



BURNT HILLS-BALLSTON LAKE **2009-2010** PROPOSED BUDGET

Succeeding in Unprecedented Times:

On May 19, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake school district voters will go to the polls to decide on a \$53.4 million budget for the 2009-10 school year. The proposed budget is up 2.16 percent from the current year and will result in a tax levy increase of 2.7 percent. **This budget-to-budget increase and tax increase are both the lowest in 40 years.**

In addition to the budget, voters will elect three Board of Education members and decide on a proposition to replace four school buses.

The theme of this year's budget newsletter, *Succeeding in Unprecedented Times*, was chosen because it expresses the DUAL responsibilities Board of Education members are attempting to address in the proposed budget. Board members have cut more than \$1 million in staffing costs from the proposed budget because

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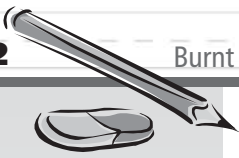


VOTING:

- ▶ **Tuesday, May 19**
- ▶ 7:00 AM - 9:00 PM
- ▶ High School Gymnasium

BALLOT ITEMS:

- ▶ The 2009-10 Proposed Budget
- ▶ Bus Purchase Referendum
- ▶ Board of Education Candidates



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the unprecedented economic problems facing our nation and state are real and must be reflected in a reduced school budget. Crafting a budget that increased far less than the Consumer Price Index increase of 3.8 percent was not easy, but was clearly what the community wanted this year.

On the other hand, no matter how dire the economy, the Board

of Education has a responsibility every year to ensure that BH-BL children can attain the education and skills they need to be successful in life.

A child is only 5 or 12 or 17 once in his or her life. Children cannot wait for the economy to improve to receive the lessons they need to learn and build on at each stage of their development.

The following pages give answers to frequently asked questions about the proposed budget. The primary change in the 2009-10 budget is the loss of over \$1 million in staff services. But what has not changed is the district's determination to continue balancing and serving the needs of both taxpayers and children as best it can.



How is the budget changing to respond to the economic crisis? How were reductions made?

The proposed budget includes no new programs or staffing. Since last November, the budget energies of school administrators and Board of Education members have been entirely focused on reducing costs and surviving the national economic crisis — not on adding anything new.

Even before Governor Paterson's mid-December proposal to cut aid to BH-BL by nine percent or \$1.6 million, Superintendent Jim Schultz had frozen discretionary spending, ordered lower

thermostat settings, and begun asking staff and residents for their suggestions on the best ways for BH-BL to save money. From November through March, hundreds of residents, staff and students shared their ideas and recommendations.

Preliminary budget up 4.6%

In January, Board of Education members began work on the 2009-10 spending plan with a preliminary budget of \$54.6 million, an increase of 4.6 percent from the current year.

Over 80 percent of the increase in the preliminary budget was for staff compensation and benefits, so this area clearly needed to be the focus of work to reduce the budget. However, reducing school staff and staffing costs is a more complex task than many people realize.

As described on the next page, there are state laws that govern collective bargaining. There are also civil service regulations, pension rules, a long list of state curriculum mandates, and required support services for children. There are services that BH-BL parents expect and depend on, too, plus the paramount need to protect children's health and safety.

Criteria used in making cuts

In looking for ways to reduce the preliminary budget, Board of Education members and administrators

read online budget survey responses and listened to the community. They discussed strategies for making cuts at numerous meetings and collected input at three public budget forums. In the end, the following criteria were used to cut over \$1 million in staffing costs plus \$230,100 in other costs from the preliminary budget.

Budget reductions needed to:

1. Minimize damage to educational programs and learning. Change needs to take place, but BH-BL must still offer a high quality comprehensive educational program.
2. Weigh the impact on health and safety.
3. Weigh the impact on class size and course offerings.
4. Spread the pain across the schools and departments. Small reductions in several departments, for instance, are better than decimating any one program.
5. Reflect the belief that extracurricular programs are important though less important than curricular programs.
6. Create a leaner K-12 administrative structure.
7. Be sustainable for more than one year, since one-year-only spending cuts just postpone economic problems to next year. A multi-year budget perspective is crucial.*



* For more details on the Board's budget process & objectives, go to www.bhbl.org/District/Board/budgetintro.htm

Qq

How does the district control staffing costs?

Aa

Education is a people business. It takes people — a lot of people — to teach, bus, feed, coach, and care for the nearly 3,450 children in our five schools, plus more people to clean the buildings, mow the playing fields, order the supplies and make the decisions. BH-BL has just over 600 employees, including many part-timers. Every year roughly 75 percent of the district budget goes to pay their salaries and benefits.

