



## Student-focused, new spending plan fixes shortfall, preserves programs

Dear residents,

**We did it!** As many residents will likely know, planning and preparing the 2016-17 budget was especially challenging as we were confronted with a budget gap of approximately \$2 million. But through the cooperative efforts of our Board of Education, the concerned residents who attended meetings and participated in the budget process, and our administrative team, I can tell you with confidence and pride that we have managed to close that budget gap and have done so in a manner that preserves the programs and services our students enjoy, expect, and need to be successful.

I am pleased to be able to say that with your support, we will be well on our way to a fantastic 2016-17 school year!

I'd like to take a moment to highlight some of the important items that were preserved during this year's budget development process. First and foremost, we kept our focus on our students.

We maintained all programming for students, including:

- All athletics offerings
- All field trips
- Our after-school program
- Our summer enrichment program
- All extra-curricular clubs and organizations

Additionally, there will be no negative impacts on special subject classes such as art and music, and our college courses remain intact. This is all outstanding news for our students!

You will notice that the proposed budget will require a 3.02 percent increase on the

local property tax levy. This equates to about \$112,000 in new revenue for our district at an average increased annual cost of roughly \$22 on a home assessed at \$50,000. That means the estimated average tax rate for the district would go from about \$14.36 per thousand of assessed value to about \$14.79, an increase of 43 cents per thousand.



Michael Rullo  
superintendent

It is important to know that the proposed increase is in full compliance with the state's "tax cap law," as our district's maximum allowable limit this year is set at 3.02 percent. As many of you already know, the so-called "2 percent tax cap" is a misnomer; it has never really existed. I urge you to read the tax cap article on page 2 for clarification. Nonetheless, be assured that since we are staying within the tax levy cap set by the state, our residents will remain eligible for the "property tax freeze credit" that the state instituted to reward districts such as ours for complying with the levy limit legislation.

I want to acknowledge the fact that no single budget is going to reflect the desires of every person. The process of developing a spending plan as robust as a school budget requires careful planning and compromise. It requires that we keep the big picture in mind at all times. In the case of this year's budget – and the magnitude of the reductions we faced - I believe we have done an excellent job making the strategic cuts that everyone can live with rather than simply

resorting to gutting programs and services. This proposal will eliminate some faculty and staff positions. As a result, we've had to shift certain tasks. But, again, as we've discussed during our workshops, every group of employees in our district was asked to share the burden - no group was



Budget Snapshot		
	Total	Increase
Budget	\$20,363,159	11.28 %
Tax levy	\$3,857,206	3.02 %
Tax levy limit	-	3.02 %
Average tax rate*	\$14.79	\$0.43
Annual cost increase for home assessed at \$50K: \$21.65 **		
*per \$1,000 assessed value **estimated using last year's equalization rate, assessed values, etc.		

See "Message," page 2



### Message, from page 1

immune. For example, the current administrative team is absorbing two highly critical roles that had been filled by the full-time equivalent of 1.5 - 2 people. No administrative staff have been added and there will be no additional compensation - the current group is simply taking on more work and responsibility, which is what these financial times require.

But the best part is, I don't believe anyone is going to walk into one of our schools next year and notice any major shifts or obvious changes. I am confident that we'll be able to get the

necessary work done and done well!

In closing, I want to thank everyone for giving careful consideration to the proposed 2016-17 budget, and I urge all residents to get out and vote on May 17. An approved budget will ensure that we do not have to go back to the drawing board to make additional reductions. More importantly, it will ensure that we will provide all of the services that I've highlighted and that our students will continue to enjoy the multitude of educational and extra-curricular opportunities that they deserve.

If you would like additional information, I recommend you visit our website at [www.hcs.stier.org/BudgetTaxInformation.aspx](http://www.hcs.stier.org/BudgetTaxInformation.aspx), where you will find a variety of informational items. I also encourage you to attend our annual budget hearing at 6 p.m. May 9 in the Jr./Sr. High School auditorium, where we'll be happy to answer any questions you might have. Of course, you are always welcome to call me as well.

