On Tuesday May 18, 2010, district residents will be asked to vote on a $68,560,000 spending plan. While the district was faced with many tough choices during this budget process, school officials created a budget that recognized the difficult economic realities while preserving our core mission to be a “bold and innovative home for learning”.

The $68.56 million proposed budget is a 4.36% increase over the 2009-2010 adopted budget.

This budget season proved challenging for school districts across the state. At Hen Hud declines in state and federal aide, amounted close to $610,000. School Officials were challenged to construct a budget that is responsible, sustainable and most importantly able to meet the needs of our student population.

Hendrick Hudson School officials have been proactive in their budget preparations. In 2007-08 school officials began to formulate a long term financial strategy that would position the school district on a solid economic path. The Administration began to review expenditures and staffing needs to improve efficiencies and reduce costs. Since their review began in 2008, the Hendrick Hudson School District has reduced nearly $4.8 million in staff and expenses from the budget- resulting in over an 8% reduction in the budget and nearly a 14% reduction in staff.

In developing this year’s budget, administrators had to contend with skyrocketing retirement costs estimated to be a 38.7% increase from last year. This item alone adds over $1 million dollars to the budget and is responsible for almost 2.5 points on the tax levy.
Continued from page 1

As state contributions to the retirement system are calculated based on how well, or in this case poor the stock markets does, local contributions are subject to drastic rate increases and decreases making it increasingly difficult for school districts to adequately plan for and anticipate future payments.

Other expenses driving this year’s budget increase are established contractual obligations for professional and support staff. “We have worked to resolve our labor agreements in a manner that is both fair and affordable. Our most recent agreements with Teacher Aides and Monitors (TAMA) and the Custodians (CSEA) have resulted in total packages that have an annual cost to the district of under 3%. We intend to use these agreements as a basis for future negotiations as other agreements begin to expire later this year,” said Dr. McCann.

Despite the district’s best efforts to avoid savings through staff reductions, several positions have had to be reduced. Though any staff reductions are painful, “we are confident that the positions slated to be reduced will have minimal impact on the academic program,” said Dr. McCann.

“In these times of fiscal austerity, staff reductions have become necessary across all industries, and education is no different,” said Dr. McCann. The proposed budget calls for the reduction of 6.6 teaching positions and 5 teacher aides. It also proposes to re-categorize 14 teacher aides as teaching assistants, and provides for the funding of 15 part-time monitors to ensure adequate supervision and student safety during lunch hours. These staff reductions and re-assignments will save the district approximately $820,000.

Despite these difficult decisions, the district has been able to maintain class sizes in ALL academic areas and continue to provide funding for all of our athletic teams and student activities.

“We really attempted to find savings that would have the least impact on the individual student and the core academic program,” said McCann. “None of these decisions have been easy. As a district we have had to make a number of difficult decisions the last several years, but through it all we have maintained high academic standards, and continue to provide our students with a top notch high quality education,” he concluded.

Based on current information, district officials project the budget will result in a 3.59% increase in the tax levy which translates to a tax rate increase of 3.49% for the Town of Cortlandt and 4.13% for Peekskill. For a house (average and current STAR reimbursement rates) assessed value in Cortlandt of $7325 the increase would be $193 in 2010 -2011; in Peekskill with an average assessed value of $7325 the increase would be $97 in 2010 – 2011.

**Bus Proposition Also on Ballot**

The Hendrick Hudson School District is also seeking voter authorization on May 18, 2010 to replace five school buses that are nearing the end of their useful life. The District is recommending the purchase in accordance with their Fleet Management Plan which recommends replacing approximately 10% of the fleet each year.

The District deferred bus purchases in the last budget year and as result, 8 buses were slated for replacement this year. After a thorough review, the district decided to replace only five busses, whose average age is 14.2 years old well above the recommended industry average of 5.5 year.

The District’s makes every effort to be proactive when it comes to the maintenance, up keep and replacement of district vehicles. The buses in question all have in excess of 119,000 miles. By following the recommended fleet management plan, the district avoids costly spikes in maintenance and replacement costs by planning ahead and replacing vehicles before they become too costly to maintain, become less reliable or no longer safe.

