

Voters to decide on \$30,782,778 budget for 2024-25 school year

Proposed budget sustains current programming; tax levy under 'cap'

On Tuesday, May 21, residents of the Stillwater Central School District will head to the polls to vote on a proposed \$30,782,778 budget for the 2024-25 school year. The spending plan maintains all educational programs for students, preserves current services, and includes the purchase of three new school buses. In addition, the proposed budget includes funding for salary increases for faculty and staff, as well as increased costs associated with health insurance and other employee benefits. The vote will be held from 12-9 p.m. in the MS/HS auditorium.

Under the proposal, spending would increase by 2.65%, or \$794,533 over the current-year budget. The increase in spending is being driven by rising costs in a variety of areas, including increases in utilities, diesel, gasoline and fuel oil.

"The proposed 2024-25 budget balances fiscal responsibility with our vision of promoting student success through continuous improvement," Superintendent Joseph Mariano, Jr. said. "Our top priorities of maintaining safe school environments, providing high quality educational experiences for our students and innovative professional development opportunities for staff are all met within the proposed spending plan." District officials surmise that school tax rates, which are the amount of taxes residents pay per \$1,000 of assessed property value, will increase by approximately 2.14% for residents in the District. Final school tax rates are set in August when municipalities finalize their assessment rolls. *(See page 3 for more about the tax rates).*

If voters approve the proposed budget, the projected tax levy—the total amount of money a school district raises through property taxes—would rise by 4.69%. This increase is below Stillwater's maximum allowable tax levy increase of 6.40% as determined by the state's tax levy "cap" formula.

In addition to the May 21 budget vote, district residents will elect three members

to the Board of Education to serve three-year terms.

Voters will also decide on a proposed budget and trustees for the Stillwater Public Library. *(See page 5 for more information).*



BUDGET VOTE AT-A-GLANCE

WHEN & WHERE: **TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024** 12-9 P.M. STILLWATER AUDITORIUM

PROPOSED BUDGET

\$30,782,778

Spending	Tax Levy	Projected Tax Rate
Increase	Increase	Increase
2.65%	4.69%	2.14%

PROJECTED TAX RATES					
2023-24* 2024-25* % Change					
Stillwater	\$15.25	\$15.58	2.14%		
Saratoga	\$14.92	\$15.24	2.14%		
Easton	\$10.76	\$10.99	2.14%		
Schaghticoke	\$63.68	\$65.04	2.14%		

*Tax rates are per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Rates and % change calculations are rounded from six decimal places. Final tax rates are not established until the final assessment rolls are approved in August.

Keeping CURRENT

Letter to the community...

Dear Stillwater Central School District Residents,

Every year, the Board of Education enters the budget planning process with one goal at the forefront: supporting the success of our students. This means creating a spending plan that not only sustains current programs and services, but one that will establish a robust foundation for future generations to come. We are pleased to present a proposed budget that meets these objectives while remaining fiscally responsible to Stillwater residents.

The proposed budget for the 2024-25 school year will increase spending by 2.65% or \$794,533, maintaining all educational programs and services, in addition to student opportunities. The increase in spending is attributable to various rising costs; higher costs for health insurance, other employee benefits, and utilities are reflected, in addition to salary increases for faculty and staff that were successfully negotiated through collective bargaining agreements.

While there have been some challenges, the Board remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting our students and providing a high quality education that prepares them for future success. We thank the community for their ongoing support as we work together to help our students realize their full potential and the exciting opportunities that await. Please take the time to vote on Tuesday, May 21, during the district's annual budget vote, which will be held from 12-9 p.m. in the MS/HS auditorium.

The proposed budget would continue to fund:

- Career and Technical Education, work-based learning, summer enrichment, and credit recovery opportunities.
- ✓ The elementary STEAM program.
- Preventive maintenance programs for HVAC systems, boilers and equipment.
- Rising diesel, gasoline and fuel oil costs.
- ✓ The purchase of new buses.
- The \$100,000 capital outlay project (see page 5).



Stillwater Elementary lends a helping a paw to local animal shelters

January was all about "lending a helping paw" at Stillwater Elementary, as the Kindness Club organized a school-wide shelter drive for the Saratoga County Animal Shelter and Lucky Puppy Rescue. The school community came together from Jan. 11-26 to collect essential care items such as dish soap, garbage bags, dog/cat food, toys, chew bones, treats, blankets, towels, pet beds, collars and leashes. "It makes me smile how we're helping the dogs and cats in need. It's important because some pets don't get the comfort of a warm home," said fourth grader Cora P.

