

2008-09 School Budget Up for Vote on May 20



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Budget Notice

Schoharie Central School District residents can **vote on a \$19,709,534 budget for the 2008-09 school year on Tuesday, May 20**, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the foyer of the Schoharie Jr./Sr. High School library.

At that time voters also will decide on three propositions, one to purchase five buses as part of an ongoing bus replacement plan (see page 2), a second to establish a Capital Reserve Fund (see page 3) and a third to collect funds for the Schoharie Free Library (see page 4). In addition, three candidates are running for three open seats on the Schoharie Board of Education (see page 7).

The 2008-09 school budget proposal is a \$1,038,152, or 5.56 percent, increase from the 2007-08 school

budget. The proposal maintains existing educational programs and covers rising costs primarily associated with employee salaries and benefits, debt service, transportation, and students with disabilities (see page 4). It also includes a variety of efforts designed to reduce the cost of education (see page 3). One such effort, the Energy Education program, should save the district \$60,000–\$90,000 in energy costs every year.

The district’s primary revenue source for 2008-09 is state aid, but school tax items are still the second most significant revenue source in the proposed budget (see page 2).

“Our district has some revenue challenges, but our community’s children still deserve the educational tools that will prepare them for future success,” said Chris Spies, president of the school board.

“This is a tight budget that continues educational progress in the district,” said Superintendent Brian Sherman. Recent educational progress includes more high school students earning a Regents diploma and attending college (see page 5) and the high school’s removal from School in Need of Improvement (SINI) status.

Look for more details on the 2008-09 budget throughout this newsletter.

Get Involved:

Don't forget to vote on Tuesday, May 20, from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. in the lobby of the Schoharie High School library.

pand educational opportunities without turning to local taxpayers for support, but school tax items are still the second most significant revenue source for the 2008-09 school budget.

Next year’s school tax levy (i.e., total amount of money that the district collects from local taxpayers) of \$7,933,792 is a 4.4 percent increase over the school tax levy for 2007-08. The district, which serves an almost entirely residential and rural community, has seen very little growth in recent years.

“This creates a revenue problem, so we really rely on our state aid,” said Superintendent Brian Sherman. “In light of our community’s unique challenges, we have to be very fiscally responsible.”

Reducing the Cost of Education

Part of that fiscal responsibility is finding ways to deliver successful education programs at the lowest cost possible. Thanks to a variety of cost-saving efforts, the average spending per pupil in

Schoharie is one of the lowest of area school districts (according to NYS Education Department school report card data). Some of those efforts include:

- **Health care**—Employees are shouldering more of the cost of their own health care. The district’s move to a program of self-funding for medical prescriptions saves approximately \$70,000 each year.
- **Energy**—Schoharie recently entered into an energy management and conservation program expected to generate a cost-avoidance of up to \$1 million over the next 10 years.
- **Staffing**—When a position becomes vacant, the job is evaluated to determine if it could be shared effectively among existing staff.
- **Purchasing practices**—Most supplies are purchased through a competitive bid practice, ensuring the lowest available prices.

Capital Reserve Fund on Ballot

Proposition #2

on the May 20 ballot would authorize Schoharie Central School District to establish a capital reserve fund. The fund is part of a long-range financial planning strategy that involves setting aside money now available in district funds to cover the local share of a future capital project.

How would taxpayers benefit from the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund?

Capital projects are typically set up to take advantage of unique state aid opportunities, but a portion of the cost sometimes must be covered by local taxpayers. If Proposition #2 is approved, the Capital Reserve Fund will be established with money currently available in the district’s fund balance. In the future, if the district proposes a capital project and voters approve it, the Capital Reserve Fund can be used to cover part, if not all, of the local share of the cost of the project. As a result, the capital project would have less, if any, future impact on the school tax levy.

