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south
colonie
central
schools



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focus

Preparing World Class Citizens



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May
2017

The 2017-2018 budget

South Colonie residents to vote May 16 on proposed \$99.45 million school spending plan

Polls open at all elementary schools 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

South Colonie Central School District residents will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 16, to vote on a proposed \$99.45 million budget for the 2017-2018 school year. The polls will be open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the district's five elementary schools (see *voting locations on page 2*).



Following an extensive review of program priorities, the Board of Education adopted a proposed budget in April totaling \$99,457,249. The budget calls for a 0.81 percent spending increase over the current school year (see *complete figures on page 2*), and an increase in the district tax levy of **1.50 percent** — below the state tax levy cap for South Colonie of 1.82 percent.

Although assessment and equalization rates will not be known until August, the district estimates the average Colonie property owner with a home market value of \$200,000 would pay \$4.58 per month more next school year to finance education (see *page 4 for more tax rate information*).

The South Colonie Board of Education, administration, and school community have worked tirelessly to advocate for the reinstatement of lost New York State Foundation Aid. While some aid was restored by the NYS Legislature, the district will still be underfunded in state Foundation Aid by just over \$4 million as it enters the 2017-18 school year. Board of Education members along with district officials met with elected officials to

*Continued on page 3
... budget overview*

Proposed Budget at a Glance

- **Total 2017-2018 budget: \$99,457,249**
- **Property tax levy increase of 1.50 percent**
- **Budget-to-budget spending increase is 0.81 percent**
- **The district continues to focus on academic excellence, making thoughtful use of available resources**
- **Please vote on May 16 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. at one of the district's five elementary schools**



Who can vote on May 16?

You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older, a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote, and are registered with the school district or Albany County Board of Elections. As posted previously, May 9 was the deadline to register. Residents may vote at any location listed below.

Voting Hours

11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Voting Sites

FOREST PARK ELEMENTARY

100 Forest Drive (869-3006)

ROESSLEVILLE ELEMENTARY

100 California Ave. (459-2157)

SADDLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

100 Lorelee Drive (456-2608)

SHAKER ROAD ELEMENTARY

512 Shaker Road (458-1440)

VEEDER ELEMENTARY

25 Veeder Drive (869-4661)

Absentee ballot applications are available by contacting the District Clerk at 869-3576 or by downloading an application from the district website. Absentee ballots must be submitted to the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 16.

Estimated revenues

	2016-17	2017-18	Dollar Change
Appropriated Fund Balance/Reserves	\$ 2,560,000	\$ 2,020,336	\$ - 539,664
Continuing Education	84,722	81,654	- 3,068
Interest on Investments	40,000	40,000	0
Miscellaneous	2,240,219	2,322,390	+ 82,171
Rental-BOCES	60,000	60,000	+ 0
State Aid*	22,735,800	22,927,492	+ 191,692
Local Taxes	70,400,000	71,456,000	+ 1,056,000
Youth Detention Center	398,958	409,377	+ 10,419
Medicaid Reimbursement	140,000	140,000	0
TOTAL	\$98,659,699	\$99,457,249	+ \$797,550

* As required by Education Laws 1608 and 1716, the district estimates its 2017-2018 State Aid to be \$22,927,492 or 23.05 percent of total revenues.

Estimated expenditures

	2016-17	2017-18	Dollar Change
Board of Education	\$ 59,241	\$ 59,693	+ 452
Chief School Admin. Office	232,098	236,035	+ 3,937
Finance	775,316	782,043	+ 6,727
Legal/Personnel/Public Information	464,717	471,624	+ 6,907
Operation & Maintenance	5,502,370	5,462,489	- 39,881
Messenger & Mailing	172,615	152,296	- 20,319
Information Technology	434,949	474,058	+ 39,109
Special Items	872,939	883,314	+ 10,375
Instructional Improvement/Admin.	2,871,348	2,984,978	+ 113,630
Regular Instruction	33,058,822	33,779,372	+ 720,550
Special Education	11,888,156	11,925,178	+ 37,022
Occupational Education	424,346	419,358	- 4,988
Summer School	163,146	178,362	+ 15,216
Instructional Library/Media	1,106,959	1,138,545	+ 31,586
Instructional Technology	1,014,067	1,015,538	+ 1,471
Pupil Services	2,428,417	2,584,428	+ 156,011
Co-Curricular Activities	167,058	178,082	+ 11,024
Interscholastic Athletics	665,236	668,375	+ 3,139
Transportation	4,134,627	4,037,249	- 97,378
Community Services	483,680	491,031	+ 7,351
Employee Benefits	26,427,869	26,519,912	+ 92,043
Debt Service	5,021,723	4,435,289	- 586,434
Interfund Transfers	290,000	580,000	+ 290,000
TOTAL	\$98,659,699	\$99,457,249	+797,550

... Budget overview

Continued from page 1

request progress toward full Foundation Aid funding in the future.

