



2022-23
Proposed

BUDGET

School Budget Vote Tuesday, May 17

Proposal focused on sustaining, restoring and expanding programming for students

On Tuesday, May 17, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake School District residents will go to the polls to vote on a proposed \$76,634,726 budget for the 2022-23 school year.

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

The proposal carries a 2.50 percent tax levy increase with an estimated 1.82 percent tax rate increase, which is below the tax cap for the 11th consecutive year. Voters will also be asked to elect two candidates to the Board of Education. (See pages 6-9.)

Overall spending in the proposed budget will increase by \$4.09 million, or 5.63 percent. This increase, however, includes a \$1.3 million construction project to repair and pave the visitor/student parking area at the high school. Without this transfer, the budget-to-budget



Kindergarten students in Mrs. Mosall's Pashley Elementary School classroom participated in counting activities to celebrate the 100th day of school, such as stringing 100 Fruit Loop "beads" onto a ribbon to make a necklace. This lesson also helps students with their hand-eye coordination skills, explains Mosall. However, she's fairly certain it's the students' favorite activity because they get to eat the project when they are done.

increase would be approximately 3.84 percent. And, because the proposal also includes a transfer from the debt service fund of \$1.3 million as a revenue item, this project has no impact on the tax levy or estimated tax rate.

Budget Development

This school year, district leaders have been dedicated to returning BH-BL programming to full, pre-pandemic strength.

"Our students and staff are back and our academic and extracurricular programs are fully operational," says Superintendent Dr. Patrick McGrath. "It's been a celebratory year as we regain our footing and welcome the participation, once again, in our drama productions, concerts, art exhibits, athletic events, student clubs and activities, enrichment activities, and so much more."

Also this school year, the district used the one-time federal grant to fund services and staffing aimed at helping transition and acclimate students back to in-person instruction.

"All of the academic and social emotional support we offered this year has had a significant impact on our students," says Assistant Superintendent Dr. David Collins. "Students have benefited from targeted academic support and increased social connections. Additional staff in classrooms and in supporting roles resulted in smaller class sizes, targeted assistance during lessons or class work, and increased availability for students who, at times, may have needed academic or emotional counseling."

To allow the district to continue offering such services and support beyond the life of the federal grant, funding for these items is included in the proposed budget.

"Through a careful analysis of next year's staffing and the district's long-range financial plan, we were able to incorporate many of these student services into the general fund budget for the 2022-23 school year while shifting other, non-recurring items to the temporary federal grants," explains Assistant Superintendent Dr. Christopher Abdoo.

Continued on page 10

BUDGET at-a-glance

- ✓ Proposed Budget: \$76,634,726
- ✓ Estimated Tax Rate Increase: 1.82%
- ✓ Tax Levy Increase: 2.50%
- ✓ Budget-to-Budget Increase: 5.63% or 3.84% without transfer

DID YOU KNOW?**Stevens**

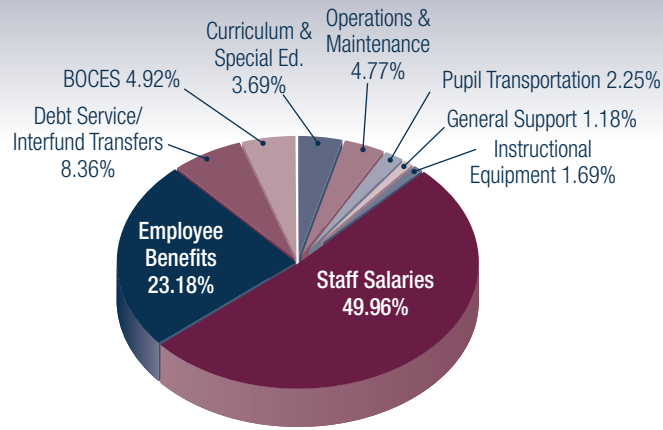
Elementary School was named among the "Best Elementary Schools" by US News and World Report. Way to go Stevens Superstars. Stevens students, faculty, staff and leadership work hard every day to make Stevens a community and a place where everyone thrives.

4 State Champs

The district's fall and winter athletic programs were so successful that four teams were state champions! Congratulations to the Girls Volleyball, Boys Cross Country, Girls Field Hockey, and Boys Swimming teams for their huge accomplishment.

High School Scholarships

Students from the Class of 2021 received \$6,187,168 in total in scholarships.

