

DISTRICT DISPATCH

A Publication of the North Syracuse Central School District

Volume 31 No. 3

May 2015

School budget vote set for May 19th Community comes together to reduce GEA, improve budget

On Tuesday, May 19, 2015, North Syracuse Central School District residents will be asked to vote on the district's proposed \$150,862,724 budget for the 2015-16 school year. The Board of Education approved the proposed spending plan for the upcoming school year at their April 20 meeting.

The budget proposal represents a 3.6% increase in spending and an estimated tax levy and tax rate increase of 2.03% for district residents, which is within the allowable tax levy limit as calculated under the state's "tax cap" guidelines.

"Since the 2010 introduction of the GEA [Gap Elimination Adjustment] the North Syracuse Central School District has lost \$42 million in State Aid and our students have suffered the negative effects of that loss," said School District Superintendent Annette Speach.

"Thanks to tremendous community support and advocacy efforts, our GEA has now been reduced, providing more promised aid and allowing us to fully fund full day kindergarten," Speach added.

★ *continued on page 3*

2015 - 16

Budget at-a-glance

Proposed budget
\$150,862,724

Tax Levy increase
\$1,626,272

Proposed school tax levy increase = 2.03%

Board of Education Candidates

The Board of Education is the official policy-making body of the North Syracuse Central School District. The Board is composed of nine members who are elected by district voters to three-year terms. Members receive no salary for serving on the Board. The terms of three Board members expire each June 30. This year there are four vacant seats due to the death of a Board member. The three candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected to three (3) year terms (from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018) and a fourth candidate will serve a (1) one year term from May 20, 2015 through June 30, 2016. On May 6, candidate profiles will be available online at www.nscsd.org.





Northstars shine brightly

The district's students continue to excel in the classroom and beyond and some have received national recognition. Some of the many student accomplishments for the current and recent school years are:

- ★ Cicero-North Syracuse senior Seth Boyke (pictured above with C-NS Executive Principal Melissa Julian) was named a commended scholar in the 2014 **National Merit Scholarship Competition**.
- ★ Anthony Hart, a C-NS student, earned national recognition in the **National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards** for his poem entitled "Parental Guidance."
- ★ More than \$300,000 in **scholarships** was awarded to North Syracuse Central School District students in 2013-14.

★ *continued on page 3*

TAX IMPACT ON \$100,000 HOME \$47 INCREASE BEFORE STAR

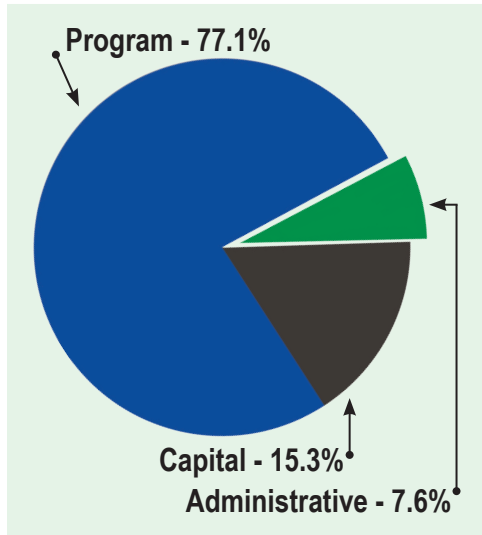
	Cicero	Clay	Salina
			
Full Value	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Assessed Value (AV)	\$100,000	\$4,330	\$100,000
Estimated Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of AV	\$23.44	\$541.59	\$23.44
Estimated Annual School Tax	\$2,344	\$2,344	\$2,344
Tax Increase Yr./Mo.	\$47/\$3.92	\$47/\$3.92	\$47/\$3.92

These calculations exclude the benefits of STAR

Three-part budget summary

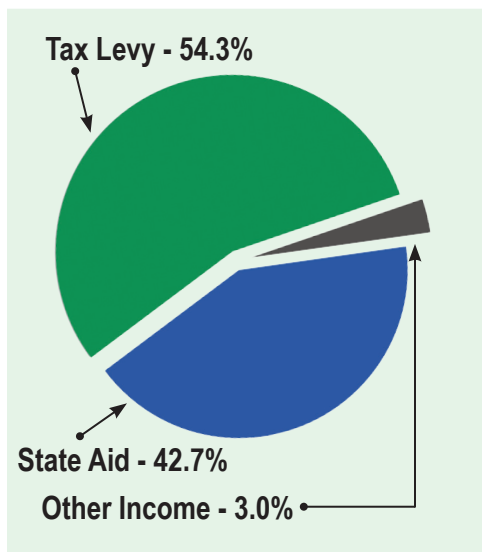
All public schools in New York State are required by law to report spending in three categories: program, administrative and capital. The District's program component represents the largest portion and focal point of its budget, accounting for 77% of the entire budget.