“While we realize adjustments to the state funding formula will take time, fair distribution of aid to schools is critical to our students and community moving forward,” said Superintendent Jonathan Buhner. “As our district continues to recover from years of lost state aid, we have worked hard to strategically restore specific academic priorities for students while considering overall costs and efficiencies.”

Among those priorities, the proposed 2017-18 budget calls for restoring or adding (see full list of budget additions on page 5) two K-4 Elementary School Teachers, a Grade 5-6 STEM Teacher, a Special Education Teacher and Teaching Assistant, a half-time Music Teacher, an Academic Intervention Teacher and three Academic Intervention classroom support Teaching Assistants, an additional English as a New Language Teacher and Teaching Assistant, a Special Education Administrator and Supervisor of Instructional Technology, two Social Workers, a part-time Art Teacher and a part-time Alternative Education Teacher for Mathematics and Science. The district is also planning to reinstate the K-4 after-school academic support program.

In addition to meeting these instructional needs, the district has also taken the opportunity to address non-instructional needs in the budget including adding a Computer Technician, part-time Security Monitor positions and 20 additional security cameras. The budget also called for replacement of the district office roof, parking lot and road repair, and installing a back-up generator at the district office to maintain district operations during power outages. The budget also includes various technology upgrades, the replacement of one maintenance truck and plow, and the replacement of a non-functioning scoreboard at Lisha Kill Middle School.

South Colonie Return on Investment

- Academically, South Colonie is ranked 11th out of 83 Capital Region School Districts. (*Buffalo Business First Guide to Upstate School Districts*)
- Nationally, South Colonie has been recognized as a “Best Community For Music Education” for five straight years.
- The district ranks in the Top 10 percent in Upstate New York for Administrative Efficiency.
- South Colonie is ranked in the top third for lowest cost per student among Capital Region school districts.
- South Colonie’s graduation rate regularly reaches or exceeds 90 percent with recent graduates being accepted into universities such as RPI, Marist, Tulane, Binghamton, Niagara, Manhattan, Fordham, Cleveland Institute of Music, Emerson, St. John’s, UNC Chapel Hill, LeMoyne, University of Buffalo, University at Albany, SUNY Oswego, Albany College of Pharmacy, Colgate, Syracuse, New Hampshire, RIT, Hartwick, Ithaca, Saint Rose, Russell Sage, Siena, HVCC, and SCCC.
- The district is one of the original Project Lead the Way schools, a nationally recognized pre-engineering program.
- Colonie Central High School was ranked fifth in the region in 2016 for having the best teachers.
- In May 2016, 248 Colonie Central High School students completed 366 Advanced Placement exams with 78 percent earning a score of three or higher (out of five).

What will be on the May 16 voting ballot?

Proposition No. 1 – 2017-2018 District Budget

Consideration of the proposed 2017-18 South Colonie district operating budget totaling \$99,457,249.

