



2020-21
Proposed

BUDGET

Absentee Ballots Due June 9

Proposed budget maintains student programming, reduces 19 positions and carries an estimated 1.98% tax rate increase

BH-BL residents are being asked to consider via absentee ballot a proposed \$70.88 million budget that carries an estimated 1.98 percent tax rate increase for the 2020-21 school year. The proposal maintains all current academic programs and services for students while keeping the tax levy increase (2.90 percent) below the tax cap for the eighth consecutive year.

Given the flat state foundation aid increase and the possibility of mid-year aid reductions (see page 7), measures were taken to realize significant savings through the retirement or resignation of 19 instructional and non-instructional positions that will not be filled next school year.

The proposed spending plan reflects an increase of 1.92 percent, or \$1,337,436, over the current school year. Contractual costs such as salaries and other benefits, health insurance, out-of-district student placements, etc. are driving next year's spending increase.

Continued on page 7



Kaegan Crawford, a Charlton Heights student in Mrs. Martin's kindergarten class, is participating in a Google Meet lesson with his teacher and classmates. Kaegan attends class remotely every weekday to learn academic lessons Mrs. Martin is teaching. He then completes the assignments online and submits them to his teacher. K-12 students have been learning remotely since mid March.

District pivots to remote learning during COVID-19 crisis

Survey reveals parents give BH-BL high grades

In mid-March, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, students and faculty had to abruptly shift their learning and teaching to a remote, online platform. Students went from their accustomed face-to-face interactions with their teachers to only digital connections. More than 3,100 Chromebook computers are on loan to K-12 students so they can stay connected and complete school assignments. While it's not the ideal form of teaching and learning, staff and students have been making it work. They are staying connected through a variety of interactive platforms, such as Google Classroom (where teachers can post videos of lessons, notes, homework assignments, etc.) and Google Meet sessions where teachers and students connect in real-time for academic lessons, work on art projects, participate in physical education and music classes, and more. Teachers are also providing students with workbooks, textbooks, and other resources to complement their online instruction.

"The transition to online learning has been difficult for everyone. It's hard not to be in the classroom with my peers and teachers," says BH-BL High School student and Student Board of Education Representative Hannah Shell who's attending Harvard in the fall. "But, through this process, we have all been constantly supported. The BH-BL staff and administration have been incredibly helpful while the whole world has seemingly turned upside down. While I miss being in the classroom, I am impressed and excited to see my teachers rally around the student body. I am proud and grateful to be a member of this district, especially right now."

When remote education first began, there was a learning curve as students, parents, and teachers worked together to adapt to using the various classroom platforms, and the district streamlined communications about remote learning guidelines and expectations. These efforts paid off when the district received high marks in a recent survey in which nearly 1,400

Continued on page 8

BUDGET at-a-glance

- ✓ Proposed Budget: \$70,885,844
- ✓ Budget-to-Budget Increase: 1.92%
- ✓ Estimated Tax Rate Increase: 1.98%
- ✓ Tax Levy Increase: 2.90%

HEAR from students

Remote Learning

"I felt our school and district were very well prepared for this time of distance learning with the help of our teachers, but nothing can replace the classroom experience."

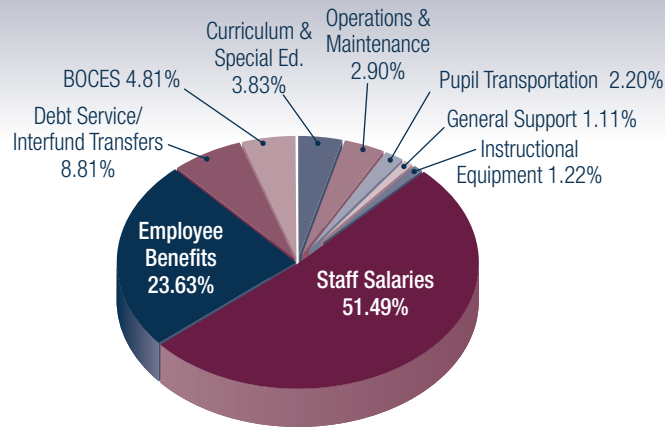
--HS Senior Jack
Kislawski

Remote Learning

"Remote learning has certainly given me some positive experiences. My entire family has been home, so I can spend much more time with them. I'm able to sleep in later and do work on my own time. The teachers have all done a great job of communicating and staying connected with their classes. However, I definitely miss being in school to see everybody and participating in sports."