As in other NY school districts, most BH-BL employees are members of a union, and their terms of employment are set forth in a three-year contract, a negotiated agreement between the Board of Education and their union. This contract is a legally binding document. Under state law, neither side can change the terms of these contracts without negotiations.

Status of staff contracts

As part of the district's multi-year strategies, new contracts are negotiated as the current ones expire. Current contracts with the BH-BL Support Staff (CSEA) and the Administrators Association expire on June 30, 2009, so negotiations with these two groups will take place this year. The BH-BL Teachers Association contract is in effect until June 30, 2011. Earlier this winter, Superintendent Schultz asked the Teachers Association to reopen their contract, but they declined to do so. Mr. Schultz has agreed to reopen and renegotiate his individual contract with the Board of Education.

So how do we control staffing costs?

Since NY school districts do not have the legal authority to reduce contracted pay rates of employees unilaterally, in a crisis like this year, districts must eliminate positions or find creative ways to reconfigure positions.

The proposed budget reduces staffing costs by more than \$1 million by:

1. Strategically eliminating & restructuring

the equivalent of 20 full time positions, as described below. This includes a few full-time reductions and many part-time reductions.

2. Reducing non-contractual pay rates, as will happen in summer school classes.
3. Reducing some services purchased from agencies like CHS & BOCES.

How do we control benefit costs?

BH-BL has been lobbying the state Legislature to provide long-term relief of pension costs by creating a new "Tier 5" in the state retirement systems. Otherwise there is little schools can do to reduce the pension costs dictated by state law or the social security costs dictated by federal law.

In the area of health insurance, the district has been aggressively pursuing lower costs wherever possible. We save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, according to Blue Shield, by offering traditional indemnity health insurance through a consortium of 15 school districts.

In 2007, raising the office visit co-pay for staff in our two HMO insurance plans actually decreased health insur-



ance premiums. And in 2008, changing our CDPHP plan from community-rated to experience-rated held that premium increase to only 1.3 percent.

Also, at a time when many school districts require their retirees to pay zero to 20 percent of health insurance premiums, BH-BL retirees must pay 50 percent.

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What reductions are included in the budget & how will this impact students?

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The proposed budget reduces staffing costs in the preliminary budget by \$1,030,000 and other costs by \$230,100. Reductions include the equivalent of 20 full time positions (FTEs) and will take place in a variety of ways.

Students, parents and staff will be impacted by these changes. There is no way to make reductions of this magnitude without creating some pain, frustration and inconvenience for many people, but the goal all along has been to reduce costs in ways that will do the least damage to our instructional programs.

Reductions include:

- ▶ One section will be cut from the Charlton Heights 5th grade next fall, bringing 5th grade class sizes to an expected 26 pupils. While higher than ideal, this class size is in keeping with district expectations for upper elementary grade classrooms.
- ▶ In special education, one full-time high school teaching and one part-time middle school teaching position will be eliminated.

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- ▶ Secondary teaching costs will be reduced in the math, business, music, art, family & consumer science, library, and science departments plus the GED program by the equivalent of 0.2 to 0.4 positions each. (Note: 0.2 FTE of teaching time = one secondary class section)

The impact of this on students will vary depending on the school and department. For instance, the



middle school is considering offering 10 fewer weeks of art to either 7th or 8th graders to accommodate the art reduction yet still meet state mandates. Another option is to cut a low-enrollment high school elective, increase class sizes, or offer fewer sections of a given class.

This is neither as easy nor as pain-free as it may sound. Many factors must be weighed. Is a class size limited by safety issues such as the number of pupils who can be supervised when operating power tools or complex equipment? Will cutting an elective mean that some seniors won't get the advanced skills they are counting on for college? Even offering five rather than six sections of high school Keyboarding next year may mean that some pupils must wait a year to learn the foundational skills that are prerequisites for other courses.

- ▶ Other instructional changes next year will include decreases in speech therapy and physical therapy, a 50 percent loss in staff development teacher time, and reduced allocations for substitute teachers and teacher leader positions.
- ▶ Administrative positions will be cut back by 0.4 FTE in the middle school Dean of Students position and 0.2 in special education administration. Also the roles of several K-12 district department heads will be restructured.

- ▶ Support staff positions will decline as well. The positions of two custodians who are retiring will not be filled. Special education teaching assistant positions will be scaled back, as will elementary computer lab assistants, and secondary school security monitors.

