

EDUCATIONmatters

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 17

12 noon – 9 p.m.

MS Cafeteria

What am I voting on?

Voters will decide on the following items:

- A \$28,966,155 budget for the 2016-17 school year
- Selection of three Board of Education members
- Purchase of five school buses
- Establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund
- Purchase of property adjacent to Elementary School

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Proposed budget maintains programming for students

On Tuesday, May 17, the Cairo-Durham CSD community will vote on a proposed 2016-17 school budget that requires no reduction in programming or staffing and maintains class sizes while adding new course offerings and a special education position.

The \$28,966,155 budget, which increases spending by \$205,866 over the current year's budget, requires an estimated 1.19 percent increase in the tax levy. The proposed budget is within the district's property tax cap. While state officials often tout this as a "2 percent tax cap," the law actually uses an eight-step formula to calculate the district's allowable levy increase, or the amount of taxes it can collect from residents.

"The focus of this budget proposal was to sustain current programming and staffing with limited use of reserved funds and a minimal increase in the tax levy," said Superintendent Anthony Taibi. "This budget also seeks to plan for our future building or infrastructure needs, both planned and unplanned."

The proposed budget would enhance student programming by adding five distance learning courses in AP Art History, Personal Finance, Philosophy, SAT/ACT Review and Sign Language II. This would expand the number of distance learning offerings to 16, allowing high school students to take courses that would otherwise be

unavailable. Additionally, the proposed budget would add a full-time special education instructor to support student needs.

The proposed budget also includes a line item for a \$100,000 Capital Outlay Project to address safety and security needs at the high school. This includes new front entrance doors, replacement of a folding partition wall, and replacement and repair of various exterior doors and windows. These 40 year-old items, which were not addressed in the last building project, date back to the original construction in 1976.

The New York State Education Department established this kind of project to help districts address smaller capital needs. One of the advantages is Cairo-Durham CSD would receive building aid from the state in the following year as opposed to several years, as is the case with larger capital projects. The district's current building aid ratio is 69.7 percent so the project is estimated to generate \$69,700 in aid during the 2017-18 school year.

Residents will also vote on three other propositions. This includes the purchase of vacant property adjacent to Cairo-Durham Elementary School to create additional parking; the creation of a \$500,000 Capital Reserve Fund to address future infrastructure needs; and the purchase of five buses as part of the district's board-approved replacement plan.

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS: All voters must be United States citizens, age 18 or older on Election Day. Voters must be residents of the Cairo-Durham Central School District for 30 days immediately prior to Election day and registered to vote.

REGISTERING TO VOTE: Voter registration is required. Voters can register to vote with the Greene County Board of Elections or with the district at the High School lobby from 12-8 p.m. on **May 10**. If you have voted in a school election in the past 4 years, then you are already registered to vote.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS: Residents who will be unable to vote in person can vote by absentee ballot. You can obtain an absentee ballot by completing an absentee ballot application in the Board Clerk's office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The application deadline is **May 10** if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter or the day before the vote if the ballot is to be personally delivered. Please call (518) 622-8534, extension 23040 for more information.

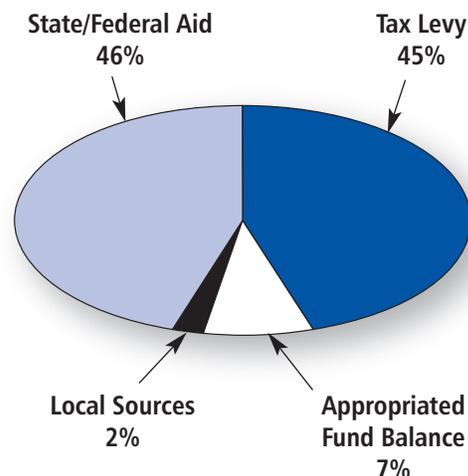




Where the money comes from...

