

The Panther Post

#WithMontiPride

MONTICELLO CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT // BUDGET 2022-23 // VOLUME 8

PROPOSED BUDGET RESTORES STUDENT EXPERIENCES, WITHOUT INCREASING TAX LEVY

Residents to vote on May 17, 2022

Residents of the Monticello Central School District will vote on a \$94,460,575 proposed school budget for the 2022-23 school year and elect three members to the Board of Education (see p. 14). The proposed budget preserves all existing positions and programs, restores pre-pandemic extracurricular experiences and activities, adds and enhances staff professional development opportunities, and addresses pandemic-related learning loss – without impacting the tax levy.

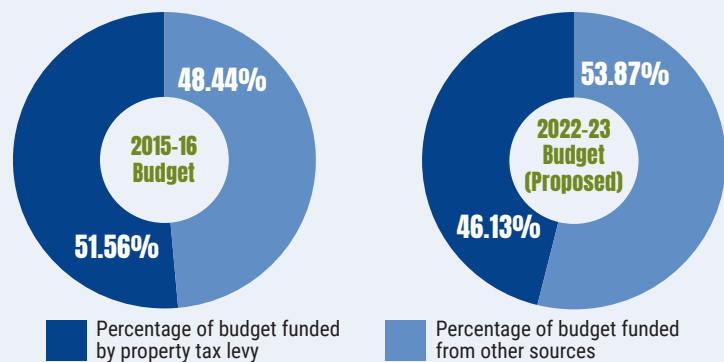
No Increase In Tax Levy

The proposed spending plan is an increase of \$3,193,969 from last year's budget, but the amount of the budget financed by taxpayers, or the tax levy, remains the same as the 2021-22 school year. The 2021-22 school year's tax levy was a decrease of 2.06% from the 2020-21 tax levy.

Less than half of proposed budget is funded by property taxes

In the 2015-16 school year, the tax levy funded 51.56% of the budget. This year, the tax levy funds 46.13% of it. The district has worked to progressively shrink the percentage of the budget funded by tax payers, while aggressively pursuing other sources of revenue, such as grants.

Taxpayer burden has decreased by 5.43% since 2015-16



Increased expenses, increased aid

A portion of the budget increase can be attributed to an increase in costs for existing expenses. Like many sectors of our current economy, the cost of employee health benefits, BOCES programming, materials and supplies have all increased. At the same time, the district saw an increase in state aid, which will help mitigate these additional costs.

In addition to preserving all existing programs and positions, the budget also:

Restores/Enhances Student Experiences

- ➔ Increases funding for field trips
- ➔ Adds music supplies
- ➔ Funds early drop-off program

Addresses Learning Loss

- ➔ Adds credit recovery software
- ➔ Adds social studies and science elementary curriculum
- ➔ Funds speakers and workshop facilitators for in-person professional development
- ➔ Adds a librarian to the Emma C. Chase Elementary School
- ➔ Adds three teaching assistants at the George L. Cooke Elementary School
- ➔ Adds one district Local Area Network (LAN) Technician

Supports student social-emotional learning

- ➔ RULER professional development for teachers
- ➔ Increases PBIS at the Emma C. Chase Elementary School

Budget At-A-Glance

Proposed budget:

\$94,460,575

Proposed School

Tax Levy:

\$43,576,655

Tax Levy Change:

\$0
0%

Proposed budget change:

\$3,193,969
3.50%

Also on the ballot:

Election of Board of
Education Members
(see page 14)

VOTE=

May 17

8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

WHERE TO VOTE ON MAY 17

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>📍 Thompson/Monticello - District #1
Robert J. Kaiser Middle School
45 Breakey Avenue • Monticello, NY 12701</p> | <p>📍 Rock Hill - District #4
Rock Hill Fire Department
61 Glen Wild Road • Rock Hill, NY 12775</p> |
| <p>📍 Bethel - District #2
Duggan Community Center
3460 Route 55 • White Lake, NY 12786</p> | <p>📍 Forestburgh - District #5
Forestburgh Town Hall
332 King Road • Forestburgh, NY 12777</p> |
| <p>📍 Mamakating - District #3
Emma C. Chase School
28 Pennsylvania Avenue • Wurtsboro, NY 12790</p> | <p><i>If you have a question about where you should vote, call 845-794-7700, ext. 70523</i></p> |

OUR NEW TRANSPORTATION CENTER IS OPEN!



See page 9

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Community Corner Calendar

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Fall & Winter Sports

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Our Goals

page **12**
COVID Relief Fund Usage

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Budget Proposal

Community Corner

CALENDAR

MAY

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

- 9 – 7:30 p.m. – MHS Spring Concert - Part I (Solos and Ensembles)
- 10 – 4 p.m.–8 p.m. – Voter Registration Day, all district polling locations
7:30 p.m. – MHS Spring Concert - Part II (Band/Chorus/Orchestra)
- 11 – 6:30 p.m. – Parent/Community Night with guest speaker Nathan Harmon, A.P. Hughs Auditorium, MHS
- 17 – 8 a.m.–8 p.m. – Annual School District Budget Vote
7:30 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting (Budget Vote & Election)

JUNE

- 1 – 4 p.m. – ENL Family Gathering
- 2 – 7:30 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting
- 3 – 12 p.m. – MHS Hall of Distinction ceremony
6 p.m. – District-Wide Arts Show
- 6 – 7:30 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting (Special Meeting)
- 7 – 6:30 p.m. – President's Education Awards (Grades 5, 8, 12)
- 23 – 7:30 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting (Retiree Recognition)

JULY

- 7 – 6 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting
(Reorganization meeting @ 6 p.m.;
Regular Meeting begins after)
- 21 – 7:30 p.m. – Board of Education Meeting

FIRST DAY OF 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR:
SEPTEMBER 6

The Monticello Central School District has been honorably named a "Best Community for Music Education" by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation for the 13th consecutive year. The designation shows a commitment by our Board of Education and Administration, coupled with the dedication of our highly qualified music teachers, to provide a deep and meaningful music education to all students of our district. There were many initiatives that led to this distinguished honor, including the generous donation of a clarinet from the class of 1959 to be used by a future sixth-grade student, as well as the district being selected to pilot a music-based graduation pathway. "This award is unique in that it is awarded on the basis of the local community's effort to support the arts. I think the donation from the class of 1959, and the assistance of Robert M. Sides Family Music Center over the years is illustrative of how fortunate we are to be surrounded by a community that cares," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Matthew Evans said.

Monticello awarded Best Communities for Music Education - yet again



CONNECT WITH US!

Are you a community member who wants to stay in touch with the most up-to-date news and events from the district? Use the QR code, or visit our website to sign up to receive district news via email.