- ▶ Other cutbacks include restructuring bus runs to reduce costs by the equivalent of at least two transportation staff positions, reducing clerical time in the district human resources and business offices, and reducing the facilities coordinator position by 0.4 FTE.

- ▶ Reductions in interscholastic sports include: scheduling fewer contests and restructuring transportation to contests (\$25,000), eliminating the 4th level teams in baseball, girls soccer and boys soccer (\$18,500), and no spending on uniforms (\$8,000).

- ▶ Reductions in other areas include:

Furniture & equipment	\$10,000
Building maintenance	\$20,000
BOCES computer repair	\$30,000
Library materials & processing	\$22,000
No high school phys. ed bowling	\$5,000
Summer curriculum work	\$20,000
No elementary summer library	\$3,600
Reduced pay rate for summer school teaching	\$68,000



Is BH-BL receiving a share of the federal stimulus plan?

Yes. Federal stimulus money is scheduled to come to public schools through a number of vehicles. This is all part of the federal American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

1. "State fiscal stabilization funds" are being awarded to each state to support education. This is the money that Governor Paterson has agreed to use to restore the state aid to schools that would otherwise have been cut. For BH-BL this means that rather than facing a loss of \$1.6 million in state operating

aid, our 2009-10 aid will remain essentially flat.

2. School districts are also eligible to apply for additional federal IDEA grants to support their special education program. These grants must "supplement, not supplant" money being used on existing services in a district's operating budget. We await the specific rules on this, but it appears likely BH-BL can apply for up to \$400,000 in grants for training staff, pre-identification services, equipment, and other services for our special education students.

3. Few details are available yet about another form of federal stimulus aid that is intended to support school construction and renovation. This money will be coordinated by the NY State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA). BH-BL has already researched and documented several energy-conservation renovation needs in our schools. Our architectural firm is in touch with NYSERDA, and we should be able to submit grant requests quickly once the details are announced.

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What is happening with the district's enrollment & long term infrastructure needs?

Aa

As part of its long range planning, the Board of Education has been monitoring enrollment trends and housing starts within the district's four towns, plus infrastructure needs in our buildings and grounds. A 2007-08 analysis by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission predicted BH-BL would see a slight enrollment rise to 3,418 pupils by 2012. However, we have already exceeded that with this year's enrollment of 3,444.

Although the recent economic downturn has slowed housing starts, we anticipate BH-BL will see continued slow growth in enrollment over the next five years now that work toward a Global Foundries chip-fab plant in Luther Forest (located only five miles from the northeast corner of our district) has begun. As one of the highest performing school districts in the area, BH-BL is likely to receive attention from home-buyers coming here to take

part in "Tech Valley" enterprises over the next decade.

To assist the Board in this sort of multi-year planning, a group of staff and facilities specialists recently completed a detailed list of the infrastructure needs the district will be forced to address in the next 10-20 years as our buildings age. The list includes projects like heating systems, roofing, septic and telephone systems. It will now be evaluated by a citizens committee.

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How will the proposed budget impact taxes?

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The proposed budget for 2009-10 is 2.16 percent higher than the current year's budget. Given the amount of aid (including federal stimulus money) coming to BH-BL in the new state budget, we know that the overall school tax levy will need to increase by 2.7 percent. Another way of saying this is that property taxes in the district's four towns will need to increase on an average of 2.7 percent to balance the proposed school budget.

Currently the median value home in the district is assessed at \$173,100. For the BH-BL homeowner with a home assessed at this median value, the proposed budget would mean a tax increase of \$79.

School revenue sources

As shown in the Revenue pie chart on page 8, NY public schools have two primary income sources: local property taxes and state aid. Despite efforts to increase other types of revenue — like interest on investments, rent, and admission fees — typically these other sources amount to only a small percent of the budget.

Equalization rates

So what will an average tax increase of 2.7 percent mean for BH-BL homeowners? Calculating tax increases is

complicated by the fact that our school district contains parts of four towns.

Each year the actual tax increase varies somewhat from town to town due to equalization rates that the NY State Office of Real Property Services (ORPS) announces in August.

As their name implies, equalization rates are intended to spread the tax burden across the four towns as fairly as possible. They attempt to "equalize" or compensate for differing assessment practices and for the fact that property values don't rise equally fast in all towns within a school district.

For instance, in BH-BL, if ORPS determines that property values have risen more in one town than another in the past year, the tax increase in that town may be somewhat higher than the 2.7 percent average while the rate in another town may be lower than the average.