BH-BL**Expenditures Summary**

CATEGORY	2021-22	PROPOSED 2022-23	% CHANGE '21-22 to '22-23
General Support* (Includes district supplies & materials, legal services, general insurance)	\$804,503	\$902,236	12.15%
Curriculum/Spec. Ed. Private Placements	2,917,039	2,831,577	-2.93%
BOCES	3,593,489	3,773,163	5.00%
Instructional Equipment, Furniture & Materials**	869,013	1,296,941	49.24%
Operations & Maintenance***	2,129,040	3,658,150	71.82%
Pupil Transportation	1,585,650	1,722,000	8.60%
Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes	17,363,993	17,759,810	2.28%
Debt Service & Interfund Transfers	6,344,123	6,409,737	1.03%
Staff Salaries	36,942,842	38,281,112	3.62%
Total Expenditure	\$72,549,692	\$76,634,726	5.63%

* This figure reflects additional expenditures for legal fees in 2022-23.

**This figure reflects the E-rate project scheduled for 2022-23.

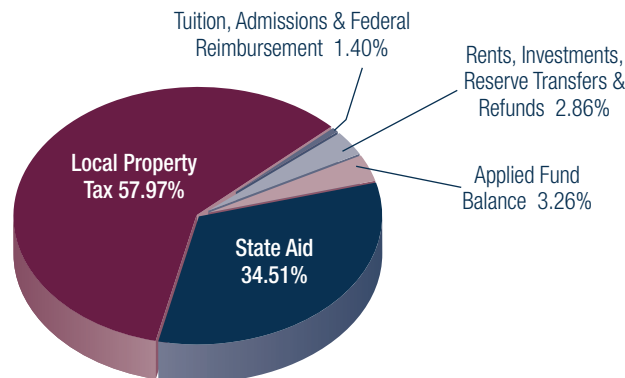
***This figure reflects a transfer to the 2018 Capital Project associated with repavement of student/visitor parking lot at the high school. It also reflects funding (\$100,000) for a Capital Outlay Project focused on the addition of an elevated access way above the fuel tanks at the transportation facility. Approximately 75 percent of the expenses will be refunded to the district through state building aid.

Revenue Summary

	2021-22	PROPOSED 2022-23	% CHANGE '21-22 to '22-23
State Aid	\$24,678,548	\$26,446,574	7.16%
Local Property Tax	43,338,144	44,421,597	2.50%
Tuition, Admissions & Services****	582,000	878,386	50.93%
Rents, Investments, Refunds, Transfer from Reserves*****	976,000	2,190,169	124.40%
Federal Aid/Medicaid Reimbursement	225,000	198,000	-12.00%
Applied Fund Balance	2,750,000	2,500,000	-9.09%
Total Revenue	\$72,549,692	76,634,726	5.63%

**** This figure reflects the Transportation Service Agreement with the Scotia-Glenville School District.

*****This figure reflects a \$1.3 million transfer from the Debt Service Fund.



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2021-22 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year	Contingent Budget for 2022-23 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$72,549,692	\$76,634,726	\$75,551,272
Increase/Decrease for the 2022-23 School Year		\$4,085,034	\$3,001,580
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.63%	4.14%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.7%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$43,338,144	\$44,421,597	
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)	\$43,338,144	\$44,421,597	\$43,338,144
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$1,865,900	\$1,974,202	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$41,503,698	\$42,662,440	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$41,472,244	\$42,447,395	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60% Voter Approval)	\$31,454	\$215,045	
Administrative Component**	\$6,871,045	\$7,424,340	\$7,155,300
Program Component**	\$53,581,296	\$55,029,644	\$55,798,154
Capital Component**	\$12,097,351	\$14,180,742	\$12,597,818

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 2022-23, 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.

Basic STAR Savings Impact

Estimated Basic STAR Savings¹

Ballston	Charlton	Clifton Park	Glenville
\$753	\$731	\$750	\$607

The annual budget vote for fiscal year 2022-23 by the qualified voters of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District, Saratoga & Schenectady Counties, New York, will be held at BH-BL High School, Tuesday, May 17, 2022, between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., prevailing time in the BH-BL School District, at which times the polls will be opened 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.



O'Rourke Middle School students were super excited to celebrate their first Grade 6 Spirit Day field trip since the pandemic. Some students went to Pizza Works where they made their own pizzas. Another group of students went skating at an ice rink. Both trips resulted in some good old-fashioned Spartan bonding and F-U-N.

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: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/max-savings/school-district/sd42.htm>

BH-BL



**DID
YOU KNOW?****World
Finals**

The grade 7 Odyssey of the Mind Team that took 3rd place in the state competition is now advancing to the OM World Finals in late May. Visit bhbl.org to learn more about the team's project. Good luck!