The total cost of this year’s planned replacements is $534,246.

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<td>Cost of Bus Proposition to Tax Payer Per Year</td>
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**Budget and Tax Levy Increase**
Hen Hud Choirs Make History at NYSSMA

For the first time in Westchester County history two choirs from the same school received the highest honor possible at the NYSSMA Majors, Gold with Distinction!

Under the direction of Erica Denler, Hendrick Hudson High School’s two show choirs, Concert Choir and the Treble Makers, competed in the prestigious NYSSMA Majors on April 9, 2010.

Each group prepared three songs to perform at the festival in front of their peers and judges. Two of the songs were from a provided list, and the third song was chosen by the choirs.

Each performance is sung before two expert judges. The judges critique the performances and provide the students with insights into improving their selections. At the conclusion of the performance, the judges will rate the group in one of three categories; Bronze (indicates an at level choir) Silver (indicates an excellent Choir) or Gold (indicates and outstanding Choir). On rare occasions, will judges feel the need to go beyond the Gold rating. The Gold with Distinction rating is reserved for choirs who sing the three pieces in an exemplary way that exceeds expectations in terms of ability and performance.

After the judges awarded the Gold with Distinction rating, they spoke highly of the choirs especially noting their “ability to not just sing with excellent technique, but to perform and express the music with such passion and emotion”.

“I’m extremely proud of the kids for their exemplary demeanor both on stage and off, but more importantly by how incredibly hard they work, and allow me to push them,” said Denler. “They allowed me to take their talents to another level. I’m so happy they will leave Hen Hud someday and have this incredible memory!” she concluded.

It was commented by both judges that in their 25 years of adjudicating choirs in NY, these two performances were amongst the best they’d seen, and they were so touched by he performance that they will remember forever!

Developing the Budget

A Message from Marion Walsh, President, Board of Education

The Board of Education, together with our administrators, has worked diligently this year to develop a budget that meets the educational expectations of the community, at an appropriate cost. This year, this task has been unusually difficult because of continuing economic challenges, which has caused reduction and uncertainty in state and federal aid, fluctuations in the District’s required payments to the teacher retirement system and the employee retirement system, as well as decreasing revenue due to lowered assessments.

Yet as we confront these economic challenges, we must persevere in optimism to create an improved system for our students so that they may excel in our increasingly competitive world. We have been taking a hard look at what is working and not working in our District to effectuate true improvement.

We seek the support of our community for a budget which will provide world-class opportunities for our students. To begin with our flagship school, our high school offers 28 college level courses and an opportunity to excel in science research and an engineering sequences as well as advanced art and languages. We have preserved our BOCES programs and our Walkabout program to offer diverse opportunities for every student. Our middle school offers accelerated high school courses, including tenth grade biology, an improved Math curriculum, and a English curriculum that meets students’ diverse learning needs and interests. Our elementary schools offer an improved curriculum in English and math so that students are learning to read earlier and mastering essential skills earlier. We are continuing to preserve our Horizons program, as well as a full array of special education programs so we can truly individualize education. I am proud that our budget preserves our rich music and arts programs as well as our strong extracurricular and sports programs. These programs are so vital for the full development of our young people.

The proposed budget reflects hours of careful review and thoughtful deliberations. While it is never easy to reduce positions, it was nonetheless necessary again this year, in order to present a budget with a minimal impact on taxes. In our economic climate, everyone must work harder and more efficiently.

The Board of Education has set high goals for our administration to improve our District’s academic performance and rigor, with a transparent and responsible budget. This budget accomplishes those goals and ensures that our community continues to have an educational system with the highest standards and the greatest opportunities to allow for maximum success of our students, aligned with our District mission and strategic plan. Please carefully consider what your vote means in these times. Support of our budget equates to optimism for the future and support for our students.

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On behalf of the Board of Education, I thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of our budget proposal. We urge you to exercise your right to vote on Tuesday May 18.