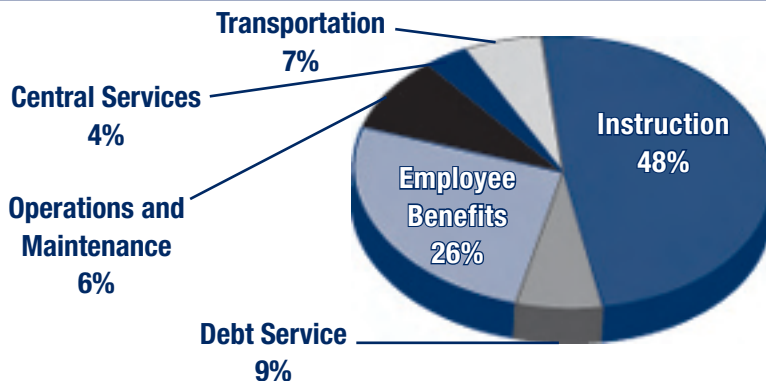
How would the Capital Reserve Fund be used to improve Schoharie facilities?

Several projects are under consideration. They include the replacement of the old steam boilers in Schoharie High School with more efficient hot

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Where does the money go?*

DESCRIPTION	2007-08 BUDGETED	2008-09 PROPOSED BUDGET	2008-09 CHANGE
Central Services	\$657,460	\$697,447	\$39,987
Operations & Maintenance	\$1,095,025	\$1,187,600	\$92,575
Instruction	\$9,176,803	\$9,604,088	\$427,285
Transportation	\$1,236,301	\$1,316,125	\$79,824
Employee Benefits	\$4,913,193	\$5,144,625	\$231,432
Debt Service/Other	\$1,592,600	\$1,759,649	\$167,049
Total Expenses	\$18,671,382	\$19,709,534	\$1,038,152



* Turn to pages 4-5 for a more detailed breakdown of budget expenses.

Capital Reserve

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

water units and the installation of a solar array (above the high school roof) that would generate enough power to match that required to run all the lights on the school campus. These plans, which were not included in the recent EXCEL Capital Project, are still in the very early stages of development.

Support for Schoharie Free Library on Ballot

Proposition #3

on the May 20 ballot would authorize Schoharie Central School District to collect \$55,000 annually to support and maintain the Schoharie Free Library, 103 Knower Ave.

If voters approve Proposition #3, Schoharie will raise the approved amount annually from taxable properties in the district.

Once collected, the approved funds will be distributed to the public library. They will not be considered school revenue or applied to any school expenses.

Visit www.schoharielibrary.org for more information on the Schoharie Free Library.

Where does the money go?

Central Services: 3.54% of total budget

	Adopted Budget 2007-2008 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2008-2009 (\$)	Percent Increase
Board of Education	5,525	6,200	
District Clerk	5,775	6,041	
District Meeting	900	900	
Central Administration	159,115	170,916	
Finance	181,425	187,750	
Auditing	25,500	36,500	
Treasurer	9,450	10,300	
Tax Collector	6,700	7,800	
Fiscal Agent Fees	1,000	1,000	
Legal	75,000	75,000	
Personnel	6,100	7,000	
Public Information	16,000	19,000	
Central Printing and Mailing	7,970	10,040	
Insurance	58,500	58,500	
Association Dues	1,000	1,000	
Tax Refunds	4,000	6,000	
Administrative Charge - BOCES	93,500	93,500	
Total Central Services	\$657,460	\$697,447	6.08%

Operations & Maintenance: 6.03% of total budget

Operations of Plant	1,000,025	1,067,600	
Maintenance of Plant	95,000	120,000	
Total Operations & Maintenance	\$1,095,025	\$1,187,600	8.45%

Instruction: 48.73% of total budget

Supervision Regular Day	433,317	488,817	
In-service Training	11,800	11,800	
Teaching Regular School	5,125,462	5,238,227	
Special Education	2,210,315	2,359,950	
Occupational Education	315,000	366,750	
Summer School, Driver Ed, Tutors	27,344	27,344	
School Library	219,430	220,600	
Educational Television-AV	17,100	17,700	
Computer Assisted Instruction	169,340	197,540	
Attendance	600	600	
Guidance	231,042	242,407	
Health Services	76,650	82,950	
Psychological Services	36,350	38,850	
Social Work Services	110,950	116,450	
Co-Curricular Activities	51,600	51,600	
Interscholastic Athletics	140,503	142,503	
Total Instruction	\$9,176,803	\$9,604,088	4.66%

