

Therapy Dogs Help Students Develop Communication Skills

Dr. Laurel Olexa, chairwoman of the District-wide Committee on Special Education, has been bringing her therapy dogs, Oppie and Oz, into District schools to work with students for several years. The calm-natured “cockapoos” (a cross between a cocker spaniel and a poodle) are a hypoallergenic, low-to-no-shedding breed – and are much mightier than they at first seem. With their clown-like personalities, the 10-pound balls of fur and energy have the power to make a bad day into a good one for almost anyone!



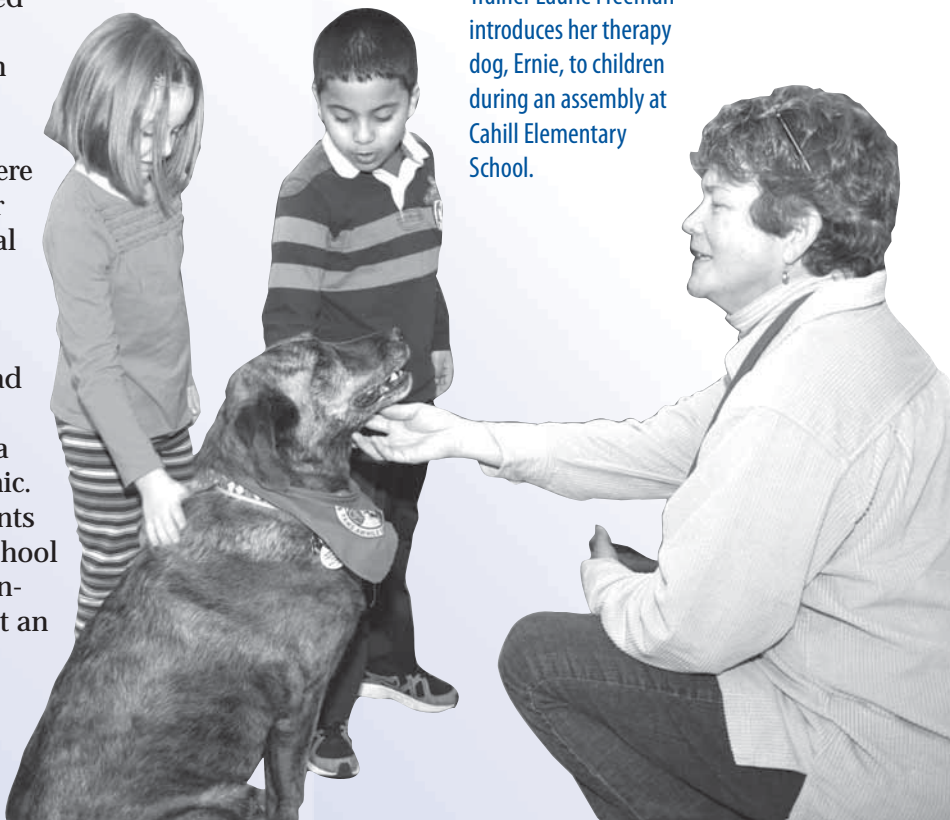
Trainer Kathy White of Kingston directs her therapy dog, Kona, through a hoop held by students at Cahill Elementary School.

“Therapy dogs help students open up; even the non-verbal become far more engaged and expressive when working with a therapy dog,” says Dr. Olexa, who has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. “We see remarkable changes in students who work with the dogs.”

The dogs have visited Health and Special Education classrooms in the District, as well as a Board of Education meeting in October, where they demonstrated their unique expertise. Several students also attended the meeting to show off samples of the 100 dog-crate comforters they had made for their canine friends and donated to a local animal-control clinic.

In December, students at Cahill Elementary School were treated to a demonstration of dog agility at an assembly organized by Dr. Olexa.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Trainer Laurie Freeman introduces her therapy dog, Ernie, to children during an assembly at Cahill Elementary School.

Saugerties

Central School District

BUDGET 2012

Residents to Vote on May 15

Proposed Budget Provides for Student Needs – Keeps Taxes Lower Than Allowable Threshold

The Saugerties Central School District Board of Education has adopted a Proposed Budget of \$54,676,980, which represents an estimated tax levy increase of 1.87 percent and will need a simple majority of voter support at the polls on Tuesday, May 15, 2012.

New York State’s tax levy limit law, which takes effect for the first time this year, actually permits Saugerties to propose a higher tax levy increase of 1.92 percent before requiring a 60 percent supermajority approval. However, the Board of Education felt it was important to present a budget that keeps any spending increases to a minimum, while providing the best educational programs for children.

Ensuring that each student is afforded the appropriate learning opportunities was the top priority of the District as it sought to craft a balanced budget that would stay within the allowable tax cap threshold. Additionally, the Board of Education and administration worked to make long-term fiscal planning a cornerstone of the budget development process. This mission was not without numerous challenges.

Multiple years of cuts in State and Federal aid have forced the responsibility for funding schools onto local taxpayers. In 2007-08, State and Federal sources accounted for 45 percent of school district revenues, whereas the estimates for 2012-13 are that the State and Federal sources account for 34 percent of revenues. In total dollars, Saugerties Central School District will receive \$3.4 million less in State aid in 2012-13 than it received in 2007-08.

As a result of the reductions in State and Federal revenue, the District has realigned a number of administrative functions, and over 70 positions have been eliminated since October of 2009. The Proposed Budget for 2012-13 includes further staff reductions, including one administrative position, one elementary teaching position, two English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching positions, and five part-time monitor positions.

For the 2012-13 budget, the Board of Education also had to accordingly plan for the loss of an \$836,000 grant award under the Education Jobs Fund (EJF). The loss of the EJF funding was significant, as this Federal money had been supporting key instructional positions. “We had to carefully rebuild the budget to include the salary and benefit costs associated with the instructional positions that were previously funded by the EJF,” noted Superintendent Seth Turner.