Sincerely,

Marion Walsh, President, Board of Education
Doing More with Less
A message from Dr. McCann, Superintendent of Schools

One of the most difficult jobs a superintendent faces each year is the development of the annual school budget. No other process we undertake receives as much scrutiny and attention from as many varied groups as the budget process.

Despite the challenges we have faced, I am confident our recommended budget will meet the needs of our students while eliminating costly inefficiencies. Our recommended spending plan is in line with our district’s goals and Strategic Plan. We will continue to provide our students with high quality, diverse academic programs.

In the face of near historic budget challenges, I am pleased to say that we have continued to make significant progress on a number of important fronts. In the last several years, we have seen improved academic performance in all of our schools. We have made significant progress in meeting the needs of our typical and special education students in the least restrictive environment. We have been able to expand our college level and advancement placement classes at the high school while reducing class sizes at the elementary level. I am proud to say that we have developed exemplary programs in both the visual and performing arts throughout the district and that over 90% of our athletic teams have earned the distinction of “ Scholar Athlete Team”.

I believe we have been able to expand some services and provide additional support to our students because our staff has been doing more with less. Through careful reviews we have been able to reduce costs by finding greater efficiencies, reducing energy costs, and have found more cost effective ways to maintain our buildings. Thanks to our extraordinary staff, who have all pulled together during these tough times to take on more responsibility and share some of the increased workload between each other.

We are hopeful that the toughest decisions are behind us and that we will soon be able to grow our programs and district in the most cost effective, fiscally sustainable ways possible.

Important Dates

May 3
9th Grade Parent Orientation

May 4
MOVAPA Performance at BMMS

May 5
Board of Education Meeting
Public Hearing on Budget

May 8
Buchanan-Verplanck Carnival

May 10
No School for Students

May 12
Kindergarten Orientation (BV)

May 12
Board of Education Meeting

May 12
HHHS Guitar Concert

May 13
7th & 8th Grade Band and Orchestra Concert (BMMS)

May 18
Budget Vote

May 20
HHHS Jazz Band Concert

May 21
Junior Prom

May 24
5th Grade Parent Orientation

As we move forward, I encourage each of you to carefully review our budget information in this newsletter and on our website at www.henhudschools.org/budget. There you will find in-depth information about the budget and how it will effect your child and your pocket book.

Most importantly, some people believe that if you do not have children in the school system you have no vested interest in the school budget. I beg to differ. As a community, as a citizen of this great nation, we all have a vested interest in making sure our children and our neighbors children have the opportunity to be successful and learn in an academically strong and innovative environment. We have the responsibility to give our students all that is necessary to learn and grow and eventually to carry on that same responsibility for future generations. If we provide a quality education for our children today, we ensure our schools, community and nation will thrive.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel McCann

Proposed Budget:

Preserves Programs and Extra Curricular Activities
Supports District Initiatives in instruction and integration of technology

Dates and times are subject to change. Please check www.henhudschools.org for updated events, dates and times.
Strategic Plan Guides Decision Making

The Strategic Plan of the Hendrick Hudson Schools provides a framework for our work as a district. Defined by William Cook of The Cambridge Group, “Strategic planning is the means by which an organization continually recreates itself toward extraordinary purpose.”

When our original plan was completed in 2005, it included eight strategies and three objectives to be completed in five years. In 2007-08, the Strategic Planning Committee wrote an additional two strategies, one dealing with goal setting and the other, curriculum, and in 2009 another team wrote an extensive plan supporting innovation in the arts, science, and technology. At this point, we are concentrating on 24 action plans.

As an example, under Strategy I – “We will redefine learning with a focus towards individual goals” – Action Plan 3 promises “We will promote and emphasize Differentiated Instruction as a philosophy to meet all students’ individual needs.” What does this mean for our students in the Hendrick Hudson Schools?

When teachers are differentiating their instruction, they are making sure they are using strategies that will help all children learn. In the elementary schools, teachers and administrators are stressing small group instruction and the incorporation of learning centers into literacy and math instruction. The goal is to help each student learn the material, with extra support for those who need it and extra challenge for those who have already mastered it.

