

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE TARRYTOWNS 2007-08 BUDGET FACT SHEET

The proposed budget represents the amount necessary to support continuation of programs and services and maintenance of class sizes in keeping with district standards for the 2007-08 school year. The increase over this year's budget reflects the increased cost of operating public schools in our region.

Budget at a Glance

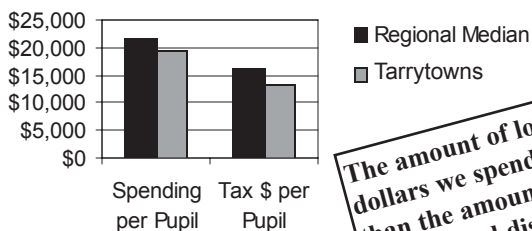
Total Budget	\$55,584,650
Budget Increase	9.85%
Tax Levy Increase*	8.3% → 6.4%
Tax Rate Increase*	
Tarrytown	8.3% → 7.8%
Sleepy Hollow	8.4% → 7.4%

**Note: We are receiving a significant increase in state aid which we are applying to reduce your tax rate increase.*

Standards supported by 2007-08 Budget

- Class size guidelines comparable to region
- Appropriate instructional materials & supplies
- State-of-the-art elementary curriculum
- Improved middle school program
- Comprehensive academic program at secondary level
- Extensive AP course offerings relative to school size
- K-12 Foreign Language program
- Advanced technology
- Comprehensive extra-curricular and sports programs
- Clean buildings
- Middle and High School expansion & renovation
- Safe, comprehensive & efficient pupil transportation

Regional Efficiency Comparisons



The amount of local property tax dollars we spend per pupil is lower than the amount spent in all but 12 of 46 school districts in our region.

Did You Know?

We spend a greater portion of our budget on instruction and less on operational overhead than the average for Westchester County and New York State.

BUDGET HEARING: May 3
VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE May 10
BUDGET VOTE: MAY 15, 7am-9pm

Tarrytown Residents vote at Washington Irving School
Sleepy Hollow Residents vote at Morse School

School Tax Payments for Many District Residents will be *Less Than Last Year* Thanks to New STAR Funding

No tax increase in 2007 for a resident whose adjusted gross income is less than \$175,000/year and who owns a mid-range home with school tax bill of \$8,400 (before STAR exemption) in 2006:

For homeowner earning less than \$175,000:	2006-07	2007-08
School tax bill before STAR*	\$8,400	\$9,045
School tax bill after STAR exemption	\$6,380	\$7,005
Net school tax after additional STAR rebate	\$6,050	\$6,045

No tax increase in 2007 for a senior citizen whose adjusted gross income is less than \$60,000/year and who owns a home with school tax bill (before STAR exemption) of \$6600 in 2006:

For senior citizen earning less than \$60,000:	2006-07	2007-08
School tax bill before STAR	\$6,600	\$7,100
School tax bill after Enhanced STAR exemption	\$2,735	\$3,145
Net school tax after additional STAR rebate	\$2,185	\$2,180

The STAR program includes an initial exemption that is applied against a homeowner's school tax bill and a separate check from the state that is issued to each homeowner in the fall.

Two Propositions Will Be Voted on May 15

Proposition #1: State-reimbursed expenditure on improvements to the Washington Irving School New revenue with **NO TAX INCREASE**

This year's state education budget includes special "EXCEL" funding that each school district in the state can use to help pay for school construction work. The amount approved for our school district is \$787,690. The district is proposing to use these funds to restore some of the reduced WI construction project budget in order to maximize the work that can be accomplished without increasing taxes. **Voter approval is required to receive and spend these new funds.**

A YES vote yields \$787,690 of new revenue.