Equalization differences tend to even out over several years, but they make it impossible to predict actual tax increases in each town accurately. Even the median value home in each town can vary widely.

The school district plays no role in determining what portion of the tax burden is placed on any one town or property owner.



The State ORPS office 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.



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Will homeowners still receive STAR exemptions? How about other tax exemptions?

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Yes, homeowners will still receive property tax exemptions under the School Tax Relief (STAR) program this year.

The part of STAR that the Legislature eliminated in the 2009 state budget is the “Middle Class STAR rebate” — the separate rebate check homeowners received in the fall of 2007 and 2008. But the STAR exemption that reduces your school property taxes remains the same.

Here’s how the exemption works:

The **Basic STAR exemption** is available for owner-occupied, primary residences regardless of the owners’ ages and incomes. Basic STAR works by exempting \$30,000 of the

FULL value of a home from school taxes. (Or, specifically, \$31,530 of the assessed value of a home in Ballston, \$24,640 of the assessed value in Charlton, \$19,570 in Clifton Park, and \$29,730 in Glenville.) This exemption means that the state will pay an average of \$620 of BH-BL residents’ school property tax bill this coming fall.

The **Enhanced STAR exemption** is available on the primary residence of residents age 65 and up with yearly incomes below the state standard. This standard rises yearly and is based on the adjusted gross income on your tax return two years earlier. The 2009 limit is an income of \$73,000 on senior citizens’ 2007 tax return.

Qualifying senior citizens are exempted from paying the school taxes on \$60,100 of the FULL value of their home. (Or, specifically, \$63,160 of the assessed value of a home in Ballston, \$49,360 of the assessed value in Charlton, \$39,200 in Clifton Park, and \$56,280 in Glenville.) This exemption means that the state will pay an average of \$1,225 of these BH-BL residents’ school tax bill this September.

Homeowners receiving the regular (i.e., Basic) STAR exemption need not reapply each year. Only senior citizens receiving the enhanced exemptions must prove that their income is still within the limit each year.

Other tax relief options

Property tax exemptions are also available for low income senior residents and for disabled residents.

In an effort to respond to the concerns of fixed income senior citizens, in January the Board of Education raised the income limit for the seniors exemption to the maximum allowed by law. Residents over the age of 65 with an income of \$36,400 or less can be exempted from paying school taxes on 5-50% of their home’s assessed value depending on their income.

The district also grants a disability exemption ranging from 5-50% for qualifying residents of any age with disabilities and incomes of less than \$36,400.

Both exemptions are in addition to the STAR exemption and certain qualifications apply. Applications for either exemption must be filed with your town assessor’s office and must be renewed annually.

Call your town assessor (below) or visit your town website if you have questions about STAR or other exemptions, about how income limits are calculated, or wish to apply for any of these tax exemptions.

- ▶ **Ballston:** June Maniacek
885-8502, ext. 20
- ▶ **Charlton:** Robert Cromie
384-0152
- ▶ **Clifton Park:** Walter Smead
371-6460
- ▶ **Glenville:** Darlene Abbatecola
688-1200, ext. 403



Qq

What happens if the budget is defeated? Would a contingent budget be different this year?

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If the proposed budget is defeated at the polls on May 19, state law gives the school board three options. Board members may decide to:

1. Put the same budget before the voters a second time,
2. Put a revised budget before the voters, or
3. Go directly to a contingent budget. If the voters defeat a budget a second time, the Board must go to a contingent budget.

BH-BL Board of Education members have discussed what they would do if the proposed budget is defeated this spring. The maximum size allowed by law for a contingent budget is tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase.

In most years going to a contingent budget means a district has to cut many staff positions, but this year the important thing to remember is that our Board has already done the hard

work of cutting the budget to a level that is FAR BELOW the CPI increase.

In the current economic climate, if the budget is defeated, Board members have indicated that they most likely would be looking for ways to make FURTHER reductions.

In any case, BH-BL would be required to cut approximately \$129,000 from the proposed budget because a contingent budget cannot include money for equipment or new capital projects.

Here are some key points on how a 2009-10 contingent budget would impact BH-BL programs:

- ▶ Contingent budgets CAN fund interscholastic sports and busing of pupils, but cannot include money for equipment or new capital projects. In our case, this means cutting roughly \$129,000.
- ▶ The district would have to raise the fees charged for public use of school buildings and grounds under the law.