At our middle and high schools, teachers are mapping curriculum with differentiated instruction in mind. After asking the big questions, in the Backwards Design model for curriculum development, teachers determine what students need to learn and be able to do by the end of each unit. They then design various learning activities to ensure that each student is appropriately supported and/or challenged.

While it is important that teachers provide effective, targeted instruction for each student, it is equally important that students understand their own learning styles in order to begin goal setting for themselves, and two of our Strategies provide structure for this work. Strategy II asks students to implement personal learning plans, and Strategy IX focuses on a guidance process that links parents, teachers, and students to choose and monitor student goals. At elementary level, classroom teachers provide guidance for their students to understand their strengths and weaknesses as learners, and to set appropriate learning goals. In the middle and high schools, students are working with their counselors, using the Naviance guidance software program.

What are the next steps for our Strategic Plan? We have come to the end of the first five years, and therefore when the Strategic Planning Committee meets at the end of May, they will determine which of the existing eleven strategies have been operationalized and which need to be carried forward into the Strategic Plan, 2010-2015. We have just begun to work on Strategy XI, focusing of innovation in technology, science, and the arts, so this will very likely be one of the strategies carried forward.

The Strategic Planning Committee is comprised of teachers, administrators, Board of Education members, and community members. If anyone is interested in participating in this important work, please contact Dr. Alice Gottlieb at 257-5120.

Furnace Woods teacher Mrs. Haviland makes ice cream in her classroom with Cristian Chica and Margaret Gruber to celebrate the first day of Spring!

Voter Information

Registration

To vote in the Hendrick Hudson School election, you must be registered. If you are registered to vote in the general election and have voted within the last four years, you are also registered to vote in the school election. If you wish to register for only the school election, you may register on Thursday, May 13, 2010 with the District Clerk at 61 Trolley Road, Montrose, between 8:30 and 4:30. If you are not sure if you are registered, please call Rosanne Squillante at (914) 257-5112.

Qualifications to Vote

- A person must be a citizen of the United States
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Be registered to vote in the school district elections and
- Be a resident of the district for at least 30 days preceding the vote.

Absentee Ballots

Applications for absentee ballots are available now for registered voters who will not be in able to vote in person on May 18, 2010. You may apply in person at the School District Administration Building for an application. May 11th is the deadline for absentee ballot applications if it is to be mailed to the voter. May 17, 2010 is deadline for absentee ballot applications if the ballot is to be picked up by the voter. All absentee ballots must be returned to the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 18th. For further information, contact Rosanne Squillante, District Clerk at the District Office, 61 Trolley Road, Montrose, NY 10548 or call (914) 257-5112.
The educational plan for the Hendrick Hudson School District is designed to maximize the potential of each of our students. Here is just a small example of what Hen Hud students do to make our community proud, and our school a bold and innovative place of learning.

Tara Cuzzi, Senior

Tara Cuzzi is a Senior at Hendrick Hudson High School. Since her freshman year, Tara has taken full advantage of the unique programs and comprehensive sports that are offered at the High School. From participating in winter and Spring Track since freshman year, to Field Hockey and Cross Country, Tara has become a stellar athlete and exceptional student. When Tara isn’t on the field, you can expect her to be helping the community through her work with one of the three honor societies she is part of, including Math, Italian and National Honor Society. Tara has also been active in the High School’s student government, where she currently serves as the President of the Student body.

As Tara gets ready to part ways with Hendrick Hudson High School at the end of June, she is “thankful for the opportunities that Hen Hud has provided her”. She is planning on studying Journalism or Law at Fordham University this fall.

Calvin Reuter, Senior

If you see Calvin Reuter on the field, you better watch out and look up, because there’s a good chance there is a javelin in the air. Calvin currently holds the champion javelin thrower title, for not only his section, but for the county and league as well.

As a champion athlete, Calvin has learned the importance of balancing sports and school work. “Sports helps to keep my time managed.” It is an attitude like that, that keeps Calvin listed as a Scholar Athlete.

In the fall, Calvin will be attending Cornell University, where he was accepted Early Decision.