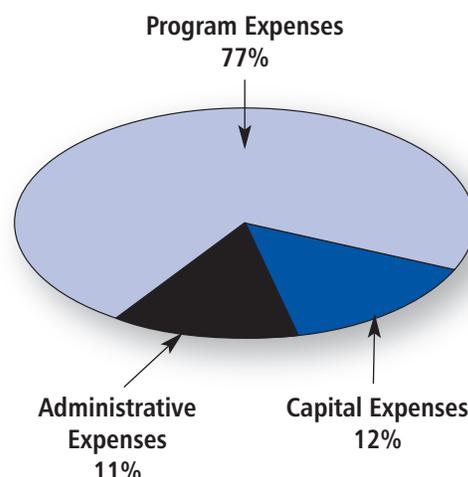
Source of Funds	2015-2016 Budget	2016-2017 Proposed	Increase/Decrease	Percent Change
State/Federal Aid	\$13,242,946	\$13,194,082	\$ (48,864)	-0.37%
Tax Levy	12,992,687	13,147,417	154,730	1.19%
Local Sources*	624,656	624,656	—	0.00%
Appropriated Fund Balance	1,900,000	1,900,000	—	0.00%
Appropriated Reserves	—	100,000	—	%
TOTAL	\$28,760,289	\$28,966,155	\$105,866	0.37%

* other local sources include payments in lieu of taxes, interest penalties, charges for services, day school tuition, use of money and property, sale of property, refund of prior year expenses, etc.



...and where it is spent

Expense Category	2015-2016 Budget	2016-2017 Proposed	Increase/Decrease	Percent Change
ADMINISTRATION:				
Board of Education	\$ 23,650	\$ 40,770	\$ 17,120	72.39%
Central Administration	193,710	199,795	6,085	3.14%
Finance Services	446,679	477,164	30,485	6.82%
Legal/Public Information	64,050	71,100	7,050	11.01%
Central Services	576,376	589,406	13,030	2.26%
Supervisory/Improvement	965,652	1,127,837	162,185	16.80%
Fringe Benefits	810,423	550,054	(260,369)	-32.13%
Administrative Total	\$3,080,540	\$3,056,126	\$ (24,414)	-0.79%
PROGRAM:				
Legal	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	—	0.00%
Regular Instruction	7,628,250	7,652,634	24,384	0.32%
Special Education	3,521,729	3,529,172	7,443	0.21%
Occupational Education	696,343	908,422	212,079	30.46%
Library/Technology	962,128	998,067	35,939	3.74%
Student Services	1,007,611	1,028,008	20,397	2.02%
Transportation	1,869,960	1,802,764	(67,196)	-3.59%
Interfund Transfers	95,000	235,000	140,000	147.37%
Fringe Benefits	5,582,199	6,164,440	582,241	10.43%
Program Total	\$21,413,220	\$22,368,507	\$ 955,287	4.46%
CAPITAL:				
Operations & Maintenance	\$ 1,794,060	\$ 1,670,243	(123,817)	6.90%
Certiorari/Judgments	8,000	8,000	—	0.00%
Debt Service	2,044,337	1,463,015	(581,322)	-28.44%
Fringe Benefits	420,132	400,264	(19,868)	-4.73%
Capital Total	4,266,529	3,541,522	(725,007)	-16.99%
TOTAL	\$28,760,289	\$28,966,155	\$ 205,866	0.72%



Residents to vote on bus purchasing

Residents will vote on a proposition authorizing the purchase of five, 66-passenger buses at a total cost of \$442,720, before state aid reimbursement. Approximately 52.2 percent of the bus purchase would be returned through future state aid, offsetting the local taxpayer share.

Cairo-Durham CSD follows a seven-year bus replacement plan adopted by the Board of Education. This means that each year, a certain number of older buses are phased out and replaced by new models. The Board chose a seven-year plan because this cycle allows the district to better control repair and maintenance costs while ensuring student safety.

Maintenance costs significantly increase for buses older than seven years. These are also the buses more likely to fail state inspection, and have higher repair costs, lesser reliability and lower resale value.

Planning for the future

The May 17th ballot includes several propositions that would allow Cairo-Durham CSD to plan for the future of its facility needs. The district's last state-required Building Conditions Survey identified up to \$14 million of future maintenance, repair or replacement needs.

Residents to decide on property purchase

A proposition seeks voter approval to purchase the vacant property located next to Cairo-Durham Elementary School. This purchase would have no impact on the proposed 2016-17 budget (it would be paid out of the current year's fund balance).

The property, which is in view of the school and next to the playground and athletic fields, includes a condemned house. Should voters pass this proposition, the Town of Cairo, who currently owns the property, would demolish the house and then sell the parcel to the district for the cost of the demolition. The purchase price cannot exceed \$40,000 under the proposition. However, the actual cost of the demolition is expected to be under \$30,000.

The purchase of the property would coincide with the district's long-term planning needs. In December 2014 voters approved a referendum for a \$3.31 million capital project. Phase I of this project, which was completed in September 2015, included replacement of classroom floors at the elementary school and replacement of some doors and windows at the middle and high schools.