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- Sincerely, Robert McCoy, Board President

BUDGET

What's different in the proposed budget?

The 2024-25 budget proposal increases spending by \$794,533 or 2.65%, over the current year. The 2024-25 spending plan includes funding for rising costs associated with salaries, employee pensions and benefits, as well as state and federal mandated programs and services. In addition, the proposed budget would fund debt service payments associated with previously completed capital projects.

TAXES

What is the difference between the tax levy and tax rate?

The tax levy is the total amount of money a school district raises in taxes each year from all property owners in the district. Tax rates are calculated by dividing the total amount of the levy by the total taxable assessed value in a community. Tax rates are affected by changes in both municipal assessments and state equalization rates, which are determined during the summer after the budget is adopted. The tax rate is used to calculate each individual property tax bill.

How would the proposed budget affect my taxes?

While the tax levy would increase by \$606,942 next year, total property assessments within the district are also growing, meaning there are more properties across which to distribute the tax levy. So, while the tax levy is increasing by 4.69%, the estimated tax rate increase is approximately 2.14% because there is projected to be more taxable value sharing that cost.

Actual tax rates are set in August when assessment rolls for the year are finalized.

These rates are based on final property assessments (provided by each town) and equalization rates for each town, which are provided by the state Office of Real Property Services.

REVENUES

What is the district's maximum allowable tax levy?

Under New York state law, the amount that the district can increase its tax levy is limited to a certain amount based on a tax levy limit calculation. Using a formula developed by the Office of the State Comptroller, Stillwater's 2024-25 maximum allowable tax levy limit is 6.40%. However, the proposed 2024-25 budget would increase the tax levy by 4.69%, or \$606,942, which is below what the law allows.

How does the Global Foundries PILOT affect the district's budget?

The Global Foundries PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) continues to provide a guaranteed source of revenue for the district. The district is planning to receive \$1,000,000 through the PILOT in 2024-25. Although this is a decrease from the current year based on the terms of the agreement, the PILOT continues to provide revenue that supports programs and services for students.

VOTING

What happens if the budget is not approved?

Under New York state law, if the school budget is defeated, the Board of Education typically has two options: put the same or a modified budget up for another vote on the third Tuesday in June or immediately adopt a contingent budget. If residents defeat the proposed budget during a second vote, the Board must adopt a contingent budget.

Why is there a vote for the Stillwater Public Library on the ballot?

On May 21, residents will vote on a separate proposition to approve the Stillwater Public Library budget and elect trustees. This is separate from the school district's budget. The library is seeking to increase its budget from \$348,757 to \$378,757, to support and maintain services. This money will be collected by the district and then forwarded to the library. The Stillwater Public Library has the same service boundary as the school district; however, the library is not governed by the district.

TAX RATES				
Town of	2023 Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Value	2024 Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Value	*2025 Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Value	
Stillwater	\$15.02	\$15.25	\$15.58	
Saratoga	\$14.45	\$14.92	\$15.24	
Easton	\$11.41	\$10.76	\$10.99	
Schaghticoke	\$64.30	\$63.68	\$65.04	

* The rates projected for the next year are only estimates. The estimated tax rates do not reflect any STAR or other tax exemptions that may reduce individual tax bills. This chart reflects projected tax rates based on the anticipated growth in property assessments.



Preparing for future success

Senior Leanny Castro is ready to take on the world thanks to the skills and knowledge gained through the Early College Career Academy (ECCA), a collaborative program between a student's high school, SUNY Adirondack and WSWHE BOCES. The program provides students the opportunity to earn college credits while obtaining valuable workbased learning experiences from skilled professionals. Leanny is



enrolled in the Business and Entrepreneurship program with aspirations of becoming a diplomat or foreign service officer. "I've learned a lot of things in the program that will be useful in my future career," Leanny said. Through the program, Leanny has job shadowed for Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner and is currently interning with a marketing firm. She also had the opportunity to apply her skills in a t-shirt design contest by creating all of the Instagram content.

Student athletes shine on and off the field

Excelling on the field and in the classroom

The winter season was a home run as eight varsity sport teams and 44 students were recognized by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) for achieving scholar-athlete status by earning an average of 90 or above.

Boys varsity basketball team brings home state championship

The boys varsity basketball team had an unstoppable winning streak this season, capturing both the Class B Section II and the Class B Regional Championship titles. The team topped off its incredible season by winning the Class B NYSPHSAA Championships in March. SCSD is proud of their accomplishments on the court this year and their excellent sportsmanship.