Proposition No. 2 – School Bus Purchase

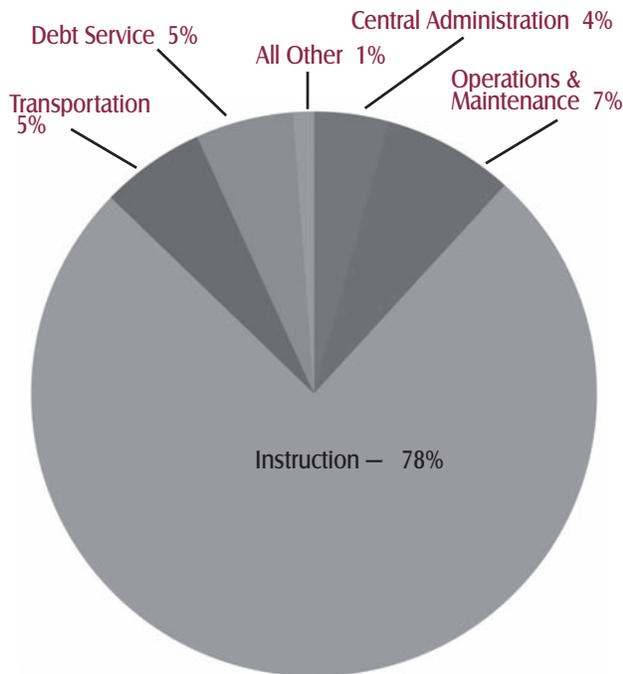
Residents are being asked to consider the purchase of 10 school bus vehicles at an estimated cost not to exceed \$1,092,500. This purchase is eligible for 52.8 percent state aid, making the overall net cost to the district \$121,320 per year for five years. The proposed purchase plan helps the district replace older, high mileage/high maintenance buses which become expensive to repair (See page 5 for more information).

Board of Education Election

Two candidates, incumbents Rose Gigliello and Leonard Motto, are seeking election to new five-year terms on the South Colonie Board of Education. Terms begin July 1, 2017 and end on June 30, 2022 (See page 6 for more information).



2017-2018 Budget Breakdown



Estimated Property Tax Rate

Year	Estimated Tax Rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Value		
	Colonie	Guilderland	Niskayuna
2016-17	\$27.14	\$18.34	\$20.84
*2017-18	\$27.55	\$18.61	\$21.15

* Tax rates and increases for next year are estimates only. The district will set final tax rates in August based on final assessment figures and equalization rates as provided by the NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services.

What will the budget cost property owners in 2017-2018?

* Colonie home market valued at **\$225,000** = **\$5.15 more per month**

* Colonie home market valued at **\$200,000** = **\$4.58 more per month**

* Colonie home market valued at **\$175,000** = **\$4.01 more per month**

* Estimates above do not include the impact of other exemptions such as STAR, Alternative Veterans, senior citizens, disabilities, etc.

Budget Summary

New York State law requires all school districts to present their budgets divided into three expenditure categories – Program, Administrative and Capital – and compare them to last year's amounts. South Colonie's three-part budget breaks down as follows:

PROGRAM BUDGET CATEGORY

	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>
Dollar amount	\$77,986,815	\$78,515,573
% of Total Budget	79.05%	78.94%

The Program category includes: salaries and benefits of teachers and staff who deliver pupil services (guidance, health, library/media, etc.), textbooks and equipment, co-curricular activities, athletics and transportation costs (except bus purchases).

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET CATEGORY

	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>
Dollar amount	\$8,893,283	\$9,446,211
% of Total Budget	9.01%	9.50%

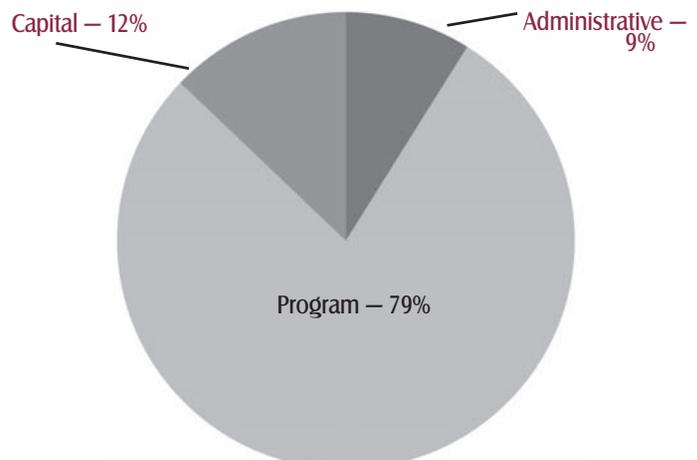
The Administrative category includes: salaries and benefits of administrators, supervisors and administrative clerical staff; public information and printing; curriculum and staff development; school board costs; tax collection and some legal costs.

CAPITAL BUDGET CATEGORY

	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>
Dollar amount	\$11,779,601	\$11,495,465
% of Total Budget	11.94%	11.56%

The Capital category includes: salaries and benefits of maintenance and custodial staff; debt service on buildings; school bus purchases; utilities; general insurance; tax certiorari and court-ordered costs.