- ▶ The district would be subject to various limits and controls on how the money within the contingent budget is spent. These rules tend to make it harder to pass a budget in the following years and harder to do multi-year planning. In other words, a contingent budget would substitute state rules for the Board's own strategic efforts to cut costs with the least damage to our educational programs.



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In the final analysis, what do BH-BL residents get for their tax dollars?

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Board of Education members know that many families in the district value a strong educational system and moved to BH-BL specifically to have that for their children. But in this year of unprecedented economic pressures, many folks are worried and want the school district to reduce its costs.

The proposed budget is an attempt to do just that while also minimizing the damage to instructional programs.

There is much evidence to indicate that BH-BL educational programs are successful. In the past year our high school was one of only four Capital Region high schools to be ranked in the top 5 percent of schools nationally in a *Newsweek* magazine analysis.

Our elementary and middle school students achieve high scores on most state tests, 92% of the total Class of 2008 earned Regents diplomas, and even 62% of 2008 special education graduates earned Regents diplomas.

Evidence that our schools are effective is important, but can we also document that our schools are cost-effective? That is more challenging.

We know that the our total cost per pupil is significantly below the state average of \$17,330. In the most recent year for which comparative figures are available (2006-07), the BH-BL average of \$14,064 was also below the average for both Schenectady County districts (\$14,334) and Suburban Council districts (\$14,311).

Another objective measurement of the cost-effectiveness occurs in the performance ranking the weekly *Business Review* newspaper does every year of 85 area school districts in 11 counties on the basis of students' test scores and graduation data. Last September the newspaper ranked BH-BL 5th out of 85 districts. We are also the highest ranked district with what the State Education Department calls "average needs." This means that the four districts with slightly better results all have more community wealth to draw upon, and implies that BH-BL achieves very high results given its resources.

Expenditures by Category

CATEGORY	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	PROPOSED 2009-10	% INCREASE '08-09 to '09-10
Staff Compensation & Benefits	\$36,092,610	\$38,091,402	\$39,508,563	\$40,360,072	2.16%
BOCES/Special Ed. Contracts	3,200,020	3,457,394	3,570,942	3,791,367	6.2%
Equipment & Furniture	268,244	262,482	299,381	299,381	0
Textbooks, Software & Supplies	1,353,177	1,405,342	1,637,420	1,637,420	0
Utilities & General Insurance	1,862,020	1,949,389	2,084,150	2,171,550	4.2%
Debt Service	3,057,266	3,883,419	3,904,779	3,928,536	0.6%
Renovation, Maintenance & Other Services	1,155,246	1,194,202	1,235,109	1,180,534	-4.4%
Total Expenditure	\$46,988,583	\$50,243,630	\$52,240,344	\$53,368,860	2.16%

Expenditures by Service

SERVICE	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	PROPOSED 2009-10	% INCREASE '08-09 to '09-10
Instruction	\$31,856,912	\$33,641,353	\$34,846,912	\$35,766,519	2.6%
Pupil Services (Library, Athletics, Guidance & Health)	3,109,470	3,241,560	3,318,004	3,381,178	1.9%
Operation & Maintenance	3,073,826	3,145,246	3,221,672	3,309,797	2.7%
Utilities & General Insurance	1,862,020	1,949,389	2,084,150	2,171,550	4.2%
Transportation	2,529,762	2,804,389	3,214,075	3,170,747	-1.4%
Debt Service	3,057,266	3,883,419	3,904,779	3,928,536	0.6%
Central Support	1,499,327	1,578,274	1,650,752	1,640,534	-0.6%
Total Expenditure	\$46,988,583	\$50,243,630	\$52,240,344	\$53,368,860	2.16%

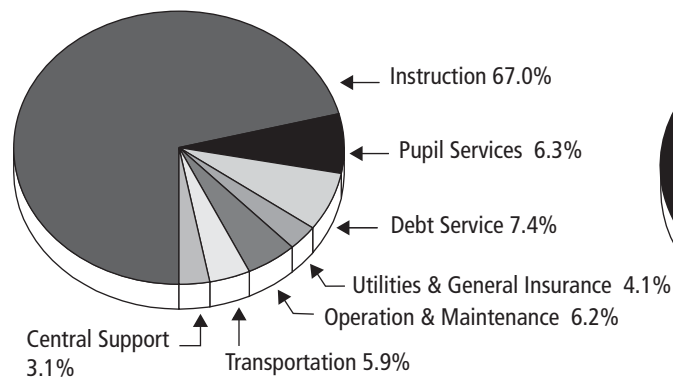
Each item in this chart includes amounts budgeted for staffing, supplies, equipment & all costs directly related to that service. No funds are budgeted for the school lunch program, whose entire cost (including staff salaries) is paid for by meal purchases and state and federal aid.