--HS Senior & Class
of 2020 Valedictorian
Dillon Aldrich

BH-BL



Expenditures Summary

CATEGORY	2019-20	PROPOSED 2020-21	% CHANGE '19-20 to '20-21
General Support (Includes district supplies & materials, legal services, general insurance)	\$784,472	\$787,306	0.36%
Curriculum/Spec. Ed. Private Placements	2,429,027	\$2,717,039*	11.86%
BOCES	3,357,548	\$3,405,096	1.42%
Instructional Equipment, Furniture & Materials	921,362	\$866,887	- 5.91%
Operations & Maintenance	2,036,000	\$2,055,740**	0.97%
Pupil Transportation	1,647,340	\$1,561,840	- 5.19%
Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes	16,365,839	\$16,748,450	2.34%
Debt Service & Interfund Transfers	5,862,157	\$6,242,837***	6.49%
Staff Salaries	36,144,663	\$36,500,649	0.98%
Total Expenditure	\$69,548,408	\$70,885,844	1.92%

* This is an anticipated increase in private out-of-district placements.

** This figure includes funding (\$100,000) for a capital outlay project for renovations that include upgrading to more energy efficient (LED) lighting in the Pashley Elementary School gymnasium & cafeteria. Approximately 75 percent of this project will be refunded to the district through state building aid. This is in addition to the energy savings this project will yield.

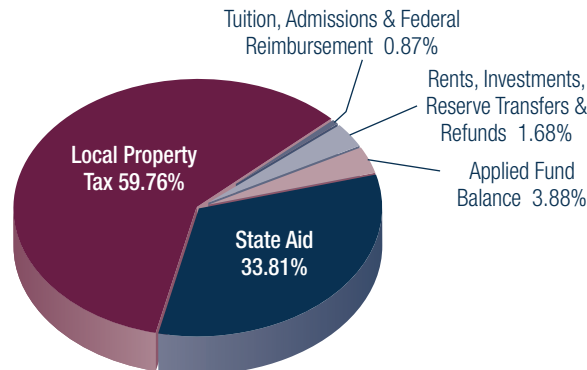
***This increase in Debt Service is associated with the voter-approved 2018 Building Our 2nd Century II referendum. This comes with a corresponding increase in state building aid.

Revenue Summary

	2019-20	PROPOSED 2020-21	% CHANGE '19-20 to '20-21
State Aid	\$23,797,454	\$23,964,067†	0.70%
Local Property Tax	41,169,851	42,363,777	2.90%
Tuition & Admissions	415,000	467,000	12.53%
Rents, Investments, Refunds, Transfer from Reserves	1,454,999	1,191,000	- 18.14%
Federal Aid/Medicaid Reimbursement	100,000	150,000	50%
Applied Fund Balance	2,611,104	2,750,000††	5.32%
Total Revenue	\$69,548,408	\$70,885,844	1.92%

† This figure could change due to the possibility of mid-year state aid cuts. See page 7.

†† Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the district spent less than expected on items such as diesel fuel, building electricity, athletics, etc. The district is applying part of this savings to the appropriated fund balance for the 2020-21 budget to lessen the tax levy increase and preserve programs and services for students.



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2019-20 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2020-21 School Year	Contingent Budget for 2020-21 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$69,548,408	\$70,885,844	\$69,691,918
Increase/Decrease for the 2020-2021 School Year		\$1,337,436	\$143,510
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		1.92%	0.21%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.81%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$41,169,851	\$42,363,777	
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)	\$41,169,851	\$42,363,777	\$41,169,851
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$1,490,513	\$1,742,113	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$40,021,663	\$40,749,078	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$39,679,338	\$40,621,664	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)	\$342,325	\$127,414	
Administrative Component**	\$6,851,045	\$6,752,847	\$6,752,847
Program Component**	\$51,017,068	\$52,476,589	\$51,234,474
Capital Component**	\$11,680,295	\$11,656,408	\$11,704,356

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 2.

* Assumptions made in projecting a contingent budget for 2020-21, 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.

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 Savings Impact

Estimated Basic STAR Savings¹

Ballston	Charlton	Clifton Park	Glenville
\$770	\$737	\$767	\$630

The annual budget vote for fiscal year 2020-21 by the qualified voters of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District, Saratoga & Schenectady Counties, New York, will be held via absentee ballot on Tuesday, June 9 per NYS Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Executive Order. Ballots must be received by the district no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. Ballots may be mailed in using the postage-paid return envelope or dropped off in the same envelope at the District Office, 88 Lakehill Road. By law, all return envelopes must be signed by the voter and returned by 5 p.m. on June 9 in order to be counted.