1st Place

The O'Rourke Middle School Future City team once again won 1st place in this year's state competition and advanced to the National Competition where they earned a special award for "Best Land Surveying Practices."

**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.

BH-BL

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.

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 \$1,083,454. In doing this, the board may not be able to adhere to its goal of preserving student programs and services or staff, or restoring staffing from prior years. 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.

Are new buses being purchased for next year?

Yes, but 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 proposal includes \$945,000 for the purchase of five 72-passenger buses, two 35-passenger bus, a 21-passenger wheelchair accessible bus, and two small transport vans to replace some of the district's oldest buses.

The district anticipates being reimbursed approximately 71 percent of the cost of the buses through state transportation aid in subsequent years, resulting in a net local cost of approximately \$274,050. 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 2022-23 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.





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 \$92,000 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.

2022 Estimated STAR Values

Basic STAR	MAXIMUM TAX SAVINGS
Ballston	\$753
Charlton	\$731
Clifton Park	\$750
Glenville	\$607

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.

RESULTS by the Numbers

109

The number of high school students who were asked to have their artwork shown at an exhibition within the Capital Region or were asked to play in a music festival concert this school year.

10

The number of consecutive years BH-BL has been named among the "Best Communities for Music Education" by the NAMM Foundation.

4

The number of awards student musicians and conductors received for their outstanding performances at NYSSMA Major Organization Festivals. Grade Chorus 8 received the Level 2 Silver Award; HS Concert Choir received the Level 5 Silver Award; HS Chamber Strings received the Level 4 Silver Award; and HS Concert Band received the Level 5 Gold Award.

BH-BL



Understanding Tax Levy vs Tax Rate

In the proposed 2022-23 budget, the overall property tax levy will increase 2.50 percent, which results in an estimated 1.82 percent tax rate increase. To understand the impact on homeowners, see the infographic example below.

2022 MEDIAN FULL-MARKET VALUE PER TOWN & ESTIMATED 2022 TAX INCREASES

Ballston	\$244,431	\$91
Charlton	\$232,500	\$87
Clifton Park	\$208,726	\$78
Glenville	\$203,529	\$76

Understanding this infographic: If your home is in Glenville and last September's tax bill shows its total full-market value was \$203,529, your school tax bill could increase by \$76 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.

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. Please contact your town assessor's office if you have questions about your property assessment or how they determine equalization rates.

Board of Education CANDIDATES

On May 17 residents may also elect **two** members to the Board of Education for three year terms.

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

Meet-the-Candidates Night on Thursday, May 12 at 7 p.m.

The event is both in-person and being live streamed. The live stream link will be on the district's website.

MTC Questions

The event will be moderated by the League of Women Voters. Given the number of candidates and time constraints, the LofVV is asking residents to submit questions ahead of time. Please send questions to Tara Mitchell at tmitchell@bhbl.org by **May 10**.

*** 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



Michele Draves

is seeking her first term on the board. She is a 1991 BH-BL High School graduate and attended SCCC for paralegal studies. She is also a graduate of the National Labor College. Michele is active in the school community as well as the community at large. Since 2016, she's been a member of the Town of Glenville's Efficiency in Government Committee and is a member of the high school's Parent Advisory Committee and the Special Education PTA. She also served the community as a 911 dispatcher for five years, held a five-year leadership role with the Scotia-Glenville Democrats, and often volunteered at Charlton Heights Elementary School. She and her husband, Ron, have twin boys attending BH-BL High School. *See Michele's position statement at right.



"As a graduate of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake School District, I appreciate all that our district has to offer students from Kindergarten through High School. When I met and later married my husband, while house shopping, my main objective was to live in the district to offer my children the same quality education that I received.

Currently, while hopefully facing the end to the Global Pandemic that we have been facing for the past 2 years, I think that it is more important than ever that the members of our Board of Education set purposeful, well thought out policies and procedures. This includes but is not limited to the tiered mitigation plan.

As the parent of two high schoolers I have a unique perspective on the privileges our district offers, extensive language opportunities, college credit courses, unmatched technology opportunities, as well as BOCES and Driver Education programs. One of my high schoolers is also taking advantage of our unparalleled Special Education Program, which also gives me a unique understanding of why all of these services are so important to our community as a whole. This safe and supportive educational environment, with our new, exceptional Technology wing also affords students of our district many opportunities not offered in other districts, and if offered, none to the extent of BH-BL.

Knowing all of these many opportunities as well as the quality of educators and support staff in our district, I feel compelled to represent my community and our children to ensure that all of this remains offered at BH-BL, while also ensuring that the district budget be carefully examined throughout and to always keep the current economic climate in mind.

