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Proposed Budget Focuses on Full Return of Students

PROPOSED BUDGET IS TAX LEVY CAP-COMPLIANT

In our commitment to preserve the educational excellence in our schools, the North Salem Board of Education has adopted the 2021-22 proposed budget of \$45,914,756. The proposed spending plan represents a 1.26% increase in the tax levy, which complies with the New York State tax levy cap for the district.

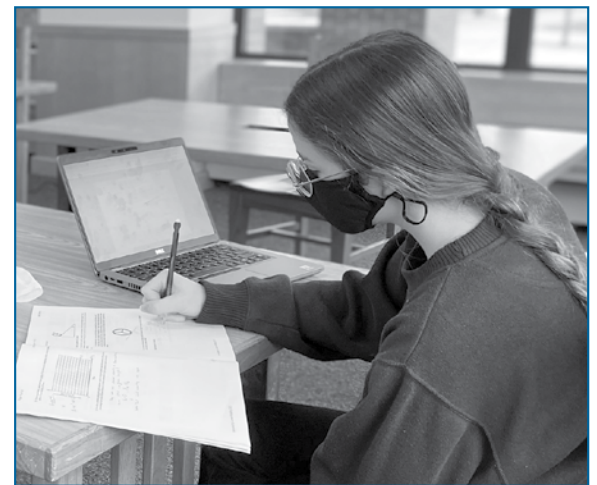
Throughout the budget planning process, we prioritized several key areas, including preserving low class sizes and sustaining the district's focus on mental health initiatives while remaining fiscally responsible to our taxpayers. As we worked to overcome unique challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, our students' education remained our biggest priority. To that end, we built our budget to ensure a full-time, in-person return of our students. While we have allocated resources to complete a multitude of technology upgrades, we continue to maintain all of our existing programs and services to continue to provide our students with a dynamic education. This budget, along with federal grant funds, positions us to address issues of learning loss as our students return to school while also providing the technology needed to allow students to learn at home, if required.

This budget also begins a program of bus replacement with a 66-passenger school bus and a new wheelchair-accessible passenger van.

In addition, community members will be asked to vote on a second

proposition regarding funding for a \$6.9 million Athletic Fields Improvement Project, which will include the construction of a new synthetic turf field and the addition of four unisex restrooms on the MS/HS campus, and improvements to Tompkins Field that include improved drainage, regraded playing surface, repairs to the track and miscellaneous improvements to PQ Field. If this proposition is approved, the out-of-pocket cost to taxpayers is negligible. This is because the district is retiring existing debt and the new debt associated with the proposed proposition will replace the old debt.

For more information on the 2021-22 proposed budget, please visit the district website at www.northsalemsschools.org. Send questions and comments to Superintendent of Schools



Our Mission: Engage students to continuously learn, question, define and solve problems through critical and creative thinking.

Dr. Kenneth Freeston at kfreeston@northsalemsschools.org. Polls will be open for in-person voting on Tuesday, May 18 from 7 a.m.-9 p.m. at Pequenakonck Elementary School gym.

Sincerely,
The North Salem Board of Education

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:

- The proposed 2021-22 budget represents a tax levy increase of 1.26%, which is at the New York State allowable tax levy cap.
- The budget-to-budget proposed spending increase is 2.11%.
- The budget positions the district for a return to full-time, in-person learning.
- The budget maintains all current programs and services.
- The budget continues to focus on mental health initiatives.
- The budget preserves all current class size guidelines.