**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.



With libraries closed during the COVID-19 crisis, Pashley Elementary School student Gwen Libbertucci was worried her peers would run out of books to read. Good thing she's a problem solver. Gwen, with a little help from her family, made a lending library—the Little Free Library—for their front lawn. Now students can borrow and donate books whenever they want!

BH-BL



Did you know?

BH-BL

has more than 3,500 Chromebook computers out on loan to nearly all K-12 students and many staff so they can participate in remote learning.

BH-BL

has loaned more than a dozen hot spots to students who are unable to get internet access at their home. They are using the hot spots to connect to WiFi and access their online learning platforms.

BH-BL

Technology Department has fielded more than 550 calls, walk-ins, or troubleshooting emails since mid March. They are also working behind the scenes to ensure Chromebooks are kept updated so students and teachers can connect digitally. The staff even created a website for students and parents that includes technology tutorials, FAQs, How-To guides, and much more.

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 rather than as a separate proposition. Bus purchases are done this way so the district doesn't have to borrow funds and incur debt. The proposed budget includes \$730,000 for the purchase of five 66-passenger buses and two 29-passenger buses 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 \$248,200.

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

Bus replacement plan

The buses scheduled to be replaced in the 2020-21 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 750,000 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.

ONE SCHOOL BUS CARRIES THE EQUIVALENT OF 36 CARS

AMERICAN SCHOOL BUS COUNCIL



Are there any tax savings programs available to help taxpayers?

Homeowners can receive a property tax exemption or credit under the School Tax Relief (STAR) program.

The Basic STAR* exemption or credit is available on a homeowner's primary residence for anyone who owns and lives in his/her own home. Homeowners who earn \$500,000 or less can receive a STAR credit. Homeowners earning \$250,000 or less can receive a STAR exemption or credit.

The Enhanced STAR exemption is available on the primary residence of taxpayers age 65 and older with yearly incomes of \$88,050 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.

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 program must be filed with your town assessor's office. Please visit your town's website or call your town assessor if you have questions.

2020 Estimated STAR Values

Basic STAR	MAXIMUM TAX SAVINGS
Ballston	\$770
Charlton	\$737
Clifton Park	\$767
Glenville	\$630

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

***STAR Program Savings:** Please contact your town assessor's office to learn more about the latest requirements for residents participating in the STAR program.



What happens if voters do not approve the proposed budget?

Under New York State law, if the school budget is defeated, the BH-BL Board of Education typically has two options: put the same or a modified budget up for another vote on the third Tuesday in June, or immediately adopt a contingent budget. If residents defeat the proposed budget during a second vote, the board must adopt a contingent budget. *However*, given the delay in this year's initial vote to June 9, the date in law for a revote of June 16 would not be possible. Given this timeline, there's a strong possibility that if the proposed budget is defeated, the board will move directly to adopt a contingent budget.

Contingent budget rules

Under New York state 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 \$1,193,926. In doing this, the board may not be able to adhere to its goal of preserving student programs and services or staff. It would also likely have to make a number of staff reductions across all schools, which would increase class sizes.

Adopting a contingent budget also 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 including school buses; nonessential maintenance; capital expenditures (except in emergencies); salary increases for non-instructional and non-unionized employees; and certain field trips and student supplies.

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



The BH-BL food services staff, in response to COVID-19, also had to completely change the way they provide free/reduced price meals to students. But they quickly adapted, and, since mid-March, have been making more than 400 meals every weekday. They package and bag the meals for daily pick up. The transportation department also stepped in to help deliver meals to those unable to get to the school for pick up. Food Service Director Nicola Boehm explained that she and her staff shifted responsibilities to do what was necessary to make sure kids were being fed. Additionally, most of the meals are made from scratch and Boehm says she's sure to include fresh fruits and vegetables in every package. On Fridays, the staff also help prepare and pack food to fill nearly 200 backpacks as part of the community's Backpack Program that provides food to local families in need. The food service department will continue to provide meals until the last day of school. By that time, it's estimated that BH-BL staff will have made nearly 27,000 meals for students in need.