It was also essential for long-term preservation of facilities and equipment to be considered in crafting the budget for the 2012-2013 school year. Rules for operating under a contingency budget have limited the school district in spending on equipment and non-emergency repairs. For two years, the District has been able to address only building maintenance items which are deemed necessary for the health, safety, security, and welfare of students and staff. Ideally, the District should be able to follow a planned replacement and

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VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Tuesday May 15

6 AM–9 PM

See It... Hear It... Stop It!

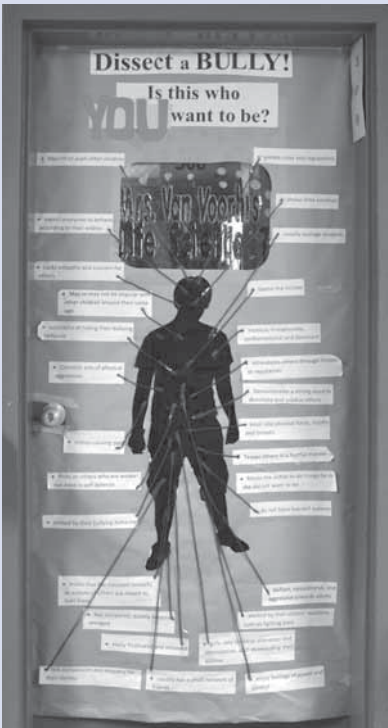
That’s the mantra ringing through the hallways of Saugerties Junior High School this year. The students have made it their battle cry against bullying!

What used to be dismissed as a “normal” part of growing up can happen to, and be caused by either boys or girls. It ranges from verbal taunting to physical blows. It happens on the way to school, on school property, and in cyberspace. For the recipients, it is torture.

It’s called bullying, and its effects can be long-lasting. Its victims can develop depression, as well as low self-esteem that follows them into adulthood. Some victims, sadly, are driven to suicide. The bullies themselves may move on to other forms of violence and criminal behavior that lead to a destructive life.

Saugerties students began their crusade against bullying this fall after an intensive anti-bullying assembly featuring Grammy-winning country music star Taylor Swift’s “Mean” video, which depicts young people overcoming being picked on.

“The Taylor Swift video made it very real and very powerful for the students,” says Tom Averill, principal at the Junior-Senior High School. The important messages conveyed through the two-hour assembly



were documented by students in Scott Wickham’s Computer Video Production class, Mr. Averill reports.

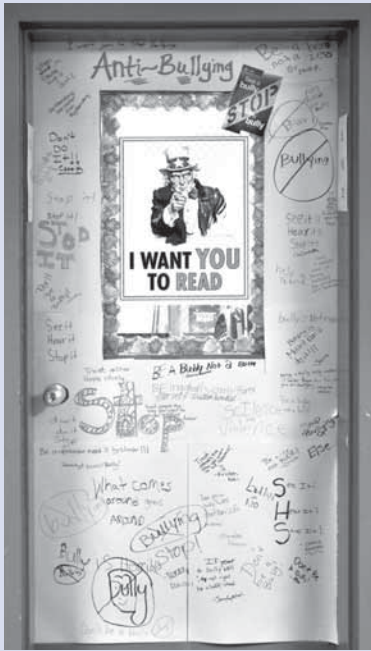
The Anti-Bullying Assembly, created entirely by District staff for seventh and eighth grade students, focused on the role bystanders play in perpetuating the cycle.

“We want bystanders to step up when they see bullying taking place, and instead be ‘upstanders,’” Mr. Averill says. “If students see someone being a bully or being bullied, they should let their peers know that isn’t acceptable behavior. If that doesn’t stop it, then they should report it to a faculty member.”

The assembly program emphasized how important it is that we don’t discount bullying as teasing or simply a necessary part of growing up. In a 2001 study by the nonprofit Kaiser Foundation, preteens said that bullying is a



Donna Donaldson, a home and careers teacher for 14 years, was a champion of anti-bullying efforts. Mrs. Donaldson, who passed away earlier this year, would be proud to see these peace-keeping efforts which stemmed from the anti-bullying campaign she initiated within the Junior Senior High School.



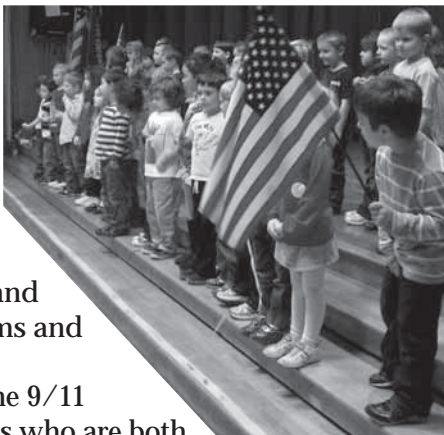
regular occurrence at school and that it becomes even more pervasive as children start high school; 86 percent of children between the ages of 12 and 15 said that they get teased or bullied at school – making bullying more prevalent than smoking, alcohol, drugs, or sex in that age group.

Since the assembly, a homeroom-door contest focused on the bullying issue, and faculty members periodically wear T-shirts sporting the “See It... Hear It... Stop It...” slogan to reinforce the anti-bullying message. Students have also signed pledges stating that they want to be part of the solution, to work together to stop mean behavior, and to “stamp out bullying.”

Our Veterans, Our Heroes

At Mt. Marion’s Veterans Day program, with more than 30 local veterans in attendance, the ceremony began with Kindergarten students leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and the band playing high-spirited renditions of “America the Beautiful” and “God Bless America.” Second grade students made bright red poppies for the occasion – a nationally known and recognized symbol of sacrifice worn to honor the men and women who serve their country. Students also wrote and read poems and essays they had written about the meaning of Veterans Day.

