



# HARTFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOME OF THE TANAGERS

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO VOTE ON THE DISTRICT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR

*The residents of the Hartford Central School District will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 19th to vote on a proposed spending plan of \$11,354,470 for the 2015-2016 school year. Voting will take place from 8:30a.m. to 9p.m. at the Ella Colvin Gymnasium. In addition to the proposed budget, community members will be electing a Board of Education member to a five-year term and voting on a proposition for the purchase of a 66-passenger bus, a truck, and snow plow.*

The process to develop a balanced school budget is a complex and difficult task. The route usually begins in the early winter months with the district office reviewing our current expenditures, meeting with the various department leaders, and forecasting expenditures for the following school year. Then, after the Governor presents his "State of the State" remarks, New York State releases projected state aid runs that provide baseline information on how much revenue in the form of state aide the district can expect to receive. However, this year, Governor Cuomo refused to release these predictions and aligned state aid to far-reaching education reforms that he wanted the Senate and Assembly to approve. As

a result, districts throughout New York State, including Hartford, were forced to develop budgets based on last year's finances. This made a complicated process even more difficult as the district administration and the members of the Board of Education were forced to make important decisions without all the necessary, and essential, information. The act of refusing to provide our aid runs was a classic example of partisan politics which handcuffed the school district. As a district, we do our best to develop a comprehensive budget that provides for the optimal learning experience and environment for our students, while ensuring that spending is practical and appropriate. Throughout this process we attempt to be as transparent as possible and, unfortunately, this year we had to play by a new set of rules that, seemingly, were made up as we went along.



*Mr. Cook reading in his pajamas as part of PARP (Parents As Reading Partners)*

When drafting a school budget, we need to consider a number of different factors, including the:

required state and federal mandates, needs of our students (educational, social, and psychological), tax burden of the community, and the difficult economic circumstances of New York State. While the proposed budget has a projected increase in spending from the previous year, the increase is much smaller than originally projected. To maintain all existing programs and services in their current capacity, the district would have had to submit a budget proposition of over \$11.5 million, which would have caused an increase in spending of almost \$1 million. As a result of this drastic increase, we sought ways to reduce expenditures and spent a great deal of time really studying the district's expenditure lines to identify areas we could possibly reduce costs without disrupting, or further reducing, our students' educational experience. Through this work, the district was able to reduce the overall projected spending and propose a budget of \$11,354,470. However, these types of reduction are not without valuable losses in other areas [non-academic] of the district. Typically,

*(Continued on page 6)*

### BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Proposed Spending Plan: \$11,354,470
- Projected Tax Levy Increase of: 2% (*Tax Cap is 2.81%*)
- More Information is available by contacting the District Office at 518-632-5222.

### ALSO ON THE BALLOT

- Reelection of Board of Education Member, Mr. Adam Fish, to a five-year term (*July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2020*)
- Proposition I: Purchase of a 66-passenger bus, truck, and snow plow not to exceed \$150,000

## Update: Middle / High School

I hope everyone is enjoying the long, overdue, warm weather! While it has been a long winter, our students have been hard at work prepping for end of the year state assessments, Regents' exams and upcoming finals. Throughout the year, our students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to participate in a number of activities including: concerts, educational field trips, sporting events, the Spud Run, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Pig Roast, the Turkey Trot, school dances, the LAS 110 class trip to Washington D.C., the Senior Class trip to New York City, hockey games, the senior class talent show, and the Language Fair; just to name a few. Needless to say, our students have been extremely busy. Not only have our students participated in countless fundraising and extra-curricular activities, but they have also been busy academically. As a faculty and staff member, there is nothing more rewarding than seeing our students excel both inside and outside of the classroom. As we enter the last quarter of the school year our students will continue to be busy. We appreciate your support throughout the school year and look forward to a busy Spring. I hope you will be able to join us for some of these upcoming events:

- ✓ National Honor Society Induction Ceremony – **May 4<sup>th</sup>** at 2:00 p.m.
- ✓ National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony – **May 5<sup>th</sup>** at 2:00 p.m.
- ✓ Dime-a-Dip Community Dinner – **May 7<sup>th</sup>** at 5:00 p.m.
- ✓ AP US History Exam- **May 8<sup>th</sup>** at 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam – **May 14<sup>th</sup>** at 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ Red Cross Blood Drive – **May 15<sup>th</sup>** 11:30 – 4:30
- ✓ Junior/Senior Prom – **May 30<sup>th</sup>**
- ✓ Common Core ELA Regents Exam – **June 2<sup>nd</sup>** at 8:30 a.m.
- ✓ Common Core Geometry Regents Exam – **June 2<sup>nd</sup>** at 12:00 p.m.
- ✓ Junior/Senior Band Concert – **June 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 7:00 p.m.
- ✓ Science Club Field Trip to Mystic, Connecticut – **June 5<sup>th</sup>**
- ✓ Middle/High School Awards Ceremony – **June 15<sup>th</sup>** at 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ NYS Regents Exams – **June 16<sup>th</sup> – June 24<sup>th</sup>**
- ✓ High School Graduation – **June 26<sup>th</sup>** at 7:00 p.m.

As educators, we strive to provide our students with every opportunity to become active members in our communities. From looking at just some of the many accomplishments our students had during the 2014-2015 school year, I would say we are well on our way to achieving this goal. I am extremely honored to be a part of the Hartford Central School District and look forward to a successful end of the school year.

***Brian George***



*Members of the LAS 110 course outside the Washington Monument in Washington D.C.*



*Students in the 6th grade class invited members of the community to attend a breakfast celebrating the completion of the class project entitled "Important People of Hartford"*

## Update: Floyd Harwood Elementary School

Happy Spring to all! It is hard to believe we are already in the last quarter of the school year. As students, faculty and staff continue to work hard to rise to the expectations of Common Core Standards, your continued support at home is vital for the success of your child/children. Reading with your child/children is one of the most important activities you can do at home to help support success in school. Currently, a large percentage of our students receive additional academic interventions in the areas of ELA and/or Math. Just 15 minutes per day of reading outside of school can have a positive impact in the classroom. Together, I am confident our students can meet the rigor of higher standards, better preparing them with college and career readiness skills.

With Spring, also comes some exciting end of the year activities. I hope you will be available to join us for some of the following upcoming events:

- ✓ Grandparents' Breakfast – **May 19<sup>th</sup>** starting at 7:30am
- ✓ Tanager Voices Concert/Grade 5 Band/Art Show – **May 21<sup>st</sup>** at 6:00pm
- ✓ Bike Rodeo for grades 2-5 – **May 28<sup>th</sup>** (bikes and volunteers are needed)
- ✓ Kindergarten Round-Up – **May 29<sup>th</sup>** (please contact Mrs. Getty if you have a child entering Kindergarten next year who is not enrolled in our UPK Program)
- ✓ Elementary Awards Ceremony – **June 12<sup>th</sup>** at 9:00 (Academic Awards) and 1:00 (Special Area Awards)
- ✓ K-5 Field Day – **June 18<sup>th</sup>** (rain date June 19<sup>th</sup>)
- ✓ Fifth Grade Moving-Up Ceremony – **June 22<sup>nd</sup>** at 9:00
- ✓ Kindergarten Graduation – **June 23<sup>rd</sup>** at 9:00
- ✓ Pre-K Graduation – **June 23<sup>rd</sup>** at 1:00 (for both AM and PM classes)
- ✓ K-5 11:30 Dismissal on June 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>

Remember, time is the best gift you can give your children. We appreciate your support throughout the school year. Together, we can continue to make a difference in the education of Hartford students. Our goal is to provide children with a solid foundation for future success!



*Mrs. Dougher introducing a performance from "The Learning Arts" for our Elementary students.*



*Elementary students attending the December Citizens of the Month Assembly*

## Revenue Summary

	2014-2015 Budget	2015-2016 Budget	Dollar Change
State Aid	\$6,377,000	\$6,950,575	\$573,575
Fund Balance	\$580,000	\$448,499	-\$131,501
Miscellaneous	\$422,725	\$488,000	\$65,275
Sub-Total	\$7,379,725	\$7,887,074	\$507,349
Tax Levy	\$3,399,408	\$3,467,396	\$67,988
Total Revenue	\$10,779,133	\$11,354,470	\$575,337

School Districts receive revenue through three primary sources:

1. Property Taxes;
2. State Aid; and
3. Miscellaneous Funds

⇒ State Aid is made up of “Foundation Aid” and “Expense Driven Aid”.