2020 MEDIAN FULL-MARKET VALUE PER TOWN & ESTIMATED 2020 TAX INCREASES

Ballston	\$239,617	\$95
Charlton	\$238,636	\$94
Clifton Park	\$197,076	\$78
Glenville	\$205,238	\$81

Understanding this infographic: If your home is in Glenville and last September's tax bill shows its total full-market value was \$205,238, your school tax bill could increase by \$81 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.*

Tax Levy vs Tax Rate

In the proposed 2020-21 budget, the overall property tax levy will increase 2.90 percent, which results in an estimated 1.98 percent tax rate increase. (See infographic above.)

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. In a growing district, the tax rate would be lower than the tax levy because the tax levy is spread out over a larger number of property owners.

Calculating tax rate increases is complicated by the fact that BH-BL is made up of parts of four towns. 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. 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 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.

\$3500+

is the amount of money the community has donated to the Spartan Community Fund since March. This fund supports BH-BL families who are in need. But that's not all. Each school & PTA has been receiving food, gift cards, school supplies, and more to be distributed to their families. One school received a donation to pay for students' yearbook. Some staff have made meals for their students' families. The outpouring of support and donations as been overwhelming.

BH-BL



Board of Education CANDIDATES

John Blowers

joined the Board of Education in 2006 and has served in the past as president and vice president. He is also a member of



the Board's Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee. He is a 1983 BH-BL graduate and holds an MBA from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. John is the Vice President, Operations for K&A Engineering Consulting, a multi-discipline engineering firm with operations in the United States and Nepal. He is also the author of the novel *Life on Tilt*. John coached CYO basketball and little league baseball for 12 seasons, and is the past Board Chair for Junior Achievement of Northeastern New York.

He is a lifelong district resident, currently lives in Ballston Lake with his wife Danna, and has two children who graduated from BH-BL and one attending the high school.

Don Marshall

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



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

On the June 9 Absentee Ballot, residents may also elect **three** members to the Board of Education.

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

Meet-the-Candidates Night on Tuesday, June 2 at 7 p.m. via Google Meet.

A link to the virtual meeting will be on the district's website the afternoon of June 2.

All residents

are invited to pose questions and listen to the candidates discuss their views. Direction for how to ask an online question will also be on the district's website.

*** 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



"During the pandemic of 1918-19, the Albany School District closed its doors for 33 calendar days, and the local newspaper published weekly high school lessons. Los Angeles was widely regarded as on the cutting edge of innovative education delivery by developing a mail-in correspondence course for its secondary students. School closures during this time were coordinated between departments of health and boards of education to allow for local discretion. By government decree, NY school districts are currently facing a disruption of 35% of a school year, possibly more. BH-BL was better prepared to deal with a rapid conversion to remote learning than most districts thanks to strategic investments in technology and professional development. Despite this preparation, the education experience is still developing. Some elements of instruction are more compatible with distance learning than others. And while our seniors are feeling the most immediate effects of this shutdown, the longer-term impact to our students is yet to be determined.

What happens next will determine the student education experience for decades to come. State leadership has announced a plan to 're-imagine education.' I can only imagine what this will look like and I doubt it will be focused on the needs of BH-BL students and community members. We need to come together as a community to determine the best approach for both educating students and funding the district. We have learned a great deal during the shutdown about what's possible and what gaps exist. It will be critical for our shared decision-making process to guide efforts to apply lessons learned from the pandemic to emerge with a local solution to how the district operates.

My experience as a lifelong resident, BH-BL graduate, parent of two graduates and a current Spartan, business leader and the longest-tenured board member allows me broad perspective to district challenges. I would welcome the opportunity to continue serving the community as a board member and help the district navigate through this important time. I ask for your vote and encourage you to mail in your ballot today. Thank you in advance for your support."

"My name is Don Marshall and I am running for a second term on the BH-BL Board of Education. Even though my three children went through the BH-BL school system, it was not until I was on the Board that I came to fully appreciate how much work and dedication, at all levels, went into creating and supporting the tradition of quality education. The other important dynamic that I observed was the considerable effort and commitment, again at all levels, to the values of cost containment. There is great sensitivity within the district to the financial responsibility our community carries as it pursues a comprehensive education for children. This commitment to fiscal responsibility will always remain the cornerstone of our system.