Revenue Summary

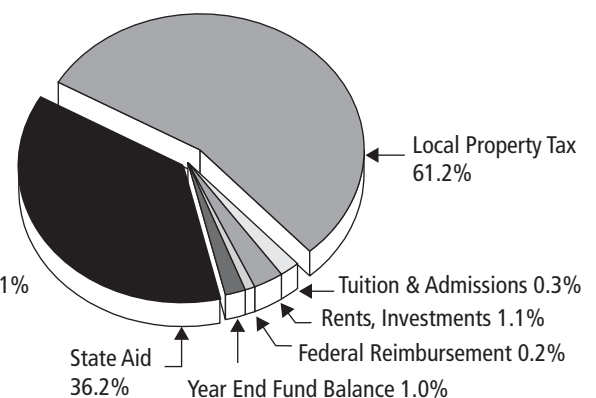
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	PROPOSED 2009-10	CHANGE '08-09 to '09-10
State Aid	\$17,444,991	\$18,836,577	\$19,083,065	\$19,315,300	\$232,235
Local Property Tax	27,971,692	29,948,153	31,556,379	32,663,060	1,106,681*
Tuition & Admissions	147,900	147,900	122,900	133,000	10,100
Rents, Investments, Refunds	646,000	641,000	725,000	602,500	-122,500
Federal Medicaid Reimbursement	170,000	170,000	170,000	105,000	-65,000
Year End Fund Balance	608,000	500,000	583,000	550,000	-33,000
Total Revenue	\$46,988,583	\$50,243,630	\$52,240,344	\$53,368,860	\$1,128,516

* \$856,681 of this change is from the tax rate increase. The remainder is tax revenue on new construction added to the tax rolls since last year. An estimated \$5 million of the property tax levy will be paid by the state under the STAR program. See page 6.

Expenditures by Service



Revenue Summary



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2008-09 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2009-10 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2009-10 School Year*
Total budgeted amount	\$52,240,344	\$53,368,860	\$53,239,958
Increase (decrease) for the 2009-10 school year		\$1,128,516	\$999,614
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		2.16%	1.9%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		3.8%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2009-10 school year		\$32,663,060	\$32,534,158
1. Administrative Component	\$5,609,119	\$5,752,663	\$5,728,463
2. Program Component	\$37,695,669	\$38,548,365	\$38,490,588
3. Capital Component	\$8,935,556	\$9,067,832	\$9,020,907

* Assumptions made in projecting a Contingency Budget for 2009-10, should the proposed budget be defeated: While this may be adjusted, we assume that the proposed budget would be reduced by removing non-contingent expenses for equipment and new capital project costs. As the law requires, debt service is excluded from the calculation of contingent budget costs.

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.

The traditional more detailed breakdown of our expenses and income is given on the previous page.

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR** Exemption Savings:

	Budget Proposed for the 2009-10 School Year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$620 (est.)

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2009-2010 by the qualified voters of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District, Saratoga & Schenectady Counties, New York, will be held at the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Senior High School in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2009, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Senior High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.

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

DEFINITIONS

- Administrative costs** include the salaries and benefits of administrators and supervisors, plus the salaries and benefits of clerical staff. Also, 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.
- Program costs** include the salaries and benefits of all teachers and staff delivering pupil services (health, guidance, library and athletics). Also, textbooks, instructional materials, equipment, extracurricular activities, BOCES program costs, and all costs of the transportation program except bus purchases.
- Capital costs** include the salaries and benefits of maintenance and custodial staff, plus debt service, bus purchases, utilities, fire insurance, tax certiorari, and other court-ordered expenses.





Board of Education Candidates



Don Brandt

Don Brandt is seeking his first term on the Board of Education. An area resident since 1963 and BH-BL resident since 2001, he retired as an engineering manager after 34 years with GE and is currently a GE consultant. He earned a bachelors from Penn State and a masters in engineering from Union College. He has extensive experience in international business dealings in a variety of cultures. Don has two children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He and his wife reside on Maple Avenue in Charlton.