- ✓ Foundation Aid is an unrestricted aid category provided to all school districts in New York State.
- ✓ Expense Driven Aid is monies that the district will receive based on our prior year spending. Items that fall within the category of expense driven aid are: textbooks, software, hardware and technology, and library.

⇒ Miscellaneous Funds consist of monies the district will receive through grants, Medicaid reimbursement, etc.

## Budget Questions and Answers

**Q: What is different from the 2014-15 budget?**

A: Year-to-year spending has increases due to variety of factors. Primarily though, it is due to fiscal obligations that are beyond the district’s control. However, within this budget, the district would be able to maintain all existing programs for 2015-16 and preserve all existing faculty and staff positions. In addition, the district is also planning to participate in the Early College High School Program for some of our junior and senior students.

**Q: Does the district really need another bus?**

A: Yes. Annually, each one of our buses accumulate, on average, 12,000 miles. As a district, we try to replace a bus once it reaches ten (10) years of service. It is important to note that when purchasing a bus, the district is reimbursed for 90% of the total cost by NYSED. If we do not purchase a bus each year, we leave ourselves open for expensive repairs on older buses and will create a gap in our revenue streams and the district will actually lose money in future years. Most importantly, regular replacement of our fleet ensures student safety.

**Q: How does the increase in the tax levy affect my taxes?**

A: The true tax rates for individuals cannot be established until after NYS completes the equalization rates. The equalization rates are completed in August.

**Q: What efforts have been made to save money?**

A: The district is always attempting to discover ways to reduce spending. Over the past few years, Hartford has started sharing various services through BOCES and other neighboring districts (*i.e. Data Integrity Service, Computer Technicians, etc*). In addition, the district has submitted architectural designs for the installation of solar panels which is currently being reviewed by NYSED.

**Q: Is the district hiring new employees?**

A: Only when absolutely necessary. Whenever an individual leaves the district (*i.e. retirement*) the administration completes a thorough review to see if the position needs to be filled or if the district can maintain the program through other means.

## 2015 -2016 Expenditure Summary

- ⇒ Administrative expenditures are all the costs associated with district supervision.
- ⇒ The Administrative expenses are approximately 8% of the overall budget.

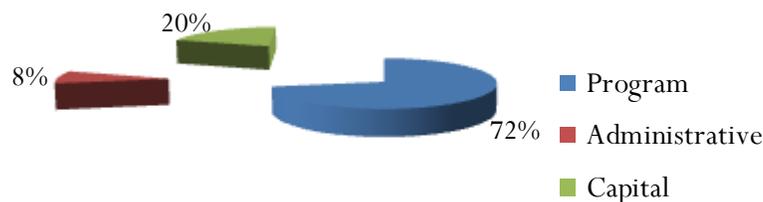
ADMINISTRATIVE	2014-15	2015-16	Change
Board of Education	\$1,475	\$5,675	\$4,200
Central Administration	\$146,252	\$122,194	-\$24,058
Business Administration	\$117,115	\$131,944	\$14,829
Finance	\$16,620	\$18,475	\$1,855
Legal Fees	\$17,000	\$17,425	\$425
Public Information	\$2,500	\$2,500	0
Central Services	\$40,249	\$55,133	\$14,884
Unallocated Insurance	\$41,897	\$44,830	\$2,933
BOCES Administration	\$64,668	\$69,079	\$4,411
Supervision: Regular day	\$251,696	\$248,059	-\$3,637
Employee Benefits	\$162,269	\$149,652	-\$12,617
<b>Total Administrative</b>	<b>\$861,741</b>	<b>\$864,966</b>	<b>\$3,225</b>

- ⇒ Program expenditures are all the costs directly related to student instruction, including instructional salaries and health benefits.
- ⇒ The Program expenses are approximately 72% of the overall budget.