As a member of the board, I vow to do my best to ensure all policies and procedures that I am asked to examine are for the betterment of the school community at large. With your support, I look forward to serving as a member of our school board."

Emily Walsh

is seeking her first term on the Board of Education. She has been a resident of BH-BL for eight years. Emily graduated from Scotia-Glenville High School in 2003 and is the owner of Freckles Photography. She and her husband, Patrick, have three children who currently attend Stevens Elementary School. Emily volunteers her time and photography services for St. Baldrick's events and is the photographer for Burnt Hills Nursery School. She also volunteers in various capacities at the Charlton Volunteer Fire Department. Emily and her family foster dogs for Dallys Hope 4 Paws. *See Emily's position statement at right.



"Growing up in nearby Scotia, I was thrilled to move to Burnt Hills in 2014 so I could give my children all of the benefits the school district has to offer. I embraced the BHBL community and started a family photography business in 2017 and have wholeheartedly enjoyed my time with all of the families in the area.

If elected, I will work hard to ensure the operational and fiscal practices of the board are sound while being a strong advocate for students who have struggled academically, emotionally, and physically. Covid has created many unprecedented challenges and as a board we need to be innovative in our solutions. This will include taking a close look at expanding our special education department to address a much greater need. I look forward to being part of the solution and helping to develop a concrete action plan to help all students heal and reach their full potential.

I am against COVID vaccine mandates and will be a staunch advocate for parent choice in these matters. I will always support the right of parents and caregivers to decide what is best for their child. All children must have access to a public education and that should not be threatened by policies that intrude into personal matters.

What sets me apart in a crowded field of candidates is that I will be a strong parent choice advocate while working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure student success. Melissa Barone and I are running as a team because our shared vision allows us to advocate more effectively, and our district can only benefit from having fresh ideas and voices to navigate all the unique challenges facing public schools today. Together, we can move BHBL forward and ensure all stakeholders are part of the solution."

Board of Education CANDIDATES

David Mitchell

is seeking his first term on the Board. He has been a BH-BL resident for 22 years and is the Executive Director of the Oak Hill School. David has his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from SUNY Plattsburgh as well as certifications in Special Education and School District Administration. David is a member of the Elks Club and is a former East Glenville Fire Commissioner. He also volunteers as a travel coach for youth baseball and basketball teams, and is involved in Junior Achievement at Pashley Elementary School. David and his wife, Brande, have five children. Three of his children have already graduated from BH-BL High School and one will be a Class of 2022 graduate. *See David's position statement at right.



"BHBL core beliefs state that students, staff, parents, and community members are partners and all have a responsibility in the educational process for our children. The strength of the BHBL Central School District is ensuring that all stakeholders are heard and are a part of sustaining a high-quality education for all students. As a board member, I would do my best to make sure that statement is adhered to.

As a parent of five children, three who graduated from BHBL and another who will be graduating this year, and for someone who has been in the field of education for the past 40 years, I recognize how important it is for all stakeholders to work collaboratively to achieve success for all of our children. I have been a teacher, coach, mentor, principal, and district administrator in public education for 30 years. In addition, for the past ten years, I have been the Executive Director at Oak Hill School, a private school for students with special needs. I believe all of these experiences, including being a parent and community member, give me the unique perspective to act as an asset to the school board. As an educator, parent and taxpayer, I understand and recognize the importance of our teachers, administrators, and support staff as the pillars of our schools. We need to continue to hire, retain and support high-quality staff, which in turn produce high-quality programs for our children.

Being a school board member is a considerable commitment and one that I take seriously. If elected, you can be sure that I will give my very best effort and will listen to all stakeholders before making any decisions that will impact our children or school district. In addition, I will use my knowledge as a parent, educator, coach, and community member to advocate for our children in a fiscally responsible and academically supportive manner."

David Barclay II

is seeking his first term on the Board. He is a graduate of Union College where he earned a Bachelor's degree in history and a Master's degree in teaching. He was also named Union football team's 1998 MVP. Dave furthered his education at Johns Hopkins University earning a second Master's degree in Education Technology and earned his Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Leadership at SUNY Plattsburgh. Dave is currently a Regional Sales Manager for Hapara. He is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution and is the Founder and Organizer of the Dads in Cargo Shorts 5k. Dave is an Assistant Coach for Spartan Youth Football and is on the organization's Golf Event Committee. Dave and his wife Kathleen have two sons who attend Stevens and O'Rourke. *See Dave's position statement at right.