Thanks for all that you do to support our schools and our students.

**Go Hornets!**

## The tax cap that isn't - the real story

With all the talk and media attention paid to New York's so-called "2 percent tax cap," many residents may be surprised to learn that it doesn't really exist. What state lawmakers approved was not a firm cap, but instead a complex set of calculations designed to place a "tax levy limit" on school districts.

Sounds like the same thing, you say? Well, it isn't. There are big differences. Here are some basic facts taxpayers need to know about this tax law:

- 1 The law does not limit districts to an annual tax levy increase of 2 percent or less. More importantly, it does not limit how much a resident's tax bill can go up.
- 2 Using the eight-step formula provided by the state, it's very unlikely your district will arrive at a tax levy increase of exactly 2 percent - more likely, it will be a number higher than, or lower than, 2 percent.
- 3 Even if your district was to adopt a levy increase of 2 percent or less, there is no assurance your individual tax bill would mirror that figure.

To explain:

The legislation requires every district to calculate its own "tax levy limit." The 2 percent figure we keep hearing about is just one of eight factors in this calculation.

And here is a key point: having followed all the calculations prescribed under the law, if a district were to end up with a tax levy limit increase greater than 2 percent, it can legally proceed with submitting that budget to a public vote and need only a simple majority vote (50 percent plus 1). The "supermajority" (60 percent) requirement would apply only to those districts that seek public permission to exceed their calculated "tax levy limit."

It's important to note that several area school districts have adopted budgets with tax levy increases below 2 percent but the tax bills for their residents varied considerably. The main reason for those variations is because school tax bills are subject to the property assessing practices of the different townships located within the school district, and those assessing practices can vary widely from township to township. Specifically, the state requires towns to calculate school tax bills employing a state-issued "equalization rate" designed to ensure the equitable distribution of the school levy across the various towns located within district boundaries. This process causes the school tax rate to vary from one town to the next. It is conceivable, for example, for a home assessed at \$100,000 to see a school tax increase of 2 percent in one town, while in another town it's 3.5 percent or more.

## District property owners to qualify for state tax credit under proposal

The 3.02 percent increase in the proposed 2016-17 tax levy is the amount allowed under the state's so-called "tax cap" law. Because the Harpursville Central School District's tax levy does not exceed the allowable threshold, taxpayers who are eligible for the STAR exemption will receive a credit from the state Office of Taxation and Finance. Holding the levy increase to within the limit set by the state also means the district will need only a simple majority (50 percent plus 1) vote for approval.



## Budget development goals

- Provide an instructional program that meets the educational needs of all students and ensures all students are prepared for their future.
- Eliminate the structural deficit in the budget.
- Develop a budget that puts the district on a path to fiscal health and stability while maintaining our responsibility to the district residents and providing our students with a sound education.

## Priority No. 1 - Students

While faced with a structural shortfall that threatened the long-term fiscal stability of our district, our budget team was committed to making sure the tough decisions that needed to be made did not impact the educational quality and opportunities our students deserve. With that goal foremost in mind, this budget proposal will fund:

- All athletics offerings
- All field trips
- The after-school program
- The summer enrichment program
- All extra-curricular clubs and organizations
- Special subject classes such as art and music!
- College course offerings for high school students





## Revenue

	2015-16 current budget	2016-17 proposed budget	Percent change	Dollar change
Tax levy	3,744,285	<b>\$3,857,206</b>	3.02%	112,921
Other revenue	736,000	<b>\$1,150,909</b>	56.37%	414,909
State aid	13,015,045	<b>\$14,358,044</b>	10.32%	1,342,999
Appropriated reserves	-	<b>\$297,000</b>	100.00%	297,000
Appropriated fund balance	803,615	<b>\$700,000</b>	-12.89%	-103,615
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,298,945</b>	<b>\$20,363,159</b>	<b>11.28%</b>	<b>2,064,214</b>