PROGRAM	2014-15	2015-16	Change
In-service Training	\$20,263	\$31,567	\$11,304
Instruction: Regular Ed.	\$3,618,494	\$3,915,421	\$296,927
Instructional Media	\$349,887	\$414,514	\$64,627
Pupil Personnel	\$308,996	\$326,784	\$17,788
Interscholastic and Co-curricular	\$158,942	\$157,110	-\$1,832
Transportation Services	\$575,688	\$623,775	\$48,087
Employee Benefits	\$2,750,181	\$2,760,957	\$10,776
<b>Total Program</b>	<b>\$7,782,451</b>	<b>\$8,230,128</b>	<b>\$447,677</b>

- ⇒ Capital expenditures are all the costs associated with the maintenance of the district facilities.
- ⇒ The Capital expenses are approximately 20% of overall budget.

CAPITAL	2014-15	2015-16	Change
Central Services	\$528,208	\$628,034	\$99,826
Employee Benefits	\$135,648	\$131,899	-\$3,749
Debt Service	\$1,471,085	\$1,499,443	\$28,358
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>\$2,134,941</b>	<b>\$2,259,376</b>	<b>\$124,435</b>



(Continued from page 1)



Members of the 6th grade class taking a tour of the A.E.P. building.

reductions are not long-term solutions and can lead to additional fiscal stress to the district. Unfortunately, some of the biggest factors in the budget process are the uncontrollable costs for the district: Teacher’s Retirement System (TRS), Employee Retirement System (ERS), Health Insurance, and the continuation of New York State’s Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). Even though the district’s GEA withholding was reduced, the district is still owed over \$184,000 that could be used to decrease the tax levy, reduce our fund balance contribution, and offer programs to students. The current format of the GEA and freeze on Foundation Aid is handcuffing districts and severely limiting student opportunities. It is impossible to be “College and Career” ready when we have to continually reduce and restructure programs and services for our students due to the fiscal limitations that New York State is forcing. This has been a very challenging budget process and I am very proud of the work that has

been done to create the proposed spending plan. We have done our best to continue the high level of academics within the school district, while reducing ancillary expenses to keep the levy low and following the strict requirements of the Government Efficiency Plan (see page 7).

I am truly proud of all the accomplishments of our students and the great educational experience that our students receive. On behalf of the members of the Board of Education, district administration, faculty, staff, and students, I would like to thank the community for your continued support!

**Property Tax Report Card**  
**2015-2016**

	Budgeted: 14-15	Proposed: 15-16	Percent Change
Total Spending	\$10,779,133	\$11,354,470	5%
Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$3,399,408	\$3,467,396	2%
Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$219,655	\$257,082	
Proposed Tax Levy; Not Including Exclusions	\$3,179,753	\$3,237,829	
Tax Levy Limit	\$3,179,753	\$3,494,911	
Difference	0	\$27,515	
Enrollment	480	483	1%
Consumer Price Index			1.62%
Adjusted Restricted Fund Balance (Reserves)	\$200,137	\$200,200	
Assigned Appropriated Fund Balance	\$580,000	\$448,499	
Adjusted Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$500,000	\$503,200	
Adjusted Unrestricted Fund Balance as a Percent of the total Budget	4.3%	4.4%	

	Budget Adopted for 2014-2015	Budget Proposed for 2015-2016	Contingency Budget for 2015-2016 *
Total Budgeted Amount (Not included Separate Propositions)	\$10,779,133	\$11,354,470	\$11,286,482
Increase/Decrease for the 2015-16 School Year		\$575,336	\$507,349
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.1%	4.7%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.62%	
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (Including Levy to Support Library Debt)	\$3,399,408	\$3,467,396	\$3,399,408
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$219,655	\$257,082	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy (Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt)	\$3,179,753	\$3,237,829	
School Tax Levy Limit (Not Including Permissible Exclusions)	\$3,179,753	\$3,210,314	
Difference (Positive Value Requires 60% Voter Approval)	0	-\$27,515	
Administrative Component	\$861,741	\$864,966	\$796,978
Program Component	\$7,782,451	\$8,230,128	\$8,230,128
Capital Component	\$2,134,941	\$2,259,376	\$2,259,376