District Expenditures



	2014-15 Budget	2015-16 Proposed	Dollar Change
Program Expenditures	\$112,220,450	\$116,253,146	\$4,032,696
Regular Instruction	\$38,929,253	\$40,655,685	\$1,726,432
Special School Program	\$16,356,511	\$16,820,085	\$463,574
Student Services	\$8,940,066	\$8,863,419	(\$76,647)
In-Service Training	\$416,967	\$408,558	(\$8,409)
Legal	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$20,000
Transportation	\$7,893,069	\$8,066,627	\$173,558
Employee Benefits	\$39,604,584	\$41,338,772	\$1,734,188
Administrative Expenditures	\$11,269,442	\$11,505,736	\$236,294
Board of Education	\$127,748	\$145,664	\$17,916
Central Administration	\$1,707,997	\$1,817,546	\$109,549
Central Support	\$1,715,819	\$1,821,087	\$105,268
Supervision/Staff Development	\$4,546,918	\$4,510,581	(\$36,337)
Census	\$0	\$0	\$0
Employee Benefits	\$3,170,960	\$3,210,858	\$39,898
Capital Expenditures	\$22,175,143	\$23,103,842	\$928,699
Operation/Maintenance of Plan	\$8,617,142	\$9,283,004	\$665,862
Central Support	\$106,000	\$131,000	\$25,000
Employee Benefits	\$2,610,053	\$2,820,216	\$210,163
Debt service	\$10,841,948	\$10,869,622	\$27,674
TOTAL	\$145,665,035	\$150,862,724	\$5,197,689

District Revenues



	2014-15 Budget	2015-16 Proposed	Dollar Change
General Aid	\$53,141,180	\$56,864,117	\$3,722,937
Building Aid	\$7,803,499	\$7,534,084	(\$269,415)
Other Revenue			
PILOTS	\$545,505	\$583,700	\$38,195
County sales tax	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$0
Interest	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$0
Fund balance	\$847,356	\$750,000	(\$97,356)
Rent	\$350,000	\$380,000	\$30,000
Medicaid	\$225,000	\$300,000	\$75,000
Other	\$2,084,554	\$2,156,610	\$72,056
Subtotal	\$4,462,415	\$4,580,310	\$117,895
Property taxes			
Property tax levy	\$80,257,941	\$81,884,213	\$1,626,272
TOTAL	\$145,665,035	\$150,862,724	\$5,197,689

Community helps reduce GEA

★ continued from page 1



In early February, regional advocacy events, “Our Schools Remain at Risk,” were held at North Syracuse Junior High School (pictured above) and Auburn West Middle School. More than 1,000 supporters of public education attended the forums to hear about the devastating impact that GEA cuts have had on public education and learn how to become advocates for their schools and children.

The GEA was first introduced for the 2010-11 fiscal year by former Governor Paterson as a way to help close New York’s budget deficit. The loss of State Aid in conjunction with the tax cap has severely restricted the district’s revenue, forcing staff and program cuts. The 2015-16 budget includes a partial restoration of the GEA.

“We are thankful for the efforts of our Board of Education, employees and community members for their tremendous advocacy, which led to a reduction in our GEA and prevented us from having to make more painful and damaging cuts,” said Associate Superintendent for Business Services Donald F.X. Keegan. “Those efforts are applauded on behalf of our district and our students,” he added.

A record of fiscal responsibility

The North Syracuse Central School District has a proven record of responsible stewardship including:

- Although inflation has averaged over 2% since 2009-10, district spending has increased an average of slightly less than 1.5% per year over the same period.
- Despite the district receiving less State Aid in 2015-16 than it did in 2009-10, the district has balanced its budget each year with tax levy increases at the tax cap limit.
- Adopted a funding strategy for full day kindergarten that will not require an increase in the tax levy above the tax cap and will not result in further cuts to personnel and programming.
- The district has maintained its Moody’s credit rating of Aa3, which determines the rate of interest on our debt, despite financial challenges.