Phase II work, which is set to begin this summer, includes plans for the elementary school to improve parking and relocate the bus pick up/drop off location to the rear of the building. The purchase of the adjacent property would allow the district to enhance student, staff and community safety during drop-off and pick-up times. It would also allow for all elementary grades to participate together in school activities, providing for a more connected school community. Right now, limited parking causes activities to be split amongst grade levels.

Phase II also includes plans to redesign the traffic flow at the middle/high school to separate school buses and all other traffic. This will improve safety during arrival and dismissal. Additionally, this phase will install a new cafeteria floor, replace some windows and doors, and add air conditioning to selected classrooms at the middle/high school.

Residents to decide on capital reserve fund

Another proposition seeks voter approval to establish a Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$500,000 over a 10-year period to help pay for repairs, maintenance and facility improvements.

Establishing a capital reserve fund would allow the district to plan for the long-term needs, both planned and unplanned. It would also protect the district from unanticipated or emergency needs without having a significant impact on the overall school budget.

The district's proposed budget is an estimate of costs for the upcoming year. When expenditures are less than projected or revenues are higher than expected, some of those savings could be placed in the Capital Reserve Fund. Taxes would not increase due to this fund. Money would only be added to the reserve if there is excess money left at the end of the fiscal year.

Additionally, the fund can only be used with voter approval, so any future proposed project using the fund would be decided by the community.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What happens if the budget is defeated?

If the budget is not approved on May 17, the district may submit the original budget or submit a revised budget to voters on June 21, or adopt a contingency budget that levies a tax no greater than the current year's budget. If the resubmitted or revised budget proposal is not approved by the required margin, the Board must adopt a budget that levies a tax no greater than the current year. In that case, the district would not be allowed to increase the tax levy to the extent necessary to fund items of expenditure excluded from the tax cap.

Why isn't there a library proposition?

No proposition is required because there is no change in the library budget from last year.

Did the district receive additional state funding?

Yes, the school district received an increase in state aid due to the end of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), a state aid cut which impacted all districts since 2010. However, it should be noted that Cairo-Durham CSD had one of the lowest overall state aid increases in the state.

Why is the district switching to electronic voting?

Voting will take place by scanning-type voting machines this year, as required by state law. Election workers will be available to assist you if needed.

Is there a new property tax rebate from the state?

Yes, the new Property Tax Rebate replaces the property tax freeze credit that provided rebate checks to eligible taxpayers in 2014 and 2015. This rebate, which will be active from 2016 to 2019, is for homeowners who receive the STAR exemption and who live in a district that passes a budget at or below its tax cap. Because the district stayed with its tax cap, eligible taxpayers making less than \$200,000 a year should receive a rebate check for \$185 from New York State in the fall.



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Preparing students for the future

College and career readiness is a term that is often used to assess the success of schools and students, but what does it actually mean? Cairo-Durham CSD students demonstrate readiness with the skills they learn, the courses they complete and achievements they earn. Here are some examples of the success of our students and staff:

- The Class of 2015 earned nearly 1,200 college credits while still in high school. More than 80 percent of these students earned at least three college credits. The Class of 2016 is vying to top their classmates, with 10 students earning 30 or more college credits, or the equivalent of a full year of college.
- Corey Winegard won first place and Matthew Schoenewolf won fifth place at the SkillsUSA regional competition. They are both automotive students at Questar III.
- Senior Anasuzi Bustos won second place in Questar III's High School Invitational Art Exhibit at Hudson Valley Community College.
- Heather Maassman, business teacher and department facilitator, won the Friends of Education award from the Capital Area School Development Association (CASDA).
- Student Kathleen Snyder was honored by WNYT Channel 13.
- The district experienced a student enrollment increase for the first time since 2001.

SED recognizes the district for improvement

For the last four years, Cairo-Durham CSD has been identified under the state's accountability system as a Focus District. In February, the State Education Department designated Cairo-Durham as a district in Good Standing through the 2016-17 school year. This improvement effort is a testament to the hard work of our students and staff.

Planning for technology needs

The district will receive \$1.3 million in technology funding from New York State as part of the Smart Schools Bond Act passed by state voters in 2014. Cairo-Durham CSD is currently seeking parent volunteers to serve on the district's Smart Schools Investment Plan (SSIP) Advisory Committee.

The purpose of the committee is to provide feedback to the district as it develops a spending plan for board and state approval. These technology funds remain available until the district has used its entire allocation.

District leaders anticipate that the committee will meet four times in the 2016-17 school year. Parents interested in serving on this committee should contact the District Office at (518) 622-8534.