This year, in a special recognition of those who lost their lives in the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, students also honored two veterans who are both Saugerties High School graduates: Cliff Wayman, Jr., a former U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant, and Alex Wilson, a retired U.S. Army Captain. Learning about the two men’s experiences in the service brought history to life for the students.



Video production teacher Scott Wickham helps students Andrew Mentz and Matthew McLaren rehearse a broadcast in the High School’s television studio.

District Receives Grant to Create TV Station with Video-streaming Capability

Thanks to a Community Service Project Grant for \$50,000 from the New York State Education Department, which was written by Seth Turner and supported by Senator John Bonacic, students in the Saugerties Central School District will launch a television station that will enable live broadcasts on local Public Access Channel 20 beginning in September 2012. Additionally, new equipment purchased with this grant will allow for some programs to be video-streamed live on the internet, and archived. Students will now be able

to broadcast live from events like athletic contests, school concerts, talent shows, and more. The community, including senior citizens who have limited mobility, will now be able to keep in touch with school and community events. Students will gain experience in live video production, giving those students interested in the media arts an added boost to their résumé.

This exciting project will come at no cost to local taxpayers. Years of fundraising activities by students and staff in the Computer Video Production courses at Saugerties High School helped to initially raise money for this endeavor. The grant awarded by New York State allows for their goal of the television station to come to fruition. Additionally, students at the elementary level who have been active in journalism/media clubs run by teachers who have volunteered their time and resources will now have a medium through which their work can be viewed by a larger audience (for a preview of some of the programs, go to: www.justprintit.net). Currently, 92 students in Grades 2-6 participate in journalism/media programs at the elementary level, and more than 75 students are enrolled in a High School video production course.

“We are grateful to be recipients of this grant funding,” noted Mr. Turner. “The interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students of all ages abound with this new technology.”

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Therapy Dogs Help Students Develop Communication Skills

Kathy White of Kingston and her boxer, Kona; Jennifer Christie of Shandaken and her Boston terrier, Sturgis; as well as Laurie Freeman and her therapy dog, Ernie, joined in the demonstration.



Students watch as Dr. Laurel Olexa’s therapy dog, Oppie, runs the agility course at Cahill Elementary School in December. Students volunteered to be “obstacles” on the course.



Trainer Jennifer Christie and her therapy dog, Sturgis, a Boston terrier, work with students at a December assembly at Cahill Elementary School.

Saugerties

Central School District

2012-2013 PROPOSED BUDGET

Three Part Budget

The legislation that requires New York State school districts to have a public budget vote includes the requirement that the budget be divided up into three sections: Administration, Program, and Capital.

	2011-2012	2012-2013	INCREASE/(DECREASE)
Administration	7.29% \$3,888,580	7.09% \$3,874,945	(0.35%)
Program	80.11% \$42,721,754	80.52% \$44,023,887	3.05%
Capital	12.60% \$6,717,266	12.40% \$6,778,148	0.91%
TOTAL	\$53,327,600	\$54,676,980	2.53%
2012-2013 Proposed Budget: \$54,676,980			

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Tuesday May 15

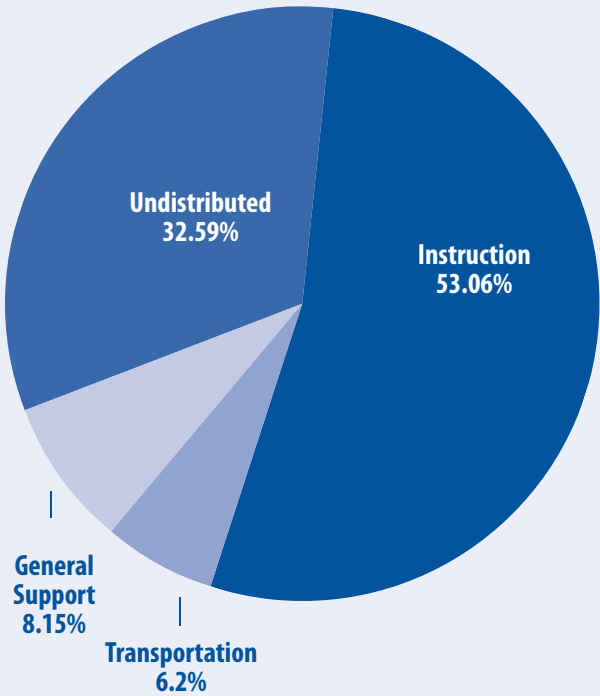
6 AM–9 PM

Cahill Elementary School
Morse Elementary School
Mt. Marion Elementary School
Riccardi Elementary School