Recent events have clearly demonstrated the need for schools to be prepared for and responsive to a rapidly changing educational environment, even in extreme circumstances. I understand the adjustments have been hard on everyone. Students, parents and teachers had to adjust quickly to the new challenges of remote learning. However, I believe the District was prepared for this challenge—with a well established Distant Learning Program, advanced technological capabilities and the provision of individual Chromebook computers to our students. Still, the challenges of providing a quality education, from a distance, remains. The District is completely committed to provide a comprehensive on-line learning experience to our students until we can get them safely back into the classrooms. The upcoming school year will continue to be challenging for everyone. The District will be challenged on both the programmatic and the fiscal levels. I sincerely believe that we have the people, the values, the skills and a solid commitment to provide a meaningful and affordable education to our students, under all circumstances.

Please consider voting for me for a second and final term on the Board of Education. In return I will continue to extend my best effort and complete commitment to build on the quality education that we, as a District and as a community, have created for our students.

Lakshmi Nagarajan

is a 13-year resident who is seeking her first term on the board. She is the treasurer for the Pashley and O'Rourke PTAs, is involved in many school-related activities, and also volunteers for Junior Achievement. Lakshmi is a Senior Financial Advisor with Holistic Wealth Advisors. She holds her MBA from the University of Connecticut and is currently enrolled at College of Financial Planning where she is working to achieve the professional designation of Certified Financial Planner. She and her husband, James Vilics Jr, have two children in the district. See Lakshmi's position statement* at right.



"It is in public education that the American dream begins to take shape."
– Tom Brokaw

The connection between the school district, its taxpayers, and government leadership is vital to the prosperity of the community—affecting everything from quality of life issues like crime rates to economic factors like housing prices and employment. Our district's ongoing success will continue the current work of the Board balancing fiscal responsibility with educational proficiency.

I am passionate about community involvement in our District. Constituents should be able to voice and debate different policies and proposals while administrators and educators should be empowered to implement best practices. This process should be transparent to all stakeholders to encourage open communication and support. This is so important to students' education as so much occurs outside of the traditional school day.

While local involvement is important at the district level, we need to stay innovative and competitive at state, national and global levels. Our community has the best perspective to determine what our needs are to continue the high levels of achievement for our District. Although we rely on financial support from the government, we should push back on mandates that do not make sense while maximizing monetary and infrastructure support for which we qualify. Competing demands for resources at all grade levels in the District must be considered when difficult decisions arise. These needs must be balanced against budgetary restrictions and constraints and the reality that taxpayers have priorities for tax dollars outside of education. Balancing all stakeholder views leads to the community's overall success.

As a resident of the BH-BL School District for 13 years, I love our community's commitment to all its residents. My foremost responsibility is my two children; therefore I am fully committed to serving the District that influences their minds and futures. I am invested in the best interests of our community and our children so I will always look for a path that considers the betterment of both. I would be truly honored for the opportunity to serve on the Board of Education.



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. There is also budget information at www.bhbl.org.

Budget Presentation on Website

If you were unable to attend the online budget presentation on May 26, a recording of it is available on the district's website, bhbl.org. Click on the "Budget" link at the top of the page to access it.

Annual Budget Vote

Continued from page 1

The spending increase is balanced by a 1.92 percent increase in revenue, which includes a 0.7 percent increase in state aid, a 2.9 percent increase in tax levy, and applied fund balance. (See charts on page 2 for details.)

Residents will also select three candidates for the board of education. (See pages 6-7.)

In an executive order issued on May 1, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that this year's school budget vote and board of education election will take place exclusively by absentee ballot due to the COVID-19 public health crisis. By law, the district must receive ballots by 5 p.m. on June 9, 2020. (See page 8 for details about absentee ballot voting.)

Possible Aid Reductions

Governor Cuomo stated that New York State is facing a \$13 billion deficit. At the time this newsletter went to print, there was no evidence

of additional federal funding. And the Governor's budget, in an attempt to fill the state's budget gap, still included state revenue review periods which could result in mid-year aid cuts to school districts.

"Given the uncertainty with school state aid, we believe the proposed budget will allow the district to continue to provide students with a high-quality education and maintain the programs and services BH-BL has been delivering," says Board President Patrick Ziegler. "Plans are already in place should state aid be reduced and we are forced to revisit the budget mid year to make additional reductions."

The 2020-21 school budget proposal includes the reduction of seven teaching positions, two night-time custodians, a security monitor, a guidance secretary, and eight teaching assistants. Additionally, all five school building budgets for materials, supplies, and equipment have been reduced,

and, in preparation for the possibility of mid year cuts, the district has already instituted a hiring freeze and administrative review of all vacated positions. If further reductions are necessary, a Budget Review Committee will be assembled to analyze and recommend other reductions and savings measures. The Committee would include staff, administrators, and community members.