Paint the Town Blue for the Class of 2022

Continuing with tradition, we are asking our community to paint the town blue for the class of 2022. To participate, simply decorate your home or business in blue during the month of June—it can be as simple as a blue bow or as elaborate as a sea of blue streamers with glitter. Help us show our graduates how proud their community is of them.



Hall of Distinction

The Monticello Central School District Hall of Distinction honors highly successful alumni, former Board of Education members and former employees who have achieved distinction, outstanding accomplishments or made significant contributions within their school, family, career, community and/or personal lives. The ceremony for the 2021 Hall of Distinction will be June 3. In addition, the Hall of Distinction Committee is accepting nominations for the 2022 Hall of Distinction. Please consider nominating someone deserving of this honor. More information and a nomination packet are available on the Hall of Distinction webpage located on monticelloschools.net under "About Us". Nominations are due by June 30, 2022.

Superintendent's Message

When the Board of Education created its new mission, vision and goals (p. 6-9) for the district in 2019, it could not have predicted the unprecedented two years that would follow. Although we did continue to strive towards meeting all of these goals while simultaneously guiding staff and students through the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, our district is now prepared to fully embark on a path forward towards our ultimate vision of becoming a district of choice.

This spring, we assembled a strategic plan committee comprised of educators, community members, parents and students. The committee is working to define the indicators of successful goal attainment, and the specific actions the district will take in order to meet these goals over the next five years. Once completed, we will have a public, easy-to-understand document that clearly outlines a map to success.



The strategic plan committee is working to create a road map towards meeting the district's goals.

Fiscal responsibility

As always, our administrative team sought to create a budget that balances our responsibility to provide each learner with empowering educational experiences with our responsibility to the taxpayer to exercise fiscal prudence. Thanks to careful budgeting and an aggressive pursuit of revenue sources beyond the taxpayer burden, we are once again able to present a budget that meets the needs of our students, without impacting the tax levy. (see p. 1).

Our brand-new transportation center, funded by the Classroom 2020 capital improvement project, is open for business, and we expect the new 100/200 wing of the high school to be open by August. We have also entered into a Energy Performance Contract guaranteed to save at least \$145,000 per year in energy costs (p. 9)

Student Success

The proposed budget preserves and restores all pre-pandemic programs and student activities, while adding new curriculum, professional development, and positions to support student growth (see p. 1). In addition, the district has received funding through the historic American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). We have used these one-time funds to add positions, initiatives and technology to address learning loss, and support student growth at no cost to taxpayers (see p. 12).

School Culture

The Board of Education recently adopted a new Belonging, Equity, Diversity, and Representation in Education policy, based upon the New York State School Board Association's recommendations. This policy solidifies the district's commitment to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students. Although this policy formalizes our responsibility to ensure all of our students have the tools necessary to succeed, we have been hard at work all year long implementing new equity initiatives, including the Junior Panthers Book Club (p. 10) and our grant-funded School Violence Prevention program (p. 11).

Community Engagement

As a superintendent, one of my highest priorities is fostering an open line of communication with the greater community. To that end, I share a video each Monday called "It's Monday in Monticello" which highlights upcoming events and other important news. In addition, I also publish a monthly newsletter called the Monti Message which provides a broader overview of district happenings. Both of these publications are available on our website.

We're excited to announce that we have launched a new communications platform called ParentSquare, to improve school-to-home communications. If you are the parent of a child who is currently enrolled in the Monticello Central School District, and have not yet registered, please create an account using the email or phone number that is on file with your child's school at ParentSquare.com. This platform also enables us to extend our reach to the greater community by allowing community members to sign up to receive district news and events via email. If you are a community member without a child currently enrolled, you can use the QR code on p.2 to sign up to receive messages from the district.

Of course, I am also available through more traditional means – I encourage any parent or community member with questions to contact me via phone or email. I am also available to speak to any interested community groups or organizations.

I appreciate your continued support and partnership. Together, I am confident that we will build a stronger community and become a true district of choice.

With Monti Pride,

Matthew T. Evans, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

 Follow Dr Evans on Twitter @MEvansMonti



Dr. Evans is available to meet with your community group. Here, he speaks with residents during a visit to the Monticello Senior Center.

#WithMontiPride

Highlights from our fall and winter sports seasons



Both the boys and girls alpine ski teams were crowned Section IX and Division Champions. Seven skiers represented Monticello at the NYSPHSAA Championships – Jack Rein, Samuel Rein, Connor Foss, Ryan Weiner, Alexis Heins, Harly Taylor and Kaitlyn Miller. Jack Rein was named Boys Section IX and Division Champion, and Alexis Heins was named Girls Section IX and Division Champion.



The girls and boys Nordic ski teams both competed at sectionals. Skiers Abby Morse, Evan Waterton, Kaitlyn Morse and Owen Bassett all ranked in the top 10, with Owen and Evan going on to compete at the state level to represent Monticello and Section IX. In addition, Owen received the Sportsmanship award at the NYSPHSAA Championships.

The Fall Varsity Boys XC team had two athletes qualify to compete at the section IX championships – Evan Waterton and Bobby Pape-Lucella. Bobby placed 32 with a time of 18:51. Evan Waterton placed second, with a time of 15:48. Evan also competed at the NYSPHSAA XC Championships at Chenango Valley, where he placed third with a time of 16:05. This time qualified him to compete at the Federation Meet held in Dutchess County.



REMEMBERING COACH BATES



Sadly, in late March, shortly after the close of this successful season, the community mourned the loss of alpine ski coach James "Jim" Bates. Current alpine ski co-captains Liza Mitchell and Harly Taylor reflected on his legacy in the following tribute:

Jim was a coach that not only inspired athletes but encouraged and supported them to do their best. He did not shy away from performing the tasks that he expected his athletes to

complete. At every dry-land practice, Jim could be found participating in all of the exercises and with greater stamina than most of the group. His enthusiasm, love, and dedication are evident by his long-standing commitment to the Monticello Ski Team. He served 25+ plus years as a coach. He appreciated an athlete that sought feedback and implemented it throughout the season. Jim went above and beyond to assist his athletes in finding equipment and went as far as attending ski swap sales in Vermont to ensure everyone had what they needed. Jim was a man of very few words, but all words were wise words. When asked about Coach Bates, Haley Heins, former MHS racer and coach said, "His skillset in waxing was impressive. He once waxed my skis at the top of the mountain before a State run and sliced his hand on my edge. With little regard to his pain, he preserved and tended to my skis. In all my years of racing, this was the fastest my skis had ever felt. I recall feeling a slight panic in the start gate, that my skis may take-off before I was ready. Jim chuckled when I told him, that was his plan. It is not often that a mentor and coach become a fellow colleague. After 7 years as an athlete with Jim, I had the pleasure of coaching the ski team with him. I experienced a new-found appreciation for the work that went into coaching and witnessed his love for skiing from a new perspective". Jim will be remembered for his unique waxing techniques and constant love and support for the sport.