Transportation: 6.68% of total budget

	Adopted Budget 2007-2008 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2008-2009 (\$)	Percent Increase
District Transportation	1,100,650	1,182,725	
Garage Building	135,651	133,400	
Contract Transportation	0	0	
BOCES Transportation	0	0	
Total Transportation	\$1,236,301	\$1,316,125	4.33%

Employee Benefits: 26.10% of total budget

NYS Employees Retirement	259,044	237,000	
NYS Teachers Retirement	752,524	757,000	
Social Security	660,690	714,000	
Worker Compensation	90,380	85,000	
Life Insurance	5,500	5,500	
Unemployment Insurance	24,500	15,000	
Disability Insurance	2,675	2,675	
Hospital Medical Dental	3,117,880	3,328,450	
Total Employee Benefits	\$4,913,193	\$5,144,625	4.71%

Debt Service/Interfund Transfers: 8.93% of total budget

Debt Service - School Construction	1,259,000	1,338,355	
Serial Bonds - Buses	246,000	347,225	
Debt Service - Revenue Anticipation Note	10,000	0	
Other Debt	28,000	24,469	
Transfers	49,600	49,600	
Total Debt Service/Interfund Transfers	\$1,592,600	\$1,759,649	10.40%

Total Expenditures	\$18,671,382	\$19,709,534	5.56%
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Did you know ...

- ✓ At Schoharie Jr./Sr. High School, 75 percent of the Class of 2007 earned a Regents or Advanced Regents diploma and 80 percent went on to attend a two- or four-year college.
- ✓ Schoharie Central School District's per pupil spending is among the lowest of area school districts, according to the New York State Education Department.
- ✓ The Schoharie Hospitality Technology & Culinary Arts team, a BOCES program, won the New York State ProStart Competition. Schoharie student Michael Cushman was an alternate member of the team.
- ✓ About 72 percent of Schoharie's BOCES expenses are reimbursed by state aid in the year following the expenditure.
- ✓ To lower transportation costs, the district doubles up on as many out-of-town bus trips as possible (e.g., BOCES special education programs, transportation to private and parochial schools, athletic games).

Schoharie Takes Students on Odyssey



Schoharie Central School District educational programs include enrichment activities such as Odyssey of the Mind, which helps participants develop creative problem-solving skills through teamwork.

This spring, Schoharie sent more than 50 students to the Region 7 Odyssey of the Mind Tournament, and two of the eight teams took home a first-place trophy. The two first place teams, Division I and Division III Tee Structure, advanced to the New York State Finals held in March.

The Division I team included: fourth-graders Seth Sholtes, Johnny Krohn, Kathleen Peters, Kathryn Cipperly, and Rebecca Stevens; and fifth-graders Jessica Zinssar and Jeremy Medak. The Division III team included: 11th-graders Caitlin Kavanaugh, Gabby Toborg, Andy Schultz, Mike Snyder, Mark Roberts, and Justin Nieminski; and 12th-grader Mackenzie Wilsey. Congratulations to all!

Voter Information

What am I voting on?

A \$19,709,534 budget for the 2008-09 school year, three propositions (purchase five school buses, establish a Capital Reserve Fund and collect funds for the Schoharie Free Library), and candidates for the school board

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 20, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the lobby of the Schoharie High School library

Who is eligible to vote?

Anyone who is a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and a resident of the Schoharie Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote

How can I vote by absentee ballot?

Qualified district residents who are unable to go to the polls on May 20 can cast their votes by absentee ballot. For an application, call the district clerk at 295-6652 or stop in at the elementary school office. If the ballot is to be mailed, the application for the ballot must be received by May 13. If the ballot is to be delivered in person, the application must be received by May 19. All completed ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 20.

What if I have questions?

For further information, please call the superintendent's office at 295-6679 or the business office at 295-6673.

2008-09 School Budget Proposal Questions and Answers

How was the 2008-09 school budget proposal developed?