\*Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2015-16 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

**Basic STAR Exemption Impact**

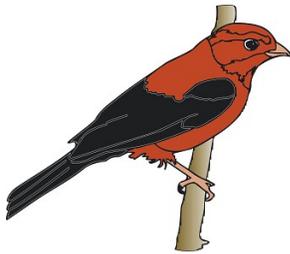
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings based on a home within the Hartford Central School District with a full value of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000)		Budget Proposed for the 2015-2016 School Year
Basic STAR Tax Savings		\$519

**Government Efficiency Plan**

As part of the 2015 State Budget, New York State enacted the Property Tax Freeze Credit (*Freeze Credit*). The law encouraged local governments and school districts to generate tax relief through a variety of different means (*sharing services*). In addition, the law provided for a “Freeze Credit” to qualified homeowners who are eligible for STAR, live in a tax district that limits any tax increase to the tax cap, and develops a Government Efficiency Plan. Last year, all homeowners who met the qualifications received the credit and they will again this year! As is required within the second year of the plan, taxing jurisdictions must stay within the property tax cap and create a plan to save one percent of their tax levies. The Hartford Central School District has met both requirements!

HARTFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PO Box 79  
4704 State Route 149  
Hartford, New York 12838  
518-632-5222

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
HARTFORD, NY 12838  
PERMIT #1



Superintendent  
Andrew Cook

Middle/High School Principal  
Brian George

Elementary Principal  
Bethellen Mannix

Board of Education  
Brian Getty, President  
Janine Thomas, Vice President  
Philip Jessen  
Adam Fish  
Ron Smith

**ABSENTEE VOTING**

District residents who are unable to vote in person or will be out of town, may apply for an absentee ballot through the Office of the District Clerk within the District Office. Please call 632-5222 with any questions or for more information.

**VOTING QUALIFICATIONS**

A person shall be entitled to vote at the Annual School District Meeting and the Annual School Election who is: a citizen of the United States; eighteen years of age; and a resident within the District for a period of thirty days next preceding the meeting at which he/she offers to vote.

You do not need to be registered to vote.

**Voting Information**

Budget Hearing

Monday, May 11th  
7:00p.m.

Annual Vote

Tuesday, May 19th  
8:30a.m. - 9:00p.m.

**“Tanagers Honoring The Creative Arts”**

Come honor the creative artistic ability of our students on May 19th. Musical performances will take place between 5:30p.m. and 7:00p.m. in the cafeteria and student works of art will be on display throughout the day. Refreshments will also be provided.

**Meet Mr. Fish - BOE Re-Election**

Being a taxpayer as well as a parent of two school age children gives me an interest in how the Hartford Central School District is being fiscally responsible, while providing the best possible opportunities for the students. For the past five years, I have had the honor to serve as member of the Board of Education and during this time, I have learned a lot about how public education is provided in New York State. As many of you know, the last few years have seen school districts faced with many difficult decisions due to a convoluted funding structure from the State. HCS has dealt with multiple mandates from NYSED, with little to no funding to cover the increasing costs associated with these mandates. To overcome these demands requires an outstanding commitment to HCS from everyone involved with the district. In spite of these challenges, HCS is fortunate to have a second to none teaching staff, custodial team, transportation department, and cafeteria staff. As a BOE member, I have the privilege to work with an administration that is wholly dedicated to the mission of providing the Hartford community a school of which everyone can be proud. Today we have a school that provides excellent learning opportunities to our students. From the distance learning room, the AP courses, the CTE classes, the early college credit programs, to the enrichment classes for elementary students. Not only do the students have academic options, there are also a wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities. I have been involved with the Washington County School District Collaborative, along with CASDA, for the past few years. Through this collaborative, I have seen area school districts come together to share resources and learn, from each other, what works well and what we can do to improve. I seek your vote to continue to be an integral part of the Hartford CSD governing process.