PROPOSED THREE-PART BUDGET 2021-22

	2020-21 ADOPTED BUDGET	2021-22 PROPOSED BUDGET	DOLLAR CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
ADMINISTRATION				
Board of Education/District Meeting	\$71,390	\$73,900	\$2,510	3.52%
Central Administration	364,566	368,883	4,317	1.18%
Finance/Auditing	683,250	694,304	11,054	1.62%
Legal	150,000	150,000	-	0.00%
Human Resources/Public Information and Services	118,046	150,874	32,828	27.81%
Insurance	183,138	183,888	750	0.41%
BOCES Administrative	239,198	239,658	460	0.19%
BOCES Capital Expenses	21,978	26,783	4,805	21.86%
Curriculum Development – Supervision	625,428	562,279	(63,149)	(10.10)%
Supervision – Regular School	1,295,166	1,308,909	13,743	1.06%
Employee Benefits	948,892	1,060,373	111,481	11.75%
Total Administration	\$4,701,052	\$4,819,851	\$118,799	2.53%
CAPITAL				
Operation of Plant	\$2,081,372	\$2,126,143	\$44,771	2.15%
Maintenance of Plant	805,774	869,060	63,286	7.85%
Security	293,032	295,848	2,816	0.96%
Purchase of Buses	-	182,452	182,452	-
Employee Benefits	946,849	979,412	32,563	3.44%
Serial Bonds	1,773,031	1,771,105	(1,926)	(0.11)%
Total Capital	\$5,900,058	\$6,224,020	\$323,962	5.49%
PROGRAM				
Teaching	\$12,920,071	\$12,847,525	(\$72,546)	(0.56)%
Program for Students with Disabilities	7,104,085	7,593,379	489,294	6.89%
Computer-Assisted Instruction	835,075	945,225	110,150	13.19%
Counseling/Psychological/Social Work Services	1,172,783	1,213,648	40,865	3.48%
Health Services	273,926	295,369	21,443	7.83%
Co-curricular Activities/Interscholastic Athletics	997,344	977,296	(20,048)	(2.01)%
District Transportation Services	2,250,913	2,151,410	(99,503)	(4.42)%
Employee Benefits	8,747,402	8,782,033	34,631	0.40%
Transfer to Special Aid Fund	65,000	65,000	-	0.00%
Total Program	\$34,366,599	\$34,870,885	\$504,286	1.47%
Grand Total	\$44,967,709	\$45,914,756	\$947,047	2.11%

BUDGET COMPONENT SUMMARY	2020-21 ADOPTED BUDGET	2020-21 % OF BUDGET	2021-22 PROPOSED BUDGET	2021-22 % OF BUDGET
Administration	\$4,701,052	10.45%	\$4,819,851	10.50%
Capital	5,900,058	13.12%	6,224,020	13.56%
Program	34,366,599	76.43%	34,870,885	75.94%
Grand Total	\$44,967,709	100.00%	\$45,914,756	100.00%

ESTIMATED REVENUE	2020-21 ADOPTED BUDGET	2021-22 PROPOSED BUDGET	DOLLAR CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
Westchester County Sales Tax	\$420,750	\$425,000	\$4,250	1.01%
Miscellaneous Revenue	820,098	829,792	9,694	1.18%
Basic Formula Aid – General Aid	2,696,880	2,909,971	213,091	7.90%
Unemployment Benefit Reserve	4,000	5,000	1,000	25.00%
Interfund Transfer from Debt Service	25,000	25,000	-	0.00%
Retirement Contribution Reserve	575,000	667,920	92,920	16.16%
Appropriated Fund Balance	700,000	825,000	125,000	17.86%
Total All Other Revenues	\$5,241,728	\$5,687,683	\$445,955	8.51%
Property Tax Levy	39,725,981	40,227,073	501,092	1.26%
Grand Total	\$44,967,709	\$45,914,756	\$947,047	2.11%

Your Investment Paying Off...

- This year has been filled with many challenges from reopening school to learning how to learn in any environment. The teachers, staff, students and parents have developed new skills as a result, namely patience, persistence, flexibility and empathy. The year has tested us all, and our community is better for the incredible support we have all shown to one another. While not necessarily tangible results, our community is stronger due to collaboration and thinking outside the box at every turn.
- The district is a member of EdLeader21 and the national network of Battelle for Kids, which is comprised of outstanding school districts across the country. North Salem educators present at national and regional consortium and conferences on topics that include how our students are learning to integrate critical and creative thinking, collaboration, communication and digital learning into problem-solving.
- The district is a member of the Tri-State Consortium and is accredited by the University of the State of New York and by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.
- The profile of a North Salem graduate as a problem-solver outlines the aspirations of graduates as critical and creative thinkers, collaborators, communicators, citizens and continuously improving learners. Those skills are central to our district's mission and are taught across all grades and departments.
- Three students from the NSHS Class of 2020 were named National Merit Commended Students.
- In 2020, 67 students earned Advanced Placement Scholar Awards as recognized by the College Board.
- In May 2020, 291 Advanced Placement exams were administered to 150 students.
- 69% of our students took one or more AP courses. High school students have the opportunity to enroll in 17 AP courses commencing in grade 10.
- Our students' average SAT scores outperformed New York State and national average scores.
- 96% of the Class of 2020 were accepted to colleges.
- Students attend colleges in 20 states, including Washington, D.C., and four students joined the armed forces.
- The high school boasts a 41% participation rate in the cocurricular program and a 69%