Varsity boys basketball team qualified for sectionals in class "A" division.



For the first time in more than 25 years, the varsity girls basketball team qualified for sectionals.



The winter indoor track teams competed at Sullivan County Community College and in the Section IX championships, where Taina DeJesus was crowned Section IX champion and Division Champion 55 Hurdles. She then went on to compete at the state level in Staten Island.



The fall varsity girls XC team took second place team finish at the Section IX Class B Championship Meet – the highest finish from the Monticello squad since the 2015 season. The team members who competed at this meet were: Taina DeJesus, Abby Morse, Diya Patel, Hannah Titus, and Kaitlyn Morse.

The following students were named as Sullivan County Democrat All-Stars:



Varsity Boys Basketball: Michael Mingot, Joseph Russo, Dylan Hardy, Pedro Rodriguez (MVP)

Winter Indoor Track Team: Jadon Swasey, JaJuan Swasey, Rohan Patrick and Taina DeJesus

Varsity Girls Basketball Team: Amiah Neails, Shayla Smalls and Aaliyah Mota (MVP)

Girls Volleyball Team: Taylor Zirt and Rachel Zirt

Girls Tennis Team: Liza Mitchell

Girls Soccer Team: Gianna Kinne DeMaio, Karen Perilla Buitrago and Yami Escobar

Boys Soccer Team: Bairon Velaquez, Frank Skala and Christian Corces

Football Team: Thomas Garcia, Daniel Cano and Enderson Abraham



OUR GOALS:

OUR VISION

This Board aspires to build a world-class community of schools, and be a district of choice.

OUR MISSION

This Board's mission is to ensure that each learner is future-ready by providing empowering educational experiences.



This Board will provide a holistic education comprised of extensive curricular and extra-curricular experiences that empower each individual student to conquer challenges, develop talents, and discover passions, while sustaining rigor and achieving evidence-based academic growth.



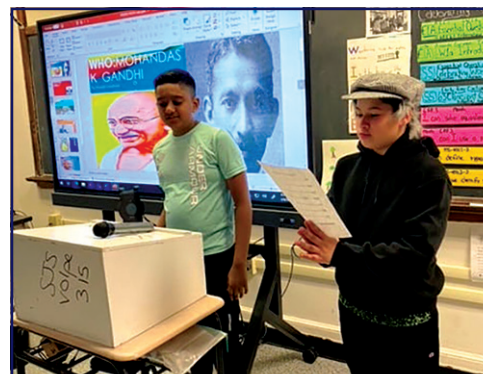
The My Brother's Keeper mentorship program is back in-person at Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Once per week, Monticello High School students known as MBK "fellows" meet with fifth-grade students at KLR Elementary after school, offering support and guidance to their younger peers. "I became a mentor in ninth grade," said MBK Fellow Collen. "I enjoy making a difference. Through the years, MBK has given me a community and the opportunity to interact with kids." The MBK program focuses on closing and eliminating the opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color so that all young people have the chance to reach their full potential. Furthermore, it provides students with after-school activities, opportunities for personal and professional development, community events, field trips and more.



Monticello High School Academy of Finance (AOF) students in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program wrapped up their 15th tax season, preparing 155 tax returns and saving community members \$37,525 in tax preparation fees. Students in the VITA program are trained to prepare tax returns by AOF educators Susan Bahrenburg and Eric Shewmaker, both of whom have extensive experience as a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Tax Preparer, respectively. The program is IRS-certified, and each year, the program invites community members to participate. Aside from experience in tax return preparation, students also have a chance to practice the customer service and communications skills they develop through the AOF classes.



Readers are leaders! Early literacy is key to building a strong foundation for academic success; which is why staff at the George L. Cooke Elementary School are constantly seeking new ways to help students develop a love of reading. On April 12, the school recognized National Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) Day – a celebration that commemorates the birthday of the late children's author Beverly Cleary. At a predetermined time on DEAR Day, the entire Cooke community stopped everything to enjoy some free reading time.



During Black History Month, students in Ms. Volpe's sixth-grade ELA class were tasked with selecting an individual who had positively impacted the U.S. or the world. They teamed up together to research influential people, and then presented their findings to their fellow classmates. It was an excellent opportunity for students to refine various skills, such as collaboration, research and public speaking skills.



Third-grade students at Emma Chase Elementary took on the challenge of ensuring all students in the school would have access to books by resurrecting the "New to You Bookstore". They worked together to collect books, create posters and even escorted fellow students from their classrooms to purchase books from the store for a reasonable \$0.25 per book. Students also had the option to exchange a book for another one. All proceeds from the bookstore will be donated to a local organization to be named in the future.

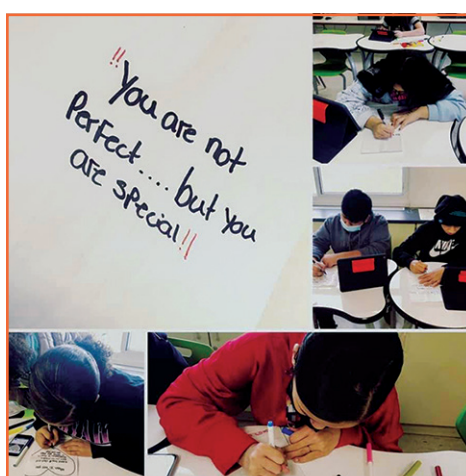
COMMUNITY engagement



This Board will strive to build authentic relationships rooted in trust, transparency and two-way communication with all constituents. We will actively seek avenues to partner with local organizations and agencies to increase our network of resources to improve and support life-long learning opportunities for our community.



Monticello High School students were dancing on air when they had the opportunity to engage with Tony-nominated choreographer Camille A. Brown's teaching artists via her community engagement platform, EVERY BODY MOVE (EBM). Part of Bethel Woods' in-school residency program E3: Engage. Experience. Explore, EBM works to inspire and incite ambitious collective action fueled by the art of social dance. EBM develops the creativity of its participants through innovative workshops and celebrations for people of diverse abilities, identities and ages. Back in October, teaching artists visited Lisa Lombardo's dance students at MHS where students participated in various dance workshops, as well as watched a performance by the teaching artists. Students even had the chance to learn new choreography.



At Robert J. Kaiser Middle School, positivity is contagious! Health classes at the school decorated bags for Monticello Bagel Bakery with positive affirmations that were then used to pack up customers' orders, spreading messages of love across the community.