"After graduating from Burnt Hills in 1995, life took me several places around the United States and abroad. On this journey, I came to know many different people, cultures and ways of living. With our wanderlust satisfied, my wife and I moved back to BH-BL to raise our family in this unique and terrific community. As a Board of Education member, I would preserve and honor who we are, where we have been and what makes us great. With over two decades as an educator, I would be sure to keep an eye on how we can best prepare our children for an ever changing world that looks different from the community in which they live.

Shared Decision Making stands at the core of how BH-BL operates. Continuing this long tradition will ensure that all community stakeholders will have their voice as we move forward together. Our success as a school district hinges on the strong relationships forged by parents, school leaders and faculty. As a parent of children in the district, a former school administrator and classroom teacher, I am uniquely placed to understand the challenges faced by each group, and listen empathetically to the needs, concerns and hopes for BH-BL students.

Financially, BH-BL has kept yearly budget increases below 2% for the past 11 years. During this same period, the district has maintained a healthy student/teacher ratio and embarked upon multiple capital improvement projects providing our students with cutting edge technology and facilities. I am in full support of these efforts, and would move to continue on the trajectory of fiscally responsible improvements to our staffing and facilities.

Together, we have weathered the COVID storm. My goal is to play a part in healing our community as we navigate the road ahead. I pledge to listen to individual concerns, and emphatically accept the challenge of looking at all sides of the issues facing our district. I will work collaboratively with other Board of Education members to develop thoughtful, inclusive and well reasoned positions that benefit all Spartans."



Exit Survey

Following the vote, residents may complete a voluntary and anonymous exit survey. The responses and comments will help the board gather valuable community feedback to help guide future budget and program decisions. Both electronic and paper surveys will be available. High School students will be helping run the exit survey.

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BH-BL



Board of Education CANDIDATES

RESULTS by the Numbers

98

The district's average graduation rate from the past five years. It's one of the highest in the Capital Region.

88

The percentage of 2021 BH-BL graduates who attended a 2- or 4-year college after graduation.

34

The number of clubs offered at BH-BL High School that range in focus from community service and student government to academics, athletics, and fine arts.

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BH-BL



Jennifer Longtin

is a 22-year BH-BL resident and is seeking her fourth term on the board. During her time on the board, Jen has served as president, vice president, and finance



committee chairperson. She is also the chair of the Policy Review Committee and serves on the Long Range Planning Committee. She is currently serving her second term as a NYSTRS Board Trustee and earned a Board Mastery designation from NYSSBA. Jen owns Lighthouse Insurance Agency LLC and Longtin Properties LLC, both of which have operated in Burnt Hills for more than 12 years. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Siena in Business Administration, Accounting, and Management. She lives in Ballston Lake with her three children who attend BH-BL High School. *See Jen's position statement at right.

"First and foremost, I want to thank our voters for their support over the past nine years. It has been a pleasure to serve this district. I know how lucky I am to be a part of this board and community, and I do not take that for granted."

BH-BL is a special place to live, go to school, and even work. We have exceptional teachers and staff who are truly invested in helping all of our students succeed. We have a community that supports the district's goals to improve and flourish. And we have a visionary leadership team that has put our district on a steady and strategic path toward continued success and growth."

With three children in the district I have had the opportunity to personally meet many of our wonderful families, and I am proud to call so many friends. It has been an honor to be a part of our students' successes and watch them excel on the stage and on our athletic fields and courts. I am truly proud to be a Spartan."

During my time on the board, I have been instrumental in supporting transparent communication and ensuring the district continues to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment to provide our students with the foundation they need to thrive and succeed. I remain strongly supportive of the district's shared-decision making tradition and have participated on various committees, such as the Policy Review Committee where I play an integral role in revisiting and revising the district's current policies to align them with NYS School Boards Association recommendations."

We all know the world is changing and we are faced with challenges every day. And that is why I will continue to be an advocate for our students, teachers, and community. My passion to make a difference is the same as it was nine years ago and I want to continue doing my part to help guide our district into the future. I will remain an active, engaged board member working in the best interests of our students, district and community. I am proud to serve as a board member and thank you for your support with my re-election."

Ben Riehlman

is seeking his first term on the board. He holds degrees in mathematics, science, technology, world history, and education from The College of St.



Rose, SUNY Albany, and SCCC. He is a dual certified teacher in both technology and social studies, and currently teaches general and special education. Prior to that, Ben worked as a dairy farmer, a construction worker, a cook and an uber driver, and is a supporter of trade apprenticeships. Ben is also a coach and mentor. He and his wife, Brenda, are raising two children, an 8-year-old son who attends Pashley Elementary School and a 4-year-old daughter who will be entering kindergarten in September. *See Ben's position statement at right.