## Expenditures

	2015-16 current budget	2016-17 proposed budget	Percent change	Dollar change
Instructional salaries	5,773,173	<b>5,371,882</b>	-6.95%	-401,291
Non-instructional salaries	1,566,047	<b>1,755,513</b>	12.10%	189,466
Equipment	76,563	<b>35,250</b>	-53.96%	-41,313
Contractual expenses	1,150,288	<b>1,494,683</b>	29.94%	308,295
Materials and supplies	492,085	<b>510,957</b>	3.84%	24,972
BOCES	3,187,437	<b>4,209,280</b>	32.06%	1,051,843
Debt service	1,183,791	<b>2,177,459</b>	83.94%	993,668
Benefits	4,869,562	<b>4,776,136</b>	-1.92%	-93,426
Transfers	-	<b>32,000</b>	100.00%	32,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,298,945</b>	<b>20,363,159</b>	<b>11.28%</b>	<b>2,064,214</b>

## Six-year tax levy review

Year	Tax levy	Increase
2011-12	\$3,424,663.00	3.94%
2012-13	\$3,493,156.00	2.00%
2013-14	\$3,615,067.00	3.49%
2014-15	\$3,687,369.00	2.00%
2015-16	\$3,744,285.00	1.54%
2016-17	\$3,857,206.00	3.02%

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# 2016-17 three-part budget

**Proposition:** Shall the Board of Education be authorized to appropriate the sum of \$20,363,159 to meet the estimated expenditures for the 2016-17 school year?

<b>Administrative</b>	<b>\$1,851,239.93</b>	<b>9.09%</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>\$15,100,075.32</b>	<b>74.15%</b>
<b>Capital</b>	<b>\$3,411,843.44</b>	<b>16.75%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,363,158.69</b>	<b>-</b>

## Administrative Component

	Description	2015-16 Budget	2016-17 Budget	Change
Board of Education	School board association memberships and conferences, election supplies and services and other Board of Education related expenses	32,450	37,580	5,130
Chief school officer	Superintendent's and clerical salaries, supplies and contracted service costs	188,423	184,258	(4,165)
Finance	Business office salaries and services, BOCES services	244,512	343,366	98,854
Staff	Legal costs, personnel office, supplies and services, public information supplies and services	82,854	65,191	(17,664)
Special items	Insurance costs, BOCES administrative costs, labor alliance	193,073	216,235	23,163
Administration-instruction	Salaries of principals, assistant principals, director of operations, special education director and associated clerical salaries and supplies.	557,549	538,623	(18,927)
Employee benefits	Related benefits for administrative employees (FICA, health insurance, retirement costs, workers comp)	397,699	465,987	68,288
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,696,560</b>	<b>1,851,240</b>	<b>\$154,680</b>

## Program Component

	Description	2015-16 Budget	2016-17 Budget	Change
Teaching	Teacher salaries, textbooks, supplies, equipment, contracted services (BOCES), support staff costs and substitute costs for general education and special education	8,149,126	8,837,697	688,571
Library & audiovisual	Library and AV salaries, library books, supplies and services	117,006	91,946	(25,060)
Computer-assisted instruction	Computer equipment and software, BOCES instructional programs, technology services	281,471	464,774	183,302
Guidance	Salaries, supplies, and contracted services for the guidance department	204,267	133,627	(70,641)
Educational related support services	Nurses office, psychologist, speech pathologist salaries, supplies and contractual expenses	282,622	338,002	55,380
Co-curricular activities	Salaries, supplies and services to support student clubs and activities	47,897	53,038	5,141
Interscholastic athletics	Salaries, supplies and services to support girls and boys athletic teams	213,425	211,747	(1,678)
Transportation	Bus driver and support staff salaries, supplies and services for transporting students.	787,786	933,560	145,774
Employee benefits	Related benefits for program employees (FICA, health insurance, retirement costs, workers comp)	4,321,577	4,003,686	(317,891)
Inter-fund transfers	-	-	32,000	32,000
<b>Totals</b>		<b>14,405,177</b>	<b>15,100,075</b>	<b>694,899</b>