It's music to our ears at Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary where professional musicians Akiko Hosoi and Andrew Trombley from the Nesin Cultural Arts Center in Monticello had the opportunity to teach young string musicians. Hosoi and Trombley introduced students to Florence Price, a Black composer whose works were only discovered earlier this year in an attic slated for demolition in Illinois. The musicians even performed one of Ms. Price's pieces entitled "Ticklin' Toes" for the students.



Bee Moser and Barbara Moran from the Cornell Cooperative visited students at Chase Elementary and presented ways students could live a healthy and an environmentally conscious lifestyle. First, Bee Moser taught lessons on healthy eating, exercise and avoiding sugary drinks. Then Barbara Moran read the book "The Growing Table" by Will Allen, a former basketball player and current farmer to Mrs. Furman's second grade class. The book explained the importance of composting and how to do it. Thanks to Mrs. Moran and Cornell, Mrs. Furman's class received red wiggler worms and continue to compost items to this day.



George Cooke Elementary students nabbed an "exclusive" journalism experience with a visit from Fred Stabbert III of The Sullivan Democrat. Mr. Stabbert reviewed the various types of information distributed through newspapers—from local news to recipes to the funnies. Students also learned the many career paths available at a newspaper, including reporting, sales and marketing, graphic design and more. Mr. Stabbert even brought a vintage typewriter in to show students how newspapers were created before computers. Mr. Stabbert concluded his visit by giving each student a copy of the Democrat to enhance their reading skills and learn more about current events in Sullivan County.

SCHOOL culture

This Board will foster an inclusive culture that sparks community pride, emphasizes kindness and respect and ensures that all students, staff and visitors are valued and supported in safe, secure, orderly and clean appropriately effective facilities.



Who's got spirit? The students of Cooke Elementary do! Students demonstrated their school spirit and ingenuity during "Spirit Week" with themes for each day, and they did not disappoint! This year's themes were "Crazy Socks", "Disney Day", "Dress Wacky", "Mood Meter" and "Blue and White".



Chase Elementary students showed their school spirit in a week-long celebration where students dressed up every day to coincide with a selected theme. This year's themes included "Tye Dye Day", "Dress Your Best", "Sweat It Out", "Chase Spirit Day" and "Pajama Day".

Students at Robert J. Kaiser Middle School brought their A-game during Fall Spirit Week. Students showed their creativity and originality each day with themes such as "College Day", "Decades Day" (any before 2000), "Wacky Hair Day", "Fall Color Day" (red, orange, yellow and brown) and "Hero/Character Day".



Fifth-grade students at Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary have been working on building a school community of respect with the help of Director of Equity, Tiffany Hall. Ms. Hall visited each classroom with the goal of getting students to think about how their words matter, and how they, as the oldest students in KLR, can set a positive example for younger students. Ms. Hall engaged students with activities that illustrated how they can practice kindness and respect towards each other daily. KLR fifth-graders watched a video from RocketKids that outlined the various ways that people show respect to one another, as well as participated in a small-group communication activity. Ms. Hall concluded her visits by reading a poem to students entitled "Instructions on Listening to the Trees" by Mahogany L. Browne. In the poem, the author describes a community in nature – how the sun, the water and the tree's roots all play an important role in helping a tree grow. Just as a tree needs all of these elements to thrive, human beings need the support of a caring community to grow.



Back in March, Monticello High School students welcomed their first foreign exchange student in years. Isabella Fouché, originally from South Africa, came to MHS and spent eight weeks living the life of an average American high school student. Isabella noted the differences of attending school in America, compared to South Africa. Classroom doors led to hallways, instead of outside. Students were more apt to cheer on a basketball game, instead of watching net ball or rugby. And of course – snow days – were a completely foreign concept to a citizen of a country where the temperature rarely dips below 20 degrees. Isabella concluded her experience with her classmates by sharing a presentation she created on her home country during Tim Potts' U.S. History and Government Regents class. She also commented on her experience at MHS, stating "The students here have all been very kind to me and I made new friends that I plan to keep in touch with. I would definitely encourage them to visit South Africa – it is a beautiful country and a huge tourist destination."

FISCAL responsibility



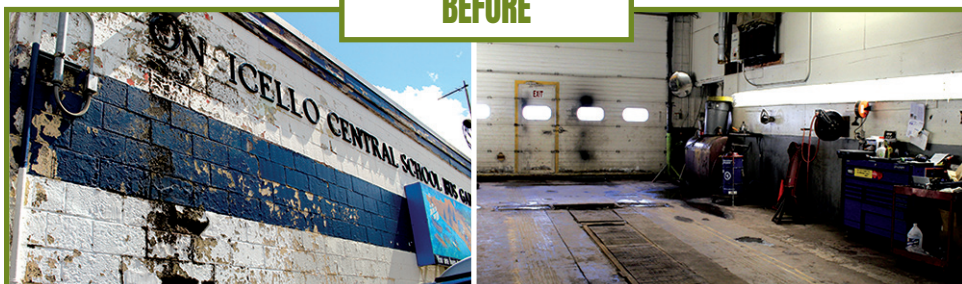
This Board will fortify its financial assets through long-term, strategic planning that aims to consistently maximize district improvements while minimizing taxpayer impact.

Our new transportation center is open!

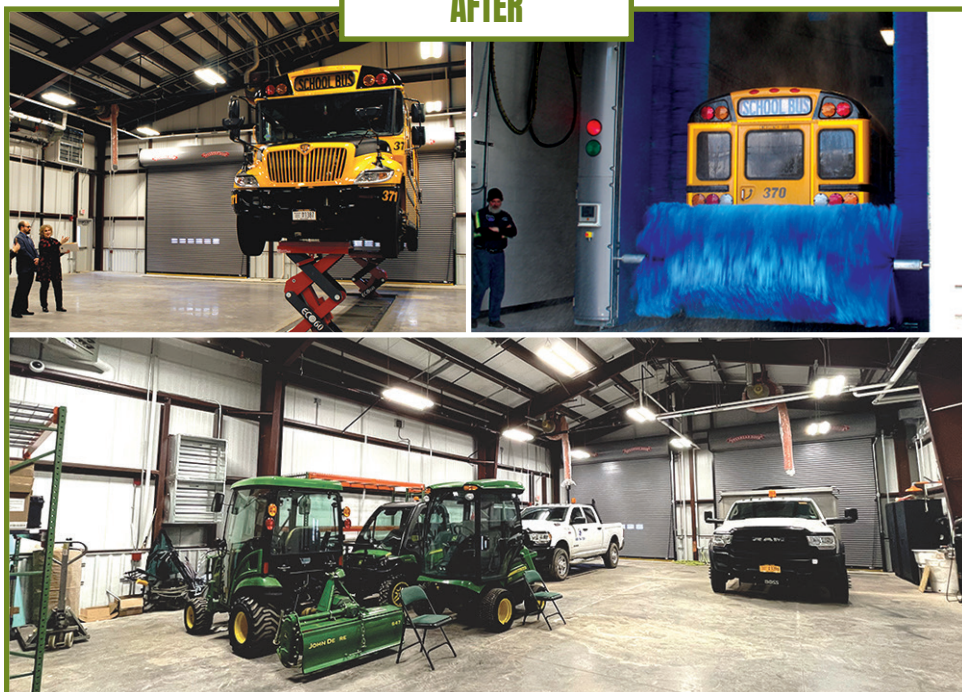
Our newly-constructed facilities and transportation center received its building occupancy certificate in April, and our transportation and facilities teams are in the process of moving into the new building. The new 18,736 square foot building is part of Phase I of the district's Classroom 2020 Capital Improvement Project, which was approved by voters in Nov. 2018 at no impact to the tax levy.