"New York State's effort to reimagine education is proving to be a dismal failure. We must return schools to their proper order, whereby they serve the interests of the community in which they reside, not the interests of state agencies. While I am certainly prepared to tackle the procedural and logistical side of being on the school board: passing budgets, forming coalitions, and engaging in shared decision making, my primary focus will be on much more critical issues. If we do not rein in the state's Unconstitutional and immoral overreach into our schools, then the repercussions on our children, and our society, will be catastrophic."

Originally, public schools were structured in a way that gave parents and community members the ability and authority to guide policies and curricula. Recently, state agencies, using monetary incentives, have usurped this authority, leaving the community out and taking away parent's choice. The policies and mandates handed down from state agencies are becoming increasingly distasteful and have strayed from the original mission of educating students. Good citizens and loving parents, many of them living paycheck-to-paycheck, are left with a difficult choice: Keep their children in a school that promotes ideologies which are averse to their value structure or quit their job so that they can homeschool their children, leaving them economically distressed. For some, the latter of these two choices is an impossibility, as it would mean that these parents would be unable to pay their bills, subsequently putting them out on the streets. As such, these loving parents are forced to keep their children in a school that no longer reflects their values and beliefs."

I would like to offer these concerned citizens and parents, a third choice. I am running for school board to put the power back in the hands of the local community and to give parents a voice. If elected, I will do everything in my power, use every tool at my disposal, to reject the repugnant policies and mandates being pushed by the state and to reaffirm that Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake CSD, belongs to our community."

Board of Education CANDIDATES

Tom Bird

is seeking his first term on the board. He has been a BH-BL resident for three years and lived in Glenville for 38 years. He graduated from Siena



College with a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration and Management degree. Tom is the owner of First Class Home Solution and a partner in Bird Realty, both located in Glenville. He also holds a NYS Real Estate Brokers License and is a member of the NYS Association of Realtors and National Association of Realtors. Tom and his family are parishioners at Faith Baptist Church where he's also the Facility Director and a member of the Music Worship Team. Tom lives in Glenville with his wife Brittany, who is an educator, his step-daughter Sofie and son Johnathan. *See Tom's position statement at right.

"In today's society and especially within our schools, we as a community are in a fight against situations we could have never imagined. This is happening for all parents and students no matter how you may feel from a political perspective.

Our children have had to deal with differences in their learning environment and also from a social/emotional aspect of life. In trying to keep them safe from a pandemic, our NYS government overstepped their bounds and handcuffed local school administrators' abilities to teach our children from a "normal" position. I would like to be a part of the BH-BL Board of Education to help fight against mandates and curriculum changes that disregard parental choice and the voice of the community.

I am very pro-teacher as my wife and some family members teach children every day, and I understand how difficult of a position this can be. However, it takes a village (our community) to raise a child and I feel strongly that we need to make sure our teachers are well equipped from a budgetary standpoint, so that they may handle the everyday situations that may arise. However, being fiscally responsible with the taxpayer dollars after teachers are compensated fairly is a task that I am willing to take head on.

As a member of the Board, I would like to see more local control from and for our schools administrators. Although I would come to this position from a morally conservative viewpoint, I would want to work as a team with the other seven board members for the betterment of each child who walks into our schools. I would push for more camaraderie as a community rather than the separation that is happening in today's society."

Melissa Barone

is seeking her first term on the Board. She has a Bachelor's degree from SUNY Albany where she studied psychology and philosophy.



Melissa is licensed in Property & Casualty/Life & Health Insurance. She is a licensed NYS Real Estate Salesperson and a self-employed realtor with Field Realty. She volunteers for Red Cross Blood Drives, Toys for Tots, and Make a Wish Foundation. She also volunteers at the "Morning of Kindness" and "Dine Out for Life" annual events. Melissa was an Eagle Society Top Sales Leader and Chairman Circle Qualifier (via State Farm) and a two-time Arbonne Incentive Trip earner. She and her husband, Jason, have lived in BH-BL for three years. Their two children attend O'Rourke Middle School and Charlton Heights. *See Melissa's position statement at right.

"Born and raised in Troy, NY, my husband and I were excited to settle with our two boys in the Burnt Hills community. I run both an Arbonne and Real Estate business, and I am deeply committed to volunteering and to community service. I have served as President of the Colonie Chamber Ambassador Committee, President of the Clifton Park Women in Networking Connect, and the President of the Forest Park Elementary PTA, to name just a few. I will bring that same passion to serve on the BH-BL Board of Education.