Estimated **Revenues: Where the money comes from**

	2023-24	2024-25	Change
Real Property Taxes and STAR	\$12,934,550	\$13,541,492	\$606,942
Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$1,200,000	\$1,000,000	\$(200,000)
Interest and Penalties on Real Property Taxes	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0
Tuition Students, Non-Resident	\$0	\$0	\$0
Admissions	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Charges for Services	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0
Interest and Earnings	\$200,000	\$450,000	\$250,000
Medicare Retiree Drug Subsidy	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$0
Refund BOCES Services Approved	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Miscellaneous	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0
State Aid	\$12,728,695	\$13,106,286	\$377,591
Other Federal Aid	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$0
Federal Medicaid Aid	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0
Transfer from Debt Service	\$290,000	\$300,000	\$10,000
Revenue Subtotal	\$27,588,245	\$28,632,778	\$1,044,533
Fund Balance Applied	\$2,400,000	\$2,150,000	\$(250,000)
TOTAL Revenues	\$29,988,245	\$30,782,778	\$794,533



Tim Oliver and Anthony Zazzaro were recognized for their outstanding cross

Tim Oliver and Anthony Zazzaro

recognized for cross country

achievements

country seasons by the Board of Education at its regular meeting on Feb. 13. The duo was presented with certificates commemorating the honor, with Coach Shawn McClements highlighting their achievements from the year. Tim placed second in the Wasaren League Championships and came in fourth at the Section II Class D Championships; he also qualified for the state championships this past fall, becoming only the second sophomore ever to do so. Meanwhile, Anthony was the League Champion for the third consecutive year, won the Class D Sectional Championships and came in fourth at the state championships.

Bowling team wins sectional championship

The varsity bowling team continues to reign supreme after winning the Section II Class C Championship on Feb. 13. The team made an epic comeback after its

first game, eventually rolling past Hoosick Falls to secure its second championship title. Team captain Alex Mell also won an award for second high individual game with a match score of 255.



Estimated **Expenditures: Where the money goes**

PROGRAM	2023-24	2024-25	Change	% of Budget
Program Legal Fees	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	0.1%
In-Service Training	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$0	0.5%
Teaching - Regular School	\$7,561,333	\$7,768,946	\$207,613	25.2%
Programs for Students with Disabilities	\$3,265,600	\$3,735,700	\$470,100	12.1%
Career Tech Education	\$525,000	\$500,000	-\$25,000	1.6%
Teaching - Special Schools	\$46,600	\$56,600	\$10,000	0.2%
Instructional Media	\$847,022	\$880,747	\$33,725	2.9%
Pupil Services	\$1,824,698	\$1,961,651	\$136,953	6.4%
Pupil Transportation	\$1,257,050	\$1,208,050	-\$49,000	3.9%
Employee Benefits	\$5,339,437	\$5,825,687	\$486,250	18.9%
Transfer to Federal Fund	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0	0.1%
Total Program	\$20,871,740	\$22,142,381	\$1,270,641	71.9%

ADMINISTRATIVE	2023-24	2024-25	Change	% of Budget
Board of Education	\$15,628	\$15,993	\$365	0.1%
Central Administration	\$271,100	\$266,182	-\$4,918	0.9%
Finance	\$490,612	\$506,458	\$15,846	1.6%
Staff (Legal, Personnel, Public Information)	\$137,875	\$142,375	\$4,500	0.5%
Central Data Processing	\$239,000	\$239,000	\$0	0.8%
Special Items (Insurance, Dues, BOCES Admin.)	\$335,750	\$349,406	\$13,656	1.1%
Curriculum Development and Supervision	\$978,927	\$1,025,370	\$46,443	3.3%
Employee Benefits	\$646,375	\$727,875	\$81,500	2.4%
Total Administrative	\$3,115,267	\$3,272,659	\$157,392	10.7%

Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

CAPITAL	2023-24	2024-25	Change	% of Budget
Central Services	\$1,667,100	\$1,817,600	\$150,500	5.9%
Special Items	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	0.0%
Bus Purchase	\$475,000	\$490,000	\$15,000	1.6%
Employee Benefits	\$394,938	\$407,438	\$12,500	1.3%
Debt Service	\$3,354,200	\$2,542,700	-\$811,500	8.3%
Transfer to Capital Fund	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	0.3%
Total Capital	\$6,001,238	\$5,367,738	-\$633,500	17.4%
TOTAL BUDGET	\$29,988,245	\$30,782,778	\$794,533	100.0%

Extra day, extra smiles for MS students

An extra day called for extra play as Stillwater Middle School students spent Feb. 29 at the school's Teen Scene! The building was filled with activities, games, food and fun galore for students to celebrate the Leap Year.