Thomas Lauro, Senior

Thomas Lauro is another great student from Hendrick Hudson High School. He exemplifies the tenacity and dedication that all Hen Hud students should strive for.

As a student of the Tech Center in Yorktown, Thomas is studying in their Culinary Arts program. This program has opened Thomas up to a whole new world filled with creativity and passion expressed through food. Thomas is excited about continuing his culinary studies this fall, when he enters SUNY Delhi’s Culinary Arts Program.

From the kitchen to the field, Thomas continues to impress his teachers as well as his teammates. As a member of both the Spring Track team and the Cross Country team, Thomas has worked hard to improve his times and his standings. In fact, the teams recently voted him as the Most Improved Runner.

Jorge Huilca, Senior

Jorge Huilca is a great example of what our school system and community is all about. Jorge immigrated to the United States with his family as a young child. This has inspired him to give back to his community. Jorge works closely with the High School ESL students and acts as both a mentor and tutor, helping them adjust to the United States and understanding the English language.

Jorge has also used his time at Hendrick Hudson High to explore the many extra-curricular and sports activities available. From playing the role of T-Bird in the recent production of “Grease”, to running down the soccer field or wrestling, Jorge continues to be the kind of student that exemplifies what Hendrick Hudson is all about!

Heather Andralliski, Senior

Heather Andralliski has an amazing eye for craftsmanship and design. She developed her talents through the Auto Computer Aided Design program at Yorktown BOCES.

Anyone who enters the front doors of Hendrick Hudson High School has seen the product of Heather’s amazing intellect and talents, she helped design and build the security desk. Building principal Mr. Mackin was so impressed with her work, he invited her to participate in the stage extension project currently underway in the High School Auditorium.

Heather also had the distinct pleasure of attending the “Lead America Conference” where she took part in a number of seminars and workshops on topics like engineering and robotics.

In the fall, Heather plans to continue to explore her passion for engineering and design as she enters the Architecture program at Philadelphia University.
Frequently Asked Questions

What went into developing this year’s budget?

This year’s budget comes after months of work by both our school administration and our central office staff starting back in November. It also reflects the Board of Education’s thoughtful deliberations after carefully listening too and considering the public’s comments from Board meetings and around town.

In developing this year’s budget we focused on several core goals:

- Provide the community with an affordable, sustainable budget.
- Maintain existing levels of services & extracurricular activities.
- Keep any reductions as far from core academic program as possible.
- Continue cost effective maintenance of facilities.
- Effect personnel changes through attrition whenever possible.
- Continue focus on achieving efficiency.
- Work with Board as representatives of the community to establish a target tax rate.

Where does the money come from?

As a public school in New York State, we receive our funding from a variety of sources, some large and some small, but each an important piece of the funding pie. Due to the relative wealth of our community a vast majority of the budget comes from the local tax levy. This is about $40 million (58% of total revenue). The next largest source of funding come through PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreements with places like Entergy, Lafarge and RESCO. This accounts for over $20.5 million dollars (30% of total revenue). Those two sources account for nearly 88% of our revenues. The other 12% comes from about $4.7 million in state aide, 7% other revenue sources such as interest income total $1.5 million (2%).

Due to expense control and careful money management the district is expecting to save $1.35 million this year. The district will take these savings to reduce the tax levy and keep local taxes at a stable and low rate.

Where does the money go?

The school budget can be broken down into three categories, Administrative, Capital and Program. The Administrative portion, which is the smallest part of our budget, covers (7%) expenses such as district and school administrators and their support staff, legal fees and our public relations program. The Capital portion (14%) contains the funds necessary to run our schools including energy, maintenance, facilities and debt service. The Program portion of our budget is the largest (79%) and contains the costs associated with educating our students including teacher’s salaries and instructional support services.

What has the district done to curb spending up until now?

District officials have reduced spending in this through finding greater efficiencies, cost-effective maintenance of facilities and finally through staff reductions. Since 2008, the Hendrick Hudson School District has reduced nearly $4.8 million in staff and expenses from the budget- resulting in over an 8% reduction in the budget and nearly a 14% reduction in staff.