2017-2018 BUDGET SUMMARY



School bus replacement plan proposal to purchase 10 buses on May 16 ballot

South Colonie residents will be asked to consider a special proposition on the May 16 ballot allowing for the purchase of 10 school bus vehicles at a cost not to exceed \$1,092,500. The purchase is eligible for state transportation aid of 52.8 percent — **making the average annual net cost to the district \$121,320 after the aid.** Similar to previous years, money to fund the purchase would be borrowed over five years. The average annual net tax impact would be 4.4 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value after aid. The first payment would not be due until the 2018-19 school year. The proposed purchase plan helps the district to replace older, high mileage/high maintenance buses which become expensive to repair.

The proposition calls for purchasing:

- Four 66-passenger school buses
- Two 24-passenger wheelchair buses
- Two 36-passenger school buses
- One 16-passenger school bus
- One 6-passenger utility vehicle/bus



The proposition's average annual net cost to the district to purchase 10 new school buses would be \$121,320 after state transportation aid or 4.4 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

What is being restored or added to the proposed 2017-2018 district budget?

- 2.0 K-4 Elementary Teachers
- 1.0 Grade 5-6 STEM Teacher
- 0.5 Music Teacher
- 1.0 Special Education Teacher
- 1.0 Special Education Teacher Assistant
- 1.0 K-4 Academic Intervention Teacher
- 3.0 K-4 Academic Intervention/Classroom Teacher Assistants
- 1.0 English as a New Language Teacher
- 1.0 English as a New Language Teaching Assistant
- 1.0 Special Education Administrator
- 1.0 Supervisor of Instructional Technology
- 2.0 School Social Workers
- 0.5 High School Art Teacher
- 0.7 Alternative Education Teacher for Mathematics and Science
- 2.0 part-time Elementary Library Clerical Support positions
- 1.0 Computer Technician
- Reinstatement of K-4 after school academic support program
- Support for administrative professional development
- Part-time after school Security Monitors (LK, SC and CCHS)
- Part-time School Monitor support
- Lease with Pine Grove Methodist Church for Alternative Education programming space
- Upgraded Internet bandwidth from 200 to 300 MB; firewall web filter replacement and Distance Learning/Videoconferencing
- New i-Ready universal academic growth tool for ELA/Math. Also, professional development and training to support this initiative.
- 20 additional security cameras
- Parking lot and road repair/paving
- Replacement of the District Office roof
- Installation of a District Office back-up generator to maintain critical operations during power outages
- Replacement of non-functioning scoreboard at Lisha Kill Middle School, and additional equipment funding to address district-wide needs
- Replacement of one truck and plow and other required equipment for Operations & Maintenance Department
- Bus proposition to replace 10 school buses of various sizes. No impact on 2017-18 budget; first payment due in 2018-19 for average yearly net cost of \$121,320 after state transportation aid. Buses are financed over five years.

District solar and capital projects moving along

Work continues to move forward on South Colonie's solar panel installation and capital improvement projects.

The large-scale solar project is funded through a grant from NYSERDA and is projected to save \$1.7 million in energy savings over 20 years — money that can be used to maintain other academic initiatives across the district. With more than 1,000 panels already operating, and 6,000 in the process of being installed, connected and activated on the grid, the 1.75 megawatt system, once completed, will be one of the largest solar systems providing power for schools in New York State. While community members will see some solar panels on athletic fields and at the bus garage, most panels are located in remote metering sites such as Queensbury, Saratoga, Cobleskill, Troy and two additional local Colonie sites.

Capital project update

On another venture not related to the solar project grant, construction continues to work on the \$13.8 million South Colonie capital project approved by voters in the fall of 2014. Since that time, new WiFi Internet has been installed at all eight schools as well as additional technology updates such as Voice-Over Internet phone systems and clocks.

The district broke ground in December on a new library at Forest Park Elementary School, and plans to do the same at Roessleville Elementary School this summer. Major renovations are also underway at Colonie Central High School where the Art, Music and Technology wing is being redesigned and modernized.

Textbook returns

Textbooks loaned to private and parochial school students for the 2016-2017 school year must be returned to the textbook depository located at Shaker Road Elementary School (use side entrance on Kings Court off Miracle Lane) according to the following schedule:

- Tuesday, June 20- Thursday, June 22, 9 a.m.-noon, 1-3 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 27- Thursday, June 29, 9 a.m.-noon, 1-3 p.m.

Those with questions should contact the Textbook Coordinator at 869-3576 or 489-0685.