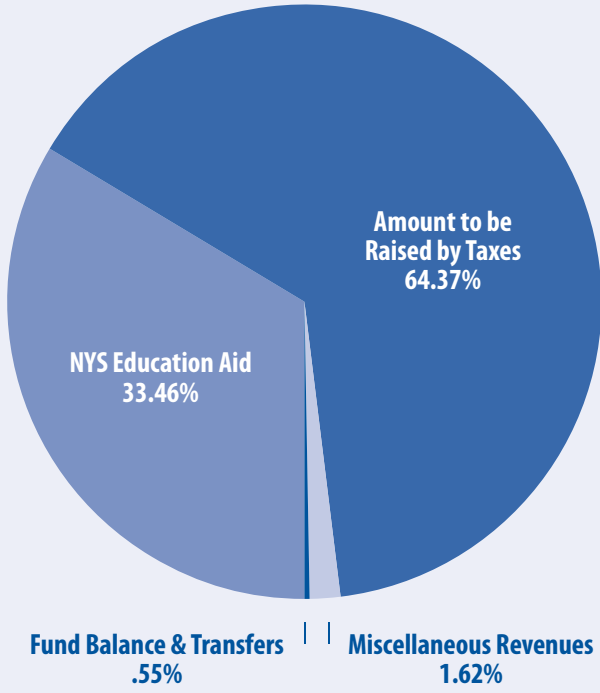
Expenditure Summary

	ADOPTED BUDGET 2011-2012	PROPOSED BUDGET 2012-2013	\$ INCREASE (\$ DECREASE)
GENERAL SUPPORT			
Board of Education	\$34,063	\$33,874	(\$189)
Central Administration	\$226,156	\$228,800	\$2,644
Finance	\$407,845	\$421,678	\$13,833
Staff	\$195,608	\$203,796	\$8,188
Central Services	\$2,749,708	\$2,880,347	\$130,639
Special Items	\$687,924	\$686,665	(\$1,259)
Total	\$4,301,304	\$4,455,160	\$153,856
INSTRUCTION			
Administration & Improvement	\$1,294,539	\$1,268,615	(\$25,924)
Instruction - Teaching	\$23,887,342	\$24,435,435	\$548,093
Instructional Media	\$1,159,805	\$1,207,872	\$48,067
Pupil Services	\$1,865,247	\$2,097,867	\$232,620
Total	\$28,206,933	\$29,009,789	\$802,856
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION			
District-Owned Transportation	\$195,562	\$197,866	\$2,304
Contract Transportation	\$3,112,063	\$3,193,467	\$81,404
Total	\$3,307,625	\$3,391,333	\$83,708
UNDISTRIBUTED			
Employee Benefits	\$14,329,282	\$14,729,193	\$ 399,911
Debt Service	\$3,080,456	\$2,989,505	(\$90,951)
Interfund Transfers	\$102,000	\$102,000	0
Total	\$17,511,738	\$17,820,698	\$308,960
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$53,327,600	\$54,676,980	\$1,349,380

How the Money Will Be Spent



Where the Money Comes From



Revenue Summary

	ADOPTED BUDGET 2011-2012	PROPOSED BUDGET 2012-2013	\$ INCREASE (\$ DECREASE)
Total Miscellaneous Revenues/Federal Aid	\$535,000	\$885,000	\$350,000
Total State Aid Revenues without STAR	\$18,242,941	\$18,297,227	\$54,286
Total Revenue Other Than Property Tax/STAR	\$18,777,941	\$19,182,227	\$404,286
Appropriated Fund Balance	-	\$300,000	\$300,000
Amount to Be Raised by Property Tax (estimated)	\$30,327,914	\$30,888,573	\$560,659
STAR Reimbursement (estimated)	\$4,221,745	\$4,306,180	\$84,435
TOTAL REVENUES	\$53,327,600	\$54,676,980	\$1,349,380

Saugerties 2012-2013 PROPOSED BUDGET

Central School District

Facts & Figures About the Proposed Budget

What is Saugerties' budget per pupil?

Historically, Saugerties has had the lowest per pupil costs of any Ulster County School District. According to the 2011-2012 Mid-Hudson School Study Council report, the District's cost per pupil is \$18,113.99. The Ulster County average is \$22,755.40.

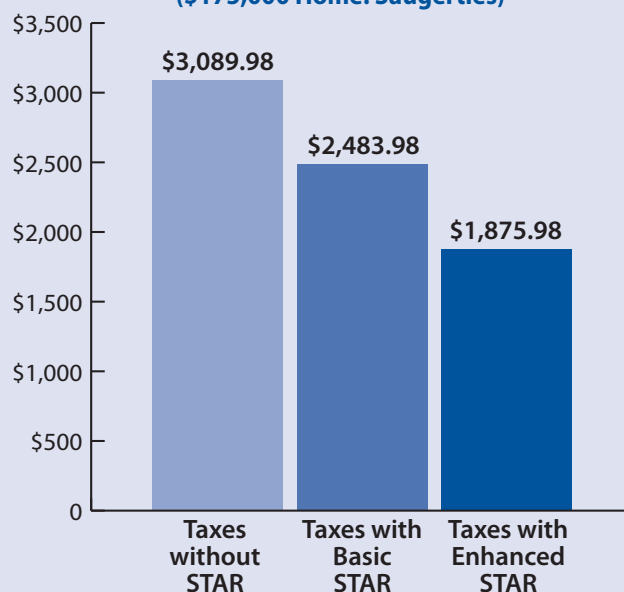
What are the estimated 2012-2013 equalization rates?

The rates are based on the preliminary assessment rolls for the three towns comprising the Saugerties Central School District.

Town	Equalization Rate
Saugerties	1.00
Ulster	0.8094
Woodstock	0.95

The estimated tax bills are for a property in Saugerties with an assessed value of \$175,000. (Since the tentative equalization rate for Saugerties is 1.00, the assessed value will equal the true value.)

2012-2013 Estimated Taxes
(\$175,000 Home: Saugerties)



How does the STAR program work?

The School Tax Relief (STAR) Program that was passed by the Legislature in 1997 to provide Basic and Enhanced school tax relief for owner-occupied, primary residences is contin-

ued under the New York State budget but has been revised to also reflect income levels of owners. Owner-occupied, primary residences where the owners' total income is less than \$500,000 are eligible for STAR. The Basic STAR exemption is offered to all property owners on their owner-occupied primary residences, and is provided in the form of an actual reduction in the homeowner's property tax bill. Owners aged 65 or older who meet income criteria are eligible for even greater tax savings through the Enhanced STAR exemption. Seniors must apply for Enhanced STAR each year. Contact your local assessor for more information.

How do I get more detailed information about the budget?