The Schoharie Central School District administration developed a draft budget, and it was reviewed and fine-tuned by the Schoharie Board of Education. Budget development participants were aware of their responsibility to propose a financial plan that maintains and enhances Schoharie's educational plan, while keeping in mind the impact on local taxpayers.

Why is the budget increasing more than the cost of living?

The cost of living is not a fair measure for school budgets because any cost-of-living index only reflects changes in the prices of goods and services in the marketplace, such as food, housing, clothing, vehicles, and pet supplies. School districts purchase some of the same things, but must also cover things such as faculty and staff salaries, health insurance, pensions, and special education—the costs of which often increase by more than the cost of living. Also, while a cost-of-living index measures expenses over the previous 12 months, school budgets are an attempt to predict expenses over the next 12 months.

How does participation in BOCES help reduce district expenses?

BOCES provides school districts with shared services that would otherwise be more expensive if a single school district funded them alone. Service areas include special education, career and technical education (pictured at right), health and safety services, and special student services. About 72 percent of Schoharie's BOCES expenses are reimbursed by state aid in the year following the expenditure.

How do STAR exemptions reduce school taxes?

All New Yorkers who own a home can significantly reduce their school property taxes through a School Tax Relief (STAR) exemption. There are two standard STAR exemptions: Basic STAR for owner-occupied, primary residences regardless of owners' ages and incomes; and Enhanced STAR for primary residences of owners aged 65 and older with yearly household incomes below the state standard. The Middle Class STAR program, introduced in 2007, will continue to provide a further benefit to taxpayers, on a sliding income scale, through a rebate check. Homeowners can apply for a STAR tax exemption through their town assessor's office. Visit www.orps.state.ny.us/star/ for more details.

What happens if voters do not approve the proposed budget?

If the 2008-09 school budget proposal is defeated, the school board may opt to present voters with one more budget (revised or not) or to go directly to a contingency budget. If a second budget proposal fails, the board must adopt a contingency budget, which would require \$365,480 in cuts from the proposed budget. By law, the district would not be able to spend money on equipment and furniture; the use of school facilities by non-school related organizations, unless facilities use charges are paid; financial support for school breakfast and lunch programs; non-mandatory facilities repairs and maintenance, such as painting; and the purchase of student supplies (e.g., pens, pencils, notebooks, and writing paper).

School Board Candidates on Ballot

The three candidates listed below have filed petitions for the three open seats on the Schoharie Board of Education. They are listed in the order that they will appear on the May 20 ballot.

Board members are unpaid volunteers, and open seats are typically for a three-year term. The two candidates with the most votes on May 20 will serve a term from July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2011. The candidate with the third most votes will serve out the remaining two years in the seat previously held by Shawn Gathen.



Pamela Newell is seeking her first term on the Schoharie Board of Education. She is running for a seat on the school board because she has a passion for higher education and love for a safe environment. She is employed by Schoharie County Department of Motor Vehicles. She has served as president of the Schoharie Elementary School EPTSO for the past three years and helps teach Sunday school to first-, second- and third-grade children. She is a lifelong resident of Schoharie and a 1989 graduate of Schoharie High School. She and her husband, Chad, reside in Sloansville with their three elementary-aged children, Jonathon, Courtney and Jacob.



Linda Isles is seeking her first term on the Schoharie Board of Education. She is running for a seat on the school board because she has experience with and an interest in excellence in education. She has worked at the Schoharie County ARC since 1985 and served as program director of the Vocational Services Program for the past eight years. She has served on the board of directors of the Schoharie County Child Development Council as a trustee for the Schoharie Free Library. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Plattsburgh State University and a master's degree in special education from the College of St. Rose. She and her husband, Keith, have been residents of the district since 1984, and their three children – Brandon, Kelly and Lauren – are all Schoharie HS alumni.