participation rate in the athletic program.

- 14 athletic teams were designated as scholar-athlete teams by maintaining a cumulative average of 90% or better during the 2019-2020 school year, demonstrating real-life application of students' problem-solving skills.
- 30% of students volunteer 30 hours or more of community service each year.
- 100% of the Class of 2020 earned Regents Diplomas; 58% of graduates earned Regents Diplomas with Honors.
- High school seniors participate in the O.P.T.I.O.N.S. internship program, solving authentic problems in fields such as business, medicine and education by using critical and creative thinking skills. Seniors present their work to the community at a senior exhibition.
- In 2020, the district hosted a number of physically distanced celebrations to honor its students. The high school provided its Class of 2020 graduates with a special commencement ceremony at a drive-in theater. Fifth and eighth graders were recognized in drive-by celebrations held on campus. Four student athletes were honored for their commitment to play sports in college during ceremonial letter of intent signings. The Booster Club, Croton Falls Fire Department, North Salem Police Department and the school resource officer drove through various parts of the district to each senior student-athlete's home to recognize them for their achievements. In addition, they delivered awards to JV and varsity athletes.
- The district continues to sustain and expand focus on mental health and wellness through the implementation of its Comprehensive School Counseling Program. Over the last year, the Counseling Department expanded its reach through a series of student surveys resulting in the provision of targeted support for students, both in-person at school and remotely at home.

- In addition to having meals available to students seven days a week, school district staff worked with community members to provide food pantry during the height of the pandemic, March – June 2020.
- Students have excelled with new technology to support their in-person and virtual learning. Our 1:1 Chromebook program has enabled all students to thrive and further their learning whether at home or in school.
- This year at Pequenakonck Elementary, our Spanish program continued K-5. Students are learning to speak Spanish while also studying the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries around the world. This program helps children develop a global perspective of the world around them.
- Pequenakonck Elementary students and faculty continue to promote the idea of intentional kindness. PQ uses Ben's Bells Kind Campus program as our teaching tool throughout the year. We will be commemorating our commitment to kindness with the installation of a Ben's Bells mural made by PQ students through the generosity of the PQ PTO.
- The Mindful lab with roots in the Yale RULER approach has helped support students' social-emotional learning and well-being throughout the year, both in-person and virtually, providing support and resources for students and families.
- Our students enjoy our annual author visits. These individuals inspire our children to read, write, create and collaborate. Through virtual author visits sponsored by the PQ PTO, students were able to learn with authors Doreen Cronin, Ralph Fletcher, Natalie Kinsey-Warnock, Lauren Tarshis and Susan Verde.
- PQ has established a Free Little Library in the front of the school, supporting our students and the community with free books to read and exchange.

Budget Increases: A 5-Year Perspective

2017-18	1.98%
2018-19	2.19%
2019-20	2.31%
2020-21	2.50%
2021-22	2.11%

Average: 2.22%

Tax Levy Trends: A 5-Year Perspective

2017-18	1.43%
2018-19	2.47%
2019-20	1.65%
2020-21	2.20%
2021-22	1.26%

Average: 1.80%

Protecting the Community's Investment

Proposition 2: Athletic Fields Improvement Project

On May 18, voters will be asked to vote on a second proposition regarding funding for a \$6.9 million Athletic Fields Improvement Project to include:

- A new synthetic turf field on the MS/HS campus, with field lighting, security fence, ball stop netting, score board and bleachers.
- Four unisex restrooms that can be accessed from the fields and from the gyms.
- Improvements to Tompkins Field, including improved drainage, regraded playing surface and repairs to the track.
- Miscellaneous improvements to PQ Field.



