

2014-15 Budget Development & Communications Plan

2014-15 Budget Objectives

In developing the 2014-15 budget, the Board of Education will:

1. Work to balance the community's desire for both excellent school programs and reasonable taxes by diligently evaluating current practices, proposed expenditures and revenue sources other than taxes.
2. Ensure that BH-BL graduates have the skills, knowledge and attitudes outlined in the district's 21st Century Framework for Learning document so that they can compete in a demanding and technologically sophisticated global marketplace. This will include support for innovative instructional models and programs that have proven to be effective ways to deliver services, as well as support for the professional development necessary for such innovation.
3. Engage the community to share their perspectives and values regarding the school programs they wish to support with their tax dollars.
4. Actively lobby state legislators to reform the mandates outside of school districts' control that currently drive up costs in the areas of instruction, personnel and construction.

Context for Developing the 2014-15 Budget

New York State's economy is slowly starting to recover, but still has a long way to go. Below are some factors that will impact development of the 2014-15 BH-BL budget. *To help gauge the impact of the following factors, 1% of the BH-BL property tax levy is roughly \$360,000. Hence every \$360,000 in additional expense—or lost revenue—that is not ultimately balanced by new revenue or reductions elsewhere in the budget results in roughly a 1% tax levy increase. This is the rough equivalent of seven full-time staff positions.*

1. The biggest area of predicted cost increase in the 2014-15 budget will likely be in staff pension costs—an area the district has no control over because the figures are set by the state. The required employer contribution rate for members of the state Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) is currently 16.25% of salaries. It is projected to increase to between 1 and 1.5% while the Employee Retirement System (ERS) contribution rate is projected to slightly decrease—less than 1%. The overall pension cost increase to BH-BL is expected to be more than \$350,000, depending on final rates.
2. We have been advised by the State Legislature that school districts across the state may receive an average state aid increase of 3.4% for the 2014-15 school year. For BH-BL, this could mean an estimated additional \$600,000.
3. We have received guidance that the starting point for the tax levy cap calculation for the 2014-15 budget year will likely be between 1.5 and 1.6% for BH-BL. Final numbers related to this will be released in the near future. Yet, it is unlikely that BH-BL will have the same exclusions in 2014-15 that raised the district's tax levy cap threshold in 2013-14. Overall, the district is likely to have a much lower tax levy cap for 2014-15 compared to the previous two budget years.
4. BH-BL is fortunate that our residents, by and large, support high-quality school programs when balanced by reasonable taxes. The 2013-14 budget proposal—which was significantly *below* the district's tax levy cap—was approved by a 63% passing rate.
5. Unlike many Suburban Council school districts, BH-BL has very little commercial development and our tax base is 85 to 90% residential. After several years of this unprecedented bad economy, many district families are stretched financially. U.S. Census Bureau data shows that the percent of BH-BL families with school-age children living in poverty rose from 3% in 2007 to 9.6% in 2011. (Most recent statistics available.)
6. BH-BL has been able to lock in competitive rates for electricity and natural gas by participating in multi-year, multi-district consortium contracts with more than 140 school districts. Using funds from the 2009 referendum, we continue to cut our operating costs with renovations, including energy-conserving replacement doors, windows and roofing.

Calendar of Budget & Election Activities

Dec. 6 • F	Schools & managers submit budget requests
Dec. 10 • Tu	Approve budget calendar at regular Board of Education meeting, 7:30 p.m., HS Library
Mid-Jan.	Deadline for announcement of Governor's budget proposals
Jan. - Feb.	Board members discuss budget & process at PTA meetings
Jan. 17 • F	Compiled budget requests & reference materials distributed to Board members
Feb. 4 • Tu	Finance Committee on Governor's proposals & Board budget binders, 7 p.m. HS library

Feb 27 • Thu Public Forum on the Preliminary Budget & Potential Changes, 7:30 p.m., HS library — also broadcast live online

Mar. 1 • S	Deadline for school districts to submit tax levy limit information to the state comptroller
Mar. 4 • Tu	Finance Committee, 7 p.m., HS library
Mar. 11 • Tu	Approve referenda & notice of the annual meeting at regular Board mtg., 7:30 p.m. MS library
Mar. 14 • F	Superintendent's recommendations to Board
Mar. 18 • Tu	Finance Committee to discuss superintendent's recommendations, 7 p.m., HS library

April 1 • Tu Public Forum on the Nearly Complete Budget, 7:30 p.m., MS cafeteria — also broadcast live online

April 3 • Th	Finance Committee to review input received at forum, 7 p.m., HS library
April 7 • M	Draft budget newsletter to Board

April 8 • Tu Adoption of the Proposed 2014-15 Budget at regular Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., HS library

mid-April to mid-May	Reach out to inform school & community groups about the budget
April 21 • M	Board of Education candidates' filing deadline
April 22 • Tu	Budget newsletter goes to printer
April 22 • Tu	Budget Hearing as part of regular Board of Education meeting, 7:30 p.m., HS library
May 2 • F	Budget newsletter mailed to residents
May 6 • Tu	Meet-the-Candidates Night, 7:30 p.m., HS library
May 13 • Tu	Budget Hearing as part of regular Board of Education meeting, 7:30 p.m., MS library
May 15 • Th	Elementary Walk-about, 7 p.m., all three schools

May 20 • Tu Public Budget Vote, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., High School gymnasium



Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools

Ensuring opportunities for learning, personal growth & social responsibility