Proposition #2: Installation of synthetic turf fields at Sleepy Hollow High School & Washington Irving School

This proposition for \$3.6 million would enable the district to install synthetic turf fields at two schools, one in Tarrytown and one in Sleepy Hollow. Why? To greatly improve safety conditions and help the community meet the growing demand for fields. There has been a significant increase in field use by school teams, which now include football, girls and boys soccer and girls and boys lacrosse as well as field hockey. Community groups including AYSO, TNT, Wolfpack also use school fields regularly. This demand far exceeds the amount of usage the fields were originally designed to accommodate. The proposition includes two synthetic field surfaces, construction, and necessary items such as goal posts and maintenance equipment. Lights at the high school will be included if sufficient funds remain after turf installation expenses are covered. *The only alternative to installing synthetic fields is to reduce field use by school and community groups in order to provide a safe natural turf surface.*

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE TARRYTOWNS

2007-08 BUDGET Q & A

Why is the inflation rate for education higher than the overall consumer price index?

While the district works hard to hold down discretionary costs, the cost of contractual salaries and benefits for our employees, and the rates we pay for utilities, property and liability insurance and special education tuition continues to rise at a substantially higher rate than the 3.2% CPI. Finally, our debt service has increased at a higher rate than would otherwise be necessary because we have had to borrow to cover refunds of tax payments to commercial and condominium property owners whose property has been over assessed.

How do we know that the district's budget is truly "cost effective?"

We carefully monitor data comparing expenditure rates in our district to those in school districts throughout our region to ensure that we continue to have a cost effective operation. One measure involves how much money we spend per pupil. Comparative data indicate that the amount we spend per pupil is lower than the amount spent by all but 9 out of 46 districts in the region. The percentage of our budget that is devoted to overhead expenses other than those that fall under the Instruction category is lower than the percentage in all but 13 districts out of 46 districts in the region.

How does the tax impact of the proposed budget compare with the tax impact of school budgets elsewhere in the region?

The amount of local property tax dollars we spend per student is lower than the amount spent in all but 12 of 46 school districts in the region. The percentage of the budget funded by local taxpayer dollars is also lower than the mid-range percentage in the region. However, a declining property tax base due to reductions in assessed value of commercial property as a result of tax certiorari proceedings contributes to a higher tax rate increase than would occur if our tax base were stable or increasing. Even so, the tax rate on true value for property in our district actually declined between the 2005-06 and the 2006-07 school years. Another positive trend is the addition of The Legends and Ichabod's Landing developments to our tax rolls.

What has been done to make the budget increase and resulting tax increase as low as possible?

Early in the budget process, teachers and administrators submitted budget requests in response to specific needs. Approximately \$1.3 million in proposed spending increases associated with these requests was eliminated from the budget before it was presented to the Board at the end of February. The resulting budget reflects the staffing commitment necessary to meet our kindergarten and

first grade class size guidelines and to make some program improvements at the middle school. However, the expense of any new staffing will be covered by salary savings associated with teacher retirements.

In the course of our three Saturday budget work sessions in March, the Board of Education asked that we limit the use of additional propositions by addressing our ongoing technology and bus equipment needs through a lease arrangement within our budget proposal, eliminating the need for separate future propositions. Accomplishing this without increasing the budget required a further budget reduction of \$180,000. The resulting budget meets the Board's goal of preserving existing programs and services and maintaining class sizes at regionally comparable levels.

What would it take to lower the budget and tax increase even further?

Budgets are driven by standards. Some of these standards reflect state and federal requirements, so the budgetary implications are not subject to local discretion. Reducing our budget would require us to change standards that are subject to local discretion in ways such as the following:

- Increasing elementary class sizes beyond district guidelines, which are based on regional and state averages.
- Reducing teacher assistants in kindergarten and 1st grade, requiring teachers to share access to them.
- Eliminating specific programs in areas such as music, foreign language, or sports.
- Increasing high school class sizes and eliminating certain electives, including AP classes, which would result in more students being assigned to study halls.
- Reducing monitors on school buses or increasing the student walking distance.

When can taxpayers expect new revenue from the two major riverfront developments to begin offsetting the tax impact of the school construction project?

Our understanding from projections by village officials is that construction on the Ferry Landing Development will begin this spring and construction at Lighthouse Landing should begin within the next year. Conservative estimates of the tax revenue-generating potential of these two developments continue to exceed \$8 million per year as compared to annual debt payments on our construction project when fully completed of about \$5.5 million per year. If the riverfront construction proceeds as planned, it should start having an impact on our tax rolls within two years.

QUESTIONS:

Contact Superintendent Howard Smith
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