PROPOSITIONS & BOE ELECTION

Public library proposition

Community members will vote on a proposition requested by and for the Stillwater Public Library to raise \$378,757, separate and apart from the annual School District budget, to support, maintain and fund the operating budget of the library. This money will be collected by the district and then forwarded to the library. The Stillwater Public Library has the same service boundary as the school district; however, the library is not governed by the district. Voters will also be asked to elect four members to the library's Board of Trustees; three vacancies will be elected for at-large terms running from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2027, with a fourth elected at large for a one-year term running from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

Capital reserve proposition

Stillwater residents will vote on a proposition to approve the establishment of a capital reserve. This reserve would be funded with current unassigned fund balance that would be reallocated to the reserve. The monies in the reserve would be used to help offset the cost of future capital project(s). While the proposition is asking the voters to authorize the district to fund the reserve in an amount up to \$10 million, the actual amount to be transferred to the reserve would be determined at the end of the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Board election

There are three seats on the Board of Education for which terms expire June 30, 2024. Voters will elect candidates to the three "at-large" seats for three-year terms that will run from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2027. At the time this publication went to print, the final slate of candidates was not yet available.

Capital project outlay

While the most recent capital project refurbished the auditorium, the stage was not included. If the budget is approved, the district would replace the main portion of the stage utilized for performances to match the upgraded portion from the previous project.

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School District Budget Notice Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$29,988,245	\$30,782,778	\$30,090,883
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-25 School Year		\$794,533	\$102,638
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.65%	0.34%
Change in the Consumer Price Index] [4.12%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$12,934,550	\$13,541,492	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C – D)	\$12,934,550	\$13,541,492	\$12,934,549
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$864,932	\$965,773	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$12,379,278	\$12,799,556	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions $(E - B - F + D)$	\$12,069,618	\$12,575,719	
 Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) ** 	\$309,660	\$223,837	
Administrative Component	\$3,115,267	\$3,272,659	\$3,262,783
Program Component	\$20,871,740	\$22,142,381	\$22,190,050
Capital Component	\$6,001,238	\$5,367,738	\$4,638,050

* The contingency budget for 2024-25 assumes the elimination of all equipment purchases and eliminates funding for a capital outlay project for 2024-25.

	Description	Amount
** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)		\$0
		\$0
		\$0

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$419

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Stillwater Central School District, Saratoga County, New York, will be held at the Stillwater Central School District Auditorium in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, 12:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the auditorium, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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

Celebrating our TOP SENIORS

Class of 2024 Valedictorian Sarah Silvestrini Folmann

A leader in the classroom and on the athletic field, Sarah Silvestrini Folmann has achieved a great deal since she first came to Stillwater her freshman year. She's played soccer and basketball since ninth grade and was named captain of both teams her senior year. She has also competed in dance, was a member of the softball team for three years, and ran track for one. An active student. Sarah has been involved in several extracurriculars over the course of her high school career, including the Friends of Rachel Club, French Club, Key Club, Student Government, National Honor Society and the Class of 2024. She has held different leadership positions in these organizations and currently serves as president of NHS and secretary for the Class of 2024.

A student dedicated to her studies, Sarah has earned multiple awards and recognitions; she's made the principal's list every year since ninth grade, has been recognized for outstanding attendance, has achieved scholar-athlete status in various sports and was the recipient of the Bausch + Lomb Honorary Science Award from the University of Rochester. In addition, precalculus and chemistry were two of Sarah's favorite classes in high school, which will come in handy as she plans on attending college in the fall with the goal of becoming an orthodontist.

Outside of school Sarah enjoys attending Stillwater sports games, watching college and professional sports, going to concerts, shopping, and hanging out with friends.

Upon reflecting on her time at Stillwater, Sarah recognized her family, friends and Stillwater's faculty and staff for their support over the years, saying "I'd like to thank my parents, siblings, extended family and friends," Sarah said. "Their support and encouragement led me to be the person I am today. I would also like to thank my teachers, coaches and staff at SCSD." Moreover, Sarah stated that the past four years at Stillwater have "proven to be better than I could've imagined. There is never a dull moment and the people and community made for such a unique and unforgettable experience which I will always be grateful for."