Chris Spies, current president of the Schoharie Board of Education, is seeking his third term on the board. He is running for the school board again to help the school improve its approach to delivering high-quality education to students, to foster public involvement and to keep the school board and the district accountable to the public. He is the chief clerk of the Supreme Court, County Court, Family Court, and Surrogate Court in Schoharie County. He has previously served as a member of the Town of Wright Planning Board, the Gallupville Fire Department, and the Town of Wright Lions, and was a town justice for the Town of Wright. After graduating from Schoharie HS, he went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Fordham University and a master's degree in public administration from SUNY Albany Rockefeller College. He lives with his wife, Janet, and their four children – Sarah, Tom, Chris and Hannah – in the Town of Wright.

Upcoming Events

May 2008

- 7 Budget Hearing, 7 p.m.
- 13 Elementary Wee Count Night, 5:30 p.m.
- 13 Grades 3/4 Choir Spring Arts Concert, 7 p.m.
- 15 Jr./Sr. High School Spring Vocal Arts Concert, 7 p.m.
- 16 Jr./Sr. High School Prom, 6:30 p.m.
- 20 Public Budget Vote/Board Election, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- 20 Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- 21 7th Grade North/South Fair
- 22 Memorial Day Parade – Schoharie, 6:30 p.m.
- 26 Memorial Day – No School
Memorial Day Parades:
– Central Bridge, 11 a.m.
– Esperance, 1:30 p.m.

June 2008

- 3 Elementary Wee Read Night, 5:30 p.m.
- 3 8th Grade NYS Social Studies Testing (through 6/4)
- 4 Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- 6 High School Awards Assembly, 8:15 a.m.
- 17 Regents Exams (through 6/26)
- 18 Elementary Field Day
- 18 Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- 25 Kindergarten Graduation, 9 a.m.
- 26 Elementary Moving Up Day
- 28 Senior Graduation, 10 a.m.

Schoharie Central School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget adopted for the 2007-08 school year	Budget proposed for the 2008-09 school year	Contingency budget for the 2008-09 school year
Total budget amount	\$18,671,382	\$19,709,534	\$ 19,344,054
Increase/decrease for the 2008-09 school year		\$1,038,152	\$672,672
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		5.56%	3.60%
Change in the consumer price index		2.80%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2008-09 school year		\$7,933,792	\$7,568,312
1. Administrative component	\$1,546,660	\$1,618,039	\$1,618,039
2. Program component	\$13,990,909	\$14,672,578	\$14,307,098
3. Capital component	\$3,133,813	\$3,418,917	\$3,418,917

What happens if the 2008-09 budget is not approved by a majority of voters?

The school district may bring the same or a modified plan to the public for a second vote. If the proposed budget is defeated a second time, the school board must adopt a contingency budget, which would place a limit on the spending increase. Based upon a formula mandated by the State, this would require the amount of \$365,480 to be reduced from the Proposed 2008-09 Budget.

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR* exemption savings based on an owner-occupied home within the school district with a full value assessment of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

Schoharie Central School District	Budget adopted for the 2007-08 school year	Budget proposed for the 2008-09 school year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$694.08	\$724.61
School tax increase/decrease	\$128.00	\$106.00
Net Basic STAR tax savings	\$566.08	\$618.61

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

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2008-09 by the qualified voters of the Schoharie Central School District, New York, will be held in the lobby by the high school library, in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, between the hours of 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM, at which time the polls will be open to vote by ballot or machine.

School districts are required by state law to mail this "School District Budget Notice" to all households within the district.

For a more detailed breakdown of expenditures and revenues, please see pages 2-5.

If you would like additional information about the budget, please call the superintendent's office at 295-6679 or the business office at 295-6673.

REMINDER—

May 20: Annual Budget Vote and School Board Election, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., lobby of the Schoharie High School library



BOARD of EDUCATION

F. Christian Spies, *President*
Mark Quandt, *Vice President*

Zachary Reinhart
William Schlieder
Edythe Schultz
Carol Ann Wilber

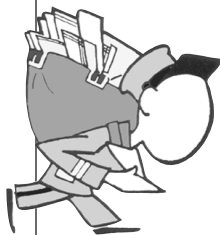
.....
Brian D. Sherman

Superintendent of Schools

Schoharie

Central School District

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