What is the cost to taxpayers for this project?

The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$6.9 million before state aid. Because funding for this project is timed to coincide with the retirement of existing debt, taxpayers will not see an increase on their tax bills as a result of this project.

Why should North Salem invest in athletics facilities?

A complete educational program: Athletics and a robust physical education curriculum are an important part of a 21st-century educational experience. Involvement in team sports teaches leadership, cooperation, integrity and problem-solving.

Shortage of fields: The MS/HS currently has just two grass playing fields for nine fall teams and 16 spring teams. Consequently, several teams take a bus to off-campus facilities for both practice and games. Because town fields are not available to us before April 1 at the earliest, the district rents off-campus locations for early spring practices or moves indoors.

Condition of fields: Heavy rain and inadequate field conditions frequently leave home fields unsafe and unplayable, resulting in our teams often forfeiting the home field advantage. About 21% of games are played at home, vs. the optimal 50%. In the spring of 2019, 85% of North Salem boys lacrosse

and 82% of girls lacrosse games were played away. In 2018 and 2019, 68% of practices were moved off campus due to poor field conditions, at a cost of about \$200 per trip. Drainage improvements to Tompkins Field and repairs to the PQ field will improve their playability. Upgrades to the Tompkins track will improve running conditions for competition and community use.

What are the advantages of this project?

Playability, more predictable maintenance, savings in transportation time and costs and increased reliability are among many advantages of having a synthetic turf field. Turf fields are not affected by rain or snow, need minimal maintenance and can be used 24/7/365. North Salem and Croton-Harmon are the only public high schools in northern Westchester County without a synthetic turf field. Turf offers a consistent, almost weatherproof, quality playing surface that our teams almost always encounter when they visit other schools. The bathrooms make the project eligible for state aid while adding facilities for spectators at our current outdoor fields, as well as the gyms.

What will the turf field be used for?

- Varsity and JV boys and girls soccer, field hockey in the fall, and varsity and JV boys and girls lacrosse in the spring.

- Baseball and softball practices for both varsity and JV.
- Modified teams where space allows.
- Town recreation teams.
- A turf field would serve as an outdoor classroom for a more robust MS/HS physical education program.
- Elementary school field days.
- Hosting special events, including homecoming, Salem Fest and sectional play-off games.

What is the projected lifespan for the synthetic turf field?

- State-of-the-art fields have a 12-year warranty and can be expected to last at least 15 years with expected maintenance.
- Maintenance costs associated with the turf field are comparable to the current costs for field maintenance of Tompkins Field.
- The encapsulated sand infill (not environmentally questionable crumb rubber) is reusable.

Voter Information

This proposition, to secure funding for the Athletics Fields Improvement Project, will appear as Proposition 2 on the School District Annual Budget ballot on May 18. Voting will take place at the same time as the school budget vote on Tuesday, May 18 at Pequenakonck Elementary School, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Full details about this project can be found on the district website, www.northsaalemfields.org.

Questions and Answers

Q: How is the Board able to present a budget at the New York State tax levy cap?

A: The Board and administration have made a concerted effort over the past several years to limit expenses and seek cost savings where possible. This careful planning has allowed the Board to present a budget that does not exceed New York State's maximum allowable tax levy cap. Factors instrumental in holding expenses to a minimum include savings from retirements, additional state aid and the addition of revenue from the STEP program expansion.

Q: What does the proposed tax levy increase of 1.26% mean for my taxes?