Two running unopposed for re-election to South Colonie Board of Education

Rose Gigliello

Incumbent Rose Gigliello is running unopposed for one of two seats that are up for election this year on the South Colonie Board of Education. She has served on the school board since 2012.



Gigliello has lived in the district for more than 30 years and works as a Special Education teacher for the Capital Region Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, and a Master's Degree in Special Education from the College of Saint Rose in Albany.

She has served on the district's Curriculum Mapping Committee and Special Education Advisory Committee. She is a past Vice President of the Lisha Kill Middle School PTA, a former Religious Education Teacher for Blessed Sacrement Church, and has volunteered with the Homeward Bound Dog Rescue organization. As a board member, she has served, and continues to serve, on a variety of working committees.

She and her husband, John, have two daughters, both Colonie Central High School graduates, who are now college students.

Leonard Motto

Incumbent Leonard Motto is running unopposed for one of two seats that are up for election this year on the South Colonie Board of Education. He has served on the school board since 2006.



Motto is a lifelong resident of South Colonie and a 1978 graduate of Colonie Central High School. He works as a Branch Manager at Dataflow.

He served as South Colonie Board of Education President from 2011-13, and was Vice President from 2009-11. He has also served, and continues to serve, on a number of board working committees.

Motto and his wife, Sheryl, have two daughters who are South Colonie graduates.



South Colonie Students, Families,
District Staff and Community Members ...

Do you live, work or
study in the South
Colonie Central
School District?

GREAT ... then we need your help!



YOUR *Survey ends May 31*

OPINION MATTERS!

The South Colonie Board of Education and Leadership Team are seeking your input this spring by conducting a quick online survey. This anonymous survey will help assure decisions we make align with community priorities.

Please take 5 minutes to help us meet this goal. Access the survey online at the URL below. No login or password are necessary. Your responses are **NOT** individually tracked and are confidential. Thank you!

Complete the survey online at ...

www.surveymonkey.com/r/SColsurvey



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 Edward Sim, Vice President
 Christine Badger Mele
 Brian Casey
 Rose Gigliello
 Shelle Jaquish
 Neil Johanning
 Leonard Motto
 James (Tim) Ryan
Jamie Mroczko
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Jonathan W. Buhner
 Superintendent of Schools

Tim Backus
 Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Sherri Fisher
 Assistant Superintendent for
 Management Services and Strategic Planning

David Perry, PhD
 Director of Human Resources, Safe Schools, IT

John K. Noetzel
 Editor/Communications/Web

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South Colonie Central School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2016-17 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year	Contingent Budget for the 2017-18 School Year*
Total Budget Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$98,659,699	\$ 99,457,249	\$98,401,249
Increase/Decrease for the 2017-18 School Year		\$797,550	(\$258,450)
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		0.81%	(0.26%)
Change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)		1.26%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$70,400,000	\$71,456,000	
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)	\$70,400,000	\$71,456,000	\$70,400,000
F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$2,397,894	\$2,494,586	
G. School Tax Levy Limit <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$68,470,480	\$69,188,008	
H. Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, <u>Excluding</u> Permissible Exclusions and Levy for Library Debt, Plus Prior Year Tax Cap Reserve (E - B - F + D)	\$68,002,106	\$68,961,414	
I. Difference (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$468,374	\$226,594	
Administrative Component	\$8,893,283	\$9,446,211	\$8,915,915
Program Component	\$ 77,986,815	\$78,515,573	\$78,111,924
Capital Component	\$11,779,601	\$11,495,465	\$11,373,410

* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingent budget for the 2017-18 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 Education Law:
 Elimination of all non-contingent items: equipment purchases (\$440,781) and further reductions (\$615,219) in teaching, administration and non-instructional program areas would be necessary to reduce the tax levy to the 2016-17 level as required by the current contingent budget rules.

**List separate propositions that are not included in the total budgeted amount: (Tax levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements).

Description	Amount
School bus purchase of 10 school buses, financed over 5 years. No financial impact in the 2017-18 budget. The first debt payment would be due in the 2018-19 school year. The average annual net cost after Transportation Aid is projected at \$121,320 per year.	\$1,092,500

	Under Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹	\$558

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2017-18 by the qualified voters of the South Colonie Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Forest Park, Roessleville, Saddlewood, Shaker Road, and Veeder Elementary Schools in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the above listed schools, 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.