The new center replaces the district's existing bus garage, which has fallen into significant disrepair throughout the years. The new transportation center features energy-efficient systems, office space for the transportation and facilities departments and a vast increase in storage capacity. There is an expansive parking area, fueling stations on site, four bus bays, two lifts and an indoor bus wash.

BEFORE



AFTER



Construction Continues at the High School

The lack of structural integrity in the 100/200 wing of Monticello High School has caused significant delays and redesigns in its renovation. Some of the discovered conditions include poorly constructed exterior walls and exterior walls that are not plumb—the northern wall changes by four inches from one end to the other. Our construction team has also dealt with staffing shortages and supply chain issues.

One significant redesigned component is the use of traditional steel-formed framing, with layered steel exterior panels. The initial design called for Kalwall panels to be applied to existing exterior walls. These were not possible due to the conditions described above. The steel framing—though more expensive—will make the exterior plumb and create a more energy-efficient structure.

Steel framing is presently underway on both the southern facade (i.e. the interior courtyard of the high school) and the northern facade (i.e. the side facing Breakey Avenue). With the warmer weather upon us, the roofers have returned to complete the 200 wing's new roof that they began in the fall. We expect the new wing to be open by August.

Task 3 of the project is the construction of new tennis courts. This task is under contract, with construction expected to begin in mid-May. The new tennis courts will be located in between the 100/200 wing of the high school and Breakey Avenue, near the cafeteria/gymnasium entrance.

Please continue to check our website for updates as our work on these projects continue.

Energy Performance Contract will save \$145,000 annually in energy costs

Construction has begun on our district-wide Energy Performance Contract (EPC) with Trane Technologies. In contrast to a bond referendum, EPCs do not require a tax increase or any out-of-pocket costs. The project is fully funded by the guaranteed energy savings that the upgrades will yield over time. If the guaranteed energy savings do not materialize, the energy services company must fund the difference.

The Monticello EPC includes the installation of roof-top solar panels at the Emma C. Chase Elementary School. Additional energy conservation measures across the five schools in the district include: interior lighting (LED) upgrades, energy management system (EMS) upgrades, boiler replacements at Monticello High School and Robert J. Kaiser Middle Schools, plug-load controls, and more.

Junior Panthers Book Club: Building Literacy and Inclusivity

For many young children, a simple three-hour car ride en route to a family vacation can feel like a constraining, never-ending ordeal. That's why the second-grade students in the Junior Panthers Book Club at the George L. Cooke Elementary School were incredulous to learn that one man spent 27 hours stuffed into a small box in a bid to win his freedom.

The Junior Panthers Book Club is a group of second-grade students who meet weekly after school to read and discuss books. The first book, and the book that the club is currently exploring, is *Henry's Freedom Box*, a picture book that tells the story of Henry Brown. Henry Brown was an enslaved Black man who hid in a box in 1849 and shipped himself to Philadelphia, thus escaping slavery.

The club, which operates under the umbrella of the district's after-school program as well as the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) program, is an example of how the district is striving to build cultural awareness and develop social-emotional skills in its students, while also improving reading skills.

Before opening a single page of *Henry's Freedom Box*, Shannon Daniel, who works with the MBK program, establishes a sense of camaraderie and autonomy with the students. She asks their input on the name of the club, encourages them to personalize their name tag with artwork that represents their interests and hobbies and leads them in "getting-to-know-you" activities.

"What kind of foods do you all like to eat?" she asks.

The students shout out their answers: burgers, chicken, fries.

One girl holds back, remaining silent.

"What about you? What's your favorite food?" Ms. Daniel presses.

"You probably wouldn't know what they are – the names of my favorite recipes are all in Spanish," the girl responds.

"Well, actually, I do speak Spanish," Ms. Daniel says.

The girls face goes from hesitant to ebullient as she begins excitedly rattling off the names of various dishes in Spanish.



Ms. Daniel offers a closer look of the illustrations in *Henry's Freedom Box*



Director of Student Equity Tiffany Hall chats with members of the Junior Panther Book Club

striving to build a culture where each and every one of our students feels valued and empowered."

After the students have finished their ice breakers, Ms. Daniel holds up the book and asks students if they've ever heard of the Underground Railroad, or if they know what a slave is.

"A slave is a person who works but they don't want to," one student offers.

"I think I saw a movie about the Underground Railroad," another student says. "There was a woman named Ha...Harry?"

"Harriet Tubman," Ms. Daniel affirms. "That's correct. Harriet Tubman helped a lot of slaves escape on the Underground Railroad. Today we're going to start a book about a slave who escaped, but he didn't use the Underground Railroad. He found a different way."

And with that, Ms. Daniel begins to read the story to the group, pausing to clarify vocabulary words or to ask students to imagine and identify what emotions Henry might be feeling as he encounters various challenges and situations. The key takeaways of this particular book for the students is to demonstrate the values of courage and perseverance.

The Junior Panthers Book Club finished *Henry's Freedom Box* over a number of weeks in February, during Black History Month, before moving on to a story about Ruby Bridges in honor of Women's History Month in March. They will continue to read other books and materials that highlight themes such as the difference between wants and needs, celebration of different abilities, self-esteem and relationship building.

Ms. Daniel hopes to develop enthusiasm about reading in the students with the goal of each child reading an additional book of their choice weekly. She also hopes to expand the club into the summer months and collaborate with the local libraries to offer community service learning projects.

"Due to my strong passion for working, educating and connecting with students, I'm very excited to be leading the book club," Ms. Daniel said. "The elementary level is a crucial age for reading fundamentals. I also hold a high regard for the goals and milestones of the MBK program – one of which aligns with the book club: ensuring that all children are able to read by third grade. Finally, it's fulfilling and rewarding to watch the students be so excited to learn about culturally responsive and relevant stories that expand their understanding of the world."