Will there be any reductions in staff this year?

In these times of fiscal austerity, staff reductions have become necessary across all industries, and education is no different. The proposed budget calls for the reduction of 6.6 teaching positions and 5 teacher aides. It also proposes to re-categorize 14 teacher aides as teaching assistants, and provides for the funding of 15 part-time monitors to ensure adequate supervision and student safety during lunch hours. These staff reductions will save the district approximately $820,000.

Will my child’s class size be affected by these changes?

No. School officials have taken great pains to ensure that any cuts are as far from the core educational program as possible. While any cuts are painful, we are confident that these changes will have a minimal impact on most grades, and a few grades are even projected to see a decrease in class size in the fall.

What happens if the budget fails?

In the event that the recommended budget fails to meet voter approval on May 18, the district has three options to choose from. The first option the Board has would be to put the same budget up for a vote a second time and hope for a different outcome. The second option would involve the school board making additional reductions to the budget that could include additional staff and programmatic cuts. The third option would be to immediately adopt a contingent budget. If the budget fails to gain enough support the second time, the district will also be forced to adopt a contingent budget.

What does a contingent budget mean?

Should the district decide to or be forced to enact a contingent budget there is a good chance that no part of the district would be left unscathed. Under current law, the contingent budget would need to be approximately $2.4 million less then the proposed budget.

With all the cut you have mentioned why are taxes still going up?

In developing this year’s budget, administrators had to contend with skyrocketing retirement costs estimated to be a 38.7% increase from last year. This item alone adds over $1 million dollars to the budget and is responsible for almost 2.5 points on the local tax rates. Other expenses driving this year’s budget increase are established contractual obligations for professional and support staff.

Will there be anything else on the ballot?

Yes. When voters enter the voting booth they will see a Proposition to purchase new school buses for the Hendrick Hudson School District. Voters will also be asked to select three people to serve on the Hendrick Hudson School District Board of Education. Each term is a full three year term.

Additionally, voters will see the Hendrick Hudson Free Library budget. We share the ballot with the library to reduce the costs of holding separate budget votes.
**Hendrick Hudson School District**
61 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548

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**Hendrick Hudson Mission Statement**

The Mission of Hendrick Hudson School District, recognized as a bold and innovative home for learning, is to ensure each student is a committed and passionate learner who achieves his or her maximum potential and contributes to society. This is accomplished by a system characterized by:

- A culture of highest expectations for all
- An exemplary staff
- Diverse instructional strategies that meet the individual interest and abilities of all students
- Optimal technology embedded in teaching and learning
- A fully engaged, supportive community dedicated to common goals

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**Hendrick Hudson School District Administration**

**Board of Education**
- Marion Walsh, President
- William Oricchio, Vice President
- Mary-Pat Briggi
- Ellen Grabowitz
- Laurie Ryan
- Charles Thompson
- Bruce Toll

**District Administrators**

- **Dr. Daniel McCann**
  Superintendent of Schools
- **Dr. Alice Gottlieb**
  Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Personnel
- **Enrique Catalan**
  Assistant Superintendent for Business
- **Kathleen Coughlin**
  Director of Pupil Personnel Services
- **Mathew Swerdloff**
  Director of Technology
- **Thomas Baker**
  Director of Athletics
- **Anthony Merlini**
  Director of School Facilities, Operations and Maintenance
- **Dawn Russell**
  Director of Transportation

**Editor**
- Rick McCormack

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**Contacting us is Easy**

**District Office Building**
61 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548
(914) 257-5100

**Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School**
160 Westchester Avenue
Buchanan, NY 10511
(914) 257-5400

**Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School**
57 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548
(914) 257-5500

**Furnace Woods Elementary School**
239 Watch Hill Road
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
(914) 257-5600

**Blue Mountain Middle School**
7 Furnace Woods Road
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
(914) 257-5700

**Hendrick Hudson High School**
2166 Albany Post Road
Montrose, NY 10548
(914) 257-5800

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Visit us on the web at [www.henhudschools.org](http://www.henhudschools.org) for the latest news and information.