William Farmer

William Farmer is seeking his first term on the Board. He has been a district resident for 14 years and employed by Creatacor, Inc., in Clifton Park for 19 years. As vice president for client services, William supervises 11 Creatacor staff members and oversees marketing functions. He volunteers with the Southern Saratoga Chamber of Commerce and is currently serving on the BH-BL Citizens Review Committee to evaluate critical school infrastructure needs. He and his wife live on Willow Lane in Glenville, where their two sons attend Pashley Elementary.



Elizabeth Herkenham

Elizabeth Herkenham is seeking her third term on the Board. She has previously served as Board finance chair and president. A PTA Founders Day Award winner and former Charlton Heights PTA president, she is co-founder & executive director of the Workforce Consortium for Emerging Technologies, Inc., a not-for-profit organization that builds partnerships among businesses, government and education. A BH-BL resident for 20 years, Elizabeth and her husband live on Maple Avenue in Charlton. Their two children attend the high school.

BH-BL residents will elect three members of the Board of Education on May 19. Board members all run at large and serve a three-year term of office at no pay. Five candidates filed nominating petitions for seats on the board this April. The two highest vote getters will be elected for three-year terms of office, and the third highest vote getter will fill the two years remaining on the term of a former member who resigned.

Residents will have an opportunity to pose questions and hear the candidates discuss their views at **Meet the Candidates Night** at 7:30 p.m. on **Tuesday, May 5**, in the High School Library.

"My five grandchildren are graduates of BH-BL. Four of them are college graduates and are professionally employed with the fifth still in college. One of these grandchildren is an eighth grade science teacher. From this it should be clear that I have an interest in quality education.

My experience as a GE manager for over thirty years has prepared me for achieving difficult goals while having to face extremely tough financial restrictions. My responsibilities have included a staff of up to 400 men and women including professional as well as union members, and I have done this successfully.

I am running for a position on the BH-BL School Board so that I might have an opportunity to help this district deal with the very challenging financial issues that are upon us. Given the current economic condition, I believe the proposed 2.7% increase in the tax levy is excessive. I also do not believe that it is justified by being the lowest increase in the past 40 years. There must be a lesson to be learned from Schalmont's zero percent increase. I also believe that the difficult budgetary lessons I have had to learn during my industrial experience can be helpful in bringing discipline to our budgetary process."

"School is your job. If you are successful at school, it will carry you to success throughout your life." My father's words guided me when I was young, and now I want to be a part of providing our children with the opportunity to succeed.

No matter the economic environment, the top priority of any community must be providing the highest caliber education for its students. We must offer a challenging, safe and well-rounded experience ensuring our children have the tools to be the leaders of the future. The needs of the group must be balanced with the individual needs of every student. If elected to the board, I will ensure this priority is a guiding principle when making decisions.

The school board also has a responsibility to the taxpayers. Regardless of the individual situation, taxes have a tremendous impact on our quality of life. A quality education isn't free, but it shouldn't continually outpace the cost of living. If elected, my approach will emphasize using resources to their fullest potential, researching alternative revenue opportunities and investigating newer yet proven educational techniques that improve education without adding additional costs. I've been a resident of the district for many years, and it's now my turn to give something back. I look forward to continuing and improving on the excellent results BH-BL schools achieve year after year. I respectfully request your vote this election day."

"We are all working hard to do more with less. The BH-BL School District is no different. We face rising costs and the challenges of an aging facility infrastructure. This year the Board and Administration knew that major cuts had to be made that would be sustainable and yet not jeopardize the high quality education our community expects. We listened to our community, examined the budget and seriously considered the impact of each proposed cut. Not everyone will agree with the changes we have made, but we all respect that.

The business of public education is a different beast! In my six years on the school board, I have learned a great deal about operational issues that are unique to running a school district: unfunded mandates, an unpredictable revenue stream, legislated employee retirement obligations, and the list goes on.

The reward of being involved in education comes in knowing how important it is in shaping our children's future. Our region is poised to have the largest high tech development

Continued next page

Herkenham statement continued

project in the world break ground within a few months — just 5 miles from our district’s boundary. Globally mobile jobs will require collaborative teaming skills that integrate math, science, and technology along with strong communication skills. We need to adapt our education system to better serve the needs of our students for their future and in a more affordable manner. I would be honored to continue my service as a member of the BH-BL Board of Education.”

Patre Kuziak was appointed to the Board last fall when another member resigned. She is president of the Burnt Hills-Scotia Glenville Hockey Association, which supports the joint-school ice hockey team. She holds a degree in biology from Keuka College, teaches religion at Immaculate Conception Church, and earned a Founders Day Award from the Charlton Heights PTA. Since 1991 she and her husband have owned and operated Marcella’s Restaurant on Route 50. The couple lives on Schlensker Drive in Glenville with their two sons, who attend the middle school and high school.

