

THE SPECIAL BUDGET EDITION

2013-2014

NEWS FROM CANAJOHARIE CENTRAL SCHOOL

School budget vote on May 21

\$19.7 million proposal for 2013-14 uses almost \$1 million in reserves to improve programs

Canajoharie Central School District residents will vote May 21 on a proposed \$19.7 million budget for the 2013-14 school year. The proposal increases spending by 2.53 percent over 2012-13 and carries a tax levy increase of 2.5 percent.

To offset cost increases, the proposed spending plan uses almost \$1 million in fund balance/reserves to improve the district's current programs and stay under the district's 4.2 percent tax levy limit. Although the district used \$913,514 in reserves in the 2012-13 school year, the Board of Education continued to place priorities on using revenues to balance the budget and allocate resources to improve student outcomes.

Superintendent Deborah Grimshaw said an approximate 2.5 percent increase in state aid was not enough to balance the budget, and the 2.5 percent tax levy increase is to support increases in expenses the district cannot control such as state-mandated retirement contributions and health insurance.

"We're utilizing our reserves and only asking the public to support the cost drivers



we can't control to hold the budget steady," she said. "We are budgeting on a long-term plan instead of just planning for one budget, so we're focused on managing our cost increases this year and over the next few years."

The problem of long-term financial sustainability still remains, because Canajoharie, like many poor rural districts, is heavily dependent on state aid. Over the last four years, it has lost more than \$3.5 million because of the state's Gap Elimination Adjustment.

"Our focus continues to be preparing our students for college or careers while mindful of our local taxpayers capacity," Mrs. Grimshaw added.

For updated information, please visit the district website at www.canajoharieschools.org.

Q & A on page 2

Budget Vote

Tuesday, May 21

Proposed 2013-14 budget	=	\$19,767,113
2012-13 budget	=	\$19,279,887
Change ↑ 2.53%	=	\$478,226

Proposed 2013-14 Real Property Tax Levy	=	↑ 2.50%
Maximum Allowable Tax Levy Increase	=	4.2%*

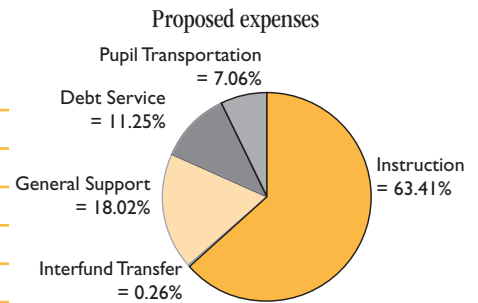
* The maximum allowable tax levy is the tax levy limit PLUS certain exclusions, such as taxes levied for voter-approved local capital expenditures, increases in state-mandated employer contribution rates for teacher/employee pension systems that exceed two percentage points, and court orders/judgments resulting from tort actions of any amount that exceeds 5 percent of the district's current levy. Exclusions may be added to the tax levy limit without triggering the need for 60 percent voter approval.

Please take the time to read about the proposed school budget. Polls are open noon - 9 p.m. in the high school lobby. By law, voters must be U.S. citizens, age 18 or older and residents of the district for at least 30 days prior to vote. Advance registration is not required.

The budget at a glance

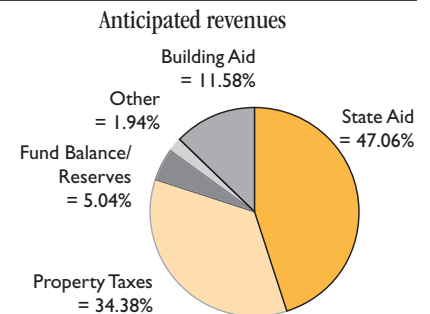
EXPENDITURES

	2012-13 Budget	2013-14 Proposed Budget	Percent Change
General Support	\$3,424,936	\$3,561,368	3.98%
Instruction	12,130,732	12,533,732	3.32%
Pupil Transportation	1,331,088	1,395,688	4.85%
Debt Service	2,346,131	2,224,325	-5.19%
Interfund Transfers	47,000	52,000	10.64%
TOTAL	\$19,279,887	\$19,767,113	2.53%



REVENUES

	2012-13 Budget	2013-14 Proposed Budget	Percent Change
State Aid	\$9,052,071	\$9,302,451	2.77%
State Aid - Building Aid	2,264,611	2,289,165	1.08%
Property Taxes	6,629,607	6,795,347	2.50%
Fund Balance/Reserves	913,514	996,350	9.07%
Other	420,084	383,800	-8.64%
TOTAL	\$19,279,887	\$19,767,113	2.53%



Budget questions and answers

What is the school district doing to provide the best education for students despite funding inequities?

The Board of Education is strategically using state aid and district savings to fund areas that directly support student learning and that will allow us to maintain our current opportunities in the upcoming year. This has become increasingly difficult in the face of a state aid formula that puts less affluent school districts such as Canajoharie at a disadvantage. Although the district received an additional \$23,000 in state foundation aid, it still is not a genuine increase. It merely replaces a small portion of the more than \$3.5 million the district has lost over the past four years due to the Gap Elimination Adjustment — which is essentially an annual “take back” of state aid to balance the state budget.

Are there any staff or program reductions in the proposed budget?

No. The use of almost \$1 million in reserves/fund balance, allowed the board to propose a budget that maintains staff, and all of our programs and extracurricular activities.

How have we managed our revenues and looked for other cost savings?