You can stop by the District Offices in the Hildebrandt Building or any of the six schools for a copy of the complete Budget document, or visit www.saugerties.k12.ny.us. Please contact Superintendent Seth Turner at (845) 247-6551, or School Business Official Allen Olsen at (845) 247-6520, if you have specific questions.

Questions and Answers About the New Tax Law

New York's fiscal crisis has major implications for the State's public school system, and for the way the Saugerties Central School District develops its budgets. Below are answers to some common questions people ask. Additional information about the Proposed Budget can be found at www.saugerties.k12.ny.us. The community is encouraged to vote on the budget on May 15, 2012. Board of Education members will also be elected.

What is the "tax cap"?

New York State has implemented a new law that changes the way budgets are approved. The changes go into effect beginning with the May 15, 2012 vote. Under the law, a school district must now plan its budget around a complex State formula that calculates a baseline tax levy increase. Budgets that carry a tax levy increase at or below this calculation will need the approval of a simple majority (50 percent plus one) of voters. Any proposal higher than this calculation will require a supermajority approval (60 percent). The Board of Education has adopted a budget that is BELOW the allowable levy level under the State's formula and therefore will need a simple majority voter approval of 50 percent plus one.

How is the tax levy increase calculated?

Although this law has been commonly referred to as the 2 percent tax cap, it is important to understand that it is not a cap, nor does it limit the levy increase to just two percent. That number may be above or below two percent, and it will vary each year. While the formula is influenced by the lesser of CPI (consumer price index) or 2 percent, it then allows for specific exemptions and the application of other factors in the formula. In Saugerties, this year's exemptions include increases to State-mandated pension contributions, as well as the principal and interest on past debt for capital projects. After applying the allowable exemptions, the Saugerties Central School District is permitted a maximum

1.92 percent levy. The Board of Education has adopted a budget less than this, with a 1.87 percent levy increase.

Is voting still important?

YES, voting is more important than ever. In the past, a budget had two chances for voter approval. If budgets were not approved, districts were allowed "contingency budget" increases that guaranteed funds would be available to meet certain contractual and legal obligations. Saugerties has been operating under a contingency budget for the last two years. Under the new legislation, however, there is no longer a safety net to cover any increased costs. A district that fails to get its budget approved by the second vote must adopt a zero percent levy increase, as well as meet the former guidelines for what are considered allowable contingency expenses. For the Saugerties Central School District, this would cause a budget gap of more than \$645,000. This gap would be addressed through additional cuts, including four more teaching positions, a significant number of teaching assistants, custodial staff, potential cuts to sports programs, eliminating spending on equipment, and reducing BOCES services. These cuts would impact the level of programs provided for students.

What can I do?

The most important things community members can do is to become informed about the budget being presented and to vote on May 15. We understand that the school budget process is complicated, and that the addition of the levy limit legislation may make it more confusing. However, it is important for the community to understand the budget proposal. Please visit our website and attend Board meetings to stay informed. Helping everyone understand the budget and what it means to the future of the programs offered to students is very important. We want to assist in any way we can.

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Proposed Budget Below Allowable Tax Cap Threshold

repair schedule for facilities maintenance and equipment.

With these challenges in mind, the District initiated the budgetary planning process early. "The budget discussions for 2012-13 began in August 2011, and were built into each of our Board meetings," said Superintendent Turner. Starting the budget process early was valuable for the District, since the bulk of information about the new tax levy limit legislation only became available late in 2011, and early in 2012. This caused the Board of Education to be responsive in providing necessary information to the State Education Department and amending its draft budget to meet the evolving requirements of this new law.

Throughout the process of budget

"This budget addresses long-term financial planning needs that were not possible to consider under the Contingency Budgets of the past two school years, and provides students with the greatest learning opportunities possible."

~Superintendent Seth Turner

development, the Board of Education and administration retained a focus on budget reductions that would minimize a negative impact on our students, while also being mindful of the community's ability to pay. "This budget addresses long-term financial planning needs that were not possible to consider under the contingency budgets of the past two school years, and provides students with the greatest learning opportunities possible," says Superintendent Turner.

Proposed Staffing Cuts

- District Data Administrator
- Elementary School Teaching Position
- Two English as a Second Language Teaching Positions
- Five Part-time Monitor Positions

Saugerties

Central School District

2012-2013 PROPOSED BUDGET

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2011-2012 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2012-2013 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2012-2013 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount	\$53,327,600	\$54,676,980	\$54,031,886
Increase/decrease for the 2012-2013 school year		\$1,349,380	\$704,286
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		2.53%	1.32%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		3.20%	
School Tax Levy Limit		\$35,212,444	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy (without permissible exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit)		\$34,395,337	\$34,395,337
Total Permissible Exclusions		\$817,107	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy (including permissible exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit)	\$34,549,659	\$35,194,753	\$34,549,659
Administrative Component	\$3,888,580	\$3,874,945	\$3,874,945
Program Component	\$42,721,754	\$44,023,887	\$43,512,793
Capital Component	\$6,717,266	\$6,778,148	\$6,644,148

* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2012-2013 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law: A contingency budget for 2012-2013 requires that the tax levy increase by 0.0%. Therefore, a budget gap of \$645,094 would need to be addressed to reach the contingency level. The anticipated changes in order to meet the contingency level include the following:

- four teaching positions
- a number of teaching assistants
- custodial staffing
- potential cuts to interscholastic sports programs
- eliminating equipment spending unrelated to safety and security, and
- reducing BOCES services.



Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Budget Proposed for the 2012-2013 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption savings ¹ → \$618

¹The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2012-2013 by the qualified voters of the Saugerties Central School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at the Cahill, Morse, Mt. Marion, and Riccardi Elementary Schools in said district on Tuesday, May 15, 2012 between the hours of 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM, prevailing time in Saugerties Central School District, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

Sample Ballot

The wording on the proposition will appear as shown in this example and you will have a choice of either YES or NO:

Proposition 1
2012-2013 Budget

Shall the Board of Education of the Saugerties Central School District be authorized to expend the sums of money which will be required for School District purposes for the 2012-2013 school year in the total amount of \$54,676,980 (the budget), and levy the necessary sum against the taxable real property in the District?

There are three (3) three-year seats available on the Board of Education. The three candidates with the most votes will fill the vacancies and their terms shall be effective July1, 2012 through June 30, 2015.
The following four candidates are running for election to the Board of Education:

Teresa Bach-Tucker ★ Richard Petramale ★ Lawrence Quick ★ Donald Tucker

Voting Information

Who May Vote?

In order to vote you must be:

- ★ Registered to vote
- ★ A citizen of the United States
- ★ 18 years of age or older
- ★ A resident of Saugerties Central School District for at least 30 days, immediately before the election

When And Where Is The Vote?

Voting will take place on Tuesday, May 15, 2012, from 6 AM to 9 PM. Polls are open in each of the Saugerties Central School District’s Elementary Schools (Grant D. Morse, Mt. Marion, Cahill, and Riccardi) by School District voting areas.

Where Can I Get An Absentee Ballot?

Absentee ballot applications are available for pick-up at the Hildebrandt Building on week-days from 8 AM to 4:30 PM. A voter can request an absentee ballot be mailed to them, however, the request for mailing must be made before May 7. The completed absentee ballots must be returned to the Hildebrandt Building in a sealed envelope no later than 4 PM on May 14.

How Do I Register?

If you are already registered to vote in the general governmental elections in November, then you are registered to vote in the School District vote. If you are not registered, you may do so by obtaining a registration form available at the following locations:

- ★ Ulster County Board of Elections, 284 Wall Street, Kingston (phone: 334-5470)
- ★ Ulster County Department of Motor Vehicles, 244 Fair Street, Kingston (phone: 340-3700)
- ★ any United States Post Office

Where Do I Vote?

District A: Grant D. Morse Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 6, 9, 15 and 16, and contains that geographical area south of the Greene County line, west of the New York State Thruway, north of Route 212 and east of the west boundary of the town of Saugerties located between Palenville and Zena.

District B: Mt. Marion Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 5 and 10 of the town of Saugerties and those parts of 3, 6, and 7 of the town of Woodstock. It is within that geographical area south of Route 212, west of the NYS Thruway (north of Glasco Turnpike), west of Snyder Road and Schoolhouse Road, north of the southern boundary of the town of Saugerties, with the exception of that area of the town of Saugerties located in the Kingston Consolidated School District and east of the School District boundary near the area of Plochmann Lane in the town of Woodstock.

District C: Cahill Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 14 of the town of Saugerties and is within that geographical area south of the Greene County line, west of the Hudson River, east of the New York State Thruway and north of the area commonly referred to as Barclay Heights.

District D: Riccardi Elementary School

The district will encompass General Municipal Election Districts 8, 11, 12 (including Mt. Marion Park), and 13 located in the Town of Saugerties and parts of 7, 9, and 12 located in the town of Ulster. Geographically, it is bounded north by the south boundary of Election District 3, on the east by the Hudson River, on the west by the New York State Thruway (north of Glasco Turnpike), then south of Glasco Turnpike to the east of Snyder Road and School House Road and on the south by the town of Ulster.

VOTE!
VOTE!
VOTE!

Tuesday May 15

Cahill Elementary School
Morse Elementary School
Mt. Marion Elementary School
Riccardi Elementary School

6 AM–9 PM

District Support Staff Members are Schools' Unsung

The Hildebrandt Building is home to an important contingent of District personnel. They are modest folks, for the most part unseen, and go about their business quietly and diligently, day in and day out. They seldom seek recognition, but nonetheless contribute distinctively and measurably to the success of the Saugerties Central School District. These unsung heroes are none other than our support staff.

“Our support staff plays a vital role in the day-to-day operations of our schools,” confirms Seth Turner, Saugerties Central School District Superintendent. “They are an essential component of the success of our students, teachers, administrators, and parents.”

These professionals, with more than 126 years of combined experience in the District, keep the daily operations running smoothly for approximately 3,000 students and 500 employees in six schools. Their high standards of conduct, accuracy, speed, discretion, and efficiency, along with the caring support they provide, are all invaluable to the morale and performance of students, teachers, and administrators.

“They are a great team,” says Mr. Turner. “We respect and value them and the important work they do every day.”

MEET THE TEAM!

Geri Gardner, Payroll and Benefits Assistant in the Business Office, has worked in the District for 13 years, 12 of those in her current position. As Assistant to the Payroll Clerk, Geri understands the complexities of employee health insurance benefits (in terms of coverage, enrollment, policy changes, and claims processing). Her responsibilities include maintaining District employee attendance records and tuition billing for foster students, private-pay students, and out-of-District students. She also processes New York State Aid claims for Special Education students. Her husband is a Saugerties High School alumnus and her oldest daughter, Kacey, graduated last year as class valedictorian. Another daughter, Rachel, will graduate at the end of this school year.

Margaret Holmes and Aryn Kerr, part-time Personnel Clerks, are the smiling faces that welcome visitors to the District Office.

Margaret has worked in the District Office for 14 years, and her daughter is a graduate of Saugerties High School. It’s the variety of the job and the camaraderie of the office that she enjoys most.

“It’s not the same thing every day; there’s always a million-and-one things that could happen,” she says. “And everybody helps each other. It’s all about teamwork here.”