## Capital Component

	Description	2015-16 Budget	2016-17 Budget	Change
Operation and plant maintenance	Custodial and maintenance salaries and supplies, contract services, plant utilities (heat, electric etc.)	843,919	927,921	84,003
Buses	Cost associated with purchasing buses	19,213	-	-
Employee benefits	Related benefits for capital component employees (FICA, health insurance, retirement costs, workers comp)	150,286	306,463	156,177
Debt service	Costs for short and long term debt of the district	1,183,790	2,177,459	993,669
Other transfers	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2,197,208</b>	<b>3,411,843</b>	<b>\$1,214,636</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>18,298,944</b>	<b>20,363,159</b>	<b>\$2,064,215</b>

# Board of Education Openings

## Harpursville voters to fill three seats on the Board of Education

Three seats on the Harpursville Central School District Board of Education are up for election. Those seats, and the candidates seeking them, are as follows:

Running for the five-year seat currently held by Bob Blakeslee, who is not seeking re-election:

Tracy Ayers  
John Dattoria  
Amy Livermore-Kappauf

Running for the five-year seat currently held by Sharon Snow, who is not seeking re-election:

Michelle Noyes  
Christine Wolbert

Running to fill the unexpired term (to begin May 18) recently vacated by Theresa Matts:

Michele Burns Harder  
Stephanie Quick

### From the candidates (edited for format only)

#### Tracy Ayers

I'm Tracy Ayers. My husband Marc and I chose Harpursville for our home in 1999. We have two children, Robert, 14, & Emily, 8 (going on 18!). When we first moved here, people said they were surprised we chose Harpursville because "the school sucks." When Rob started Pre-K, in 2005, we found exactly the opposite. Rob has Selective Mutism, and didn't communicate by speaking. Not only did other kids welcome him, but teachers rallied around him. They learned to communicate with him using questions he answered by nodding or shaking his head. At first grade's end, when he started speaking, teachers in EVERY grade came to me with tears in their eyes, saying they were blessed to hear his voice. Some teachers I didn't even know - but THEY knew Rob. THIS is the reason I LOVE THIS

SCHOOL! This small, caring community school is a place where every teacher knows every student- whether in their class or not!

My belief is our school has been changing over the last few years. Many past and recent decisions have changed the tone of our school. We need to strengthen Special Education, more aides in classrooms. These actions not only benefit the kids being assisted, but also helps the flow of the entire class; support our teachers; limit class size; lower the salaries of some administrative personnel to halt teacher layoffs; contain school taxes.

I would appreciate your vote.

Background/Experience: Retired NYS Trooper;

Founder/Director, Harper's Haven Dog Rescue (Rehoming dogs of hospice patients); Master's Degree in Education, Counseling & Psychology; Attended nearly every board & budget meeting for last 17 months; Foster Parent - 15yrs.; Bus Garage Committee; Principal Search Committee; Transportation Committee; Santa's Workshop Volunteer - 7 yrs.; Frequent Class & Field Trip Volunteer; Attended BOCES Class for Prospective School Board Members; Attended Class for Rights/Regulations of Special Education



#### Michele Burns Harder

Hello, my name is Michele Burns Harder. I have lived here for 34 years. I am a member of the Harpursville Central School graduating class of 1992. I graduated from Cedarville College in Cedarville, OH obtaining my Bachelors degree in elementary education. I graduated from Binghamton University in Binghamton, NY with my Masters degree in special education. After subbing in various schools, including a yearlong substitute position at Harpursville, I was hired by Susquehanna Valley Central Schools. I have spent the past 15 years as a Special Education Teacher at Susquehanna Valley Central schools