When asked what she will miss most about Stillwater, Sarah said, "I'll miss all of my friends and seeing them everyday, as well as the teachers and the overall environment." This past soccer season was especially memorable for Sarah, as "the bond and dedication our group formed made for some of the best and most enjoyable memories."

When asked what advice she'd offer to fellow Stillwater students, Sarah said, "Everyone around you is more alike than you think. Every person can bring a different perspective and can add to your experience in ways you would never expect. Enjoy your time before it's gone because graduation will come sooner than you think. Make the best memories and don't take anything for granted."



TOP 10 STUDENTS

The Stillwater Central School District named the top 10 students from the Class of 2024 in late March. Congratulations to Sarah Silvestrini Folmann (Valedictorian), Julietta Rapisarda (Salutatorian), Alexandria Thompson, Christie Ghorayeb, Morgan Kay, Peyton Morris, Anthony Miller, Jacey Locci, Amelia Miller and Alexander Mell.



Class of 2024 Salutatorian Julietta Rapisarda

Julietta Rapisarda has attended Stillwater schools since the sixth grade and has been active in the school community ever since. An accomplished student, Julietta has excelled in both academics and athletics; she's been recognized for outstanding attendance, achieved scholar-athlete status, made the principal's list for four consecutive years, and earned the Clarkson Science Award. She's also been an involved member of the SCSD community, whether it be through clubs, sport teams or serving as a class officer. Her extracurricular activities include the National Honor Society, Key Club, Friends of Rachel Club, French Club and cross country. In addition, Julietta was a member of student government and the ski team throughout high school; she simultaneously served as team captain and president of student government her junior and senior years.

During her tenure at Stillwater High School, two of Julietta's favorite classes were AP History and AP Chemistry. Both courses have prepared her for life after graduation, as Julietta plans on attending a four-year college with the goal of entering the medical field to help her community.

Looking back at her time at Stillwater, Julietta recognized her family for their encouragement over the years and for helping her become the person she is today. "I would like to thank my sister for being an incredible motivator and outstanding role model, as well as my parents for their unwavering support," Julietta said.

Outside of school, Julietta spends most of her time on the slopes, skiing as much as she can during the winter. As a member of the Stillwater ski team, Julietta was able to devote more time to the sport she loves and share that experience with friends.

When asked what she will miss most about Stillwater, Julietta said, "I'll miss my friends and their incredible kindness



and support, as well as my amazing teachers, such as Mr. and Mrs. Cook and Mr. McCoy." Moreover, one of Julietta's most memorable moments from her time in SCSD included this year's senior class trip to Disney World. The trip was an opportunity to not only bond with her classmates before graduation but to make memories that will last for a lifetime.

When asked what advice she'd offer to fellow Stillwater students, Julietta said, "As you go forth and finish out your high school career, remember above all else to choose kindness."



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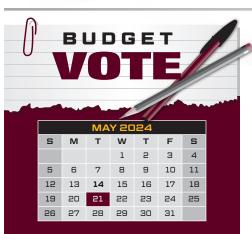
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School Budget Vote & Board of Education Election: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 12-9 p.m. Stillwater Auditorium

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

To vote, you must be:

- A resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.
- ✓ 18 years of age or older.
- A citizen of the United States.
- Registered with either the school district or the county Board of Elections.

What's on the ballot?

- Proposed \$30,782,778 budget for the 2024-25 school year.
- Solution Elect three (3) members to the Board of Education.
- Proposed \$378,757 budget for the Stillwater Public Library and election of (4) four trustees for the library.

Early Voting & Absentee Ballot Information

You must fill out an application to vote by early voting or absentee ballot. The applications are different, but the application process and deadlines are the same. To receive an application or for more information, contact the District Clerk at (518) 373-6100, ext. 30022.

If you would like a ballot mailed to you, your application must be received by 5 p.m. May 14, 2024. If you plan to pick up your ballot, your application must be received by 5 p.m. May 20, 2024. The completed ballot must be received by 5 p.m. May 21, 2024.

Spotlight on our MS/HS drama clubs

The middle and high school drama clubs took the stage in March and entertained audiences with exciting musical productions. The middle school drama club performed "Fame, Jr." from March 7-9 while the high school drama club presented "Once Upon a Mattress" from March 21-23. A round of applause for all involved!



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