Aryn, a 1997 Saugerties High School graduate, has worked for the District for nearly four years. She has a daughter who will be entering Kindergarten at Cahill Elementary School in the fall of 2012. Like Margaret, she enjoys the friendly and bustling atmosphere at the Hildebrandt Building. “They’re great people to work with,” she adds.

Margaret and Aryn’s responsibilities include processing all new employee applications and making certain all teacher certifications are current. They also maintain the District’s database of 300-400 instructional and non-instructional substitute employees. The two women track the days each individual is available to work and what subject and grade levels they are qualified to teach. They also keep a list of about 200 non-instructional substitutes.

Pam Murphy, Secretary to the Superintendent, provides general support for the Superintendent and performs a long list of other duties, as the day requires. “That’s what I like about my job – it’s different every day,” she says. She has worked in the District nearly five years now. Daily, she fields phone calls, answering questions or directing callers to those who can provide the best answers to callers’ inquiries. She files enrollment reports, tracks in-service credit for teachers, and is responsible for meeting all FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) requests. She organizes information for the District calendar, is responsible for preparing the agenda and information packets for Board of Education meetings, and serves as United Way representative for the District. “What a great team I work with,” Pam says about District Office staff. “Sometimes a larger group of people has difficulty working together, but everyone here is so willing to pitch in and help.”

Carol Petramale, Transportation Clerk, has worked for the District for 29 years. She has two children attending District schools. Carol serves as liaison between the District and the bus companies to ensure safe and timely transportation of students. Her responsibilities include coordinating the flow of communication between school personnel and drivers. If there’s a roadblock somewhere due to an emergency, she finds the best alternate routes for drivers. She uses computer software to help her map out bus routes for the drivers, but her colleagues say that she knows the “runs” by heart. She utilizes phones and two-way radios to receive routing and transportation requests and information as well as to provide assistance to bus drivers, school personnel, and parents. She also handles all the paperwork for student daycare requests and reschedules transportation when events are cancelled.



Standing: Pam Murphy, Secretary to the Superintendent; Margaret Holmes, part-time Personnel Clerk; Taylor Vertetis, Business Office Secretary; Nanette Weeks, District Treasurer; Cathy Snoddy, Accounts Payable and Deputy Treasurer. Seated: Angie Wilson, Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Geri Gardner, part-time Payroll and Benefits Assistant; Pat Praetorius, Payroll.

Pat Praetorius, Payroll Clerk, has worked for the District for 19 years. Her responsibilities include maintaining accurate and up-to-date payroll information on more than 500 employees in the District. It’s Pat who makes sure everyone receives his or her paycheck on time! She is also responsible for processing all workers compensation and insurance claims and is the go-to person when there is a question about benefits coverage. She has two sons who are graduates of Saugerties High School. “The people I work with are the greatest,” Pat says. “They’ve been my support system through everything, including my battle with cancer and the chemo treatments. I can’t imagine a greater group of people to work with.”



Cathy Snoddy, Accounts Payable and Deputy Treasurer, has been working in the District for 12 years. She is a Saugerties High School graduate with degrees in Accounting and Computer Science from SUNY Potsdam. Her workday revolves around paying bills and ordering supplies – with a keen eye to the bottom line – for each of the schools in the District. She processes invoices and purchase orders, ensuring that all the appropriate paperwork is complete. She also is on hand to assist the District Treasurer. She thoroughly enjoys her job, but it’s the people she works with that are most important to her. “You can work with numbers anywhere, but working in an office with people you enjoy is what makes your job worthwhile,” she says.

Taylor Vertetis, Business Office Secretary, has worked in the Saugerties Central School District for more than 12 years. She and her son are both graduates of Saugerties High School. Her responsibilities include greeting visitors and assisting the Business Administrator with the day-to-day operations of the office. “The thing I enjoy most about my job is that I’m working with highly talented individuals who truly care about the District,” she says. “Everyone in the Business Office works diligently to ensure that the children are transported safely, that employees receive their proper compensation, that the bills are paid in a timely manner, and that appropriations and revenues are effectively managed.”

Nanette Weeks, District Treasurer, has been keeping the District’s financial records in order for more than 10 years. “I love every aspect of my job,” she says. Most of her responsibility involves the collection of revenue, recording cash receipts, and reconciling bank statements for the District’s \$53.3 million budget. Other duties include making money transfers and bond payments, as necessary. She also handles health insurance benefits for District retirees. Computer spreadsheets are the mainstay of her daily workload and help her turn the complex mathematical matrix of numbers inherent to a school district into clear and concise financial reports for the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the New York State Department of Education. Nanette is a graduate of Saugerties High School, and she has two children attending schools in the District.

Angie Wilson, Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Anyone who knew Angie was truly amazed by her strength and courage, especially throughout her long and hard-fought battle with cancer. The disease took Angie from us on January 5, 2012. Throughout her 14 years of dedicated service to the District, she played an instrumental role in the District office. Though her job responsibilities were integral to the office’s operation, Angie’s impact was felt on a much deeper, personal level. She touched the lives of the people she knew. Everyone who worked with Angie cherished the relationship they had with her; a relationship Angie valued as well. When interviewed for this article, Angie said. “I’ve been blessed to work with these people. They are all very understanding and dear to me.” She was a graduate of Saugerties High School, as are two of her sons – a third son is currently in High School.

Community Spirit Running High at Cahill Elementary School



Students at Cahill Elementary School are making good use of their new playground, garden, and learning pavilion, all created through the generous contributions of community members and businesses.

“We’re positively ebullient from the astounding support we’ve received, and we’re still running high on community spirit,” says Susan Gies, principal at Cahill Elementary School. And support continues to grow for the school.

