

Proposed budget carries no tax levy increase

On Tuesday, May 15th, residents of the Fort Plain Central School District will go to the polls to vote on the district's proposed \$20,500,000 budget for the 2018-19 school year—a budget that carries no tax levy increase. The proposal would increase spending 3.07 percent or \$610,000 compared to 2017-18. The increase is offset by an increase in state aid and the district's steps to control costs and improve efficiencies. Because the levy increase is below the district's 4.13 percent limit under New York's tax levy limit law, the proposal will require a simple majority (50 percent plus one) of votes to pass.

Budget highlights

This year's proposed budget stands apart from most school budgets in the region for two reasons. First, Fort Plain's proposed tax levy remains below the 2012-13 levy. In other words, the district will collect less taxes in 2018-19 than it did six years ago. Second, the cost of employee benefits is lower than it was in 2014-15. This is in contrast to higher tax levies and rising employee benefit costs in schools throughout the Capital Region as reported in the media.

The proposed budget includes no program cuts. It also addresses critical areas of student learning, safety, and support while leveraging fiscal resources in a manner that does not increase the burden on local taxpayers.

"Our administrative and school teams continually reflect on the allocation of our resources, making adjustments to programming that ensure our greatest areas of need are supported," said Dr. David Ziskin, Superintendent of Schools.

"The 2018-19 budget is closely aligned to our district mission and will improve the education our students receive at no additional cost to our taxpayers. In fact, our total tax levy will still be less than it was in 2012-13."

On the revenue side, Fort Plain will receive an additional \$325,000 in Foundation Aid in the 2018-19 New York state budget compared to last



year. Foundation Aid is unrestricted money that districts can use for everyday expenses.

Like other area districts, Fort Plain relies heavily on Foundation Aid., which combined with aid for reimbursed expenses make up more than two thirds of the district's annual revenue.

Resources directed to identified priority areas

The board, administrators, and faculty teams at the Junior-Senior High School and Harry Hoag Elementary continue to identify opportunities for improvement and to implement corresponding action plans within each of the district's identified priority areas. Areas supported in the 2018-19 proposed budget include:

Priority Area: Safety and student social and emotional developmental health

In the wake of the recent tragedies that have struck many of the nation's schools, Fort Plain is taking an important step to keep students safe. Every school day, a School Safety Officer will travel back and forth between Harry Hoag Elementary School and the Junior-Senior High School. The officer—actually two part-time officers—will work with school officials to keep students and staff safe throughout the school day. They will also help school counselors address student concerns.

BUDGET VOTE

May 15, 2018

1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Harry Hoag Elementary
Gymnasium

VOTER ELIGIBILITY

- U.S. citizen
- School district resident for at least 30 days
- 18 years of age

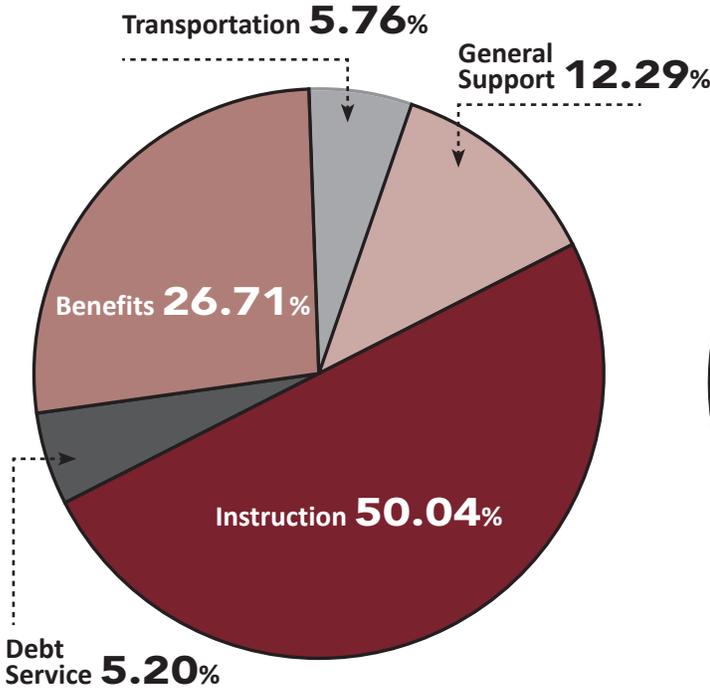
ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Voters who meet eligibility requirements, but are unable to make it to the polls on school budget vote day, may cast their votes by absentee ballot. An application must be completed and received by the District Clerk at least seven days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter. For applications or more information, contact Rebecca J. Smith in the district office at 993-4000, ext. #1000.