The proposed budget also continues to include efforts that generate revenue. For instance, the district will continue to expand distance learning course offerings to other districts through the BOCES District Learning Network. This school year, participation in the program yielded \$120,000 in revenue, or additional aid, to support distance learning teachers' salaries. The district will also continue to seek grants and run Spartan Catering to bring in additional funding.

BH-BL



Board of Education
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Don Marshall,
Vice President
John Blowers
Jennifer Longtin
Lisa Morse
Peter Sawyer
David Versocki

Superintendent
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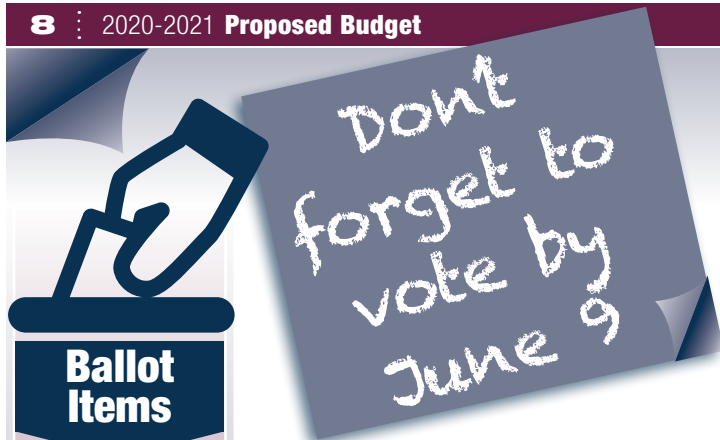
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8 :: 2020-2021 Proposed Budget



Ballot Items

☒ The 2020-21
Proposed
Budget

☒ Board of
Education
Candidates

No in-
person
voting

BH-BL



👉 Ballots Due June 9 by 5 pm

Per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order, the annual school budget vote and Board of Education election will be held by absentee ballot only. Ballots must be received by 5 p.m. on June 9, 2020. They can be mailed in the district-provided, prepaid return envelope or dropped off in the same envelope at the District Office (Hostetter Leadership Center) entrance located at the High School, 88 Lakehill Road. The building is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Tuesday, June 9 the building will be open until 5 p.m. **By law, ballots received after 5 p.m. on June 9 cannot to be counted.**

👉 Where do I get a ballot?

Qualified voters were mailed absentee ballots in late May. If you are a qualified voter but did NOT receive an absentee ballot, please contact the District Office at 518-399-9141. Ballots can also be picked up at the District Office weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

👉 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 to vote with the county or district.

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parents participated. The results showed that close to 80% of the responses were favorable. The survey asked parents to rate their satisfaction level of the remote learning process; communication from teachers, principals, and the district; and the technology and associated support provided to students.

"We know this situation has been challenging and difficult at times for families," says Superintendent Dr. Patrick McGrath. "One of our goals during this time was to be sure we provided parents and students with a level of stability and routine, and try to create an online learning environment that, to the best of our ability, modeled the instruction they were receiving in the classroom. It hasn't always been easy but we are so thankful to our parents, staff, and students for being flexible, patient and supportive as we fine-tuned our transition to remote learning."

BH-BL Community's Continued Support

When faced with the COVID-19 crisis, the BH-BL community didn't shy away. Residents and staff showed up in full force to offer support in a variety of ways. Teachers volunteered to hold professional development Google Meets to better familiarize their colleagues with remote technology. The technology staff delivered Chromebooks and hot spots to students who needed wifi connections. Community members and businesses made monetary and gift card donations to the Spartan Community Fund to support families in need. A team of social workers, counselors, and support professionals connected with families to offer assistance. Staff cleared out students' desks and lockers and bagged and labeled the items for pick up. Principals worked tirelessly to reorganize milestone events for students. Custodians added extra sanitation practices to their routines. Staff organized parades and virtual events to stay connected to students. The Food Service staff prepared 400 meals daily (see page 5). And high school seniors, whose final year together was cut short, weathered this crisis with maturity and understanding.

"There is so much Spartan pride in this close-knit community," adds McGrath. "And it has become even more apparent as everyone continues to rally together and go above and beyond to help and support each during this unusual situation."