COVID created many setbacks and challenges for students. As the parent of a child with a learning disability, I came to see how a successful balance had not been struck between keeping everyone safe while also protecting the mental, academic, and social health of children during critical periods of development. I am committed to bringing valuable insight to complicated issues and will work collaboratively to help students overcome and thrive. I am opposed to COVID mandates and believe all parents should play an important role in shared decision making.

Coming from a culturally diverse family with military and civil service roots, it is important to me that our district promotes the values and lessons that create a positive learning environment. Administration, staff, and parents need to work together to ensure sensitive topics are handled in a way that does not expose children to developmentally inappropriate lessons.

It is my love of our children, district, community, and country that led me to run for the BH-BL Board of Education. Running as a team with Emily Walsh, we hope to continue the legacy BH-BL has built, but there is much work to be done to overcome unprecedented challenges. I promise to be open, listen, and collaborate, all while standing strong for our Constitution and parent choice."

RESULTS by the Numbers

11

The number of consecutive years, the Board of Education has proposed a budget that has been below the state-imposed tax cap.

4

The number of BH-BL high school students who were recognized in the prestigious National Merit Scholarship Program this year. Congratulations to National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist Owen Bechtel and to National Merit Scholarship Commended students Lucas Carey, Jonathan Costa, and Cabot Smith.

*** 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



2022-23 School Budget Vote Continued from page 1

RESULTS by the Numbers

1,978

The number of collective hours Pashley Elementary School students read during the PTA's month-long PARP event, which was aimed at increasing family reading experiences.

4

The number of consecutive years Charlton Heights Elementary School has been named among the "Best Public Schools" through the *Daily Gazette's* People Choice Award. The students', staffs' and leaderships' dedication to their school continues to receive praise.

27

The number of Suburban Council varsity athletic teams currently at BH-BL. The proposed budget, however, includes the addition of a Girls Varsity Golf team.

BH-BL



What's being proposed for next school year?

The Board of Education determined that the primary goal of the 2022-23 budget should be the continuation of the work undertaken this year—fully restoring, enhancing, and growing student programming. It was also a priority of the board to remain below the state-mandated tax levy cap.

The proposal includes plans to expand and enhance the district's strong, innovative academic programming by:

- ▶ Implementing a new elementary-level math curriculum and continuing to align the K-12 science curriculum with the Next Generation Science standards;
- ▶ expanding the high school's college-credit earning program, BH-BL + 1, by partnering with additional colleges and universities to allow for a broader choice of courses and credits;
- ▶ continuing the district's existing Language & Culture program at the elementary schools and extending the Chinese language sequence at the high school;
- ▶ broadening the high school's distance learning offerings across eight different academic departments;
- ▶ restoring and enhancing the elementary-level enrichment programs and in-school activities; and
- ▶ expanding high school elective course opportunities through a technology-based partnership with the Scotia-Glenville School District.

The proposal also supports academic, extracurricular, and social-emotional program growth. This includes:

- ▶ Sustaining this year's expansion of the elementary-level guidance

program though additional counseling personnel and services (much of the associated cost will be offset by retirements);

- ▶ expanding the K-8 Character Education/SEL program to allow for additional time spent working with students on building character traits, strong interpersonal relationships, and healthy minds;
- ▶ maintaining the current elementary-level reading, math, and special education positions that were added through the federal grant;
- ▶ sustaining the K-8 targeted math and reading learning labs focused on delivering additional academic assistance to students in need;
- ▶ expanding STRIVE (a special education program) at Pashley to match a growing need;
- ▶ expanding athletic offerings by establishing a girls varsity golf team and adding a boys junior varsity golf team; and
- ▶ adding a maintenance position to allow for more time to be dedicated to the care of athletic fields/school grounds.

Improving instructional leadership is another goal of the proposed budget. The additional positions will rely on existing staff and, therefore, are nearly cost neutral. The proposal includes:

- ▶ Adding a part-time Dean of Students at O'Rourke Middle School to



assist with student referrals, support students' needs, connect with parents/guardians, etc.;

- ▶ restoring the K-12 Science Department Head position (vacant for a year); and
- ▶ adding a technology facilities educator to manage events in district facilities (i.e., auditoriums, Black Box Theater, TV studio, etc.) and develop student offerings in the areas of technology and media (i.e., broadcasting, theatrical technology/audio, etc.).

"Our goal with this budget is not only to provide our full array of pre-pandemic programmatic offerings but to excel in our delivery of these opportunities to our students," says McGrath. "We are committed to translating our residents' investment in our school district into world class opportunities for the children of this community."