The district continually seeks ways to contain cost increases. We contract with BOCES for business services, and share services with other districts, including a food service director with Fort Plain. We also buy energy, supplies, and services jointly with other school districts and municipalities to secure better pricing. We continue to lease buses, paying for them from a reserve fund rather than having to raise taxes. We continually look at improving energy efficiency in lighting and heating.

What can we expect in the future?

Although the problem of how the state funds public schools still exists, district leaders in Canajoharie created the current budget with a long-term plan in mind to maintain/expand programs and opportunities for students that prepare them for college and careers. The district is working to partner with local employers and economic development organizations to ensure we graduate students who are ready for the workplace and able to help grow our local economy. And inside the classroom, we plan to continue to emphasize literacy, student achievement, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. This year, district leaders started an advocacy effort to push for school funding equity, and while those efforts will continue, we will not lose sight of giving students the foundation they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. For information about programs in each of our schools, please see page 4.

Required format

School districts are required to provide information in the format below

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2012-13 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2013-14 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2013-14 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount, Not including Separate Propositions	\$19,279,887	\$19,767,113	\$19,601,373
Increase/Decrease for the 2013-2014 School Year		\$478,226	\$321,486
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.53%	1.67%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.1%	
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, including Levy to Support Library Debt, if applicable	\$6,629,607	\$6,795,348	\$6,629,607
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$54,629	\$164,878	
A. Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt	\$6,574,978	\$6,630,470	
B. School Tax Levy Limit, Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$6,594,299	\$6,744,213	
Difference: A - B (Positive Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval –See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)	-\$19,321	-\$113,743	
Administrative Component	\$1,723,909	\$1,787,129	\$1,757,429
Program Component	\$13,362,655	\$13,820,268	\$13,766,111
Capital Component	\$4,193,323	\$4,159,716	\$4,077,833

What happens if voters don't approve the 2013-14 budget?

If the proposed budget is defeated by voters on May 21, Canajoharie has the option of putting the same or a revised budget up for a revote. If a proposed budget is defeated twice by voters, the district must adopt a contingent budget. Under New York's tax levy cap law, a contingent budget must carry a 0 percent tax levy increase. In other words, Canajoharie would have to raise the same or less taxes as in the current year — without any adjustments for state pension rate increases, contractual obligations, or any other costs (mandated or not). Contingency

rules prohibit the district from spending money in certain areas including the community's use of school facilities (unless the costs are reimbursed), new equipment, non-essential maintenance, certain student supplies, and small building improvement projects.

The administrative component of the budget would be capped at the previous year's level.

If a contingency budget is adopted, the district would need to cut an additional \$165,740 from the proposed spending plan.

The STAR program continues

The New York State School Tax Relief Program (STAR) provides New York homeowners with partial exemptions from school property taxes. If you earn less than \$500,000 and own and live in your home, you are probably eligible for the STAR exemption.

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2013-14 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$607

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2013-14 by the qualified voters of the Canajoharie Central School District, Montgomery County, New York, will be held at Canajoharie High School in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2013, between the hours of noon and 9 p.m., prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by digital machine.

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Setting the foundations of education

Elementary and middle school programs target literacy and collaboration

Instruction at East Hill Elementary School emphasizes literacy and collaboration so that students are prepared for their next level of education. The school recently established a new reading series for grades K-1, and a new math curriculum for grades K-5, focusing on using the skills students learn in class in real-life situations. Students are expected to learn

the fundamentals of numbers and operations, geometry, data, measurement, and early algebra. There are also now literacy and math centers in classrooms for small group learning. East Hill's focus on literacy results in multiple literacy events such as "Parents as Reading Partners," workshops, and poet visits.

In the middle school, students recently collaborated with first

graders for a technology project. The unit focused on mass production, and the seventh graders produced 3-D games for each first grade student.

The school also started a co-teacher program this year in some classes to assist students with disabilities to meet learning goals. The students benefit from regular instruction with learning support provided in the classroom environment.

To: Residents of the
Canajoharie Central
School District

Voters will
elect one
school
board
on the
member
Canajoharie
Board of
Education

Incumbent
Rachael Mason
is running
unopposed for
a five-year term
on the
school
board
member
Canajoharie
Board of
Education



REMEMBER TO VOTE ON
TUESDAY, May 21
Polls open noon to 9 p.m.
Canajoharie High School

Published by the Canajoharie Central School Board of Education

CANAJOHARIE CENTRAL SCHOOL
Canajoharie, New York 13317

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Canajoharie, NY
Permit No. 18

Investing in student success

Canajoharie High School focuses on preparing students for success in college and career

During some lessons at Canajoharie High School, students not only learn, they also teach. The goal is to offer academic programs focused on making students ready for college and career. One example includes the Gatsby Fair, where 23 juniors in honors English read *The Great Gatsby*. Following in-depth research of the 1920s, they then developed interactive lessons and taught the class. The project reinforced skills in reading, public speaking, historical

knowledge, critical thinking, technology use, and how to utilize what they learn.

Teachers are also developing more interdisciplinary projects (where students develop research projects on social studies themes and improve their writing skills in English classes) such as a recent project based on the study of revolutions in global studies and English 10 classes. For another project, studies researched African masks and used their

own interpretation of the culture to create masks out of clay in studio art. History teacher Phil Schoff said the students could not create the masks without "an understanding of the culture."

Art students from the high and middle school are also collaborating on a mosaic celebrating the area's Native American history. During the project, students work side-by-side with a professional artist.