The members of the Junior Panther Book Club With Ms. Daniel

"Students who feel a sense of belonging are students who are highly engaged in learning," MCSD Director of Student Equity Tiffany Hall explained. "That's what's at the crux of the concept of 'cultural relevance' – it's asking ourselves if all of our students feel as if they are seen and affirmed in the interactions they have, the books they read and the spaces they occupy. We're



The young ladies of the Junior Panther Book Club show off their strength in honor of International Women's Day

School Violence Prevention Grant will fund comprehensive programming at MCSD

Students at the Robert J. Kaiser Middle School and Monticello High School will soon have a plethora of opportunities to develop new skills, explore interests, improve behavior and establish a deepened connection to the community.

Monticello Central School District was among 84 school districts and non-profit organizations chosen by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to receive a School Violence Prevention (SVP) grant. Nearly 300 districts and organizations applied for these grants, which are earmarked to fund extra-curricular activities, school-based intervention programming and collaboration with law enforcement agencies or community-based organizations to prevent school violence. MCSD received \$340,000 per year over a five-year period.

The district identified three goals for the program, based upon district data and stakeholder feedback: improve student attendance and sense of belonging in the district, reduce interpersonal conflict between students to improve safety and wellness and improve students' academic achievement while reducing achievement gaps among students.

To meet these goals, the district plans to use the funds from the SVP grant to:

- ➔ Deliver conflict resolution and peer mediation workshop in partnership with Dispute Resolution Center, Inc. (DRC)
- ➔ Offer a range of learning and development experiences to help nurture self-expression in students, including visual art, music, dance and writing.
- ➔ Create a service-learning program that combines community service with academic learning to help students learn the value of caring for one another and their communities.
- ➔ Increase academic support and intervention; and
- ➔ Provide enhanced support and outreach to families of students who are chronically absent, or at risk of becoming chronically absent.

To oversee the day-to-day implementation of this program, Lyle Mincheff has joined the Monticello team as Grant Program Director. While he may be new to the Monticello team, he is no stranger to many of the students in the district. Mr. Mincheff has served as the Youth Program Coordinator for Sullivan County,



Lyle Mincheff



Dawn Wilkin, Assistant Director of Prevention Services for Catholic Charities speaks to the crowd at the Healthy Lifestyles Event

overseeing the summer youth employment calendar, and providing opportunities for education training and employment. In that role, Mr. Mincheff also implemented the workforce development's first re-entry program for incarcerated youth.

"Monticello embraces diversity, culture and the opportunity to be better together," he said. "I'm not here to reinvent the wheel; my plan is to see where any gaps are, and to fill those gaps with meaningful programming. I want to expand on the many great things we already have going that are succeeding and making it even better."

He plans to do that through crafting relationships with students, staff and community organizations to provide outlets for youth to explore ideas based around their interests. In April, he launched his first event: two days of substance abuse prevention programming with Follow Us to Success (FUS) – one at RJK; one at MHS, followed by a Healthy Lifestyles Community Event for parents. At the parent event, Junior Sanchez from FUS led representatives from Sullivan County Opioid Task Force, Catholic Charities, Sullivan Agencies Leading Together (SALT), Hope Not Handcuffs, and Sullivan County District Attorney Meagan Galligan in a panel about the many resources available in Sullivan County, how local officials are combatting the opioid crisis, strategies to help children and teens make positive choices and learn where to turn in the event of a loved one struggling with substance abuse.

This event was just the first of many planned to help bridge our students, their families and our community. Next up, there will be a Parent/Community Night on May 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the A.P. Hughs Auditorium at Monticello High School, with special guest speaker Nathan Harmon. The event is open to the public, and the entire community is encouraged to attend.

Please keep an eye on our website for more information as events are planned.



A parent speaks to the panel of experts about strategies to challenge substance use in Sullivan County

Monticello Central School District ARP-ESSER Funds

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, school districts across the nation became eligible to receive one-time funding through the Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund allocated by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP-ESSER). New York has been allocated nearly \$9 billion in ARP-ESSER funds, with a minimum of \$8.09 billion (90 percent) going to local education agencies, including public schools. The Monticello Central School District has been allocated \$4,893,375 through the ESSER -II and approximately \$10,989,825 through the ARP.

Can the district use ARP-ESSER monies to fund the general budget?

These are one-time funds that can only be used for specific purposes, including addressing learning loss, throughout the 2020-24 school years. In planning for the use of these funds, the district sought to avoid "fiscal cliff" scenarios, opting to use the funds for one-time costs or long-term investments (e.g. facilities improvements and technology) in order to avoid recurring expenses that would be unsustainable in the long term. Hence, the general budget revenue does not include ARP-ESSER funds.

Here are some highlights of how ARP-ESSER funds have been distributed at Monticello Central School District – a full line-by-line plan is available on our website.

Addressing Learning Loss

- ➔ Eight new elementary teacher positions to reduce class size and facilitate small-group instruction
- ➔ Free around-the-clock live virtual tutoring in more than 300 subjects for students in grades 6-12 through TutorMe
- ➔ Six additional teaching assistants to support classroom learning
- ➔ Two school counselors to address student emotional needs
- ➔ Eight elementary mentors to support student success
- ➔ Seven teaching aides
- ➔ Professional development for administrators, teachers, and classroom staff in Early Literacy

Facilities Updates

- ➔ Enhanced air filtration systems, including unit ventilators, exhaust fans and energy management systems
- ➔ Hands-free faucets
- ➔ HVAC updates – replacement of 10 air handling units and 5 rooftop units at Monticello High School
- ➔ New classroom furniture, including desks, chairs and stools

Technology

- ➔ 275 new student laptops
- ➔ 400 new iPads
- ➔ Independent security assessment to identify and improve network security to address increased use of the network through remote learning
- ➔ 28 BenQ enhanced white boards for classroom instruction
- ➔ Power cords, charging stations, headsets, iPad cases, speakers for the new devices.



An increase in the number of educators and support staff positions enables more individualized, small-group instruction.



Through ESSER-ARP funds, the district was able to purchase a wealth of devices for students to use.



Professional development for staff and administrators emphasized early literacy; setting our students up for success by building a strong foundation in literacy skills.



Students in grades 6-12 have round-the-clock access to live tutoring in more than 300 subjects, thanks to the district's partnership with TutorMe.