Building Our 2nd Century II Capital Project Update

High School Auditorium Nearly Complete; Business Classrooms Upgrade to Begin in June 2022

The summer of 2022 is going to be a busy one at BH-BL High School—and possibly one of the most memorable ones as well. Construction crews will be putting the finishing touches on the school's new auditorium and beginning the work for major renovations in the Business/Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) wing.

New High School Auditorium

The highly anticipated new auditorium is slated to open its doors and welcome the community in the fall of 2022. For some, the space will be unrecognizable now that it has been completely modernized, the stage expanded, and balcony seating added.

When complete, the entire auditorium, which was gutted and reconstructed in its original footprint, will have approximately 1,000 new seats; air conditioning; new carpeting, houselights and ambient floor/aisle lighting; state-of-the-art audio and lighting systems; a lighting booth in the balcony; and a sound booth with cutting-edge technology to allow for live video streaming of concerts and productions. The orchestra pit, which was also lengthened, now has the ability to be mechanically raised and lowered. Additionally, the fly space above the stage was heightened to allow for efficient scenery changes and set storage.

"Over the years, this space has truly become a district- and community-wide auditorium," says Fine Arts Director Pete Giroux. "So many wonderful annual events are held in the auditorium, it will be awesome to have them in a state-of-the-art facility that the community deserves."

HS Business/FACS Classrooms

Work on this section of the school will begin in June and is expected to be ready for use in the 2022-23 school year. The Business and FACS classrooms are among some of the oldest, most dated rooms in the school. They are located in the original section of the high school, built in 1955, and have received very few upgrades over the year.

When finished, the new classrooms will feature new lighting, floors, ceilings and technology infrastructure upgrades to support today's learning devices such as high-definition interactive projectors, document cameras, and large screen white boards. It also includes the creation of flexible work spaces that allow students to collaborate, create, communicate, design, solve problems, and think critically.

"We are so excited for the transformation of the new wing because it will provide our students with access to large and small group presentation rooms, access to on-demand financial data, a new textile lab, and even a new foods lab," adds District Department Head for Business, FACS, and Technology Stephanie Andrejcak. "These classrooms and labs will expose students to the



Top Photo: A view from the stage of the audience ground-level seating area and the new balcony, which created nearly 100 additional seats in the auditorium.

Bottom Photo: A view of the auditorium's new orchestra pit being installed. When done, the pit floor will have the ability to be raised and lowered. During drama productions, this is where the live music ensemble performs.



spaces they'll experience in the real world and better prepare them for their next steps after high school, whether that's continuing their education or entering the workforce."

BH-BL



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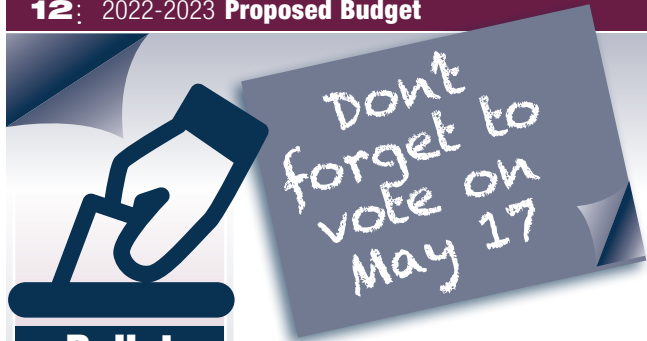
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12 2022-2023 Proposed Budget



Ballot Items

☒ The 2022-23
Proposed
Budget

☒ Two Board
of Education
Candidates

BH-BL



*Congratulations to BH-BL High School Science Research students **Jack Mongan** and **Carsyn Bonesteel** who were recognized for their research at the Greater Capital Region Science and Engineering Fair. **Bonesteel's** research, "A Pre-Clinical Investigation of the Therapeutic Efficacy of Ventral Pallidum Deep-Brain Stimulation for Epilepsy," earned the National Association of Biology Teachers Award and the Regeneron George Yancopoulos Award that recognizes the project demonstrating the most creativity in improving or identifying health issues in an individual. **Mongan's** research, "Efficacy of Copper Oxide Wire Particles and Albendazole Against Gastrointestinal Nematodes in Goats," won FIRST place in the fair! He also received the USAID from the America People Award that is given for the humanitarian project that holds the potential to improve lives around the world. Mongan advances to the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair where he'll compete with 1,800 students from countries and territories around the world.*



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

Absentee Ballots

Registered voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at the polling place on May 17.

To receive an absentee ballot, first fill out an application which can be obtained from Deputy Clerk of the Board Rebecca Manson 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 Rebecca Manson 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 no later than 5 p.m. on May 17. For more information, call 518-399-9141, ext. 85025.