at the middle school level. I have served as a resource room teacher as well as a consultant teacher at Susquehanna Valley. As a teacher, I have been a part of many committees. Currently I am a part of our building's Planning Improvement Team. I have served on the discipline and literacy committees at Susquehanna Valley as well. I served on the search committee for an elementary principal here at Harpursville Central School. Even outside of my professional life, I have devoted my life to working with children. I work in multiple areas of children's ministry at Harpursville Baptist Church. My goal as a teacher is to advocate

for my children when they are unable to. I eagerly await the chance to advocate for our children by being a member of Harpursville Central School's Board of Education. As a homeowner in the district, I want to give our children the best education at a cost affordable to the taxpayers. I thank you in advance, for your time and consideration of my candidacy.



#### Michelle Noyes

Hello, my name is Michelle Noyes. I am running for a seat on the Harpursville Central School's Board of Education. I moved to Harpursville in July 2005 when I married my husband Larry Noyes. Larry and our son/stepson Jordan Bakley are both graduates of Harpursville. We have two children yet in school, our daughter/stepdaughter Cassie Bakley, a junior, and our stepson/son Christian Noyes, a sophomore.

I am an active member of the Harpursville United Methodist Church and on Colesville Super Celebration Committee. I am currently employed at Winsor Acres LLC and have my own business with Pampered Chef.

I became employed with HCS in the fall of

2005 and continued until June of 2015. I was a long-term Special Education Aide for 7th & 8th grade until early 2006. For the remainder of the school year, I was a Special Ed. Aide in the elementary building with 5th & 6th grade. The next five years, I was an Aide throughout the elementary building. In May 2011, I became a School Bus Driver. Throughout my years working at our school, I built many relationships with the students and staff I came into contact with.

I have felt the effects that the Board of Education has made. While not all decisions are negative but they are the decisions that are often remembered because of the effect it has had on the students and staff. With my previous work

experience within the district, I feel I can provide insight and ideas to some of the decisions that our Board of Education may be presented with.

The Board of Education is just that, a board elected to ensure our students get the best education our district can provide. Now that my employment time IN the district has ended, it's time for me to start working FOR the district!

I would appreciate your support on May 17th.



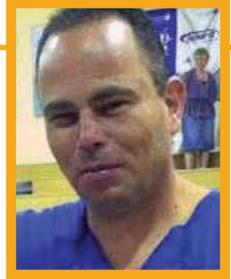
## John Dattoria

I'm originally from Binghamton, New York. My wife and I moved to Harpursville in 1999. We have two children who attend the Harpursville Central School District.

I graduated from Broome Community college with an associate's degree in Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice. I attended Binghamton University to pursue a degree in Political Science. While studying at BU, I became employed with

the Broome County Sheriff's Department. I have worked for the Sheriff's Department since 1992. During my employment, I have served as Executive Board Member and Treasurer of BCDSBA Local 2012. I have also served as an Executive Board Member and Vice President of BCSDCE Local 2012. I have been a Board Member with Harpursville Youth Baseball. During my free time, I enjoy coaching youth baseball and youth

softball. I am seeking a position on the school board to ensure that educational and athletic opportunities for the children of Harpursville are preserved.



## Amy Livermore-Kappauf

Harpursville school district residence my name is Amy Livermore-Kappauf. I ask with passion, desire & drive to represent you, your child and our community. We need positive changes in a transparent, financially awareness manner, school spirit to be strong again, as it was when I walked the halls. We need parents that feel heard, our community to want to support or school...not just through higher taxes handed down. Our children deserve a bright thriving educational future with the foundation started at HCS with educated, caring and trained teachers and staff. The campus at HCS is the true center of our small rural town and we need to revive the heart. I will make your vote count!!!

Work Experience: Accounting Manager (Payroll, Accounts Payable & Receivable), International Liason, Executive Administrative Assistant,

Mortgage Originator, Realtor, Local Small Business Owner, Marketing & Advertising Manager, Independent Consultant.