“Preparing our children for the future has always and will always be a priority for me. All children deserve a quality education that develops their abilities and prepares them to succeed in a global marketplace.

As a business owner for the past 18 years, I have had the fortunate opportunity to employ many BH-BL students while they were in high school and college. Having had this experience helps me to be in touch with what educational experiences are important to them, what works and what doesn’t.

My business has changed and grown these past 18 years due in part to the feedback I get from our customers. I bring to the board a strong relationship with the public. I know and respect my community. In these tough economic times as a business owner I have had to ‘think outside the box,’ always change and look for new ways to create income. These experiences I feel have helped me as a board member.

Serving as a board member is one of the most important responsibilities I have experienced. The educational standards we establish affect the future of our students, the community and ultimately our society. I am proud to be a part of a school board that works so diligently to strike a balance between quality education and financial responsibilities. I would be honored to continue to serve as a member.”



Patre Kuziak

James Maughan is seeking his first term on the Board. An area native, he is general manager of Customer Service with GE Wind Energy. James holds a BS, MS and PhD in mechanical engineering. He has been an active volunteer in various school committees, local Scout troops, his church and the GE Volunteers program. James and his wife live on Longcreek Drive Extension in Burnt Hills. They have two children in college and two children attending the high school.

“Nearly 20 years ago my wife and I chose the BH-BL schools for our children and have been increasingly impressed ever since. Our district has a reputation for an excellent, well-rounded education that far exceeds what might be expected from a school of our size — something not every school has, as we found out recently when we had the chance to spend a few years in a different part of the country.

The challenge is to maintain that quality against growing pressures: State budgets up 9%. STAR rebates being eliminated. School spending over \$15,000 per student. Increasing unemployment and decreasing personal income. If we ignore this, over time fewer will be able to afford to live here, but if we lose our reputation for quality schools, over time fewer will choose to live here.

I hope to use my work and life experience to help the community find these ongoing solutions. None of us pretends to have the full answer. The underlying principle is that we’re investing our limited resources in the education of these students so they can be well prepared for their future and, in turn, support our progress together. I would now welcome an opportunity to serve on the Board and help find the best ways to ensure we fulfill that mission.”



James Maughan



What else will we be voting about on May 19?

The Board of Education is seeking the voters’ approval to borrow up to \$350,000 to replace four of the oldest buses in our fleet. The vehicles to be purchased all include security cameras and will be:

- ▶ Three 66-passenger buses
- ▶ One 29-passenger bus.

The buses to be replaced are all 10 - 11 years old and have already accumulated between 102,000 and 145,000 miles each. Beyond these limits, vehicles typically become prohibitively expensive to repair given the ultra-strict state safety codes for school buses. The old buses will either be sold or traded in, depending on which option is the better deal.

Approximately 73% of the cost of buses is reimbursed by state aid. Payment for these buses would be spread over five years beginning in 2010-11, and would be phased in as payments on other buses are complete. Annually funding buses in this manner costs the average BH-BL homeowner less than \$20 per year.

Board of EducationRobert Speck,
*President*John Blowers
Elizabeth Herkenham
Timothy Kelliher
Patre Kuziak
Joe Pericone
Michael Wolf**Superintendent**

Jim Schultz

*Produced in cooperation
with the Capital Region
BOCES Communications
Service**Christy Multer, Editor &
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Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District

**Please
Remember to****VOTE**

- ▶ Tuesday, May 19
- ▶ 7:00 am - 9:00 pm
- ▶ High School Gym
88 Lakehill Rd.

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 19, 2009, if you registered for or voted in either a school election or a general election anytime since May 2005. If you are not already registered, you may do so in either of two ways.

You may register for the school election by coming to the school district office in the Hostetter Building, 50 Cypress Drive, between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday-Friday, through May 15. Or you may register in person or by mail with your County Board of Elections through May 15.

Absentee Ballots

Registered voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at the polling place on May 19.

To receive an absentee ballot, voters must obtain an application from Clerk of the Board Jacqueline St. Onge at the district office. (The application form can also be downloaded and printed from the BH-BL website at www.bhbl.org/district/board/voterinfo.htm)

The application must be returned to Ms. St. Onge 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 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Absentee ballots will be counted only if they are returned to the Clerk of the Board no later than 5:00 pm on election day. For more information, contact Ms. St. Onge at 399-9141, ext. 5025.