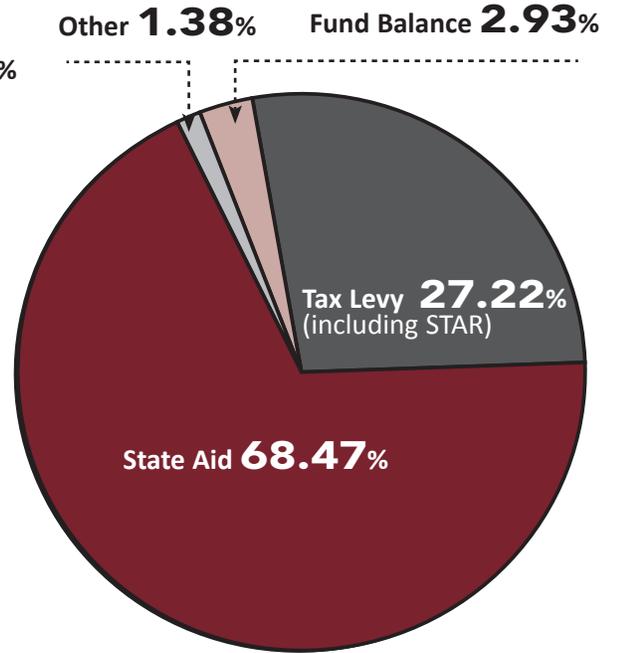


2018-19 Budget at a Glance

EXPENDITURES



REVENUES



EXPENDITURES

| | 2017-18 Budget | 2018-19 Proposed Budget | Percent Change |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| General Support | \$2,502,683 | \$2,520,282 | 0.70% |
| Instruction | 9,663,593 | 10,257,370 | 6.14% |
| Pupil Transportation | 1,115,955 | 1,181,127 | 5.84% |
| Employee Benefits | 5,567,769 | 5,476,221 | -1.64% |
| Debt Service & Related Transfers | 1,040,000 | 1,065,000 | 2.40% |
| TOTAL | \$19,890,000 | \$20,500,000 | 3.07% |

REVENUES

| | 2017-18 Budget | 2018-19 Proposed Budget | Percent Change |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| State Aid | \$13,224,994 | \$14,035,684 | 6.13% |
| Property Tax Levy (including STAR) | 5,580,146 | 5,580,146 | 0.00% |
| Fund Balance | 780,000 | 600,000 | -23.08% |
| Other | 304,860 | 284,170 | -6.79% |
| TOTAL | \$19,890,000 | \$20,500,000 | 3.07% |



Budget proposal continued...

Priority Area: Curriculum development and support

Dr. Cheryl Dozier, a University at Albany professor nationally recognized for her childhood literacy expertise, will return to Harry Hoag Elementary School for the fourth consecutive year. Dr. Dozier works with grade-level teams, demonstrating proven strategies that improve student literacy.

The district's technology pathway to graduation will become a reality in 2018-19. Students will follow a theme-based approach that includes high school coursework, leading to college credits, or industry certification, as well as a high school diploma. Graduates will meet the requirements for entry-level positions in microchip technology such as those offered at GlobalFoundries.

Priority Area: Family and community engagement

The district is expanding its partnership with the Family Counseling Center of Gloversville, which provides a Family-Peer Advocate at the Junior-Senior High School.

"The current counselor has proven to be a key contributor to our efforts to improve student attendance and engagement. Attendance and engagement are critically important factors in ensuring that all of our students remain on the path toward graduation," said Dr. Ziskin.