Student accomplishments ★ continued from page 1



★ Hundreds of student athletes achieved **scholar athlete** status during the 2013-14 and 14-15 school years. To qualify as a scholar athlete, students must have an overall GPA of 85% or higher and teams must have an average GPA over 90%. *Girls’ track and boys’ wrestling (winter 2015) pictured above.*



★ Two elementary students, Austin Quintero (Roxboro Road Middle School) and Colin Byrnes (Gillette Road Middle School) scored 100% on their **NY State Science tests**. *Students are pictured above left with Science Teacher Beth Bova and NSCSD Director of Science John Rice.*

★ C-NS and NSJHS students earned more than 30 top 10 medals and had seven overall winners at the **New York State DECA competition**. *C-NS students are pictured above right.*

★ More than 100 students from C-NS and NSJHS earned awards in the 2015 **CNY Scholastic Art Awards** competition with 38 Gold Key awards received.

★ C-NS junior Elizabeth Westfall was recognized for exemplary volunteer service with a **Certificate of Excellence** from the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and with a **President’s Volunteer Service Award** granted by the program on behalf of President Barack Obama. She has received this award for two consecutive years.

★ Two Gillette Road Middle School students Josh Wilk (7th) and Jake Nardoza (5th) qualified to compete in the **WCNY/Post Standard Scripps Written Spelling Bee**.

★ At the 2015 Shell Eco-Marathon Americas, the **Performance Engineering Team** placed 2nd in Hydrogen Fuel Cell Prototype Division and 3rd in Diesel Urban Concept Division. *Prototype team pictured left.*



Visit the district website at www.nscsd.org for a continued list of student photos and accomplishments.



NORTH SYRACUSE CSD RESIDENT ECR WSS

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SYRACUSE, NY
PERMIT NO. 4

DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE RUSH

Please Vote!

Tuesday, May 19, 2015 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

On the ballot:

- 2015-16 school budget proposition: \$150,862,724
- School bus purchase proposition: \$1,403,038
- Salina Free Library proposition: \$421,858
- Four seats on the Board of Education (candidate information will be available online on May 6 at www.nscsd.org)

Voter qualifications:

- U.S. citizen;
- 18 years of age or older;
- Resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote; and
- Not under sentence for a felony conviction and not adjudged mentally incompetent.

Registration Information: If you are not registered to vote with the County or District, you must pre-register by May 14, 2015. The District is holding a special evening registration from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on May 5, 2015 at Cicero Elementary School and at the Jerome F. Melvin Administrative Office Building (5355 West Taft Road) in North Syracuse. Residents may also register at the Administrative Office Building through May 14, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Absentee Ballots: Qualified voters of the District may obtain absentee ballot applications from the Office of the District Clerk. The district clerk must receive completed applications no later than 5 p.m. on May 18, 2015 OR no later than 5 p.m. on May 12, 2015 if the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Completed applications received after 5 p.m. on May 12, 2015 will require the voter to personally appear at the Office of the District Clerk to receive an absentee ballot.

Contact *Connie A. Gibson, District Clerk*, at 218-2131 for additional information about voting, registration and ballots.

Polling Places:

For residents living
SOUTH of 481

Administrative Office Building
5355 West Taft Road
North Syracuse, NY

For residents living
NORTH of 481

Cicero Elementary School
Route 31
Cicero, NY

BUS PURCHASE REFERENDUM

On May 19, the North Syracuse Central School District will be asking voters to decide upon the purchase of several new buses as recommended in the district's long-term bus replacement plan.

Each year, all school buses must pass a rigorous state inspection. Replacement of buses normally occurs after 10 years when it is no longer cost-effective to meet those standards.

The 2015-16 proposition includes the following purchases at a total cost not to exceed \$1,403,038:

- Eight new 65-passenger diesel school buses;
- Two new 65-passenger diesel school buses with a luggage compartment;
- One new 39-passenger diesel school bus with one to three wheelchair positions, hydraulic lift and air conditioning;
- One new 48-passenger bus with air conditioning; and
- One new Chevrolet Suburban.

The state will reimburse the district over a five-year period for approximately 76 percent of the cost. Local property taxes would pay for the remainder of the cost, which is about a \$2.00 annual tax increase for a home assessed at \$100,000 before the STAR exemption.

Budget public hearing

May 5, 2015, 7 p.m.

Jerome F. Melvin Administrative Office Building
(5355 West Taft Road in North Syracuse)

More budget information:

Copies of the budget can be reviewed Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Jerome F. Melvin Administrative Office Building (5355 West Taft Road) in North Syracuse.

More information is available at www.nscsd.org/budget.