3-Part Budget Fiscal Year: 2022

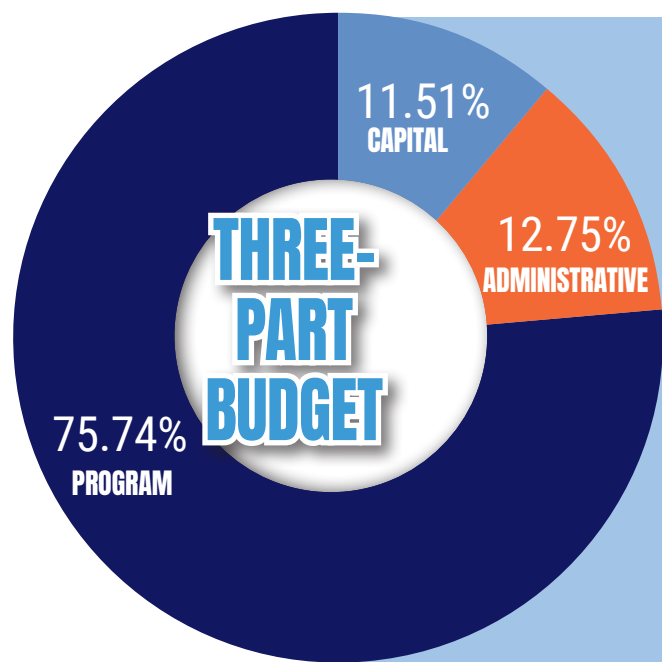
State Function	Description	2022-23 Proposed Budget	2021-22 Adopted Budget
ADMINISTRATION			
1010	Board Of Education	\$61,000	\$39,000
1040	District Clerk	\$40,306	\$37,710
1060	District Meeting	\$45,890	\$30,140
1240	Chief School Administrator	\$313,051	\$291,908
1310	Business Administration	\$837,011	\$771,416
1320	Auditing	\$84,000	\$84,000
1330	Tax Collector	\$56,500	\$56,750
1380	Fiscal Agent Fee	\$20,000	\$20,000
1420	Legal	\$250,000	\$250,000
1430	Personnel	\$338,536	\$154,392
1460	Records Management Officer	\$50,000	\$0
1480	Public Information and Services	\$181,268	\$107,248
1670	Central Printing & Mailing	\$0	\$0
1910	Unallocated Insurance	\$284,500	\$284,500
1920	School Association Dues	\$15,000	\$15,000
1950	Assessments on School Property	\$30,000	\$30,000
1981	BOCES Administrative Costs	\$1,387,546	\$1,366,450
2010	Curriculum Development and Supervision	\$980,204	\$664,151
2020	Supervision-Regular School	\$3,434,689	\$3,542,654
2070	Inservice Training-Instruction	\$80,000	\$40,000
2110	Teaching-Regular School	\$204,700	\$473,000
9000	Employee Benefits	\$3,345,386	\$3,139,932
Total Administration		\$12,039,587	\$11,398,251
CAPITAL			
1620	Operation of Plant	\$3,846,971	\$3,610,405
1621	Maintenance of Plant	\$1,780,882	\$1,610,787
1930	Judgments and Claims	\$5,000	\$5,000
1964	Refund on Real Property Taxes	\$50,000	\$50,000
5510	District Transportation Services	\$550,000	\$475,000
9000	Employee Benefits	\$1,686,995	\$1,631,132
9711	Serial Bonds-School Construction	\$409,290	\$409,290
9731	Bond Antic Notes-School Construction	\$2,047,026	\$2,047,026
9732	Bond Antic Notes-Bus Purchases	\$0	\$0
9785	Install Purch Debt-State Aided Hardware	\$397,520	\$397,520
9950	Transfer to Capital Fund	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total Capital		\$10,873,684	\$10,336,160

For more information about the 2022-23 proposed budget, please visit our website www.monticelloschools.net

State Function	Description	2022-23 Proposed Budget	2021-22 Adopted Budget
PROGRAM			
1420	Legal	\$2,000	\$2,000
1910	Unallocated Insurance	\$55,000	\$55,000
2070	Inservice Training-Instruction	\$158,000	\$153,000
2110	Teaching-Regular School	\$21,733,963	\$24,470,904
2250	Program For Students w/Disabilities-Med-Eligible	\$19,853,525	\$19,498,580
2280	Occupational Education (Grades 9-12)	\$2,221,000	\$0
2330	Teaching-Special Schools	\$424,000	\$344,000
2610	School Library & AV	\$334,317	\$268,405
2630	Computer Assisted Instruction	\$1,899,790	\$1,161,233
2805	Attendance-Regular School	\$143,377	\$136,932
2810	Guidance-Regular School	\$949,876	\$940,700
2815	Health Services-Regular School	\$597,530	\$488,936
2820	Psychological Services-Regular School	\$228,487	\$248,714
2825	Social Work Services-Regular School	\$699,880	\$729,198
2830	Pupil Personnel Services-Special Schools	\$363,721	\$348,572
2850	Co-Curricular Activities-Regular School	\$230,400	\$239,150
2855	Interscholastic Athletics-Regular School	\$685,849	\$650,605
2870	School Store Fund	\$0	\$0
5510	District Transport Services-Med-Eligible	\$4,028,356	\$3,916,673
5530	Garage Building	\$90,608	\$100,288
5540	Contract Transportation-Med Eligible	\$0	\$0
7310	Youth Program	\$0	\$0
8070	Census	\$34,181	\$32,518
9000	Employee Benefits	\$16,638,444	\$15,571,787
9901	Transfer to Other Funds	\$0	\$0
9901	Transfer to School Food Service Fund	\$0	\$0
9901	Transfer to Special Aid Fund	\$175,000	\$175,000
Total Program		\$71,547,304	\$69,532,195

BUDGET COMPONENT SUMMARY

	2022-23 Proposed Budget	% of Budget	2020-21 Adopted Budget	% of Budget
Administration	\$12,039,587	12.75	\$11,398,251	12.48
Capital	\$10,873,684	11.51	\$10,336,160	11.33
Program	\$71,547,304	75.74	\$69,532,195	76.19
Total	94,460,575	100.00	\$91,266,606	100.00



By law, school districts must divide their proposed budgets into three portions – administrative, capital and program – and compare them to the current year’s amounts. Monticello’s three-part budget breaks down as follows:

	Proposed 2022-23	Budgeted 2021-22
ADMINISTRATIVE Amount:	\$12,039,587	\$11,398,251
The administrative component includes all administrative salaries, benefits and office and program costs for directing and supervising all instructional activities of the district.		
	Proposed 2022-23	Budgeted 2021-22
PROGRAM Amount:	\$71,547,304	\$69,532,195
The program component includes salaries and benefits for classroom teaching personnel, instructional materials, supplies and services,interscholastic sports, extracurricular programs and transportation.		
	Proposed 2022-23	Budgeted 2021-22
CAPITAL Amount:	\$10,873,684	\$10,336,160
The capital component includes all costs for facility maintenance operations, including salaries and benefits of plant operations staff, supplies, utilities, capital expenditures, debt service and purchase of transportation vehicles.		