A: An overall tax levy increase of 1.26% means that we will collect \$501,092 more from the whole community than was collected last year. It does not mean your tax bill will increase by 1.26% in 2021-22. How the tax levy affects the amount of your tax is a product of many factors, including your town's portion of the tax levy, the equalization rates, changes in assessments to your property and others, changes in property tax exemptions within your town, tax certioraris and small claim assessment reviews. Your tax assessor is the professional best able to explain the impact on your tax bill. These officials have information that is not available to the NSCSD. Nevertheless, our commitment to meeting the tax levy cap illustrates our desire to exert as little upward

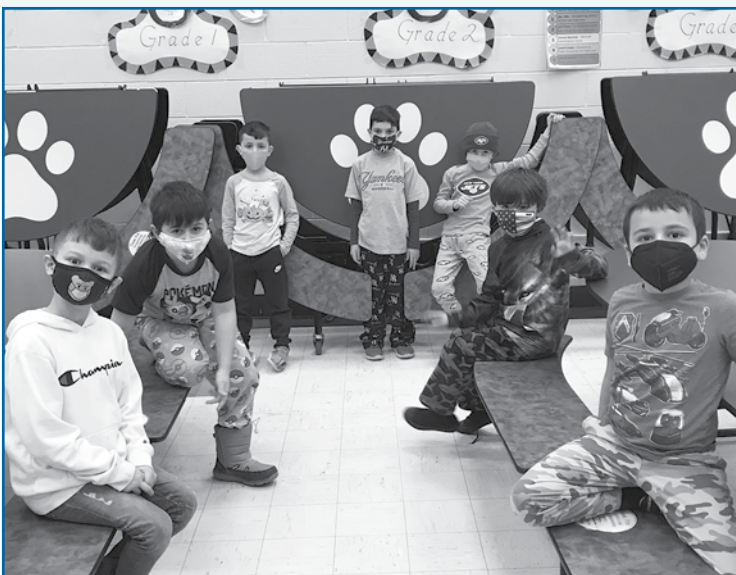
pressure on your tax as possible. Please remember that tax rates are not the same as tax bills and are often poor barometers of the actual tax due. Put another way, the only item controlled by the district is the total amount of taxes we seek from the community.

Q: What happens if the community does not approve the proposed budget on May 18?

A: If the proposed budget is defeated on May 18, New York State law allows the district to present the same budget or a revised budget for one more vote, or go directly to a contingency budget. If a second proposed budget is defeated, the district must, by law, adopt a contingency budget, which would limit the tax levy to that of the current school year. A contingency budget would not have funding for equipment purchases, certain repairs and community use of the facilities unless the district expenses are fully reimbursed. If necessary, the actual budget reductions would be made by Administration and the Board of Education pursuant to Education Law.

Q: What were the Board's priorities in developing the proposed budget for 2021-22?

A: When preparing the spending plan for 2021-22, the Board had several priorities guiding the planning process: maintaining low class sizes, sustaining the district's mission and a continued focus on mental health initiatives.



North Salem Central School District
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North Salem, NY 10560

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School Budget Vote and Trustee Election

The 2021-22 school budget vote and trustee election will be held on Tuesday, May 18, from 7 a.m.-9 p.m. at Pequenakonck Elementary School gym.

Voter Information

To be eligible to vote, you must:

- Be a citizen of the United States.
- Be at least 18 years old by May 18 (the date of the election).
- Be a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to May 18.
- Not be in jail or on parole for a felony conviction.
- Not claim the right to vote elsewhere.
- Be registered with either the school district's board of registration or with your appropriate County Board of Elections. If you previously registered to vote but have not voted in either a school district or general election in the last four years, you must reregister to vote.

You may register at the office of the district clerk in the district administration offices, 230 June Road, during the office hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. You may also contact the district clerk to schedule an appointment. The last day to register to vote is Thursday, May 13.

School Trustee Election

There are a total of two trustee seats to be filled for a three-year term ending June 30, 2024.

Absentee Ballot Applications

The application may be obtained from the district website under "Board of Education," or by calling the district clerk at

914-669-5414, ext. 1011. The completed application must be received by the district clerk at least seven days prior to the annual school district election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Applications received after May 13 may not be mailed, but they may be picked up at the district clerk's office until May 17. The district clerk must receive absentee ballots by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18.

Budget Information

For more details on the proposed budget, please access our website, www.northsalemsschools.org. Copies of the complete proposed 2021-22 budget are available for review in the district office and online.

If you have any questions about the budget, please call the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kenneth Freeston, at 914-669-5414, ext. 1011, or check the website, www.northsalemsschools.org.



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