In March, Pashley Elementary School held a schoolwide Read-A-Thon. The students rose to the challenge by reading a whopping 103,000 minutes and raising \$5,000 for the Ronald McDonald House Charities.

This is just a sampling of the many successes Spartans achieve in the classroom, on the stage, and on the field throughout the year. To learn more about student and staff achievements, please visit our website and social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) where news, announcements, and photos are shared almost daily. Visit www.bhbl.org or follow BH-BL on social media at @BHBLschools.



Congratulations to BH-BL High School and Career & Technical Education (CTE) students **Joe Pedersen** (top) and **Matt Tyree** (bottom) who competed in the Regional SkillsUSA competition and earned first and fifth place medals, respectively. Both advance to the state level competition where their skills in the automotive field will be put to the test. The annual SkillsUSA competitions at the local, regional, state, and national levels enable students to showcase their career and technical, professional, and interpersonal skills and learn more about team work and citizenship.



Congratulations to BH-BL High School student and trombonist **Cedric Sirianni** for being named "Outstanding Soloist" and winning a Judges' Choice Award at this year's Berklee Jazz Festival in Massachusetts.



Results by the Numbers

85

The percent increase of the number of high school students requesting to enroll in STEAM-related courses for the 2018-19 school year.

20

The number of state championships BH-BL teams have won in the past 15 years.

786

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

25+

The number of years BH-BL has supported the long-standing and successful PEACE Exchange Program. Last year, students went to France, Spain & Germany.

BH-BL



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Tara Mitchell, Editor*

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake

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12 2019-2020 Proposed Budget



Ballot Items

☒ The 2019-20 Proposed Budget

☒ Board of Education Candidates

☒ Ex Officio Student Board Member

BH-BL



**Tuesday, May 21
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 21 if you are registered with your county Board of Elections to vote in a general election.



*Congratulations to high school students (from left) **Serena Burnetter, Kieran Thomas, Jacob Shell, Drew Wemple, Hannah Smithgall** and **Tyler Berg** (not pictured) for being named at the Capital District YMCA's 32nd Annual Awards ceremony as Outstanding Students. BH-BL High School business teacher **Jennifer Wheeler** was recognized as an Outstanding Educator (not pictured). Additionally, **Kieran** was recognized as the YMCA Student of the Year. The YMCA honors students and educators for their dedication, contribution, and service to their school and community. The Outstanding Student Awards are presented to students who share and demonstrate the YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility with their peers and members of their communities. Outstanding Educators are honored for their effectiveness and success working with students, their impact on community development and involvement, and promoting leadership qualities.*

Absentee Ballots

Registered voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at the polling place on May 21. To receive an absentee ballot, first fill out an application from Clerk of the Board Dr. Christopher Abdoo at the district office. The application can also be downloaded from the BH-BL website at www.bhbl.org/budget/voting-information/

The completed application must be returned to Dr. Abdoo 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 21. For more information, contact Dr. Abdoo at 518-399-9141, ext. 85025.