REVENUES ► Where the money comes from		
REVENUE	Proposed 2022-23	Budgeted 2021-22
Charges for Services	\$233,000	\$213,000
Other	\$4,659,417	\$4,780,064
Interest Income	\$15,000	\$60,000
Medicaid	\$250,000	\$250,000
State Aid	\$45,150,791	\$40,386,887
Fund Balance	\$575,712	\$2,000,000
Property Taxes	\$43,576,655	\$43,576,655
TOTALS	\$94,460,575	\$91,266,606

EXPENSES ► Where the money goes		
EXPENSES	Proposed 2022-23	Budgeted 2021-22
Employee Salaries	\$40,424,259	\$39,384,564
Benefits	\$21,670,825	\$20,342,851
BOCES	\$18,019,954	\$17,903,225
Program Support	\$7,943,026	\$7,535,007
Equipment	\$897,797	\$661,500
Materials and Supplies	\$2,375,878	\$2,310,623
Debt Service	\$3,128,836	\$3,128,836
TOTALS	\$94,460,575	\$91,266,606

Q

What happens if voters reject the proposed 2022-23 school budget on May 17?

Under New York State Education Law, if voters defeat their school district budget in May, a district has three options. It can:

- ✓ Resubmit the same proposal for a revote;
- ✓ Submit a revised proposal for a revote; or
- ✓ Adopt a contingent budget.

If it resubmits a proposal and the proposal is rejected a second time, it must adopt a contingent budget.

Under a contingent budget, a school district cannot increase the amount of taxes levied during the previous school year. Since the tax levy of MCSD’s proposed 2022-23 budget has not increased from last year, a contingent budget would not necessarily further decrease the tax levy from the proposed levy.

According to state law, a contingent budget prevents the district from spending money on particular expenses, including community use of school facilities (unless all costs are reimbursed to the district); new equipment purchases, non-essential maintenance, capital expenditures (except in emergencies) and certain field trips and student supplies. Therefore, the district would need to remove \$2,246,372 worth of equipment, replacement school buses, supplies and training if it adopted a contingent budget.

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES		
VOTE ONE FOR EACH SEAT:		
Seat 1	Seat 2	Seat 3
Lori Orestano-James	Stacey Sharoff	Mary Beth Bastone
Victoria Larusso	Ashley Rielly	Jennifer Holmes
		Jimmy B. Crawley

What are EQUALIZATION RATES and why are they used?

A tale of two houses, two towns, one school district, and two tax bills

Town A and Town B are different towns within the same school district. The house in Town A and the house in Town B recently sold for the same amount. So, the two houses have the same market value and should pay the same amount in school taxes.

However, Town A and Town B use different assessment practices, which means that the houses have different assessed values – and assessed values are used in the computation of property tax bills. Therefore, for the houses in Town A and Town B to pay the same in taxes, the tax rates (per \$1,000 of assessed value) must be different for each town.

The process of equalization is used to determine these tax rates. Essentially, full market value serves as a common denominator, or equalizer, in the process of setting tax rates.

Equalization rates indicate the ratio of the assessed value to market value in the municipality. They are used in an effort to fairly apportion the share of taxes when a taxing jurisdiction, such as a school district, contains multiple municipalities. They are designed to ensure that owners of properties with similar full market values pay an equivalent amount of taxes.



TAX BILL – HOUSE IN TOWN A

Full Market Value:	\$250,000
Equalization Rate:	74.00
Assessed Value:	\$185,000
Town Tax Rate:	\$27.03 per \$1,000
Total Taxes Due:	\$5,000



TAX BILL – HOUSE IN TOWN B

Full Market Value:	\$250,000
Equalization Rate:	100.00
Assessed Value:	\$250,000
Town Tax Rate:	\$20.00 per \$1,000
Total Taxes Due:	\$5,000

In this example, House A and House B pay an equivalent amount of taxes due to the different tax rates.

Remember: Assessed value × Tax Rate = Total Tax Bill
1,000

In the example given, **properties in Town A are assessed at 74 percent of full market value** (an equalization rate of 74) and **Town B properties are assessed at full market value** – an equalization rate of 100.

School districts calculate the total full market value of all properties in each municipality. Equalization rates allow them to determine the share of the tax levy to be paid by each town, a necessary step to calculating tax rates for each town. The process is designed to:

- Fairly apportion the tax levy among the municipalities in a school district ; and
- Ensure that the amount of taxes paid by owners of similar properties in the district is similar – regardless of the town and its assessment practices.

Board of Education

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William Weiss (alternate)

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Superintendent of Schools
Matthew T. Evans, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent for Business
Lisa Failla

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Linda Oehler-Marx, Ph.D.

District Public Information Officer
Courtney Bonfante

Produced in cooperation with the
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CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
60 Jefferson Street, Suite 3, Monticello, NY 12701

BUDGET
EDITION
2022

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BUDGET EDITION 2022

MONTICELLO CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT // BUDGET 2022-23 // VOLUME 8 // PAGE 16

School District
Budget Notice

VOTE!

May 17
8 a.m.
to 8 p.m.

Voting Locations:
See page 1

For more information
about the 2022-23
proposed budget,
please visit our website
www.monticelloschools.net

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2021-22 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2022-23 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$91,266,606	\$94,460,575	\$93,295,576
Increase/Decrease for the 2022-23 School Year		\$3,193,969	\$2,246,372
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.50%	2.50%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.70%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$43,576,655	\$43,576,655	
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)	\$43,576,655	\$43,576,655	\$43,204,770
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$2,831,880	\$2,350,850	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$42,461,426	\$43,135,552	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$40,744,775	\$41,225,805	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$1,716,651	\$1,909,747	
Administrative Component	\$11,398,251	\$12,039,587	\$11,772,385
Program Component	\$69,532,195	\$71,547,304	\$71,339,507
Capital Component	\$10,336,160	\$10,873,684	\$10,183,684

* According to state law, a contingent budget prevents the district from spending money on particular expenses, including community use of school facilities (unless all costs are reimbursed to the district); new equipment purchases, non-essential maintenance, capital expenditures (except in emergencies) and certain field trips and student supplies. Therefore, the district would need to remove \$2,246,372 worth of equipment, replacement school buses, supplies and training if it adopted a contingent budget.

** Separate Propositions that are NOT included in the Total Budgeted Amount

Description	Amount

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year

\$466.50

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2022-23 by the qualified voters of the Monticello Central School District, Sullivan County, New York, will be held at Robert J. Kaiser Middle School, Dr. Duggan Community Center, Emma C. Chase Elementary School, Rock Hill Fire Department and Forestburgh Town Hall in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 8:00 am prevailing time OR between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm, prevailing time in the Robert J. Kaiser Middle School, Dr. Duggan Community Center, Emma C. Chase Elementary School, Rock Hill Fire Department and Forestburgh, 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.