In October, the Cahill PTA brought the community together once again for its third annual “Cahill Cares Classic”

5K race. More than 100 runners, sporting T-shirts highlighting the names of dozens of local business and community sponsors, came out to enjoy the beautiful weather. Students, running for their individual sponsors, had the opportunity to participate in a 1K race the day before.



Also in October, fulfilling its responsibility as a member of the Saugerties Chamber of Commerce, the PTA played a leadership role in organizing the “Shine on Saugerties Gala and Auction,” a fun community event featuring artist-rendered lighthouses – auctioned off to the highest bidders – and delicious food provided by area restaurants. The Cahill PTA, participating artists, selected charities, and the Chamber shared the proceeds raised from this event.

A recent Arbor Day planting event brought together community members, teachers, and the Cahill PTA to further beautify the new garden.



“The PTA is committed to raising much-needed funds in ways that promote a more positive message,” says Mrs. Gies. “Hopefully, candy and gift catalog fundraisers are a thing of the past.”

To join Cahill Elementary School’s PTA, contact either of the two co-presidents: Maura DeCelle (mode16@verizon.net) or Lori Adorno (slmb33@hotmail.com). Additional information can be found on the Cahill PTA page on the Saugerties Central School District’s website at: www.saugerties.k12.ny.us.



Charles M. Riccardi Elementary School Prepares for Sixth Year of Successful Summer Reading Program

Splish! Splash! Read? The sounds of summer mingle with the sound of turning pages and excitement for many Charles M. Riccardi Elementary School students. This summer will mark the sixth year for the annual Riccardi Summer Reading Challenge, started in 2007 by second grade teacher Frances Murphy.

“Years ago, I looped with a third grade class into the fourth grade,” Mrs. Murphy explains. “Over the summer I gave them a packet of fun challenges to complete if they wanted to. Twenty-three of the 24 students returned the challenge, and I noticed something pretty spectacular. The children were warmed up for the year. I didn’t have to backtrack. They just took off.”

Research shows that children who don’t maintain reading skills over the summer are likely to start the upcoming school year at a disadvantage. The annual Riccardi Reading Challenge combines discovery and a lot of fun with the practice of reading skills that students need. This helps them in the classroom and ultimately in life.

Each year, participation in the Riccardi Reading Challenge has grown, reports Mrs. Murphy. “The first year we had 38 participants. This year, we expect three times that enrollment!”

In the challenge, participants finish as many of the 44 reading activities as they can by the time they return to school in the fall. If a child is not reading on his or her own yet, having someone read to them counts too. It’s also fine if friends and family work on projects together.

Activities include visiting a bookstore, reading a magazine, reading a book that their parents read when they were younger, keeping a summer journal, writing their own story, or acting out a story with family and friends. Participants are recognized at the first assembly of the



Top winners in the Riccardi Reading Challenge for 2011 are all smiles.

“Of course, the prize is just a bonus. The real prize is feeling a sense of accomplishment and pride, and enjoying the ride a great book takes you on.”

*-Frances Murphy,
Riccardi Grade 2 Teacher*

year. Those who complete 10 activities are recognized with certificates and a token prize. Students who complete 30 activities or more receive the certificate, a prize, and a specially designed T-shirt. The top readers receive a gift certificate to Barnes and Noble.

“Of course, the prize is just a bonus,” Mrs. Murphy says. “The real prize is feeling a sense of accomplishment and pride, and enjoying the ride a great book takes you on.”

Mustang Bowl VIII Celebrates Courage and Perseverance of Schoolmates

Everyone knows that the annual Mustang Bowl at Grant D. Morse Elementary School is always exciting, but this year’s game took on special meaning with the naming of two students as honorary captains. Third grade student Dakota Hally from Hilarie Wiacek’s classroom, who is fighting a serious long-term illness, represented the Mustangs, and Ashley Corrado, a former Morse Elementary School student now at the Junior High School, who is making a remarkable recovery from injuries suffered in an automobile accident in December 2010, represented the Patriots.

“Dakota and Ashley were honored for their outstanding courage and perseverance as they battle their medical conditions,” explained Joe Defino, Special Education teacher and organizer of Mustang Bowl. “Their ability to overcome very, very difficult circumstances is truly inspiring.”

Since 2004, Morse Elementary School has hosted the Mustang Bowl, an annual touch-football game featuring students in Grades 5 and 6. More than a football game, the Mustang Bowl is a lesson in sportsmanship, leadership, and teamwork for the school’s students. The team coaches are selected based on their ability to



lead effectively rather than their knowledge of the game or athletic ability, and they must be highly respected by their classmates.

The students – more than 90 participated this year –

take the game very seriously, practicing after school for more than a month to prepare. This year, Saugerties Central School District Superintendent Seth Turner and Morse Principal Donald Dieckmann played the roles of game announcers, while a record number of family, friends, and community members cheered the teams on as they battled for the coveted “Green Apples Cup.”

At this year’s pre-game ceremony, the crowd roared as Dakota and Ashley took their places at the 50-yard line, where they were recognized and awarded shiny gold medals. The medals were delivered during a touching ceremony by the LifeNet helicopter crew and first responders who had last seen

Ashley immediately after her accident. This was the first time students were named honorary captains at the event, a distinction usually reserved for community members for outstanding contributions to youth.

“We wanted to recognize Dakota and Ashley for their inspiration, determination, and demonstration of the power of the human spirit as they face extraordinary medical challenges,” Mr. Dieckmann said.



Pre-game activities also included the dramatic appearance of the rescue crew that flew Ashley to doctors after the car crash that put her into a coma. Her rescuers – who hadn’t seen Ashley since the accident – brought the game ball to the field via a LifeNet helicopter!



Ashley Corrado, a former Morse Elementary School student, was reunited with the LifeNet rescue crew who flew her to doctors following severe injuries suffered during a car crash.