Education: Proud graduate of HCS Class of 1995, Executive Business Administration Degree, DISC Personality Profile Certificate, NY State Salesperson License, NY State Series 10-55 NY Life, AD&D and Health Insurance License

Involvement: "STOP" I believe in and have been a part of the premise of this group of like minded parents and community members for transparency. I chose not to be someone that just complained about what was going on but wanted to be a part of the solution. Harpursville Youth Civic Association, Past President & VP of HCS Alumni Association. I have coached many programs, currently coach softball for HYCA. I love being a coach!

About me: I'm an extremely proud mother of 4 Maryjane 15, Adam 12, Isaac 11 & Cloey 8. I am the proud daughter of Robert & Mary (Pleus) Livermore and have lived here almost all of my 40 years. I'm an active & involved parent, the quiet one in the stands. I pride myself on my integrity. I naturally put others first and am devote Christian.

We are a small school; decisions made effect us with greater impacts. Please vote May 17th casting your vote for me.

"My success will be yours"



## Stephanie Quick

We chose this community as the place where we would raise our family and spend our forever. In a lot of ways it has raised us as well. We've had 16 years of sharing celebrations and losses. In return, many of you attended our wedding, supported us through our first wobbly steps as parents and continue to participate in the monumental task of raising triplets and we love all of you for it!

My goal if elected is to facilitate a strong school/family partnership with greater transparency and access to information and more families represented in the school day. Allow volunteers to relieve some of the burden on staff. There are also opportunities for authentic learning right in our community that remain untapped.

ALL of our families are an asset to this community and to our educational process. The value of families to education isn't reduced because of the tremendous stress of poverty, work, parenting and life in general.

I grew up in a home with constant stress. I never remember going to bed hungry, but that was about the extent of the luxury and peace I experienced as a child. My Mother purchased our first home when I was 15.

Our schools should bring us together and create an environment where kids can take pride in their families and families can take pride in our schools.

I have a Master's in education and currently teach science at SUNY Broome. Having a child with Autism has made me a default parent advocate for families of struggling children. I have taught at Owego, Harpursville and SV. I also sub at the high school.

I have attended nearly every BOE meeting over the past 15 months and have studied our school finances and policies. I would be honored to receive your vote!



## Christine Wolbert

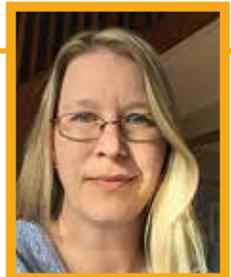
My name is Christine Wolbert, and I have had the privilege of calling Harpursville my home for almost 11 years now. My husband and I chose Harpursville to build a life and raise our children because it is the type of small town community that we grew up in and wanted the same for our children. Our oldest child graduated Harpursville in 2014, and we currently have two children in the elementary school. Over the years we have come to meet and build relationships with many of people who live here. We are truly blessed to call this our home.

I have had the pleasure of coaching U8 soccer for the HYCA for the last two years and look forward to many more. It has been such a rewarding experience to see the children building skills and confidence on the field and the parent support both on the field and the sideline is amazing.

I work in the accounting department of J&K Plumbing and Heating Co. in Binghamton. My responsibilities include payroll administration, accounts payable/receivable, human resources, Department of Labor regulations, group benefit administration and more. I work every day to

make sure that policies are followed, budgets are met, and money is saved wherever possible, and I will use these skills to help manage the same here.

I hope to serve as a member of the Board of Education, and to be a voice for our community. Let me use my skills to get our school back on track financially and heading toward a positive future for our children.





**Harpursville Central School District**

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Michael Rullo

Postal Patron

ECRWSS



**Public Hearing**

**May 9 - 6 p.m.**

High School Auditorium

**Budget Vote**

**May 17 - 1:30 - 8 p.m.**

Olmsted Elementary School

**Voter eligibility**

You may vote in a school district election if you:

- Are a U.S. citizen.
- Are at least 18 years of age.
- Have been a resident of the school district for 30 days preceding the election.

**We Did it!**