Fort Plain is also entering into a partnership with Montgomery County to share the cost of a full-time, 12-month social worker who will support a specific caseload of families during the school year and through the summer. The social worker will provide counseling and support to those students and their families who have struggled with their transition to the school setting.

Priority Area: Fiscal resources

"The board and administration are committed to supporting efforts to provide a strong, relevant education to our students in a fiscally responsible manner," said Dr. Ziskin.

"Our proposed budget maintains program and ensures our greatest areas of need receive the appropriate resources to deliver on our mission's promise to prepare every student for success beyond graduation in a safe and positive environment."

As an example, the district is switching to a new health insurance carrier to avoid a \$300,000 increase in insurance premiums. The new provider has agreed to deliver identical coverage for slightly less than the 2017-18 premium for current employees and for retirees



who already made the transition to the new carrier in January. These changes were achieved through collaboration with the two bargaining units.

"We are committed to reviewing our allocation of resources with an eye towards efficiency so we can continue targeting our areas of greatest need," Dr. Ziskin said.

"We were able to make a few targeted additions to this year's budget that would not have been possible had we not moved to a new health insurance carrier."

Other items on the ballot

A second proposal on the May 15 ballot will ask residents to vote on the use of \$230,000 from the District's Bus Purchase Reserve Fund for the purchase of new school vehicles. Expenditures of reserve funds require voter approval; however, since 100 percent of the cost is paid from the fund, there will be no impact on the tax levy.

In a third proposal, the Fort Plain Free Library seeks a \$5,000 increase in funding.

In addition to voting on the budget, residents will be asked to elect two members to the Board of Education, both three-year terms commencing on July 1, 2018 and expiring on June 30, 2021. Current members Mary Beth Hudyncia's and Jami Stevens' terms expire on June 30, 2018.

Polls will be open 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Harry Hoag gymnasium. Additional information about voting is available on the district website, www.fortplain.org.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ronald Kardash
President

Jeffrey L. Jones
1st Vice President

Joseph Bartholomew
2nd Vice President

Mary Beth Hudyncia

Todd McFee

David Przestrzelski

Jami L. Stevens



Fort Plain Central School

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BUDGET VOTE

May 15, 2018

1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Harry Hoag Elementary
Gymnasium

PUBLIC HEARING

May 2, 2018

7 p.m.

District Office
Conference Room

What will you see on the ballot?

Proposition 1:

Shall the Board of Education of Fort Plain Central School, Fort Plain, NY, be authorized to expend the sum of \$20,500,000.00 as set forth in the 2018-2019 Budget as presented to this meeting by said Board of Education and to levy the necessary tax therefor?

Proposition 2:

Authorization to Purchase Buses: Shall the Board of Education of the Fort Plain Central School District be authorized to: (a) acquire school vehicles at a maximum aggregate cost of \$230,000.00; (b) expend such sums for such purpose; (c) expend from the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund an amount not to exceed \$230,000 for such purpose; (d) levy the necessary tax therefore, to be levied and collected in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education taking into account state aid received and amounts disbursed from the reserve fund; and (e) in anticipation of the collection of such tax, to issue bonds and notes of the District at one time or from time to time in the principal amount not to exceed \$230,000.00, and to levy a tax to pay the interest on such obligations when due?

Proposition 3:

Authorization For Increase in the Library Tax Levy: Shall the annual appropriation to support and maintain the Fort Plain Free Library be increased by \$5,000.00 to \$80,000.00, which sum shall be separate and apart from the Fort Plain Central School District annual school district budget and be raised annually by a tax upon the taxable property of the school district, and which appropriation shall be the annual appropriation for the library until changed by further vote of the electors of the school district, and such tax shall be levied and collected yearly as are other general taxes and such monies paid over to the trustees of the Library?

Board of Education Election:

Voters will be asked to elect two (2) members of the Board of Education to three (3) year terms commencing on July 1, 2018 and expiring on June 30, 2021 to succeed Mary Beth Hudyncia and Jami Stevens, whose terms expire on June 30, 2018. Candidates Kim Keane and incumbent Mary Beth Hudyncia appear in that order on the ballot.